

Laszlo Bruszt, Claus Offe

## Claus Offe in Conversation with Laszlo Bruszt

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# Theorizing Crises and Charting the Realm of the Possible

## Claus Offe in Conversation with Laszlo Bruszt

by Claus Offe *and* Laszlo Bruszt

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### 1. Conversation

**Laszlo Bruszt:** Let us start with questions about your intellectual trajectory. How this was influenced by the fact that you made your doctoral defense in 1968 and in Frankfurt?

**Claus Offe:** I had graduated in Sociology, an entirely new field in German academia at the time, at the Free University of Berlin in 1965. Subsequently, I was fortunate enough to be offered a teaching assistant position by the young and not yet widely known professor Jürgen Habermas who had just accepted a chair in philosophy and sociology at the University of Frankfurt. I had been very impressed by the book of Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* [1962], and I still consider myself very lucky to have had the opportunity to work with him (for a total of no less than ten years, as it turned out).

I was somewhat familiar with the intellectual scene of Frankfurt from reading what Frankfurt School professors wrote in the 1950s. I was also active, since 1962, in the German League of Socialist Students (SDS). I was even on the board of that organization which was headquartered in Frankfurt. SDS was a small group of aspiring radical intellectuals which focused, mostly in a study group format, on contemporary events (such as post-colonial liberation wars e.g. in Algeria) and on various currents of western Marxism. These included the psychoanalytical tradition, represented by Adorno and Marcuse, and the classical writers of the interwar period such as Georg

Lukács, Otto Kirchheimer, Karl Korsch and many others. I still own a mimeographed copy of *History & Class Consciousness* as such books were not available in print at the time. Only a very limited selection of Marx's writing was available on the West German book market. They could be cheaply purchased in East Berlin bookstores. I got involved in contentious issues of organized science and university reform, a topic on which I co-authored my first book [1965, with a preface by Habermas]. German social science was at the time deeply divided between emigrant who had returned after fleeing Nazi Germany, on the one hand, and former Nazi intellectuals who had re-educated themselves to be loyal supporters of post-war German democracy. On two prominent authors of the latter category I had written my master thesis.

**LB:** The old Frankfurt school, was it what you could read?

**CO:** No, that was not possible. Neither the famous journal *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* nor *Dialektik der Aufklärung* were accessible. The rather absurd situation was that all these materials were locked up in a room in the basement of the Frankfurt Institute building so that nobody had access. This was true until the late 1960s, early 1970s. This absurdity was due to the fact that the Institut für Sozialforschung was licensed and supported by the American occupation forces. So the two senior persons, Adorno and Horkheimer, were terribly afraid that their theorizing could be used for political purposes which would annoy the Americans in the context of the incipient Cold War. There may have also been a timidity of students drawing unwelcome political conclusions from the philosophically radical writings of the heads of the Frankfurt School. This latent conflict of the School with itself culminated in 1967 when radical students tried to occupy the Institute building, yet were prevented to do so by the police that Horkheimer and Adorno had called in. While these two heads of the Frankfurt School showed fearful reluctance to engage in debates with the students, Habermas was the one who openly engaged in the conflict, trying to make a modicum of political reason prevail in this highly turbulent confrontation. He was a practitioner at that early point in time of what he later came to call "communicative action".

Anyway, so thank God, I had managed to finish, in the summer of 1967, my PhD thesis, which was a critique of meritocracy in the context of organization theory. Also came out as a book, which became quite popular, with five editions printed in German; it was also published in an English translation [1975].

**LB:** How did you get into his circle?

**CO:** I mentioned that I was one of the four authors of a 500-page book that came out in 1965 under the title *Hochschule in der Demokratie*, with chapters on the legal, philosophical, historic, and sociological aspects of academic institutions. The common question was: What is wrong with the German university, how can it be

reformed and its better traditions preserved? After the manuscript was ready I asked the young philosopher in Heidelberg, Jürgen Habermas, to write a preface, which he did. He also contacted my supervisor, Ludwig von Friedeburg. As a consequence, Habermas offered me my first job as a teaching assistant. I was 24 years old, happily accepting the best job that I could ever dream of.

I was teaching courses and seminars with him. The informal division of labor was that I was “in charge” of macro-social phenomena, including some political economy issues I had studied in Berlin, whereas Habermas was strongly interested in psychological (including psychoanalytical) issues at the time. I also had the opportunity to introduce him to a person the name of whom he had never heard before: Niklas Luhmann. Myself and others of my cohort felt at the time that Luhmann with his incredibly prolific writings was about to become an outstanding and intellectually dominant figure in German social theory. By late 1969, the two were engaged in writing a book-length controversy which strongly influenced German theoretical debates in the 1970s and beyond.

