



Keele University



British International  
Studies Association

## **Epistemologies of the Political, the Global and the International**

A workshop to reflect collectively on the ways we know the 'factual' world we research

Claus Moser Building, CM0.12, Keele University  
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**Organised by the Emerging Securities Research Unit, Keele University  
and the BISA Postructuralist Politics Working Group**

# Contents

Emerging Securities Research Unit, Keele University.....	3
Programme.....	4
Introduction .....	6
<b>Interventions on Investigatory Epistemology.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Corey Walker-Mortimer	
Investigating design culture as epistemology of the political.....	7
Rhys Machold	
Urban Security “Best Practice”: toward an (anti)political epistemology .....	9
Erzsebet Strausz	
The epistemology of (IR) ontologies: life on the “/” of power/knowledge .....	12
<b>Interventions on Reflexive Epistemology .....</b>	<b>13</b>
Andrea Rossi	
The making of Man: Human sciences and the politics of subjectivity .....	13
Joscha Wullweber	
The post-positivist paradox:The power of mainstream science and the struggle for objectivity.....	15
Eddy S. Fang	
International Political Economy, Post-Structural Politics and Islamic Finance .....	19
<b>Interventions on Performative Epistemology.....</b>	<b>20</b>
Catherine Charrett	
The Agency of Threat: Acting politically in the performativity of securitizing terrorism.....	20
Deirdre McKay	
Everyday epistemologies of the global .....	20
Cathy Elliot	
A Pakistani Spring? The Lawyers’ Movement and the Articulation of Democracy .....	23
Martin Coward	
Network thinking and the normalisation of a politics beyond ethico-legal constraint.....	25

## Emerging Securities Research Unit, Keele University

The Emerging Securities Research Unit (ESU) was created in 2009 to widen the smaller Biopolitics of Security Unit. It is one of the clusters of the Centre for the Study of Politics, International Relations and the Environment (RC-SPIRE) at Keele University.

The ESU is an interdisciplinary group involving researchers and doctoral students from Politics and International Relations, Human Geography, Criminology and International History. Its general remit is to foster research on the ways in which different 'ways of life' (in state, social, economic, and cultural forms) have been promoted and protected, as referents of security. To this end, the Unit develops projects that draw on contemporary and historical cases to understand the specificities of security strategies, and to theorise security in the making.

Security, as the ESU's general referent for analysis, is widely understood in its strategic, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and political dimensions. Special emphasis is put in understanding how security discourses and practices are made possible, in some cases in the form of security technologies, and how they articulate regimes of government and truth. In doing so, the Unit does not privilege divisions between security studies, political economy, or theories of the political, the economical, the social, or the cultural. It assumes instead a problem-driven approach.

Members of the ESU are actively involved in challenging traditional understandings of security and power. Employing diverse methodologies such as archival research, participant observation, genealogical and archaeological enquiry, as well as semi-structured interviewing, projects involve a plethora of traditions of thought, from continental philosophy, to economic history. The events and activities organised and sponsored by the Unit reflect this diversity.

The Emerging Securities Unit is home to the [Biopolitics of Security Network](#).

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## Programme

### 9.00-9.15 – Introduction

Dr Luis Lobo-Guerrero, convenor of the Emerging Securities Research Unit

### 9.15-10.30 – Interventions on Investigatory Epistemology

Chair: Professor Ronnie Lippens (Keele)

Corey Walker-Mortimer (Keele) - *The Biopolitics of Design*

Rhys Machold (Balsillie) - *Urban Security “Best Practices”: Toward an anti(political) epistemology?*

Erzsebet Strausz (Aberystwyth) - *The epistemology of (IR) ontologies: life on the “/” of power/knowledge*

### 10.30-12.00 – Keynote Address

**Professor Michael Shapiro (University of Hawaii at Manoa)**

***Against Explanation: Thinking politically after the aesthetic turn***

### 12.00-12.45 – Lunch

### 12.45-2.00 – Interventions on Reflexive Epistemology

Chair: Dr Luis Lobo-Guerrero

Andrea Rossi (Lancaster)- *The making of Man: Human sciences and the politics of subjectivity*

Joscha Wullweber (Kassel) - *The post-positivist paradox. The power of mainstream science and the struggle for objectivity*

Eddy S. Fang (Cambridge) - *International Political Economy, Post-structural Politics and Islamic Finance*

### 2.00-3.15 – Interventions on Performative Epistemology

Chair: Dr Pete Adey

Catherine Charrett (Aberystwyth) - *The Agency of Threat: Acting politically in the performativity of securitizing terrorism*

Deirdre McKay (Keele) - *Everyday epistemologies of the global*

Cathy Elliott (University College London) - *A Pakistani Spring? The Lawyers' Movement and the Articulation of Democracy*

Dr Martin Coward (Newcastle) - *Network thinking and the normalisation of a politics beyond ethico-legal constraint'*

**3.15-4.00 – Concluding roundtable**

Chair: Dr Barry Ryan

‘Thus, between the already ‘encoded’ eye and reflexive knowledge there is a middle region which liberates order itself...’

Foucault, *The Order of Things*, Routledge, 2002, p. xxii.

## Introduction

Orders of the real are authoritative ways of imagining the world. They imply specific sets of beliefs, attitudes, practices, and discourses that taken together constitute regimes of truth around which decisions on what is to be taken as valid are made. Orders of the real presuppose understandings of how the world is known, the relations that constitute the regimes upon which knowledge is produced, and the representations and assumptions about the problem of political existence. Although within a positivist tradition of science they have been approached from the realm of ‘the empirical’ and observed through methods that seek to reduce them to objective and measurable facts, they are far more problematic than that. As continental thinkers such as Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, Nancy, and many others have demonstrated, they enshrine complex relations of power, that include, and transcend, what has been known through and after Foucault’s work as power/knowledge.

Orders of the real constitute epistemological problems. They can be observed as sites from which to question deep assumptions that determine the outcomes of research. They can also be explored to make explicit the conditions of possibility and operability of systems of thought upon which modern technologies of governance depend. They can also be used to interrogate problems that in principle appear buried in time, such as various relationships between the modern and the secular as well as the modern and the uncertain, within technologies and practices of government and rule.

The workshop is organised in the form of **interventions** to a general debate dealing with the following questions:

- How can relationships between ontologies and epistemologies be made productive in revealing the possibilities of being political?
- What does researching the epistemologies of the political, the global, and the international offer in terms of understanding the realm of the empirical?
- What might a sceptical epistemology look like if traditional approaches to power/knowledge are to be resisted?
- Can epistemologies be secured in an attempt to secure orders of governance?

