

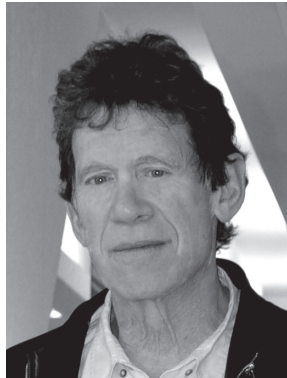
學術對談

媒體、主權和認知資本主義

對談人：雷思泰 (Scott Lash)、馮應謙

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翻譯：孫萍



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「『主權』的運作方式不同：它並不是要通過某些手段來達成某種目的，或者也可以說，主權本身是沒有目的性的。我覺得佔領運動就包含這樣的邏輯，從它的口號『佔領一切，沒有訴求』(Occupy Everything, Demand Nothing) 中便可以看出。」

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Media, Sovereignty, and Cognitive Capitalism

Discussants: Scott LASH, Anthony Y. H. FUNG

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Abstract

The dialogue is the development of the thought of Prof. Scott Lash on China, capitalism, global politics, and media. Scott explores an emerging concept of sovereignty—originally suggested by Giorgio Agamben—that can be seen in social media, occupying movements, and local governance in China. It is a new way for people to live without becoming subordinated to or dependent upon external forces. According to Lash, while our society evolves into a new form of capitalism, namely cognitive capitalism, there is also a new conception of resistance, which can be understood as a resistance of means without end.

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雷思泰教授簡介

雷思泰是倫敦大學金匠學院社會學和文化研究專業的教授。雷思泰教授在密西根大學獲得心理學學士學位，在西北大學獲社會學碩士學位，並於1980年在倫敦經濟學院獲得博士學位。之後雷思泰教授成為蘭卡斯特大學的講師，並於1993年榮獲教授頭銜，他於1998年移居倫敦，成為文化研究中心創會理事，並於2014年榮升為研究主任。

雷思泰教授在社會學和文化研究領域發表了很多具有影響力的作品，接受過眾多媒體和學術機構的採訪，包括英國廣播公司的《短文》和《設計與文化》。他自1989年起任《理論、文化與社會》學刊的編輯。雷思泰教授與約翰·厄里(John Urry)的合著在文化研究界獲得了極大關注，吉布森·伯勒爾(Gibson Burrell)評價這本書(《組織化資本主義的終結》)在知識融合方面取得了巨大成功，對25年來的各種信息和資料處理得當。雷思泰教授的作品已被翻譯成15種語言，自1996起，他在技術和媒體領域主導了一系列科研項目。他的著作包括《後現代主義》(1990)，《符號經濟與空間經濟》(1994)，《自反性現代化》(1994)、《另一種現代性：一種不同的合理性》，《信息批判》(2001年)，《全球文化工業》(2007)和《中國資本主義的建構》(2014)。

SL: 雷思泰

AF: 馮應謙

AF: 您曾在著述中講到當今的文化研究正在步入新紀元，全球範圍內的政治經濟學領域正在發生根本性的變化，因此，我們需要一個後霸權主義的理論框架來描述當今全球的政治、經濟與統治的問題。眾所周知，霸權強調的是對從屬群體的控制與支配，而您著述中的「後霸權」概念指的是一種內化的權力。這種權力是一種內在的傳播與實踐，類似于福柯的「權力」或者「話語」的概念。您能否具體闡釋一下您所講的「後霸權」與福柯的「權力」/「話語」有何異同？

SL: 我曾經寫過一篇文章叫做〈霸權後的權力：突變中的文化研究〉

(Power after Hegemony: Cultural Studies in Mutation)。在這篇文章中我的觀點是：一方面，霸權與經典文化研究例如斯圖爾特·霍爾等的著述聯繫緊密；另一方面，霸權本身也發生了變化。例如，佔領運動(The Occupy Movement)就不再通過意識形態的方式產生作用。雖然文化研究涉及到統治與被統治的問題，但是我認為佔領運動本身並不存在這樣一種統治與被統治的意識形態。它更多地是從情境出發，或者我們也可以稱它為「後意識形態」或者「後霸權」。另外一方面，我覺得權力不一定非要通過話語來付諸實施。以往看來，話語是由一系列的言語行為組成，而現代社會的許多言語行為卻被納入到演算法、軟體以及媒介等諸多形式當中。這些諸多形式，例如演算法，是通過一系列的指令，而非人為的規則來運行。即通過這樣一種有趣的方式，話語和權力其實是被安置在指令或者程式本身之下。因此，按照這樣的邏輯，權力是通過指令、軟體或者媒介等形式起作用，而非通過話語本身達到目的。