What I came to understand during my years in Frankfurt (1965-1969) is the need for social scientists to familiarize themselves with the great American and British traditions of social thought. Believe it or not, English sources were virtually absent from the reading lists of my student days. Even after that had slowly changed, the idea of reading English remained unpopular with the students. Authors such as Parsons and Bendix, Dahl and Lipset, Hunter, Bell and Mills were still far from being part of the canon of required readings. I was, again, very fortunate in being granted a post-doc fellowship starting in the fall of 1969 to spend eighteen months at UC Berkeley and Harvard, which allowed me to compensate for some of the parochialism of German academic training in the social sciences.

**LB:** This was a starting. The reason why I have asked this question was to find out how this kind of starting affected the way you ask questions, the type of questions you ask or you approach the research of capitalism.

**CO:** There was one major Marxist intellectual in German academia, the law professor Wolfgang Abendroth, who had sponsored the *Habilitation* of Jürgen Habermas after the latter fell into conflict with the heads of Frankfurt School, in particular Horkheimer, and moved from Frankfurt to Marburg. Abendroth’s writings on German post-WWII polity, economy and class politics brought me to appreciate the intellectual as well as political potential of a Marxism-inspired analysis of contemporary developments. Other than that, I had read some of the major classical writings of Marx and Engels, such as the Paris manuscripts, the *18 Brumaire*, the first volume of *Das Kapital* and later the *Grundrisse*.

**LB:** In the courses in Frankfurt you have not read Marx?

**CO:** The basics of historical materialism were supposed to be known by the Frankfurt School students. They served as a background orthodoxy in these circles yet were not taught, analyzed or challenged. I do not think there was much relevant work applying Marxist theories to contemporary developments. The closest thing to such a bridge came from books such as those written by Braverman, Baran, Baran and Sweezy, Dobb, which, however, were not widely read.

**LB:** So Frankfurt School *per se* did not have a lasting impact on your way of thinking?

**CO:** No, I would not say so. The “Frankfurt School” is not a canonical body of thoughts and doctrines. In its classical period from the late 1920s to the mid-1940s, the cohesion of the School was based on the shared question: What are the social forces that immunize people against an adequate understanding of the irrationalities of capitalism-cum-administration? With the tentative answer being: *Kulturindustrie*! It is always an exciting experience to read *Minima Moralia*.

I started, I should have mentioned perhaps, I started as a student musicology at the university of Cologne before I went to Berlin in 1960. I did one year of basic training in musicology, and then I shifted to sociology. And in my first year, I read a lot of the musicology writings of Adorno, with the greatest excitement and respect. That what was he was really strong in writing about – Bartok, Mahler, “contemporary music” as he called. But it was tangential to my later studies and interests.

**LB:** And Habermas, how would you formulate his more long-term effect on your intellectual trajectory?

**CO:** You cannot but learn a lot by osmosis, as it were, by working with and talking to a person who is such an exceptionally broad, rigorous and at the same time politically ambitious scholar and intellectual, as he still is today. At the same time, I must confess that some of his philosophical writings sound to me as coming from a different planet. I do not follow them, I do not see the intellectual motivations behind it. My range of knowledge and interests is simply much narrower than his. His strong interest in psychology and psychoanalysis was also rather tangential to my field of competence. At the same time, we share a strong interest in the fates of European integration, another field where I have learned a great deal from him.

**LB:** Actually – this is I wanted to ask, later somewhat – your book *Europe Entrapped* seems in a way to be talking to him.

**CO:** Yes, that is not wrong. I think I had a much more skeptical perspective on Europe. I remember in the early years in Berlin after 1995 I participated in discussions where I defended the point of view: It is hopeless anyway and nobody is going to accept this. And from my own today perspective that was superficial and a bit arrogant. But then I learned more and more.

What he was never strongly interested in is the issue of 1989, what he then called slightly dismissively a “catching-up revolution”, *Nachholende Revolution*. He has never visited the region, except for Poland, I think, where he had one conversation with Adam Michnik. But other than, he was not interested. And he was never interested in anything that has to do with industrial sociology, organization, bureaucracy, public administration. And what he later called, also dismissively, the “media-controlled subsystems” of political power and capital. So I would say, we complemented each other to an extent. That certainly applies to my work on the transitions in Central East Europe and my interests in the formation and implementation of public policies. However, our interest in democratic theory and in understanding the causes of contemporary democratic malaise is a point of strong convergence.

