

ANTON WILHELM AMO LECTURES

EDITED

BY

MATTHIAS KAUFMANN, RICHARD ROTTENBURG

AND REINHOLD SACKMANN

MARTIN-LUTHER-UNIVERSITÄT HALLE-WITTENBERG

HALLE (SAALE)

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THE PRECARIOUS FUTURE  
OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

VON

ARJUN APPADURAI

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK / N.Y.

MARTIN-LUTHER-UNIVERSITÄT HALLE-WITTENBERG

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## Vorwort

In der Schriftenreihe „Anton Wilhelm Amo Lectures“ des Forschungsschwerpunkts „Gesellschaft und Kultur in Bewegung“ werden seit 2013 an der Martin-Luther-Universität gehaltene Gastvorlesungen bedeutender Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler publiziert, die unter diesem Titel von den beiden Forschungsschwerpunkten „Gesellschaft und Kultur in Bewegung“ und „Aufklärung, Religion, Wissen“ gemeinsam veranstaltet werden und Anton Wilhelm Amo gewidmet sind.

Im Jahr 1727 kam Anton Wilhelm Amo – als Kind im heutigen Ghana versklavt, dann 1707 von der Holländisch-Westindischen Gesellschaft an den Wolfenbüttler Hof Herzogs Anton Ulrich von Braunschweig und Lüneburg-Wolfenbüttel verschenkt – nach einer umfassenden Ausbildung an die Universität Halle zum Studium der Philosophie und der Rechtswissenschaften. 1729 verfasste Amo die Disputation „De iure Maurorum in Europa“, in der er die Frage erörterte, inwieweit die Freiheit oder Dienstbarkeit der von Christen gekauften „Mohren“ in Europa nach dem damals geltenden Recht gerechtfertigt sei. (Diese Schrift gilt als verschollen.)

In Wittenberg wurde Amo im Jahr 1734 mit der Inauguraldissertation „De humanae mentis apatheia. Die Apatheia der menschlichen Seele“ zum philosophiae ac liberalium artium Magister promoviert und wurde als Magister legens zugelassen. Anders als der im stoischen Umfeld prominent gewordene Terminus „Apatheia“ vermuten lässt, geht es dabei nicht um Gelassenheit oder Gleichmut der Seele. Mit dieser Schrift leistete Amo vielmehr einen eigenständigen Beitrag zur Debatte zu dem, was man im 20. Jahrhundert das Leib-Seele-Problem nannte, indem er der menschlichen Seele Empfindungen und überhaupt die Fähigkeit des Empfindens aufgrund ihrer Immaterialität radikal abspricht. Wie wir im gleich anzusprechenden Hauptwerk erfahren, befasst sich die Seele mit intentionalen Repräsentationen der vom Körper sinnlich erfassten Dinge. In ausdrückli-

cher Wendung gegen Descartes, der ja den „*Passions de l'âme*“ ein ganzes Werk gewidmet hatte, betont er, dass die Seele nicht leiden könne, was bei lebendigen Dingen dasselbe wie empfinden sei (*pati et sentire in rebus vivis sunt synonyma*) und stellt sich in seiner Psychologie somit eher in eine scholastische, wolffianische Tradition (zu den lokalen Kontroversen, die aufgegriffen werden vgl. Edeh 2003, 53f.).

