



# Making Sense of the Post-Covid World: Continuities and Changes

Convenors: Mariana Cavalcanti (R. Janeiro), Sérgio Costa (Berlin), José Maurício Domingues (R. Janeiro), and Wolfgang Knöbl (Hamburg)

Concept:

**April 2022 - July 2022**  
**Tuesdays, 1:00 p.m. (Rio de Janeiro)**  
**6:00 p.m. (Berlin and Hamburg)**

The pandemic has produced ambivalent consequences for social life. Intersectional inequalities, combining, class, ethno-racial, citizenship, and gender inequalities, both between and within countries, grew during the pandemic and became even more difficult to be mitigated in the post-covid world. At the same time, the global virus has irrefutably revealed the high level of interdependency between different social groups, world regions, as well as between human and nonhuman living beings. However, this did not lead to more solidarity at the national and global level as individualistic and antagonistic responses to the pandemic have created and exacerbated divisions and divides. At the same time, these glaring problems came to the fore and demands to tackle them have grown.

This series of lectures seeks to discuss these ambivalent and long-lasting effects of the pandemic on societies: What has been the impact on social inequality and how does this affect the transformation prospects especially of poor countries? What is the impact of the global virus on world politics? How have the pandemic affected the sense of solidarity at the local, national, and global level? How does the global experience of living with and fighting the pandemic affect the treatment of issues concerning the planet's common future, such as climate change?

To address these questions, the Institute for Social and Political Studies (IESP/Rio de Janeiro), the Hamburg Institute for Social Research (HIS/ Hamburg) and the Institute of Latin American Studies (LAI /FU Berlin) have invited eight experts from different fields of social sciences to give digital lectures followed by debates with the audience. The lectures will take place between April and July 2022 and will be interposed by internal preparatory sessions at each of the organizing institutes. The series of events is funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation within the framework of the Anneliese Meier Research Award conferred to Prof. Domingues, one of the convenors of this lecture series.

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## Program & Keynote Speakers

**26 April 2022**

**Marion Fourcade (University of California, Berkeley):**

**The Great Online Migration. Covid-19 and the Virtualization of American Public Schools**

The Covid-19 pandemic has been associated with the accelerated deployment of the virtual economy. As societies protected themselves from contagion by limiting interpersonal interactions, a wide range of activities - education, work, social relations, learning, spirituality, leisure, business and politics - quickly reassembled in distancing mode. And as the pandemic stretched out from weeks to months to over a year, these reorganizations started to look permanent. This conference by Marion Fourcade will explore this "great online migration" through the prism of the virtualization of public schools in the United States. Elementary and secondary schools (or K-12 in American jargon) offer a particularly useful vantage point for analyzing the promises, failures and long-term implications of the digital switchover forced by the onset of the pandemic. Not only have these institutions found themselves at the center of controversies over the legitimacy of lockdowns, but the transition to "distance learning" has been particularly radical and difficult.

Finally, the schools' transformation during this period reveals the growing dependence of public services on technology providers, which strive not only to service new needs, but also to reinvent them in their own image.

Marion Fourcade is Professor of Sociology at UC Berkeley and Distinguished Visiting Professor of Sociology at the Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton) for 2019-2020. She is the author of *Economists and Societies: Discipline and Profession in the United States, Britain and France, 1890s to 1990s* (Princeton University Press, 2009). Her current work focuses on the politics of wine classification and taste in France and the United States and on new forms of stratification, morality, and profit in the digital economy. A book from this project, *The Ordinal Society* (with Kieran Healy), is under contract with Harvard University Press.

Reading: Fassin, D./Fourcade, M. (2021, eds): *Pandemic Exposures. Economic and Societies in the Time of Coronavirus*. Chicago: HAU Books

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**10 May 2022**

**Robert Boyer (Institute of the Americas) :**

## **Impacts on Global Development and Economy**

Covid-19 first tested the adequacy of health systems to the probable repetition of pandemics. Most have shown the weakness of prevention measures and an underinvestment related to the cost control effort. Social inequalities, within and between countries, have increased. The State has reappeared as a central actor in the coordination and expression of national solidarity. An anthropo-genetic development model based on education, health and culture, implicit in long-term developments, takes on its full meaning for both rich and developing countries. Then and above all, the pandemic has marked the rise of transnational platform capitalism, which has prompted a return to the imperative of national sovereignty and the restructuring of global value chains.

The polarization between the various zones of the world economy has worsened to the point of threatening an international regime in crisis. Critical moment that calls for an unprecedented effort from the social sciences, including imagination in terms of open scenarios on contrasting geopolitical strategies

Robert Boyer is a French economist trained at Ecole Polytechnique, Sciences-Po Paris and Paris 1 University. Previously senior researcher at CNRS and professor at EHESS, he is now Fellow at Institut des Amériques, Paris. Among his publications are Regulation Theory: the State of the Art (with Yves Saillard), Routledge, 2001, The Future of Growth, with Edward Elgar, 2004, Les financiers détruiront-ils le capitalisme? Economica, 2011, Economie politique des capitalismes, La Découverte, 2015. His most recent works deal with the consequences of Covid-19 on capitalism diversity (Les capitalismes à l'épreuve de la pandémie, La Découverte, 2020) and economic theorizing (Une discipline sans réflexivité peut-elle être une science ? Epistémologie de l'économie, Editions de la Sorbonne, 2021). He is one of the editors of Revue de la Régulation.