**LB:** I will come back to that. It seems to me that in a way in your studies, or your writings on Europe, you seem to have converged in several ways to his way of thinking.

**CO:** Yes, I think so. And here we have large area of shared views.

**LB:** Before getting to the issue of Europe, I wanted to ask you a more general question. You dealt with so many different areas in your works, but two keywords come to my mind that nearly everywhere come up in your work: “contradictions”, one of the keywords I find, but please correct me if I am wrong, and the other is “crisis”.

**CO:** I don’t think that my use of these concepts is in any way idiosyncratic or mysterious. It is even hardly original I use the idea of “contradiction” as a heuristic: goal oriented, presumably “rational” social action which complies with the rules governing a particular institutional domain leads to outcomes that are not just “unanticipated” (as in Merton), but positively counter-intentional and as such preclude the continuity of such action. The “tragedy of the commons” is a case in point, as is the failure of beneficial collective action (as analyzed by many authors from David Hume to Mancur Olson). Marx’s theorem of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall follows the same logic. As a consequence, stability and sustainability of the institution in question is being challenged. I found the sequence of events where outcomes are diametrically opposed to intentions useful as a model that allows the analysis of, among other things, welfare states and the monetary regime of the European Union. A synonym of “contradictory” is “self-defeating”, as in Michels’ “iron law” according to which mass democracy results in the formation of oligarchic parties. Albert Hirschman has analyzed the “rhetoric of reaction”, versions of which are commonplace on the political right as well as the left. Karl Deutsch has proposed to define power as the privilege of not having to learn, which makes power holders dumb and their power fragile, as we can see in the fates of state socialism.

A crisis in my understanding is simply the accumulated results of such contradictions, a point at which it becomes an open question and a decision is due on

whether a society can maintain and defend its institutional patterns or must face the consequences of their breakdown. For instance, the capitalist class and its state has so successfully resisted wage increases that it now faces an underconsumption crisis where there is not sufficient demand to actually sell what has been produced.

I read in the early 1970s something that perhaps unduly impressed me, something on the theory of social work, an American author. His question was: What is the aim of social work? And the answer he proposed was to enable them to practice fate-control, the plain opposite of which is the contradiction of addictive behavior.

**LB:** Fate control?

**CO:** Yes, fate control. And I think it is a nice term what capitalist democracies cannot do really, practice fate-control in the sense of “being masters in their own house” and being able to control the critical contingencies to which they are exposed, thereby enforcing their own stability and identity and avoiding the non-linear course of ever new unpleasant surprises and self-inflicted damages.

**LB:** One alternative way of thinking about this non-linearity of social change is that crisis might be, at least in the best of the worlds, functional for social change, for social learning. In the Soviet Studies Jadwiga Staniszkis had this concept of “regulation by crisis”, that is that the socialist regimes are run by one crisis to another, learning a little now and then, or Philippe [Schmitter], our common friend, had this neo-functionalist idea that crisis might be giving birth to something positive.

**CO:** Yes, the neo-functionalist message that crises stimulates learning. In democratic theory you have the similar idea that party competition generates an ongoing learning process. I am not so sure that this is always the case. Sometimes crisis is of such a nature that it kills the forces of reason and cooperation and destroys learning capacity. The functionalist theory of European integration, the theory that crises necessitate remedial institutional innovation, does not have much support in present-day European realities. That theory is too optimistic, I don’t think it always works this way.

In view of the demise of European state socialism at the end of the 1980s it occurred to me that Soviet-style state socialism (so-called “scientific” socialism) fell victim to one fundamental defect: the lack of capacity for self-observation and self-monitoring, which is a precondition for the capacity for self-correction. Mechanisms for self-monitoring are an independent media system, the division of powers, an independent judiciary, autonomous social science – a number of subsystems that watch each other. The system lacked early warning mechanisms and the readiness to respond to their signals. I don’t think it is axiomatic that economies and politics of the OECD world are adequately equipped with such mechanisms, which is to say: an analogous collapse is not to be excluded as a possible outcome of crisis.

**LB:** To me it seems that you and Luhmann are two completely diametrical opposing worlds, that is the world of Luhmann is nearly autopoietic, quiet and nearly machine-like working world, and yours is full of contradictions, and crisis and conflict.