Dass er indessen keineswegs ein schlichter Gefolgsmann Wolffs ist, zeigt sich in der wesentlich umfangreicheren Schrift „*De arte sobrie et accurate philosophandi. Traktat von der Kunst, nüchtern und sorgfältig zu philosophieren*“ von 1738 (vgl. u.a. Edeh 2003, 57ff.). Dort entfaltet Amo nach einem Überblick über die traditionellen Felder des Wissens, wie Jurisprudenz, Theologie und Mathematik und einer Warnung vor Pedanterie sowohl als Vielwisserei, v.a. soweit es sich um Unnützes handelt (er bezieht sich dabei auf Thomasius), seine Lehre, die der Philosophie die Aufgabe des kontinuierlichen Erkennens der Dinge und der Vervollkommnung des Menschen auf allen Gebieten, von der natürlichen Existenz bis hin zur ewigen Glückseligkeit, zuweist (*Partis Generalis Cap. II, Membrum II §§ 4-6*) und kritisiert diejenigen, die in ihr „heutzutage“ nur einen Verstandesakt ohne Verbindung zu ihrer pragmatischen Seite sehen. Philosophie ist Weisheit als Tugend und diese beweist ihren Wert in der Handlung (ebd. § 1). Nicht nur durch die Bezugnahme auf Ciceros „*De Officiis*“ in diesem Kontext zeigt sich eine Nähe zu stoischen Prinzipien (vgl. auch *Partis Generalis Cap. V Membrum I § 11*, wo als gute Wirkungsweise der Seele die Mäßigung der natürlichen Instinkte und des sinnlichen Begehrens identifiziert wird). Im umfangreicheren speziellen Teil des Werkes erläutert der „schwarze Philosoph in Halle“ seine Auffassung von den Aktivitäten der menschlichen Seele beim Vorgang des Erkennens, von der Begriffsbildung über die Reflexion, bis hin zur Logik mit samt den Regeln der Syllogistik, der Kritik und Hermeneutik. Er befindet sich dabei trotz einiger deutlicher Abweichungen – etwa seiner religiösen Fundierung der Ethik – im Umfeld der Wolffschen Schule (Edeh 2003, S. 164).

Nach einigen Jahren der Lehre als Magister legens der Philosophie und der freien Künste in Halle und Jena sah sich Anton Wilhelm Amo von seinen Gönnern verlassen (Ludewig war gestorben) und rassistischen Repressalien ausgesetzt, die ihn dazu veranlassten, im Jahr 1747 nach Afrika zurückzukehren. 1747 wird er noch als Bürger Jenas erwähnt, doch dann verschwindet seine Spur, bis auf den Bericht eines schweizer Schiffsarztes, der im Dienst der niederländischen Westafrika Compagnie den „*beroemden Heer Anthonius Guilielmus Amo Guinea Afer, Philosophiae Dr. et Artium Liberalium Magister*“ 1753 in Axim im

heutigen Ghana besuchen ging (vgl. Brentjes 1976, S. 66 u. 69, Firla 2012, Dokumente, Halle 1968, 297).

Anton Wilhelm Amo hat sich mit seiner Kritik an dunklen, rational nicht zu begründenden Gesetzen, an Rechtsauslegungen, die sich allein am Wohl der Gesetzgeber ausrichten, und der Mahnung zur Humanität in der Jurisprudenz, die im Zweifelsfall immer Vorrang vor dem strengen Recht haben soll, als ein Humanist und früher Verfechter der Menschenrechte erwiesen.

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THE PRECARIOUS FUTURE  
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# Zusammenfassung

## Die prekäre Zukunft nationaler Souveränität

National sovereignty today operates in changed ecology. The primary reason for this is the erosion of national borders by the flows of ideas, people, technologies and money across national boundaries which has accelerated since the late 1980's, in what is usually referred to as the period of globalization. In addition, as national economies have become increasingly fictions due to the realities of global finance, nation-states and political elites have had to invent other justifications for their existence and this accounts for the global shift to right-wing ideologies of soil, blood and ethnos. Finally, as the tension between universal human rights and the plight of refugees and other undocumented aliens increases, especially in Europe, we see the emergence of a deep divide about the meaning of national sovereignty, and a gap between ethnonational views and those of a more liberal variety, which stress inclusion, diversity and hospitality. More than three centuries after the Treaty of Westphalia, Europe (and the world) are in dire need of a new narrative of sovereignty.





## 1. Globalization and the Nation-State

At least since the early 1990's I have been involved in debates about the future of the nation-state. In the 1990's, I took a normative position against the nation-state and also predicted its demise (Appadurai 1996). Subsequent history, and the criticisms that I encountered, have led me to rethink my position somewhat. I now do not see that nation-state as likely to disappear soon. Indeed, the number of nation-states has grown and there are new aspirants to nationhood on the horizon. Still, I believe the future of the nation-state is precarious and all nation-states are facing crises of one kind or another. From the point of view of sovereignty, which is the hallmark of all definitions of the nation-state, there is certainly a crisis, one that is produced by a new ecology of sovereignty. My aim today is to describe this new ecology, sketch some of the factors that have produced it, and to raise some questions about what this new ecology portends for national sovereignty.



