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## Remapping China: Boundaries, Identities, Difference

**Harriet Evans** *examines misconceptions of China and argues for a more nuanced approach to the People's Republic*

The processes of reflection involved in teaching and learning about China challenge our often simple assumptions about our object of study, assumptions about where and what 'China' is and about who the 'Chinese people' are. These include ideas we associate with 'Chinese culture', such as food, ancestor worship, Confucian family traditions, and an emphasis on the group; the wonders of Chinese civilisation: Chinese poetry and medicine, and the fact that gunpowder, the wheelbarrow and printing were invented in China; and images of Chinese brutality: women's bound feet, the rampaging hoards of Red Guards, and so on. We rarely come across references that disturb our acceptance of these 'facts'.

The vulgarity of these kinds of generalisations has led to some ridiculous inconsistencies which a more critical sense would be able to avoid. The 'Chinese family', for example, is at one moment interpreted as totally uncondusive to the competitive pressures of market capitalism, and at another as custom-made for it.

One factor that obscures what we mean by 'China' relates to the question of how to speak about another culture without doing violence to it through exclusions and distortions, and without falling into the dangers of cultural relativism and its attendant orientalisng imaginings.

This kind of epistemological problematic is associated with a tendency to

essentialise China's cultural difference and to interpret that difference through simplistic binary categories. Whether the text is *Wild Swans* or Radio 4 news comments about the wholesale 'collapse' of the 'Asian economies', there is an assumption that there is a basic, and unalterable, difference between 'us' and 'them', whichever way round the 'us' is conceived.

The challenge in Chinese studies is to avoid what Frank Dikotter, in *Sex, Culture, and Modernity in China* (1995), has called the

'ontological dichotomy' of East and West, according to which Chinese authenticity and tradition are contrasted with an imposed, and therefore 'unreal' process of Westernisation; in which China's modern history is conceived of as a set of 'responses' to the 'impact of the West'; and according to which, in an attempt to steer clear of creating China as a subaltern subject, China's cultural specificity is singled out in ways which remove it from the kinds of critical analyses applied to cultures apparently nearer to home. How might we think about 'remapping China' (the title of a book edited by Gail Hershatter *et al* and published by Stanford University Press in 1996) so that we can see China's differences without falling into these dichotomising traps?

This challenge is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, the needs of a changing world, with the increasing global prominence of China, oblige us to acquire at

## CONTENTS

<b>Human Rights in China</b>	<b>3</b>
Jeffrey Wasserstrom	
<b>Liberalism and Security</b>	<b>5</b>
Barry Buzan and Ole Waever	
<b>Presidential Performance</b>	<b>7</b>
George C. Edwards	
<b>Parties in Congress</b>	<b>9</b>
John E. Owens	
<b>European Identity</b>	<b>10</b>
Richard Whitman	
<b>After The Great Transformation</b>	<b>12</b>
Claus Offe	
<b>R. I. P., Che Guevara</b>	<b>14</b>
Niels Jacob Harbitz	
<b>CSD Information</b>	<b>15-16</b>

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least a basic literacy in our understanding of China. Second, there is a clear interest on the part of the public to find out more about China, evidenced in the extraordinary status of *Wild Swans* as a best seller, and in the popularity of Chinese films by directors like Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou. Third, a political commitment to equality and democracy means that we should be self-critical in the assumptions and categories we use in talking about the 'other'. Proper identification of the forces and tendencies of political change in contemporary Chinese society requires us to move beyond simple assertions of Western and Eastern difference to identify the hierarchies of difference within China.

### CURRENT MAPS

With few exceptions, contemporary European and American perceptions of China inherit a history dominated by a dualistic vision of China as culturally 'exotic' but materially 'backward' and 'stagnant', politically despotic, and morally objectionable.

There has been little public interest to date in autonomous Chinese articulations of its own realities. The increasing polarisation of positions 'for and against' China—particularly prominent in media and policy debates in the USA—has not taken place in isolation of political and cultural developments in China. From Nien Cheng's *Life and Death in Shanghai* (1986) to *Red Azalea* (1994), many recent autobiographical accounts of life in China are examples of how selective memories reproduce stereotypes. These works construct China as a state divided by forces of good and evil (the people and the party) in which innocent victims fight against persecution and oppression, with the struggle resolved on a happy note of success in America or Europe. They define the boundaries and identities of China and Chinese people with reference to set clichés which authorize their (Western) readers as particular kinds of knowers, reinforcing many of the messages of Western discourses.

The boundaries and identities of China and 'the Chinese people' that emerge from Western and Chinese discourses also reinforce the Chinese party-state's position on a number of key issues. In the human rights debate with the USA, these boundaries and identities have served to sustain the Chinese

government's often spurious assertions of cultural difference in the interpretation and practice of human rights protections.

### REDRAWING BOUNDARIES

In common with dominant intellectual tendencies in the humanities and social sciences in general, the focus of China studies in the past two decades has moved away from the grand narratives of Chinese history and Chinese culture. The fixed assumptions of the early 1970s that China was a unitary political, geographical, and cultural entity, defined by clear boundaries, have given way to an emphasis on interrogating the meanings of boundaries and identities, which shift and change depending on the perspective from which they are viewed.

There are some distinct debates in Chinese studies where such an exercise in reconceptualising borders and identities is important. One concerns the changing character of the Chinese state and its relation to informal constituencies outside the formal state structure.

The old generation of revolutionary leaders has finally gone to its grave, leaving a China with an uncertain political future. The entire range of political meanings, from order, through control, authority, legitimacy, are currently in the balance, even if not quite up for grabs. Many of the current political configurations in China date from the early days of the communist state in 1949 and the early 1950s. One of the key themes in the debate about China's changing political character, particularly since the late 1980s, has been the attempt to identify the emergence of practices and discourses contributing to the formation of new spaces of cultural and social production removed from state control.

Considerable research has been conducted on the formation of regional associations, guilds, social clubs, and film as sites conducive to the contestation of state authority. A number of writers have further suggested that the expansion of the market economy has eroded both the possibility and the desire on the part of the state to maintain its former authority.

Yet many observations made about state-society relations in this recent period echo a view which belongs more to the earlier period: the Chinese state, it is claimed, is 'totalitarian' in the exercise of power and unrelenting in denying legitimate spaces to the expression of popular, and possibly antagonistic, opinion. A more flexible interpretation of the boundary between state and society would enable us to identify with greater clarity the multiple ways in which the state may intervene in non-state affairs—for example, in private enterprises, women's self-help groups, legal advisory groups for rural migrants—that seem to question, even erode, its own authority.

In another area of debate, recent research about women and gender relations in China has challenged the still widely applied grand narratives about women's subordination in Chinese society. This research has reformulated the concepts of gendered boundaries and identities to highlight ways in which women may be seen not only as beneficiaries (the woman who became a millionaire by setting up a chicken farm), nor just as victims of particular social and political structures (for example, of the single-child birth control policy, or of female illiteracy in rural areas) but as all these things, the particular significance of which depends on contingent factors of social context, physical location, mode of relationship, generation, and so on.

China is not just a multiplicity of diversities. To assert this is to offer an interpretation of difference that is little more than liberal relativism. Nor can we dispense with the notion of 'China'. But we need to inject a new criticality into our discussions about China, as a condition for 'de-essentialising' China's differences as the 'Other' to the West's centre.

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# Human Rights in China: Rethinking the Debate

**Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom** *considers how recent theoretical and historical work on human rights issues might help us think through the often muddy debate on contemporary China*

Thanks to a variety of factors - ranging from the Hong Kong handover to the release of longtime prisoner of conscience Wei Jingsheng to the recent Hollywood fascination with the Dalai Lama and Tibet - the Beijing regime's human rights record has recently received a lot of media attention. This is a good time, therefore, to assess how scholarship on human rights, which has of late become increasingly concerned with historical issues, might help us sort through the issues in the debate on China.

For two reasons, the debate on China provides an excellent test case for assessing the value of looking backward when thinking about human rights. Firstly, it is a debate where new approaches are needed. People staking out opposing positions seem to agree on nothing. Has the human rights situation in China been improving, or is it foolish to point to incremental changes in specific areas when many disturbing abuses still occur? Does the concept of human rights embrace 'social' and 'economic' protections as well as 'civil' and 'religious' liberties? Are there universal standards or is it necessary to apply separate criteria when judging Asian, as opposed to Western or liberal, as opposed to Marxist regimes?

