



**2<sup>nd</sup> OXPO joint doctoral seminar**  
**“The Dynamics of Politics and Inequalities”**  
**May 25 – 26, 2011**

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Session 1: Class conflicts and distributive conflicts in Europe (Wednesday May 25, 2011)

**Stephen Fisher**

**Notes on the effects of the global recession on vote choice. European Parliament elections 2009 and the British General election 2010.**

The aim of the presentation is to consider the effects of the global recession on voting behaviour in Europe and Britain. One of the effects of the recession was an increase of unemployment, which is an indirect way to look at inequalities.

The background of the presentation is the global recession that started as a sub-prime/ mortgage crisis in 2007-2008. This financial crisis generated a 'credit crunch' which made it harder to borrow money. Many businesses suffered in this period which in turn led to a recession.

*Theoretical implications for elections:* Various stories can be told on how the consequences of the recession could affect elections.

1. This crisis was a 'crisis of capitalism', revealing that markets are not benign. This might lead people to desert parties that supported capitalist economy and create a move toward parties more critical, typically far-left parties.
2. The blame lies with governments who favour loose financial regulations. So governing parties should be punished in the ballot box. Elections should punish whoever is in government at the time.
3. This is a global financial crisis that started in the US. So European governments are not to blame, as they are victims of external events.
4. The literature on economic voting has an argument saying that different kinds of parties are responsible differently for different aspects of economy. Left or centre voters are more concerned with jobs and employment, they have different priorities than right-wing voters (Anderson, 1995).

*European Parliament elections results 2009:* The Party of European Socialists (PES) suffered most heavily as a group. The gainers were Greens, the European People's Party (EPP), Liberals (right to centre parties). Where unemployment went up most, left wing governments were mostly punished. The crisis of capitalism did not cause any big shift to the extreme left. But there was a tendency for the extreme right to do better where unemployment went up most. The far-right benefits disproportionately from defection from left-wing governments where unemployment went up most. On the whole, left governments were punished for rising unemployment, but not right-wing ones.

*British general election 2010:* 2010 was the lowest share of the votes for the Labour since 1945, in

terms of levels of party support. Their only saving grace was that the system is so biased towards them that they got a few more seats.

Most of the changes in the opinion polls between 2005 and 2010 are explained not by the impact of the recession but by political events along the way. In May-June 2007, two events explain the heavy decrease in G. Brown's popularity. They are the Northernrock run up and the Conservatives' declaration according to which they would cut inheritance taxes. The drop in May 2009 is explained by the MPs' expenses crisis. However, the boost in September 2008 is due to the financial crisis. Labour's popularity went up because it asserted its leadership. In early May 2010, the bettering of economic circumstances explains the rise of the Labour's popularity. The main point here is that it is not a simple story. In the short run, the crisis was good for Brown and the Labour.

When looking at the elections at the constituency level, it appears that the more unemployment went up, the worse Labour did. The Labour did worse where the recession hit hardest and was disproportionately impacted where voters were routine manual workers. It is not clear that the Tories did not benefit much from that pattern but the British National Party (BNP) clearly did. Besides, the Labour did better and Conservatives worse in areas with more public sector workers.

*Conclusion:* Both the 2009 European elections and the 2010 British elections tell a story of left-wing government being punished for economic recession and the extreme-right as key, if not the only, beneficiaries.

## **Discussion:**

### *On the methodology*

Marie Duru-Bellat = Stephen Fisher is using not only the interpretation of macro-level explanations (the global mood of all voters) but also impact of individual behaviour (unemployed voters, public sector voters). So there are two levels of explanations. Is it possible to assess the part played by both levels?

Stephen Fisher: This presentation deals with the relationship between unemployment and election changes. Unemployment is primarily an indicator of how difficult things are in the local economy. Some contextual variables are thus created by aggregating the individual level.

### *On left-wing parties disaffection*

Antoine Jardin: Right-wing governments are not blamed as much because their policies are not going in the opposite direction as what they usually do. Left-wing parties are blamed because they are implementing what right-wing parties are usually doing (economic *rigueur*). Spain is a good example. It is not social policies that are implemented to solve the economic issues.

Stephen Fisher: If this is right, then the British case is somehow specific. Before the 1997 election, the (New) Labour had said they would have conservative economic policies, and were elected anyway. Then the Labour had the same attitude in 2005 and got re-elected. It seems that left-wing voters were willing to go along with this policy as long as the economy was growing. But then, the Labour was punished when there was recession.

Hanna Schwander: How did peripheral parties benefit or not from the crisis? Why does the radical right benefit from the crisis but not far-left parties?

Stephen Fisher: In Britain, far-left parties have disappeared pretty much. They are very tiny and lack credible leadership. They seem to have an ideology that, even post-crisis, was unattractive to voters. France is the main case with remaining strong far left candidates. And Europe-wide, there was no "Bolshevik" response as in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Nonna Mayer: What about abstention? What is the effect of the recession on electoral turnout?

Stephen Fisher: There was no association between unemployment change and abstention in the constituency level data in Britain.

Tak Wing Chan: Could you elaborate on the idea that bad unemployment rates are worse for left-wing government parties? Are we talking about a relative comparison? Does it apply to all groups in

the electorate?

Stephen Fisher: There are two main arguments. The 1<sup>st</sup> is about competence. Social-democratic parties are themselves more concerned with unemployment than they are by inflation. Therefore they sell themselves as the party who deals with unemployment and creates jobs. That's their competence. If they fail in that competence they get punished. Moreover, when voters are concerned by an issue and the governments fail to address this issue, then they punish them, or they stop voting. The 2<sup>nd</sup> argument suggests that left-wing party supporters are the most disappointed by the rise in unemployment. It is a relative effect: right-wing governments are less punished, rather than they gain more from the situation.

