

Branko BOŠKOVIĆ

## INTERVJU SA ENTONIJE GIDENSOM

U okviru projekta, jedna od aktivnosti bila je i intervju sa Entonijem Gidensom, koji je jedan od najznačajnijih sociologa 20. i 21. vijeka. Gidens je autor više od stotinu naučnih članaka, knjiga i drugih tekstova, koji se bave najznačajnijim društveno-političkim temama. Njegov opus, u najširem, obuhvata teme: teorija strukturacije, interpretativna sociologija radova Marksa, Dirkema i Vebera, država, modernost, seksualnost, globalizacija, teorija trećeg puta, Evropa i Evropska unija. Obilježio je savremenu sociologiju svojim radovima, ali i iskrenim i kolegijalnim odnosom prema kolegama i drugim saradnicima sa kojima je radio<sup>1</sup>.

Moj razgovor sa prof. Gidensom mi je potvrdio upravo ovakav odnos. Komunikacija sa njim je bila brza i jednostavna. Zahvaljujem se njegovoj tadašnjoj saradnici Svetlani Smirnovoj, na podršci i organizaciji intervjuja, koji je održan 19. aprila 2018. godine u Domu lordova. Prof. Gidens me je upoznao o zanimljivim činjenicama o zgradi engleskog parlamenta, što je bio uvod za prijatan razgovor koji je nakon toga uslijedio. Koristim ovu priliku da mu se zahvalim na vremenu koje je izdvojio, posvećenosti i otvorenosti. Ne samo da je prof. Gidens odgovorio na svako od mnogobrojnih pitanja koje sam mu postavio, već je kroz neformalni razgovor koji je uslijedio, pokazao da je ne samo dobar sociolog već i dobar čovjek. Intervju je, po njegovom zahtjevu, objavljen na engleskom jeziku.

### *Živjeti u svijetu velikih rizika i velikih mogućnosti*

Entoni Gidens je u intervjuu istakao specifičnosti svijeta u kojem se nalazimo, nazivajući ga svijetom velikih rizika i velikih mogućnosti (high risk

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<sup>1</sup> Više o Gidensu u: Bošković, B. (2018). *Politička sociologija Antonija Gidensa*. Beograd: Fakultet političkih nauka i Čigoja štampa.

— high opportunity world). Živjeti u visokoj modernosti za njega znači sticati sve više mogućnosti, ali uz sve veći rizik. Tehnologija pruža novi i drugačiji pogled na svijet, ali i suočavanje sa svijetom. Postoji, međutim, i druga strana ovog procesa, koja u značajnoj mjeri mijenja naše živote, pri čemu posebno ističe uticaj digitalizacije. Gidens je istakao da je u osnovi društvenih promjena niz procesa, koji često zavise od okolnosti u kojima se dešavaju, a koje su sve više nepredvidive i koje ne dozvoljavaju precizno i jasno planiranje budućnosti.

Jedna od tema razgovora bila je i njegova sociologija u cjelini, odnosno osvrt na Gidensove najznačajnije radove. Teorija strukturacije je temelj Gidensove sociologije, kojom potvrđuje važnost pojedinca kao aktivnog sudionika i kreatora sebe i događaja oko sebe. Danas živimo u drugačijoj modernosti, koju određuje ubrzana globalizacija, koja definiše razumijevanje svijeta i percepciju realnosti ljudi. I dalje državu vidi kao aktivnog sudionika definisanja društveno-političke realnosti, posebno kroz koncept nadgledanja, koji se sada dominantno zasniva na tehnologiji. Gidens je ostao privržen ideji socijaldemokratije, ali vjeruje da je neophodna promjena u pristupu, tj. kako ističe, danas nam treba nova avangarda socijaldemokratije, koja će biti sposobna da razumije promjene koje nas okružuju. Zadržao je svoju proevropsku orijentaciju, sa Evropskom unijom u srži projekta Evrope za budućnost. Više puta je kritički tumačio globalne političke odnose, ukazujući na polarizaciju koja je sve očiglednija, a koja je posljedica rasta desničarski orijentisanih političkih lidera. U skladu sa ovakvim viđenjem, kritičar je Bregzita, vjerujući u, na duže staze, negativne posljedice izlaska Velike Britanije iz Evropske unije.

Istakao je da je sociologija nauka koja je od suštinske važnosti za ne samo razumijevanje svijeta u kojem se nalazimo, već i za snalaženje u njemu. Niz pojava koje su novijeg porijekla, pogotovo vezano za pojavu interneta i digitalizacije, ne mogu biti prikazane bez analize koja uključuje sociološki pristup. Današnji đaci i studenti su značajno drugačiji od onih prije jedne generacije ili čak i manje, i univerzalizam koji prati različitost mora postati dio našeg uma i razmišljanja. Na samom kraju, studentima, a čini se i svim drugima koji ne pripadaju ovog grupi, preporučio je: odlučnost, disciplinu i ambiciju.