The debate on China is a good test case also because references to history already fill the polemics. Defenders of the Beijing regime refer to Western imperialist

actions of the past as 'abuses' of human rights that make hypocritical contemporary foreign denunciations of China's record. Others, who stress Asian values, claim that historical traditions can be used to explain, if not necessarily justify, the tendency of Chinese leaders to place a higher premium than their Western counterparts on social order. Critics of the Chinese regime, for their part, remind us that the current Chinese leaders head the same Communist Party responsible for the massive repression of the 1960s and the Beijing massacre of 1989. A few even liken contemporary China to Nazi Germany. Harry Wu has said the prisons of the *laogai* (gulag) system are essentially the same as Hitler's concentration camps.

Such scattershot uses of history

tend to do more harm than good. By contrast, careful use of the new historically minded scholarship on human rights can clarify rather than muddy the waters.

In 1994, Princeton published historical sociologist Daniel Chirot's *Modern Tyrants*,

which analyzes the common traits shared by the figures responsible for the worst abuses of rights. In 1995, Basic Books published *Historical Change and Human Rights*, a collection based on the 1994 Oxford Amnesty Lectures - all given by historians or historical sociologists - with an 'Introduction' by the prominent

historian Olwen Hufton. In 1996, St. Martin's Press brought out *The French Revolution and Human Rights*, edited and introduced by the historian Lynn Hunt, and Marina Svensson of Lund University completed her dissertation, 'The Chinese Conception of Human Rights: The Debate on Human Rights in China, 1898-1949'. In 1997, human rights was the theme of the annual meeting of the American Historical Association. None of these works provides a magic tool for sorting out all the confusions of the China debate. Each, however, has something to offer.

Take, for example, the matter of distinctions between Chinese and Western and Marxist and liberal rights traditions. It is often assumed that there is a clear split in each case relating to tensions between collective security and individual freedom, as well as between social protections and civil liberties. Now, it is certainly true that one can find these tensions handled differently in the writings of Confucius as opposed to those of Locke, Marx as opposed to Mill, and so forth. Nevertheless, several of these works suggest that the distinctions between traditions are seldom clear-cut.

Svensson, for example, shows that, long before the founding of the People's Republic, there was a well-developed literature in Chinese on human rights to which many prominent intellectuals, representing all points on the political spectrum, had contributed. The same figures who helped integrate into the Chinese tradition concepts associated with imported ideologies such as Marxism, Social Darwinism and liberalism had their say on human rights. To claim that China lacks a rich 'historical tradition' of valuing rights and thinking about them in ways comparable to those found in the West only makes sense, therefore, if we ignore an important period. In short, there are plenty of modern Chinese canonical thinkers for defenders of individual liberties to cite.

One matter puts in a different light the claim that Chinese emphasize collective order, Westerners individual liberties: the exclusionary policies that, until 1928, banned most Chinese (servants were exempted) from entering certain public parks in those parts of Shanghai under foreign control. Apologists for the Beijing regime cite these policies as examples of the kinds of human abuses that were common in China when

'long before the founding of the People's Republic there was a well-developed literature in Chinese on human rights'

Shanghai was a 'semi-colonial' treaty port. The point here is that, in the debates over exclusionary policies in Shanghai in this period, it was Westerners who tended to stress the need to prioritise 'order' (keep the natives out or chaos would result) and the Chinese who wanted 'rights' extended. At the American Historical Association meeting, Linda Kerber described a current misconception about social and civil rights: that only in Marxist and Third World traditions does one find economic protection taken seriously as human rights. She reminded her audience that, in the USA, attempts to work into the liberal tradition just such a notion have been made periodically since at least Franklin Roosevelt's day.

Switching from the 'rights' to the 'human' side of the term, Hufton argues convincingly that, as interesting as it is to compare definitions of 'right' and what kinds of 'rights' are treasured, we need to ask another question: 'Who . . . at any one time, is considered human?' Chiro's book illustrates the importance of the converse question: Who is considered subhuman? One thing modern tyrants have in common, he claims, is a tendency to dehumanize whole groups. The worst kinds of abuses occur when regimes place people in subhuman categories not because of what they have done, but because of who they are. Hunt notes that the issuing of the 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen' did not end the debate about rights in France. Instead, it 'opened it up in new ways', since it specified what the valued rights were but was unclear about who was entitled to them. Revolutionaries had to ask how broadly the category 'man and citizen' should be interpreted. This brought onto the table the notion that groups routinely denied rights – the 'poor, the propertyless, religious minorities, blacks . . . even women' – might properly deserve many things.

Exclusion questions remain with us, as Hunt points out, though they have been re-phrased: 'human' typically stands in for 'man', while 'citizen' is left out. The first change is a positive development, but

the latter is problematic. After all, some of the so-called 'human rights' specified in UN declarations are really meant to apply to 'citizens', sometimes 'adult citizens' - few would argue, for example, that

children have the same 'right to work' as others - so the nature of citizenship is still important to debate.

Freedoms are still not adequately protected in China: see, for example, the harsh new sentence handed down in 1996 to Wang Dan, a veteran of the 1989 protests who has continued to criticize the regime. Nevertheless, focusing on definitions of 'human', and on dehumanizing categories, provides a better method for comparing past and present states of human rights in China than does concentrating on specific individuals or creating lists of specific rights and abuses.

Is the regime using the same kinds of criteria to place people in dehumanizing categories as were employed in the past? The answer is simple: No. This suggests that, as serious as the Chinese human rights situation remains, important changes for the better have taken place. The worst horrors of the Cultural Revolution took place when large segments of the population were classified as *feirenmin* (literally: non-people), counter-revolutionaries, or bad elements, and when these labels were routinely applied to people on the basis of

parentage. This no longer happens. When members of religious groups are persecuted, it is because of things they do or profess; the same is true of those such as Wei Jingsheng (who continue to be classified as 'counter-revolutionaries' or bad elements). In the *laogai* system, in contrast to the Nazi concentration camps, dehumanizing terms are not linked to blood.

However, it is crucial to stress that historical works also remind us of the need to be wary of any blanket statement that matters are getting better or worse in a country as a whole. Revolutionary changes (like the radical economic restructuring currently underway in China) can have differing, even opposite, effects on members of contrasting social groups.

For example, in the same period that has seen the move away in China from categorical political dehumanization, human rights abuses with gendered dimensions (such as the kidnapping and sale of women) have been on the rise. More generally, and ironically - given the fact that the Beijing regime still claims to be working to introduce 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics' - many of the material protections that Marxist governments have considered important 'human rights' have been disappearing at an alarming rate in the People's Republic. Indeed, China is a country where cities in many respects perhaps better exemplify 'Capitalism with Dickensian Characteristics'.

The debate on China needs to be reformulated. This article has tried to suggest some useful ways of doing so, not least by focusing on the historical turn in human rights studies and on the promise it holds for those interested in making sense of the present as well as understanding the past.

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'as serious as the Chinese human rights situation remains, important changes for the better have taken place'

# Liberalism and Security

*The victory of the liberal project, argue **Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver**, has given rise to the demand for a wider security agenda*

**B**y the 1980s, the dominance of military-political issues as the centre of security concerns was being questioned in several ways. The technology of nuclear weapons was largely mature, and deterrence theory had reached a point of intellectual and emotional exhaustion.

Except for a last surge of energy during the early 1980s caused by Reagan's 'Strategic Defence Initiative' (SDI) and 'Cold War II', the technological driver sustaining the militarization of security in the West was beginning to lose force. After the Vietnam war, there was an increasing tendency in the West to question whether war was a cost-effective method for achieving a wide-range of political and economic objectives.

The unfolding of Gorbachev's programme during the later 1980s dealt a series of ever stronger blows against the ideological driver of militarized security, culminating in the dismantling of the communist challenge to market economics, and then in the dismantling of the Soviet Union itself. There was a growing awareness that war was disappearing, or in some cases had disappeared, as an option in relations amongst a substantial group of states.