*On Europe – US comparison*

Pamela Irwin: Is it possible to extrapolate these findings to the US?

Nathan Cisneros: There is no Labour party in the US. The underlying mechanism is that voters who form the base of left or right parties have particular expectations on particular issues. If those expectations are not matched, then they punish. Regarding European elections results, why should we assume that the same mechanisms are applying to all European countries?

Stephen Fisher: In the US, even though strictly speaking Democrats are not a social-democratic party in the European sense, it is increasingly the case that Republicans are like conservatives, and Democrats would be more in favour of redistribution. On the European side: the presentation is about voters sending signals to their national parties about national politics. There is a literature on European elections as a “second order election”. In second-order elections, voters are likely to desert big parties to small interests parties and voters protest against governments. Basically all governments suffered. The extent of the anti-government protest depends on national economic circumstances and national politics.

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## **Hanna Schwander**

### **Explaining Welfare Preferences in dualized Societies**

*Written with Silja Hausermann*

This presentation deals with the dualization in European societies and preferences for redistribution between outsiders and insiders. The dualization of the labour market implies new forms of social-economic inequalities.

*The dualization of West European societies*

In the last 30 years, we moved from an industrial golden age to a post-industrial employment equilibrium. This post-industrial equilibrium meant a change in labour markets (tertiarisation, feminisation of the workforce, education upgrading); a change in family patterns (less stable); the end of the expansion of the welfare state and a form of retrenchment of this welfare state. This led to a growing share of atypical employment (long term unemployment, part-time employment, temporary work, pseudo self employment). Because the welfare state was designed to cover industrial risks, this atypical employment leads to particular risks of welfare and income losses. So we have not only a dualization of the labour market but also a dualization of welfare situations.

*Welfare state preferences: what do insiders and outsiders want?*

How do insiders' and outsiders' welfare state preferences differ?

Insiders are fully integrated in the labour market. So they would be more in favour of the “equivalence principle” (meaning that if you pay in during your whole worklife you will have a lot from the state in return). Outsiders are more in favour of a redistribution of opportunities and resources. The first hypothesis is that insiders favour the equivalence principle, while outsiders want a redistribution of opportunities and resources.

Individuals' earning power is determined by education. To be high skilled is linked to have a high potential earning power. High-skilled outsiders would be less in favour of redistribution than low-skilled outsiders. The second hypothesis is that the labour market risk interact with potential earning power (education).

### *Who are the outsiders?*

Labour market outsiders are those individuals who incur a particular high risk of being in an atypical employment during their worklife. Outsiders are thus defined by their risk profile. How to measure this risk? The idea is to find out the members of those social groups – defined by class, gender, age – who are typically affected by atypical employment in a particular welfare regime. Then there is a comparison of the group-specific rate of unemployment and atypical employment with the average rate in the total workforce. If the rate of unemployment and atypical employment in a specific group is significantly higher than for the total workforce, then individuals belonging to this group will have a higher risk of becoming an outsider.

### *Results*

Outsiders have a stronger preference than insiders for income redistribution, publicly supported job creation, as well as publicly funded childcare services. This divide prevails among all outsiders when it comes to income redistribution, whereas it applies mostly (in the case of job creation programs) or exclusively (in the case of childcare services) to more highly skilled respondents. Insiders, by contrast, are more favourable than outsiders to social insurance and performance-related income differences. The size of the divide depends on the degree of education: for social insurance, an insider/outsider divide only appears among the more highly skilled, whereas for the liberal market model, the same divide holds throughout the workforce and simply becomes stronger with education. Regarding regime differences, the insider/outsider divide is significant in all regimes but most pronounced in the continental regime. The insider/outsider divide is also marked in the Nordic welfare states. Considering the fact that dualization is less distinct in the Nordic regimes, this comes as a surprise.

### **Discussion:**

#### *On the improvement / critics / changes in the model*

Stephen Fisher (discussant): The idea that people's policy preferences are influenced by the position in the labour market is important. Interests affect political preferences and vote choices. However, would it be possible to trace the process from policy preferences to vote choices? Researchers usually get lost at the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage, that is: which party is best for child care, for social investment, etc. There is a constraint on one level: the presentation dealt with a dualized society – but not everyone is in one or the other category. Society is not fully dualized. What is important is the categorization of outsiders and insiders. Group risk of part time work or fixed term contract or unemployment, depends on age, gender and class. When you calculate those different risks, there is quite a complicated relationship between these three variables. When classifying in two categories (insider, outsider), results are smoothed out. Some insiders are very much in the inside, some insiders are less inside ... similarly for outsiders. We're not clearly in a dualized system.

On the theoretical side, when it comes to modelling preferences for different policies, the presentation neglected some variables. For instance, the model about child care does not include whether you have children or not. Another variable that occurs could be whether you are working for a large firm or a small firm. And whether or not you are in the public or private sector would affect preferences. It also depends on where you live: young academics are outsiders in France, but are insiders in Britain. Moreover, the risk of unemployment is important to understand preferences, but part-time employment is not so important. The risk of unemployment ought to be the best predictor. But by pushing them together, you might be muddying the waters. When it comes to child care, lots of would be parents to do not expect to be parents and only when they do become parents,

then they think about child care. There is a lack of planning ahead. This would mean that preferences are not so stable. More interesting models of these preferences would be produced with the sources of interest separated more carefully. Boundaries between insiders and outsiders are more fluid than postulated.