# Interventions on Investigatory Epistemology

**Corey Walker-Mortimer**

## **Investigating design culture as epistemology of the political**

My research explores relationships between design culture and the political. It proceeds from a series of observations, the first concerns how the contemporary space of the political is a highly designed space, a space that has to a great extent come into being via the process of rapid dispersion and embedding of the process of design into all aspects of human existence throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The second concerns how the development of liberal governmentality might be related in various ways to the emergence and development of a design culture. A third, specifically, is that neo-liberal modalities of liberal governance, in relation to governmental values such as sensitivity, creativity and innovation, are increasingly appointing design as a privileged space in which to address key issues of governance, such as for example sustainability; this based on an emerging discourse that holds that systemic problems that have resulted from the design flaws of previous generations, can only be solved through a process of further design. This discourse is made explicit and illustrated through the growing 'global design culture' such as that exemplified by organizations and think tanks such as The Institute Without Boundaries and Eternally Yours, as well as the growing value appointed to the knowledge economies of the 'culture industries' by urban and regional governance.

My intervention relates to the aim of my PhD research and aims to contribute towards discussion on investigatory epistemology by exploring how the political may be problematised through investigation of epistemological spaces, in this case the epistemological spaces of design culture. Here I believe that before an analysis of the relationship between design epistemology and the political can take place (what would take the form of a genealogy), it is first productive to determine the singularities of the epistemological space in question (this written intervention, for reasons of space can only discuss this first stage of analysis, although I am very happy to discuss my genealogical work during the discussion).

Therefore I begin my investigation by utilizing Foucault's methodology of archaeology to chart the emergence of design epistemology. The immediate effect of this is a problematisation of the taken for granted historicisation of design. Here, whilst the emergence of design is taken to be deeply related to the material transformations in the process of making associated with the industrial revolution, namely the rise of mass production which necessitated the separation of an initial phase of foresight and planning (design) from the phase of making, it is revealed through archaeological analysis that the birth of design as a self-reflexive discourse and practice is also found

crucially to be the effect of a much deeper *epistemological* event that took place at the archaeological level towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

The relation of design to this event is well illustrated by John Dewey who noted much later in 1929 that design marks a 'new relationship between science, art and practice' necessitated by an epistemological move whereby 'knowledge is no longer achieved by direct conformity of ideas with the fixed order of nature', but is achieved rather 'by a new kind of art directed toward orders of change' (Dewey, 1958: 357-8). The epistemological event itself however is best explored and articulated by Foucault in his description and analysis of the epistemological threshold that marked the transition between what he distinguished as the Classical and the Modern periods in his book *The Order of Things*. I argue that whilst Foucault does not explicitly discuss this event in relation to design, the emergence of design is critically dependent upon and cannot be properly understood without reference to elements Foucault identifies as comprising the epistemological configuration constitutive of the Modern episteme, those elements principally related to 'the connection of the positivities with finitude, the reduplication of the empirical and the transcendental, the perpetual relation of the *cogito* to the unthought', and 'the retreat and return of the origin' (Foucault, 2002: 365).

These epistemological elements come into play when representation ceased to provide a fundamental basis for knowledge of an order of the real understood as a homogeneous space of Order, when it became apparent that the conditions of possibility for representation are exterior to representation itself (Foucault, 2002: 235-256, 272-328) and subject to 'a historicity proper to nature' (Foucault, 2002: 401). Here, Man becomes both subject and object of knowledge, who comes to know himself in relation to things determined by internal structures whose essence are inaccessible to him and that have a history whose origin is unknown to him, historicities that are not subordinate or homogeneous with him; his life, labour and language (Foucault, 2002: 272-320). Man comes to understand himself as subject and object to historical processes through which he acquires and comes to know his being, displacing the relationship of representation to the idea of a preordained divine order that would give rise to representation as a perfect correspondence between subject and object.

My presentation will discuss how design as a form of knowledge that is directed at shaping orders of change becomes possible via the order of the real of this Historicity. As Foucault describes, Historicity became the fundamental epistemological basis of the positivities when representation alone ceased to provide a valid medium for the ordering of things. Historicity is here understood as the successions of discontinuous analogical organic structures made up of elements whose totality perform functions (Foucault, 2002: 236); such as is the object of biology and political economy. I will also discuss some of the singularities of design epistemology in relation to the order of the real of Historicity, especially its role as an 'architectonic' form of knowledge that rejects the compartmentalization of knowledge and that is integrative of other forms of knowledge through which human and technical sciences converge around specific aims

directed at orders of change. It is as such that design has since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century been implicated in the biopolitical project of population welfare.

**Rhys Machold**

### **Urban Security “Best Practice”: toward an (anti)political epistemology**

“Best practice” has emerged as a new modality of governance across a range of institutions and corporations and increasingly among agencies involved in defense and security planning. My interest in best practice stems from its ability to effect the global proliferation and salience of militarized tactical repertoires for urban security management through appropriating expertise from outside the local political environment.<sup>1</sup> The working hypothesis of my doctoral dissertation is that the *depoliticizing* character of best practice may help to explain how the adoption of external expertise, allegedly *proven* to be effective, may be sought out in order to evade vigorous political debate about which security approach is most appropriate to address particular local risks and threats.<sup>2</sup> I therefore situate best practice as a *technology* of security governance based on its central role in both validating and promoting—indeed making possible—certain approaches to the management of urban space.

Proponents of the best practice approach assert that the most effective way to gain security/military expertise is through emulating the practices of other “successful” paradigmatic cases.<sup>3</sup> However, while representing an increasingly influential

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<sup>1</sup> A recent example was the hiring of former NYPD and LAPD police chief Bill Bratton (now the current chairman of the private security consultancy Kroll) by UK Prime Minister David Cameron in light of the London riots to combat the alleged prevalence of “gang culture” within parts of the City of London. Cameron’s early conversations with Bratton notably occurred before any systematic study of the causes of the unrest had been commissioned by the UK government. See D. Batty, “UK riots: police could adopt US methods, says ‘supercop’ Bill Bratton,” *The Guardian*, August 13, 2011; *The Associated Press*, “London will look to U.S. anti-gang strategies, limits to social media: Cameron,” November 8, 2011; P. Wintour, “David Cameron announces moves to tackle gang culture,” *The Guardian*, August 11, 2011. Regardless of the overall efficacy of Bratton’s security knowhow, there was no effort made to assess its relevance to London’s experience. Other examples include the use of “kettling” in the policing strategies during the 2010 Toronto G20 Meetings. See D. Cowen and N. Smith, “‘Martial Law in the Streets of Toronto: G20 Security and State Violence,” *Human Geography* 3, no. 3 (2010): 29-49. Another well-known case is the export of anti-crime strategies developed under the former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani. See K. Mitchell and K. Beckett, “Securing the Global City: Crime, Consulting, Risk, and Ratings in the Production of Urban Space,” *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 15, no. 1 (2008): 75–100.

