

Three Secular Seductions: One nation, One government, One science ~ Festschrift for Dr. Sytse Strijbos



Introduction

Is *evidence-based politics* [i] an idea a monolithic view of society? In one version of such a monolithic view, it is (a) the government that directs a society within (b) the boundaries of a nation-state, giving much credit to (c) the ‘oracles’ of *science* in the process to take its policy decisions.

In this essay I try to clarify why *this* monolithic view of society is dangerously flawed. Part of the reasoning below will be a description of

- 1) pluralities that are real, but obscured within a seemingly monolithic view of a government, a nation-state and/or science.
- 2) a religious or pseudo-religious status that willingly or unwillingly can be assigned to (a) the role of a *government*, (b) a *nation-state* and its boundaries; and/or (c) an *evidence-based* approach of political decision-making. The focus of this essay will be on the latter (c), which usually implicates an appeal to *science*. However, from the outset it must be clear that this essay is not a plea for fact free politics. On the contrary, the careful, methodical or scientific, academically embedded search for relevant information is recognized as an asset. Dangerous effects of the evidence-based approach are related to the supposed status of the academic expert and its possible anti-democratic or other restrictive effects.

Although applicable within the wider context of North-Atlantic (‘Western’) culture, Sytse Strijbos’ homeland, the Netherlands, is the assumed political context for the contentions that follow. Specifically, at the end of this essay

(section 6.2) I will refer to a recent report published – in Dutch – by the Council for Public Health and Society in the Netherlands. In this report the approach of evidence-based practices in health care is criticized and at least relativized. This report is important because the government – every government – has a responsibility for public health and its funding.

Disclosive Systems Thinking, to which the name of Sytse Strijbos adheres firmly, represents an interdisciplinary and pluralistic, multi-aspectual approach to societal issues. Because of its pluralistic nature it provides several clues to dissect monolithic views. Specific philosophical sources fuelled this pluralistic look and feel of *Disclosive Systems Thinking*. These sources will be used to guide this dissection of ‘one nation, one government, one science’ into its constituents and to understand clashes both between these three domains and within each of them. These clashes can be multicultural tensions, parliamentary debates or deadlocks, or scientists disagreeing because of conflicting paradigms. The selection of these three seductive domains out of many more domains (money, music, drugs, ...) is guided by the current popularity of *evidence-based politics* [ii] and its context: ‘evidence’ is expected from science; ‘politics’ is expected from the government; and a *national* government, to which I restrict myself here, assumes a nation state as context for its policies.

In the title ‘Three secular seductions’ the term ‘secular’ deserves clarification. I use ‘secular’ in the general (unreflected [iii]) sense of ‘this-worldly’, not ‘otherworldly’. In the title, and in writing for example about ‘oracles’ of science, I deliberately mix religious or moral terms like ‘oracles’ or ‘seductions’ with phaenomena usually considered as belonging to *this* world, this *saeculum*: nations, governments, sciences. So to these domains or phaenomena the adjective ‘secular’ is attached, not necessarily to the people dealing with them. On the contrary, I don’t consider religious people – here: people acknowledging some otherworldly influence – to be more immune to the seductive effects of an undivided, impressive nation, a strong government or the supposed objectivity of science than other people who would call themselves secular. Nor do I consider secular people more immune to these seductions than people who would call themselves religious.

My point is: these immanent, this-worldly, phaenomena can have similar effects that usually are ascribed to supposedly otherworldly or transcendent phaenomena. Examples of these effects are: producing energetic zeal, putting a

devotee under a spell, untying strong loyalty or absolute trust, or demanding absolute obedience or unconditional acceptance of verdicts. These effects can lead to both positive and negative behaviour. Usually these effects are associated with religious people. For people living comfortably in 'a secular age' with its generally presupposed 'immanent frame' (Charles Taylor) it is more likely that supposedly *secular* phenomena are triggering these effects than overtly supposedly otherworldly ones. Writing about nationalism below, I appeal to the late Lancaster professor of Religious Studies, Ninian Smart, to defend such a blended treatment of religions, worldviews and some encompassing -isms.