Hanna Schwander: There is a distinction between low-skilled and high-skilled individuals to try to improve the binary distinction. It's been taken into account.

Florent Gougou: You should not necessarily use a continuous variable to measure the insider/outsider divide. It depends on the question. If your interest is in the political potential as a mobilization for groups, then parties don't talk to percentages of groups, but the parties speak to groups. You're not an 80% outsider. You're either outsider or insider. If you move to political mobilization, then a dummy variable is better. Parties think in categories. This is a political scientist's view rather than a sociologist's view.

Marie Duru-Bellat: You take into account education in the model, in which already the fact of being an insider/outsider depends on income. What role can education play? Income is controlled by education, but in the model both play into being an outsider.

Hanna Schwander: Education means something different than income. While income means the actual earning, the level of education determines the earning potential but not necessarily a higher actual income. An individual's position in a post-industrial labour market is strongly determined by education. Higher educated individuals have the possibilities to gain a sufficient income through labour market participation while low skilled people don't. Your position is more advanced. Income is the actual income which you have at the end of the month. Education is more like an income potential. Future possibilities to earn an income should be greater than for someone who has lower education. But this is true if you enter the labour market. Otherwise, you cannot realize your income potential. It is a relevant factor in the *potential income*.

#### *On the role of family in the insider / outsider classification*

Tak Wing Chan: When thinking about insider and outsider, another factor is family. How precarious you are is not just an individual matter, but also a familial matter. For some countries you want to think about how young people stay with their parents – security comes from the household. See in Spain or Italy, for a lot of young people, the family does a lot for them. For a young person with middle-class parents, does it make a difference in terms of your policy preference? And the other way around, when talking about people in their 40s with a secure job: do they have young children very dependent on them, does it affect their policy preference?

Hanna Schwander: The point about families is often highlighted. It is true that families are an important unit for economic security. But divorce rates go up to 60 percent, meaning that families are less stable. Still, control variables were included in the model such as the question “if someone lives in a stable relationship”. But being a parent could actually make a difference. In some countries, young people who are not fully integrated in the labour market tend to live with their parents. But the interest to have a safer job and be independent is still here.

#### *On welfare state regimes differences*

Nonna Mayer: How many are the outsiders in the different welfare state systems? Is their proportion different in the continental system, southern system, etc.? Aren't we seeing more and more hybrid regimes? Does it still make sense to oppose so clearly those different regimes?

Hanna Schwander: The number of outsiders varies according to the regimes. We do have hybrid regimes today, strong different models don't hold any more. The operationalization was calculated for country average and regime average. For instance, the French case resembles more to the southern regime. Overall, the big analysis does not change that much. So the paper did not decide if the regimes are so relevant for preferences.

#### *On the globalization winners & losers literature*

Nonna Mayer: How do you articulate your work with the “globalization losers” literature? Is it also

a duality issue?

Hanna Schwander: The globalization loser and winner discussion is also about modernization. Outsiders lose the modernization, but in a different way. In the globalization literature, if you have a high education automatically you are a winner because it gives you the mobility. In the outsider discussion, you can be high skilled but still an outsider. So globalization winners/losers and insider-outsider literatures do not deal with the same people.

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## Florent Gougou

### **Cleavage politics, economic crisis and working-class voting The Case of France**

#### *Elements of context*

Since 2007, the French party system is under stress. In 1984, we entered a new period in the French electoral history. It was the breakthrough of the National Front (*Front National*, FN). And a new structure of competition emerged: each majority was punished in the next national election and lost power each time. 2007 was the collapse of this electoral order, with a sudden decline of the FN, a rise of an independent centre (distinct from the moderate right). Moreover, the right-wing won two times in a row (2002 and 2007), for the first time since the 1970s.

Since 2007, there has almost been one election per year: municipal elections in 2008, European in 2009, regional in 2010, departmental in 2011. Each time the right wing coalition has been strongly punished, before and after the crisis. But there exists instability in the current political pattern, basically at two locations in the political space. Firstly, the extreme-right is reviving since 2009, and there is a strong competition in the centre between the former centre-right and the green parties.

French politics are now in an era characterized by competition on what issues to discuss, to bring a new agenda and by a change in the rules of the competition between parties. With the crisis, the failure of the neoliberal system opens an opportunity for left wing parties to get hold of the agenda.

The average unemployment in France was 7.4% in 2008, 9.1% in 2009. But among manual workers the figures were 10.2% in 2008 and 13.2% in 2009; and among unskilled workers it went from 15.4% in 2008 to 20.8% in 2009. This leads to two hypotheses: 1. with the crisis, manual workers would want more redistributive policies and favour left-wing parties, in particular extreme left-parties which tend to favour an anti-capitalist agenda. 2. manual workers would favour extreme right parties, because the crisis is a globalized crisis and means the failure of the globalized economy, and the FN wishes to go back to a national self-sustained economy.

#### *Dealignment and realignment*

Manual workers tend to lose traditional linkages with left-wing parties. No more difference between manual workers and the whole electorate since 2007. At the end of the period, de-alignment means that manual workers do not any longer have any specific preference for left wing parties. This de-alignment is mainly due to generational replacement. When cohorts born after the 1980s enter the electorate, they tend to favour less the left-wing parties than the previous generation. On the other hand, there is a realignment within the rightist working class: the working class tends to favour more the extreme-right than the moderate right in comparison to the whole electorate. The generational replacement is again an explanation: each new generation tends to favour more the extreme right than the previous one.

