

HOW A FEW SOCIAL SCIENTISTS CAME TO HOLD TOP OFFICES OF STATE

A NOTE

Hermínio Martins¹

15 Jan 2010

Draft 1



The fact that a world-renowned academic sociologist, co-author of one of the most influential social science texts of the last five decades, in the Third World and the First World, and not least in the USA, with an impressive international academic curriculum, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, became President of Brazil, being twice elected in a free democratic process, has struck many people as a singular, perhaps unique occurrence in political history of nations in the twentieth century. Possibly if it had happened in a smaller, less consequential country, it would have attracted far less notice, and might have been summarily dismissed as the kind of oddity that can arise in the political processes of minor countries. Be that as it may, it was consideration of this case that originated the present Note, belatedly, where we look at a number of careers that bear some degree of structural similarity to this one and the kinds of socio-political circumstances under which have occurred.

Attempting to see this occurrence in a comparative perspective, I will look, in this brief account, at a number of cases where social scientists (sociologists, political scientists, anthropologists, economists, and even for this purpose at least, historians) have come to hold the top political offices of Presidents of Republics or Prime Ministers, in the twentieth century (the Presidency of course can carry little political power in republican parliamentary systems, certainly in normal times, but even so it is formally the highest office of State). It could be argued that lawyers (or “jurists”, in the Continental European parlance, which would include university Professors of Law or Jurisprudence), perhaps the single most numerous category in such posts in Europe and Latin America (and not unknown elsewhere), should be counted as a variety of social scientists, especially before the disciplinary identities of sociology, political science, international relations, etc., were consolidated and institutionalized in separate departments in universities (sociology could appear under a variety of rubrics, such as social economics, social studies or social philosophy): certainly some, in terms of the subjects and approaches of their doctoral dissertations, could be counted as such (work which in a number of cases could easily have been done as history, applied economics or political science), but in

¹website: herminiomartins.com

Emeritus Fellow St Antony's College University of Oxford

Emeritus Research Fellow Institute of Social Sciences University of Lisbon

this Note I will not include them as a genus. Nor will I include physicians, who have been prominent in the political elites of many countries, though often their work in social medicine and public health might in justify to some degree their inclusion among social scientists, such as Allende, for example (similar considerations would apply to practitioners of psychiatry, especially social psychiatry²).

The cases I am most interested are those of social scientists who pursued an academic career of distinction for a significant number of years before entering politics, or being appointed PRs or PMs (even though they may have harboured political ambitions in that period, they concentrated on scholarly work). I am not therefore concerned with those holding an academic post for the minimum number of years simply in order to add to their portfolio of qualifications or credentials (in the sociological sense), their c.v. or *cursus honorum* without producing a significant scholarly *oeuvre* or those who, at any rate, did not pursue an academic career for a significant length of time, for whatever reasons and entered full-time politics instead. There are cases which may be difficult to interpret, and there will be legitimate disagreement on how to classify them, but on the whole the analytical distinction seems worthwhile as a point of departure in the inquiry.

The first case I can think of of a social scientist attaining a top political office in the twentieth century is that of Woodrow Wilson, a Professor of Politics and author of articles and books on comparative government, who was twice elected President of the United States³. But it was during his tenure as President of Princeton University that Wilson, who had never been elected to state or Federal offices, became the Democratic Party's candidate for President in an unusually fraught Party Convention. One might even say it was a fluke that he was nominated, in that he had not built up a following over the previous years by pursuing a normal political career or courting key Party figures over a number of years. Since then, hardly any social scientists, not even economists, have come close to being nominated as Presidential candidates for either of the two major parties, or even been talked about seriously, in the USA, though two engineers (Hoover, Carter) became Presidents, though unlucky ones, neither being re-elected...⁴

² The psychiatrist Frantz Fanon's writings were influential throughout what was then known as the Third World among radicals and nationalists.

³ There are, to be sure, a number of figures who, without being academics, deserve to appear in comprehensive histories of political thought, in a fairly inclusive sense, who held the office of Prime Minister in the U.K. (the conservative leader Lord Salisbury being a case in point, a recent journal of conservative thought being called The Salisbury Review, though many would wish to include Winston Churchill). The same would hold in the case of authors of philosophical works, who were not academics, though they enjoyed recognition as significant thinkers in their time, the most salient being Arthur Balfour, another Conservative Prime Minister, who again earns at least footnotes in histories of philosophy of the period, though none of his works (he wrote at considerable length on questions of epistemology) appears to be in print. Masaryk, whom we shall look at later could easily be double-counted as a philosopher as well as a sociologist, who became the first President of Czechoslovakia.