The core group of this emergent security community was Western Europe, Japan and North America. Once Gorbachev assumed power and embarked on an explicit desecuritising of East-West relations it became possible to think that the Soviet Union might also join this war-free sphere. During this process there were substantial moves towards arms reduction. If war itself was fading away as

a possibility amongst many of the leading powers in the system, then realist assumptions about the inherent primacy of military security became questionable, and hard liberal ones about the temporary necessity for military containment became redundant.

## SECURITISATION

Alongside the declining salience of the military agenda was the increasing securitisation of two issues that had traditionally been thought of as low politics:

'Traditionalists fought back by raising the charge that widening the meaning of security beyond the military sector invited intellectual incoherence.'

the international economy and the environment. In the case of the environment, the growing impact of humankind was transforming the natural environment from being a background constant into a foreground variable. Starting from concerns in the 1960s about pesticides, this grew steadily into a wide range of interconnected issues including climate change, biodiversity, resource depletion, pollution, and the threat from meteorites.

In the case of the economy, the securitisation process arose in part from the relative economic decline of the United States, and in part from reactions to the increasing liberalisation of the world economy, first in trade, and from the 1970s also in finance. In general, national economies became progressively more exposed to competition from other producers in a global market, and to ever more powerful transnational corporations and financial markets. This development gave rise to specific concerns about the ability of states to maintain independent capability for military production (and

therefore mobilization), and about the possibility of economic dependencies within the global market (particularly oil) being exploited for political ends. There were fears that the global market would generate more losers than winners, and that it would heighten existing inequalities both within and between states (manifested at the top of the range by US fears of decline, and at the bottom by developing country fears of exploitation, debt crises and marginalisation).

During the turbulence surrounding the ending of the Cold War, the changing nature of the security agenda itself became a focus of controversy. The virtual collapse of Cold War military concerns by the late 1980s, and the proliferating attachment of 'security' to an ever wider range of issues, raised protests from the security studies establishment that the concept of security was becoming debased. Traditionalists fought back both by reasserting conventional arguments about the enduring primacy of military security, and by raising the charge that widening the meaning of security beyond the military sector invited intellectual incoherence. The key strategy was to allow widening only inasmuch as this could be linked to concerns about the threat or use of force between political actors. In a landmark statement of the traditionalist position, Walt argues that security studies is about the phenomenon of war, and that it can be defined as 'the study of the threat, use, and control of military force'. Against those who want to widen the agenda outside this strictly military domain, he argues that this 'runs the risk of expanding "Security Studies" excessively; by this logic, issues such as pollution, disease, child abuse, or economic recessions could all be viewed as threats to "security". Defining the field in this way would destroy its intellectual coherence and make it more difficult to devise solutions to any of these important problems'.

Walt does allow 'economics and security' into his picture, but only as it relates to military issues, and not as economic security per se.

As its main defence against the wideners, the mainstream security establishment thus focused on the charge of intellectual incoherence, and retreated into a dogmatic military definition of security. It is curious that they relied on this relatively superficial argument when a



much more serious and powerful line is available. Widening threatens the whole liberal project by bringing back into the realm of security many issues that liberals have sought, with considerable success, to desecuritize. To the extent that liberalism is defined as a desecuriting project, the unrestrained widening of the security agenda threatens both its conceptual foundations and its accomplishments. It is more than a little surprising that such a line of attack has not been used against the wideners, except in a limited way by Deudney (and in our own previous reflections). The wider agenda certainly seems to be more vulnerable to excesses of securitisation than the traditional military one (which is vulnerable enough by itself if taken to extreme). In the immediate wake of the Cold War, the lesson from the Soviet Union about the massive drawbacks of excessively wide securitisation stand exposed for all to see. In this perspective, widening the security agenda can be cast as a seriously retrograde move. It threatens the hard won desecuriting achievements of liberalism, and perhaps even of the Hobbesian Leviathan, over the past three centuries, and is out of line with the strong liberal imperatives towards more openness in the post-Cold War world.

Seen not as a product of the Cold War, but as part of the liberal programme of desecuritisation, the retreat of traditional security studies into the military sector makes clear sense. The liberal project to limit the scope of securitisation argues in favour of the traditionalists, with their narrow agenda, and against the wideners. Reserving security for the military sector has a pleasing 'last resort' ring about it, and fits comfortably with the broadly liberal ideology that is now enjoying ascendance. Demilitarization by sector has been the characteristic liberal approach to desecuritisation, and in that sense traditional security studies can be seen, surprisingly, as one of its products (and not just of realism, as is generally assumed). For what is the traditionalist style of security studies about if not the isolation of the military sector as embodying 'security'?

There is a deep contradiction in this situation. On the one hand, the core security ideas of classical liberalism about the benign effect of free trade and democratisation stand triumphant. Now

freed from the securitising imperatives of the Cold War, they dominate many of the most powerful states and societies on the planet. Although far from universally successful, liberalism has seen the rolling

back of force in the domestic politics and economies of many states, the spread of democratic norms and practices, and the widespread adoption of more open economic relations between states. Within the Western core, there is a degree of international institutionalization and socialization that has virtually ruled out war amongst the states. By almost any measure, the liberal desecuritisation project had by the late twentieth century achieved spectacular success. The ending of the Cold War, and the surrender of communism to the market, underlined this success as much as it contributed to it. And yet, on the other hand, this moment of triumph is accompanied by a durable and impressive movement to widen the security agenda across practically the whole range of human activity, seemingly bringing into question the very foundations of the classical liberal project. How is this apparent contradiction to be explained? Ironically, as we hope to show, it is the very success of the liberal project that now gives rise to the demand for a wider security agenda, for a reinvention of security in terms other than military.

To understand liberalism as the cause of the wider security agenda, one

needs to focus on economic liberalism, and especially on the praxis of the global market economy. Along with democratisation, market economics played a big role in liberalism's apparent success in solving the problem of war for a substantial part of the international system. But now that liberalism, and especially economic liberalism, has become both the hegemonic ideology and the dominant mode of organisation, a new framework for (in)security unfolds that is quite unlike the Cold War one. With liberalism defining many of the most important political and economic spaces on the planet, it simultaneously spreads the classical version of the liberal peace, and opens up a new set of insecurities. The new agenda of insecurity arises in large part from the operation of the global market economy itself. It is not an aim of liberalism (quite the contrary), but an often unintended and unanticipated effect of liberal policy in practice. It is partly about economic insecurity directly, and partly about the spillover of effects from the operation of global markets into the military, political, societal and environmental sectors.

In addition, the rise of liberalism to hegemonic status increases the pressure that other liberal ideas, most notably individualism and human rights, put on societies that do not share them. The liberal peace is not universal, and in many respects it is imperial towards the remaining non-liberal societies. Finally, democratization often adds to the widening of security because the new forms of insecurity will be felt and articulated by actors other than the traditional state representative. Because of the political and legal space opened up within and between states by liberal policies, these actors enjoy a higher degree of autonomy and freedom of action than before.

'To understand liberalism as the cause of the wider security agenda, one needs to focus on economic liberalism, and especially on the praxis of the global market economy.'

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# The President's Performance

**George C. Edwards III** *argues that we can apply neutral standards in our evaluations of American presidents*

**M**ost Americans evaluate their presidents according to their own ideological proclivities. Conservatives like conservative presidents; liberals like liberal presidents.

But a more satisfactory procedure for assessing presidential performance is to ask if the president is an effective leader in terms of his own views and goals. In this way we can effectively control for ideology.

The focus on governing to accomplish goals requires us to answer two central questions. Has the president accurately identified the possibilities in his environment for accomplishing his goals? Second, has he adopted an effective strategy to achieve these ends?

This approach to evaluating presidents can be illustrated by examining Bill Clinton's relations with Congress in his first four-year term of office, noting a change between the first and second halves of this term.

## THE FIRST TWO YEARS

In his first two years in office, President Clinton misjudged three aspects of his political environment. First, he overestimated the extent of change that a president elected with a minority of the vote - 43 percent - could make. He should not have expected to pass far-reaching social legislation - the Health Care Bill - without involving the other party, especially when the public was ambivalent and well-organized interest groups were fervently opposed. Clinton adopted a partisan approach in developing his health care plan - which was intended to be his administration's defining issue - and failed.

