

The Cultural and Social Dimensions of the Economic Crisis 2008-2014. Financial Cultures, Human Suffering and Social Protests

Manuel Castells

2013 Balzan Prize for Sociology

Balzan GPC Adviser: Dominique Schnapper

Project Directors: John Thompson, Sarah Banet-Weiser, Mireia Fernandez-Ardevol

Researchers: Michelle Forelle, Nahoi Koo, Lana Swartz, Antonio Calleja-Lopez, Arnau Monterde, Javier Toret, Enrique Serrano, Eirini Avramopoulou, Silvia Pasquetti

Affiliated Institutions: University of Cambridge; University of Southern California; Open University of Catalonia, Barcelona

Period: 2014-2017

Manuel Castells is University Professor and Wallis Annenberg Chair of Communication Technology and Society at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles; Professor at the Open University of Catalonia, Barcelona; Director of Research in the Department of Sociology, University of Cambridge; and Professor Emeritus of Sociology and of City and Regional Planning at the University of California at Berkeley. His threefold research program, conducted over three years (2014-2017), in three of the different institutions to which he is directly affiliated (the University of Southern California, the Open University of Catalonia and Cambridge University) falls under the general theme of *The Cultural and Social Dimensions of the Economic Crisis 2008-2014*. Castells coordinated the entire research program, with associate directors taking scientific responsibility for supervising the work of the young researchers (at the University of Southern California, Professor Sara Banet-Weiser; at the Open University of Catalonia, Dr. Mireia Fernandez-Ardevol; at the University of Cambridge, Professor John Thompson). The young researchers in each of the three institutions conducted their own research, leading eventually to their own publications, with the guidance and support of the coordinators and supervisors of the research program. A considerable number of individual publications have come out of this project; others are planned or underway.

RESEARCH TEAM 1: University of Southern California, Annenberg School of Communication – “NEW FINANCIAL CULTURES AFTER THE CRISIS”

Director: Professor Sarah Banet-Weiser

Young Researchers: Michelle Forelle, Nahoi Koo, Lana Swartz

The three young researchers included in this project were Dr. Lana Swartz, now Assistant Professor of Communication at the University of Virginia; Nahoi Koo and Michelle Forelle, both doctoral students at the Annenberg School of Communication at the time. Each one of them developed their own projects of research, under the general theme of the transformation of business cultures during and after the economic crisis of 2008-10. Forelle studied the cultural origins of financial derivatives in Wall Street; Koo studied the rise of new entrepreneurial networks in Silicon Valley; Swartz provided a comprehensive analysis of the cultural foundations of currencies and means of payment with a focus on cryptographic currencies, such as Bitcoin. The three young researchers were academically very active from 2014 to 2016, and are well on their way to brilliant careers. Balzan support has been acknowledged in several of their publications.

Part 1: New Financial Culture in Wall Street

Michelle Forelle: Research activities undertaken for the Balzan Project

After an exploratory research trip to New York City in September 2014, Forelle met with other researchers from the social/cultural studies of finance field, including Arjun Appadurai, Randy Martin, Rob Wosnitzer, and Caitlin Zaloom, and conducted interviews with financiers, most notably John Reed, former chairman of the New York Stock Exchange, and former CEO of Citigroup. During the 2014-2015 academic year, she developed her methodology in a seminar paper examining high-speed trading for the graduate course “Capitalism, Culture, and Communication” with Professor Christopher Holmes Smith in the fall of 2014, and in the spring of 2015 conducted additional research as part of a seminar paper for the graduate course “Political Sociology” with Professor Nina Eliasoph. In April 2015, she attended the conference “Intersections of Cultural Studies and Finance” at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She presented her research proposal, early research and preliminary findings as part of a graduate student panel and received valuable feedback from prominent scholars and interested peers. In the fall of 2016, she continued her research in New York City, and presented a paper, “‘Then you are making riskless money’: A

critical discourse analysis of credit default swap coverage in the financial trade press” (submitted to the *Journal of Cultural Economy*).

Part 2: The New Financial Cultures of Silicon Valley

Lana Swartz and Nahoi Koo worked on the New Financial Cultures in response to the 2008 global financial crisis, with a focus on the cultures of financial innovation in Silicon Valley, including new forms of currency, new payment systems, and new forms of collaborative consumption and alternative economic practices.