After introducing several *types of plurality*, this essay provides a closer look at the three domains of nation-state, government and science, in order to bring to light inherent pluralities within each of them. These pluralities are easily ignored by types of nationalism or patriotism, by centralistic views of governance, and by types of scientism. The essay converges into a plea for these pluralities to be explicitly acknowledged within society and government, in order to prevent oppressive styles of politics.

A plurality of pluralities

One of Strijbos' prominent academic concerns has been to promote an *interdisciplinary* approach to theoretical reflection, especially to reflection directed towards practices in society. Not only he 'fathered' the *Centre for Philosophy, Technology and Social Systems*, but from 1996-2012 he was one of the driving forces for the annual working conferences of this CPTS. Looking back on the 9th one, Spring 2003, he wrote a discussion paper: 'Towards a new interdisciplinarity' in which he wrote: "It is the main objective of the CPTS to create a kind of interdisciplinarity which enables to address the broader societal issues in the research process and the design stage of technology".[iv]

Systems theoreticist Gerald Midgley considers as one of the 'significant strengths' of this interdisciplinary approach that it 'is inclusive of ethical debates', for example by dialogue during the design stage of new technologies. However, he fears that in real life during these dialogues ethicists will be 'captured' by 'scientists with a nascent technology, employed by a company'. Does anyone know of a technology under development, that has been abandoned 'after hearing the arguments of philosophers'? He seems to prefer another option for ethicists, that is the option, 'through alliances with other stakeholders, to make their case in

various civil society fora'.[v]

A key term in interdisciplinarity is *plurality*. However, the previous two paragraphs make clear that not only a plurality of academic disciplines is relevant for the type of systems thinking Strijbos advocates. There is a plurality of practices in society, too (practices broadly taken). Among these practices 'doing science' and 'doing technology' themselves already are two, and, if you want, 'doing philosophy' another. Other societal practices are focussed on economy (business, banks, factories), politics (in formal or informal ways), art (orchestras, musea) or spiritualities (churches, mosques); on family life, education (primary schools, high schools), social life or leisure (clubs) or whatever.

Another type of plurality is pointed to by Midgley writing on (the lack of) fora for 'ethical debate'. When and where interpretative steps or normative issues are involved, human beings often appear to approach these issues from differing perspectives, as if they arrive at the issue from differing directions. It is one thing to signal global climate change (and even that is not without interpretation debates!), it's another thing how to react to it: which and whose behaviour has to be restricted, and to what extent, if any behaviour at all? Exactly these different perspectives explain the lengthy political debates in parliament or in the press.

Yet another type of plurality is not yet mentioned. Although the CPTS working conferences were organised in the Netherlands, participants came from Sweden and South-Africa as well. These participants, being aware of their own specific societal issues, brought their own context with them. This led to debate, not of course debate about arithmetical results like that of $2 + 2$, but debate about for example the acceptable level of technological complexity to be used to facilitate decision making processes: mobile phones are broadly used worldwide, but 'virtual meeting rooms' certainly not.

Summarising this 'plurality of pluralities': this last type of plurality can be called 'contextual plurality'; the perspectival one 'directional plurality'. Although Mouw and Griffioen [vi] dubbed the plurality of societal practices 'associational plurality', I prefer to use the term *structural plurality* in order to refer not only to the diversity of institutional constellations, associations or practices that together can be called a society, but also to the diversity disciplines that together can be called 'science' (taken as a formalised activity or as a body of knowledge). Both of these diversities can be explained primarily by structural features according to

which reality appears to us as human beings or by the structural features according to which we human beings engage our environment. Our life conditions appear to be such that we need at least some economical behaviour and (institutionalised) economical practices, or even, so it seems, an academic discipline called economics.

