



Economy and Society

RC02 2021 QUARTER 2 NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear RC02 Members,

It was a pleasure to virtually see many of you in the audiences of the 4th ISA Forum of Sociology on 23-28 February 2021. For those of you unable to attend, our newsletter editor, Dustin Stoltz, has asked some of the session organizers to write summaries of their sessions for this issue of the newsletter. All ISA members and all Forum participants can watch recordings of any session at the Forum by logging in to the Forum's [program](#) or looking [here](#).

The [ISA Forum gathered together](#) 3,516 participants from over 100 countries, with roughly half female (56%) and a quarter students (25%). Brazil contributed the largest number of scholars (656), distantly followed by the United States (314), Germany (286), India (163), the United Kingdom (146) and Japan (145). Other countries with over 100 scholars attending include Canada, Italy, Mexico, Spain, Argentina and France. Within RC02, 27 session organizers created 21 sessions with 86 authors presenting their work. In addition, RC02 members organized or significantly contributed to organizing several semi-plenaries and common sessions: a tribute to Immanuel Wallerstein, a session celebrating the life and work of Erik Olin Wright, and a semi-plenary that contributed political economic analyses in "The Politics of the Population Census: Key Indicators for Sustainable Development?" RC02 also co-organized joint

sessions with RC09 (Social Transformations and Sociology of Development), RC 46 (Clinical Sociology) RC48 (Social Movements, Collective Action and Social Change), among others.

We took advantage of the Forum's online location to host our Business Meeting on another Zoom platform, thereby allowing members who had not registered to attend the Forum to nevertheless join us. Our business meeting attracted 20 scholars world-wide on a Sunday—some attending very late at night or very early in the morning from Japan and Australia. For those of you who were able to attend, I'm grateful for your ideas, feedback, and commitment to the research committee.

Candidly, the online Forum was smaller than our original plans. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, when the Forum was organized for Porto Alegre from 14-18 July 2020, we had 26 sessions and 163 authors. In addition, Nadya and I had organized a day-long pre-conference on Cultural Analyses of the Economy with an opening and closing keynote speaker: Philippe Steiner and Fredrick Wherry. To the degree that the online version of the Forum was a success, it was a success due to RC02's 27 session organizers who organized their sessions for Porto Alegre in July 2020, re-organized it for Porto Alegre in February 2021, and then re-organized it a third time for the online variant. It is a testament to our session organizers that we lost only five sessions under these challenging circumstances.

COVID-19 continues to circulate globally, with unpredictable consequences on global society. Meanwhile, RC02 and the ISA are in the process of planning for the next World Congress of Sociology as well as two RC02 thematic interim conferences. As of today, the ISA will certainly not hold the World Congress, as scheduled, as an in-person event in July 2022. We are debating whether to hold it as an online-only event around July 2022, or to plan for an in-person/hybrid event around July 2023. The

ISA Assembly of Councils will meet on May 1st to deliberate on the two options and to make a formal vote.

In the meantime, if you have any ideas, plans, suggestions, or time to contribute to RC02, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at any time.

Aaron Pitluck
RC02 President (2018-2022)
Illinois State University

ARTICLE

Please send essays to the Secretary and Newsletter Editor, Dustin Stoltz (dss219 [at] lehigh [dot] edu).

A DEVASTATED BRAZIL: HOW BOLSONARO HAS DISMANTLED LABOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS

BY Marcos Novelli and Andréia Galvão

Originally published on

[Work in Progress](#) on 20 April 2021

Burning forests, high rates of unemployment and informal labor are dramatic expressions of the environmental and social devastation plaguing Brazil since Jair Bolsonaro took office in January 2019. To blame is the Brazilian president's radical program of [neoliberalization](#) aligned with support from a [neofascist](#) movement.

Between August 2018 and July 2019, nearly 200,000 fire [outbreaks](#) destroyed over 10,000 km² of forested land area.

The most prominent was the infamous "[Day of Fire](#)" in the Amazon when farmers, loggers, and businessmen burned the region of Novo Progresso. Other fires in the Pantanal region alone accounted for a nearly 200% [rise](#) in fire outbreaks.

Social devastation was equally alarming. The [unemployment rate](#) rose from 11.9% to 13.5% in the

first year of the Bolsonaro government. Informality defined as hiring without legal registration and thus without labor rights was made easier, and the numbers of the informally employed only dropped when the Covid-19 pandemic drove unregistered workers into the ranks of the unemployed.