## 2. The Classical Model of National Sovereignty and its Problems

The current global architecture of sovereignty has its direct roots in the Peace of Westphalia, where a variety of European actors gave birth to a non-religious and non-imperial idea of sovereignty. This event is commonly and rightly seen as marking the birth of the modern nation-state, which rests on the legal recognition of its territorial borders, the monopoly of legitimate violence within these borders, and the obligation to provide the basic conditions of security and livelihood to its citizens. The modern nation-state is unique in the history of human affairs in that it rests on the universal and mutual recognition of internal sovereignty between each state, which claims to be a nation-state.

The global dissemination of this architecture which also spread to Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle-East in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, has been accompanied by many other important processes, such as the growth of trans-regional industrial capitalism, the spread of what Benedict Anderson called print capitalism (Anderson 1983) and eventually the growth of anti-imperial movements and the push for decolonization and self-determination on a world wide basis.

The primary challenge that faces this architecture of sovereignty is that it rests on the idea of a single envelope in which national identity; territorial sovereignty and legal citizenship are contained. This is an ambitious and utopian idea whose fragility we are now being forced to recognize. The reasons for this crisis lie in the steady globalization of capital, with its push for open economic borders, free movement of labor and raw materials and coordinated activities among producers and consumers on a worldwide basis. Each of these factors puts the architecture of the nation-state under severe stress.

The biggest symptom of this crisis of sovereignty is that no modern nation-state controls what could be called its national economy. This is equally a problem for the richest and poorest of nations. The United States economy is substantially in Chinese, the Chinese depend crucially on raw materials from Africa and Latin America as well as other parts of Asia, everyone depends to some extent on Middle-Eastern oil, and virtually all modern nation-states depend on sophisticated armaments from a small number of wealthy countries. Economic sovereignty, as a basis for national sovereignty, was always a dubious principle. Today, it is plainly irrelevant.

In the absence of any national economy which modern states can claim to protect and develop, it is no surprise that there has been a world wide tendency in effective states to demonstrate national sovereignty by turning towards cultural majoritarianism, ethno-nationalism and the stifling of internal intellectual and cultural dissent. In other words, the loss of economic sovereignty everywhere produces a trend towards emphasizing cultural sovereignty. This move towards cultural sovereignty as the main theatre for the expression of the value of the nation-state has dark consequences for any unwanted or undocumented border-crossers, especially those seeking refuge and asylum.

Fear of outsiders who might threaten cultural purity and sovereignty is enhanced by a another problem, namely the norms of legal citizenship in most modern nation-states, all of which stress biological, linguistic or ethnic markers of a documentable historical connection to those defined as full citizens. This is the deep meaning behind any and all modern ideas of “naturalization” as they are applied to migrants and other claimants to legal citizenship. The narrative of modern citizenship cannot envisage any claim to citizenship which is not based on assimilation to the current norms of national belonging that remain primarily cultural rather than political. All refugee claims to citizenship in the lands to which they come, and where they eventually wish to live, are about aspiration, and not about identification. So the real difference of consequence is not between humanitarian refugees and economic refugees but rather between what we might call aspirational refugees as against what we might call escape refugees. All refugees and indeed all migrants arrive in new places because of some sort of aspiration, whether it to the good life in terms of livelihood or in terms of a new community in which they can be physically safe. And it is the aspiration to the good life that is what they really share with those who are already citizens of the receiving countries. The divide between economic refugees and refugees who are fleeing tyranny or discrimination is a distraction from this other reality. Na-

tional citizenship is everywhere in danger of becoming a series of lifeboats, in which those already aboard are encouraged to push others back into the water simply on the grounds that there is no more room.

The final deep problem of modern sovereignty, the sovereignty built on the architecture of nation-states, is that it is simply not capable of handling the world's biggest problems, all of which are trans-regional and sometimes even trans-human in their scale: terrorism, the illegal arms trade, human trafficking, epidemic diseases and above all climate are factors which clearly do not respect national boundaries.