AF: 那麼您認為在佔領運動中存在權力嗎？

SL: 當我在寫〈霸權後的權力〉一文時，影響我最深的是麥可·哈德(Michael Hardt)以及安東尼奧·納格利(Antonio Negri)的論述。當然，他們的著述至今仍舊風靡全球。在某種程度上，強度和流動性的問題與霸權後權力的聯繫不大。在這方面，我們聽說過很多人區分「生命權力」(bio-power)與「生命政治」(bio-politics)的不同。前者涉及到統治與管理，後者則指向類似於佔領運動的社會政治運動。其實很多時候，我們所想像的權力都轉化成為一種演算法式的存在。甚至意識形態本身也被融入到商品或者媒介化的產品中。因此對我來說，話語很有可能已經轉化為演算法。

關於「政治權利」與社會運動的問題，我認為很重要的一個概念是「公用」(the common)。這裡我們不使用「社群」(the community)而更偏向「公用」一詞，因為後者指的是人們持續地利用資源的過程，這更能體現出人與自然的連結。它也與之前我們所探討的免費軟體、開放源以及技術運動等問題十分相似。「政治權利」不僅涉及到人，也涉及到物，包括硬體、軟體以及各種媒介化的設

備、裝置等。例如中國的新農村建設 (the Neo-rural Reconstruction Movement)，它不僅僅是對有機農業和迴圈資源的一種宣導，也意味着一種更密集的生產與傳播方式。

AF: 以一種有機的方式？

SL: 是的，有機的方式，無論是農業生產還是新媒體，都是如此。從這個角度講，卡斯特 (Castells) 和保羅·維爾諾 (Paolo Virno) 的觀點都非常適合這個議題的探討範圍。他們對這個層面的傳播、公用以及生命權利的問題也都非常感興趣。

AF: 您剛才提到了「抗爭」(resistance) 一詞，「抗爭」在福柯的語境中的表述並不樂觀。那麼您如何看待當今社會中的抗爭，尤其是佔領運動？

SL: 雖然我們生活的年代不一樣，但是你應該記得過去有很多人使用「抗爭」一詞。但時至今日，很少有人使用「抗爭」這個詞。在樂觀還是悲觀的問題上，一個不得不承認的事實是：近期來看，無論是在香港、倫敦還是在西班牙、阿拉伯地區，社會運動的勢頭已經明顯減弱。卡斯特認為當人們不再要求佔領的時候，社會運動就會趨於平息。但是我們也必須看到，在佔領運動的過程中，群眾的凝聚性、集體的力量、以及民眾的向心力得到了很大的凸顯。在香港、紐約、倫敦甚至是武漢等城市，佔領運動的這一代人已然形成。例如美國佔領運動的精神領袖，無政府主義者 David Graeber 曾一度非常有影響力。儘管他沒有形成明確的宣導與提議，但是「百分之一」(One Percent) 的口號等依舊深入人心。這種無政府主義的、自發的、直接的民主對這一代人的影響頗深。因此，在這種意義上講，我們應當對紐約、香港等城市的社會運動秉持樂觀心態，畢竟它們已經鑄刻在我們這一代人的印記裡。

AF: 前段時間您在一個講座中提到政治概念的問題，並使用了「無目的的手段」(means without ends) 一詞，可否進一步解釋一下它的意思？

SL: 可以的。在社會運動研究中，這是一個非常重要的概念。喬治·阿甘本 (Giorgio Agamben) 在探討「無目的的手段」一詞時認為，福柯僅僅說對了一半。福柯探討了統治與權力，但是卻沒有講到

抗爭與樂觀主義政治。而對於福柯所忽視的這一方面，阿甘本偏向使用「主權」(sovereignty)一詞來表述其內在含義。

誠然，統治與權力需要通過一定手段來達成，這些手段既包括一些商品、設備以及工具性的「硬體」，也包括包括谷歌(Google)和臉書(Facebook)等軟體、媒介以及演算法的運作。但是「主權」的運作方式則不同：它並不是要通過某些手段來達成某種目的，或者也可以說，它本身是沒有目的性的。我覺得佔領運動就包含這樣的邏輯，從它的口號「佔領一切，沒有訴求」(Occupy Everything, Demand Nothing)中便可以看出。「主權」意味着自我組織、自我管理，它是一種生活形式，而這種生活形式是人們生活的手段，並不是依賴外部目的而存在。因此，我覺得這是理解現今社會運動一個有趣同時也很重要的方式。例如說在社會主義中，專制是達成目的的手段，而在佔領運動中，無政府主義本身就是在一種沒有外部目的的方式表述訴求。