### *Intervju*

B. B. (Branko Bošković): Prof. Giddens, you are now a member of the House of Lords, how do you see your life today, as a member of the House of Lords? Are you busier now than you were as a teacher?

A. G. (Anthony Giddens): In my whole career I have liked to do two or three things, so I have never been just an academic or a teacher. We started Polity Press<sup>2</sup>, a publishing company long time ago. I used to work on that and I always had quite a diversity of interests. And the same was the case when I was running London School of Economics<sup>3</sup> and I was involved in politics; and it is the same now in the House of Lords<sup>4</sup>. I like being in the Lords because it is a privilege: we are supposed to take a more long term view than the House of Commons, at least to some extent. And I am just as busy. I was never wholly a teacher, of course — I was a writer as well, I wrote a range of different books, always tried to cover a range of different things. It is the advice I have for you and everyone else — diversity is good.

B. B.: Would you say that your work can be considered as one whole project, with theoretical pieces that follow one from the other?

A. G.: In the sense that anything evolves as a whole, these Houses of Parliament might look the same from 1830, but it has evolved a lot and the same thing would be true of me. One could find some themes that stayed there, but I obviously moved between several different areas. Actually, when I started out, I was at the LSE and I did my dissertation on 'Sport and Society' because I did not want to do some of the things that other sociologists did and at that time the sociology of sport was a very marginal area. So, I have always had quite a range of things but there is a lot of continuity too.

For me, sociology is all bound up with the project of modernity. The first book I wrote was on Marx, Durkheim and Weber and it was essentially about modernity they defined as capitalism; it is the transformation in which Britain played a significant role in spreading across the world for better or for worse. I have always stuck with that and I am keep with it now, because it is just a different age, the age of global interdependence. We must not identify globalisation with economic globalisation. To me, it has always been interdependence and it has always been driven by communication as much as by economic factors. What you have got on there (pointing to my phone which I was using to record the interview B. B.) is signalling a new level of global interdependence. You can call anyone anywhere in the world and for the payment of the nominal fee, not only talk to them. You can see them and you can exchange all sorts

<sup>2</sup> Izdavačka kuća koju su 1984. godine osnovali Entoni Gidens, Dejvid Held i Džon Tompson.

<sup>3</sup> Entoni Gidens je bio direktor Londonske škole za ekonomiju i političke nauke od 1997. do 2003. godine.

<sup>4</sup> Dom Lordova, gornji dom britanskog parlamenta.

of information. That is completely staggering actually. My thesis on the evolution of modernity rests on having premodern civilisations, which were preliterate and had no control of time and space. The modern states evolved from civilisations which had writing and printing. The early age of Industrialisation was not about the machine, it was about electronic communication without which modern or rather modern-ish economy could not have been possible. The digital revolution is completely transformative, which is not marginal but fundamental for understating the world is now. Recently, I have devoted a significant time and work to analysis of the Digital Revolution.

B. B.: You are a member of the House of Lords' Committee on Artificial Intelligence<sup>5</sup> if I am not mistaken?

A. G.: I am a member of the Lord's Committee on AI and we just issued our report about four days ago. It is a work of the Committee, but it is relevant and I also find it amazing in its way. I have been in quite a few House of Lords committees but none has got the reception that this has because it has been discussed in every major newspaper in the country and all the media outlets. Searching Lords AI report online results in about 1,800,000 clicks within three days. Some are about the earlier phases of the Committee, but the most are related to the final report. I find this to be a reflection of the world which it describes.

B. B.: Although my thesis is about political sociology, I made a lot of „jumps“ to sociology in general because I wanted to understand your later works better. Consequently, my interest on the Theory of Structuration is very deep and understanding agency and duality of structure — as you did — was what I made the reference point of your whole later social theory. Would you say that the theory of structuration is a basis of your whole sociology? In other words, do you see your later theory as based in the structuration theory?

A. G.: The same thing would be with structuration. I do not use the term anymore because it is too cumbersome. But, as we talk here we are reproducing the English language, which is itself launching the global language. It does not exist apart from people reading it, looking at it, speaking it and it is not a structure in the same sense as this building is a structure. So my answer to those would be yes, but I would also add here the „hermeneutic circle“. For example, you are always going back to your earlier ideas to reinterpret them in the light of the later ones. Or, when you write a book or as you are writing one, at the

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<sup>5</sup> Dom lordova ima više odbora koje su specijalizovani za određenu oblast. Gidens je u trenutku intervjuja bio član Odbora za vještačku inteligenciju.

end, you want to go back and change the beginning. That is the hermeneutic circle. And that applies throughout any active intellectual's life.

A very good example of this approach is reading a detective novel and the beginning is understood only when you get to the end. That is the kind of a more artificial hermeneutic circle. I gave an interview recently<sup>6</sup>, related to my past where you can find answers to quite a few of your questions.