Even for those in employment Bolsonaro's de-regulations [expanded](#) precarious working conditions. Regular employment is increasingly replaced by intermittent or on-call contracts, part-time contracts, outsourced labor, and falsely self-employed workers.

Accelerated neoliberalization

The radical neoliberal turn began before Bolsonaro took office. The impeachment of Worker's Party President Dilma Rousseff allowed the ascendance of her vice-president, Michel Temer to the Brazilian presidency in 2016, whose pro-business administration promoted private investment and cut-backs in public spending on pensions.

With the election of Bolsonaro to the presidency in 2019 however, the government embarked on an even more radicalized version of neoliberalization, that marks a quantitative and qualitative difference in the

devastation of Brazil, evident most recently in the highest number of Covid-19 cases in the world.

The environment and workers' rights are Bolsonaro's main targets. His administration widely opened the way for intensified capital accumulation and exploitation of labor and land. The Ministry of Labor and Employment was eliminated altogether, while the Ministry of Environment was subordinated to the Ministry of Agriculture, which itself has always been under the control of agribusiness interests.

Bolsonaro's version of neoliberalization is worsened by its neofascist elements, involving systematic attacks on democratic institutions, the repression of social movements and citizen participation, and the popularization of anti-democratic discourse, and the spread of fake news.

Business control of the environment

Bolsonaro changed the composition of the government's National Environment Council by reducing the [number of civil society representatives](#), and thus proportionately increasing the number of federal government representatives. The change makes it easier for the government to pursue its own interests and ignore citizen's movements.

Pro-agribusiness appointees to other federal environmental agencies such as the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMBio) have replaced environmentalists with military police officers and other conservative forces from the so-called "Beef, Bullet and Bible" coalition.

The legislative and institutional activities of agencies like ICMBio not only set back environmental protections, but also facilitated the repression of native peoples. While Bolsonaro tried to [shift the blame](#) for fire outbreaks to traditional peoples, the land laid barren by fire has been violently expropriated by agribusiness enterprises.

Other actions to put environmental policies under the control of business interests, some successful, others not, include gaining control over environmental licensing, [reducing the land area](#) covered by environmental protections, and halting the demarcation of lands reserved for indigenous and quilombolas (descendants of runaway slaves) peoples.

The results are alarming: the territorial area destroyed by fire, wood extraction, and mining has increased, deforestation and squatting have intensified. Hundreds of [pesticides](#) banned in other countries are in use. The number of [murdered](#) activists, especially indigenous peoples is growing. Budgets are reduced for [environmental inspections](#), and [fines](#) for violations of remaining protections suspended.

Bolsonaro has perpetuated a new anti-environmentalist narrative, which depicts the monitoring of standards as preposterous, being of concern only to an active minority who fail to recognize the good will of farmers, thereby undermining business and economic growth.

It is no surprise, that the number of [inspectors in Brazil's environmental agency IBAMA](#) was reduced by almost half since Bolsonaro took office (1,300 in 2010 to just under 700 in 2020).

Dismantling Labor Protections

A similar reduction is evident in the number of [labor inspectors](#), who compared to a decade ago, have been reduced by a third (from 2,935 in 2010 to 2,050 in 2020). Budgets allocated to implementation measures for tackling modern slavery were also slashed. Agribusiness aligned with other business interests to dismantle protections against forced labor by re-defining what counts as modern slavery under Brazilian law.

At the center of Bolsonaro's attack on labor was the *Law for Economic Freedom*. The law exempts companies with 20 employees or less from reporting

working hours. Without a record of working hours, labor inspectors are no longer able to check the payment of overtime wages, and firms can evade rules governing the length of the working day. As a result, workers in small firms are no longer able to dispute violations of working hour rights in court.

The Bolsonaro administration is now proposing the creation of new fixed-term employment contracts for young people, called *green* and *yellow contracts*, which would exempt employers from social security contributions. The already precarious employment conditions for Brazilian workers would be further reinforced if these contracts are enacted. For Bolsonaro, [informality](#) should be the normal form of labor relations for young workers and for everyone.

Pass the cattle

In 2020 as the death toll from the pandemic rose exponentially, Ricardo Salles, the Minister of the Environment advised his colleagues in a [ministerial meeting](#) to exploit the focus of citizens' attention on the pandemic in order to quietly "pass the cattle", a metaphor for the unnoticed abolishing of environmental regulations.