AF: 這樣看來，您的意見與其他社會學家所謂的「功能主義」不盡相同。

SL: 並不相同。我們所談論的「功能」(function)並不是「功能主義」的「功能」。功能主義是從恢復社會秩序的角度出發看問題，雖然「無目的的手段」這一概念的探討與社會秩序有關，但並非是要恢復舊的社會秩序。相反，它是在爭取重建一個全新的社會秩序。同時，功能主義自始至終都具有目的性，但是我們探討的「功能」本身並不具有目的性，而更多的是一種自我組織系統。這就有點像媒介控制論的運作方式，但它不是功能主義。

AF: 最近，您的研究興趣主要放在社會變化、城鎮化以及中國文化層面。同時，您也在學習漢語，您的漢語講得也非常好。在您的《中國建構資本主義：經濟生活與城鎮變化》(*China Constructing Capitalism: Economic Life and Urban Change*)一書中，您講到了中國的發展路徑與西方的新自由主義並不完全一致。簡單來講，中國開創了自己的一套發展模式，您將其稱之為「地方政府資本主義」，並認為這種發展模式深嵌於一個關係式和情境化的社會中。最近一段時間您一直住在香港，並經常去大陸，那麼您覺得書中的觀點與您最近的實際觀察一致還是略有出入？

SL: 應該是有一些出入。這與「前景」(foreground) 以及「背景」(background) 等概念相關。探討中國文化以及藝術，並與西方文化藝術比較時，背景與前景都很重要，這種邏輯也適用於中國。西方在經濟形態的變化上往往具有明顯的分野，但是中國經濟卻不是如此。它一方面有增長，另一方面也有腐化，這構成了一個整體性的背景。地方政府的確通過剝削當地人民並將其趕到外郊地區來攫取利益，但是另一方面，我們也可以說，中國房地產商和地方政府的發展方式是偏向新自由主義的。

而且中國目前有很多人，甚至包括一些黨內人士，都希望用新自由主義的發展模式來發展中國農業。對此，復旦大學教授呂新雨曾在媒體上公開表示反對。我也認為這並不是一個好主意。雖然中國社會越來越呈現出一種新自由主義氣息，但是集體形式的城鎮所有制在發展新農村政治、經濟以及文化層面仍舊很重要，這一點不能忽視。

AF: 那麼，您是否認為中國實際上助長了國際新自由主義的形成？

SL: 您做過很多有關現代中國及其文化產業的研究，對其有着廣闊的視野，但或許我們並不能稱它為「新自由主義」。在我看來，它是西方國家的一種政治政策，它也與國際權力的平衡利害密切相關。雖然習近平實際上是在走新自由主義道路，但是目前中國崛起的道路相對和平，沒有美國當初擴張時過度的軍事化和過度的挑釁性。中國非常聰明地將重心放在社會基礎設施建設上，尤其是在互聯網發展與寬頻建設方面，比以前有了很大提高。

當然，中國同時也在非洲展開它的政治策略，主要目的是攫取自然資源。中國通過幫助非洲國家搞基礎建設來換取他們的認可與忠誠。與此同時，一些西方國家也在逐步加入到認同中國的行列中，這對於創造一個多極世界體系有好處。但是我並不確定是否我們應該稱其為新自由主義，因為實際上在西方世界，仍舊有很多其他的觀點和意見。中國現今的發展一方面具有西方的契約模式，另一方面也有送禮、請客等很難辨別是非的問題。這樣看來，目前的國際發展應該不是一個純粹的西方契約式的模式。

AF: 如此說來，資本主義在中國是否能夠經受住非民主和自上而下

的統治制度？媒介，尤其是社交媒介，是否會說明改善這樣的情形？

SL: 希望(媒介)會有所作為。當我們樂觀到一定程度，我們又不由自主地陷入悲觀。有一次在廣州，我想做一些關於社會文化的研究，但是我發現自己竟然打不開Dropbox。Dropbox應該跟社會運動之類的敏感事情無關，但是政府還是將其禁止，所以我一度對此也非常悲觀。