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**17 May 2022**

**Nisia Trindade (Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, Fiocruz):**

## **Impacts of the Pandemic on Global Health and Vital Inequalities**

A new generation of severe inequalities in human development is emerging even if many of the unresolved of the 20th century are declining. This persistence of inequality, despite the improvement of many indicators, is a phenomenon that ended up being exacerbated in the pandemic scenario. It not only induced a public health crisis, but also has led to severe economic, social, and educational crisis. Therefore, we can see the pandemic as a global total social fact, because it affected all dimensions of social life. Science and technology can help shape the way in which societies control disease, so research and development should respond to priority health needs. This is why one great challenge to overcome is the inequality of knowledge, innovation, and the production base, because without a more symmetrical distribution of productive and innovation capacities, national and global responses based on universality and equity will become unfeasible.

Nisia Trindade Lima is the current President of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz). Holding a PhD in Sociology and a master's degree in Political Science, she is now on her second mandate as the President of the Fiocruz and is the first woman to occupy this position in its 120 years of history. Linked to Brazilian Ministry of Health, Fiocruz is the largest Public Health Academic Institution in Latin American and the Caribbean Region. She is a senior researcher at Fiocruz's Casa de Oswaldo Cruz, postgraduate professor in the History of Science and Health Program, as well as a collaborating professor on the Graduate Program in Sociology at IESP/UERJ. Trindade is also an associate professor of Sociology at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ). In December 2020 she was elected full member of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences (ABC) in the Social Sciences category, and in January 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 she became a fellow of the World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) for the advancement of science in developing countries. Nisia committed and is paying great attention to expanding Fiocruz' role in the global health community. She also participated and supported the FIOCRUZ activities that contribute to the ECOSOC - High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development on different topics. She has also participated in the two editions of the WHO Global Research and Innovation Forum, in February and July of 2020. In September, she was awarded the degree of Knight of the National Order of the Legion of Honor of France, offered by the Government of France, in recognition of her work in the fields of science and health and for the services rendered to society in the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Reading: Swaminathan, S. et al. (2022): Reboot biomedical R&D in the global public interest. Nature, Vol. 602, 207-210

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**31 May 2022**

**John Torpey (City University of New York):**

## **The Social Contract in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Elite opinion in the United States has over the past several decades increasingly been shaped by a preoccupation with "identities." The identities in question – racial, gender-based, sexual, and more – have proliferated and hardened over time, arguably driving wedges through populations that might be consolidated politically if they communicated in a different idiom, namely that of class. Is solidarity possible if subnational groups are defined chiefly in terms of their differences? This lecture/paper will argue that the emphasis on identity and difference is creating divisions that should be less salient if the aim is to create progressive social change and a more durable social contract for the 21st century.

John Torpey is Presidential Professor of Sociology and History and Director of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. He has written a number of books, including *Making Whole What Has Been Smashed: On Reparations Politics* (2005), and many book chapters and articles in such publications as *Theory and Society*, *Noema*, *The Nation*, *The Conversation*, *openDemocracy*, *Forbes.com*, and elsewhere.

**7 June 2022 at 2:00 p.m. (Rio) 7:00 p.m. (Berlin, Hamburg)**

**Dipesh Chakrabarty (University of Chicago)**

## **On Earth Ethic (Q&A Session)**

In his book "The climate history in planetary age" (Chicago Univ. Press, 2021), *Dipesh Chakrabarty* discusses the implications of the Anthropocene and suggests the distinction of two perspectives: the anthropocentric and expansionist, global approach and the planetary perspective, which decenters the human. According to him "The COVID-19 pandemic is the most recent and tragic illustration of how the expanding and accelerating processes of globalization can trigger changes in the much longer-term history of life on the planet". In this Q & A session, *Dipesh Chakrabarty* will answer questions asked by the convenors and the audience about the book and his assessment of "earth ethic".

Dipesh Chakrabarty is the Lawrence A. Kimpton Distinguished Service Professor of History and South Asian Languages and Civilization at the University of Chicago. He is the recipient of 2014 Toynbee Prize and of the 2019 Tagore Memorial Prize, awarded by the government of West Bengal, India.