Lana Swartz: Research activities undertaken for the Balzan Project

During the period of work supported by the Balzan Foundation Prize, Swartz completed her dissertation on the cultures of money as a key component of the transformation of business cultures during and after the financial crisis. She focused much of her work on the rise of cryptographic currencies, such as Bitcoin, as an expression of new entrepreneurial financial cultures. The impact of her research, partly conducted under the auspices of the Balzan project, allowed her to select academic job offers from various universities. Swartz is currently Assistant Professor of Media Studies at the University of Virginia.

Research

Swartz’s dissertation, *Tokens, Ledgers, and Rails: The Communication of Money* (defended in 2015) was supported by the Balzan Foundation. After preparing it for publication, the book has been submitted to Yale University Press for full review.

Swartz also began a research project inquiring into everyday practices of financial technology. She conducted twenty in-depth interviews with young people in two cities on their use of payment apps, most notably, Venmo, the most popular mobile payment system in the United States. In particular, she was interested in how interviewees negotiate economic dimensions of social relationships through this technology and how they experience surveillance, platform governance, and other components of the political economy of this technology. This research will complement her existing dissertation research, be included in the book manuscript and form the basis of at least one journal article.

Longitudinal research on the economic culture of the financial technology industry was also continued by engaging in participant observation at Money2020, the largest and most important related trade show (Swartz's fourth year at this event). As in previous years, she conducted interviews with key members of the industry. This research supplemented her dissertation research and is included in her in-progress monograph as well as other publications.

A research project with Nancy Baym (Principal Researcher, Social Media Collective, Microsoft Research New England) and Andrea Alarcon (previously Research Assistant, Social Media Collective, Microsoft Research New England; currently PhD student, Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, University of Southern California) was begun on attempts by activists and Silicon Valley entrepreneurs to change the economic culture of the global music industry by adopting blockchain technology. The team collected and analysed original documentary data and interviews.

Publications

Books

Lana Swartz. Manuscript in preparation. *Old Money, New Money*. Solicited by MIT Press, Columbia University Press, and Yale University Press.

Bill Maurer and Lana Swartz, eds. Forthcoming. *Paid: Tales of Dongles, Checks, and Other Money Stuff*. MIT Press.

Journal Editing

Lana Swartz and Michael Palm, eds. In preparation. "Money, Technology, Culture." Special Issue of *Cultural Studies*.

Journal Articles

Taylor Nelms, Lana Swartz and Bill Maurer. In review. "The Economy of 'Just Us': A Dispatch from the Cambrian Explosion in Payments," *Theory, Culture and Society*.

Lana Swartz. In review. "What Was Bitcoin? A Retrospective Introduction." *Cultural Studies*.

Lana Swartz. 2016. "The Lonely Old Bitcoin Miner Touches Eternity: Or, What is a Peer?" *King's Review Journal*, King's College Cambridge.

Chapters in Books

Lana Swartz. "Blockchain Dreams: Imagining techno-economic alternatives after bitcoin." *Another Economy is Possible*, edited by Manuel Castells. Polity Press, 2017.

Lana Swartz. "The Diners' Club Card." *Paid: Tales of Dongles, Checks, and Other Money Stuff*, edited by Bill Maurer and Lana Swartz. MIT Press, 2017.

Lana Swartz and David Stearns. In final review. "Money and its Technologies in the Modern Era." *History of Money: The Modern Era*, edited by David Peterson. Bloomsbury Press.

Presentations

- Invited Speaker, December 2016, "Imagined Economies," *Movable Type* launch, University of Virginia.
- Roundtable Speaker, October 2016, "Studying Technology Industries," Association of Internet Researchers, Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society, Berlin.
- Invited Guest, September 2016, "The End of Cash?" *BBC Newshour with Owen Bennett Jones*. BBC Radio.
- Fellows Speaker, July 2016, "Goodbye Wallet?" Berkman Center for Internet and Society, Harvard University.
- Artist in Residence, June 2016, "The Lonely Old Bitcoin Miner Touches Eternity," ACE New York.
- Invited Participant, May 2016, "Shared Ledgers and Financial Crimes Roundtable," Harvard Law School.
- Invited Participant, April 2016, "Bitcoin Roundtable, Digital Currency Initiative," MIT Media Lab.
- Invited graduate seminar leader, March 2016. "Being Interested in Boring Things: Studying the Infrastructures of our Everyday Digital Lives," Aarhus University.
- Invited Participant, February 2016, "Shared Ledgers and Intellectual Property Roundtable," Harvard Law School.
- Fellows Speaker, January 2016, "Tokens, Ledgers, and Rails: The Communication of Money." Berkman Center for Internet and Society, Harvard University.