Second, Clinton did not

recognize that the more policy changes a president proposes, the more opposition he is likely to encounter. The proposed health care reform entailed perhaps the most sweeping, complex prescriptions in American history for controlling the conduct of state governments, employers, drug manufacturers, doctors, hospitals, and individuals. In an era when a few opponents can tie up bills, the odds were clearly against the White House.

Third, Clinton's political environment lacked resources for policy initiatives. When resources are scarce, those proposing expensive new programmes, such as the Health Care Bill, have to regulate the private sector to get things done, which inevitably unleashes a backlash by commercial interests; the costs of action are more expensive politically. In health care, the complex and coercive mechanisms created to require employers to pay for health insurance and for controlling costs (managed competition) were designed to avoid government responsibility for paying. It should have come as no surprise, therefore, that those who would bear greater costs, face higher risks, or have their discretion constrained, would oppose change.

Clinton's most notable successes, including the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), family leave, and 'motor voter registration' had substantial support in Congress before he arrived in Washington. In the former case, for example, he was able to rely on Republican support for George Bush's policy initiative. He understood that he

had to pursue a bipartisan strategy that had the additional advantage of entailing no direct budgetary implications. In the latter two cases the bills had been passed before (and been vetoed by Bush) and little leadership was required.

James David Barber has argued that all presidents must perform three political roles: rhetoric, personal relations, and homework. The habitual way of performing these roles he calls presidential style. Here we focus on the most important element of Clinton's style: rhetoric.

The Clinton presidency is the ultimate example of the Public Presidency - a presidency based on a perpetual campaign to obtain the public's support, and fed by public opinion polls, focus groups, and public relations memos. This is an administration that spent \$18 million on advertisements in 1995, a non-election year! It also repeatedly interpreted its setbacks in terms of its failure to communicate rather than in terms of the quality of its initiatives or its strategy for governing. As Bill Clinton put it, 'the role of the President of the United States is message'.

To evaluate the success of this governing style, we can ask whether the president was able to: 1) set the country's policy agenda; 2) set the terms of debate over the issues on the agenda; and 3) increase public support for himself or his proposals.

A president's legislative strategy includes setting the agenda of Congress - which, in a Public Presidency, means setting the agenda of the public first. This requires the President to establish

priorities among legislative proposals. From its first week in office, the Clinton administration did a poor job of this. Neither the legislation for improving the economy nor a comprehensive health care package was ready on time, creating a vacuum that was filled with controversies over lower priority issues such as gays in the military and public funding for abortion. These issues left an impression of ineptitude and alienated many in the public whose support the president would need for his priority legislation.

It was more than eight months after taking office before the president

'Clinton overestimated the extent of change that a president elected with a minority of the vote - 43 percent - could make.'

made a national address on health care reform, and even then his speech - made two months before the introduction of the bill - was out of step with the legislative timetable.

In the meantime, there were important distractions from the president's bill: eighteen American soldiers were killed on a peace-keeping mission in Somalia, and the USS Harlan County, carrying US troops as part of a United Nations plan to restore democracy to Haiti, was forced to leave by pro-military gunmen. In addition, the president had to devote his full attention and all the White House's resources to obtaining passage of NAFTA.

Part of the problem was the president himself: he rarely focused on any bill for more than a few days at a time. With his undisciplined personal style and over-full, badly-prioritised agenda, Clinton failed to focus the country's attention on priority issues.

Clinton also failed to set the terms of the debate. On health care reform, the White House was unable to keep the public's attention focused on the inadequacies of the health care system and the broad goals of reform. Instead of revolving around a central theme, public debate focused on the Clinton plan's pitfalls.

In short, during its first two years, the Clinton administration failed to prevent the Republicans from dominating the symbols of political discourse and setting the terms of the debate over policy. In the 1994 congressional elections, the Republicans framed the vote choice in national terms: they made taxes, social discipline, big government, and the Clinton presidency the dominant issues. Tying congressional Democrats to Clinton, a discredited government, and a deplorable status quo, they set the terms of the debate - and won.

Finally, Bill Clinton overestimated the extent to which the public was susceptible to his appeals for support. When the president's first major economic proposal, the fiscal stimulus plan, was introduced, it ran into strong Republican opposition. During the April 1993 congressional recess, Clinton stepped up his rhetoric on the bill, counting on a groundswell of public opinion to pressure moderate Republicans into ending the filibuster on the bill. The groundswell did not materialise and the bill never came to a



vote in the Senate. Nor was the Clinton administration able to sustain public support for the president's 1993 budget proposal of the same year, the 1994 crime bill, and - most painful of all - his health care reform proposals. It did only a little better on NAFTA.

The president's own approval levels averaged less than 50 per cent for each of his first two years in office. In 1994, an association with Clinton decreased votes for Democratic candidates for Congress, and the election was widely seen as a repudiation of the president. It is difficult to conclude that the president had a successful governance style.

### THE SECOND TWO YEARS

With the dramatic Republican congressional victory in the 1994, Clinton's programme was dead. But the election also gave him the opportunity to re-define his presidency. Fortunately for the president, the new Republican majorities overplayed their hands and refused to budge on their proposals to reverse the course of public policy, leading to government shutdowns and public perception of the culpability of the Republican Congress. Clinton was able to characterise the Republicans as 'radicals' and himself as a 'reasonable' alternative in opposition to change. At the same time, Clinton read his new strategic position as providing for a scaled-down

presidency: he would use executive orders to promote his policy views and the veto to defend moderation.

Clinton's primary goal became to block the Republicans' most ambitious plans to reshape government. By so doing he was able to unify his party, which was frightened of staying in the minority, for two years following its devastating defeat in 1994. His defensive strategy met with substantial success; divided government matters.

The biggest payoff for the president was re-election in 1996. The 1994 congressional elections set the terms of the debate over public policy in America so that the election of 1996 was about the excesses of the Republican Party as much as about high taxes, big government, social decay, and intrusive public authority. This, along with a classic backdrop of peace and prosperity, enabled Clinton to win easily a second term.

### DEFENSIVE STRATEGY

There are costs to the defensive strategy, however. Structuring the choice for voters and seeking public support as a more moderate version of the Republicans was good for campaigning and lifted the president in the public opinion polls. Yet while the president benefited from standing in counterpoint to the Republicans, he was forced to embrace some of their imagery in his rhetoric. He changed this rhetoric from programmes and dollars to inspiration and values. He defused a host of promising Republican cultural and values issues

with his symbolic stands aimed at attracting anxious parents: V-chips in television sets, school uniforms, teenage curfews, restrictions on teenage smoking, limits on Internet pornography, school competency tests, Hollywood ratings system, and increased educational programming.

But Clinton not only expropriated the language of values from the Republicans, he also coopted many of their issues. As a result, he had much of his agenda determined by the opposition party. He declared the era of big government to be over and signed the Republican welfare reform bill. Most important, the Republicans forced the president to deal with the budget on their

'Clinton's primary goal became to block the Republicans' most ambitious plans to reshape government.'



terms. The issue became, first, not whether to balance the budget but when and how - and, later, just how. After submitting a budget in early 1995 that envisioned \$200 billion deficits for years to come, a few months later Clinton embraced the Republican orthodoxy of a balanced budget. Shortly thereafter he agreed to Newt Gingrich's timetable of balancing it within seven years.

### SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS

It is difficult for a president to evaluate a strategic position and fashion a strategy appropriate for governing in it. Yet the Clinton presidency has inflicted wounds on itself. In 1992, Clinton campaigned as an economically liberal and socially conservative populist, and as a 'New Democrat' who was cautious in domestic policy. Yet he governed in the first two years as an economic conservative, a social liberal, and an activist in domestic policy.

Clinton's governing style undercut his campaign style. He undermined his supportive coalition and thus his ability to govern or even to receive credit for his accomplishments. In the second half of his first term, he better understood his strategic position and rediscovered his roots as a Democratic centrist, supporting a balanced budget but fending off extreme cuts and emphasizing social conservatism and family values.