⁴ The economist Clark Kerr, President of the University of California, was talked about as a possible Presidential candidate for the Democratic Party but the student rebellion that shook Berkeley in 1968-9 put paid to this prospect. It would have been the third instance of someone who had become the President of a major university being nominated in the USA for a major political party, though of course General Eisenhower, President of Columbia University at the time of his nomination for the Presidency, had not been an academic (except insofar as he had taught at a military academy). Congress has had a number of former academics, and perhaps now that a number of scientist-entrepreneurs have become millionaires, it will recruit some more, bearing in mind the prevalence of millionaires in the Senate and to a lesser extent in the House of Representatives (still, in a country with thirteen million millionaires there is a large pool to draw on). I have not considered candidates put forward by minor parties, either in the instance of the US or of other countries.

The great majority of cases of social scientists (other than economists) reaching the top offices subsequently throughout the twentieth century have occurred in newly emergent polities, mostly either following the break-up of Empires within Europe in the wake of WWI and later, after 1945, in the decolonization of European overseas empires subsequent to WWII. That is to say, in circumstances where, there were not established national political elites to draw on, so recruitment to highest offices of State was fairly open to figures other than professional politicians. Such situations provided openings for prestigious figures of scholarship or the arts, especially the performing arts, especially internationally known ones, sometimes apolitical, except in the sense of being publicly identified with the national cause in pre-independence days, to be elected or appointed as Presidents or Prime Ministers (the choice of the world-famous pianist and composer Ignacy Paderewski as Prime Minister of Poland in 1919, in his time a world celebrity⁵). Exceptional circumstances may arise, such as that of governments in exile, like that of the Spanish Republic or that of the Polish Republic after 1939, and in the case of Poland again after 1946, where appointments to these positions may be made outside the normal political criteria, and distinguished scholars may be appointed *faute de mieux*, as it were. But in this Note we are mostly concerned with relatively self-determining or emergent polities⁶.

Within Europe, the emergence of Czechoslovakia in the wake of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, led to the accession of T. Masaryk who had been prominent for some time as a leader of the Czechslovak independence movement, as President of the Republic and indeed “Father of the Nation”. Masaryk, though a philosopher primarily, had published studies of a sociological character, such as a much cited work on suicide, and was often characterized as a sociologist. His international reputation as a scholar and publicist was certainly a factor in his accession: his participation in political movements to some extent reinforced his other assets, of intellectual prestige and international fame, valuable to a new country seeking recognition on the world stage in various ways⁷. A greater oddity was the election of another sociologist, at any rate a former Professor of Sociology at Charles University, Eduard Benes, who, as follower of Masaryk’s social thought, and his close collaborator, succeeded Masaryk as President of Czechoslovakia (1935-38) and assumed the office again after exile in the U.K. during WWII, during 1945-48. Attempting to be neutral, he in fact assisted in the process which led to the Communist take-over of the country, with the consequent destruction of the democratic political forces.

Communist rule in Eastern Europe between 1945 and 1989 did not favour social scientists or indeed intellectuals of any variety for even the honorific posts of President of the Republic (even though some perhaps entertained the ambition of becoming *éminences grises* of the leaders who counted or perhaps exerting influence through Party Summer Schools). Still, there was one unusual appointment, Andreas Hegedüs, as Prime Minister in Hungary, the youngest Prime Minister in the history of the country, for a brief period, April 1955 to

⁵ This is perhaps truly unique. Especially valuable to the national cause as a friend of Woodrow Wilson. According to some sources, he was again Prime Minister of the Polish government in exile in 1940-41.

⁶ Einstein was approached with the request that he should accept becoming the first President of Israel. He declined to leave Princeton, much to the relief of practical Israeli politicians like Ben-Gurion.

⁷ Karl Renner is a case that deserves mention as a social scientist who came to occupy the top offices of State without an academic career in a University or research institute. A lawyer by training, he earned his livelihood as a librarian to the Parliament of the Dual Monarchy. His research and publications already before WWI addressed sociological topics. His best-known work on The institutions of private property carried out what he called a Marxist sociological analysis of law, and indeed the English-language translation was published in the International Library of Sociology edited by Karl Mannheim and has remained a standard reference. With the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as a prominent figure of the social democratic party, and a master conciliator, he became PM in 1919, and after WWII the first President of the Second Austrian Republic, one of the few eminent figures in the country not having been tainted with Nazi associations.

October 1956: replaced by Nagy in the course of the fast-moving process that led to the Hungarian revolution, he signed the formal request for Soviet intervention. He had not been a fully-fledged sociologist before his appointment as he had spent practically all his life from early adolescence in the Communist Party but subsequently he dedicated himself to sociological research and publication, as free as possible from political control, censorship or ideological contamination, maintaining international scholarly contacts as far as possible, publishing his books abroad, and was never tempted back into politics, even in more liberal times, though he did protest against the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia and was one of the best-known dissidents while Communist rule lasted (perhaps this counts as some sort of expiation for his action in 1956). This is a unique case in his post-political dedication to sociological inquiry, a second, longer and more productive scholarly career than the one he had prior to becoming Prime Minister. Most social scientists who have held the top political offices of State (as distinct from ministerial posts⁸) do not return to scholarly inquiry on a full-time basis after they had held such offices, partly no doubt owing to age, and the sense of not being able to recover time lost, though some maintain a lively, acute, high-quality commentary on world affairs.