Nahoi Koo: Research activities undertaken for the Balzan Project

Nahoi Koo has independently worked on three different research projects supported by the Balzan Foundation: (1) startup networks in Silicon Valley, (2) global culture and transnational entrepreneurship in South Korea, and (3) the feeling of happiness in the network society. During her spring semester in 2016, Koo spent a month in the San Francisco Bay area to conduct fieldwork. She attended eight startup conferences and networking events in Santa Clara, San Jose, Oakland, Mountain View, San Francisco, and Redwood City. As a conference participant, she was able to engage in startup competition and pitching events with other professionals in the technology industry. She was also able to make connections and recruit her interview respondents during networking sessions. Her paper from this project was presented at the European Group for Organizational Studies Colloquium.

Simultaneously, Koo collected company data of 150 billion-dollar global startups using multiple secondary sources. She is currently revising a statistical model to test variables that predict a startup's business performance. This will be further explored in her forthcoming doctoral dissertation. In the past few years, she has written and presented four papers using econometric and network analyses of startups in Silicon Valley. One of her papers, "Integrating Network Theories and Analysis into Research on Entrepreneurship", won the top student paper award from the National Communication Association. For the same paper, she also received a student award from the Korean American Communication Association.

Koo spent her summer in Seoul interviewing young entrepreneurs in 2015. Her fieldwork was also supported by the Academy of Korean Studies. She used snowball sampling to recruit a dozen respondents who returned to Korea after graduating from college in the United States. The paper she wrote for this project, which will be presented at the USC Korean Studies Institute, explored how the micro- and macro-level processes of transnational brain circulation contributed to South Korea's creative economy. Another paper she wrote for this project grapples with global cultures and hybrid identities. She creates a topology of distinct hybrid identities based on individuals' migration history.

For her last project, Koo used the World Value Survey to construct a structural equation model of subjective well-being. Results showed that inclusion of an individual's network was positively associated with his/her feeling of happiness and life satisfaction. However, diversification of information access through different

information and communication technologies was negatively associated with feelings of happiness and life satisfaction. She presented her paper for this project at the conference of the International Communication Association. Koo also expanded her paper investigating how people in Catalonia responded to the 2008 financial crisis. Despite the economic downturn, people who participated in the sharing economy felt more empowered and satisfied.

During the three years of participating in the Balzan research group, Koo was able to grow as a productive, interdisciplinary scholar. She was supervised by Professor Sarah Banet-Weiser to discuss her research ideas and designs. She also took a variety of methodology courses such as econometrics, structural equation modeling, social network analysis, and python programming from the department of economics, the Keck School of Medicine, and the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California. Also supported by the USC Graduate Student Government, the Annenberg Research Network on International Communication, and the Annenberg Foundation, she was able to participate in doctoral consortiums and summer institutes at the University of Oxford. A list of the scholarship produced in relation to her research follows.

Paper Presentations

1. The emergence of transnational entrepreneurship in South Korea's creative economy. Paper presented at the 5th Annual Korean Studies Institute Symposium, Los Angeles, CA. January 26, 2017
2. Integrating network theories and analysis into research on entrepreneurship. Paper presented at the 102nd Annual Convention of National Communication Association (Session: Top Student Papers in Business Communication). Philadelphia, PA. November 10-13, 2016
3. Mechanisms of Schumpeterian entrepreneurship in Silicon Valley technology startups. Paper presented at the 32nd EGOS Colloquium 'Organizing in the Shadow of Power' (Sub-theme: The Entrepreneurial Origins of Organizational Routines and their Impact on the Development of Organizations). Naples, Italy. July 7-9, 2016
4. Network analysis of startups participating in the sharing economy. Paper presented at the XXXV Sunbelt Conference of the International Network for Social Network Analysis (Business Networks Session). Brighton, UK. June 23-28, 2015

5. Evaluating subjective well-being in the network society. Paper presented at the 65th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (Communication and Technology Division). San Juan, Puerto Rico. May 21-25, 2015
6. What predicts a successful startup?: Evaluating economic performance in an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) startup ecosystem. Paper presented at the Annenberg Graduate Fellowship Research and Creative Project Symposium. Los Angeles, CA. April 28, 2015

