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Edited by Michiel Baud and Rosanne Rutten
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Introduction

MICHIEL BAUD AND ROSANNE RUTTEN

"Any political movement against oppression", wrote Barrington Moore, "has to develop a new diagnosis and remedy for existing forms of suffering, a diagnosis and remedy by which this suffering stands morally condemned".[1] Moore refers to the process of interpretation and reflection that takes places in all forms of protest and social mobilization. Social actors interpret specific situations as unjust, identify victims and perpetrators, translate local grievances into broader claims, and set out a course of action. Their perception of society and their specific claims and collective demands are shaped by interpretations through which they make sense of the world. They use these interpretations to convince potential supporters, fellow activists, and adversaries of the accuracy of their views and the legitimacy of their claims. In the process they also define collective identities, which demarcate the objectives and lines of contention. In short, participants in social protest and social movements are involved in "meaning work", that is, "the production of mobilizing and countermobilizing ideas and meanings".[2]

The concept of "framing" is particularly useful in exploring this articulation of protest. Framing refers to "the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action".[3] Such shared understandings are an essential part of any social movement. David Snow and Robert Benford speak of "collective action frames", interpretive frames that "underscore and embellish the seriousness and injustice of a social condition or redefine as unjust and immoral what was previously seen as unfortunate but perhaps tolerable".[4] Created in the course of

1. Barrington Moore, Jr, *Injustice: The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt* (London, 1978), p. 88.
2. Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment", *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26 (2000), pp. 611–639, 613.
3. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, "Introduction", in *idem* (eds), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge [etc.], 1996), pp. 1–20, 6.
4. David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, "Master Frames and Cycles of Protest", in Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (eds), *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (New Haven, CT, 1992), pp. 133–135, 137. This approach is inspired by Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York, 1974). The term "frame" denotes a mental model, a framework of interpretation, that enables individuals to perceive, identify, and interpret events in their own local society and in the world at large. Benford and Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements", p. 614.

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contention and proved successful, such frames may become "modular", available for adoption and adaptation by activists across the globe.

However, the point that framing is the work of individuals is often lost in the literature on contentious politics. Many studies tend to invest social movements with an agency of their own, and fail to take a closer look at the women and men who are instrumental in interpreting conditions and articulating demands: their backgrounds, the contexts in which they emerged, their role and position in social movements, and their sources of inspiration. Moreover, by focusing on framing activities, rather than on the individual persons who undertake this work, these studies tend to overlook the histories of interpersonal contacts and interactions that may be crucial in shaping contentious ideas and their reception. Such interactions also include the debates and conflicts that may occur between framing specialists themselves.

In this Supplement to the *International Review of Social History*, the people who create, use, and diffuse activist frames are centre stage. We have tentatively called these individuals "popular intellectuals". We refer here to persons who – formally educated or not – aim to understand society in order to change it, with the interests of popular classes in mind. They seek to define the problems of subaltern groups, articulate their grievances, and frame their social and political demands. To what extent they actually voice the concerns of popular classes, and represent their interests may differ from case to case. Focusing on popular intellectuals in specific societies and historical contexts, this volume explores the social dynamics of their ideological work. It deals in particular with the following questions. How did these individuals develop and disseminate their ideas in social interaction with others, in particular with (fellow) activists, other intellectuals, adversaries, and the people they claimed to represent? How were these processes shaped by the societies in which these intellectuals were embedded, as well as by their own backgrounds and the networks in which they were involved? And in what ways did their ideological work, in turn, affect the trajectory of social movements?

Here, we concentrate on popular intellectuals in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The specific sociocultural and political developments on these continents warrant a regional focus, we believe, as does the relative lack of studies on popular intellectuals in the region compared to studies on the Western world. In his classic analysis of anticolonial intellectuals in British India, Partha Chatterjee has shown how the implantation of categories and frameworks of thought, produced in other cultural contexts, changed original domains of thought and created new political and ideological processes.[5] (Post)colonial conditions, social inequality, and economic

5. Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (London, 1986).

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underdevelopment profoundly marked the societies in these regions which affected, in turn, the social movements and popular intellectuals that emerged. We do not wish to overstate, however, the differences with the Western world, nor the similarities between the societies on these three continents. Instead, we believe that the contributions to this volume will provide valuable insights on framing and contention worldwide.