<sup>2</sup> A similar dynamic may also work to stifle dissent about the effects of certain practices *within* the context of origin. For instance, McCann suggests that framing of a city’s experiences as a paradigmatic case “is a powerful political narrative that valorizes existing...models in the city...and dampens criticism of the current policy” within the context from which best practices are derived. E. McCann, “Urban policy mobilities and global circuits of knowledge: toward a research agenda,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 101, no. 1 (2010): 107–130, 108

<sup>3</sup> European Forum for Urban Security (EFUS), “EFUS Best Practices Knowledge Base”, n.d., <http://efus.eu/en/zz-our-environment-local-policies/public/794/>; RAND Corporation, “Urban Battle Fields of South Asia: Lessons Learned from Sri Lanka, India, and Pakistan” (RAND Corporation, 2004),

governmental/public policy strategy, the origins of its logic can be traced to a much more technical business management literature emphasizing efficiency through standardization and benchmarking.<sup>4</sup> Skeptics of best practices, however, have argued that rather than promoting increased efficacy, their contribution represents something else entirely: “although best practices purport to be “best,” there is nothing particularly “best” about them. The rulemaking technique is a way of obtaining common practices, not ideal ones”.<sup>5</sup>

The finding that best practices promote conformity rather than optimality seems to explain the apparent salience (or even convergence) around standardized procedures and techniques. But this line of critique proves somewhat limited and even misleading. As Larner and Le Heron argue, the finding “that such techniques are ‘partial, incomplete and ultimately ideological’ is entirely understandable, but misses their significance for the reconstitution of spaces and subjects” as well as the capacity for best practice rulemaking to “fabricate...new fields of competition”.<sup>6</sup> And rather than signaling “simple emulation and linear *replication* across policymaking sites” best practice rulemaking results in “a process of nonlinear *reproduction*”.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, the very expectations of global convergence are wrongheaded in equating the proliferation and transfer of logics through with uniform implementation of standardized, immutable policy prescriptions.<sup>8</sup>

The thrust of my argument, however, is somewhat different. I suggest that technology of best practice plays a central role in underwriting the very *success* of certain security approaches through effecting their global preeminence rather than validating their approach in a systematic way. As MacKenzie has observed, “Technologies...may be best because they have triumphed, rather than triumphing because they are best”.<sup>9</sup> Following this I suggest that the key function of best practice lies in performatively “demonstrating” the optimality of certain tactics through an appeal to some pre-established efficacy, where “knowledge” about their utility is “‘bound up’ in the very execution of the practices” themselves.<sup>10</sup> In this way, such “policies are...shaped and

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www.rand.org/pubs/monograph\_reports/2007/MR1287.pdf. SecurCity Network, “Good Practice Guide”, 2006, [http://www.mdrl.ro/urbactII/urbact/projects/securcity/Good\\_Practice\\_Guide\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.mdrl.ro/urbactII/urbact/projects/securcity/Good_Practice_Guide_pdf.pdf);

<sup>4</sup> See for instance C.E. Bogan and M.J. English, *Benchmarking for Best Practices* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> D. Zaring, “Best Practices,” *New York University Law Review* 81 (2006): 294-352, 297-298.

<sup>6</sup> W. Larner and R. Le Heron, “Global benchmarking: participating ‘at a distance’ in the globalizing economy,” in *Global Governmentality: Governing international spaces*, ed. W. Larner and W. Walters, 2004, 212–32, 215.

<sup>7</sup> J. Peck and N. Theodore, “Mobilizing policy: Models, methods, and mutations,” *Geoforum* 41, no. 2 (2010): 169-174, 170, emphasis in original.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> D.A. MacKenzie, *Knowing Machines: Essays on technical change* (Baskerville: The MIT Press, 1996), 7.

<sup>10</sup> E. Adler and V. Pouliot, “International Practices,” *International Theory* 3, no. 1 (2011): 1–36, 17.

given momentum by the telling of stories” about them<sup>11</sup> and “‘made’ into a success” *through* their introduction into “real world” settings.<sup>12</sup>

This capacity to develop and solidify momentum through a self-referential appeal to efficacy is one of the more paradoxical and important aspects of urban security best practices, particularly because they evolve through contingency, rather than design.<sup>13</sup> That is, their *emergence* often takes place in notable absence of some systematic process to design or even scientifically validate their universal efficacy. So while the apparent capacity to promote conformity is one of their most oft cited effects, the trajectory of a practice to the status of “best practice” remains ad hoc and open-ended process of social *experimentation*.<sup>14</sup>

This dynamic is perfectly captured by Bauman’s rendering of “reconnaissance battles”. Here “All action is experimental; but not in the orthodox sense of the ‘experiment’ (that is, of a carefully designed test meant to prove or disprove the existence of a predicted/suspected/guessed regularity), but in the sense of a random search for a lucky move. Action proceeds through trials, errors, new trials and new errors – until one of the attempts brings a result that could, under the circumstances, pass for satisfactory”.<sup>15</sup> Yet while contingency fundamentally underpins the *genesis* of the practices that become urban security best practices, their core utility lies in foreclosing the need for their reflexive reevaluation. Best practice can thus be conceptualized as a *technology* of security governance functioning as a way to propagate—and in doing so also validate—certain approaches to the management of urban space. This dynamic also serves to insulate tactics from possible intervention, sharing linkages to the evolutionary logic of technological determinism.

Mackenzie points out that the key significance of technological determinism is that it “inclines...us to passivity” by framing technological development as *beyond* the realm of

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<sup>11</sup> McCann, “Urban Policy”, 119.

<sup>12</sup> K. Ward, “‘Policies in Motion’, Urban Management and State Restructuring: The Trans-Local Expansion of Business Improvement Districts,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30, no. 1 (2006): 54–75, 70.

<sup>13</sup> This characteristic is well-captured Croser’s depiction of the “battlespace” as a new modality of contemporary warfare management. C. Croser, “Networking Security in the Space of the City: Event-ful Battlespaces and the Contingency of the Encounter,” *Theory & Event* 10, no. 2 (2007), 32. Also see Ward “Policies in Motion”, 70.

<sup>14</sup> Quoting officials from the US Navy, Der Derian emphasizes how U.S. military forays into American cities such as “Urban Warrior” in the 1990s were framed by their authors as “experiments” rather than exercises: “We are not simulating any specific country, because this is not an exercise: it is an experiment.” J. Der Derian, *Virtuous war: mapping the military-industrial-media-entertainment network* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 2001), 129). Coaffee and Murakami Wood have pointed out that Belfast during the 1970s was viewed as “a laboratory for radical experiments on the fortification and territorialization of urban space” through efforts to address the use of car bombing as a tactic of political violence. J. Coaffee and D. Murakami Wood, “Security is Coming Home: Rethinking Scale and Constructing Resilience in the Global Urban Response to Terrorist Risk,” *International Relations* 20, no. 4 (2006): 503 -517, 506.

<sup>15</sup> Z. Bauman, “Reconnaissance wars of the planetary frontierland,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 19, no. 4 (2002): 81-90, 88.

the political.<sup>16</sup> He adds, however, that it is this very antipolitical character of technological determinism that has played a central role in the historical course of technological transformation through reifying a distinction between the technological and the political. So while thoroughly discrediting the explanatory power of technological determinism, he maintains that the (unwarranted) separation between the technological and the political has been instrumental to achieving the path dependency of certain technologies.<sup>17</sup> Thus rather than signifying a new phenomenon altogether, I suggest that best practice may be more readily conceptualized as an *extension* of technological determinism that seeks to obscure the sociopolitical influences in the course of technological change and in doing so asserts its own inevitability.