**CO:** Luhmann had the idea of autopoietic self-referential sub-systems rotating in their own codes. The economic system, the political system, the legal system, education system, they all have their own codes, they put constraints upon each other, but they are on the same level, and that is very contrary to any kind of Frankfurt thinking. Luhmann does not allow for any dominant mechanism that radiates into everything else, such as class conflict in the Marxist tradition or the overpowering and homogenizing force of “culture industry” plus administration in Adorno. The concept of “totality” refers to a dominant force that penetrates everything and that can only be resisted by the only thing that is possibly external to it, namely autonomous art. The self-centered work of composers and other artists is what is capable to oppose the totality of all-inclusive late capitalist domination. By implication, that means that other forms of opposition are irrelevant and illusory. That is how I see Adorno, and that has certainly been an influence.

**LB:** I would like to shift to the third topic that I wanted to discuss with you and that is your perspective on Europe. And not just about your new book. You started actually mentioning how you originally were not very much interested in the topic. What was your view, what made your skepticism about EU or integration?

**CO:** Well, in the mid-1990s it used to be popular among intellectuals to say that if Europe were a state, its democratic qualities would not be sufficient to be admitted to the European Union.

**LB:** Why?

**CO:** Because the EU polity is not based on a competitive party system, has no proper constitution, and lacks the idea of self-recognized citizenship of a “European people”. We are citizens of Europe, but we do not think of ourselves as [European] citizens. To be sure, there is also a European parliament whatever its limits are. There is also the pressure of evident needs to cooperation beyond nation-states.

On the other hand, globalization (of finance and security, of trade and cognitive culture, of climate and crises) means that the idea of the autarchy and autonomy of nation states enclosed in their borders is largely obsolete anyway. Wherever we look, we see the evidence of long-distance causation. If the Trump administration were to turn to a policy of economic protectionism that move would immediately endanger tens of thousands of German jobs.

Take one example that I’ve recently read about, the consumption of cotton textiles, of which the average American buys sixty pieces a year. This pattern of con-



sumption is the direct cause of a huge soil erosion in Uzbekistan which is a major ecological problem there. It also causes the breakdown of the textile industry in West African states. For instance, in Zambia you see hundreds of people in the streets wearing T-shirts printed with YALE or the name of some college. These are “donations” arriving from the US by shiploads and sold for \$1 in the second-hand market, thus killing the local textile industry.

Another example is, there is a number of diseases – Malaria not the only one but the most prominent one – that could easily be eliminated according to what I read about this issue. But pharmaceutical companies do not think it is worthwhile because in the places it is most needed the ability to pay for it is too limited. Here, the long-distance causation starts with inaction, or failure to act. You could well do something, but you don’t because it is not profitable. I think the way to achieve the measure of “fate-control” is through supra-national integration, cooperation and regulation. The same applies to cooperation gains to be reaped by European integration, both at the level of markets and the level of policies. The huge problem, however, remains that companies know how to profit from border-crossing cooperation at the company level and through market integration, whereas national policy-makers are largely caught in their national horizon and the institutional framework of national democratic politics.

Interdependency requires joint management. I think there are encouraging indications in the EU that this is being slowly and haltingly understood, and not just concerning economic and financial issues such as the banking union. It also applies to the normative foundations of liberal democracy in Europe where not just the Commission, but also numerous civil society forces and member state governments aspire to perform an effective supervisory function concerning the enforcement of rule of law, media freedom, and academic freedom in all member states. For instance, in the spring of 2017 more than 40,000 people signed a protest resolution within a week after the intention of the Hungarian government became evident to close down the CEU. It remains to be seen to what extent national political issues can be effectively politicized in an EU-wide scope, and to what extent issues of social and economic policy making can also be taken up as items to be prioritized on a European (or at least Eurozone) agenda.

**LB:** You think of federalism?

**CO:** Yes, we need a kind of European federation which is, no doubt, enormously difficult to establish. We do not have the to get an institutional method to get it started. The American Revolution was a constitutional coup. The founding fathers made decisions in Philadelphia on matters on which they had no mandate to decide – and got away with it. You cannot do these kind of coups anymore. Any attempt to

emulate the US example would be rightly seen as an impossible bootstrapping act: The act to create a unity out of component elements that are not disposed to and cannot be forced to form such a unity.

**LB:** When I was studying political sociology, we were reading your and Jürgen Habermas' pieces in German, that was for us in Hungary political sociology in the early 1980s: crisis theories, *Spätkapitalismus*, and other similar things. Then, after the regime change, the debates about post-communist diversity, also some of your works on these dilemmas were very influential.