By then, however, the president's strategic position was greatly weakened by the Republican victories in the congressional elections. In addition, because Clinton's new campaign style reflected a reactive agenda, it undermined his ability to govern. Although he could gain public support in opposition to the Republicans, he was not able to obtain public support for his own policy initiatives.

In Clinton's second term, as the first Democratic president since Franklin D. Roosevelt to win reelection, the question remains whether he can align his campaigning and governing styles to leave his imprint on public policy

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# Parties in Congress

*Hubris, inexperience, and the separated system undermined the Republicans' 'revolution' in the House, argues **John E. Owens***

**T**he 104th US Congress (1994-96) stands out as one of the most fascinating of recent times. This is only partly because it was the first for 40 years to have Republican majorities in both houses. It is more so because of the attempt by Newt Gingrich and the House Republicans to institute party government as a means both of organizing in the House (even the entire system of national government by some accounts) and of promoting a common policy programme - and because of the limits this attempt ultimately encountered.

Since the 1960s party organizations have become the most significant organisational structures on Capitol Hill, as the traditional autonomy of congressional committees has weakened and the powers of central party leaders and caucuses strengthened.

Elected as deputy leader of the House Republicans in 1989, Gingrich was and is a strong believer in party government. He rejected explicitly the Madisonian model of congressional politics based on bargaining, negotiation and compromise across parties, and organized institutionally round the committee system. Republicans, Gingrich argued, should be 'party activists', rather than 'committee-' or 'district guys'. Their efforts needed to be directed towards specific policy goals, including 'replacing the current welfare state with an opportunity society'.

To a large extent, this perspective reflected the built-up frustrations of House Republicans as the seemingly 'permanent minority' (Connelly and Pitney, 1994). Gingrich's enthusiasm for party government and House Republicans' endorsement of his vision led directly to what was effectively

a party manifesto, the 'Contract With America'. (For the historical background to, and more details about, the Contract With America, see my 'Party Time in Congress?' in *CSD Bulletin* 3/2, Winter 1996.)

After the elections, Gingrich and the Republicans moved quickly to implement party government in the newly elected 104th THouse. By the 100 days' deadline, all the Contract items had been brought to a vote on the House floor as promised and, with the single exception of congressional terms limits, won House approval with the support of a highly disciplined Republican majority. In late 1995 Gingrich was quoted as saying that eventually it would be better if the committee system was replaced by party leadership-appointed task forces.

Late 1995 was, however, the high point of party government in the 104th House. In the months round the turn of the year, the Republicans overreached themselves. Instead of accepting half a loaf, they wanted everything. Following opposition from Bill Clinton to many of their most controversial proposals, including welfare reform, and in the mistaken beliefs that they enjoyed public support and that sheer will-power could enact the 'revolution', they elected for confrontation with the president. These proposals were loaded into a massive budget reconciliation bill and sent in late 1995 to Clinton for signature, as the Republicans dared the president to endorse their proposals in their entirety or face closing down the federal government. Clinton opted for the latter course and ultimately, through a deft public relations effort, won the encounter.

Gingrich and his colleagues

'Gingrich rejected explicitly the Madisonian model of congressional politics''

were guilty of hubris. In the aftermath of the 1994 elections, all the available evidence suggested that the mid-term results were a repudiation of Democratic government more than an endorsement of Republican radicalism. Even in a single-party strong government system, like Britain's, a majority party - such as Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party in the 1980s - cannot achieve all its policy goals when voters do not want what they are offered. An accurate reading of the 1994 election results would then have been more provisional, and more modest, than the revolutionary interpretation promoted by Gingrich and his colleagues. Not only did the House Republicans overinterpret their electoral mandate. They overestimated their capacity to achieve their policy goals and to make the 'revolution' happen.

In *Learning to Govern: An Institutional View of the 104th Congress* - one of the most insightful analyses of the Republican takeover - Richard Fenno has argued that the root cause of Republicans' ineptitude was their lack of experience. As Fenno points out, none of the House Republicans had ever served with a Republican majority; and only seven of the 73 freshmen/women had any governing experience. There is a lot to Fenno's argument.

However, inexperience was not the only problem. The fundamental problem was the endorsement of a strong party government approach coupled with a bold anti-government policy programme. If a majority party can maintain tight party unity, this approach can work in the House because rules can be written and implemented to assure that the majority party prevails. But Gingrich's call - no matter how intense - for the House to act as the driving force in the system, and the House Jacobins' insistence on 'total victory', could not guarantee compliance in the Senate or the White House. The debacle over the 1995 budget showed how misguided the House Republicans' strategy was. Anyone familiar with the workings of the American constitution knows that the separated system is specifically designed both to thwart such majoritarian ambitions and to prevent big policy changes; and that successful policymaking requires the construction of political coalitions across institutions, and compromises among players articulating



different interests and divergent ideological values.

The re-election of Clinton and the continuation of split-party control of the White House and Congress after the 1996 elections; Republican losses in those elections and the consequent narrowing of the party's majority; the unwillingness of Republicans to run on their party record in 1996; and the consequent absence of a strong electoral endorsement on which they could build a governing strategy in

'a party government approach to governing is not consistent with the separated system'

the new Congress: all this meant that House Republicans faced a strategic environment in Washington which was even less favourable than it had been in 1995. Their performance in 1997 did not suggest that they assessed this environment

accurately or that they developed a coherent governing strategy aimed at maximizing their political goals.

Since the 1996 elections, there have been two coup attempts on Gingrich, disagreements over policy direction on the budget and other issues, and, in June 1997, a rerun of the 1995 budget debacle on a disaster relief bill. Party government remains in place in the House but it is now less centralised. As the leadership has made mistakes, as deeper fissures have appeared in Republican unity, and as the enduring decentralising forces so characteristic of congressional politics have begun to reassert themselves more forcibly, it has become clear that the highly centralised legislative organisation of 1995 could not be maintained and the older patterns of committee politics would reappear.

Even before the 104th House

adjourned in October 1996, some Republican committee leaders took tentative steps to grab back some of the power they had lost. Early in 1997, Gingrich conceded that the centralization of power had not worked. And, throughout 1997, committees and chairs reasserted themselves, constraining Gingrich's power and forcing him into political accommodations in order to bolster his own position. The number of subcommittees and the memberships of full committees also increased as rank-and-file Republicans wanted more of the legislative action. Although House Republicans lost again in the showdown with Clinton over the disaster relief bill, they were able, through a deal with Clinton, to achieve one of their most cherished policy goals: balancing the federal budget (by 2002).

Yet the basic problems of learning how to govern remain. In October 1997, Gingrich himself conceded as much: 'We have never learned to govern as a party. It is time we learn to govern', the Republican Speaker declared - this from a leader of a three-year old Republican majority. So while the centralised form of legislative organization has been relaxed somewhat, the pre-1994 context, reinforced by the euphoria of the Contract governing experience, continues to propel too many House Republicans against Madison and in favour of ideological purity and a no-compromise approach. Too many of the current House majority are still unwilling to accept that such a party government approach to governing is not consistent with the separated system and, therefore, is unlikely to succeed.

Failure seems especially likely when the strategic environment in which they are seeking to govern includes a president who is only too adept at operating the system to his advantage and in which the two main parties are extremely competitive in electoral terms at all levels of government. Whether the House Republican majority can ever learn this lesson which the American system teaches remains to be seen. It could be that a majority of House Republicans might reject the travails of governing for the delights of opposition and ideological purity.

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# The European Union's International Identity

**Richard Whitman** outlines some of the instruments through which the European Union projects an international identity

The concept of identity has recently gained considerable currency in the social sciences. A strand of International Relations literature suggests that the politics of identity is the EU's central problem.

The EU's identity is a dimension of its international activity, that is, the network of relationships that the EC/EU has created and maintains with states or groups of states. This activity consist of the use of instruments - informational, procedural, transference, and overt - though which policy is implemented.

## INFORMATIONAL

Informational instruments - 'strategic' or 'specific' - consist of promulgations of the rationale of the Union's relationship with a state or a group of states.

The Common Positions and Joint Actions implemented under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) are examples of *Strategic Informational Instruments*. The Common Positions and Joint Actions make clear to third parties that the EU has adopted a specific position on a particular issue or on relations with a particular country. They may, or may not, be supported by the use of additional instruments (see below).