B. B.: One part of your theory is devoted to studying modernity and you believe that we live in high-modernity or the later phase of modernity. Do we still live in the period of high modernity? Or, do you still criticise postmodernists as strongly as you did before, especially within the modernity theory?

A. G.: We live in Modernity, but, in my definition, it is being redefined by the acceleration of globalisation. And yes, I would still distance myself from postmodernism. I also think that everybody distances themselves from postmodernism today. It is a version of hermeneutic circle because postmodernism is a kind of the end of the world it describes. For example, there is a thought of The US President, Donald Trump and his perception of reality, which is seen by some as influenced by postmodernism. And there is also the idea that there is no single thing called truth, which adds to a kind of entered culture in postmodernism. My argument is not that The US President Trump has anything to do with postmodernism, but he is a part of that culture in a significant way. It also shows relevance of the media, especially streamed media. It is very different from traditional news and traditional communication. It seems to me that The US President Trump is a product of that world.

My argument is not that postmodern created that world but free streaming, on the computer or on the phone creates a kind of jungle. There is no continuity but rather picking the first that comes along of following a thread. However, it is not postmodernity and postmodernism as a philosophy, which adequately describes its means. It describes one aspect of what it is to live in this world, but one, which, in some respects is after the postmodernism itself. The influence of the 24-hours breaking news, especially streaming, has not been sufficiently analysed, at least to show its effect on the people's consciousness. Terrorism, for example, is one of the main drivers of right-wing philosophy in Europe and beyond, with 24-hours breaking news, regardless of whether it is watched or not, any active terrorism anywhere in the world is reported immediately. And that must have an influence on people's consciousness and might

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<sup>6</sup> Times Higher Education. (June 11, 2017). *Lord Giddens: Accidental Academic Who Reached the Top*, <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/lord-giddens-accidental-academic-who-reached-top>.

lead them to assume that risk is far greater than it really is. On the other hand, you might want to cross the road and might suddenly be knocked down by a bike or a car. People's consciousness became structured in a way in which everything is reported immediately with the principle of the current media that bad news is good news.

B. B.: You speak a lot about risk and trust in your books and see the two as being in conflict, if I am correct, but there is a need of living with both, as they became a regular part of our everyday life. Would you say that risk and trust are the two major „points“ of your theory of modernity?

A. G.: Risk and trust are two major dimensions of modernity, but not just modernity. All societies are in some sense founded around the notions of trust and risk. But, there are many cultures in which the notion of risk was not as formalised as in the Western civilisation, where it was quantified in the later period. Writing is necessary for having the sense of future and it is the rise of the science which created more sophisticated ideas of risk and trust. Once it had become sophisticated, for an ordinary people it would take a moment in their lives and the two are polar notions. For example, the film *La La Land*<sup>7</sup>. The end of it is interesting and counterfactual: what would have happened if they stopped a bit longer when they first met? They might have been together.

Risk is about chance. There is a book written by Daniel Kahneman „Thinking Fast and Slow“, which is a great book and he shows that people are unable to deal psychologically with the role of risk and chance in their lives so they move mostly by trying to normalise it. In other words, after something has happened, can the actors know it must have happened? It is mostly not the case. No leading economist predicted the global financial crisis, but almost a day after they were writing about it.

B. B.: This question might come as a surprise, but it is just that I am curious about it and also, that it is seen by some today as a source of many of the social mischiefs of our world. I am speaking about religion. Some authors wrote that it was non-existent in your works, how do you explain this? I read in one place that you intended to write a book on it, is it true and what happened?

A. G.: I would not say it is non-existent, because I have written about it quite a lot and I used to teach courses on comparative religion. I have not written about it specifically too much, my interest was more into capitalism and modern social theory. It does not mean that I am denying a role of religion in history, but I can also add that I am not myself a religious man.

<sup>7</sup> Više informacija o filmu na: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3783958>.

B. B.: I was especially intrigued by your writings on surveillance. Would you agree that it became one of the most prominent aspects of the modern state and does it go against your theoretical understanding of agency? Or, to be more precise, can we be as free as much as we want and as much as we can, knowing that we are being watched all the time. Internet might be the best example and there has been a lot of discussion about it lately.

A. G.: Yes, it is truly one of the dimensions of — not only modern state — but the modern society. It is again a notion closely related to power and related to what I already mentioned, that there are no civilisations before writing. To keep surveillance on people, there has to be some kind of recording device and writing was essentially recording device. There had to be bracketing of time and space. Oral cultures did not have that kind of system, so there was no hierarchical power in the same sense. It is not just modern state — surveillance goes back before it.