INTELLECTUALS AND CONTENTIOUS ACTION: SOME LINES OF ENQUIRY

An obvious point of reference for reflections on the social and political role of popular intellectuals is the work of the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci. "All men are intellectuals", he observed, "but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals".[6]

> Each man [...] outside his professional activity, carries on some form of intellectual activity, that is, he is a 'philosopher', [...] he participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought.[7]

The *function* of intellectuals, however, is reserved for those who are specialized in intellectual work. These are, in particular, people who develop and express certain "conceptions of the world". In his analysis of Italian society, Gramsci distinguished in this sense between "traditional" and "organic" intellectuals. Traditional intellectuals, in their proverbial ivory towers, perceive themselves as politically independent and autonomous, but in historical reality they defend the interests of hegemonic social groups.[8] In contrast, organic intellectuals possess fundamental, structural ties to particular classes and demonstrate a genuine political and social engagement. As a class becomes a self-conscious entity it produces its own "organic" intellectuals, who articulate the perceptions and interests of that particular class. Gramsci's concern was with the intellectuals who could articulate the interests of the Italian working class. Many people, therefore, came to understand organic intellectuals as meaning working-class intellectuals. However, this was not Gramsci's original conceptual objective. The dominant classes and hegemonic power-holders also possess their own organic intellectuals.

For the purpose of this collection, Gramsci's analysis (and the discussion it has recently provoked) is particularly relevant for mapping out some clear lines of enquiry. First, it favours a historical, dynamic analysis of the

6. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (tr. and eds) (New York, 1971), p. 9.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

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position of intellectuals. Specific categories of intellectuals are "historically formed" in connection with other social groups, and the specific type of these connections shape the position and function of these intellectuals.[9] In this process new groups, as well as new intellectual roles, emerge. Ron Eyerman has further developed this historical analysis. In his book *Between Culture and Politics: Intellectuals in Modern Society*, he speaks of intellectuals "as an historically emergent category, continually being reinvented", and shows how social movements themselves became new "arenas [...] where 'intellectuals' can be made".[10]

Secondly, it invites us to analyse the diverse social and political positions of intellectuals in different societal settings. This allows us to apply Gramsci's ideas to societies that have developed differently from the western European model. In Africa and Asia, but also in Latin America with its long Western-influenced academic tradition, social movements often found their inspiration outside hegemonic (colonial) ideologies. Non-Christian religious influences, local patterns of political and social organization, and colonial structures all gave a specific edge to the emergence of contentious interpretations. Although Gramsci did not elaborate upon these societal differences, his interpretation of Italian society certainly stimulates their analysis.[11]

Thirdly, it asks pertinent questions about the relations between (popular) intellectuals and the social groups to which they belong, or for which they speak. Following Gramsci's analysis, popular intellectuals would primarily emerge from the popular classes: "Every social group [...] creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields".[12] In his view, intellectuals are not autonomous, but originate in the class-relations in a given society. History shows, however, that many popular intellectuals, who speak in the name of popular classes, do not originate from these classes themselves.[13] Gramsci did allow for the possibility that "traditional" intellectuals (who perceive themselves as autonomous) might be assimilated and "ideologically conquered" by social groups that develop towards dominance, including popular classes such as the working class.[14] However, tensions always exist between intellectual leaders and the rank-and-file concerning the former's legitimacy and representativity.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
10. Ron Eyerman, *Between Culture and Politics: Intellectuals in Modern Society* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 99, 11.
11. See also Kate Crehan, *Gramsci, Culture and Anthropology* (London [etc.], 2002).
12. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, p. 5.
13. Crehan, *Gramsci, Culture and Anthropology*, p. 139.
14. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, p. 10.

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Recent research on social movements has drawn attention to additional lines of enquiry that are relevant here. One is the focus on the interactive dynamics of framing. Since activists develop interpretations of their world in constant dialogue with others, such interactions should be a point of attention. Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly have stressed "the interactive construction of disputes among challengers, their opponents, elements of the state, third parties, and the media", and they consider this an essential part of framing.[15] One might say that framing concerns "ideas forged in dialogue".[16]

Contentious interactions are, after all, at the core of social movements: social movements concern sustained challenges against authorities and other powerful opponents, in which claims are made in the name of aggrieved populations.[17] This involves both a mobilization of support and alliances, and a confrontation with opponents. Ideological work figures prominently in these interactions. At the local level as well, such interpretive work is an ongoing process. It includes "the interactive processes of talk, persuasion, arguing, contestation, interpersonal influence, subtle rhetoric posturing, outright marketing that modify – indeed, continually modify – the contents of interpretative frames".[18] In this volume, we have recast this focus on the social dynamics of framing into a perspective that considers popular intellectuals as they operate within relevant networks of interaction. It includes the history of these interactions, and considers how these have shaped the ideas and actions of popular intellectuals, and their effects.