Reading: Chakrabarty, D. (2021): *The climate history in planetary age*. Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press



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**14 June 2022:**

**Sara Stevano (SOAS University of London)**

## **Labor and Inequalities During and After the Pandemic**

The COVID-19 crisis is fundamentally different from previous ones because it shakes a foundational element of our economies and societies: the organization of work, in its multiple forms. To fully analyse this process, a global feminist social reproduction lens is necessary. A feminist reading of this crisis captures the interplay between reproductive and productive work, where multiple inequalities are reproduced. This talk focuses on three key mechanisms. First, the pandemic and the measures to contain it have further deepened the centrality of households and reproductive work in the functioning of capitalism. Second, the re-organisation of work into essential and non-essential workers have increased the risk of certain social groups to either unemployment or disease exposure, with no evidence of material gains so far.

Third, the existing global division of labour, including its transnational dimensions, has significantly limited the ability to protect the livelihood of the most vulnerable workers, reinforcing South-North divides. Through such processes, intersecting inequalities of class, race, gender and migration status have been reproduced and magnified, both locally and globally.

Sara Stevano is a development and feminist political economist. She is a Senior Lecturer in Economics at SOAS University of London, after holding teaching and research positions at the University of the West of England, Bristol, and King's College London. Her areas of study are the political economy of labour, food and social reproduction. Her work focuses on Africa, with primary research experience in Mozambique and Ghana.

Reading: Svetano, S. et al. (2021): COVID-19 and crises of capitalism: intensifying inequalities and global responses. Canadian Journal of Development Studies, 42(1-2): 1-17

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**28 June 2022:**

**Yasmeen Arif (Shiv Nadar University, Delhi-NCR)**

## **The Space Between Us: Biophilosophies of Identities in Pandemic Space**

The query that guides this presentation is about how space intervenes in the presence of zoonotic disease and human physical contagion; how space configures questions of security, space and the sustenance of life; and how space formulates the political. Perusing the notion of social identity in a biopolitical environment, and how identity embeds itself in the search for secure space and distance between bodies, the arguments pose another understanding of politics and governmental technique. Using examples of crowds and political protest during the time of the pandemic, the biophilosophies that emerge in the convergence of social identity in material space speak of a compelling aspect of statecraft in the governance of biologically insecure space. In this kind of governance - statecraft, the social and the political show themselves in an emerging politics of life.

Yasmeen Arif is Professor of Sociology, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Shiv Nadar University, Delhi NCR. Her current writing is about a bio-political critique of identity in politics which follows from her book, *Life, Emergent: The Social in the Afterlives of Violence* (2016, University of Minnesota Press) which explores a politics of life across multiple global conditions of mass violence. The new book project is tentatively titled *Life, Per se: The Government of Identity* and explores neo-identities in contemporary democracies, labour-work, and race-caste-faith orientations. A constant parallel genre of research and writing has been a commitment to the geopolitics of knowledge production and equitable epistemologies in the contemporary. Her field experiences have been in Beirut, Lebanon and Delhi, India. A co-edited volume *Critical Themes in Indian Sociology* (2018, Sage Publications) is a collection of over 30 essays. A second forthcoming volume is called *Event and Everyday: Empiricisms and Epistemologies* (2022, Orient-Blackswan Press) is based on a decade long graduate research methods and theory seminar. Essays and book chapters have been published in several journals (HAU, IJURR, American Anthropologist) and volumes. Overall interest areas include bio-philosophies and life, international law and humanitarianisms, science and technology studies, aesthetics, visual and material cultures, theory and epistemology in social anthropology/sociology. Yasmeen has held positions at the Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, University of Minnesota (Twin Cities); The Graduate Institute, Geneva; CSDS, Delhi and the American University of Beirut; Lebanon. The Mellon Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Fulbright-Nehru Fellowship, among others, have supported her work.

Reading: Arif, Y. (2021): Calling a Pandemic by Its Name. *Society and Culture in South Asia* 7(1) 97-104

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**5 July 2022:**

## **Elisio Macamo (Universität Basel) The Pandemic as Disaster: African Perspectives**

When is the pandemic a disaster? Lessons for Africa on how not to copy the West  
It has become a truism to claim that there are no such things as natural disaster. This serves to remind that disasters are always a function of how a society appraises risks. A critical insight from the sociology of risk and disasters draws our attention to the epistemological implications of this truism. It consists of the idea that disasters are phenomena that count as something specific in a particular context. The purpose of my lecture will be to deploy this insight in the discussion of the conditions under which Covid-19 became a disaster in Africa. My claim is that it became a disaster because African governments defined it in European terms.

Elisio Macamo is professor of sociology and African studies at the University of Basel, Switzerland. He worked on disaster and risk for many years and these issues continue to be an abiding interest. However, his most recent work focuses on methodological issues, especially on how knowledge production on Africa can help us improve the disciplines.

Reading: Macamo, E. (2022): Africa and the Coronavirus. In: Bringel, B./ Pleyers, J. (ed.): Social Movements and Politics during COVID-19: Crisis, Solidarity and Change in a Global Pandemic. Bristol: Bristol University Press



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19 July 2022

## Conclusions

**Mariana Cavalcanti (IESP/UERJ), Sérgio Costa (FU Berlin/ Mecila), José Maurício Domingues (IESP/UERJ), and Wolfgang Knöbl (HIS-Hamburg)**



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