Research Presentations

1. Mechanisms of Schumpeterian entrepreneurship in Silicon Valley. Research presented at Annenberg Research Symposium. Los Angeles, CA. October 10, 2016
2. Entrepreneurial startup networks of innovation in the post-2008 Silicon Valley. 1. Research presented at the 7th Annual Doctoral Consortium of the Communication and Technology Division of the International Communication Association. Fukuoka, Japan. June 9, 2016
3. Entrepreneurial networks of innovation in Silicon Valley: The new wave of innovation after the 2008 financial crisis. Research presented the Oxford Internet Institute Summer Doctoral Programme. Oxford, UK. July 15, 2015

Journal Submissions

1. The new culture of sharing in the post-2008 Silicon Valley (Regional Studies)
2. The emergence of transnational entrepreneurship in South Korea's creative economy (East Asian Journal of Business Management)
3. Integrating network theories and analysis into research on entrepreneurship (Journal of Business Research)
4. Network analysis of startups participating in the sharing economy (Journal of Small Business and Enterprise)
5. Evaluating subjective well-being in the network society (Journal of New Media and Society)

Working Papers

1. Globalization, International Migration, and Hybrid Identities
2. Happiness in the Aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis: A Case Study of Catalonia

RESEARCH TEAM 2: IN3 – Open University of Catalonia, Seminar on Communication and Civil Society – “THE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL DIMENSION OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS 2008-2014: FROM HUMAN SUFFERING TO SOCIAL PROTEST. A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NETWORKED SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN SPAIN AND THE US (2011-2014)”

Director: Dr. Mireia Fernandez-Ardevol

Young Researchers: Arnau Monterde, Javier Toret, Antonio Calleja-Lopez

The three recipients of the Balzan Prize awarded to Professor Castells linked to the IN3 – Open University of Catalonia have worked to conduct an in-depth, comparative analysis of two selected network movements: 15M in Spain and Occupy Wall Street (OWS) in the US. Popular indignation against the management of the financial crisis has led, both in Europe and the United States, to the rise of social protests and social movements that have distinctive features in the age of the Internet. Since 2011 social movements in which networks play an important role have emerged. These movements have a number of characteristics that point to multiple and complex new perspectives to analyze and understand them. Network movements seem to have real and deep impacts in the societies they emerge from. At the same time, there are significant relations among these movements in different countries that urge us to start looking at them in their relational dimension.

The main goal was to compare these two significant experiences, the 15M and OWS, taking into account the dynamics of the current global wave of mobilizations that are shaping social transformations and are shaped by them. Three main dimensions define the specific goals: first, the characterization of the collectives related to the two movements and their degree of involvement; second, the analysis of the network movements from a multidimensional perspective; and third, the study of their social, cultural and institutional impacts.

The original project at the IN3 was designed, in practical terms, to allow the three young researchers to work in an interrelated way. Each of them developed their activity individually to achieve the goals of the project, showing a growing intellectual autonomy. The Balzan funding also made it possible to hire two research assistants that helped in specific tasks of the project during given periods of time.

Arnau Monterde

Arnau's research goes beyond the boundaries of academia as he has the aim of fostering empirically-based reflection in Spanish society. Most of his production is in therefore Spanish, in order to allow such reflection and dialogue with social actors. His is also highly committed to making his results open to the society. This shapes his selected channels for publication (i.e., academic open access journals). The Internet constitutes an essential channel to socialize research results, and with this end in mind, the website <http://tecnopolitica.net/> has a dedicated section to the Balzan Prize project. Arnau has published both journal articles and book chapters at an international level. Most of his production is still in the form of working papers that constitute the seed for future journal articles. He has already submitted a manuscript based on his PhD dissertation for publication by the most prestigious Spanish publishers in social sciences and humanities, Editorial Alianza. After the three-year period of the Balzan Prize, Arnau undoubtedly strengthened his autonomy as a researcher and demonstrated his capacity to secure new funding sources to maintain his personal research program, which is now turning into democratic direct participation as the next steps taken by the networked movements that already entered in the political institutions. In particular, he is a researcher of the H2020 project "Decentralised Citizens Owned Data Ecosystem" (DECODE).

Besides his participation in EU funded research projects, the primary indicator of the strong contribution of Balzan Prize in the case of Arnau is his full-time position as postdoctoral researcher at the IN3 Research Institute at the Open University of Catalonia since January 2017.