Of these many challenges, I want to focus on one, the challenge of the new forms of financialized capital.<sup>1</sup> A primary threat to international order is the volatility of global financial markets. Capitalism today surrounds and saturates us in a way it never did before. In its home regions, notably in the United States, it has taken the form of deep financialization. Finance now far exceeds the sphere of production and manufacture of industrial goods. Since the early 1970's we have had the rapid development of a host of financial instruments, which were barely imaginable in the time of Karl Marx. The breakthrough that made this financial explosion possible was the idea that risk itself could be monetized, allowing a small set of actors to take risks on risks. This is the core of the logic of the derivative, an instrument that has allowed financial technicians and managers to make virtually every part of our everyday lives susceptible to monetization. In this way, housing has now been turned into a machine for monetizing mortgages, the environment has been monetized through carbon trading and many other derivatives, education has been captured through sophisticated methods of creating student debt, health and insurance have been thoroughly penetrated by models of risk, arbitrage and bets on the future. In short, every day life is linked to capital not so much by the mechanism of the surplus value of labor but through making us all risk-bearers, whose aggregate risk can be endlessly combined and recombined to provide new forms of risk-taking and profit-making by the financial industries. We are all laborers now, regardless of what we do, insofar as our primary reason for being is to enter into debt through being forced to monetize the risks of health, security, education, housing and much else in our lives.

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<sup>1</sup> I have developed this part of the argument in greater detail in *Banking on Words: The Failure of Language in the Age of Derivative Finance* (University of Chicago Press, 2015).

This situation is most visible in the advanced capitalist countries and hence the financial collapse of 2008 was primarily felt and amplified in these very countries. But very few countries in the world escaped the effects of the collapse, since finance capital had been spreading its activities worldwide for at least the last 30 years. Still, many parts of the global South, including South Africa, did not experience the shock of the collapse as profoundly as did the United States and Europe. The buffers that created this measure of insulation were primarily that the new derivative logics, creating multiple loops between debt, risk and speculation, were less advanced in these countries. Another way to put it is that in the countries of the global South, the process by which all debt is made potentially monetizable, through derivative instruments, has been less rapid and more uneven than it has been in the countries of the North Atlantic.

However, the global spread of the capitalist imaginary has by no means been arrested or compromised. Banks, hedge funds and insurance companies are aggressively pushing their way into new markets, seeking to lobby for legislation that will allow them to bring the same untrammelled debt markets from which they profited (and which also crashed in 2008) to the countries of the global South. Thus, it is only a matter of time before the countries of the global South also find themselves fully exposed to the volatility, inscrutability and extralegality of the derivative-based financial markets of the North. As James Baldwin once said in another context, “no more water, the fire next time”.

One of the many challenges we now face is how to resist the sense that this global process is inevitable and that it cannot be subverted. The question is: what sort of politics needs to be produced to resist it? The main answer that has emerged in various parts of the world is debt-refusal, as in important segments of the “Occupy” movement. Debt-refusal by mortgage owners, students, pensionholders and others certainly is a legitimate political tactic, insofar as it offers an immediate tool for starving the beast of financial capitalism. But is it enough? Is it even the best way of making capitalism work for the 99%?

I have elsewhere developed the outlines of a different view of financial capitalism, one that does not see the logic of the derivative as inherently inequitable or evil (Appadurai 2015). My point of departure is to return to Marx, Weber and Durkheim, but through a financial lens. Marx’s central insight about the workings of industrial capitalism was (in the three volumes of *Capital*) to notice the distinction between absolute and relative surplus value. In simple terms, absolute surplus value was to be found in increasing the amount of labor that a firm could apply to producing commodities for sale, as by increasing the number of workers

or by increasing the length of the workday. Relative surplus value, on the other hand, was generated by improvements in technology, workplace organization or other means by which labor productivity could be increased without hiring more workers or paying for more labor time. This is how a given firm could compete with other firms that were producing the same commodity. The key to the appropriation of relative surplus value was to make a given amount of labor produce more profit, without increasing wages. The difference was profit in the hands of the capitalist.