可以確定的是，中國經濟發展的速度遲早會放緩。到那時候人們對共產黨是否會產生不滿情緒？幾乎每個中國人都認為他們會，但是我覺得情況或許會有所不同。很多中國人對空氣污染等環保問題非常熱衷，但是他們卻不關心政治。雖然也有人對政治感興趣，但政治並非他們的優先議題。(反對共產黨的)社會運動或許會發生，但仍舊需要很長時間。雖然大部分中國人不善言談，但是他們對自己國家充滿了自豪感，尤其隨着中國近幾年國際地位的顯著提升。這就好比在俄羅斯很多人一直崇拜普京一樣。

基於其相對自由的氛圍，社交媒體、藝術在此過程中也會發揮重要作用。例如騰訊開發的微信(WeChat)平台，一種類似臉書(Facebook)和推特(Twitter)的社交應用軟體，使得個人擁有成百上千的粉絲成為可能。如果你的狀態被眾多的粉絲看到並轉發，這種以點帶面的效應是非常巨大的。資訊可以在短時間內迅速傳播開來，並難以壓制，最終形成社會影響。這樣看來，我們可以樂觀一些。

在新農村建設的問題上，既有自上而下的領導也有自下而上的民主。政府接受並喜歡溫鐵軍，因為他提到了生態建設與城鄉發展的問題；同時，另外一些學者諸如呂新雨或者是歐寧的觀點也同樣重要。一些事情正在中國社會底層發生改變，但是並不意味着它是秘密進行的。現在在中國，你幾乎可以講任何你想說的。有一次在北京，我驚訝地發現所有人對所有事情都抱有十分開放的心態。你從來不會感覺到說出來會有甚麼不妥。我知道前些時間有一個央視主持人(畢福劍)因為在酒桌上說了一些話而不得不向大家道歉，但這種情況很少發生。

AF: 那麼你覺得中國的媒體究竟是具有社會作用，還是僅僅是一個宣傳黨政的機器？

SL: 這取決於我們怎麼看待這個問題。政府會審查BBC，但是他們很少審查其他國外駐中國的媒體。中國也有很多流行的期刊、雜誌，十分開放地討論各種問題；同時，中國的記者也是非常聰明的一個群體，他們懂得如何逃過審查制度來表述意見。這使得政府的審查很難面面俱到，因為每天的出版和討論太多。

AF: 現在中國有很多創意產業，像動畫、網遊、流行文化等。對此我們常常講到的一個概念是「認知資本主義」(cognitive capitalism)，您認為這個概念是如何與中國創意產業相聯繫的？

SL: 您的觀點比我的要悲觀許多，但是或許你是對的。今天早上在讀報時，我看到一則新聞：萬達老總王健林開始在美國，而不是中國大陸開影院。萬達是一家典型的新自由主義傾向的公司，它的這種舉動讓我們看到中國媒介審查制度的阻礙仍舊存在。從某種程度上講，我們確實應該覺得悲觀，或許我們根本不應該使用「創意產業」或者「文化產業」這樣的概念。

但是同時，藝術本身的力量是非常開放、巨大的。我還沒有來得及拜讀您的新作，但是在遊戲方面，我知道現在很多中國人都有很高超的技巧，其中有一些人還是程式設計高手。一些人在做一些具有創意和發明性的事情，例如同濟大學的建築設計；一些人在辦雜誌和報刊，例如萬科的私營媒體。

AF: 那麼這些事情是如何拼湊在一起並被稱為資本主義的？

SL: 先前我已經探討了佔領運動的「主權」問題以及「無目的的手段」，我覺這些在藝術上也同樣適用。認知資本主義是依存於較為民主的體制下的一種後工業存在。它就像「授粉」(pollination)一樣，可以廣泛、深入的傳播。打個比方，谷歌等大公司僱用一些職員為其工作，但是這些職員也可以自己獨立出來，成立自己的小公司，或者創建自己的專案，發揮自己的創意，這樣的連帶效應是巨大的。問題在於，在多大程度上中國政府會為這類行業提供基礎設施。在我看來，這不僅僅是一種自上而下的控制式管理，而是一種基於創作、知識、程式等在內的自我組織與自我設計。

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Academic Dialogue with **Scott LASH**

Media, Sovereignty, and Cognitive Capitalism

SL: Scott LASH

AF: Anthony Y. H. FUNG

AF: Your book has suggested that cultural studies is entering into a new epoch of inquiry. Basically, you have suggested there is a fundamental change of global political economy nowadays, and we need a framework of post-hegemony to describe the current global governance and politics. While hegemony emphasizes power and domination over the subordinated groups, and it is usually exercised through ideology or discourse, the post-hegemony concept you have suggested refers to internalized power that is circulated and exercised from within. The latter is similar to Foucault's concept of power/discourse. Could you explain whether your conception of post-hegemony is equivalent to or different from the Foucauldian concept of power/discourse?