This leads to another point of interest: the relevance of the personal histories of intellectuals. Traditionally, there has been a clear conceptual separation between the history of ideas which focused on the individual lives of intellectuals, and the literature on social movements and contentious politics which tended to obscure personal histories in favour of the activities and development of collective actors. Where social movements are treated as collective actors, attention to individuals may be limited to specific leaders, often perceived as the embodiment of a collective history and the product of specific social and political (class) relations. However, by paying attention to the personal histories of popular intellectuals, the importance of individual agency in the ideological work within and outside of social movements is acknowledged. The individual accumulation of experiences, contacts, and ideas partly shapes

15. Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge [etc.], 2001), p. 44.
16. Anthony Milner, *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya: Contesting Nationalism and the Expansion of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 289.
17. Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement,* 2nd edn (Cambridge [etc.], 1998), p. 2.
18. Pamela E. Oliver and Hank Johnston, "What a Good Idea! Ideology and Frames in Social Movement Research", *Mobilization*, 5 (2000), pp. 37–54, 42.

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the perceptions of those who become popular intellectuals, as well as their role in social movements.[19] Recent studies on democratic transitions, for instance, try to escape an excessive structuralism as well. They tend "to emphasize the role of leadership and crafting, thus signalling the importance of individuals, rather than collective actors".[20] This becomes clearest in moments of "high indeterminacy" when individual choices and perspectives become all the more relevant and, we may add, framing activity by popular intellectuals is most salient.[21]

This perspective should not be understood as advocating individualized interpretations, but rather as a recognition of the importance of individuals – of popular and dominant classes alike – in political change. One argument that may support this view is the importance attached, within movements themselves, to the personal characteristics and history of their political and intellectual leaders. They are widely and explicitly discussed, and taken into account in the political and strategic debates within social movements. The issue of representation and authority is closely linked to the personal history of leaders. The history of the *Zapatistas* or al-Qaeda would have been different without Sub-comandante Marcos or Osama bin Laden. Also, less well-known popular intellectuals are venerated and remembered in local contexts, long after they have lost their political or social importance. A second argument is that the personal history of popular leader-intellectuals has become an arena of struggle in itself. A dramatic case which reached the headlines of international newspapers concerned Rigoberta Menchú, the famous indigenous leader in Guatemala, and winner of the Nobel peace prize, who was openly criticized when some of the facts presented in her life story did not match historical reality.[22] Her position as indigenous leader, and consequently the position of the indigenous movement at large, also became compromised.

POPULAR INTELLECTUALS

Our focus on popular intellectuals builds, obviously, on earlier studies. Since Gramsci and, more notably, since the cultural turn in labour history and social-movement studies, the old conceptual dichotomy between "intellectuals" and "masses" (where "intellectuals" stood for educated, urban, and vanguard), is replaced by a much wider conception of intellectuals as articulate knowledge specialists who are found in all sectors of society. Of particular interest are those persons who function as

19. See, for example, Javier Auyero, *Contentious Lives: Two Argentine Women, Two Protests, and the Quest for Recognition* (Durham [etc.], 2003).
20. Ruth Berins Collier, *Paths Toward Democracy: The Working Class and Elites in Western Europe and South America* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 6.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 3–5, 48–49.
22. David Stoll, *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans* (Boulder, CO, 1999).

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framing specialists: women and men who develop, borrow, adapt, and re-work interpretive frames that promote collective action and that define collective interests and identities, rights and claims.

Social historians and anthropologists have retrieved from obscurity a wide variety of such intellectuals. They include "artisan intellectuals", whose workshops functioned as informal debating clubs;[23] worker-poets in nineteenth-century France, who developed new images of workers as a proud, assertive class;[24] "labour intellectuals", who shaped the struggle of industrial workers in England and Australia;[25] "peasant intellectuals", who organized social movements in Tanzania and developed new critical discourses in the process;[26] provincial journalists in late-colonial Java, who translated Western liberal and socialist ideas into local models;[27] indigenous intellectuals in Latin America, who try to formulate alternatives to a homogeneous and hegemonic nation-state;[28] and Muslim teachers and missionaries in southeast Asian villages, who communicate new Islamic political identities.[29]