Today's financial capitalism, which Marx could not have entirely foreseen in his day, does not primarily work through the making of profit in the commodity sphere, though a certain part of the capitalist economy still operates in this sphere. By far the larger portion works by making profit on the monetization of risk and risk is made available to the financial markets through debt in its myriad forms. All of us who live in a financialized economy generate debt in many forms: consumer debt, housing debt, health debt, and others related to these. Capitalist forms also operate through debt (since borrowing on the capital markets has become much more important than issuing stock or "equity"). The complex technical issue is how consumer debt becomes the basis of corporate debt and vice versa.

From this point of view, the major form of labor today is not labor for wages but rather labor for the production of debt. Some of us today are no doubt wage-laborers, in the classic sense. But many of us are in fact debt-laborers, whose main task is to produce debt, which can then be further monetized for profit by financial entrepreneurs who control the means of the production of profit through monetizing debts. The main vehicle for this form of profit making is the derivative, and thus the derivative is the central means by which relative surplus value is produced in a financialized economy.

From this it follows that the key to transforming the current form of financial capitalism is to *seize and appropriate the means of the production of debt*, in the interest of the vast class of debt producers, rather than the small class of debt-manipulators. From this point of view, it is not debt as such which is bad, since it allows us to bring future value into the present. The challenge, rather, is to socialize and democratize the profit produced by monetization of debt, so that those of us who actually produce debt can also be the main beneficiaries of its monetization. In this light I return to the wider institutional context, which affects national sovereignty, and it is the relationship of refugees, cities and media.

The dilemma of refugees and other undocumented migrants is one of the central challenges of the era of globalization. While the current refugee crisis in Europe is very much on our minds here in Berlin, we cannot forget other cases like those of the Rohingya in Burma and elsewhere in South Asia, the many climate based refugees of Saharan Africa, and the internally displaced people of many countries in Asia, the Middle-East and South Africa. This broader perspective will help us to recall the long-term causes of refugee status, such as political oppression, religious conflict, climate change, economic hardship and regime change. This global perspective will also help us to develop better ideas about the legal status of refugees, their definition under national and international laws, and the difficulties associated with gaining asylum in the countries to which refugees travel. There is a deep and unresolved tension between refugee status, national sovereignty and the comparative challenges of acquiring citizenship without prior claims on affinity through blood, language or employment. This tension cannot be separated from the issue of urbanization as a major force and feature of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, since the politics of cities and citizenship are intimately connected across the world.

Most analysts agree that the growth of cities is one of the most important symptoms and drivers of globalization. Cities today are described in two contradictory ways. On the one hand they are seen as overcrowded, unequal, violent and chaotic. There is some truth to this picture, if we look at such cities as Manila, Mumbai, Mexico City or Lagos. On the other hand, cities are also the sites of some of the best hopes of planners, policy-makers and architects, whose ideas frequently display a utopian hope in the future of “smart” cities, “green” cities and cities in which new technologies promise better jobs, health and safety. The truth is, as often, somewhere in between and can be seen in the efforts of activist groups, socially conscious planners and democratically oriented policy-makers to carve out a healthy balance between real estate development, job growth and social inclusion in the cities of the world. We have much to learn from pro-poor activist NGO’s, which are working in big cities throughout the world to empower the urban poor to build their own infrastructure, exercise citizenship and solve their problems through local and community-based solutions rather than be dependent on the top-down formulae of experts. This grassroots form of urban planning and development is gaining traction world-wide and offers an excellent window into the major problems – and solutions – that exist in the world’s cities today. We need to balance the picture of urban apocalypse and the picture of urbanism as utopia to better understand the contemporary urban challenges of



globalization in a realistic and well-informed manner. This balance cannot be divorced from the role of media and big data in our times since our visions of the city – both dark and bright – re inevitably by our reception of news, information and entertainment.

Media is today a major pathway for global economic, political and social networks. New electronic media must be placed in the context of older communications media such as print, post, cinema and telecommunication. This historical context will help us to develop a deeper account of the global impact of electronic media, especially those of the Internet, cellphone and social media. A factually based account of “the digital divide” will help us to see the nature of unequal global access to new media and the nature of the relationship between mobile applications, computers and broadband access in different parts of the world. This broad technological picture explains the importance of new forms of journalism, political activism and social connectivity in “media-poor” parts of the world, such as Africa, the Middle East and many parts of Asia. The role of new media in such contexts as “the Arab Spring” and in the efforts of refugees, for example in Europe, to find safety, information and support networks through the use of new media is a reminder of the most hopeful democratic potentials of the new media, along with such tools as cell-phones in countries and regions where the Internet is not widely accessible and cell-phones have become crucial vehicles in the pursuit of social mobility and global economic opportunities. On the other hand, surveillance, censorship and political repression are also enabled by the new capacities of big data analysis, in societies as different as China and the United States, where there is a major battle in progress between democratic uses of new media and authoritarian forms of surveillance and data analysis. We can now return to the question of sovereignty in today’s globalized world.