SL: There was an article I wrote a long time ago called "Power after Hegemony: Cultural Studies in Mutation," and I suppose in some ways hegemony is associated with the kind of more classical cultural studies like Stuart Hall on the one hand; on the other, however, I think things have changed a bit. For example, a movement like the Occupy Movement doesn't work through ideology. Previously, you talked about dominant and subordinated ideology, but the Occupy Movement does not have an ideology. I think it kind of gets invented and it emerges from the situation, so I think it is kind of post-ideological, or we can say post-hegemony. Besides, I don't think power necessarily operates through discourse. The way I am thinking discourse now is that discourse is comprised of speech acts. These days a lot of speech acts are incorporated into algorithms, software, and media. Algorithms work performatively through a set of instructions, not through rules. In an interesting way, discourse and power have been displaced into the software itself. And following that logic, power works through software, not discourse.

AF: Then do you think there is any power within the Occupy Movement?

SL: I suppose what influenced me the most when I wrote “Power after Hegemony” was the Negri and Hardt type of stuff, which has been so popular for fifteen years. In a sense, the idea of intensity and flow, is not much about hegemony and power, but I think a lot of people make a distinction between bio-power on the one hand and bio-politics on the other. Bio-power is governmentality and domination, and bio-politics is like the Occupy Movement, or social movements. Maybe a lot of power that we think actually is incorporated in algorithms, more than just in the commodity in that kind of classical way, or even in the classical way of ideology. So perhaps discourse has partly shifted into the medium of algorithms.

As for bio-politics like social movements as it were, I think the most important idea for me is “the commons” (“公用” in Chinese), though I know new media also plays an important role. Not “community,” but “commons” because “commons” means you use something and there are always resources as well as people, and it connects you to nature. For example, the new-rural reconstruction movement (“新農村建設運動” in Chinese). I think it is more than a movement because it is also about organic farming and use of resources. I think the same is true with free software, open source, and technical movement. It is not just people, but things, including software, hardware, and devices. The idea of “commons” also indicates that you are producing something and communicating in an intensive level.

AF: In an organic way?

SL: Yes, in an organic way, both in terms of new rural movement and new media. In that sense, Castells or Paolo Virno are particularly suitable for this topic. Especially Virno, he is very interested in that kind of level on communication, commons and bio-power.

AF: As you have mentioned resistance, and resistance in Foucault’s understanding seems not very optimistic. How do you think about resistance today, especially when it relates to the Occupy Movement?

SL: You are much younger than me, but you remember the day when

people used the term of “resistance.” But nowadays we do not so often use the word resistance. In terms of optimism and pessimism, we know now a lot of the movements subsided, not only in Hong Kong but also in London, Spain, and Arab areas. And Castells is right, where he said that when you are not occupying, things subside, because so much happens through the occupation itself, doesn’t it? Like all the solidarity and everything that generated there. I think in places like Hong Kong, New York, London, and even a place like Wuhan, I think a generation has been formed in the Occupy Movement. It’s one that has the mentality that is actually quite anarchist, for example in someone like David Graeber, who is such a hugely popular writer now. He never formulates it quite rightly, but you know the “One Percent” and that kind of stuff makes him very influential. But I think this kind of anarchist spontaneity and direct democracy, less mediated, not through necessarily the institutions, is so important to this generation. So that in a sense, you should be optimistic about what happened in New York and Hong Kong. It has imprinted a whole generation of people.

AF: Recently, you have given a talk on the conception of politics, where you have described the phrase “means without ends”; can you explain more about that?

SL: Yes, I can. In terms of the music for social movements, “means without ends” indicates something very important. When Giorgio Agamben talks about “means without ends,” he said that Foucault only got it half right, because he only talks about governmentality and power, but he is not good at resistance or positive politics. The word Agamben uses for that is “sovereignty.” Governmentality is a means to an end, like the commodity and instrumental rationality, or the use of algorithms for software. There is an instrumentalism in like Google or Facebook.