Journal Articles

Monterde, A., Calleja-López, A., Aguilera, M., Barandiaran, X. E., Postill, J. (2015). Multitudinous identities: a qualitative and network analysis of the 15M collective identity. *Information, Communication & Society*, 18(8), 930-950. <http://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2015.1043315> [JCR Impact Factor 2.109, 1st Quartile]

PhD Dissertation

Monterde, A. (2015). *Emergencia, evolución y efectos del movimiento-red 15M (2011-2015). Una aproximación tecnopolítica*. [Emergency, evolution and effects of the 15M network movement (2011-2015). A technopolitical approach], Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Barcelona. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle>.

net/10803/327599 (Awarded Exceptional thesis by the UOC Doctoral School, and to be submitted to Editorial Alianza for publication).

Working Papers

- Monterde, A., Aragon, P., Esteve M., Carrillo, R. (2016). *#YoSoy132: ¿Un nuevo paradigma en la política Mexicana?* Doctoral Working Paper Series DWP15-003 IN3 Working Paper Series <http://in3-working-paper-series.uoc.edu/in3/ca/index.php/in3-working-paper-series/article/>
- Monterde, A., Calleja-López, A., Blanche, D., Fernández-Ardèvol, M. (October 2017). 15M: The movement in its third anniversary. IN3 Working Paper Series.
- Blanche, D., Calleja-López, A., Fernández-Ardèvol, M., Monterde, A. (November 2017). Occupy Wall Street: The movement in its third anniversary. IN3 Working Paper Series.

Talks and Conferences

- Monterde, A. (2016). *Decidim Barcelona: From network-movements to democratic city*. Speaker at Conference: CyberParty. Popular Politics in digital times. Date: May 13th. Organized by: Centre for Digital Culture at King's College London (UK).
- Monterde, A. (2016). *New forms of direct democracy and citizen participation in the Digital Age*. Speaker at Conference: Network democracy and new forms of citizen participation. Organized by: D-CENT project, Rome (Italy).
- Monterde, A. (2015). *New Forms of Collective Deliberation*. Speaker at Meeting: At the Roots of Collective Intelligence. Organized by Nesta, London (UK).
- Monterde, A. (2014). *Tecnopolítica y reinención de la plaza en la onda global por la democracia real [Technopolitics and reinvention of the square in the real democracy global wave]*. Speaker at Meeting: Independent studies program (MACBA), Barcelona (Spain).
- Monterde, A. (2014). *La emergencia de los movimientos red. Una conversación empírica y multidisciplinar con la teoría de los movimientos sociales [The emergence of network movements. An empirical and multidisciplinary conversation with social movements theory]*. Meeting: Datanalysis15M meeting (IN3-UOC), Barcelona (Spain).

Javier Toret

Balzan funding supported Javier to coordinate the book entitled *Tecnopolítica y 15M: La potencia de las multitudes conectadas* [Technopolitics and the 15M: The Power of Connected Crowds], published in 2015. Due to the international impact

of this research, Toret has been invited to deliver public talks in several countries, which has helped him to support his research activities and, in selected cases, timely fieldwork.

In mid-2016 Javier was hired by a prestigious private company to coordinate training courses on digital communication strategies for political communities on an international level, and selected projects on communication and politics, which fulfill his interest as practitioner and distances him from academia.

Book

Toret, J. (editor and author) (2015). *Tecnopolítica y 15M: La potencia de las multitudes conectadas*. [Technopolitics and the 15M: The power of connected multitudes]. Barcelona: Editorial UOC.

Talks and Conferences

- Toret, J. (2015). *La experiencia de Barcelona en común. Entre redes, plazas y urnas*. Talk at Meeting: II Seminário de Comunicação e Territorialidades (Póscom-UFES), Vitoria (Brasil).
- Toret, J. (2015). *Territorialidades em rede, el caso de Barcelona en común*. Talk at Workshop: Taller herramientas de participación digital y prototipos institucionales (ITESO-Universidad de Guadalajara), Guadalajara (Mexico).
- Toret, J. (2014). *Límites y potencias de prácticas tecnopolíticas del 15M a #OccupyCentral. Nuevos experimentos tecnopolíticos en la fase constituyente 2013-2015* [Limits and powers of technopolitical practices, from 15M to #OccupyCentral. New technopolitics experiments in the constituent phase 2013-2015]. Meeting: Networked Democracy and Technopolitics (IN3-UOC), Barcelona (Spain).
- Toret, J. (2014). *#OccupyHongKong: los movimientos en red llegan a Asia* [#OccupyHongKong: network movements arrive in Asia]. Meeting: Network, Movements, and Technopolitics (IN3-UOC), Barcelona (Spain).