In drawing attention to the antipolitical character of urban security best practices, my aim is not to dispute the claim that they are in fact best (although certainly not affirming it either). The more crucial point is that they were never evidence-based in any traditional meaning of the term and so can claim no ground upon which claims to superiority would rest. Their self-implied “bestness”, then, is not simply unwarranted but asserted in notable *absence* of any attempt to subject a given approach to open deliberative scrutiny *or* to scientifically validate its utility. In this way best practice denies the very need for epistemology, by presenting the efficacy of certain practices as simultaneously self-evident yet immune from analysis. Thus the approach to the social world that it embodies is fundamentally antipolitical in maintaining that the case is already closed—a forgone conclusion that is no longer amenable to reevaluation or debate. Best practice can be understood as a technique of its own validation—a self-fulfilling prophecy—that solidifies an otherwise contingent trajectory of social change through its insulation and naturalization. So if epistemology is concerned with how we know the world we seek to explain, best practice may be a sophisticated means of *not* inquiring about it, “a policy of forgetting” in Bigo’s terms<sup>18</sup> or what Beck refers to as “manufactured non-knowing”.<sup>19</sup>

### **Erzsebet Strausz**

#### **The epistemology of (IR) ontologies: life on the “/” of power/knowledge**

Drawing on Foucault’s early works on aesthetics, *The Order of Things* and his late lectures on ethics, truth and desubjectivation, this intervention envisions an alternative to (re)think power/knowledge: one that looks into the broader context of such conceptualization of structure or the ‘grids of order’ by focusing on the blank spaces of this grid, the spaces that make such orders (and their scholarly perceptions) ‘hang together’.

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<sup>16</sup> D.A. MacKenzie, *Inventing Accuracy: A historical sociology of nuclear missile guidance* (Baskerville: The MIT press, 1990), 395.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 415.

<sup>18</sup> D. Bigo, “Security and immigration: toward a critique of the governmentality of unease,” *Alternatives* 27 (2002): 63–92, 81.

<sup>19</sup> U Beck, *World at risk* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), 116.

Order, understood as a compound of different ontologies of what can be thought or known of the factual world in our contemporary episteme, can be unmade and exposed in its contingency by going beyond conventional uses of the power/knowledge trope: what does the “/” stand for in this particular scholarly imagination of the social and the political? What does the visuality of this sign tell us about what is no longer articulated but only assumed?

Taking seriously the scholar’s embeddedness in their present, the possibilities of being political are located precisely at the limits of such (ontological) concepts, Foucauldian or other, through which we understand (and re-make) the world in its logic and factuality. Being political, that is, transgressing ontologies without producing counter-ontologies, observing order in its dynamic (un)making, grounding ourselves in what permits but also escapes grounding calls for such a *limit-attitude*: to push ourselves to the limit of thought through which we both inhabit and understand order.

The promise of a critical/sceptical epistemology might be such a destabilizing move that unmakes order as power/knowledge and contests our subjectivity as scholars applying such ‘concepts’ to ‘facts’ – that is, the experience, truth and ethics of life on the “/” of power/knowledge.

The intervention ends with a story of IR’s recent representations of ‘authorship’ and the utilization of ‘governmentality’ as two prominent (but often disconnected) axes of engagement with power/knowledge, retold from the thought-space of the “/”.

## **Interventions on Reflexive Epistemology**

**Andrea Rossi**

### **The making of Man: Human sciences and the politics of subjectivity**

The paper focuses on the epistemic-political stakes of the set of disciplines known as the human sciences. Exploring different accounts of *homo oeconomicus* (as developed by different economic theories), it points to the way and extent to which the power effects induced by the sciences of man are themselves a projection of their ontological-epistemological conditions of possibility.

The first part of the essay provides an exegesis of Michel Foucault’s *The Order of Things* (OT). It first shows how the reconfiguration of positivities and empirical sciences taking place at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century has laid the ground for a novel account of finitude, fundamentally different from the Classical one (17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century). In particular,

the birth of political economy, biology and philology points to the emergence of new epistemic *apriori*: Labour, Life and Language become the synthetic metaphysical principles lying behind, and giving consistency to positivities – “great hidden forces developed on the basis of their primitive and inaccessible nucleus, origin, causality and history” (274). An ontological argument is thus put forward: the modern age witnesses the emergence of a new general configuration of beings, whose condition of possibility is now to be found in a region inaccessible and anterior to knowledge – in Kant’s terms: ‘the thing in itself’. Precisely because of their quasi-transcendental status, Labour, Life and Language are that which determines human finitude empirically - “Man’s finitude is heralded – and imperiously so – in the positivity of knowledge... we perceive the finitude and limits they impose, we sense, as though in their blank reverse sides, all that they make impossible” (OT: 342). However, given their unknowability, modern thought would not have been able to warrant its legitimacy on the ground of the quasi-transcendental only. In fact, it will surreptitiously and aporetically redouble this first determination of finitude upon the transcendental level, positing the existence of a constituent subjectivity whose finitude is the opening by virtue of which empiricities (the very same empiricities determining Man’s finitude) can be known. Once finitude is redoubled upon itself in the interplay of the empirical and the transcendental (and thus it is no longer related to the infinity of God or Nature), Man becomes the hinge and ground of any legitimate form of knowledge and, accordingly, a privileged object of enquiry. The human sciences come to occupy, within this epistemic arrangement, a strategic position: they account for the ways in which Man can represent to himself - and thus bring to consciousness – i.e. thought conscious of itself, transcendental subjectivity - the articulation between that ‘obscure’ region where the quasi-transcendental of Labour, Life and Language hold sway (imposing forms of finitude on Man) and his concrete, actual behaviour. Through the analysis of this interplay of representations, the human sciences silently endeavour to restore in its full plenitude the humanity of Man, promising to unveil that part of himself which eludes his consciousness.

Whereas OT mainly concentrates on the epistemic status of the human sciences, the second part of the paper looks into the relations of power they engender – their concrete political effects – a theme partially developed in Foucault’s lecture series on biopolitics. In particular, this question is explored in relation to the different ways in which *homo oeconomicus* has been thought of by modern economic science. Analyses of *homo oeconomicus* typically conform to OT’s account of the human sciences: their object is not the study of the objective processes (labour, production, accumulation, etc.) taking place in the economic arena, but the ways in which Man can represent such processes and think of them in relation to his concrete economic behaviour (needs, desires, interests, etc.). In so doing, the science of economic man outlines the forms of rationality necessary to conforming individual behaviour to economic processes, thus implicitly taking on a normative function. However, such normative dynamics is not to be understood as a disciplinary *dispositif* meant to make the individual fit into a fixed, pre-given subject position. By inscribing the subject into the ‘curves of normality’

inherent to biological-economic processes, the science of *homo oeconomicus* rather seek to restore the individual to his full life-labouring potentiality (the metaphysical freedom of Labour and Life) which, by its very nature, cannot be circumscribed in advance: the unleashing of this power is precisely what mechanisms of governance take as their primary goal – the liberation of that unknowable, obscure, region determining Man's empirical make-up. By compelling the individual to undertake a (more or less conscious) hermeneutical investigation of his self-interest in relation to the dynamic of Labour, economic rationality entails a flexible process of subjectivation based on the proliferation of 'controlled differences', rather than on a mere equalization of subjectivities. The paper illustrates this point through the investigation of Smith's analysis of the division of labour and the neoliberal account of human capital, pointing at the different effects of subjectivation brought about by different understandings of Labour.