#### *Working-class constituencies: electoral results 2007 – 2010*

3 types of constituencies can be determined: leftist constituencies (1); new rightist constituencies (2); rightist constituencies (3). The aim is to distinguish between big categories or big types and look at electoral results to identify typical patterns. The results cannot be generalized to the whole working class. Only the most striking examples are presented.

In the 2009 European elections, the de-alignment is confirmed. The main picture is that manual workers do not vote more than the whole electorate for left-wing parties. There was no revival for the left wing parties after the crisis. But there was a revival of the extreme-right since the European election in 2009, and confirmed in 2010 and 2011.

Left-wing constituencies can be divided in two types: socialist and communist ones. In communist constituencies, there is no clear trend, no difference in left-wing voting before and after the crisis. However, in socialist constituencies the 2009 European elections show a distrust after the crisis. The working-class experienced a distrust in the Parti Socialiste (PS) after the economic crisis. Regarding the extreme-left, in leftist constituencies, there was no particular shift towards or from the extreme-left parties.

When looking at extreme-right voting, leftist constituencies tend to favour less the extreme-right than whole France. But for new rightist and rightist constituencies, you have different trends. In Type 2 constituencies (newly rightist ones), there is a gradual surge of the extreme right since 1988. In Type 3 constituencies (old rightist ones), the breakthrough of the extreme-right was already achieved in 1988. In Type 3 constituencies there is a strong decline of the extreme-right in the 2007 presidential elections whereas in Type 2 constituencies, Jean-Marie Le Pen could resist.

### **Discussion:**

#### *On generational replacement*

Stephen Fisher (discussant): The difference is not so much about generation replacement but about different elections. The sample size for generational cohorts seems limited to generate significant results. How would the result look like when the cohort replacement is taken out?

Florent Gougou: The cohort replacement effect could not be sufficient enough to explain what's going on. However, within the working class, generation replacement goes faster than in other social groups, because manual workers don't leave as long. So the effect of generation replacement may be stronger than in other social groups.

#### *On the constituency typology*

Stephen Fisher: Constituencies are categorized according to their voting history. But there is no evidence that their voting history affects how they respond to the crisis. Why are you creating categories rather than measuring continuous variables? Why are you picking up examples rather than analysing all constituencies? It would be easier if you saw all the data being analysed. It is not clear why the crisis matters differently in new rightist constituencies and old rightist ones. How is it possible to separate out the effects of the crisis from other effects that may affect the parties over time? The key story about 2007 is the shock of 2002, which led to people being scared of having extreme-right again on the second round. And Marine Le Pen is also part of the story for the revival of the FN. So distinguishing the effects of the crisis from other factors such as leadership are difficult to analyse.

Florent Gougou: We are talking about different perspectives and the way we analyse electoral results. If we use all constituencies, it's 3000 cantons and 36000 cities as a whole. The perspective is that there are so many factors that can explain electoral returns (as in the 2009 European elections, the political offer is so different from one constituency to another, all parties do not present a candidate in all constituencies) – you can show other things. The presentation did not mean to find general trends, but typical trends in typical constituencies that could in turn become ideal-types. The typology was constructed to show long term trends, and not just post-crisis changes. In the end, there is just one effect in leftist constituencies, the difference between communist or socialist one. It's the only group of constituencies where there is a clear effect of the crisis. For the extreme-right, the revival of the FN was not linked to the crisis. Both in new and old rightist constituencies, there is a rise of the extreme-right, but with a time difference.

#### *On the working-class as different sub-groups*

Hanna Schwander: Do you consider the working-class as an entity or do you see different segments

affected differently by the crisis? Are both manual workers and unskilled workers losers of the globalization? Both categories suffer from the rise of unemployment. Both are losers of the economic crisis. Is there a possibility to specify the hypothesis more and theorise more? Why would some parts of the working-class react differently than before?

Florent Gougou: There is no data yet to specify sub-groups, it is not possible to distinguish between constituencies where there were more skilled or unskilled workers.

#### *On the de-alignment historical trend*

Antoine Jardin: On the first part of the paper, you explain how the working class is moving away from the left towards the extreme right. 2002 was when the divide between the left-wing and the working-class was clear. In 2007, Sarkozy found a way to attract working-class voters. Those are different movements, there was a de-alignment from 1967 to 2002 and a second period between 2002 and 2012. This second period shows a new political attitude of the working-class moving back and forth between traditional right and far right.

Florent Gougou: The two dynamics are combined. The de-alignment clearly began in the late 1970s until the early 1990s. In 1993, there was already a divide between left parties and working class.

Another story, which is under way now, and began in the middle of the 1980s, is the realignment within the rightist working class electorate. It was already done in the late 1980s, and then it stabilized from 2002 onwards. Then a rupture occurred in 2007, and there was strong surge in the extreme-right in 2009. What happened took place within the rightist working class.

#### *On economic versus cultural issues*

Stephen Fisher: Do cultural issues play for the rise in extreme-right party? It is rather it's an economic threat issue, like immigration. In Britain, the economic threat is important: the government was responsible for substantially rising immigration. That did seem to reduce wages and increase wage competition amongst lower skilled workers in Britain.

Florent Gougou: Economic and cultural issues are closely linked. The point is that the financial crisis means economic threat, unemployment, but it's also linked to cultural issues (denationalization, national identity). Both are linked and hard to distinguish.

Nonna Mayer: The FN tells about giving jobs to the French nationals. But this does not explain the vote for the FN. This is not merely about economic threats. There are 3 hypotheses: 1. the working-class support for the extreme-right comes from an economic threat; 2. it's an issue of identity; 3. it's because of a political and social lack of integration. In the end, it's the cultural threat that matters. Of course, it's often a mix of economics and culture. But culture comes first. It's not the economic recession per se, but look at the way Nicolas Sarkozy put "national identity" at the heart of the debate: the rise of the FN comes in 2010, not in 2008 and 2009.