Antonio Calleja-López

Antonio has combined the Balzan Prize project with wider research in sociological studies on techno-scientific practice and innovation. Internationally focused, he has demonstrated a clear commitment to follow an academic career that has been supported by his participation in the Balzan Prize project.

Thanks to the Balzan Prize support, Antonio has been able to focus his research on the

emerging forms of technopolitics and democracy within the 15M protest movement, which helped him to finish his PhD dissertation in January 2017.

Book

Serrano, E., Calleja-López, A., Monterde, A. & Toret, J. (Eds.) (2014). *15MP2P. Una mirada transdisciplin ar del 15M. [15Mp2p a transdisciplinary approach of 15M]* Barcelona: UOC-IN3.

PhD Dissertation

Calleja-López, A. (2017). *Since 15M: the technopolitical reassembling of democracy in Spain (2011-2016)*. University of Exeter, UK. Supervisor: Andrew Pickering. Retrievable at <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/handle/10871/29295>

Working Papers

Monterde, A., Calleja-López, A., Blanche, D., Fernández-Ardèvol, M. (October 2017). *15M: The movement in its third anniversary*. IN3 Working Paper Series.

Blanche, D., Calleja-López, A., Fernández-Ardèvol, M., Monterde, A. (November 2017). *Occupy Wall Street: The movement in its third anniversary*. IN3 Working Paper Series.

Talks and Conferences

- Calleja-López, A. (2016). ¿Por qué decidim?. Talk at Meeting: #Metadecidim. I jornadas/Hackathon del decidim.barcelona, Barcelona (Spain).
- Calleja-López, A. (2016). *Since 15M: the (contentious) technopolitical reassembling of democracy in Spain*. Meeting: 4S/EASST Conference Barcelona 2016, Barcelona (Spain).
- Calleja-Lopez, A. (2015). *15M and Podemos: a comparative analysis of their multi-layer systems and practices*. [talk] Meeting: Protest Participation in Variable Communication Ecologies. Alghero (Sardinia, Italy).
- Calleja-Lopez, A. (2015). *Devenires de la tecnopolítica: una breve (y problemática) historia conceptual*. Talk at Meeting: #GlobalRevExp: Emergencia de las prácticas tecnopolíticas, 2010-2015, Barcelona.
- Calleja-López, A. (2014). *Socratic Practices, Promethean Differentials and Sociotechnical Integration*. Talk at Meeting: Communities of Integration Conference, Kitchener (Canada).
- Calleja-López, A. (2014). *Construcción y conflicto: movimientos (en) red y devenires de internet*. Talk, Santiago de Querétaro (Mexico).

- Calleja-López, A. (2014). *Datanalysis15M and Technopolitics*. Talk at Meeting: Technopolitics seminar, Leicester (UK).
- Calleja-López, A. (2014). *Collective Action, Technopolitics, Ontology*. Talk at Meeting: Global Activism Symposium, Karlsruhe (Germany).

Organized Academic Meetings

#GlobalRevExp: Emergencia de las prácticas tecnopolíticas, 2010-2015. Organizer: Network, Movements and Technopolitics, IN3-UOC, in collaboration with ITESO (Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente) Guadalajara, México, UFES (Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo), and the @DatAnalysis15M network. Barcelona (Spain), July 13-14, 2015. <http://tecnopolitica.net/content/emergencia-de-las-pr%C3%A1cticas-Tecnopol%C3%ADticas-2010-2015>

Organized Public Outreach Meetings

Network Democracy for a Better City. Organizer: Network, Movements and Technopolitics, IN3-UOC. May 5-6, 2015. Barcelona (Spain). Info at: <http://tecnopolitica.net/content/democraticcity-democracia-en-red-para-un-nuevo-gobierno-de-las-ciudades>

RESEARCH TEAM 3: Cambridge University – “THE HUMAN AND SOCIAL COST OF ECONOMIC CRISIS”

Director: Professor John Thompson

Young Researchers: Eirini Avramopoulou, Silvia Pasquetti

Aims

The aim of this strand of the research funded by the Balzan Foundation, as part of the Balzan Prize won by Manuel Castells in 2013, was to explore the ways in which individuals and groups in different parts of Europe live through and experience the economic crisis, how it affects them and how they respond to it, both at the level of feelings, emotions and forms of suffering and in terms of practices and types of collective action. A bottom-up approach was adopted to study in a qualitative and ethnographic way, through in-depth interviews and close observation, the daily lives of ordinary individuals in carefully selected regions of Europe. This qualitative research was used as a basis for developing new concepts, theoretical ideas and arguments to understand the lived reality of economic crisis, to analyse the feelings,

emotions, forms of suffering and practices that characterize the ways that individuals experience and respond to economic crisis, and to study the processes through which these emotions, forms of suffering and practices feed into types of collective action, including protest movements and other kinds of social and political action such as voting in elections and referendums.