The paper concludes with a few methodological reflections concerning the relation between ontology, epistemology and politics. Throughout the paper, a tight correlation between these three levels is posited: at the dawn of modernity, a novel understanding of being (being as the thing-in-itself, in the form of Labour, Life and Language) has brought about new epistemic foundations (the analytic of finitude and the human sciences) which, in turn, have provided the ground for the emergence of new *dispositif* of power and subjectivation. An iron law seems to hold sway over the correlation of ontology, epistemology and politics, which appears to doom the latter to a sort of determinism- fatalism, rather than to the freedom usually thought to be proper to political action. The paper asks whether and to what extent this view is fit to explain the emergence of the political. If any politics is grounded on a certain experience of being – in Heidegger's terms, it is the corollary of the way being is given (*es gibt*) – and it is not in our power to modify such experience by an act of will or by technological means – what scope is left to political freedom? What kind of freedom can we expect to enjoy politically? And how are we to understand the political project of the Enlightenment, to which Foucault himself subscribed throughout his life?

**Joscha Wullweber**

**The post-positivist paradox: The power of mainstream science and the struggle for objectivity**

One of the basic differences between positivism and post-positivism is that for the latter there is no ahistorical and transcendent *explanans* (such as a universal law), which exhibits a (socially) independent variable.<sup>20</sup> This accounts for post-positivist critique of classical methodological procedures such as deduction and induction. From a post-

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<sup>20</sup> See Wullweber, Joscha/ Scherrer, Christoph (2010): Postmodern and Poststructural International Political Economy, in: Denmark, Robert A. (ed.): The International Studies Encyclopedia, Oxford: Blackwell, Blackwell Reference Online.

positivist perspective, it is not possible to derive concrete events from universal theories (deduction). Nor do many individual cases automatically imply universal explanations (induction). Theory and empirical studies are not static, but fluid and elastic, and subject to constant change. As Derrida puts it: 'There is no general law, there is no general rule [...]. There are only contexts, and this is why deconstructive negotiation cannot produce general rules, "methods". It must be adjusted to each case, to each moment without, however, the conclusion being a relativism or empiricism' (Derrida 2002: 17).<sup>21</sup>

It follows that a post-positivist epistemology problematizes approaches which aim at finding optimal ways of gathering "facts" or at delivering universal truth claims. This does not mean that post-positivism is *anti*-positivistic. An anti-positivist position, in the form of relativism, for example, would imply giving the same weight to every explanation. However, every society requires foundations, that is to say, stable regimes of truth and agreed social practices. Still, according to post-positivism, foundations are not permanent. A post-positivist approach denies the existence of ultimate foundations but not of foundations per se. In other words, it considers the validity of every foundation subject to dispute. In order to engage in a dispute over the notion of foundations, they must, of course, exist in the first place, even if only as contingent foundations (Judith Butler).<sup>22</sup>

Post-positivism is not a neo-positivist approach, either, for it does not state that a certain analysis is more objective than another explanation. It simply denies the existence of a transcendental objectivity, arguing at the same time that some analyses are more *plausible* than others.

But what does plausibility mean in this regard? The plausibility of an analysis is contextually dependent. Something is plausible not because it is closer to a transcendent reality, but because it resonates more than other explanations with a certain horizon of truth. This horizon of truth, in turn, is not just there, waiting to be discovered. Nor does it develop by accident. The questions that need to be asked here are: How and in what way does a specific foundation of a society become temporarily valid? How do we capture the historical moment when a certain social relation or social formation becomes the horizon of a society? And why and how do particular forms of politics become society's common ground? I suggest that the concept of hegemony is a useful and appropriate analytical tool for coming to grips with this problematique.

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<sup>21</sup> Derrida, Jacques (2002) *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews, 1971-2001*. Stanford University Press: Stanford, CA.

<sup>22</sup> Butler, J. (1992) *Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of 'Postmodernism'*. In J. Butler & J.W. Scott (eds.) *Feminists Theorize the Political*. London/ New York: Routledge, pp. 3-21.

Based on hegemony theory as developed by Laclau and Mouffe<sup>23</sup>, I argue that a horizon of truth – a hegemonic discourse formation – arises out of contingent and conflictual struggles among competing claims to truth. From this it follows that a horizon of truth is not a neutral discursive space, but inextricably and necessarily linked to power relations. However, a discourse formation is not just the expression of social power relations. It reacts upon these relations as well, and therefore serves at the same time to constitute and form society. In this sense, a discursive matrix is always a *strategically selective* matrix (Bob Jessop).<sup>24</sup> This implies that some claims and practices are promoted, while others are more difficult to express and perform.

A (critical) post-positivist analysis cannot avoid locating its explanation within this hegemonic system of evidence. Hence, even though post-structuralists are eager to criticize prevailing truth claims (and this rightly so!), their ontology as well as epistemology has to rely on the hegemonic horizon of truth – at least to a certain degree. I call this the post-positivist paradox. Even though it is possible to violate parts of the hegemonic discourse formation, it is not possible to displace the system of evidences altogether – at least not directly.

What implications does this have for epistemology? I argue that we have to be aware of these power struggles and should orient our epistemological strategies accordingly. As Antonio Gramsci would say, there is a struggle for objectivity.<sup>25</sup> It is one of the major challenges for post-structuralists that this struggle is being waged on the grounds of a hegemonic order of reality.

First of all, we have to resist the claim that there would be a clear difference between ontology and epistemology. The questions "What is the nature of what exists?" and "How is knowledge about this nature provided?" are mutually dependent. Framed in this manner, the relation between ontology and epistemology is a hegemonic relation and therefore always political.

It follows that research does not start with an objective problem because there is no such thing. A reason for initiating a research project might be a puzzling situation or an irritation that attracts our attention. From the point of view of hegemony theory, such an irritation would already be a sign for a hegemonic rift in the prevailing discourse formation. For whatever reasons, the hegemonic storyline is not able to provide coherent explanation patterns. It may also be that alternative chains of equivalence, counter-hegemonic storylines, or competing hegemonic truth have gained ground.