Strategic Informational Instruments are also used in the conclusions of European Council meetings and in Commission Communications. Examples include the Essen European Council meeting's pronouncement in December 1994 on the adoption of a pre-accession strategy for the aspirant member states of the Union, and the Commission Communication, adopted in March 1995, on the proposal for a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

*Specific Informational Instruments*

are intended to establish, or re-orient, policy in a specific area. They include the declarations issued under the CFSP. Declarations are used by the Union as reactive instruments to respond to unfolding international events. The absence of a declaration can be of equal interest. The paucity of declarations about the Mediterranean basin, despite the intensity of the violence in Algeria, can be read as a lack of substantive agreement among the member states on an appropriate response to events. All of the institutions of the Union use Specific Informational Instruments which may be intended to be self-implementing or to accompany other instruments detailed below.

## PROCEDURAL

The procedural dimension of the Community refers to the creation of a standing institutionalised relationship with a third party state or group of states. These may be established in regionalised form, as noted above, or constituted on a bilateral basis, as with relations with the United States. The EC/EU has constructed a network of agreements with states and groups of states. The development and deepening of the region-to-region dialogue by the Community in the late 1980s provided, in some analyses, the basis for characterising 'a new European identity in the international system' (Regelsberger). These analyses emphasize the increase in scope of the procedural instrument, especially during the mid- and

late-1980s.

These agreements are founded on different articles of the Treaties, declarations, exchanges of letters or, in the case of international and regional organisations, the granting of membership or observer status. Alongside these agreements a political dialogue has also been established. This takes place in different fora (Association and Cooperation Councils, Ministerial meetings, meetings with the troika - the last, current, and next presidents of the Union - the Presidency and the Commission) and at differing intervals. A particular procedural instrument has been created for relations with the Europe Agreement countries: in addition to implementing the structured dialogue, defined in the Presidency Conclusions of the 1994 Essen meeting of the European Council, the Europe Agreements, signed by the Central and East European Countries (CEECs), contain an obligation to support the construction of an appropriate political dialogue with the Union.

Subsequently, the General Affairs Council approved an extension of the dialogue with the CEECs and provided for them to be able to associate with the EU in statements, *démarches* and joint actions, and by coordinating within international organisations.

## TRANSFERENCE

Transference instruments are the financial and technical assistance relationships that the Community uses to pursue policy. The budget of the EU is one of the *positive*

*transference* instruments available to the Union. Approximately 6 per cent of the Community budget for 1996 was allocated to external action and directed towards Central and Eastern Europe, the CIS states, and the states in the Mediterranean Basin, Asia, and Latin America. In addition, the member states provide financial and technical assistance financed by member state contributions to the European Development Fund (for Lomé states) and loans from the European Investment Bank. The creation of the European Community Humanitarian Office represents a proceduralisation of

'The paucity of declarations about the Mediterranean basin, despite the intensity of the violence in Algeria, can be read as a lack of substantive agreement among the member states on an appropriate response to events.'

the positive transference process.

The *negative transference* instrument of economic sanctions is also used by the Union. The use of economic sanctions was regularised under Article 228a of Treaty on European Union, which gave the CFSP the ability to use economic sanctions.

**OVERT**

The overt dimension refers to the physical presence of the Community and its representatives outside the Community. This can be on a permanent basis: for example, the establishment of the external delegations of the Commission; or on a temporary basis: for instance, visits of the troika or the 'bi-cephalic troika' (the troika plus the Commission), or the dispatch of monitors and special representatives, to, for example, the Middle East and the Great Lakes. The Union has also created its own overt instrument in the form of its network of external delegations accredited to 112 countries.

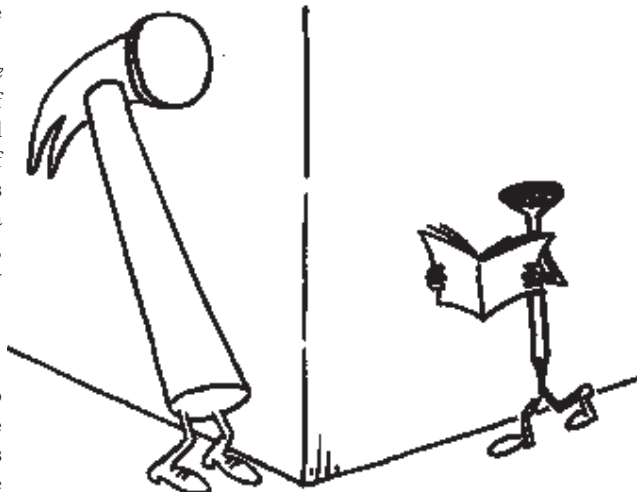
The Presidency of the Union is explicitly granted responsibility for the implementation of the CFSP under the TEU, and the troika and bi-cephalic troika are also retained as other instruments at the disposal of the Union.

The Presidency retains responsibility for the extensive network of political dialogue commitments that are the day-to-day substance of CFSP. The Commission and Commissioners perform a similar overt role, with the portfolios of Jacques Santer, Sir Leon Brittan, Hans van den Broek, Manuel Marin, Joao de Deus Pinheiro and Emma Bonino being the most public face of overt activity by the Commission.

Joint actions of the CFSP have created a number of new overt instruments: these include the conveying of aid in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the dispatch of observers to the Russian and South African elections, and the EU administration of Mostar. The Western European Union also represents a potential overt instrument for the EU under Article J.4.2 of the TEU.

Recent EC/EU-Russian

"European foreign policy is handicapped by the requirement for unanimity by member states for each decision".



Federation relations illustrate how a combination of the above instruments are deployed in the relationship with a third party state. The EC/EU used strategic informational instruments to detail a new strategy towards Russia in the Conclusions of the Madrid European Council in December 1995, and in the 'European Union Action Plan for Russia' of May 1996.

Under the CFSP specific informational instruments have also been utilised to respond to political crises in

Russia. The deployment of these instruments can be indicative. The use of troops by the Russian Federation in Chechnya on 11 December 1994 did not generate a declaratory position by the Union until 18 January 1995. Speaking on the events in Chechnya the Belgium foreign minister, Frank Vandenbroucke, characterised the difficulties in formulating even this Union response by stating that 'European foreign policy is handicapped by the requirement for unanimity by member states for each decision'.

Procedural instruments deployed in EC/EU-Russian relations include the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with its attendant Cooperation Council, Cooperation Committee, and Inter-Parliamentary meetings.

Joint action with respect to the Russian elections was given effect through a Moscow-based European Union Observer Centre for the Russian elections on 12 December 1993. The centre was staffed by one representative of the Belgian Presidency, one from the European Parliament, and two from the

Commission, as well as by Russian personnel. The Centre, which reported to the Council, was responsible for providing transport and communications assistance to the twenty-four observers sent by the European Parliament, and to monitors sent by the national parliaments and NGOs of the Member States. Furthermore, the Union employed the German-based NGO, the European Institute for the Media (EIM), to monitor election coverage.

Positive transference instruments deployed in EC/EU-Russian relations include the TACIS programme of technical assistance (631 million ecu from 1990 to 1994). The use of additional positive transference instruments includes food aid, humanitarian assistance through ECHO, and sectorally specific programmes such as the SYNERGY programme for the energy sector, the TEMPUS programme for higher education, and scientific co-operation through programmes such as COPERNICUS, PECO, and INTAS. Negative transference instruments include anti-dumping actions currently in force against 14 categories of goods.

**CONCLUSION**

This focus on the instruments used by the EC/EU to assert its identity provides only a limited insight into the full international role and significance of the EU. Moreover, the relative significance of the EU's various international relationships cannot be conveyed by describing the use of declarations, procedural instruments, and so on: the environment within which these instruments are deployed, the EU's position in that environment, and the process of policy formulation, are also of crucial significance. Nevertheless, a consideration of how these instruments are deployed is one way to capture a particular dimension of the international role of the EC/EU; it also refines and makes explicit assumptions that can inform future empirical work.