Achievements

The original plan was to carry out fieldwork in three countries – two in southern Europe, where the deleterious consequences of the crisis have been most apparent, and one in northern Europe. Greece and Italy were selected as the two southern European countries, and the plan was to carry out research in the UK as the country in northern Europe. In practice, empirical research was focused in Greece and Italy, and an originally planned-for third case study was dropped because the empirical research in Greece and Italy proved to be immensely fruitful and at the same time very challenging and time-consuming, and the exceptionally high quality of the interviews carried out in Greece and Italy required a substantial amount of money that had to be set aside in order to translate and transcribe them so they could be accessible. Moreover, as the social and economic trajectory of the UK evolved and the economic crisis of 2007-08 began to recede. Other issues began to emerge in the UK as significant, such as issues related to immigration.

As originally planned, Dr Eirini Avramopoulou was appointed to carry out the research in Greece and Dr Silvia Pasquetti carried out the research in Italy. For part of this time Avramopoulou was based in Athens, and part of the time in Volos and Pelion. She carried out more than 60 interviews – around 30 in Athens and 30 in Volos and Pelion, in accordance with the project's original plans. Pasquetti was based in Parma and Florence, two prosperous northern Italian cities, for part of the time, and for the other part she was based in Syracuse and other smaller towns in southeastern Sicily. She did more than 60 interviews, around 30 in Parma and 30 in Sicily – again, in accordance with the project's plans.

The research sites were chosen to ensure a range of views that reflected both highly developed metropolitan centres and rural, less developed regions. In both countries interviewees were selected from different social strata, including upper middle class professionals (lawyers, doctors, etc.); people in full-time employment in the public and private sectors; people who were self-employed (including small business owners, some

of whose businesses had failed); workers who are currently unemployed, who had lost their jobs or who are precariously employed; young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs); and pensioners. These selection criteria ensured that there was an equal representation of men and women and a wide age range, from young people in their late teens and early 20s to pensioners in their 60s and 70s. Migrants as well as native Greeks and Italians were included – a task made easier by the fact that both Greece and Italy have experienced a large influx of migrants in recent years, even before the most recent migration surge from Turkey and North Africa.

The timing of the fieldwork was fortuitous, especially in Greece (2010-2015), with a deepening economic crisis, and threats to eject Greece from the Euro. While Greece was in turmoil, Italy, with the third largest economy in the eurozone, was struggling to cope with a crisis that had exposed its parlous fiscal position and thrown many thousands of people out of work, and the country was simmering with anger, frustration and fear.

Before Eirini and Silvia began their fieldwork, they worked closely with John Thompson to develop detailed templates that covered the range of issues to be explored in the interviews, all of which were recorded and safely stored, with each researcher developing a system of pseudonyms for interviewees and fictitious place names for towns, villages, districts or streets when the use of actual names could compromise the anonymity of interviewees. Nearly 80 of the interviews have been fully translated and transcribed (over 2,500 pages) in English, thus constituting a very rich and substantial body of qualitative research material.

In addition the interviews, Eirini and Silvia took detailed field notes about the research sites, the individuals they interviewed and the interviews they conducted. These field notes are also valuable primary material because they help to contextualize the interviews, describe the circumstances in which the interviews were carried out (many were carried out in the homes of the individuals concerned) and provide a commentary on aspects of the interview and the interviewee that are not apparent from the text of the interview on its own.

Outputs and career development

In terms of outputs and publications, this research is still work-in-progress. The grant has been used very effectively to produce a rich body of primary research material.

This kind of material is very difficult to produce not only because it is time-sensitive and time-consuming, but also because it required a special set of linguistic and ethnographic skills. Given these challenges, the team was very fortunate to be able to generate as much primary material as it did. They are now in the process of analysing this material and developing outputs of various kinds.

Research Reports

Project Director Thompson drew directly on the reports by Eirini and Silvia and used their findings to develop an original analysis of the human and social costs of the economic crisis in Greece and Italy. This co-authored paper was published in 2017 as John B. Thompson, Eirini Avramopoulou and Silvia Pasquetti, “Suffering: The Human and Social Costs of Economic Crisis”, in Manuel Castells et al. (eds.), *Europe’s Crises* (Cambridge: Polity, 2017).