*Europe Entrapped* is very much in that line, thinking about contradictions, thinking about crisis. What really makes a difference, and I was wondering what is behind that, is that in this new book on Europe you put much more stress on suggesting a way out than in your previous work.

**CO:** Stressing crisis is perhaps a typical German inclination that can be denounced as a tic of intellectuals of my generation. On the other hand, and as I said before, the observation and explanation of things that “go wrong”, of systematic irrationalities and counter-intentional outcomes is a core component of what exemplary social scientists have been doing, perhaps even the mandate of social science. But fulfilling that mandate does not categorically absolve them, in my view, from the task of exploring and charting the realm of the possible.

To enjoy observing and describing processes of self-destruction, to take pleasure and inspiration from doing so, is a somewhat immature intellectual attitude that many of my generation had indulged in for a while. It can amount to a kind of self-righteous *Schadenfreude*, a shallow radicalism that mistakes itself for a deep insight. Out of fear to appear naïve and blue-eyed, you conjure the inevitable doom of capitalism or, for that matter, European integration. Yet in my view it would be more helpful, as well as intellectually more demanding, to specify conditions under which doomsday scenarios can be avoided. There is always a fine line between wishful thinking and thoughtful wishing, and that also applies to a scenario in which the EU overcomes its crisis by mobilizing endogenous learning processes.

**LB:** How isolated do you feel in this approach, meaning on European integration? Who would you think now in European intellectual circles might be allies, or you see as thinking in a similar way?

**CO:** I think quite a few people. Of course, it is easy to be utopian. Paul Mason had the other day the “Option Six” added to the Commission White Paper.<sup>1</sup> And this is about a European welfare state with very solid foundations, and constitutions,

<sup>1</sup> “Commission White Paper Option Six: A Europe Of Democracy And Social Justice”, available at: <https://www.socialeurope.eu/option-six-a-europe-of-democracy-and-social-justice>

and political forces. So the revival of social democracy on a European scale. I am not aware of any compelling impossibility theorem regarding such a way out, unlikely as it may appear today.

**LB:** That has very long traditions, it goes back to the Delors Commission?

**CO:** Sure, or even further, I mean the *Ventotene Manifesto* of 1941, put on paper by [former] communists such as Rossi and Spinelli, both incidentally brothers-in-law of Albert Hirschman who much later came up with the idea of “possibilism” as a legitimate mission of the social sciences. As early as 1948, Hirschman foresaw a European monetary system in the context of the Marshall plan. There are a few amazing things to re-discover.

**LB:** But my question was: about intellectual allies in Europe?

**CO:** It is not so much individual politicians and public intellectuals whom I have in mind; it is rather the “objective” urgency of promoting a new start that is perceived by and imposes itself upon even quite mediocre minds. All of sudden it has become almost common sense among EU élites, in the first half of 2017, that a European treasury with taxing, borrowing and spending authority derived from a new Eurozone legislative body is an attractive idea. Similarly, it is widely understood (though not yet openly admitted) that the ban on debt mutualization in the Eurozone is plainly obsolete. Some mental roadblocks have been removed, and others may follow. Also, the presence of Trump and the presence of Putin may help to highlight the urgency of European élites getting their act together.

**LB:** What would be your list of the first three things to do?

**CO:** First, change the situation that is destroying the economies of the South, the olive-belt of Europe, as the British say. We must get rid of the Schäubles, and introduce debt-relief plus a major program for investment.

Second, we need to cope with the refugee crisis in a cooperative way, which also requires to force the Visegrad gang to behave in a civilized way, and not just in view of the refugee challenges.

Third, strengthen the “social dimension” at a European level, beginning with the Europeanization of unemployment insurance.

**LB:** To what extent is it realistic to expect these things to be done in the present political framework?

**CO:** The present political framework, if you refer to rightist populism and nationalism, it is a direct consequence of the qualitative and quantitative decline of social democracy. I mean, people do not get protection from state power, therefore they expect wrongly to get protection from state borders. Building fences, keeping everything out, foreign goods and foreign Gods out! My bottom line is always the decomposition or the decay of state capacity. We cannot coerce ourselves, as Europeans, to

do what is in the most direct, most obvious, most urgent interest of Europe. That is a contradiction: We lack the leadership capacity, the capacity to organize cooperation that is needed in order to address the most urgent and most obvious problems.

Looking back, we should have relied less on the grand coalitions and the conspiracy of silence about the real problems. Grand coalitions tend to bracket out the hard questions. And that is what we have seen now for eight years in Germany, and chances are that this is going to continue.