The scope of today’s problems, whether they involve refugees, cities or media, is inescapably global. But the empire of the nation-state is local. At the same time, our most brilliant leaps forward as a species are also a product of trans-regional, trans-national and global flows of ideas, innovations, discoveries and investments. This is most clear in the realm of science and technology, but it can also be seen in such areas as conflict resolution, agricultural development and media activism, all of which are improving human political and social life on a global basis and could not have happened if national borders were effective containers of creativity and enterprise. So global processes bring us our best and worst news. In both cases, nation-states have become less players and more referees or brokers.

And so it is with the challenges of the refugee crisis, where nation-states are either unwitting stages for exit or unprepared sites for arrival. How can this state of affairs be modified? One approach is to continue to try to inject more force and credibility into the current architecture of national sovereignty, both at the sending and receiving ends. This, in my opinion, is a losing strategy since there is no way to weaken those states which we consider to be bad while strengthening those states we consider to be good, since both draw strength from the same legal and architectural principles. The other is to squarely confront global problems with global solutions. This path is of course very close to the founding vision of the UN system. But the UN system has to design and support global conventions, agreements and interventions with one hand tied behind its back, since its constituents are, after all, the member-states. And international non-governmental organizations cannot be expected to solve all the world's problems either. So where might we look for some sort of systemic solution?

In my view, the only route is by a hard re-examination of the territorial dimension of the modern system of nation-states, including questions of borders, regions, movement and policing. Can we imagine a new sort of ecology of sovereignty in which, instead of territory, we install some other principle of local sovereignty, which might be ecological, industrial or linguistic, for example, rather than territorial? This is a mind-bending exercise since we are so deeply wired to think of nations as above all sovereign territories. But it is high time to start imagining these possibilities for alternative ecologies of sovereignty, or else we will live in a world of territorial sovereignties but the world itself will have become an unlivable place.

### 3. Can we Govern Across Borders?

In the course of the twentieth century, there has been a growing recognition that the system of nation-states is not adequate to dealing with the biggest challenges facing the contemporary world. The United Nations, and subsequently a series of major multilateral organizations, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Health Organization, and the International Labor Organization (to name only the most well-known) have sought to work towards international agreements, strategies and protocols to tackle global crises. In addition, a series of coalitions and organizations have formed in different regions and continents (examples include the European Union, ASEAN, Mercosur, and the Organization of African States) to address problems that nations within a given region might face and which exceed their individual capacities. Finally, in the last five decades, there has been a truly remarkable explosion in transnational non-governmental organizations that have formed to tackle problems of poverty, housing, human rights, women and children, trafficking and discrimination, among many other issues. So global governance today is a complex patchwork of official, semi-official and entirely non-official organizations that seek to address problems that transcend national boundaries or that do not seem to be priorities for national governments.

This new assemblage of transnational governance organizations and the challenges the challenges to national sovereignty that I discussed earlier force us to ask how far we have come in addressing global challenges on a truly global basis. What can governance mean in an age when many major problems have become planetary in scope and when national interests often seem to be at odds with human and planetary interests. Who will speak for the planet? Who will

speak for the species? And where will the power of these new voices and movements come from?

A part of the answer to this question can be found in those political and social movements that seek to address and resolve problems on a global scale on a democratic basis, without relying on the official power of nation states or on the visions of religious or ethnic fundamentalism. The major examples of such global movements are environmentalist, feminism and anti-poverty movements. In each of these cases, the issues are global in their scale: eco-degradation, women's rights and poverty. In each case, these movements include actors from the state system and actors from civil society. In each case, major philanthropic organizations are partnering with governments and corporations to find non-partisan solutions. In each case, youth are centrally involved since it is their future that is at stake. And in every case, these movements also face powerful opponents, from states and from the corporate world, which have their own agendas of power or profit. These movements are also trying to find new sources of funding (such as crowd funding), new means of communication (such as social media) and new models of organization and mobilization, which do not require traditional bureaucracies and hierarchies.