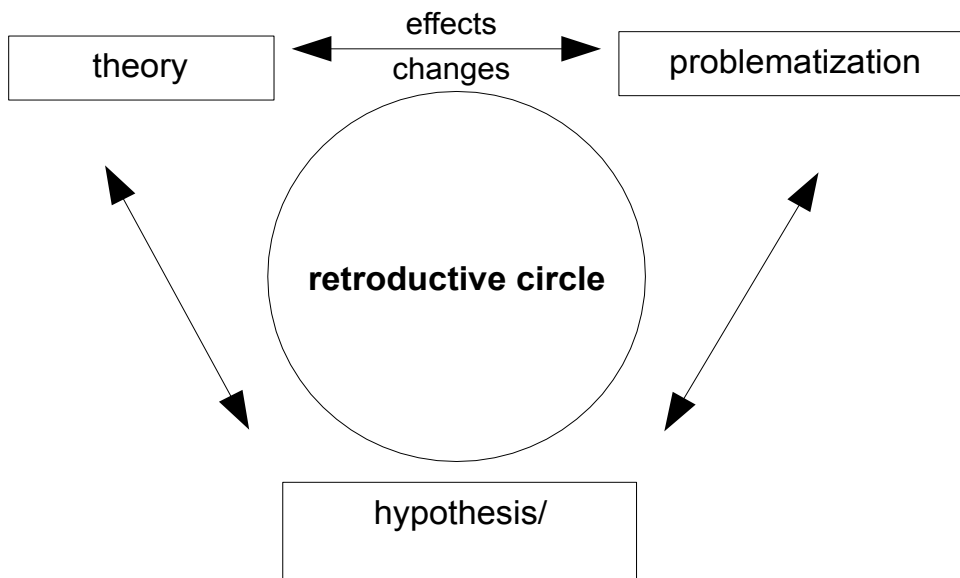
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<sup>23</sup> Laclau, Ernesto/ Mouffe, Chantal (1985): *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, London/ New York: Verso.

<sup>24</sup> Jessop, Bob (2007): *State Power. A Strategic Relational Approach*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

<sup>25</sup> Gramsci, Antonio (1971): *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Problematization follows as the next step. Before this step the problem does not exist. It only arises when the issue is problematized. The process of explanation begins at this point, always grafted on explicit and implicit theoretical assumptions. New irritations are likely to emerge during the process of analysis. This could lead to a revision of the theoretical framework, which would require a new approach to empirical data. This, in turn, would change the hypotheses, calling for new explanations, and so on. Theory and empirical data are constantly in motion. Ontology, epistemology and methodology are not static but affect and shape one another. The process of cognizance performs an oscillating circular movement. Glynos and Howarth call this a retroductive process<sup>26</sup>:



The person conducting research is not detached, but deeply involved in that process. Laclau reminds us that there is no strict separation between fact and personal values. Personal changes profoundly affect how research is carried out. At the same time, conducting research quite often changes the personality of the researchers involved.

We are always already inside a hegemonic discourse formation which offers different subject positions. However, and following Laclau and Mouffe, this hegemonically structured discursive space does not completely determine the subject's possibilities because it is constantly being dislocated. Social structures do not hold their own means to reconstruct themselves. They possess an inherent undecidability. Structures exist because they are permanently being produced, reproduced and altered by the subjects.

<sup>26</sup> Glynos, Jason/ Howarth, David R. (2007): *Logics of Critical Explanation in Social and Political Theory*, London u.a.: Routledge.

This opens the (ontological) possibility for change. Because a hegemonic matrix is always open, and to a certain degree decentred, there is no inner logic which governs change (even though the strategic selectivity of that matrix may provide more incentives for some decisions/ interpretations/ subject positions etc. than for others). No critical epistemology can circumvent the post-positivist paradox. Critical research always relies on a hegemonic horizon of truth. However, constant critical – that is to say, counter-hegemonic – activities and practices can gradually sabotage prevailing truth claims, and, in doing so, displace a hegemonic discourse formation.

Thus, being critical implies being dissident to prevailing practices and constantly subverting hegemonic power relations – and sometimes even invoking a 'strategic essentialism' (Spivak).

**Eddy S. Fang**

### **International Political Economy, Post-Structural Politics and Islamic Finance**

Islamic finance, which less than two decades ago was perceived as an obscure set of financial practices with an uncertain future, has by now been propelled to fame as the latest 'financial innovation' in global markets. Not only private financial institutions, but also monetary and public authorities in non-Muslim countries all around the world have started to expand their activities to Shariah-compliant finance. This, however, came as quite a surprise as the rise of these alternative financial practices occurred in a time when international financial discourse casted financial convergence as the only 'proper' and 'rational' course of economic management.

The present research project focuses on the emergence of Islamic finance in global markets to illustrate the contingent, constructed and contested nature of economic knowledge. I argue that in order to conduct a thorough investigation into the encounter between 'conventional' and Islamic financial representations, one needs to go beyond the traditional boundaries of the 'economic' realm. Indeed, it is only after all claims of economic 'rationality' have been dispelled that the political interaction between the two competing bodies can be studied.

The contribution of this investigation, hence, will be two fold: First, a new epistemological framework will be introduced to the study of alternatives in the global economy. This potentially uncovers a new level of analysis and brings to the surface a series of new research inquiries, which were up to now largely overlooked. And second, not only can an interpretive approach enrich the study of Islamic finance, but Islamic finance itself, by displacing the locus of discursive authority in global finance, also provides compelling evidence to highlight the contingency of the 'natural order' of international economic interactions.

# Interventions on Performative Epistemology

**Catherine Charrett**

## **The Agency of Threat: Acting politically in the performativity of securitizing terrorism**

This intervention aims to invigorate a debate on how we understand “threat” in approaches to terrorism. It argues for a performative account of *threat*, whereby discourses of securitization bring into being the recognizably “threatening” through the interpellation of “threat” and “threatened” into a new social positionality. Engaging with epistemologies of threat through this performative lens opens up the possibility of addressing agency within conceptualizations and representations of *threat*. The *agency of threat* within the securitization of terrorism is contended to be harboured in the space between the interiorization of cultural and temporal fantasies and fears of threat and the performance of threat through the encounter with the “terrorist” other.

By turning to the theory of performativity as developed in the works of Judith Butler this paper argues for a conceptualization of ontology through actions, whereby the subject is constituted through the “stylized repetition of acts”. These actions, however, are only readable through the “matrix of intelligibility”, here argued to be, that which makes the “terrorist” recognizable. Actors repeatedly perform their subjecthood and in turn reinforce the boundaries of intelligibility of “threat and threatened”/ “security actor and terrorist”. Building off Butler’s turn to the “political” and beyond, this intervention argues for the possibility of resistance in “acknowledging” the terrorist threat. It endeavours to present a performative epistemology of threat in order to observe how the “terrorist” can be represented or encountered otherwise. This intervention argues that by observing the disturbance of sovereignty within the securitization of terrorism the potentiality for being political emerges. Through this discussion of the performativity of securitizing terrorism this paper will firstly, address how epistemologies of threat constitute ontologies of threat and secondly, speak to the possibility for resistance by exploring the displacement of sovereignty and thus agency within performances of securitizing terrorism.

**Deirdre McKay**

## **Everyday epistemologies of the global**

Currently, the dominant anthropological/ethnographic methodology for approaching the global charts the ways this novel realm emerges from mundane technocratic practices, public rituals and the production of discourse around belonging. This approach is based on the methodology used to apprehend the everyday state. Here, mapping, describing or theorizing the global/the state has thus meant pretty much the same set of activities: engaging in a kind of meta-analysis intended to extract theory

from micro-level studies. Saskia Sassen has led the way with her seminal work, *Territories, Authority, Rights* (2006). Following her lead, cultural studies of the global have both curated selected ethnographic data and undertaken original discourse analysis. The resulting studies offer us accounts of *the global* as a Deleuzian-type virtual realm being shaped and reshaped by a real-world assemblage of regulatory structures, their slippages and bureaucratic demands, and popular or institutional resistances to them. Too often, intimate, cultural ties have been elided from these accounts of *the global*, not because they are unimportant, but because, as objects of research, they are difficult to apprehend. Such ties leave behind far too few artefacts for secondary academic analysis. Intimacy and emotion are usually too obscure and language-based to be accessible to meta-analytical approaches. Neglecting this aspect of culture has meant, instead, that accounts of the global seem to hinge on the persistence of a monological Western-style individuated subject.