The Bolsonaro government has repeatedly resorted to a fictional trade-off between protecting the economy versus saving people's lives in order to justify its refusal to lock-down non-essential services during the Covid-19 crisis.

The depredation of natural resources and the undermining of labor rights go hand-in-hand in Bolsonaro's mix of neoliberal deregulation and neofascist violence. The devastation of human life in

the pandemic has become a new chance for Bolsonaro to advance the erosion of labor and land in Brazil.

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Read more

Andréia Galvão and José Marcos Nayme Novelli, "[Neoliberalismo exacerbado: devastação ambiental e degradação](#)," *Conference Proceedings: Democracia & Desenvolvimento*, 2020.

Andréia Galvão and Paula Marcelino, "[The Brazilian Union Movement in the Twenty-first Century: The PT governments, the Coup, and the Counterreforms](#)," *Latin American Perspectives*, 2019. [Available open-access in Portuguese](#).

José Marcos Nayme Novelli, "[Progress and Setbacks in the Neo-Developmentalist Agenda of Public Policy in Brazil](#)," *Bath papers in International Development and Wellbeing*, 2016

SOLIDARITY ECONOMY PROJECTS IN DIVERSE SOCIAL CONTEXTS

Session Organizers:

Melanie E BUSH
Adelphi University, USA

Withney SABINO
Associação Sócio Cultural Horizonte Azul,
Mozambique

David EMBRICK
University of Connecticut, USA

In this Invited Session presenters explored questions related to projects comprising the “solidarity economy”. For example, the impact of involvement in these initiatives on youth development; which types of structures of solidarity most align with deeply transformative practices; the relationship of these projects to political resistance; commonalities and distinctions with indigenous forms of associativism and the shaping of individual and collective narratives about the kind(s) of society(ies) that members strive to create.

We brought intergenerational (ages 25-65) feminist, scholar-activist, critical race and decolonial perspectives about contemporary initiatives and the possibilities they represent. We affirmed the centrality of interdisciplinarity in our analyses. Most presenters are involved in scholarly and community projects characterized by solidarity economy oriented practices such as cooperatives, mutual aid, etc.

We collectively considered how communities “be the change” structurally and through transformative social relations. We explored what principles and

practices most firmly embed solidarity and the common good in contemporary efforts aimed at radical social change. This session engaged participants and attendees in thinking about the *Challenges of the 21st Century: Democracy, Environment, Inequalities, Intersectionality* through a conversation of ideas and energies in action.

Presentations

Panelists shared excerpts from ethnographic research, and centered respondents’ voices in an analysis of the meaning and significance of the projects examined. Their comments provided a space to visualize knowledge created on the other side of the abyssal line (Santos 2014). Presenters demonstrated how communities navigate the challenges of meeting basic needs in different ways, utilizing resources at hand.

Drawing from Youth Studies, **Erika Licon** discussed the impact that solidarity economy organizations has on youth human development. She demonstrated how these projects provide safe physical spaces in which subaltern representations of youth selfhood are developed and expanded. Participants expressed that when you grow as a person, you also grow with the project in the sense of belonging. Being, belonging and becoming is transformative for the individual, the community and the collective. This influences their ideas about who they will be in the future. Participation satisfies their social, economic and emotional needs and develops them as environmentally conscious citizens. Participation expands youth subaltern representations of selfhood.

Withney Sabino (Mozambique) spoke of her experience with communities constantly challenged by displacement, environmental catastrophe and

armed conflict. Sabino explored how movements reinvent themselves to sustain their struggles outside traditional structures and bring a feminist organizing perspective. She describes how doing so involves challenging generational power relations within the feminist movement, because of tensions with and dependence on already established larger organizations. Associação Sócio Cultural Horizonte Azul (ASCHA) began their work by using social media tools, and in 2020 created a new funding movement called *aljada*, (allies) to support their initiatives. By doing so they shifted from dependence on formal funds and power structures to support activities such as COVID support, education, obtaining and distributing basic food, health and school supplies.

Through a feminist inquiry approach with the 'Capuchinhas' women's cooperative in Portugal, **Teresa Cunha** discussed how companionship, autonomy, freedom, and decision-making power are experienced in co-op members' lives. She counters the dichotomy between productive and reproductive work. Cunha establishes that all women's work is productive as it is the material and immaterial foundation of life. Cunha states that the sociological imagining of another world centers life and therefore women in an economy of desire that affirms generative practices.