One nation

In this and the next two sections I will explore which types of pluralities are relevant within the domains of the nation, the government and science. Every section I start however by supposing there are some pluralities to be found and to be defended. Given that assumption I mention a tendency that carries in itself a danger of ignoring or threatening at least one of these pluralities, putting under pressure what corresponds with this kind or these kinds of plurality in real life.

The dangerous tendency I want to explore in the domain of the nation(-state) is that of *nationalism*, identifiable by a series of features described by Ninian Smart. Nationalist movements are vigorous, not only in for example India or Sri Lanka (Hindu or Buddhist nationalism), but also in East- or West-European countries (Hungary, Scotland). In Hungary, for example, this nationalism is visible in the fences at the border by which refugees from Middle East of African countries are kept out.[vii] This nationalist and avertive attitude is not only triggered by ethnic differences, but by religious differences too, especially by anti-islam sentiments.

Smart, who uses a seven-dimensional model to describe religions in his introduction to *The World's Religions*,[viii] adds the question: does this model also apply to 'systems ... commonly called secular: ideologies or worldviews such as scientific humanism, Marxism, Existentialism, nationalism, and so on'? [ix] As the first of three examples he selects nationalism. He describes its *rituals* of nationhood (e.g. the singing the national anthem), its powerful *emotional side* (the sentiments of patriotism), its *narrative* of the national history, its *doctrines and principles* (e.g. of self-determination and freedom), its *ethical* values (e.g. loyalty and a law-abiding attitude), its emphasis on the *social* and *institutional* aspects of the nation-state (e.g. the head of state), and finally the *material* embodiment of national pride (e.g. in great buildings and memorials). Marxism is described by Smart with a shorter but similar seven-dimensional list. More caution Smart shows mentioning features of scientific humanism, because it does not 'embody itself in a rich way as a religious-type system'. His conclusion is nuanced:

Though to a greater or lesser extent our seven-dimensional model may apply to secular worldviews, it is not really appropriate to call them religions, or even “quasi-religions” (...). However, (...) the various systems of ideas and practices, whether religious or not, are competitors and mutual blenders, and thus can be said to play in the same league.[x]

For Smart it doesn't matter whether someone has reasons to *categorize* a worldview or some -ism, for example nationalism, as secular or religious. His point is: a worldview or -ism can have observable features similar to that of religions: they 'play in the same league'.

Now, back to nationalism itself, and the question: (how) does it put one or more types of plurality under pressure? For types of nationalism, either some nation as a (supposed) ethno-cultural entity or some nation-state as a political entity is the focus. Its unity is an essential feature of this entity – by definition, one can say. But in a more pregnant sense, emotionally, this unity has a seductive force for nationalists of most, if not all types. On the descriptive level this unity does not so much refer to geographical contours of some nation or a nation-state (the British empire consisted and still consists of several not well connected areas). However, the entity is and *has* to be distinguished from other nations or nation-states. It is *this* nation or nation-state that deserves a special role in world history. For this special role, all internal capacities and forces have to be united. So this unity of the nation(-state) is not only descriptive, but prescriptive as well: it contains a normative ideal, or better: an anti-normative ideal. This ideal, this unity has to be defended *at all costs* against possible intruders. Mind the absolutism here that easily gets religious overtones.

When we observe this stress on national unity, then: which types of plurality are involved within the domain of the nation(-state)? And which types are possibly in danger? The structural plurality of diverse societal institutions or associations (postponing the diversity of disciplines within science to section 5)? The directional plurality of diverse worldviews or religions? And/or the contextual diversity, especially within the nation or nation-state?