Pam Irwin: What about the rise of the BNP in the UK. Would the cultural element also play in the BNP rise, particularly in the industrial heartland in the UK?

Nonna Mayer: This is all over Europe, but the BNP is impeded in the UK due to the electoral system. However, the "Defence league", even if not a political party, is also on this cultural issue.

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Session 2: Inequalities and politics outside Europe (Thursday May 26, 2011)

### **Michele Lamont**

#### **The place of culture in understanding poverty.**

The field of poverty in the US is dominated by demographers and economics. However, cultural sociologists highlight the cultural world inhabited by the poor, how they see their situation and their strategies to cope with tough situations. How the poor understand their world is crucial for policy-making.

The “successful societies project” deals with several issues. How we can mobilize the conceptual tools of sociology to complexify how people think about health and inequality. How can we compare societies based on their “success”? The least ethnocentric measures are infant mortality, life expectancy, etc. How do culture and institutions affect health, what are the capabilities individual and groups have to face the challenges they encounter? Culture and institutions play a role as buffers, parachutes to lessen the impact of poverty and inequalities on individuals. Canada has evolved policy tools in cultural representation of the community that valorises multiculturalism. There is a huge difference between the Canadian society and a society where the existence of racism is not acknowledged, and where immigrants are seen as a problem and assimilation is supposed to be automatic.

Another project was social resilience in the age of neoliberalism. What are the challenges that come with neoliberalism? What are the protective blankets against neoliberalism? However, the project looks at neoliberalism not only how it constrains people's life but also how it empowers them. For instance in China, India and South Africa respondents love neoliberalism, saying it gives them competition opportunities so that they can demonstrate their worth. But on the bad side, neoliberalism destroys other things such as morality. “Social resilience” focuses on the tools provided to groups that enable them to respond to challenges.

Both projects are tied. One of the key questions in using culture for understanding poverty is how people are able to imagine alternatives. How do they project possible selves to the future based on what they see around them? What are the collective imaginaries society makes available to them? In the US, there's the American Dream but there are few alternatives.

How do US workers understand the place of solidarity in the society? White workers understood solidarity in the framework of the disciplined self (solidarity in moral terms: if you pay your bills, take care of your kids, etc.) Black workers showed more empathy towards the poor. In France, there is lots of solidarity, strong networks, etc. These are the results of a survey conducted in 1992. In France, there were strong boundaries towards Muslim immigrants but not so much towards the poor and black. In the US in contrast, there were very strong boundaries towards the poor and black, for their supposed moral failing (lack of discipline self), but there were not so much boundaries towards immigrants if they tried to pursue the American dream. The question is: what are the templates of worth that prevail in a society?

How does culture matter for the understanding of poverty? There are two situations.

1. The colours of poverty. The poor in the US are diverse, so there are different frames people use to perceive their environment. Being or not in a family or in a network leads people to produce or not collective efficacy. The most important tool is culture as repertoire. Sociologist should stop seeing culture as a fog in which we all live. This is replaced by focus on meaning-making. Instead of thinking about culture as what you learn on your mother's knees, you see culture as a repertoire to make sense of people's action. It's a supply side approach. For instance, economic values are more readily available in the US than in France. Money makes people equal in the US, but not in France, where it's more the idea that human nature makes us equal. As a consequence, you find more solidarity in France than in the US. French workers still talk about solidarity because their culture repertoire gives them solidarity more easily (values of republicanism, Catholicism, etc., that don't exist in the US).

2. What are boundaries? Meaning: do we take the poor as part of our group or not. What's ahead of us is the issue of integration. For instance, we can get demographers to think more about sexual risk by using these cultural tools. How do low income young men decide to sleep around or not? It comes down to the boundaries they draw between the women they are ready to “wife up” and those they call “stunt”. These young men have risky sexual behaviours because their horizons of possible life are very limited. They think they will die soon so they do not mind engaging in risky sex life behaviour. So what matters is how they see life and death and the fact that they live in an environment where there is a lot of distrust. So if you have explanations that are overly mechanistic, they are less empirically correct. Culture matters.

## **Discussion:**

### *On the level of analysis*

Tak Wing Chan: On what level do we speak of heterogeneity? On a between country level? A problem when you read cultural sociology is that scholars speak at one level of comparison, but it's not clear where do we think the major contrast is.

Michèle Lamont: The intuition is that research is always comparison because that's how we theorize. In cultural sociology, some people study the creation of identity, of processes. The analytical level reaches the whole palette.

### *On the economists / sociologists divide*

Tak Wing Chan: How to confront economists? If we were to be really persuasive as cultural sociologists, we should be able to tell economists in what ways our data can say that their starting assumptions are wrong, that the way we usually think about problems

Michèle Lamont: If we want to be persuasive towards economists, we'll have to structure our work to make them believe our work. Otherwise they'll say, "You are just telling nice stories". Yet storytelling might be essential when it comes to describing processes of social changes, when it points to path dependency for instance. Multiple regression also presumes a conception of reality that can be deemed limited. Disciplines excel at different things: sociologist answer questions that economist cannot start touching (such as social processes). It's more about demonstrating the added value of a theory compared to other theories. It is more important to develop new problems that have been ignored before, rather than showing that an already existing theory is wrong.

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## **Pamela Irwin**

### **Older single women and the risk of homelessness – the recession, inequalities and politics in rural Australia**

There is an increasing recognition of the risk of homelessness in older single women. Not a lot of research is done about this particular group in rural areas.