In "Associativism in Traditional Communities", **Marilia Veronese** speaks of the living metaphor of suffering caused by coloniality and asserts that a major problem is of cognitive injustice. Veronese spoke of the long tradition of solidarity in Brazil, particularly among indigenous communities, Quilombos, artisans and fishermen who work cooperatively as a way of life. These communities' strength comes from traditional practices related to water, irrigation systems and seed banks that rid them of dependence on the state and the market. They also participate in social movements for example around housing, the autonomous

management of schools and in challenging binary gender relations. Through this work they engage a deeper participatory citizenship through social activism.

Examining the solidarity economy in the United States, **Melanie Bush** shared respondents' perspectives about two models: a time bank and a comprehensive project with a vision and program for reshaping social relations and ways to meet the needs of their community (Brattleboro Time Trade/Vermont; Cooperation Jackson/Mississippi). Bush stated that the characterization of these as "new" disregards historical examples of community-based efforts to meet needs, where formal structures either do not exist or are insufficient. What is new is the contemporary crisis of the modern world system. While short and long term goals can sometimes represent a tension, community building can be part of movement building making political education important. Race, class, gender and age dynamics play a significant role in the form and focus of these initiatives. Finally, Bush states "change" comes because people create it, not because those in power grant it.

Jean-Louis Laville asked why it is difficult for the solidarity economy to become a legitimate topic, noting the strong separation between social movement and alternative economies studies. He suggests that the liberal tradition presents history as a succession of steps and assimilating market economy to progress and a lack of consideration for the resources which according to Jean-Baptiste Say are not part of economic analysis. He asserts that neoliberalism emphasizes reference to competition and by definition, capitalist forms of organizing society. Laville proposes that to highlight the political dimension of solidarity economy we need international dialogue mostly south-north, rooted in the historical context.

This theme was noted throughout the session — that it is critical for the separation of solidarity economies, social movements and the academy to be bridged. Furthermore, the role of youth, intergenerationality, women and the most oppressed is central to the organization of these economic structures. A challenge is sustainability outside the market economy and the state, and meeting both immediate and long term needs. In this moment of

capitalist crisis, solidarity economy projects have a critical role to play. Research and analyses are essential.

References

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COMPARING “ELITE” UNDERSTANDING OF INEQUALITY

Session Organizers

Alice KROZER

University of Cambridge, UK

Katharina HECHT

London School of Economics, UK

An exciting development in the field of sociology has been a recent upsurge in studies concerning themselves with society’s upper echelons in terms of their economic, political, social or cultural status. Accordingly, the call for proposals to participate in our ISA 2021 panel on ‘Elite Perceptions of Inequality Compared’ received a great number of outstanding paper submissions. Thankfully, we were able to accommodate an international selection of papers due to the generous concession of an additional conference slot on behalf of the RC02 Committee. We arranged two panels; the first focused on the larger context of *Policy, Institutions and the State*, and the second on *Identity, Practices and the Legitimation of Wealth*.

Previous work on elite perceptions has highlighted the importance of meritocratic ideas of ‘hard work’ and talent, and of considering views towards inequalities of gender, ‘race’ and ethnicity, as presented on our panels at the ISA 2018 conference

in Toronto. To understand how these different dimensions of inequality influence elite perceptions in a cumulative and intersecting fashion, the aim of our sessions this time around was to move beyond the one-dimensional idea of privilege to understanding the web of privileges experienced and how they are perceived by members of the elite. Moreover, to implement successful poverty and inequality reduction policies, it is crucial to understand contextually embedded elite perceptions and the mechanisms of privilege accumulation in place. To that end, we asked our participants to relate current perceptions to the history of place in which ‘their’ respective elites find themselves in.

In this vein, **Elisa Reis** inaugurated the first panel with her presentation on the temporal dimension of Brazilian elites, exploring how they deal with negative externalities of social cohesion. Being one of the few scholars having conducted comparable interview series with elites periodically since the early 1990s, Reis is in a unique position to analyze changes in elite perceptions and their variations over time. Compared to a readily available discourse of meritocracy, the beginning of the pandemic brought about a strong feeling of social interdependence among the country’s wealthy. The policy challenge for a context as unequal as Brazil, she argued, lies in the question of how to maintain this notion of interdependence beyond the current crisis.

Having thus cast the scene for elites’ stances towards redistribution, **Graziella Moraes Silva** presented

her research on the controversial nature of cash transfers (CTs) in Brazil and South Africa, respectively – two of the world’s most unequal countries, both with significant CT programs. Based on hundreds of survey participants, she finds that the repertoires employed by elites regarding the meaning of “giving money to the poor” differs not only by country, but also between their political and economic subgroups.