These are clearly very different types of people, who articulate their ideas in diverse historical, political, and cultural contexts. But they do share some significant traits. They are people who articulate reflexive knowledge on the society they live in and are able to convert this analysis in ideological work and ultimately in political activism. They are also people who hold an authoritative position within social movements, and whose reflexive knowledge is instrumental for militancy and political leadership. The differences between labour intellectuals in nineteenth-century England and present-day indigenous intellectuals in Latin

23. E.J. Hobsbawm and Joan Wallach Scott, "Political Shoemakers", *Past and Present*, 89 (1980), pp. 86–114. On cigarmakers, see Fernando Ortiz's classic study, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham [etc.], 1995; Spanish orig. 1940); Jean Stubbs, *Tobacco on the Periphery: A Case Study in Cuban Labour History, 1860–1958* (Cambridge [etc.], 1985); Michiel Baud, "La huelga de los tabaqueros, Santiago, 1919. Un momento de la lucha obrera en la República Dominicana", *Estudios Sociales*, 23 (1990), pp. 3–19.
24. Jacques Rancière, *The Nights of Labor: The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth-Century France* (Philadelphia, PA, 1989).
25. Michael Vester, *Die Entstehung des Proletariats als Lernproces: Zur Soziologie der Arbeiterbewegung* (Frankfurt am Main, 1970); Terry Irving and Sean Scalmer, "Australian Labour Intellectuals: An Introduction", *Labour History*, 77 (1999), pp. 1–10.
26. Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Madison, WI, 1990).
27. Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912–26* (Ithaca, NY [etc.], 1990).
28. Edward F. Fischer, *Cultural Logics and Global Economics: Maya Identity in Thought and Practice* (Austin, TX, 2001); Joanne Rappaport, *Cumbe Reborn: An Andean Ethnography of History* (Chicago, IL [etc.], 1994); Kay B. Warren, *Indigenous Movements and Their Critics: Pan-Maya Activism in Guatemala* (Princeton, NJ, 1998).
29. Robert W. Hefner and Patricia Horvatich (eds), *Islam in an Era of Nation-States: Politics and Religious Renewal in Muslim Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, HA, 1997).

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America, for example, concern the historical circumstances and the socio-economic and cultural context in which they emerged. Nevertheless, they are similar in that they are embedded in local constituencies while simultaneously addressing a larger, national political constituency.

To define the persons we call "popular intellectuals", we may come up with the following characteristics:

(1) They are acknowledged as producers of meaning and as representatives of collective interests by a popular group or local society. However, their legitimacy and authority is never uncontested and all the time new "intellectuals" and intellectual leaders emerge who may challenge their legitimacy, or who may express new or previously silenced interests of specific populations (for example women, peasants, younger generations, indigenous groups).
(2) They possess the explicit ambition to transform society and to put into practice their recipes for change. They are, in this sense, "engaged intellectuals" who combine reflexive activity with cultural and political activism.
(3) They include members of the popular classes and persons who gained their knowledge outside of the realm of formal education, as well as formally-educated members of the upper and middle classes who may have started out as "traditional intellectuals", but redefined their position and political mission.

This exploratory definition[30] draws attention to two important issues. First, it is clear that there is no sharp distinction between popular intellectuals on the one hand and popular leaders and movement activists on the other. Although some framing specialists succeed in maintaining their distance from the actual social or political struggle of social movements, most are actively involved in that struggle from the outset or become involved in it the moment their ideas start to appeal to followers and wider audiences. They become leaders or activists in the process. Moreover, many popular leaders acquire (part of) their authority on the basis of their framing capabilities.[31] In this volume, most authors do not

30. In our definition of popular intellectuals there is a slight overlap with "public intellectuals", i.e. engaged intellectuals with the credentials of a formal education, who speak out on matters of public concern and try to reach a popular audience, though these intellectuals may not connect to social movements. On the other side of the spectrum, there is an overlap with the category of "movement intellectuals", "those intellectuals who gain the status and the self-perception of being 'intellectuals' in the context of their participation in political movements rather than through the institutions of the established culture"; Eyerman, *Between Culture and Politics*, p. 15.

31. This category resembles the type of "people-oriented" leaders of social movements described by by Ron Aminzade *et al.* In contrast to "task-oriented" or "pragmatic" leaders specialized in organization, people-oriented leaders are concerned with evoking "a state of

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rigidly distinguish between the two positions. Instead, they allow for the flexible interaction between political and intellectual work and focus on its (historical) consequences.