### *Inequalities relating to elderly, women, rural & remote areas*

There is no set agreement on the definition of homelessness. It depends on the country and the type of literature. In Europe, homelessness deals with precariously housed individuals, meaning those at a high risk of becoming homeless. In the US, homelessness addresses people literally homeless. In Australia, there are 3 distinctions, between primary (no conventional housing), secondary (emergency accommodation or pensions) and tertiary (no home, living with friends) homelessness. So there are variations in estimating the prevalence of homelessness due to the different definitions. Do we refer to people who are on the streets? Who are in their cars? Who are moving in and out of homeless context? There is an underestimation in survey data, probably due to the difficulty to find these people. On the other hand, there is a perception that social services and support agencies on the contrary overestimate the numbers.

### *Homelessness as a social construct*

The image of homelessness has been traditionally identified with alcoholic men who sleep on the streets. This has now changed. Currently, homelessness is perceived as a multiple social exclusion, with many causes. For example, in Australia, one of the main reasons for homelessness is gambling. The new homeless are youth, families, elderly, women, marginalised, ethnic and migrant groups, rural residents.

### *Homelessness and inequalities*

Regarding the group of older women, there is a cascade of vulnerability, meaning that different factors interact and build an often downwards spiral. Characteristics for these older single women are social isolation and loneliness. Older women live longer but also suffer more ill health. These factors may be associated with the breakdown of social networks, estranged family relations, and the absence of a close or meaningful personal relationship.

Evidence of gender bias exists in the literature. One of the most glaring is a stereotype of older women as 'bag ladies'. Homeless women tend not to be excused for their situation like men are. Many older women display resilience in term of dealing with or negotiating years of domestic abuse and violence. Women seek support internally, from family and friends, before they resort to accessing agency services, whereas men seem to be more willing to seek help a lot earlier. There is also a difference in why women leave relationship – often to escape abuse and violence, whereas for men it's often a result of gambling, alcoholism, substance abuse.

There's also an age difference. Visible homelessness is usually associated with younger women, but homelessness in older single women is often invisible and hidden and related to a sudden loss. Older women are more creative in being discreet: they nap in during the day in public places, instead of sleeping at night when it's more dangerous.

In rural and remote areas, there is also an invisible poverty. It's difficult to count homelessness and poverty in rural areas because it is very dispersed and difficult to cluster statistically. There's a paucity of services, particularly in homelessness services. What's more significant is the cultural invisibility related to a romanticized notion of rural life and a notion of community belonging. Running alongside this, in terms of homelessness, often the causality is more individualistic. There is more blame and shame associated in being homeless especially if you have been in a rural community for many years.

### *Housing policies in Australia*

The recession (housing boom crunch bust) happened also in Australia. There is a strong movement to try and do something about homelessness in Australia, with an emphasis on younger people and families. But older groups are also on the policy horizons. The 50 years old limit fits an older profile, due to health and poverty issues. But it does not fit in the general policy recognition of what is considered older. With older women, there is a literature about the stoic image of older women “keeping calm and carrying on”. This has particular relevance to Australia, where recently many parts of the country have experienced droughts and flood.

### **Discussion:**

Michèle Lamont: The main question is to think about what are the contributions or writings about homelessness that you would locate your own contribution in relation to. Try to read more broadly on rural poverty. What are the distinctive characteristics of being poor in a rural context? Are there more problems with relocating? What about isolation in a weak social network? Aim at thinking comparatively and theorizing.

Nonna Mayer: Have a look at the literature of the “*non-recours au droit*” (non take-up of social rights and public services). How people don't apply for the rights they have? There is a notion of shame and social stigma. There are surveys on homeless, via associations who work on the field.

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### **Malvika Maheshwari**

#### **Expression of artists in India and nationalism. Craftsmen in India: problems they face and resistance.**

#### *Evolution of the craftsmen's position in the Indian society*

Thirty years ago, craftsmen were seen as naïve, innocent, close to nature, living in rural areas. The

advent of modernization was said to threaten their way of life. So policies were implemented aimed at preserving craftsmen as relics of the past. In the 1980s, due to the consumer-oriented society, there has been a tendency towards the degradation of craftsmen life. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was no intervention at all towards craftsmen, they were neglected. Independence in 1947 was turning point and craftsmen were seen as relics of the past. By the 1980s a small group of art historians and sociologists, for the 1<sup>st</sup> time looked at the contemporaneity of craftsmen. They found it also important to look at craftsmen's reaction to modernization. This led to an exhibition the craftsmen's work.

### *Issues at stake*

There are issues of cast, poverty (lack of education, rural upbringing) as well as the issue of the rise of Hindu nationalism in the early 1990s. What has it done to craftsmen? Traditionally, craftsmen used unclothed representations of gods. With the rise of the Hindu nationalists, craftsmen have been physically attacked, government subsidies have been cancelled, etc. A 4<sup>th</sup> issue is that some craftsmen have migrated to urban areas and cities. They also want to explore urban medium and occupy galleries usually reserved to modern artists. Craftsmen are actually fighting the identity imposed on them of being past, rural people.

### *The Delhi Museum*

One of the most important government interventions for craftsmen was the creation of a craft museum, set up in Delhi in the early 1980s. This museum stores the masterpieces, and invites craftsmen to Delhi. The visitor sees the craftsman making its work, which leads to social interaction, trade. These are the ways in which the urban audience interacts with craftsmen. However, it's in a way replicating the colonial relation with the native. They are seen as relics of the old world. It limits craftsmen to this identity. Governmental policies towards craftsmen have been dealing with these conflicting problems: one the one hand how to improve their life, how to bring them to urban status? And on the other hand how to preserve the areas in which they work and how they work? So while the museums uplift craftsmen, it still perpetuates their identity of being past and rural.