All three of them are involved, and all of them appear to be put under pressure too – albeit in different ways, as the following examples illustrate. Let's start with the *structural* (associational) plurality. Already in the Roman Empire – admittedly bigger than what is usually considered to be *one nation!* – *collegia*, brotherhoods

related to some guild, mystery religions, or whatever) were raising suspicion as soon as they had some membership code that pointed to secret, members-only activities. Nowadays Russia provides an example of pressure on the freedom of media, (international) NGOs and even large companies. Putin's party is called *United Russia* and in 2016 with more than 50% (!) by far (!) the biggest party of the country. The Russian Orthodox Church, like a lot of eastern orthodox churches, has strong nationalist inclinations, and is allowed to continue its public presence. Other Christian 'flavours' (Baptists, Pentecostal) however are having difficulties in getting along, not to mention Islamic groups. Greenpeace or Baptists are dubbed as 'foreign' influences. So not a secular anti-religious sentiment is threatening a *directional* plurality here, but nationalist feelings are threatening all kinds of 'deviant' societal associations.

For awareness of directional plurality, in the North-Atlantic cultural sphere immigration politics and 'islamophobia' is enough, too. However, not only nationalist movements (mixed with *Pegida*-like anti-islam sentiments) are putting this plurality under pressure. In the Netherlands part of the official integration program for immigrants consists of the presentation of 'our' country in a movie. Debate arose about the inclusion in this movie of topless women at the beach and of the legal marriage of a homosexual couple. A one-sided emphasis on 'our', modern or Western values, easily blots out the presence of allochthone critics sharing a modern worldview without supporting a libertine ethics, or of Dutch homosexual citizens that for religious reasons choose for celibacy and for communities or congregations that supports them in this choice. A supposedly majority worldview or religion endangers the (public) continuation of minority worldviews or religions.

What about the *contextual* plurality? Here the effects of nationalism depend on the scale of observation. Because the national context is sharper delimited from other nations or nation-states, on an international scale the contextual plurality is enhanced. But *within* the nation(-state) conformity can smooth out regional, tribal or other differences when defined as deviances (local folklore, ethnic traditions, etc.). A primary example is Nazi-Germany where the slogan sounded: 'Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Führer' (one people, one empire, one leader). This type of nationalism chose (not only homosexuals and gypsies, but especially) Jews as scapegoat, erasing much of their presence in Europe. Jewish quarters in towns have lost much if not all of their Jewishness. More complicated is the Brexit-case.

In reaction to 'Brussels', the *United Kingdom* as a nation-state was led into a Brexit by anti-European nationalism (among other factors). Immediately, Scottish nationalism pointed to the different voting results in their 'nation' (as was the case in London, too, to be honest). Internal contextual differences within a nation-state are not easily wiped out, as African and Middle-East countries like Sudan and Syria show, too.

Structural (associational), directional and contextual pluralities are all relevant, can be concluded. And, whatever the nuances, whoever is stressing the unity of a nation or nation-state, will be aware of or reminded about the existence of these pluralities, because their participants easily will fear some pressure of homogeneity.

One government

Having the types of plurality and section structure clear, the sections on government and science can be shorter. Although the unity of the government is closely related to that of a nation-state, the attention in this section will be focussed on the pluralities *within* a government. Although decentralising (or privatising) and centralising tendencies can occur simultaneously, I focus on the centralising tendencies. Often, a centralising tendency is related to the call for a strong leader – and someone creating or 'listening' to such a call...

Among the dimensions of nationalism, mentioned by Smart, the sixth one refers to the emphasis on national social institutions, for example the head of state. Of course, a government is more than a head of state. You can think of institutions like the cabinet council, government departments, parliament and senate, local governments with mayors and city councils, or, by taking the government of a country in a broad sense: political parties, public services, the police, national security service, courts and other organisations to prepare or administer laws, or to enforce 'law and order'.

With this list, the awareness of the role of *structural* plurality *within* the government is laid bare. For this structural plurality here, 'institutional plurality' is a more specific term. Is this plurality put under pressure by stressing the unity of the government? And what about the other types of plurality? Starting with the former question, indeed the pressure put on the different institutions cannot be ignored. The framing of 'the strong leader' more often than not is followed by a degradation of the role of their party or the parliament into a mere applause

machine. Power is seductive. Dictators like to give the impression of rule of law, but democratic institutions or even courts are functioning as empty shells. By reordering departments a new government (a new coalition) can show its priorities. In the Netherlands a department of 'Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' in 2010 has been combined with Economical Affairs and Innovation. So yes, institutional diversity, advocated already by Montesquieu to balance power, are not immune to the strong government.