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# After Polanyi

**Claus Offe** considers the relationship between the market and social order

**K**arl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* (1944) aimed to demonstrate that the institutional arrangements of market societies cause them to be inherently unstable. This is the famous 'satanic mill' argument. It derives in turn from the 'fictitious commodities' argument that labour, land, and money are commodities that differ from all others in that they do not come into being as commodities, that is, as the outcome of an acquisitive production process aimed at the sale of its results for profit. The market cannot create 'social order' because some of the key ingredients of social order cannot be the result of market interaction. The market, genetically and structurally, is the creation of non-market actors.

On the basis of the 'satanic mill' argument, we can draw the inverse conclusion. If a market economy actually develops into a sustainable social order, it must be due not - to use an important distinction introduced by Hayek - to its quality of 'cosmos' (spontaneous order due to the operation of the invisible hand), but of 'taxis' (consciously arranged, instituted, and controlled order). The question then becomes: who creates and manages 'taxis'? How do the social institutions in which the market is embedded come into being?

Polanyi argued that it is the state which is the guardian of integration, coherence, and solidarity. How does the state come to perform that function? There is a strong functionalist argument in *The Great Transformation*: 'Objective reasons of a stringent nature forced the hands of the legislators.' But legislators as social actors must be conscious of these objective reasons, and they must also be able and willing to comply with what these reasons mandate. The necessary protective devices on which a market society depends for its integration and sustainability do not become operative automatically. Nor are they self-evident and determinate. No outside observer can tell what institutional measures must be adopted to make a market economy a

viable social order. Any practical answer to this question must be willed and the ultimate source of this will is a theory of social justice that guides political action within society.

Polanyi showed, in his analysis of Speenhamland and its repeal in 1832-34, that market capitalism does not come into being by the force of evolutionary superiority alone. It originates, rather, in the conscious efforts of the holders of state power to create institutional and administrative arrangements that are best suited to it, and, most important, to the marketization of labour. Capitalism, and the commodification of labour as its core prerequisite, is thus a political construction.

The protective regulatory framework that eventually emerged after Speenhamland was also a political construction, based on the experience that market society, if left wholly unregulated, does not result in a stable social order. If, as Polanyi insists time and again, 'the market has been the outcome of a conscious and often violent intervention on the part of government which imposed the market organization on society for non-economic ends', then why should the same not be true for the reverse process in which markets are contained and regulated? There is an inconsistency here: while Polanyi is very specific as to the agents that brought about marketization, he lapses into the anonymity of functionalist logic in explaining the reverse process. 'Ultimately what made things happen were the interests of society as a whole.' He maintains that it was not class interests that gave rise to protective regulation and self-preservation, but, rather, that 'such measures simply responded to the needs of industrial civilization with which market methods were unable to cope.'

The great virtue and attraction of market forces and private property consist not in their being the medium of profit

maximization, but in their capacity for collective loss-minimization. Markets eliminate in a smooth, continuous, and inconspicuous way all those factors of production that fail to perform according to current standards of efficiency. These failing factors are thus forced to adapt and to find alternative and more productive uses. The power that drives this continuous search is more potent than any political authority or planning agency, be it authoritarian or democratic. This is so because the market is an anonymous power that cannot be irritated by election results or by any other kind of 'voice'. The potency of market forces derives from their anonymity and non-intentionality: if factors of production fail in a particular allocation, nobody can be blamed for having caused that event. Hence, as 'no one else' can be blamed for the negative market outcomes, the market invites individuals to attribute failure to themselves.

The market invites victim-blaming. As we know, anonymous efficiency-enhancing pressure is just one side of the market. The other side is its tendency to spread to every aspect of social life; the market cannot easily be contained or kept in its 'proper place' while respecting the autonomy of the 'life world' of culture, socialization, and the shape of human biographies.

Moreover, the market, far from being the favourite arrangement of producers, is, wherever possible undermined by cartels and monopolies, or distorted by clientelistic favours extracted from the holders of political power. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, what speaks against the market as a generator of social order is its blindness: it fails to register and to translate into price signals both present and future externalities, including those which result in the permanent exclusion of people and entire regions. It is these three classes of market deficiencies and market failures which must be addressed in any attempt to integrate market societies and impose upon them a viable social order.

*This is an edited version of Claus Offe's contribution to The Changing Nature of Democracy, edited by Takashi Inoguchi, John Keane, and Edward Newman (1998).*

'the market is an anonymous power that cannot be irritated by election results or by any other kind of "voice"'



# R. I. P., Che Guevara

Niels Jacob Harbitz *casts an appreciative eye over two recent biographies of Latin America's most popular Marxist revolutionary*

**T**hat long, flowing hair, that beret with the single star, those eyes fixed on a better future: the picture of Che Guevara has become the late twentieth century's image of revolt and revolution. In life an awe-inspiring leader, in death an icon for our times, Che - a whole generation thought they knew him - was the hallmark of all things new and radical.

Two recent biographies - Jon Lee Anderson's *Che Guevara*.

*A Revolutionary Life* (Bantam Press, 1997) and Jorge Castañeda's *Companero. The Life and Death of Che Guevara* (Bloomsbury, 1997) do more to complete the picture of Che than we could have hoped for. Long established Latin Americanists, Guevara's new biographers have drawn fully on already

established knowledge and combined this with exhaustive tappings of several previously unused sources of information.

The two biographies compliment each other nicely. The authors' different strategies and priorities have produced two significantly different versions of the same story. That, and the fact that both biographies are extremely well researched (if, in terms of style and composition, somewhat conventional examples of their genre) makes both well worth reading.

Lee Anderson writes that his sole loyalty is to Che Guevara himself, 'to write what I perceive to be his truth, not anyone else's.' But his work is not a hagiography. His most important sources are the people he befriended during his long stay in Havana. Among them were comrades, friends, and even some of Guevara's closest relatives, most notably his widow Aleida March. Yet Lee Anderson shows great integrity in drawing his own conclusions, frequently leaving his readers

with quite unflattering or uncomfortable pictures of 'el Che'. By the end of his account, Lee Anderson makes us realise, therefore, that Guevara's failings only made his tragedy even larger. While Guevara's ambition couldn't have been bigger - stirring up one big revolution for the whole of Latin America - his death

couldn't have been much smaller. Lee Anderson's strength is his tireless telling of detail and his straightforward way of reporting all this.

For political and philosophical depth of analysis, look instead to Castañeda. Despite being a little short on the patience required to write a biography of this kind, Castañeda displays a more critical and sophisticated

understanding than Lee Anderson not only of Che the revolutionary, but also of the revolution he guided. He shows how the Cuban revolution inspired insurgencies throughout Central and South America, and locates them all within the entire ideological spirit of the time. The key to understanding Che's

historical importance, he says, is recognizing how perfectly suited the man was to his times. His legends lives, Castañeda argues, because Che embodied an almost mystical affinity with his era, a time when people believed justice was achievable and revolution excusable. Castañeda's real task is to explain how and why Guevara's example could lead so many thousands of young Latin Americans to their deaths. Even today,

young rebels express their idealist ambition in the form of a prediction or even a premonition: 'Seré como el Che' - 'I will be like Che'. Alas, all too often, they get there.

More than thirty years after Guevara's death, such wishes seem hollow. Today one of the most uncompromising socialists the world has known can be merchandised as a red-hot commodity. In the course of those few October days in 1997 when his bones were first put on *lit de parade* and then laid to rest in a purpose-built mausoleum in Santa Clara (the city where Guevara's unit won its most important victory against the Batista regime) it became clear to everyone that the vast majority of the Che cult followers were no longer committed communist soldiers but consumer-capitalist shoppers. Appropriately, the myth of Che is soon to become the subject of not one, but many major motion

pictures. Celebrity investors, Mick Jagger amongst them, are busier than ever creating a new, fictional Che. While we wait for the films, we can walk *la Ruta del Che*, the route followed by Che's guerilla band, and observe the spots where they camped, fought, and died. En

route - or anywhere else for that matter - Che can be listened to, worn, eaten, or drunk. He can be seen on the face of a Swatch. There is no 'Chez Guevara' nightclub, but there probably will be one before long. It has already featured in a recent episode of 'The Simpsons'.