### *Hindu nationalists' hostility towards craftsmen*

There has been a big boom for the craftsmen as tourists buy their production. This again perpetuates the fascination for the crafts. The art market is creating a new bubble around the crafts, prices are increasing. In parallel, this brings media attention onto the crafts and in turn crafts caught the attention of Hindu nationalists. Why do Hindu nationalist groups target the craftsmen? Because the foreigners and rich Indians started buying their nude paintings. So the renewed attention on craftsmen brought onto them attacks of nationalists. Other events can explain these attacks. The craft Museum started serving non-vegetarian meals in the Museum restaurant, and it once served alcohol to visiting diplomats. Attacks manifested themselves for instance by breaking the craftsmen's instruments and work. Craftsmen are poor people so if you break their instruments, you basically take their life away. Moreover, a painting for instance takes two months to make, so tearing the painting takes away the livelihood.

### *Means of resistance against an assigned identity and against Hindu nationalists' attacks*

#### 1. Vs assigned identity

The caste status of craftsmen is very hazy, with conflicting texts. A 1<sup>st</sup> text does not put craftsmen in the lower caste status, saying that all castes can indulge in the activities of the craftsmen. A 2<sup>nd</sup> text says that craftsmen are in the lower caste, and they are the only ones able to be artisans. So there is confusion as to their status. This confusion is enhanced by another tradition: if you make an art piece in service of the divine, then you are not in the lower caste any more. This is a means of resistance by the craftsmen to their status. Craftsmen play on these uncertainties. Also, their status differs depending on the location in India.

Craftsmen can also play on their rural identity to actually resist this imposed identity. James Scott says that you need to observe the studied group when it's in front of the dominant group. What happens in the backstage? Scott looks at the names used to designate the dominating group. Craftsmen do give names such as “the educated lot” “the rich” or say that “the urban city-dweller is dishonest” or call them “one that has no time to enjoy what the craftsmen do”. At the museum, when the man in charge ordered a craftsman to move his stuff elsewhere, two other craftsmen mocked this museum official. So it's another way of resistance.

2. Vs Hindu nationalists' attacks.

Craftsmen may use the art of political disguise to resist Hindu political attacks. In interviews, women artisans give first a Hindu name, but at the end of the interview give their actual name. They change names to escape attacks. Any obvious physical marks are changed. Lying is also important. Another means of resistance comes from the association of craftsmen with nature, the idea that they would all be versed in astrology. Lots of rituals are kept and they may use songs in their native language to resist, by singing songs in front of foreign attackers for instance.

## **Discussion:**

### *On the role of the state*

Stephen Fisher: Some bits are about resistance, some are about self-protection. These are quite different things. The problem is that if you're getting attacked physically for what you are doing, then the State is not protecting you. What about police? Do they address these actions?

Malvika Maheshwari: Hindu nationalism has various organizations at various levels. The ideology has invested the state (courts, judiciaries, political parties). State agencies are somehow part of the Hindu ideology as well. So craftsmen cannot refer to this option any more. The state cannot protect them. The state is not unbiased; it is actually part of the process.

### *On the craft museum*

Hanna Schwander: The craft museum is a new thing that came up recently. Can you consider it as another threat to the craftsmen's traditional way to be, or an opportunity to re-bridge the craftsmen with themselves. It is also a place to make products that are not standardized for the market.

Malvika Maheshwari: It is impossible to say if this museum is good or bad. It's made to protect craftsmen, to make them connect with the buyers. But also, the craft museums are perpetrating the idea that crafts are at an arms' distance (rural/urban, modern/ traditional). It's putting craftsmen in roles and identities. However, galleries are a place to have a conversation with the artist, where the artist has more liberty. Whereas the museum labels the artists. On the other hand, without the museum, there would be no craftsmen in the city at all.

### *On other religions*

Nonna Mayer: What's the position of other religions? What about strict Muslims?

Malvika Maheshwari: Most craftsmen are also Muslims. So even the statues for Hindu festivals are made by Muslim artisans. But with the politicization of religion, the Hindus say craftsmen shouldn't work in this field any more, and will be rather given work in the construction business, etc.

### *On further developments of the presentation*

Michèle Lamont: James Scott is an old literature, old model that was developed in the context of neo-marxism and Antonio Gramsci. However, in a context where repression is so strong, then it's fruitful to use that framework. There are other perspectives in cultural sociology. You might also use the sociology of tourism perspective. Other questions at stake are: how this world has been structured by political attention, market forces, collective identity and memory?

Tak Wing Chan: What is craft? Are craftsmen very diverse? Craft includes traditional arts such as paintings and religious art. People who make cooking instruments are under pressure by industrialized production whereas painters are under pressure by Hindu nationalists. It is necessary

to differentiate the different types of crafts and the different resistance means. Some of the forms of resistance are useless for craftsmen who are under pressure by capitalist production.

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## Sumeet Mhaskar

### **Examining Caste and Religion in Post-Industrial Mumbai. A Case Study of Mumbai's Ex Mill Workers Occupational Choices**

Do social institutions (caste, religion) shape people's occupational choices? This study takes place in the transformation of Mumbai from an industrial to a post-industrial economy. What are the occupational trends once the textile mill is closed?

Caste in India can be understood in different ways. Here, we are looking at the occupational aspect. The occupations are attached to particular castes. When you are born in a caste, you are born in an occupation, historically speaking.