Probably the greater number of cases of social scientists assuming top political offices occurred in the aftermath of decolonization, with the independence of former colonies of European powers, above all in Africa, but also in the Caribbean, in the 1960s especially, having been leaders or prominent figures of independence movements.

Jomo Kenyatta, born and bred in Kenya, entered university at the age of 41, earned a Ph. D. in social anthropology at the London School of Economics under no less a figure than Malinowski (he was one of his last students at LSE), the revised thesis being published as a book (Facing Mount Kenya) in 1938, with a foreword by his supervisor. He did not subsequently publish any scholarly work. He returned to Kenya after an absence of 15 years and subsequently was arrested and tried during the Mau Mau emergency and imprisoned for eight years under British rule. After his release he became Prime Minister and shortly after, having engineered a change in the Constitution, President, executive President (being both head of state, head of government and commander-in-chief of the armed forces) of newly independent Kenya. As a Kikuyu, he was a member of the majority “tribe” or *ethnie*, and he had been sufficiently close to the independence movements, that together with his intellectual standing, to be chosen for the post. Informally crowned as “Father of the Nation”, he held it till his death in 1978 (one of the first of the African Presidents for Life, in effect or in denomination, that proliferated in later decades). For the last eight years of his life the country was a one-party state and Kenyatta was the only candidate in the presidential elections.

K. A. Busia, a native of Ghana (the Gold Coast as it was called then) became Prime Minister in independent Ghana from 1969-72, after the end of the Nkrumah era. Having already taken PPE, he earned a D.Phil in Social Anthropology from Oxford in 1947, at the time when Radcliffe-Brown was director, published as a book in 1951 (The position of the chief in the modern political system of Ashanti⁹). Unlike Kenyatta, he went on to publish a number of other scholarly works of an anthropological kind: he was the first African to hold a Chair in the University College of the Gold Coast (one of the few considered in this Note to pursue a normal academic career, in this case both in Ghana and in Oxford, where he was a Senior Associate Member of St Antony’s College in his years of exile). In his case he had been

⁸ There have been a number of cases of sociologists (as well as scholars of other disciplines in the social sciences) appointed as Ministers in the last couple of decades in a number of Western countries, some indeed being elected to Parliament as well, but they are not considered here. But the cases represent the coincidence of a young democracy with the recent rise of a new academic discipline with a certain cachet of modernity in the university systems of the countries concerned.

⁹ The subtitle was: “A study of the influence of contemporary social changes on Ashanti political institutions”.

involved in party and parliamentary politics for a number of years, so that his intellectual eminence was less of a factor than in the other African cases, his party leadership counting more perhaps. He was ousted by a military coup (and he had been brought to his office by the military coup that overthrew Nkrumah), and appears not to have resumed scholarly activities during the rest of his life.

In the post-colonial world, outside Africa, we have the case of Eric Williams, a native of Trinidad, an undergraduate at Oxford, where he read History, being awarded a First, he later did graduate work in economic history in the same university. His chief work, Capitalism and Slavery (based on his Oxford D. Phil., accepted in 1938), was published in 1944 in the USA (it was not published in the UK for another twenty years)¹⁰. It has been recurrently debated to the present day, and was certainly a landmark in the relevant historiography (unlike the theses of Kenyatta or Busia, it was not about his own country specifically, except as part of Caribbean history, but in a way on international political economy, and those theses have not provoked the same kind of persistent historiographical controversy). Williams, with his Oxford doctorate, wanted to pursue an academic career, but, unable to do so in the UK, where there was perhaps a racial factor counting against him, he emigrated to the USA in 1939, where he taught at a leading Afro-American university, Howard University, though he published little of comparable scope and originality after his remarkable book, which enjoyed a considerable reputation among African intellectuals associated with Pan-African or national African independence movements. He returned to his country, in its last years as a colonial dependency, in 1948, and he was very active as an independent lecturer and publicist, leading to the publication of a history of the Caribbean, as well in party politics. In newly independent Trinidad, or, strictly speaking, Trinidad and Tobago, as a figure of international standing, indefatigable in his educational and political activities since his return, he became Prime Minister, and his astuteness and ability to play the political game in an ethnically divided society, and to handle massive discontents and the surge of “Black Power” which nearly swept him from power, kept him in the office till his death (he held the post of Prime Minister without interruption from 1956 to 1981), and even acquired the informal title of “Father of the Nation”, like Kenyatta, who had preceded him also in his life-presidency.