The ensuing presentation by **Emilia Schaigorodsky** elaborated on this question of who ‘the elites’ actually are, besides being rich, extending the spatial comparison to Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay. Examining dozens of statements made by business chambers between 2016-2020, she concluded that elites justify their place in society in normative terms, perceiving themselves (to varying degrees) as “guardians” of the rest of society. Their perceived role of promoters of economic growth putting business first thus perpetuates inequality via the (outdated) discourse of “trickle-down economics”.

The final presentation of this panel, by **María Luisa Méndez** and **Modesto Gayo** closed in on the Chilean case and the socio-spatial trajectories of upper class participants, as well as their understanding of what being a “good citizen” entails. Mendez and Gayo observe a significant fragmentation with regards to cultural and political discourses mobilized in the qualitative accounts collected, allowing them to group participants into wealthy inheritors, ‘achievers’, and newcomers to the segment, respectively.

Complementing these findings of changing elite perceptions over time, as well as diverging discourses as to their purpose in society and political/redistribution views, **Alice Krozer** and **Katharina Hecht** shared the finding from their research that elites also rely on context-dependent narratives to account for their *origin*: for instance, elite narratives in Mexico utilise historic events like colonialism to explain and legitimise their privileges,

whereas in the UK elites rely on economic/market-based explanations. This finding connected the discussion to our second panel focusing on Identity, Practices and the Legitimation of Wealth.

Here, scholars discussed elite family relationships, inheritance and the legitimising role of philanthropy and meritocracy. **Jessica Sklair** discussed her research on elite Brazilian business families. She found that her participants perceived the preservation of privilege as a social responsibility, and being wealthy as a noble condition because one is ‘giving back’. Therefore, Sklair argued that for the families in her study, philanthropy justifies wealth accumulation.

In the following, **Elisabeth Schimpfoss** presented findings of her research of Russian multi-millionaires and billionaires. While her participants also legitimated their wealth by pointing to philanthropy and entrepreneurship, they additionally referred to ‘personality traits and intelligence’. Schimpfoss’s participants talked about their ‘strong genes’, ‘entrepreneurial spirit’ and ‘talent’ which was often traced back to the Russian intelligentsia.

Finally, **Katie Higgins** discussed her research on wealthy entrepreneurs in North-West England. She found that wealth managers and parents in wealthy families use money as an educational tool for heirs, by tying inheritance to ‘meritocratic’ achievements such as education or entrepreneurship. Higgins therefore argued that family wealth is a key pedagogical site in the families of her study.

Our two sessions thus brought together researchers who explored and compared the context-specific, spatially and historically embedded elements of elite perceptions, and how these fit into elites’ accounts of their own privileges. It was such a pleasure to host these panels. Many thanks to RC02 and Aaron Pitluck and Dustin Stoltz for their support with the organization of the sessions.

CORPORATE POWER, FOSSIL CAPITAL, CLIMATE CRISIS

Session Organizer

Bill CARROLL

University of Victoria, Canada

This session explored the intersections between (a) networks, structures and practices of capitalist class power (and resistance to it), as centred in large corporations; (b) the political economy of fossil capital as a way of life that has reached global scale; and (c) the accelerating climate crisis, whose urgency seems to be matched by its intractability at least within the strictures of capitalism itself.

In 'Extreme Extractivism and the Fossil Fuel Corporate Elite in Eastern Canada' **JP Sapinski** and **Darin Brooks** used a power structure approach to draw linkages between fossil capital corporations based in eastern Canada and the broader Canadian and global corporate elite, to map the structure of the fossil fuel industry at the national and transnational levels. They also traced corporate ownership relations to ascertain the constellation of financial interests in the sector within and outside of Canada. Finally, they examined how extreme carbon extractivist projects turn into flashpoints of contention where local communities mobilize to defend the land, air and water on which they depend, and join together to create a broad movement of resistance across the country and the world.

In 'Environmental Meaning of the Financial Turn: A Cross-National Study of the Finance-Economy-Environment Nexus' **Patrick Greiner**, **Julius McGee** and **Ethan Gibbons** explored the ramifications of financialization for the

environment-economy relationship, in a series of fixed effects regression analyses for 172 nations between 1960 and 2014. They found that although financialization decouples GDP per capita from CO₂ emissions per capita, no such decoupling occurs when economic activity attributable to manufacture is the criterion variable. Given the absolute rise in manufacturing activity during this period, these findings suggest that the ongoing pressure that economic growth places on the environment is not mitigated by financialization.