It is not only being necessary for organisation, especially now when we are into a new world. It is that (pointing to my phone B. B.) again. If you use Google — it knows where you are at this very instance, it knows your whole pattern of life. Level of surveillance is massively greater than anything that has been known before. It is used for commercial purposes mostly. For example, lots of restaurants there have got recording devices: what you are saying might not be recorded but once you get heard you have accurate face recognition and it can be recognised. This example shows the level of surveillance can be massively greater than anything that was present in the Soviet Union. That overtook people too quickly so there is now a necessary counter reaction. Our Committee's work was a counter-reaction. The change was so quick, so global, that it flooded into people's lives without the people starting it and realising what was actually starting. I see these issues with Facebook and other social networks as very relevant. The issue of surveillance is very important now, far more than anything could ever be imagined. It is always dialectical, of course, because you get power from that as well, so you need never get lost in London as long as you do not lose your...

B. B.: My battery and my GPS signal.

A. G.: Yes exactly, GPS. If we go back to globalisation, it is an extraordinary aspect of it. I am always astonished by the fact that people find these things to be normal and they just accept them. However, it is a complete miracle. You can find your way anywhere in the world; everyone has access to it, but it has access to you as well, which is another side of it. A lot of digital revolution is geopolitical and remains so and GPS is largely, a result of the Cold War. Satellites were there and are still there.

B. B.: Couple of weeks ago I read that Google has around two gigabytes of data on everyone who uses the Internet, which is a huge amount of data gathered from online activity.

A. G.: Whatever you do online is there forever, it can be blotted out, but never completely destroyed. Mostly, it is not too consequential just because there is too much of it and no one can sift through it. But, at the same time, someone could be checking up on you now, and me too.

B. B.: And it can be used as some moment when we do not expect it.

A. G.: Yes, but is used all the time to send for sending ads. One of the most amazing aspects of the world is the spread of the commercialism to all aspects of life. It is the result of factorism becoming global. If we go back to football, there was team advertising some time ago, but football teams had something like Starbucks on their jerseys, but advertising is everywhere. All of that is surveillance in a way.

B. B.: One of the most relevant sections of your work is the theory of globalisation. How do you see globalisation today? Has your standpoint changed in any way, especially considering rising inequalities and challenges people face today? Is riding a juggernaut still the best way to explain the way world lives?

A. G.: It is on a new level now. It is very hard for people not to equate it with economic globalisation but that is not as fundamental to me as interdependence, which basically works electronically now.

B. B.: We have gone much beyond the economic globalisation.

A. G.: Yes. There has been an acceleration in a gigantic way. And yes, it is still like juggernaut. I am trying to write a book about it now and I wrote the book about it already, when I gave BBC lectures twenty years ago. I am trying to see what it all looks like now. It is a very serious question if we lost control of what we have created, because there are huge issues and advantages, but there are huge problems as well. I now call it high risk — high opportunity world, which means that you do not know the level of opportunity or risk, because many of these are open and new so they cannot be calculated. Climate change is an example.

It is a real issue whether a man can cope with these changes. A whole past was about nuclear weapons or whether population will be going up to ten billion. Given that there are huge, not just inequalities, but fractures, making society lay behind, there are obviously some other issues that may cross the world. I do not think it is actually true, if we pay attention to unequal outcomes that they cluster, creating what is quite an old issue and I have always been involved in inequality issues. It may be true up to some level, I would tend not to agree with that. This would not only be different from when I wrote



about it, it is different from ten years ago. We know when the telephone was invented, around 1850, it took fifty years to reach significant number of people. When the first smartphone was used, which was only ten years ago, there are now two billion smartphone users in the world. They are all around us and I do not know what they are doing with it.

B. B.: Not many of them are using them for calling, I think.

A. G.: The thing they are doing now, for better or for worse, works globally forever. I find that astonishing.

B. B.: One of the shifts you made in your theory was the third way, which also drew a lot of controversy and which was very influential. Is the third way still alive? You were once surprised how much attention your theory drew, do you still believe in it and what do you think of it from this point in time?

A. G.: The third way is sort of light, but you have to remember that I never gave a lot technical significance to the term. For me, it is a label. At the time when I was writing a book of that title I made it clear it did not have any technical uses and I stopped using it after a while because it became so produced in the press. It was identified with neoliberalism, but for me it was beyond neoliberalism on the one hand and beyond the traditional top-down socialism, on the other hand. And that is still a lot of decent politics of today but enmeshed in the other issues, which we are discussing today. One of the most disturbing things was the global partial crux of the political centre. That is very dangerous, because of the polarisation of politics in many countries and I see it deeply related to the advent of digital revolution.