Against this approach, I argue that the intimate and cultural emergence of globality requires a different sort of methodology. I want to see an approach attuned to the different – and differentiating – forms of personhood at work in a globalizing world. What I advocate here is an approach where cultural specificities challenge and extend methods that apprehend the global as simply an institutional super-object or artefact of a globalized popular culture. Thus, instead of being meta-analytical, my own work on the global is ethnographic, historical and multi-sited. My ways of knowing globality come from classical anthropological ways of ‘knowing’ another’s language and culture.

My research on the global has emerged from work with Filipino migrants in London. Participants in my study are predominantly people with irregular immigration status who are doing informal, cash-in-hand caring work. My research explains how their migration translates Filipino concepts of *alayan* (offering, sacrifice or assistance) and *inayan* (karma) into lives led in the UK through the actions and emotional dispositions of care. These two words are Filipino terms describing mutual exposure between self and other across human relations and are intimately related to *kalayaan* – the notion of liberty, describing a freedom that comes through a balance of gifts and obligations. My findings unpack the complex meanings care has for Filipinos. Care underpins virtually all the social relations they inhabit - from kinship and friendships to labour and citizenship. Care shapes migrants’ work in London, their connections to each other, to community groups, to kin in the Philippines and their experiences of the technocratic regulatory regimes shaping migration and public rituals of national belonging – fiestas, Embassy events etc. Filipino migrants understand a lack of perceived care from their own government undermines its legitimacy. They learn about government care because their work reveals the retreat of the British welfare state that previously provided care for many of their employers. For irregular migrants, or those breaking the rules governing their visas, the insecurity attached to their stay in the UK makes life in London particularly anxious. In interviews, migrants described how care work produces a series of small islands of safety that link home in the Philippines to life in London through *alayan* and *inayan*. These spaces of safety depend on emotional connections established

with employers within the mutual exposure required by caring work. Employers, themselves breaking employment laws and subject to fines for not checking workers documents, feel if not equally, then similarly exposed, dependent and insecure. For both of these groups, recourse to *the global* as a shared site of justification for rule-breaking behaviour and imagined realm of equality and communion assuages these feeling of insecurity.

For example, Aida, an overstayer working as a housekeeper, reported:

“My employers care about me, even if I have no papers. ‘Aida’, they say, ‘you care; you make our lives run smoothly and thus also the UK economy. You are one in a million here in London; it’s a global world and the old rules for migration don’t make sense anymore.’”

Employers and employees in these relationships connect the care experienced with employees’ cultural backgrounds, and their broader ideas of ‘a global world’ are instantiated and expanded through such intercultural encounters. It is evident that care here is not simply universal disposition or a technical proficiency – a skill that can be easily mastered or a universal norm – because Filipino migrants are able to market themselves as the quintessential caring people, almost as a brand name (Manalansan 2010). Instead, care is the outcome of encounters between a group of people with a dividual subjectivity – people who carry with them a relational forms of personhood and come from a non-State society - with more individuated UK residents.

In these encounters, *the global* is ‘what people make of it.’ The global is coming into being as an ‘as if’ reality in people’s everyday lives as they try to deal with insecurity in various forms. Framing of the global as a kind of supra-state realm does not suffice here. For Aida, above, the global emerges not primarily through state regulations and migration regimes, but from within the intimate connections of care in her daily life. This care consoles her, assuaging her guilt over her irregular status and, at the same time, enables her employers’ to find recourse in a realm of globality to justify employing her. This suggests a very wide and varied group of people are using everyday intimacies to give shape to a global that exceeds, supplements, and calls into question the state. The fine-grained, ethnographic methodology I’m developing here opens up the global into a sphere of possibility and critique where cultural variations in notions of personhood are recombined and transcended through different forms of relation. This realm is being shaped by a series of cross-cultural ‘emotional grammars’ (Beatty, 2005) learned by participants in these relations to negotiate care. *The global* may also be about regulation, synthesis and over-arching logics, but it is at the same time being composed of the accretion of such intimate, intercultural translations, emerging from and through specific ethnographic contexts.

Beatty, A. (2005) Emotions in the field, *JRAI* 11, 17–37.

Manalansan, M. (2010) "Servicing the world" In J. Staiger *et al.* (eds.) *Political Emotions*. (Routledge, pp. 215-228.)

Sassen, S. (2006) *Territory, Authority, Rights*. Stanford.

**Cathy Elliot**

### **A Pakistani Spring? The Lawyers' Movement and the Articulation of Democracy**

In recent months and years, many parts of the world have witnessed large-scale pro-democracy movements on the streets of countries with authoritarian regimes, tempting politicians, commentators and academics to conclude that democracy is indeed a universal value transcending contexts and cultures<sup>27</sup>. However, rather than accepting a discourse of "universal values" I take it as surprising that diverse movements might secure a particular liberal ontology, in which "democracy" – although in theory highly contested – ends up being understood solely in terms of Western institutions. That is the subject of my intervention, illustrated by Pakistani "Lawyer's Movement" which took place in 2007 in support of the sacked Chief Justice and against the military regime of General Musharraf.

The sacking of the Chief Justice sparked large, popular protests, widely interpreted not merely as a defence of civilian institutions against military rule<sup>28</sup>, but as a "full-scale pro-democracy campaign"<sup>29</sup>. The protests brought together unlikely political allies, including large numbers of lawyers<sup>30</sup>, the two main political parties, assorted NGOs, members of the liberal, middle-classes<sup>31</sup>, activists for women's rights<sup>32</sup> and even the main alliance of religious parties<sup>33</sup>. The protesters were able to celebrate the return of democratic elections in February 2008 after nearly a decade of military rule.