Another case that would deserve to be listed here, had he not been assassinated, was that of the Mozambican Eduardo Mondlane (1920-1969). He obtained a scholarship to study in the USA, entered Oberlin College at the age of 31, graduated there in anthropology and sociology¹¹, and subsequently earned a doctorate in sociology at Northwestern University in 1960, having spent a year at Harvard as a visiting scholar in the meantime (his thesis, never published *in toto* or in part, was not on an African topic, but on role conflict¹²). He taught for a year at Syracuse University and worked as a United Nations official, but returned permanently to Africa in 1962. His intellectual eminence and American connections, amongst other factors, undoubtedly secured a call to him to return to Africa to lead the movement for the independence of Mozambique which was then preparing to start the armed struggle (at that time it had not proclaimed itself a Marxist-Leninist organization, committed to “scientific socialism” and Mondlane, although a socialist, did not subscribe to a Marxist creed). It is still the ruling party today, more than forty years later, FRELIMO, enjoying since 1975 a monopoly or near-monopoly of political power. Mondlane was assassinated in Tanzania, during the war for independence (initiated in 1964), through what agency is still not entirely clear. He would undoubtedly have become the first President of the new Republic of

¹⁰ It was published by the University of North Carolina Press. The subtitle (which the work lacks) could have been something like “British capitalism and Caribbean slavery”. The D. Phil thesis was entitled “The economic aspects of West Indian slave trade and slavery”.

¹¹ Among his teachers there were two well-known American sociologists, George Simpson and J. Milton Yinger.

¹² I have not had access to this thesis, nor do I know anyone who has.

Mozambique after independence had he lived, though one cannot tell whether he would have become another President for Life or he would have chosen to only hold the office for a couple of terms or so, or whether he would have moved towards a less repressive post-colonial regime than the one that was installed. Anyway, he would have been another of the tiny roll of sociologists to have become Presidents, most of whom outside the normal parameters of democratic politics¹³.

Of all categories of social scientists, economists would seem to have the best chances of reaching at least the office of Prime Minister. Again, we restrict our universe to those who have enjoyed a distinguished academic careers or at least served in economic research institutes prior to ministerial appointments. There seem to be two kinds of cases amongst the economists who have attained the office of Prime Minister: those who are catapulted (or perhaps one could say “parachuted”) into the office via the sponsorship of a king-making entity, the military, the dominant Church, a major political dynasty, economic lobbies, top bankers, key media, etc¹⁴., and those who enter normal politics after achieving eminence in their discipline, in democracies, and succeed in being elected leaders of political parties, or at least achieve prominence in them.

In the first type of case, it may arise most likely in a military dictatorship. An example was Salazar who after teaching and research, with a number of scholarly publications, was essentially brought to power sponsored by the Church and with the support of important segments of the military (it is true that many former university professors had held ministerial posts since 1910, partly because of the demise of the previous parliamentary political elite). Even though he belonged to a minor political party, standing for the Church interest, it was not because of the importance of the party that he was appointed Minister of Finance with exceptional powers. Through the exercise of these powers he gained influence and prestige and became Prime Minister and in effect the ruler of a civilian-military dictatorship from 1932 to his illness and incapacity (or “political death”) in 1968.

In military dictatorships in the post-1945 period in Latin America, or better post-1960 period when a turn to more modern-oriented military dictatorships took place many economists were appointed Ministers of Finance without any previous political experience or affiliations, picked out directly from universities, amongst those willing to serve a dictatorship, to be sure, at least under certain conditions like being given *carte blanche* to implement ambitious programmes of monetary, fiscal and other modes of economic reform, often via stiff doses of drastic “shock therapy” or “surgery”, and closing their eyes to repressive practices, the banning of free trade unions, arbitrary imprisonment, systematic torture, etc. taking place at the same time (the term “technocrat” came to enjoy widespread currency in connexion with

¹³ Mondlane and Kenyatta have both had universities named after them. The intellectual distinction and prominence as public figures of Busia and Williams would have warranted similar memorialization. Colonial liberation movements were often headed by intellectuals in their early phases, with academic experience in the metropolises (often after attending mission schools in the colonies), where they in contact with members of other liberation movements (there were important clusters of such persons at various times in London and Paris) and established links with influential persons and organizations that would prove helpful in various ways to the movements and the newly independent countries (“networking”, it would be called later). Some indeed comprised considerable numbers of intellectuals and Western-educated persons in their cadres, but the prominent figures would often be writers (a surprising number of poets amongst them) rather than technically qualified (some combined a profession with literary gifts such as the physician and poet Agostinho Neto, head of the MPLA, which became the ruling party in Angola). That Mondlane became a sociologist was in away an anomaly in terms of the kind of academic fields chosen by these elites between the 1930s and 1950s: sociology only became fashionable later.