B. B.: Would you say that there is a close relationship between the digital revolution and polarisation of politics?

A. G.: Yes, I think so. For me, this revolution is the greatest force in the current world society. There is a lot of literature on what is called echo-chambers, which tends to accentuate the fact that you can look for views that support the existing ones, but then you have to have a dialogue online and it can be polarised. As I said, The US President Trump is inseparable from streaming and television and this rather strange relationship to reality. An interesting example is a WWE<sup>8</sup> which is hugely successful global wrestling, a sort of entertainment show, which thousands and millions of people follow. The US President Trump was on it. He actually featured long before he stood to be a president. He appeared in it, wrestled the owner of the show to the ground and shaved off all his head. The major point here is that it is all staged. But, it

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<sup>8</sup> World Wrestling Entertainment ([www.wwe.com](http://www.wwe.com)).

is staged in a brilliant way. It is not my interest area, of course, but that is The US President Trump's world and also our world. It is a staged world and there is no real truth behind it. In a metaphorical sense, it is all connected through WWE, it is the world we have now.

B. B.: But still, so many people are there and they are interested in it.

A. G.: Yes, they are interested in it and almost all of them know it is staged. It is like Trump's entire presidency. It is a bit like 1984, a hyper-modern version of it in a way, not so different in some aspects from Soviet double-speak and obviously Putin has merged traditional Soviet double-speak with the digital world, where you can never be sure with anything. You might find something on it (my phone B. B.), for example WWE or the Times. What you get up is probably authentic, but may not be. Nothing you get on there is absolutely, definitely, reality. If you watch WWE, it involves a kind of willing suspension of disbelief of people watching it. I find it symptomatic for a wider world which is to some extent flat, but watching it can be fascinating.

B. B.: How do you see social democracy today, especially in Europe? In close relationship with the left, extreme right is gaining ground across Europe, in some of the countries where many could not even imagine it, Scandinavian countries being the best example. Do you see the future of the rightist movements across Europe as the inevitable part of its political spectre?

A. G.: There is a structural backdrop to the rise of populism. It cannot be explained except in a very complex way. It is a world in one part only, then there is a global financial crisis, the world has been reverberating and has not had recovery from that. We live in the 21 century and quite a lot of migrants use smartphone, as well as smugglers, who use them for advertising online. It is probable that one of the things which led to the conflict in Syria was the first, kind of, digital encounter, because everything about it was on the social media. And we cannot know whether the consequences would be liberating. I spoke at the debate here (House of Lords B. B.) and being rather careful, I think I was the only one who was cautious about this issue. Some thought this is a new future for the Middle East. On the other hand, when we spoke about Arab Spring, I pointed out that Prague Spring took thirty years before there was any democratisation.

B. B.: Digital media are playing a very important role in this issue, if I understood you well?

A. G.: They are the context, yes, but only partially. In financial crisis there are whole historical fractures overlapping with it, but it is a concern and coincides with a disturbing move towards return to global power politics, which is deeply worrying. It is a turn to power and we live in such an interdependent

world and there is the United States and it will not have the same role as some thirty of forty years ago. There are China, Russia, Middle East, where we see the rise of men being strong leaders. If that does not disturb you, there might be something wrong with you (laugh B. B.).

I think the digital revolution is not the only one but a huge part, of that. But I think it is multi-layered. There is also an issue of women's emancipation and resistance or transgender rights movement, which is very interesting for me, since I wrote a book on sexuality. I think transgender fits in my idea of plastic sexuality. Is it being deeply resisted and there are the whole series of cultural conflicts, which recreate a kind of left-right divisions to some degree. Many of them are carried online and there is resurgence of populism without the digital world in the same way as it has happened anywhere. And most of it is very strong. Although they are reclaiming tradition, they are on the edge of high modernity at the same time.

B. B.: So we are witnessing a conflict with tradition here, in this sense?

A. G.: Yes, and all tradition is reinvented and it is being reinvented in a different kind of context and guise. To return to the previous point, the third way is still alive, I think. It depends how you define it, but Theresa May<sup>9</sup> has actually moved to occupy the political centre. She has got third way because there was neoliberalism and she put a light on industrial policy, which means planning. So, it is not a tradition of the neoliberal economy. But in a wider sense, the main issue was what is going to happen with social democracy and that we do not know. It must make a comeback, to a core, decent type of politics and we have to strive for that.

B. B.: Social democracy in Europe needs some new energy.

A. G.: What it needs is a kind of avant-garde version. It has to be recreated against a backdrop of these changes. When we revived social democracy at the turn of the century it was based on the structural analysis of change. I remember that most politicians I met in the 1990s had not even heard of the term globalisation. And then, everybody started using it. It became an example of itself. We are now in a digital world and similar other changes have not been assimilated within traditional politics. Also, we do not know how far they are contributing to undermining democracy itself. There are huge dangers in that. It is a new world and at this point people are free to say all sorts of things that we do not really know.

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<sup>9</sup> Premijerka Velike Britanije, 2016–2019.

B. B.: Social investment state was a product of the third way theory, is your opinion on the matter still the same? You have been constantly criticised as an author whose writings are of a neoliberal orientation, in the third way theory, would you say those critiques were justified?