The role of a parliament immediately makes clear the importance of *directional* plurality in a government. In a serious parliament exactly the diverse value systems of different parties, of different worldviews or even religions are providing the reason for political debate. So any tendency stressing the unity of the government at the cost of *real*, in depth political debate is an attack on directional plurality: it diminishes the (formal [xi]) possibilities of directional plurality that exists within society to become public and politically visible.

Finally, what about *contextual* plurality within the government? A typical example of the importance of contextual awareness is the decision at what government level laws have to be formulated. In some parts of the Netherlands, the so-called Bible Belt, Sunday opening hours for shops are a sensitive issue because of a majority (or at least a significant percentage) of citizens affiliated to a pietistic strand of Christianity that insist on a public Sunday rest. On the national level debates entered parliament about the stress of 24/7-consumerism, the freedom of individual consumers, and the coercive effects on shop-owners to open their shops on Sundays against their convictions or beyond their financial (employee payment) possibilities. These arguments were raised by both religious and secular parties (so religious diversity is not the only factor in this debate). In the end the decision and policymaking about opening hours of shops was referred to the local level. On the one hand this decentralisation of the decision seems to do justice to the contextual diversity within the country. On the other hand this awareness does not prevent coercive effects between neighbouring municipalities. A neoliberal free market emphasis, dominant in the central government, is influencing local contextual circumstances.

Our conclusion is that *within* the government of a country (government levels included) structural (institutional), directional and contextual pluralities are relevant. All three of them are under pressure when the central government, a head of state or some other of the governmental institutions becomes a position

dominating the – then lost – balance of powers.

One science

Science can be considered as a worldwide methodical activity or project by humanity, aiming at the clarification of domains or aspects of our existence. The resulting, growing body of knowledge of this project can be called science, too. History of science makes clear that in a process of diversification more and more disciplines and sub-disciplines have appeared on stage, which on its turn gave rise to different types of interdisciplinarity.[xii] These types differ, among other aspects in degree of cohesion or boundary crossing that results from the cooperation between scientists from the different disciplines involved. ‘Encyclopaedic interdisciplinarity’ is just the availability of different disciplines next to each other (without any boundary crossing), ‘integrated interdisciplinary’ allows concepts and insights from one discipline to contribute to the problem-solving or theory-development of others.

When on this scale some ideal of ‘unified science’[xiii] is taken as summit of interdisciplinarity, in the work of Strijbos this unity is *not* taken as an ideal. His plea for interdisciplinarity is called interdisciplinarity precisely because of his conviction that irreducible pluralities exist and are to be acknowledged within the worldwide project of science or its resulting body of knowledge. So again, let’s ask whether the different types of plurality are relevant here, too, and whether an ideal of ‘unified science’ is endangering the acknowledgment of these pluralities.

As a process leading to a *structural* plurality the diversification of disciplines has been mentioned already. An important point here, however, is obscured by talking about diversification. It is true that ‘philosophy’ has been a container word, encompassing for example ‘natural philosophy’ for the branches that we now call ‘natural sciences’.[xiv] This unity of ancestry suggests that a ‘unified science’ in the end is an interesting goal. However, exactly this origin and seduction does conceal the irreducibility of the diverse disciplines to each other – an anti-reductionist stance that is implied by the concept of ‘structural plurality’ here. For example, (socially) intelligent behaviour should not be reduced to (the result of) the interaction of subatomic particles. Physics is *not* the discipline to study psychological, social or political affairs. Types of reductionism are a permanent pressure on all sciences, apart from probably the exemplary ones: mathematics and physics.