¹⁴ I have listed entities which have been alleged to have played this role in various historical accounts (some perhaps rather doubtful) for a number of countries, especially in dictatorships or the aftermath of authoritarian rule.

this category in Latin America and elsewhere, though in a different sense from the word originally had, in connexion with engineers and not economists: they might better be called “econocrats”¹⁵). But even the most successful of these Ministers of Finance, Delfim Netto in Brazil, an academic economist, under whose auspices the highest rates of economic growth the country has ever experienced before or since were attained for six consecutive years (the years of the Brazilian “economic miracle” as well as of the armed struggle and the state terror), to whom therefore the military dictatorship owed a special debt, never rose any higher, even though he did entertain hopes of becoming President (there was no office of Prime Minister in a presidential system)¹⁶. None of the “Chicago boys” elsewhere made it either, though in some cases their policies did result in or coincide with fairly high rates of economic growth, if at the expense of not insignificant social and environmental costs (in others they were disastrous in every way, leading to financial collapse and exacting terrible social costs). Even in a non-dictatorial situation, too, economists may be called directly from the groves of academe to play a high role in politics. There was at least the case of Andreas Papandreou, who had been living in the USA for quite a number of years, having graduated from Harvard, and become Professor of Economics (and Chairman of the Department) at Berkeley, though he also held Professorships of Economics at various other North American universities, being a rather peripatetic academic. He was asked by his father, the head of the family’s political dynasty, and leader of a major political party, to return to Greece, which he did in 1959, having lived in the US since 1938 where he had become a US citizen, and became assistant Prime Minister, in effect, though he was also elected to Parliament for the first time. Arrested and exiled again, he became Prime Minister in 1981, having founded and headed the Socialist Party, reelected in 1985 and again in 1993. The dynastic factor here is a distinguishing feature of his trajectory¹⁷.

In normal democratic politics, in Europe, as in the Americas, quite a number of academic economists have been appointed Ministers of Finance (or the equivalent).¹⁸ One of the two greatest economists of the twentieth century in the view of many economists (the other one being, of course, Keynes), the Austrian Joseph Schumpeter, a Professor of Economics who became Finance Minister of the new Austrian Republic, but an unlucky one. Another Austrian, Rudolf Hilferding, a (not very orthodox) member of the Social Democratic Party, became Minister of Finance twice in 1923 and 1928-9, in singularly unpropitious economic and political circumstances (Hilferding had become an economist informally as it were, through the classes provided by social-democratic economists, and a number of his publications were of considerable importance such as his book on Finance Capital, surprisingly topical once again¹⁹).

Other examples could be adduced in recent times, as in the post-communist countries of Eastern Europe, even if none have so far enjoyed a very successful record, that is they have not presided as yet over any “economic miracle”. To be sure, a number of academic economists have enjoyed great influence on economic policy in their countries without

¹⁵ The British political scientist Peter Self suggested this term, I believe, in connexion with the pretensions of cost-benefit analysis in the determination of public policy.

¹⁶ It is true that his second run as Minister of Finance did not meet with much success.

¹⁷ His son has become Prime Minister (the current incumbent), like his father and grandfather.

¹⁸ I use the expression generically. The post may come under other rubrics in different countries: Chancellor of the Exchequer in the U.K., Secretary of the Treasury in the U.S, Minister of the Treasury, Minister of Planning, and so on, in a number of other countries. Often the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of the Economy are separated, at least for a period, and economists may hold both posts. Cognate posts such as Minister of Industry could be counted also.

¹⁹ He authored a remarkable paper on totalitarian orders (under which he subsumed both Nazi Germany and Stalin’s Russia) in the late 1930s, published by a Menshevik journal in the USA. It was reprinted in C. Wright Mills’ collection *The Marxists* and yet it is too little known. He was a victim of the Gestapo.

holding a ministerial post, or even located in key financial institutions like Central Banks. Keynes, who after all taught economics for many years, may be seen as perhaps the paramount instance, though his influence on the ways in which economic policy was framed, in a wide sense, was worldwide, and other cases could be referred such that of Raul Prebisch and his leadership of ECLA in Santiago de Chile, key ideas of which had world-wide impact²⁰. No need to dwell here on the role of the “Chicago boys” (a generic term, for by no means all of the economists referred to had received their doctorates from the University of Chicago, often earning their doctorates in their own countries) and the shaping of the “Washington Consensus”, subjects which have been addressed already at length everywhere. Very few economists have gone on to become PMs or PRs, possibly because their tenure of the ministry was not in general very successful, not necessarily because of the wrongness of the policies, more perhaps the intractability of the *conjuncture* when they were appointed or elected (the post can be as much a breaker as a maker of political reputations, in fact more likely the former)²¹. Four cases come to mind, listed in chronological order, according to the date when they first became Prime Ministers (or the equivalent).

First, Ludwig Erhard (1897-2007), an economist who directed an institute of economic research, until dismissed during the Nazi period. He introduced the very successful currency reform of 1948, was appointed by the Chancellor as Minister of Finance, a post he held between 1949 and 1963, became a very successful or very lucky Minister of Finance with the resurgence of the West German economy, the very first “economic miracle” (*Wirtschaftswunder*), justifying his faith in the “social market economy” of *Ordo*-liberalism and the Freiburg School (other countries have subsequently been looking for their “Erhard”). Some even claim that his success was as important as the Marshall Plan for the resurgence of Western Europe. Partly on the basis of his success, of his affiliation to a political party (the CDU) and partly through the convolutions of parliamentary politics, was subsequently elected Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, which he held from 1963 to 1966.