If this alliance was incongruous, its figurehead was perhaps yet more unlikely. For one thing, the Chief Justice had scarcely been a consistent champion of democracy: his own rulings as a Supreme Court Justice legitimised martial law in 2000 and permitted Musharraf to retain his position as head of the army in 2002<sup>34</sup>. It is furthermore possible

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<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Amartya Sen, "Democracy as a Universal Value," *Journal of Democracy* 10, no. 3 (1999); Tony Blair, "A Battle for Global Values," *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 1 (2007); Anwar Ibrahim, "Universal Values and Muslim Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 17, no. 3 (2006)

<sup>28</sup> Aryn Baker, "Pakistan's Reluctant Hero" *Time Magazine*,

<sup>29</sup> William Dalrymple, "A New Deal in Pakistan," *The New York Review of Books* 55, no. 5 (2008) and see also Asma Jahangir, "Pakistan: A Path Through Danger" (2009) accessed at <http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/pakistan-a-path-through-danger> on 5 October, 2009

<sup>30</sup> Hence the widely-used name of the movement: see Salman Raja, "Pakistan: Inside the Storm" (2007) accessed at [http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/conflicts/pakistan\\_inside\\_the\\_storm](http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/conflicts/pakistan_inside_the_storm) on 5 October, 2009

<sup>31</sup> Dalrymple "A New Deal in Pakistan"

<sup>32</sup> Pippa Virdee, "Pakistan: Women's Quest for Entitlement" (2009) accessed at <http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/pakistan-history-in-women-s-voices> on 5 October, 2009

<sup>33</sup> BBC, "In Pictures: Pakistan Protests" (2007) accessed at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in\\_pictures/6458503.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_pictures/6458503.stm) on 5 October, 2009

<sup>34</sup> Baker, "Pakistan's Reluctant Hero"

to argue that there is nothing particularly democratic about the role of lawyers or supreme courts in general – who might be thought to curtail the role of democratic politics in favour of unaccountable judges<sup>35</sup>. Moreover, it is argued that an emphasis on the role of courts reduces the role of citizens from law-makers to, at best, litigants appealing to defend their already-defined rights<sup>36</sup>.

Ernesto Laclau's theory of "articulation" gives us some tools to understand how the "unity of the group" can be forged out of this sort of diversity in contingent historical circumstances<sup>37</sup>, starting at the level of the "demand". In this case, demands for political rights and freedoms, elections, the independence of the courts, and so on, have failed to be met each in isolation by the military regime. This is what enables them to be articulated in an equivalential relationship, a chain<sup>38</sup>. Struggle is enabled because the social order is split between the deposed Chief Justice and the military regime<sup>39</sup>. Laclau argues that the constitution of a "popular identity" can only take place through processes of articulation of equivalences, and that therefore, "the *sine qua non* requirement of the political are the constitution of antagonistic frontiers within the social and the appeal to new subjects of social change"<sup>40</sup>.

Thus, in Laclau's terms, the Chief Justice's cause is "privileged" and comes "to signify a much wider camp against an oppressive regime"<sup>41</sup>. The particularistic demand for the reinstatement of the Chief Justice has become less important than its role in signifying "something quite different from itself: the total chain of equivalential demands". What is at stake for the protesters and their diverse supporters is democracy itself: the Chief Justice's cause is the cause of democracy and, therefore, the cause of the other demands that are linked equivalentially to it. This does not mean that the Chief Justice is nothing more than a convenient banner. However, the demand for reinstatement takes on the function of holding the chain of equivalential demands together, giving them substance and meaning and *enacting* the link between them. By this account, the signifier that refers to the complete chain is an "empty signifier": the Pakistani protests performatively *constitute* the meaning of democracy as a set of rather specific, contingently related demands, including that for an independent judiciary, which have no inevitable relationship to each other<sup>42</sup>.

Laclau therefore provides helpful tools and vocabulary to understand this kind of broad-based social movement. However, by beginning at the level of the demand, his account leaves out a crucial question: why do people demand the things they do? The

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<sup>35</sup> Richard Bellamy, *Political Constitutionalism: A Republican Defence of the Constitutionality of Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

<sup>36</sup> Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000): 42

<sup>37</sup> Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (Abingdon: Verso Books, 2005): 73-74.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Baker, "Pakistan's Reluctant Hero"

<sup>40</sup> Laclau, *On Populist Reason*: 154-5

<sup>41</sup> Laclau, *On Populist Reason*: 81

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*: 95 - 97

constitution of their specific demands might be investigated using Foucault to think about the way a set of practices and values associated with liberal democracy have enabled the constitution of a particular kind of democratic subjectivity. This would require an understanding of productive power operating through a process of subjectivation by which individuals come to assume subjectivities through participation in social practices and technologies<sup>43</sup>, such as acting as litigants, or voting. This is the power that prescribes (and limits) how we know what democracy is.

This epistemological move complicates the binary formulation of “oppression” versus “resistance” used normatively by Laclau, as well as any celebration of “universal values”. The role of the Chief Justice in constituting the articulated chain of demands for democracy may be contingent, but it is certainly not arbitrary - it is conditioned by the historically constituted workings of power and secures a liberal democratic ontology. The struggle for democracy, then, cannot simply be a question of an indigenous movement reclaiming democracy for their own purposes. Furthermore, it cannot simply take place *between* two articulated chains of demands that are horizontally and equivalentially articulated. Rather, they must always already be taking place *within* articulated formation. It is crucial, for example, to understand that the protesters were demanding democracy within a context in which a certain form of liberal, representative democracy is privileged and promoted, perhaps to the detriment of imagined alternatives, including more locally-rooted forms of decision-making, such as the *jirga* or *panchayat*. Whilst new articulations and forms of resistance are doubtless possible, the Pakistani protests suggest that often these are by no means unproblematically constituted by or constitutive of “new subjects of social change”. They are rather precarious and contingent re-articulations of already-existing subjectivities, ontologies and epistemologies, which inevitably reproduce subjects of social change within existing webs of power.

### **Martin Coward**

#### **Network thinking and the normalisation of a politics beyond ethico-legal constraint**

This intervention focuses on the manner in which the network has come to structure thinking about security and governance in the contemporary era. As an order of the real the network presupposes surpassing the methodological territorialism of the international. However, the webs of interconnected nodes that characterise the network are de-territorialised in a way that precludes referring to them as properly global (even if they are globalized).

Indeed, one of the key epistemological entailments of the network is that it structures thought in a de-territorialised, non-linear fashion that is constitutive of a spatiality at odds with the classical territorial orders of the real that have dominated thinking about

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<sup>43</sup> Michel Foucault, ““Afterword: The Subject and Power”” in *Michel Foucault : Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, edited by Hubert L Dreyfus, and Paul Rabinow (Brighton: Harvester, 1982)

international or global politics. As both a description of empirical dynamics and an explanatory category, the network has been seen as apt for a critical reappraisal of the contemporary period precisely because of the manner in which it seemingly surpasses the classical territorial orders of the real.

However, recent deployments of the network trope in counter-terrorism should make us think about the unquestioned political entailments of the network as an epistemological trope. The network re-enchants warfare presupposing a precise use of force that has no effect on its territorial surroundings. Social network analysis presupposes a focus in individuals to the detriment of the cultures and contexts within which they are situated. The network trope filters what is considered extraneous to focus simply on a set of key, interconnected nodes. That which is extraneous is rendered invisible, as is collateral damage inflicted on it. Moreover, since our ethico-legal limits on the use of force are predicated on a methodological territorialism, the network surpasses the historically sedimented norms that have traditionally constrained organised violence.

In this intervention I will look at the way in which the network begins as an epistemological category that naturalises a certain spatial understanding. This spatiality then translates into ontological suppositions about the manner in which disruptive intervention (or force) is to be deployed in or against socio-political structures. As epistemology, the network thus naturalises a certain politics by providing the ground on which a certain action in the world is predicated. I will illustrate my comments with reference to the ongoing war on terror, particularly the escalation of drone warfare in the so-called AF-PAK theatre.