Going over to *directional* plurality within science often a first reaction is that worldview or religion should have no influence on science. If it would not have been an example of is/ought-reasoning, someone could easily add: worldview or religion has no influence whatsoever on mathematics ($2+2=4$) or physics (a quark behaves as a quark). True enough. However, in real life the development of science takes place in a cultural and political environment in which worldview and religion does play a role. And that is not only a matter of external context, it is part of the mind-set of the scientists themselves, not to mention the managers of universities. Choices about research direction are made by groups of people with their specific interests, problem priorities, value systems and other personal or institutional resources. The claim that science is able to have an autonomous development, ruled by scientific reasoning only, will be difficult to substantiate. The reality is: there are scientists adhering worldviews or religions that fuel a value system in which science *should* serve urgent societal problems.[xv] Should the work of these last type scientists be excluded from the worldwide project of humanity called 'science'?

The reality is, too, that not only the choices of research direction, but also the subsequent work is laden with personal views and convictions: what about the interpretative and normative questions that especially in the humanities are part and parcel of the work? Either you are a behaviourist, or not. Are human beings 'nothing but' an emergent phenomenon 'ultimately' based on matter and energy, or is there some ontological irreducibility that explains the epistemic irreducibility mentioned before? So here: directional plurality will be visible in the real life development of sciences. Some ideal of 'unified science' can lead to nervousness about the existence of parallel paradigms in research development or to devaluate research directions that do not sit easily with one's convictions (whether reductionist or not, for example).

Turning to *contextual* plurality, the context in which scientists live and work and make their decisions is mentioned just before. Nobody can deny the different circumstances in which scientists worldwide are doing their work. This *does* influence the development of their research. In Cameroon, scientists can have an interest in the Benoué valley in the North.[xvi] I guess that it will be difficult in most African countries to develop frontier knowledge in the field of nanotechnology or nuclear physics. In dealing with scientific contributions from all over the world, scientists usually will be aware of these kinds of contextual

differences. However, here I don't see compelling reasons to think that some ideal of 'unified science' would be disturbed by the contextual differences within our global village. Academic standards usually are guarded by international journals and accreditation organisations.

Within science, we can conclude, all three types of plurality again are relevant. However, under pressure by some ideal of 'unified science' are only two of these three types: the acknowledgment of structural plurality of irreducible disciplines, and the acknowledgment of directional plurality because of worldviewish and religious influences. The contextual plurality itself will be too unavoidable not to be acknowledged (see the just mentioned Cameroon example). Potential pressure on the *structural* plurality of sciences becomes clear when observing non-natural sciences (e.g. sociology, cultural anthropology) having to defend their methodologically 'weaker' approaches in comparison to the 'exact' sciences. Potential pressure on the *directional* plurality of sciences becomes clear when observing that for example within the economic sciences some paradigms or schools (e.g. the Chicago school of economics) can gain (and have gained) prominence at the cost of other approaches.

What do we gain, acknowledging this plurality of pluralities?

6.1 In a pluralistic world

In what ways can citizens, politicians or scientists profit from the foregoing discussion of types of plurality? By distinguishing types of plurality and by giving a range of quite diverse examples, I have shown the relevance of these pluralities within nation-states, governments and sciences. Ignoring them will lead to social unrest or more serious disharmony among groups of citizens, among sensitive politicians or among groups of scientists. So, paradoxically, the acknowledgement by politicians or scientists of both a plurality of pluralities and of the existence of those pluralities in the reality of real life and real science, will promote a kind of unity among people that can be called harmony, a multicultural harmony, if you want. By acknowledging the pluralistic complexities of the real world, politicians and scientist do more justice to people in their real circumstances.

Talking about a plurality of pluralities is not just word play. In political terms, it is a matter of justice, in the end: a matter of doing justice to human beings in their diverse associations (e.g. schools), with their diverse beliefs and values, in their diverse contexts. The complexity of reality asks for complex social or

epistemological philosophies, refined enough to do *justice* to complexities of real life or real science. *Disclosive Systems Thinking* is a type of systems thinking that has been informed by traditions of complex philosophy, among which the 'Amsterdam School' founded by Herman Dooyeweerd (1894-1977) has been a prominent source.[xvii] Only a real understanding of complex reality can lead to mutual understanding of human beings and to relevant development of their practices.