Sovereignty works in a different way. It is not a means to an end; it’s purely means that there are no ends. And I think the Occupy Movement works like this. Because people “Occupy Everything, Demand Nothing”; that’s the slogan. And sovereignty also means self-organization, self-regulation, and forms of life. I think what is going on in the Occupy Movement is a form of life, and a form of living. These forms of living are means, that how we live as means,

but without ends, no external ends. So I think this is an important way for understanding temporary social movements. It is kind of like, in communism, the dictatorship is a means to an end, but anarchism do not speak the language of dictatorship. It is all happening without any demands; these demands are ends so it's means without ends.

AF: It seems that this idea is different from most other sociologists, and which sometimes can be described as “functionalism,” right?

SL: No, it's not. But I can take a certain point only in the sense that these days, when we are dealing with technology, the notion of the “operation” is very interesting. But this kind of function is definitely not “functionalism,” since functionalism always wants to reproduce the social order, but we are talking about the production of a different kind of social order. Functionalism in my thinking has ends all the time, but the function we are talking about does not have an end. It is a little bit more like self-organizing systems. It works like media cybernetics, but not functionalism.

AF: Recently you have a strong interest in research in social change, urbanism, and culture in China, and you are learning Chinese. In your previous book, *China Constructing Capitalism: Economic life and Urban Change*, you seem to argue that the path of the development toward capitalism in China is not western neo-liberalism. China has constructed its own version of it, namely local state capitalism, along with a relational and situated society. Now you are in Hong Kong, and you go to China very often, so do you think this idea is still right or actually you have a slightly different version?

SL: Maybe a tiny bit of difference because it has to do with foreground and background. In China and its culture, the background is so important. It is kind of like Chinese art compared with Western art; the background and the foreground, rather than the figure, are hugely important. And I think the same is true in economics. In the west, before feature and rational choice, a preference schedule marks it as neoclassical economics. The neoclassical (or neoliberal) preference schedule, or indifference curve is in the foreground. But the Chinese economy works in terms of the background. In terms of the economic

forms of life in the background. Chinese local state capitalism does work through dispossession of people, who then move out to the far suburbs of say Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou. I do think that the way that property developers and local governments work is neo-liberal. In China there are a lot of people who want to neo-liberalize the agriculture, even including some people in the Party. But so much of the Chinese economy works from a Confucian or Daoist logic of the background. And in this sense it is not neoliberal at all.

People like Lv Xinyu argue publicly against this neoliberal tendency in Chinese agriculture in the press. In the party, there is indeed a debate, also partly outside. And I know there are some people who want neo-liberalism a lot. They want the neo-liberalized agriculture, and I think it is a very bad idea. I think it is important for the Chinese to go to the collective village levels of ownership (which is not state ownership), which is the reason why I think the new rural movement is important.

AF: Do you think that actually China now contributes to the global formation of neo-liberalism?

SL: You have done a lot of good analysis on what is going on in China as well as the culture industries. You have a very broad view. But probably we should not call it “neo-liberalism.” It is surely an alternative to the World Bank, and it is clearly a foreign policy. And it’s true Xi Jinping is doing it. It has to do with the global balance of power. In a lot of ways, it is a quite peaceful way of doing it. Better to build infrastructure, rather than put drones in the air in the Middle East. I mean, it is a better type of form of policy than the US has, which tends to be very military. The US has an extremely militaristic form of policy, much more than the UK ever. British foreign policy is much more culturally inflected. I do think it is a smart idea to work on the infrastructure level. China has huge expertise, especially in high speed railways, in ports, in the metro system; it could do better in terms of broadband and other kinds of stuff, though now the broadband is much better than before.

But there is an infrastructure for policy strategy that starts in Africa. But in Africa it is partly to get the natural resources. I think it is the Chinese government, building infrastructure in exchange for a kind of loyalty from various countries, especially developing

countries. And of course, some of the European countries are joining China's new development bank. That's great in establishing a multiple polar global policy. I don't know whether we should call it international neo-liberalism or not. Wang Huyiu for example, contrasts Western foreign policy based on 'treaty' (starting from Westphalia) with a Chinese historical policy based on 'tribute'. The latter is not really neoclassical nor neoliberal. Chinese foreign policy is becoming more treaty-like and contractual. But there will always be that tribute dimension. This tribute is a variety of the gift. The *liwu*, the ritual thing, that we have in Confucian ethics.