Secondly, *local* intellectuals are not necessarily *popular* intellectuals. Distinguished by their local knowledge within their communities, local intellectuals do not always intend to use this knowledge to change societal conditions to the advantage of popular classes. Their historical role may just as well be the maintenance and reproduction of the existing social order. In her comparative analysis of popular nationalism in nineteenth-century Mexico and Peru, Florencia Mallon writes: "local intellectuals were those who labored to reproduce and rearticulate local history and memory, to connect community discourses about local identity to constantly shifting patterns of power, solidarity, and consensus".[32] She shows how local intellectuals in Mexico sometimes reproduced hegemonic Eurocentric and racist ideas, and tended to disregard the indigenous population: "the use of authoritarian and racist discourses also tied local intellectuals to wider webs of complicity and social control emerging in Mexico after 1867".[33] This ambiguity is also noted by Claudio Lomnitz-Adler, who shows how local intellectuals in Mexico could be instrumental both in articulating protest and in consolidating the status quo.[34]

These examples draw attention to the ambiguous position of popular intellectuals which so haunted Gramsci. Their political position is never uncontested. To be able to act and function in a meaningful way, intellectuals need to be recognized and accepted as (ideological) leaders by the rank-and-file. They need to possess authority, and their knowledge and suggestions must elicit recognition and respect. At the same time, their specific position as intellectuals sets them apart from the rest of a political movement. James Scott has demonstrated how difficult this balancing act can be in situations where intellectual leaders share very little of the daily realities and world views which prevail among the rank-and-file of a movement.[35] Moreover, to gain respect and authority among followers and wider audiences is not an easy task, because the nature of their work

motivation and commitment, often identification, with the leader or with a movement or goal", and may be described as visionary or charismatic; Ron Aminzade *et al.*, "Leadership Dynamics and Dynamics of Contention", in *idem*, *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics* (Cambridge [etc.], 2001), pp. 126–154, 130.

32. Florencia E. Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley, CA, 1995), p. 12.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 294.

34. Claudio Lomnitz-Adler, *Exits from the Labyrinth: Culture and Ideology in the Mexican National Space* (Berkeley, CA [etc.], 1992), and *idem*, "Provincial Intellectuals and the Sociology of the so-called Deep Mexico", in *idem*, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: An Anthropology of Nationalism* (Minneapolis, MN, 2001), pp. 263–286.

35. James C. Scott, "Revolution in the Revolution: Peasants and Commissars", *Theory and Society*, 7 (1979), pp. 97–134.

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makes popular intellectuals vulnerable to accusations that they are unpractical dreamers, pedantic snobs, or simply unreliable activists.[36]

Trust between (intellectual) leaders and followers is, then, not self-evident, and it may not last long. Too many politicians and intellectuals pretend to defend the interests of "the people" without really caring for or even understanding these interests. Among intellectuals, and between intellectuals and their followers, there exists a constant struggle over the content and direction of contentious politics. Following Talal Asad, Steven Feierman asks the essential question: "Who succeeds in defining a set of issues or a course of action as the appropriate one, pre-empting the space of opposed utterances or alternative practice?"[37] Popular intellectuals are embedded in relations of power, not only between social movements and powerholders, but also within social movements.

These tensions have acquired new meaning with changes in the dissemination of ideas. From the late nineteenth century onwards, the means of communication have changed dramatically, adding new ways in which popular intellectuals can make themselves heard. Traditional means of articulating protest towards local publics or individual authorities never disappeared (such as the writing of petitions or the staging of demonstrations), but in the course of the twentieth century, mass media allowed social movements and activist intellectuals to address large national and international publics as well. As local activists were drawn into wider activist networks, the context of their struggle and the ideological work it implied also changed. Increasingly, they started to address different audiences at the same time, employing multiple frames in the process. Moreover, the intensified process of global intellectual exchange, which was initially limited to the world of traditional intellectuals, began to affect all domains of political and intellectual activity, including popular intellectuals in the remotest corners of the world. Political activism became embroidered in an international tapestry of ideas that historians have scarcely started to unravel.

POPULAR INTELLECTUALS IN NONWESTERN SOCIETIES

More than forty years ago, Edward Shils wrote a seminal article on the political significance of intellectuals in what he called the "new states", the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa.[38] Though his article shows clear signs of the dominant modernization paradigm of the period, and obviously lacks an analysis of more recent trends, it contains valuable

36. Terry Irving and Sean Scalmer, "Labour Intellectuals in Australia: Modes, Traditions, Generations, Transformations", *International Review of Social History*, forthcoming.
37. Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals*, p. 31.
38. Edward Shils, "The Intellectuals in the Political Development of the New States", *World Politics*, 12 (1960), pp. 329–368.

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