But against the hope which we might vest in these movements are the variety of symptoms of a global swing to the right which we can see at the national level in the vision of Donald Trump in the United States, in the leadership of Russia, China and the Philippines, in Narendra Modi's India and in the repressive Islamic regimes and movements of much of Middle-East<sup>2</sup>. These regimes and movements seek neo-liberal capitalist wealth on the one hand while also encouraging cultural and political repression at home. Economic liberalization and cultural repression seem to go hand in hand in many parts of the world. These movements, parties and states are symptoms of a worldwide politics of fear, which also thrives on demonizing migrants, refugees and strangers. It is also visible in today's Germany.

This global swing to the right needs to be connected to the forces of financial globalization with which I began this essay, and the increasing conversion of large parts of the population to a debt-producing proletariat whose debt is then converted to marketizable assets and instruments, such as the financial derivative

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<sup>2</sup> I address the worldwide trend towards authoritarian populisms in an essay on "Democracy Fatigue", in *The Great Regression* (Heinrich Geiselberger, Ed.), Berlin: Suhrkamp (Forthcoming: 2017).

which produce huge profits for the global financial elites while leaving most others in an increasingly precarious and volatile situation, in which they become receptive to messages of fear, hate and exclusion. Seen in this light, the battle against the forces of cultural suspicion, ethnonational purity and authoritarian leadership cannot be addressed without a hard look at the financialization of the world's wealth. Such wealth is not bad in itself. But its concentration and liquidity, and the speed with which it eludes social regulation and democratic scrutiny, are all enemies of democracy. These qualities need our attention, our imagination and our intervention. Without such intervention, we will find ourselves in a world of inequality, which is simultaneously a world of volatility and disorder.

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## About the Author

Arjun Appadurai is the Goddard Professor in Media, Culture and Communication at New York University, where he is also Senior Fellow at the Institute for Public Knowledge. He serves as Honorary Professor in the Department of Media and Communication, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Tata Chair Professor at The Tata Institute for Social Sciences, Mumbai and as a Senior Research Partner at the Max-Planck Institute for Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Gottingen. He was previously Senior Advisor for Global Initiatives at The New School in New York City, where he also held a Distinguished Professorship as the John Dewey Distinguished Professor in the Social Sciences. Arjun Appadurai was the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at The New School from 2004-2006. He was formerly the William K. Lanman Jr. Professor of International Studies, Professor of Anthropology, and Director of the Center on Cities and Globalization at Yale University. Appadurai is the founder and now the President of PUKAR (Partners for Urban Knowledge Action and Research), a non-profit organization based in and oriented to the city of Mumbai (India).

Professor Appadurai was born and educated in Bombay. He graduated from St. Xavier's High School and took his Intermediate Arts degree from Elphinstone College before coming to the United States. He earned his B.A. from Brandeis University in 1967, and his M.A. (1973) and Ph.D. (1976) from The Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago.

During his academic career, he has also held professorial chairs at Yale University, the University of Chicago and the University of Pennsylvania, and has held visiting appointments at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris), the University of Delhi, the University of Michigan, the University of Amsterdam, the University of Iowa, Columbia University and New York University. He has authored numerous books and scholarly articles, including *Fear*

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Arjun Appadurai has held numerous fellowships and scholarships and has received several scholarly honors, including residential fellowships at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto (California) and the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, and an Individual Research Fellowship from the Open Society Institute (New York). He was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1997. In 2013, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by Erasmus University in the Netherlands.

He has also served as a consultant or advisor to a wide range of public and private organizations, including many major foundations (Ford, MacArthur, and Rockefeller); UNESCO; UNDP; the World Bank; the National Endowment for the Humanities; the National Science Foundation; and the Infosys Foundation. He currently serves on the Advisory Board for the Asian Art Initiative at the Solomon Guggenheim Museum and on the Scientific Advisory Board of the Forum D'Avignon in Paris.

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