AF: Then, if what you describe is correct, do you think that capitalism in China could be sustained under a non-democratic state and top-down ruling? Do you think media, especially social media, would help to change the situation?

SL: I hope so. Every time when you are optimistic, you get pessimistic again. In Guangzhou, I want to do my editorial work for the journal *Theory, Culture, and Society*, but I even cannot open my Dropbox. I do not think Dropbox has been used for social movements, unlike Facebook or Twitter. So sometimes I get pessimistic.

Surely, growth in China is going to decline, and it has to. I mean, China has caught up by all the years, after no growth for about 100 years. Ecologically speaking, it should slow down, maybe from 7% or 6% to 4%. In that sense, will people be upset with the Party? Everybody thought they would; but they might not. Many Chinese people are very interested in air pollution and the environment, but they may be less interested in democracy. There is considerable freedom in the arts in China. When I was guest professor at Nanjing University, there was a lot of pro-democracy sentiment among students. But I thought it was because Nanjing is very liberally oriented. Surely there are some, many who are interested in politics, as much as it is not so high on their agenda. I think it will take a long time if democracy happens in China.. Who knows? People in China have a lot of national pride, and they did have national pride for all these years. They wouldn't say they are proud, but they are. There will be something that lasts for a long time. I mean even in Russia, they go for Putin, and Russian people are proud of him.

I am not that optimistic. I do think social media will play a role, and also art, since it is relatively free. And also in China, there is WeChat, something between Facebook and WhatsApp. There are groups of people on WeChat and it sounds like Twitter, that you may have thousands of followers. If thousands of friends see your postings, and each of them has hundreds of friends, then things do get spread. And it is maybe harder to take control. And every time you put one thing down, some other things happen. So maybe we should be more optimistic.

In new rural reconstruction, it is a little bit top-down as well as bottom-up. The government likes Wen Tiejun because of his thinking in regard to environmental and rural-urban policy. Rural reconstruction is a space of cultural change and intellectual challenge. And ideas from scholars like Lv Xinyu or Ou Ning are important. Something is happening on an sort of subterranean level, but not secretly. I find I and my friends can speak openly about most things. I know there was censor of a TV celebrity when he made a rude joke in confidence about Chairman Mao. Somebody reported it, and he had to apologize. But that was unusual.

AF: So do you think the role of the media in China is still important? Or it is only a top-down machine for propaganda?

SL: It depends. They censor the BBC, but they never censor some others. There are also some journals, magazines, like *Gaige Kafang*, and there are some even more popular ones. And there are a lot of questions that have been opened up. The journalists are pretty clever people there. It is hard to keep a lid on since there are a lot of discussions going on. So in some ways, we should be more optimistic.

AF: Now China has a lot of creative industries, like animations, games, and pop cultures. And recently, we have discussed a concept called “cognitive capitalism.” How does it relate to the creative industry in China? Can you give a view to readers? How do you consider the relation between cognitive capitalism and creative industry?

SL: You are much more pessimistic than I am, but probably you are right. This morning I was reading a paper of Wang Jianlin, who is one of the billionaires in China. Instead of opening theaters all over China,

he is opening theaters in America. He has brought changes. His company, Wanda, is probably a neo-liberal firm, and in that way, you want to be a little pessimistic.

The art thing is quite open and it is huge and massive. I haven't seen your latest book on games, but there are many people who have pretty good skills now. They are really good coders. And they are people who are doing some inventive work and designs. There are people in Tongji University for architecture designs. Also people also make magazines, and sometimes it is a privatized one, like magazines from Vanke, big private media stuff.

AF: So how do all these things come together to be called as cognitive capitalism?

SL: I always see space for that opening. We have talked about sovereignty in terms of the Occupy Movement and also the “means without ends.” I think a similar thing can happen in the arts as well. Cognitive capitalism is post-industrial, and it is based less on the top-down structure, and it is based on the idea of pollination, where you have Google and big firms hiring people, but the idea is that people break away from these firms and start small ones, like incubators or projects like that. A lot of things start like that. The trick is, how can China offer infrastructure for people doing these kinds of things? And it is not just the top-down style. Cognitive capitalism is based on making stuff, and it is “knowledge-intensive,” and it also uses algorithms, but maybe in a different way in the design. Further, it is self-organizing.

Selected Works by Scott LASH

Please refer to the end of the Chinese version of the dialogue for Scott Lash's selected works