**LB:** Coming back to the broad question of reforming Europe, and this will be my last question, what do you think of the European polity? Can that be reformed, is that on the agenda?

**CO:** It must be. All knowledgeable people are fully aware that this needs to be done. But then, how to do it is the problem. And I think, the easiest ways to do it is to start from scratch, with the Eurozone rather than the entire EU. The present absurdity is that we have nineteen states without a central bank and a hyper-autonomous central bank, the ECB, without a state. The very term “debt” as applied to the monetary and fiscal conditions of Greece is a lie as it wrongly suggests that rescue transfers that have been made to that country can and will ever be paid back. It is a wide open secret that that “debt” must be written off as a loss, a giant loss.

**LB:** Last question: not too many people talk nowadays about the Ventotene ideas – the basic idea of the *Ventotene Manifesto* is federal polity: European level parties, European level competition, shared sovereignty, this kind of ideas.

**CO:** Yes, but I think there is still a federalist undercurrent in the European discussion. The key problem with all kinds of federalism is what is left to “subsidiarity” and what is to be centralized. That must be renegotiated. Many questions of social policy, fiscal policy, and economic policy must be moved up to the federal level. I realize that this is an enormous political challenge. While there is no reason to be euphoric about the prospects, both the disastrous economic facts and no less the emerging political forces of anti-European mobilization will teach élites what needs to be done and what to be prevented.

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## Theorizing Crises and Charting the Realm of the Possible

Claus Offe in Conversation with Laszlo Bruszt

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**Abstract:** In this conversation with Laszlo Bruszt, sociologist Claus Offe discusses the key moments of his personal intellectual education and the main aspects of his scientific work. Starting from a peculiar interest in musicology, Offe reconverts to social sciences in the 1960s while getting involved in students activism with the *German Socialist Students* (SDS) and later becoming teaching assistant under the supervision of the young Habermas. Retracing his intellectual trajectory from the early works on education and democracy, it is possible to pinpoint the specific critical sociological route elaborated by Offe focussing on the macro-sociological analysis of systemic contradictions and crises reciprocally affecting contemporary capitalism and democracy. This perspective is then particularly suited to discuss one of the most salient political problems of our time like the crisis of the European political union and the possible reforms for its internal democratization, with an emphasis on its capability to attain integration through social justice. The interview concludes with a critical rediscovery of the arguments of the *Ventotene Manifesto* to overcome the key challenges hindering the realization of the European project.

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*Keywords:* Frankfurt School; Habermas; Contradictions; Crises; European Integration; Intellectual Trajectory.

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**Claus Offe** was (until his retirement in 2005) Professor of Political Science at Humboldt University, Berlin, where he held a chair of Political Sociology and Social Policy. He earned his PhD (Dr. rer. pol.) at the University of Frankfurt (1968) and his *Habilitation* at the University of Constance. From 2006 to 2013 he taught at the Hertie School of Governance where he held a chair of Political Sociology. Previous positions include professorships at the Universities of Bielefeld and Bremen, where he has served as director of the Center of Social Policy Research. He was awarded an honorary degree by the Australian National University in 2007 and another one by the New York University Tirana in 2015. Since 2016, he is Nonresident Permanent Fellow at the Institute of Human Sciences in Vienna. His fields of research include democratic theory, transition studies, EU integration, and welfare state and labor market studies. He has published numerous articles and book chapters in these fields, a selection of which is reprinted as *Herausforderungen der Demokratie. Zur Integrations- und Leistungsfähigkeit politischer Institutionen* [2003]. Book publications in English include *Varieties of Transition* [1996], *Modernity and the State: East and West* [1996], *Institutional Design in Post-Communist Societies* [1998, with J. Elster and U.K. Preuß], *Reflections on America. Tocqueville, Weber, und Adorno in the United States* [2006] *Citizens in Europe* [2016, with U.K. Preuß] and *Europe Entrapped* [2015].

**Laszlo Bruszt** is Professor of Sociology at the CEU Department of Political Sciences, and he also teaches at Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Scuola Normale Superiore, Firenze. He was teaching before at the European University Institute (2004-2016). In his earlier research, he has dealt with the interplay between economic and political transformations in the post-communist countries. In his later works he has dealt with the politics of regulatory integration and the emergence of regional developmental regimes. Based on these studies in his more recent research he deals with economic integration and institutional development in the Eastern and Southern peripheries of Europe.