A. G.: I would still defend the idea of social investment. I am not sure I used that term because the main problem with the traditional welfare state is that, as it was defined by Beveridge, dealt with things after they had happened. So it is all worked out in terms of consequences and there has to be planning ahead, to try to make happen that these problems are not supposed to happen at the first place. I still support the term and still have the same view on it.

The third way was always beyond neoliberalism on the one hand and beyond state-socialism on the other. There is no control of what political parties do when they are in power, so it was in a way identified with policies that were the ones that I backed. What we need now is a kind of avant-garde left that takes into account all the changes we are discussing here and tries to create a new society, with the same values. Whether that can actually be done is open to questions, because of the schismatic elements of the world.

If we go back to Kahneman, there is a lot of contingency. Looking back, Trump might not have been elected, Brexit might not have happened, the margin was very small. We would be seeing a world differently. If there was no Brexit and Trump the world would be different. So, there is a lot contingency, as Kahneman shows and everyone tried to explain things with structural reasons which are on part themselves contingent. If you look at the article I gave you<sup>10</sup>, that is true of my life as well. Almost every bit of it has been heavily contingent. No one from my family has been to university before. And I could easily have been the ducked one that works underground, like my father did. If one or two things have been different, the same must be true of you, it must be true of everybody.

B. B.: If I remember well, it was only in Leicester that you really discussed you master thesis with Ilya Neustadt and Norbert Elias?

A. G.: Yes, but I was not too heavily involved into intellectual life in Leicester. I was playing squash, having good time playing table football and writing (laugh B. B.). Anyone who wants to create a decent society, economically, has to reconcile competitiveness with social investment because the world economy is so open. You cannot work if you do not look at what comes from the outside. Investors have to be pleased. The question is how to reconcile targeted

<sup>10</sup> Više u fusnoti 5.

social investment, which was a kind of a key problem with the new labour. In my view, Jeremy Corbin has no account of it at the moment, as far as I know, which just seems like he can upraise a closed nation-state, at the same knowing it is heavily dependent on the overseas capital. If taxes are put up, at first, they might not come and there are huge issues that have not been resolved. Lots of issues and problems around the world persist in the similar way.

B. B.: Despite having British origin and despite having the EU-facing numerous challenges, you strongly support it. Are you still as strongly pro-European as you have been so far, in your works but also in the House of Lords speeches?

A. G.: Yes, I am strongly pro-European and I think stereotyped European Union is often misconceived. To me, it gives more sovereignty, not less, which is what I argued for in my book<sup>11</sup>. If shared with others but not less than it, sovereignty can be greater. If trade deals need to be negotiated, it will be very hard to the UK, as the state of sixty million people, to negotiate with China or India. In the economic terms, the EU offers far more chances to get a decent trade deal. I am pro-European because if we do not hold Europe together, we know what the history of Europe is, it could all go back to war. That is never off the agenda so it is crucial that the EU survives and prospers but it is always vulnerable.

It is a half way creation, it is not a state, it is not a nation, it has an amorphous form and it has not been terribly successful in democratisation. I am a quite strong supporter of Macron<sup>12</sup>. He gave a brilliant speech in the European Parliament a few days ago and I see him as a possible symbol of success. But, the EU has still got its structural problems, surrounded by the states like yours, and for example Russia. Russia is meddling in the elections and Russia is in a way more malign than the Soviet Union. Lavrov<sup>13</sup> had an interview a few days ago, expressing dangerous opinions. The EU has got a crucial role, but its structure is still deeply vulnerable.

B. B.: Do you see the EU responding to Russia-USA relationship in different way than it is the case now, should it be more organised, in a way? For example, deal between Russia and Turkey on placing the missiles on Turkish territory caused a huge debate.

A. G.: The EU is not a state. It was not designed in that way and it limits its capacities. On the other hand, there are a lot of virtues to it. If it were a super state, it would be more dangerous than Turkey and many other countries. The

<sup>11</sup> Giddens, A. (2015). *Turbulent and mighty continent. What future for Europe?* Cambridge: Polity Press.

<sup>12</sup> Emanuel Makron, predsjednik Francuske, izabran 2017. godine.

<sup>13</sup> Sergej Lavrov, ministar spoljnih poslova Rusije, imenovan 2004. godine.

situation in Europe is always tense and unfortunately, 1989 was not a movement towards a new world that many people hoped. Many are saying that traditional rivalries were even accentuated. It can be argued the Cold War could keep other things in place, as long as you do not destroy each other. Some people think it created more stability compared to now. We can see how The US President Trump gets on with North Korea. It is a truly dangerous world because of the fire power in it. Nuclear weapons are available now and massively greater than they were during the cold war. There is a book on Cuban missile crises, „The Tug of War“<sup>14</sup>, which describes how the world survived on luck that time.

B. B.: I saw that film a few days ago actually, I think it shows that luck, together with some good perceptions, played strong role.