In 'Regime of Obstruction: Fossil Capital and the Construction of Hegemony in a Northern Petro-State' **William K. Carroll** reported on an interdisciplinary study of a regime of obstruction within contemporary Canada. Rooted in the political economy of fossil capitalism, and conjoined to a panoply of hegemonic practices that reach into civil and political society, the regime is driven by the quest for profit through the carbon extraction that continues to fuel capital accumulation globally. It combines several modalities of power – economic, political and cultural – operating at different scales to form an historical bloc supporting business-as-usual. The paper concluded with a brief consideration of prospects for crafting an alternative historical bloc around 'energy democracy', as a socially just escape route from impending climate catastrophe.

In 'Electric Car, the Social Production of a Green Innovation' **Rodrigo Wolffenbuttel** traced the innovation networks around three experiences of electric car implementation in Brazil: one relating to technological development, another dedicated to urban car-sharing and a third focused on monitoring the impacts of electric cars on the energy distribution system. The study was attuned to both the facilitation of technological innovation and the

regulation of relevant markets. Among the interesting findings was the observation that these networks were mobilized by outsiders to the established automobile industry in Brazil.

Although there was little time for discussion after these presentations, the session was successful in taking up Corporate Power, Fossil Capital and Climate Crisis from a number of angles.

LATIN AMERICAN STRUCTURALISM, ECLAC/CEPAL, AND ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY IN HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

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University of São Paulo, Brazil

Aaron PITLUCK
Illinois State University, USA

When ISA decided to hold its Forum in a Latin American country, we realized as RC-02 Program Co-Organizers that it would be perfect if we started exploring the theoretical contribution of ECLAC (the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean/CEPAL – Comisión Económica para América Latina y Caribe). Since its creation in 1948, ECLAC has developed a rich and seminal discourse encompassing the economic, social and political dimensions of development in this region. As a leading think tank, ECLAC has nourished generations of Latin American economists, social planners, and social scientists by not only hosting them in Santiago but also with collaborative intensive training programs throughout Latin America.

Our motivation in creating this invited session was an early excavation to better understand the influence of ECLAC and Latin American Structuralism on the origins of contemporary Latin American Economic Sociology. In addition, we hoped the session might examine ECLAC's relevance for contemporary Economic Sociology by considering theoretical repertoires associated with

ECLAC such as Latin American Structuralism, Dependency Theory, and Neo-structuralism.

The vivid debate in our session came from three different sources: the interplay of disciplines—economics, political sociology, public policy; the confluence of theoretical discussions and memoirs; and the cross-fertilization of insights coming from various generations of Latin American intellectuals.

We are grateful that three experts were able to join us in this exploratory session. **Miguel Torres**, the Editor in Chief of *Revista de CEPAL*, is a leading economist at ECLAC/CEPAL, who has been researching and extensively publishing on the contributions of its main intellectuals. **Maria Herminia Tavares de Almeida**, a leading political scientist in Brazilian academia, is a senior researcher at the Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning (CEBRAP) and a former Professor at the Institute of International Relations, University of São Paulo. **Elisa Kluger** is an associated researcher at the International Postdoctoral Program at the Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning (CEBRAP).

Miguel Torres, *Estructuralismo, Dependencia y Neoestructuralismo En El Siglo XXI*

Torres stated that ECLAC's intellectuals provided a foundation for Latin American and Caribbean "socioeconomics" for more than 70 years, based on the center-periphery theory of Raul Prebisch and the structural historical method. He suggests that Prebisch inaugurated a tradition that recovers the thought of José Carlos Mariátegui, who interpreted society through an original and autonomous

thought; this was the path that ECLAC tried to follow.

In his presentation, he revisited three key theoretical formulations from ECLAC intellectuals. Firstly, the structuralist theses of the first phase of ECLAC thought. Secondly, the so-called “dependency theory”, a derivation of the structuralist approach, especially from the center-periphery approach, associated with the structural historical method. Thirdly, and more extensively, the recent ideas of ECLAC, from the last 10 years. Those ideas departed from the structuralist approach of the 1990s, but expressed some changes from 2010 on, exploring more deeply the interplay between the regional context and the different dynamics that have characterized the global economy and society. The notion of “inclusive development” became a central axis in the proposals and recent documents, with significant advances on the issues of environmentally sustainable economy, and the inefficiency of inequality. More recently, the post-COVID context oriented the intellectuals toward exploring the changes in the regional productive matrix and the possibility of its move towards a more inclusive development.