The second case was that of Raymond Barre (1924-2007), an academic economist teaching at the Institut d’Études Politiques in Paris who became Prime Minister under the Fifth Republic, a presidential appointment. He was the only PM of the Fifth Republic not to be leader or a prominent figure of any political party. This is a case where a President, as was his prerogative, chose an independent figure who has not played a part in politics, on the grounds of intellectual distinction and professional competence, though in fact he had held a number of government advisory positions and had been Minister of Industry for a few months. In fact the President appointed him as both Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economy (the only person to have held both posts at the same time in the history of the Fifth Republic), which he was conjointly from the date of his appointment in 1976 till 1978. He was Prime

²⁰ Celso Furtado deserves a mention, and not just for his role in CEPAL. An academic economist, he was only briefly Minister of Planning before the military coup of 1964, which led to his exile. He exerted considerable influence on economists and indeed the intelligentsia in general through his writings on the economic history, development economics and international economics. He was one of the earliest Brazilian economists to develop an ecological consciousness and a sustainability approach, partly perhaps owing to his North Eastern background and practical experience heading the State development agency for the region. He was also one of the first to use the phrase “mundialização da economia” (in the early 1970s).

²¹ Harold Wilson was an academic economist, but for rather a short time, and was involved in Government work and party-political activities from very early on, so I would not include his Prime Ministership in this list. Hugh Gaitskell, similarly: he might have become Prime Minister, as leader of the Labour Party but for his premature death. Since then there have been no instances of *academic* economists coming so close to the office, or indeed becoming Chancellors, in the UK. Maybe PPE is the universal qualification (both Wilson and Gaitskell did PPE) and there is no need to go on to do academic research in economics...Of course in a parliamentary system there are constraints in such appointments which do not exist in presidential systems. Still, nomination to the House of Lords has provided numerous Ministers from outside the elected chamber, though never, I believe, for the key offices, but no academic economist has been chosen for the purpose.

Minister during the greater part of the Giscard d'Estaing Presidency, but headed three different governments during this period (1976-1977, 1977-78, 1978-1981). The President was not re-elected to a second term, and Barre never secured national political office subsequently.²²

The third case is that Aníbal Cavaco Silva, who earned a Ph D in economics at the University of York²³, pursued an academic career after his return to Portugal, publishing a number of technical papers, joined the center-right party, one of the two major parties since the transition to democracy, became Minister of Finance (but other economists have served as Ministers of Finance since 1974 in a variety of governments, though not all Ministers of Finance have been economists). Eventually, having become leader of the party, Prime Minister. He enjoys the dubious distinction of having been the second longest serving PM in Portugal after Salazar (another economist). After some years' absence from active politics he stood for election to the Presidency, backed by a wide spectrum of opinion, and not only by his party. A more creditable achievement is that he is perhaps the only academic economist to have become both Prime Minister and President of the Republic, certainly in a democratic polity (in a semi-presidential system the President can be an important political player).

The fourth case is that of Romano Prodi, who was an academic economist at the University of Bologna, having taught and researched there and also in the US, from 1963 till the early 1970s when he started a governmental career. He did not hold the Ministry of Finance, properly speaking, but was Minister of Industry (at any rate, an economic ministry). He became Prime Minister of Italy subsequently from 1996 to 1998, and held the office again from 2006 to 2008. In the meantime he was President of the European Commission (1999-2004), a new kind of appointment in the recent history of international organizations for politician-academics²⁴.

We have not considered non-economist academics becoming Minister of Finance (as has happened) and then achieving one or the other of the highest offices (of which only one case comes to mind). We end by returning to the beginning of this Note. A sociologist by training and vocation, he followed a parliamentary career after his return from exile, having taught at universities in three different countries²⁵. FHC owes his election to the Presidency above all

²² Giscard had been Finance Minister (twice) before running for President. He was not an academic economist: on graduating from one of the *grandes écoles* (the DNA) he went straight into the Civil Service and stayed in public administration or politics, in government or in parliament from then on.

²³ Supervised by Sir Alan Peacock, a specialist on Public Finance and a staunch liberal in economic vision (to use Schumpeter's term) or ideology (very critical though of some versions of economic liberalism, and sympathetic to *Ordo*-liberalism at least to the extent of editing a book on this movement of thought). Cavaco Silva was a rather pragmatic Finance Minister, not a liberal ideologue seizing the chance to reshape the economy on neo-liberal lines, which would have been practically impossible anyway in a democracy except perhaps in particularly serious crisis-situations. He was of course greatly helped by the accession of Portugal to the European Economic Community from January 1 1986, which rescued the economy from its dire straits. It is still a matter of academic discussion how far his policies complemented the bonanza.

²⁴ Two economists, Carlos Salinas and Ernesto Zedillo, became Presidents of Mexico in recent years. However, after their doctorates in economics in top American universities, they stayed in academia less than five years before entering full-time government service, and the first was not elected but appointed since they were not free elections at the time. There are no doubt other Latin American examples.