In the assessment of evidence-based politics

This essay started with the question: Is *evidence-based politics* an idea a monolithic view of society? In the first place, by exploring different types of plurality *any* monolithic view of society itself is made object of debate. Whether or not society is considered to be an association of associations, it is not *one* social body or *one* political pyramid at the top of which *one* government can act as a Pharaoh considering all that is below him to be his possession. Maybe, within a society some worldview or religion is a dominating, a worldview or religion considered by a majority of the citizens to be a trustworthy and reasonable guide for a serious or even meaningful way of life. But nobody should force any of these citizens to forget his or her own worldview or religion when interpretative or normative views are involved in politics or scientific work. Maybe, contextual differences in regions, tribes or social strata of a (global) society are not that big that people don't understand each other anymore. Even then, people should be aware of the contextual differences that do play a role in the (scientific) ideas and ways of life that they develop.

Secondly, an *evidence-based* approach of *politics* is inclined to ignore the different types of plurality that have been presented. There are *structural* differences between sciences, some being more quantitative, others being more qualitative – just to mention one important difference. Is an *evidence-based* approach in practical reality not having a bias towards those sciences in which quantitative or specifically statistical methods play an important role? Furthermore, isn't evidence-based politics inclined to legitimize policy proposals with an appeal to (some) sciences, ignoring *directional* differences and debates that nevertheless are important in real life? Examples here are (Dutch) debates about vaccination (e.g. against polio). Several groups in society opposed vaccination at all (e.g. anthroposophical groups, strict Calvinist groups). Statistics about the positive results of vaccination do not take into account the real

convictions behind this opposition. Debates in parliament can make these differences explicit. Finally, evidence based politics fails to do justice to *contextual* differences. Political priorities are not only a matter of numbers, but are related to societal situations and the personal convictions and circumstances of groups within this society. A debate about ritual slaughter of animals is no only a matter of pain indicators, but a matter of religious or freedom as well.

This critique of the reductionist effects of an *evidence-based* approach to politics echoes the critique voiced in report about 'Evidence-Based Practice' (EBP) in health care, published June 2017 in the Netherlands by the Council for Public Health and Society. Although the authors acknowledge the value of systematic reflection on the consequences and results of medical interventions, they signal the limits of this EBP-approach, too. In their main criticism the authors refer to the role of the context and the context-related issue what good care is within this specific context. This is easily ignored by an EBP-approach: 'What exactly is the good to be done – that can differ for every single client and his or her situation. Furthermore, changes occur in what is considered to be good care.'[xviii] In these two remarks we see a defence to acknowledge both contextual and directional pluralities. A second criticism is directed towards the risk of an EBP-approach to argue mainly on the basis of quantitative (statistical) experiments. This criticism is a defence of the structural plurality that a diversity types of academic or practical reasoning can be relevant in the specific health care situations. Omitted here is a third criticism which targets the authoritative status of quality standards formulated using an EBP-approach: this easily leads to unwarranted standardization.

Governments are – at least indirectly – responsible for the nation-wide public health care, its quality standards and its funding. Given the fact that the EBP-approach can be criticized along lines as mentioned here, governments themselves should be careful in their appeal to evidence-based policies in the domain of health care. More generally, governments should be aware that evidence-based policy making is evoking similar criticism as worded about the EBP-approach within health care. Politics is related to specific contexts (the nation as a whole, and/or their differing local areas), to debate about different values hierarchies (of liberals, social-democrats, conservatives, Christians, humanists, etc.), and to structurally different styles of theoretical and practical reasoning and other types of communicative exchange. In conclusion: in this essay

three secular seductions have been explored: the seductions to be one strong-and-special nation (with a special 'calling' in world history...), to have one strong government, and to strive for one all-encompassing science. At least three different types of plurality are presented to make clear that things probably are *a Bit More Complicated Than That*. *Disclosive Systems Thinking* can be interpreted as an approach to social studies that tries to do justice to this complexity of the real world that politicians, citizens and scientists all live in.