Maria Herminia Tavares de Almeida, ECLAC and the Latin American Political Sociology in the 1960-70: Memoirs

Almeida reflected on the intellectual contributions of CEPAL, based on her own memories as a young researcher in Santiago de Chile in the 1970's. The city was indisputably the Latin American capital for the social sciences, and ECLAC was the core of an important group of institutions. In fact, Santiago hosted a large set of institutions representing the United Nations system, including CELADE (Latin American Center for Demography, 1957), ILPES (Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning, 1960), PREALC (Latin American and Caribbean Regional Program for Employment), FLACSO (Latin American School of Social Sciences,

1967) supported by UNESCO, and also Escolatina (School of Economics, at University of Chile 1967). That coexistence produced a very lively intellectual milieu, an important circulation of students and researchers, and legitimated the relevance of Latin American Studies.

Almeida also remembered that at this time, two macro theories dominated the intellectual environment: functionalist theories of modernization competing with Marxist theories of bourgeois democratic revolution and imperialist domination. Despite their theoretical differences, they shared the belief that there was no other development path for Latin American than the model of capitalist or socialist societies. In contrast to those universal explanations, ECLAC stated the originality and specificity of the economic change in Latin America, departing from its foundational manifesto (1949), the Prebisch Report. ECLAC's thought provided intellectuals with a theory of international trade and a theory of Latin American industrialization, side by side with an original, controversial and unorthodox theory of inflation.

This thought grounded the Latin American Sociology produced in the 1960's and early 1970's, and its search of specificities on social stratification, urbanization, labor markets, among other subjects. In the same vein, ECLAC inspired the emergence of a Latin American political sociology, focusing on the specificities of power structure, on populism and mass mobilization, on peasant resistance, and on authoritarianism. ECLAC's thought also developed a center-periphery theory of international relations that anticipated Immanuel Wallerstein's ideas.

In sum, the theoretical and methodological contributions of ECLAC developed some of the key theoretical tools of the contemporary era.

Elisa Kluger, The ECLAC-BNDES Center and the Building of a Generation of Intellectuals Engaged in Planning the Brazilian Development

Kluger continued the conversation on the history and intellectual production of ECLAC focusing on a different period and a diverse angle. Her paper, co-authored with Sergio Wanderley and Alexandre Barbosa, explores how the Economic Commission for Latin America (at this time, ECLA) created comparative national frameworks for analyses. Kluger's presentation highlighted the process of diffusion of ECLA's ideas and showed how the organization contributed largely to the training of economic experts in Latin America with its "Course on Problems of Economic Development".

She discussed how the specificities of the Brazilian context influenced the form of absorption of ECLA's ideas, leading to changes in the visions about the development problem of the experts that worked at the ECLA-BNDE Center, a short-lived partnership (1960-1967) with the Brazilian National

Bank for Economic Development/BNDES. Kluger emphasized how the circulation of ECLA's experts between the offices fostered the adoption of comparative frameworks for the studies of the development, stressing the need to understand the effects on the development patterns of the political and social diversity within the region.

Based on documents, newspaper stories and testimonies offered by ex-members of the Center, Kluger described its activities and retraced the processes of genesis, expansion, and closure of that partnership aimed to impact both the governmental spheres and the academic world, offering alternative training to the hegemony of neoclassical economics. Following the closing of the Center, her paper examines the effects of disbanding the Center's staff and the dissolution of international cooperation. The now dispersed community sought to build fortifications to defend ECLA's influence while at the same time critically engaging with and improving ECLA's earlier scholarship.

BOOK REVIEW

Please send book reviews to the Secretary and Newsletter Editor

***Poverty in Italy: Features and Drivers in a European Perspective* by Chiara Saraceno, David Benassi and Enrica Morlicchio, Policy Press, 2020.**

Reviewed by Antonella MEO
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From an early date, Italy was intensely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. As widely documented, it entered the Covid-19 emergency as one of the countries in Europe with an alarming incidence of poverty, high economic and social inequalities, strong imbalances and gaps of a different nature

(gender, generational, and territorial, to mention just a few). In a scenario marked by great uncertainty concerning the extent of the repercussions of the epidemic on employment and the loss of productive capacity, it is entirely plausible to imagine an amplification of inequalities among individuals, families and territories, and processes of impoverishment of the most vulnerable part of the population. The situation is even more worrying because the country had already suffered the increase in the poverty rate since the 2008 financial crisis even more than other European countries, due to the structural weakness of the Italian welfare state and the historically ineffective anti-poverty policies. In the historical series since 2005, Italy recorded a

record number of individuals below the absolute poverty line in 2017, a sign of drastic deterioration in living conditions.