²⁵ Something like the modal *cursus honorum* of Brazilian national politics for plausible presidential candidates would demand at least some of the following elective posts: membership of either House of Parliament, especially (but not exclusively) election to the Senate, prefect (executive Mayor) of one the leading cities of the country, governor of a state, especially one of the major states. Non-elective posts like being a Cabinet Minister, or State Secretary in a major state like São Paulo, are not as decisive, in general. FHC was a distinguished parliamentarian, but his one great mishap was failing to be elected governor of his own state of São Paulo (though he was not defeated by a very wide margin). Fortunately, it did not prove fatal, and being Minister (of Finance) in this case more than compensated for that mishap. In any case he had been talked about as a potential President, a *papabile*, as it were, for some years before his first candidacy.

(though by no means exclusively) to the fact that he was appointed by the then President to the Finance Ministry rather than to the Foreign Ministry, for which his qualifications, interests and cosmopolitan background would have made him an obvious and excellent choice. He had the good sense to listen to his team of economists and the good luck to have a team of economists who put forward a realistic programme which turned out to be adequate to the circumstances²⁶. In addition, of course, and this factor was crucial, he had the courage and political savvy to launch a programme based on their recommendations, which turned out to be most successful economic programme, the Plano Real which marked a turning point in Brazilian history since the transition to democracy starting in 1985, taming inflation which had endured for decades despite numerous plans and programmes, sometimes quite drastic, in practically every government trying to address it. Though the leader of only the fourth largest party in Parliament, he won a substantial popular majority on his first campaign for the Presidency, being substantially backed also by an important segment of the intelligentsia (those not irreducibly committed to the Workers' Party and their leader, Lula, an emotional tie which the strength of which cannot be underestimated), the key media and a majority of the middle classes. Certainly, he was the most intellectually eminent of Brazilian Presidents (and not only)²⁷, and played a crucial role in the consolidation of democracy in his country. Of course, he could not follow the prescriptions that might have been derived from the dependency theory he had formulated in the 1960s, but that was due to world-changes and reprioritization of democracy as a goal and a prime value after the ordeal of dictatorship²⁸.

We are not in the business of prognostication, but a few tentative reflections on future possibilities may be advanced.

The great windows of opportunity for social scientists (other than economists), or at any rate politically ambitious intellectuals, to come to the fore in politics, via independence or liberation movements, have narrowed as the great empires have broken up, from 1918 to 1991. Of course there are still liberation movements in every continent, and some of them may still provide openings... Political elites practically everywhere, certainly in Western Europe, have become more and more professionalized, with the top offices becoming virtually the preserve of politicians who start their political lives from their teens, absorbed in party-political affairs of one sort or another almost continuously afterwards, holding local or national political office or in an advisory capacity, or at any rate serve in public administration or quasi-governmental bodies of one sort or another, national or international financial institutions or companies, charities, transnational organizations, etc. (sometimes this becomes a career after ceasing to play a part in national politics). Even when breaks occur with party systems and established political elites, as in the French Fifth Republic or the Second Republic in Italy, opening up political space, affording room for new entrants from outside politics, academics have not mostly been called upon, with few exceptions (R. Barre, R. Prodi, respectively). There have been 14 Prime Ministers in the Fifth Republic of France,

²⁶ Every serious presidential candidate in Brazil since 1985 has relied on a team of economists even before the electoral campaign starts, often drawn from a particular university department or center.

²⁷ Possibly the next President will be José Serra, former State Secretary in the State of São Paulo, Minister in the FHC Administrations and subsequently elected Mayor and Governor of the State of São Paulo. Serra took a Masters in economics in Chile, and subsequently a Ph.D. in economics at Cornell University and taught economics at a university in Chile and in Brazil (University of Campinas).

²⁸ This question has provoked a lot of commentary, often ill-informed. FHC has responded to it in various writings, including his English-language book, *The Accidental President*. See also the interview and discussions in *Democracia, Crise, Reforma: estudos sobre a era Fernando Henrique Cardoso* [Democracy, crisis, reform: studies on the Fernando Henrique Cardoso era], edited by Maria Ângela D'Incao and the present writer, São Paulo, 2010. In this book the anthropologist Roberto da Matta gives a very interesting account for the wider import of the "Plano Real".