The fact remains, though, that Che is dead, and Lee Anderson and are the ones who may have made it possible for him finally to lie down. Both tracked

'Lee Anderson shows great integrity in drawing his own conclusions, frequently leaving his readers with quite unflattering or uncomfortable pictures of "el Che".'

'Castañeda shows how the Cuban revolution inspired insurgencies throughout Central and South America, and locates them all within the entire ideological spirit of the time.'



removed before his burial.

As patience was wearing thin, Cuban government forensic experts flew in to scan the entire area for 'anomalies', places where the earth had been disturbed. They found quite a few. After a six

down people who were present both at his execution and his burial. In November 1995, Lee Anderson was interviewing Mario Vargas Salinas, a former junior officer of the Bolivian Army. He knew that Vargas had been part of the platoon that had captured and killed Guevara. But the interview was a formality. The story of Guevara's last days had already been established, in sufficient detail, years earlier. Towards the end of their conversation, however, after he had put his notebook away, Lee Anderson

'I've been wanting to tell you. Che was buried, together with six others, in a mass grave near the Vallegrande air strip.'

nevertheless asked if Vargas knew what happened to Guevara's body.

'I've been wanting to tell you', said Vargas. 'Che was buried, together with six others, in a mass grave near the Vallegrande air strip.' Lee Anderson wrote up the story for *The New York Times*. At this point all hell broke loose. The Bolivian army denounced Lee Anderson, claiming that he had got Vargas drunk and made up lies to promote his book. Lee Anderson produced the tape from the interview. Vargas, meanwhile, ran away, and is now apparently under 'house arrest' in Colombia. Under immense media pressure, the Bolivian president formed a commission to find the bodies. The Army, however, had other plans. Mainly thanks to them, digging only began a year later. After four weeks, four corpses had been found. All, however, had hands, while Guevara's, apparently, had been

week break, digging was resumed, and, in late June 1997, a grave with the bones of seven bodies was unearthed. On one of them, 'number 2', the hands were missing.

Castañeda also found his gravedigger. Tracked down in his sports shop in Miami, the Cuban exile and former CIA stooge Gustavo Villoldo claimed that he had also been present. 'He was never cremated', said Villoldo, 'I didn't allow it, in the same manner I opposed the mutilation of his body.' From then on, all Castañeda had to do was to wait for the material evidence. It didn't take long.

And as it turned out, the story of the opening of the first grave and closing of the second coincided, not only with the build-up to the thirtieth anniversary of Guevara's death, but also with the publication of the two biographies. In death, as in life, Guevara's genius was his sense of timing.

*Niels Jacob Harbitz is a PhD candidate at CSD.*

## CSD

The Centre for the Study of Democracy (CSD) is the post-graduate and post-doctoral research centre of Politics and International Relations at the University of Westminster. CSD supports research into all aspects of the past, present and future of democracy, in such diverse areas as political theory and philosophy, international relations and law, European Union social policy, gender and politics, mass media and communications, and the politics of eastern and western Europe, the United States, and Islam. CSD is located in the School of Social and Behavioural Sciences (SBS) on the Regent Campus. It hosts seminars, public lectures and symposia in its efforts to foster greater awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of democracy in the public and private spheres at local, regional, national and international levels. It offers a one-year full-time (two-year part-time) MA in International Relations and Political Theory. CSD's publications include a series of working research papers entitled CSD Perspectives and this bulletin. *CSD Bulletin* aims to inform other university departments and public organizations, and our colleagues and under-graduates at the University of Westminster, of CSD's research activities. The *Bulletin* comprises reports of 'work in progress' of our research students and staff and contributions from visiting researchers and speakers. Comments on the content of this Bulletin, or requests to receive it, should be directed to The Editor, *CSD Bulletin*, 309 Regent Street, London W1R 8AL. As with all CSD-organized publications and events, the opinions expressed in these pages do not necessarily represent those held generally or officially in CSD or the University of Westminster.

## CSD Research Seminar

### MARCH

**10 Doreen Massey** (Open University)  
'The Politics of Spaciality'

**17 William Wallace** (LSE)  
'Rethinking European Order'  
(CSD/DAL Lecture)

**24 Shirin Rai** (University of Warwick)  
'Gender and Representation: the Indian Story'

**31 Niels Jacob Harbitz** (CSD)  
'The Meaning of Literacy'

## CSD PERSPECTIVES

*A series of monographs published by University of Westminster Press.*

### **The Betrayal of Bosnia,**

by Lee Bryant.  
No. 1 (Autumn 1993).  
ISBN : 1 85919 035 9.

### **Nations, Nationalism, and the European Citizen,**

by John Keane.  
No. 2 (Autumn 1993).  
ISBN : 1 85919 040 5.

### **Universal Human Rights? The Rhetoric of International Law,**

by Jeremy Colwill.  
No. 3 (Autumn 1994).  
ISBN : 1 85919 040 5.

### **Islam and the Creation of European Identity,**

by Tomaz Mastnak.  
No. 4 (Autumn 1994).  
ISBN : 1 85919 026 X.

### **Uncertainty and Identity: The Enlightenment and its Shadows,**

by Chris Sparks.  
No. 5 (Autumn 1994).  
ISBN : 1 85919 031 6.

### **The Making of a Weak State: The Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1906,**

by Mehdi Moslem.  
No. 6 (Summer 1995).  
ISBN: 1 85919 071 5.

### **The 1996 Intergovernmental Conference: Perspectives on European Integration,**

by Richard Whitman.  
No. 7 (Winter 1995).  
ISBN: 1 85919 002 2.

### **Renewing Local Representative Democracy: Councillors, Communities, Communication,**

by Keith Taylor. No. 8 (Spring 1996).  
ISBN: 1 85919 082 0.

### **European Democracy at the Russian Crossroads,**

by Irene Brennan. No. 9 (Spring 1996).  
ISBN: 1 85919 077 4.

### **The Common Foreign and Security Policy: Obstacles and Prospects,**

by Richard Whitman.  
No. 11 (Winter 1996).  
ISBN: 1859190480.

### **Managing Variety: Issues in the Integration and Disintegration of States,**

by Margaret Blunden.  
No. 12 (Spring 1997).  
ISBN: 1859190685.

The monographs are priced at £5.00 each and are available from Marylebone Books, 35 Marylebone Road London NW1 5BS. Make cheques payable to 'Marylebone Books'.

## MA IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND POLITICAL THEORY

The Centre for the Study of Democracy, the postgraduate and postdoctoral research centre in Politics and International Relations at the University of Westminster, now offers a taught MA (one-year full-time, or two-year part-time).

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Application forms: The Centre for the Study of Democracy, University of Westminster, 309 Regent Street, London W1R 8AL. Tel: (+44) 0171 911 5138. Fax: (+44) 0171 911 5164. E-mail: [csd@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:csd@westminster.ac.uk).

For an informal discussion about the course structure and content please contact: Stephen Adam (Course Leader), MA International Relations and Political Theory, School of Social and Behavioural Sciences, University of Westminster, 32-38 Wells Street, London W1P 4DJ. Tel: (+44) 0171 911 5000 x 2322 or (+44) 0171 911 5922.

Further details on the Internet: <http://www.wmin.ac.uk/csd>.



## CSD NEWS

### CSD MEMBERS

Director of CSD **John Keane's** new book, *Civil Society: Old Images, New Visions*, will be published by Polity Press in 1998.

**John Owens's** new book, *The Republican Takeover of Congress* (co-edited with Dean McSweeney), will be published by Macmillan/St Martin's in March 1998.

In July, he will be delivering papers at two conferences co-organised by the Research Committee of Legislative Specialists of the International Political Science Association: the first, at the Centre for the Democracy Studies at the Budapest University of Economic Sciences, is entitled 'The significance of the individual member in parliamentary politics'; the second, co-sponsored by the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ljubljana and the Political Science Association of Slovenia, is on the theme of parliamentary leadership.

His article, 'The institutional consequences of partisan change in Congress', will appear in *New Developments in American Politics*, edited by Gillian Peele *et al* (Macmillan and Chatham House, 1998).

### CSD EVENTS

Jean-François Lyotard will deliver a lecture and take part in two round-table discussions at the 'Encounter with Jean-François Lyotard', to be held on 26 May 1998 at the University of Westminster. Further details from CSD office.