#### *Towards a Post-Industrial City: economic transformation of Mumbai.*

In *Girangaon*, a village of textile mills, there were around 58 textile mills, employing 250 000 workers until the 1980s. Workers employed on casual basis. Located there were also other businesses linked to mill work (dyeing, etc.). So the figure was up to a 500 000 workforce in the early 1980s. In 1982 there was a huge 18-months long strike. After the strike, the mill owners laid off lots of people. So the workforce was down to 150,000 in the 1990s. It was a punishment against the participants of the strike, without any compensation. They were gradually laid off with the final closure of mills in the late 1990s. The proportion of textile mill workers in the Bombay economy was quite high, but the city underwent a transformation to a post-industrial economy (banking, insurance, information technology, entertainment industry, shopping malls). The nature of the workforce has thus completely changed.

#### *Issue of caste & occupation.*

Caste has an occupational aspect, transferred from generation to generation. There was a limited possibility of changing one's occupation. Does this remains significant in modern India? What is happening to industrial occupation, which used to be divided by caste and religion?

Scholars have shown that caste institutions remain significant, as far as working in the textile industry was concerned. One occupies a particular department depending on one's status. In the weaving department there were no Dalits (untouchables) in the weaving sheds. It's the highest department in the mill industry. High-caste Hindus occupied the weaving department. But filthy occupations were filled by Dalits. Caste groups were thus located in particular departments. From the 1970s onwards, more and more, Muslims were considered as "neo-untouchables".

Alongside the mill work, workers have parallel work. Nearly 10 percent were engaged in some kind of occupation. The aim is to supplement the family income. 15 percent are engaged in caste based work (leather workers, carpenters and barbers). Modern and traditional jobs existed side by side. But 85 percent were engaged in non caste occupations. As far as fast foods is concerned, no Dalits nor Muslims. High caste Hindus were engaged in cleaning and manual occupations.

More than 60 percent of the ex-mill workers are engaged in some kind of job after the closure of mills. 70% of them are engaged in wage labour. By class groups, 46% of the high-caste Hindus are in wage labour, 46% of Dalits, but just 16% of Muslim. For the latest group, this low data is due to the discrimination they face in the labour market. 30% of ex mill workers are involved in small businesses. Within these small businesses occupations, only 3% are caste based occupations. We still see the absence of Dalits and Muslims of the fast food business, because the high class will not patronize their businesses. Dalits & Muslims are not really free in the choice of their occupation. In Mumbai, almost 90% of the street businesses are done without license, so there is a need to rely on

informal patronizing, notably by political parties. No political patronage is given to very low class Hindus neither to Muslims.

### *Conclusions*

Only very few percentage of ex mill workers are still engaged in caste based occupations. Wage labour shows weak trend in terms of the influence of caste on occupation, but does show some trend for the less participation of Muslims. Self –Employment/Small Businesses is where some caste clustering is seen. Especially regarding the absence of Dalits and Muslim from fast food and only their engagement in Scrap Metal Collection. Another reached conclusion is that Muslims are seen as the new untouchables.

### **Discussion:**

#### *On social change*

Michèle Lamont: What are the principles of restructuration? What are the mechanics of boundary change? Think about the basic social processes. It's a story of greater social significance: these changes happen everywhere.

#### *On the employer versus worker occupational choice*

Tak Wing Chan: Opportunity structure versus choice. You mention there are no Dalits or Muslims in the fast food industry – but higher caste Hindus do cleaning jobs with vacuum cleaners. Those people need to find jobs. Is it because employers wouldn't hire caste groups in certain occupation, or is it because when you are a certain class you know a certain job is forbidden and scrap metal collection is what you're supposed to do. Does the occupational choice come from an employer's decision or is it actually the worker's choice? Why is a vacuum not as contaminating as scrapping with a piece of cloth? Employer vs. Workers choice would make a good framework.

Sumeet Mhaskar: Even if leather work is available, high class Hindus would not enter it and rather stay unemployed.

Tak Wing Chan: So is the caste system putting higher constraint on higher class or lower class people in terms of self imposed occupational choice? People restrict their opportunities, as much in the high castes as in the low castes.

Sumeet Mhaskar: Yet, recruiting agencies don't take caste into consideration, because they are responding to the company's needs and pressure. Agencies recruit anyone they can.

#### *On Muslim discrimination*

Hanna Schwander: Is there a hierarchy in inequality? Muslims are among the losers of this transition in terms of economic inequality. Why they are seen as the new untouchable? Is it for political reasons (rise of the Hindu nationalism) or due to their occupation?

Sumeet Mhaskar: From the start, everyone had to look for a new occupation. Everyone is facing an unfair situation – but Muslims are facing exclusion on top of this. 90% of street business is illegal, but state officials pick up only on Dalits & Muslims. That's why they sometimes don't do street businesses. Non-Muslims and non-untouchable are always less harassed. High caste Hindu can complain to local counsellors and later avoid any more problems.

#### *On the importance of gender*

Hanna Schwander: What is the relevance of gender? Does gender have any influence in the perception of the social status and regarding the occupational choices?

Sumeet Mhaskar: On the gender issue, there is only a little sample of women mill workers. Since the 70s and 80s, less and less women mill workers. Women had maternity benefits, etc., so mill owners started not to employ women any more.

#### *On the role of unions*

Nonna Mayer: What about the unions? What is the degree of organization in the sector? Are there separate unions by religion and/or by caste?

Sumeet Mhaskar: The 1982 strike was a direct action. As the workers were fed up with all sorts of unions, they themselves invited an external leader to lead the strike. So the support for this leader came from all castes and religions. He was later elected in Parliament.