In the current scenario, it is important to investigate the impact of the epidemic. The unprecedented emergency due to the new Coronavirus can be seen as an additional stress test, which enables one to understand how institutions, markets and society all work and change. However, the effects of the Covid crisis will be affected by the long-term structural features of the Italian economy and society.

By integrating effectively theoretical and empirical tools, this book represents a crucial contribution to the understanding of poverty in Italy. It provides in-depth analysis that explores how forced familialism, unbalanced gender arrangements, territorial cleavages and slow growth have rendered Italy vulnerable to the 2008 financial crisis and, now, to the new crisis.

The book analyses the Italian case as a specific example of a poverty pattern. More precisely, the authors have developed the concept of a poverty regime and placed it within an articulated and sturdy conceptual framework, which proves useful in examining the characteristics and evolution of poverty in other contexts, beyond the Italian case.

A poverty regime is defined as “*a specific combination of labour market conditions, the balance between public and private (family) responsibility in buffering against social risks, a gender division of labour within families and within society, and (gendered) social norms and cultural values*” (p.1). The regime approach guides a wide-ranging analysis, supported by recourse to national and international data, which focuses not on poverty in the strict sense but on its social construction through the mechanisms of its institutional management and specific modes of social regulation.

There are three main merits of the volume: taking a comparative, long-term, and structural perspective. The authors have elaborated a typology of the European contemporary poverty regimes, revisiting the analyses of Polanyi, Esping-Andersen, Gallie and Paugam, Castel, and Paugam. Poverty regimes are conceived as the outcome of specific patterns of interdependence (and misalignment) among four areas of social regulation: family and welfare arrangements, the role of non-governmental organizations and charities, and the functioning of both the economy and labour market.

The authors argue that the incidence of poverty and its composition in every regime depend on the specific combination and interaction of these factors over time and show how poverty regimes differ across European countries, according to the efficacy of their social regulation patterns in protecting against poverty.

Comparing Italy with other European countries, they have outlined the peculiar features of its poverty regime: labour market segmentation and high territorial differentiation in economic development, a strong gender division of labour, a strong geographic concentration of poverty and its high persistence, low employment of women and high youth unemployment, high incidence of the working poor and children’s poverty, a weak system of social protection, a fragmented unemployment protection system, inadequate child-linked social transfers, and the importance of charities and NGOs.

The book provides the analytical toolbox to understand how poverty is produced and reproduced over the long term. Cultivating a long-term perspective, it allows one to focus on the transformations of the phenomenon in Italy, from Italian unification in the mid-19th century to the years closest to us. It traces the historical roots of the Italian poverty regime, documenting the reasons for

high and persistent levels of poverty and the social groups most at risk of being poor, thus showing their continuity and changes. Living in the South, being the working poor and living in a large household, have remained persistent risk factors over time. The working poor turn out to be a constant of Italian poverty, even if their characteristics have changed.

An interesting in-depth insight concerns three particularly vulnerable social groups, partly overlapping: the working poor, and children and migrants, are the most affected by the 2008 crisis and represent the exemplary victims of the Italian welfare regime. The theme of the ambivalent role of the Italian family with respect to poverty is also illuminating, not only as a protective factor but also as a cause of poverty. Arguing about the “costs” (or downsides) of family solidarity, the authors have provided elements to revise the category of “integrated poverty” to which Paugam (2005) referred to Italy.

A broad perspective guides the analysis, not only temporally but also spatially. It is articulated on several levels, from the international one, to the national and regional ones, as well as down to the municipal level. In fact, urban poverty is addressed by investigating its characteristics, specific patterns of segregation and deprivation, in the 10 main Italian cities.

The book closes with a final chapter dedicated to the reconstruction of policies for combating poverty in Italy and to the recent introduction of a national minimum income scheme, although it is primarily focused on the social construction of poverty with a “regime approach”.

The book is of great interest to scholars and students interested in poverty and inequality, social policy regimes, and comparative social policy research.