Apart from these initial outputs, Thompson, Avramopoulou and Pasquetti plan to write a much more substantial text that builds on the analysis developed in the paper described above and uses much more of the rich primary material they have produced, possibly as a book with a similar title: *Suffering: The Human and Social Costs of Economic Crisis*, with a view to publication in 2019.

Eirini Avramopoulou

Avramopoulou is currently A.G. Leventis Fellow at the British School at Athens, and is working on a project entitled “Changing Spaces of Refuge: Histories and Geographies of Displacement amidst Politics of Crisis in Greece”, which builds directly on her research on the human and social costs of economic crisis in Greece.

Publications

“Caught between Anger and Inertia: Experiencing the Economic Crisis as a Double Bind,” paper delivered at University of Plovdiv, Bulgaria, submitted in August 2017.

Contribution in edited volume *Affect and Ethnography: Theoretical and Methodological Issues* (Nissos Publishers, forthcoming).

Invited Lectures, Seminars and Conferences/Workshops

- Curator, thematic section “Images of Desire at Different Times of Crisis” for the Athens Ethnographic Film Festival in Greece <http://www.ethnofest.gr/>, November

26-29, 2015, along with one-day conference on current social and political issues pertaining to understandings and experiences of 'a life in crisis' and the effects of hope and desire at times of crisis.

- Speaker at international conference: *Reverberations: Violence across Time and Space*, funded by the European Research Council (ERC) for a project entitled *Living with Remnants: Politics, Materiality and Subjectivity in the Aftermath of Past Atrocities in Turkey (REMNANTS)* (PI: Dr. Yael Navaro-Yashin). Title of presentation: "Echoing Thanatopolitics: A Postscript to the Athenian Landscape of 'Crisis'", March 26-28, 2015.
- Speaker at international conference *Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari: Refrains of Freedom*, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens. Title of presentation: "Crisis as a Concept, Crisis as a Scream". April 24-26, 2015.
- Seminar, Sociology Department, University of Athens: "Wounds that Hurt: Neocolonialism, Crisis and Film Production", December 9, 2015.
- Workshop to present work on the refugee crisis that built directly on Avramopoulou's research on the economic crisis in Greece. Copenhagen, May 25-28, 2016
- Seminars on cultural diversity, economic crisis and the refugee crisis, hosted by Diotima: Centre of Study and Research on Women, the International Medical Corps and the General Secretariat for Gender Equality, Greece. June 24-25, 2016.
- "The Emotional Cost of Economic Crisis: The Banality of Crisis amidst an Atmosphere of Negative Affects". Talk at international conference "Living the Crisis: Everyday Life and Translation", University of Plovdiv, Bulgaria, funded by the Leverhulme Trust as part of the project "Framing Financial Crisis and Protest: NW and SE Europe", The Open University, UK. September 8-10, 2016. Plans for publication in 2019.
- "Refusing to perform the subject of crisis? Reflections on the performativity of everyday life and on epistemic violence". Talk at international conference "(Non) Performance as Method", organized by Dr. Hypatia Vourloumis and funded by the Research Centre for the Humanities.

Silvia Pasquetti

Pasquetti is currently developing a new project about the intersection between the refugee crisis and the economic crisis in Italy, "Injuries of Refuge: Asylum and Nested Marginalities in Peripheral Europe", a multi-sited ethnography of asylum and inequalities in 'peripheral' urban areas in Europe. The new project is directly indebted to the research she did for the Balzan project. The Balzan project has also enabled Pasquetti to secure a funded Research Excellence Framework PhD Studentship for

three years (beginning September 2017) on a project entitled “Asylum, Inequality, and Sense of Place in Peripheral Europe”.

Publications

“Shades of Anger: Citizenship, Migration, and Grievances in an Unequal Italy”, *Sociology* special issue on migration and the economic crisis (submitted March 2017).

Invited Lectures, Seminars and Conferences/Workshops

- “The Human and Social Costs of Economic Crisis: Empty Time, Troubled Anger, and the Futility of Togetherness”. Invited talk at the Institute for Social Protection, Oxford University, November 14, 2016.
- “In Search of Refuge: Asylum, Mobility, and Inequality in Italy” and “If It is a Heavy Job You Do It! Refugees and the Meanings of Work in an Unequal Italy”. Talks presented at the Sixth Ethnography and Qualitative Research Conference, University of Bergamo, Italy, June 8-11, 2016.