but only one of them was previously an academic, the economist Raymond Barre (as previously noted), even if they had all been to one or another of the *grandes écoles* (after which they entered government service or party politics at local, regional or national levels). Even in the case of economists, those who could have pursued an academic career with distinction, may prefer or be seduced by, the prospects of a career in financial institutions, national or international, or advisory bodies and commissions of one sort or another, or occasionally as CEOs of companies (especially State-owned ones), practically full-time and life-long, a structure of opportunity which has steadily widened in recent decades (mathematicians and physicists also flocked to Wall Street in the years preceding the Great Recession). The paradigmatic example here is M. Singh, who after a D. Phil. in economics at Oxford²⁹, went straight into non-academic organizations, and mostly worked in international organizations, Ministries, and State Banks, although he also taught concurrently at the University of Delhi for a short period in the 1970s. He became Finance Minister (1991-1996), a tenure where he enjoyed great success, turning around the Indian economy, though oddly, no-one called him the Indian Erhard. Five years after he left office, the Congress Party chose him as their candidate for Prime Minister and subsequently he was elected Prime Minister of the Indian Union twice, in 2001 and 2007 (he is still the current incumbent) at a time when India is a rising economic power on the world stage³⁰. That is likely to be the major pathway to the top political offices in future for economists (though it may not happen, of course). Of course there is always the possibility of social scientists, or indeed scholars or intellectuals in general, being picked for Ministerial appointments by executive Presidents despite or because of their lack of party affiliations or political experience (and/or arranging for them to be elected to Parliament for safe seats). Where the Presidency in parliamentary systems is in normal times largely honorary, with little or no political power (though there has been a strong tendency towards the American-style presidentialization of the powers of Presidents and Prime Ministers since 1962), one might expect intellectual distinction in one of the major fields of the natural or social sciences, or in literature, to be an asset, but it has rarely happened, V. Havel in post-Communist Czechoslovakia being perhaps the outstanding case where it did happen³¹.

²⁹ He was a graduate student at Nuffield College, having been a brilliant undergraduate in Cambridge..

³⁰ If José Serra is elected President, then we might have the two BRIC powers which are democracies led by economists (there are other similarities between the two countries with respect to the distribution of wealth and income, and in the trends thereof).

³¹ The philosopher Jan Patočka (1907-1977), beaten up and severely tortured under the Communist regime, might well have become the first president of post-Communist Czechoslovakia. There is at least one case of a philosopher becoming President in the twentieth century, S. Radakrishnan, the second President of India (the President being elected by Parliament), who, among various professorial appointments, had held a Chair at Oxford University (the Spalding Chair in Religion and Ethics): as a leading authority on Hindu religion and philosophical thought and its interpretation in terms more familiar to Western traditions, he had commanded great prestige. At least one philosopher, the Brazilian Robert Mangabeira Unger, a brilliant, wide-ranging, and prolific thinker, a professor at Harvard Law School for many years, has expressed a desire to become President of his country, though his chances are virtually nil (he does come from one of the great political families of Republican Brazil). He held briefly a post of Minister of long-term planning in the Lula Administration. During the twentieth century philosophers have been appointed (rather than elected) to Senates (the political philosopher Norberto Bobbio was appointed life-senator), or to Ministries (in various European countries), elected as executive Mayors of cities (Massimo Cacciari has been Mayor of Venice), or, as I have already mentioned, as Prime Ministers (Balfour). The appetite for major national political influence in a dictatorship (what might be called "the Syracuse temptation") has not been lacking in outstanding philosophers, alas, Heidegger providing perhaps a salutary warning, or Carl Schmitt in political theory. Some have led or been associated with terrorist movements or signed execution orders in their ministerial capacity (Lukàcs). The role of neo-Confucian philosophers in contemporary China provides a particularly fascinating case-study in the relations between philosophy and politics.

Besides economics, other social sciences also have become ever more closely associated with policy-formation organizations of one sort or another, national or international, quangos, and the like, or at least involved in think tanks (which are now mushrooming outside the Anglo-Saxon world), research institutes, UN commissions, UNESCO, Foundations, agencies, charities, etc., a world which in part could be described as para-academia (in some cases this becomes a kind of extra-territorial career, especially suited, it seems, to those from small countries). This is perhaps how at least ministerial office within states may be reached in future, and the political influence that many covet (though in the past high civil servants could play a part in social reform, in the improvement and extension of the welfare state). With the constant pressures over the last three decades on universities to become an integral part of the market economy, knowledge factories, intellectual property generators, purveyors of services to cognitive capitalism in a regime of techno-economic acceleration, biotechnological power-houses, in sum, the hollowing out of the classical university ideals and academic or scientific ethos, the social sciences will become increasingly de-academicized, as far as the old sense of “academia” is concerned: we have entered the era of “post-academic science” in the nominal academia and outside³². Perhaps they will follow the template of economics in these respects, with social scientists increasingly outside academia. Nevertheless, within academia, competition within academic social science for jobs, promotion, funding, publication, ratings and rankings, etc., is possibly more intense than ever, the consequences of which would deserve careful study: after all, the cognitive implications of various modes of competition have been a classical topic in the sociology of knowledge. Economists and other social scientists if and insofar as they follow the occupational pattern of economists will no longer serve as the research arm of the welfare-warfare state of the post-war consensus but of the new market-security-warfare state (if not real security, at any rate “surveillance”, justified by an unending “war on terror” and the fear of the enemy within, and until recently at any rate rising levels of incarceration, within an over-all culture of fear, in a polity which now defines virtual thought-crimes). De-academicized, morphed into policy scientists or knowledge-entrepreneurs, perhaps it won’t matter very much any longer what posts they do secure.

³² The term was coined by the physicist John Ziman in his studies of contemporary science.