A. G.: Well, again, we are back to chance because it was partly luck. It was a conclusion of the author of the book and luckily, it was the right decision at the time. The next time it might not be. The US President Trump is persuading North Korea to give up nuclear weapons. It would be great, I think, even if it keeps them in power, but it might all go wrong and it might get worse because there is so much contingency. There are different people in this, for example authors like Norberg<sup>15</sup> and Pinker<sup>16</sup>, who stress the amount of progress that has been made, which is absolutely huge, in terms of poverty, literacy etc. There is an example of China, where forty million people were starved then and now the main problem of Chinese cities is obesity. And there is more than billion people raised from poverty. Nothing like that has ever happened before. We can get in a plane, you can come in from Montenegro and you could go anywhere like that so there is a huge other side of it. That is why I call it a high opportunity — high risk world. Unfortunately, the level of risk cannot be calculated. It would be much safer if it could be done.

Martin Rees has written a book „Our Final Century“<sup>17</sup> and he found something called central existential risk. When there is interdependent world there is a huge mixture of benefits and much greater risks than before. But, if we look back in history, in 19 century, most people lived horrific lives. It was a very brutal time, containing brutal relationship between men. We now have the right

<sup>14</sup> Rambo, D. (2018). *The Tug of War*. New York: Dramatist's Play Service.

<sup>15</sup> Norberg, J. (2017). *Progress: Ten Reasons to Look Forward to the Future*. London: Oneworld Publications.

<sup>16</sup> Pinker, S. (2018). *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress*. New York: Viking.

<sup>17</sup> Rees, M. (2004). *Our Final Century? Will the Human Race Survive the Twenty-First Century*. Eastbourne: Gardners books.

to say that the level of progress has been absolutely stunning. The other side of it was the risks and the way it inflated because of interdependence. I once went to a castle in the Switzerland, beautiful on the outside but it was one of the few places showing how people actually lived. There was not a clean wall, for example. It was horrible in there, having no loos and no proper food and people were dying on average in their mid-thirties on average.

B. B.: Reading Stone's<sup>18</sup> book on family, sex and marriage in England, from 1500 to 1800, made me think exactly in a way you talk about it now.

A. G.: It is a revelation. People sometimes romanticize the past. I am just reading the book about the Templars. They came through your region and they were very brutal, even logging peoples' heads, similar to Saracens. If they conquer the city they might behead everybody there, men, women and children. To conclude, we live in the high opportunity-high risk world. There cannot be any calculation because there are too many contingencies which might come out on top.

B. B.: One of the pressing issues of the EU is Brexit. In your speeches in the House of Lords you strongly opposed leaving the EU. What is the future of the United Kingdom? How will Brexit develop? I am asking because an official discourse has significantly changed, from certain after the referendum to all but certain future of the negotiations now?

A. G.: We still do not know because, at the moment, the UK has got itself into very awkward situation. It is going to be two years suspended and waiting, either in the EU or out with no influence over EU policy but by that, a consequence subject to the EU policy. It is two years of the worst of all odds for the UK in my opinion. We just do not know how that will end up. It may come out as a reasonable outcome, but it may not.

I do not think we are going to get a very profound deal with the rest of the EU. I was just on a debate here this morning and there was a previous head of the military, Jock Stirrup. He was saying just how crucial Europe was for our security. We absolutely must not abandon the collective will that involves that. It is an unknown territory and we do not know how it will turn out. It does not look as it can be reversed much, as though I would like it to be. On the other hand, everything has some advantage because if Macron could have provided guidance for the EU, the Brits would not have blocked it in a way they always did before. Perversely, it could actually help that project. I am stressing could here, only could. The UK has always been an odd member of the EU from the very beginning really. As I said in my book, Churchill advocated US

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<sup>18</sup> Stone, L. (1990). *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800*. London: Penguin.

of Europe, explicitly excluding Britain and Britain was a Commonwealth then, an empire. As I said, we were walking through it, and this country is a true exception in that sense. It was a global empire and a pioneer of industrialism

B. B.: You already spoke about whether you are writing anything now.

A. G.: I am trying to write a book on the state of the world at the moment. As I said, it is about all the things we are discussing.

B. B.: I am now involved in the project „Humanism and high school education: the place and the role of sociology and related disciplines“ which is implemented by Montenegrin Academy of sciences and arts. The idea was encouraged by perception of sociology and social sciences in our high-schools as less important, speaking in the number of hours of teaching. What do you think of Sociology today? Is it relevant as a science?

A. G.: Talking about sociology, I still think the same. It still has the core importance. It is not economics, it is not politics and it straddles these different fields. I find it important to see my textbook on Sociology is self-globalised. I just received an invitation from Chinese publishers who are interested in Chinese version and they have already translated the 8th edition. It is quite amazing to me because I wrote it when I was the head of the faculty and I dictated it, all of those mini tales, it is how I managed it. The success of that book is a testimony to a role of sociology. It has been used by school kids all over the world. It has been sold in more than million and half copies, in different translations. To me, it is quite something.

B. B.: Social sciences are seen by some to have become closely related to natural sciences because of the changing methodology and introduction of statistics as an indispensable part of a quality work and a scientific paper. Has the nature of Sociology changed?

A. G.: The sociology is still the same, it has not changed, it is still ridden with divisions, similar to other academic disciplines. A lot of sociologists never took to my writings because they were emphasising statistics, precision, field work and I never did much field work. I was primarily a researcher and part of sociologists has to do that. Many of the sociologists prioritise statistical methods. Divisions are present in all academic disciplines.

B. B.: You once said it was central to our lives, do you still believe it is so and in what way? How can sociology help us live our lives today?

A. G.: I have not changed my views so I see it as central and helpful in many ways. One way is by teaching it at school, as long as it is a public tool. What we do not have here is everything I was saying before. It has been several years that I have been working on the latest phase of globalisation, about all of the things we discussed before. I also added a chapter on digitalisation in the 8th edition



of the textbook. I tried to build it from the beginning and today's parents have to be very careful, having children grow up as the first digital generation.

Obsessiveness is just one example, and there are many others. No one has ever grown up in the digital world before and I think parents have to be very rigorous. There are huge issues around this so there are lots of ways sociology can help our lives. One prime way is through the educational system. I believe that education is going to be deeply transformed by digital revolution. It is just in the beginnings but it is transforming world and has transformed all the other things, including teaching at schools. It has already transformed quite a bit because there is no more teaching by just standing in front of the class in the same way. But, I think there will be a lot more changes.

B. B.: Do you support these changes, especially having in mind the relationship between students and the teacher, it becoming more digitalised, in a way?

A. G.: Yes, as long as you do not succumb to it. Teaching has to have to have a critical slant. One of the things we have to do is to educate people for the digital world. And that includes the young people, who are so vulnerable and do not know what they are doing. Most of us do not know because it is too new. They get terrible threats online and what the digital world recreates is like Marshal McLuhan<sup>19</sup> said in the sixties. What we need is McLuhan for our time and I would love to be if I could be (laugh B. B.). It is because things that were characteristic of village communities are now globalised. Examples are bullying, personal hatred, animosities and these can be named to indefinite distance.

B. B.: What do you think of the new generations of today? What would you say their major differences are, compared to one or if it is not too much to compare, two generations back?

A. G.: New generations inhabit the world I am describing, with huge advantages and massive problems and we do not know how it will turn out. The very existence of our global society is subsumed in risk and Martin Rees writes about that. Existential risks are in a phase that we do not know what they are. There can be a global pandemic, nuclear war, we are not getting anywhere with a climate change. On the other hand, there are gigantic possibilities and achievements everywhere. That is what the younger generations have to, somehow, come to terms, otherwise, they are carried through it. We recognise that there is now a phone or a supercomputer with much more computing power than ever, and even children of two or three years have access to these devices. That is one of the major differences. Others might be just the part of

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<sup>19</sup> Kanadski sociolog koji se bavio medijima.

the fractured nature of the world. It cannot be pulled together now. There are still huge inequalities, as just an example.

B. B.: What would you say are the major differences between pupils and students today and before?

A. G.: Students' and pupils' differences are within a different world. Otherwise, there would be too much change and there are characteristics which would not work unless they were universal. It is one of the remarkable things, that everything can be translated into every other language. It is unbelievable to me because there is no relationship on paper or in speaking and anything can be translated. That is universalism behind the diversity which must be somehow embedded in mind and human cognition.

B. B.: You just summarised what you have been saying during our talk today. But on the other hand, would you say that all of this changes the personality of these kids as well, affecting their later lives?

A. G.: I do not know that. It is the first digital generation. It will be very hard to monitor that. What can be said are some of the structural insights. These kids have access to some of the things that no kids ever had access to. What does it do to children that they can watch pornography freely? No one ever voted for universally available pornography but there it is. There are many other similar things, so they are like pioneers in a new world. It does have multiple advantages too and that is why I call this world high opportunity — high risk world.

They are entering it. It is massively interdependent at the same time. The children are like pioneers in a new territory, similar to us. We just do not know how it will turn out. I really think that description of the world as high opportunity — high risk is suitable. There are people who want to say they are pessimists or optimists and they can be either of the two. However, we must say that we live in this world where there is an interlacing of ways of opportunity and ways that cannot be fully understood. On the whole, it is better to be an optimist but analysing other ways is the main thing.

B. B.: And one final question, last but not the least and in my opinion one of the most relevant questions anyone, but especially sociology teachers today, might ask you. What would you recommend to students today, as a sociologist, teacher and a person with a great experience?

A. G.: I got three things: determination, discipline, ambition.

B. B.: It might look as only three but I can say it is more than enough. Prof. Giddens, thank you very much for the effort and a very interesting talk today, it was a pleasure.