Notes

[i] See e.g. <http://www.lse.ac.uk/government/research/resgroups/CPPAR/Documents/Evidence-based-politics-Government-and-the-production-of-policy-research.pdf>. Accessed 13-10-2017.

[ii] In the section 'Evidence-Based Policy' of his book *I Think You'll Find It's a Bit More Complicated Than That* (London: Fourth Estate, 2014), 169-218, psychiatrist and science writer Ben Goldacre gives a dozen (often funny) examples of insufficient or misleading use of evidence, by politicians too. I myself have no statistical evidence whether 'evidence-based politics' is a hype that has reached its peak already or will reach that peak soon, or that this approach will be a more permanent legitimation style in politics. I assume the latter.

[iii] The relation between 'this' and the 'other' world is more complicated than these terms suggest, even to the point that the terms themselves are misleading. See works by theologians who emphasize the 'immanence' of God, e.g. John Milbank (2006).

[iv] Sytse Strijbos, 'Towards a New Interdisciplinarity', in Rob A. Nijhoff, Jan van der Stoep, Sytse Strijbos (eds.) *Towards a New Interdisciplinarity. Proceedings of the 9th Annual Working Conference of CPTS* (Maarssen: CPTS, 2003), 133-138; here: 137.

[v] Gerald Midgley, 'Reflections on the CPTS Model of Interdisciplinarity', in: Sytse Strijbos, Andrew Basden (eds.), *In Search of an Integrative Vision for Technology. Interdisciplinary Studies in Information Systems* (New York NY: Springer 2006), 259-268; here: 267.

[vi] I am following here the analysis in Mouw, Richard, and Griffioen, Sander. *Pluralisms and Horizons: An Essay in Christian Public Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), summarised: on pp.168-173. Mouw and Griffioen share with Strijbos awareness of the philosophical legacy of the Dutch philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd (see note 11).

[vii] Migrant crisis: Hungary declares emergency at Serbia border. BBC News. 15 September 2015; see <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34252812> (accessed June 2, 2017).

[viii] Ninian Smart, *The World's Religions. Second Edition* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 13-22. The seven dimensions are italicised in the description of nationalism (immediately following).

[ix] Ninian Smart, *The World's Religions*, 22. The example of nationalism follows immediately (22-25).

[x] Smart, *The World's Religions*, 26.

[xi] This critique is touching the work of Jürgen Habermas as well. Although Habermas certainly opposes any oppressive government and (especially since 2001) explicitly invites religious traditions to join in in public debate. He is too afraid for religious views to allow them to be voiced by people having formal political function during their professional activities - even members of parliament! See the recurrent debates of this restriction in Craig Calhoun et al. (eds.), *Habermas and Religion* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).

[xii] Sytse Strijbos, Andrew Basden, 'Introduction: In Search for an Integrative Vision for Technology', in: Sytse Strijbos, Andrew Basden (eds.), *In Search of an Integrative Vision for Technology. Interdisciplinary Studies in Information Systems* (New York: Springer, 2006), 1-16; here: 1-2, with reference to M.A. Boden 'What is interdisciplinarity?', in: R. Cunningham (ed.) *Interdisciplinarity and the Organisation of Knowledge in Europe* (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1999), 13-24.

[xiii] Otto Neurath (1882-1945) is one of the names related to such an ideal. For an overview of at least 15 types of scientism: see Rik Peels, 'A Conceptual Map of Scientism', in: Jeroen de Ridder, Rik Peels, and René van Woudenberg (eds.), *Scientism: Prospects and Problems* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming). Peels categorizes the type of scientism that Neurath advocates as one of the 'eliminative' types of scientism, within the spectrum of 'academic' types of scientism that Peels distinguishes.

[xiv] Cf. the title of Isaac Newton, *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (London: Royal Society, 1687).

[xv] See e.g. Nathan D. Shannon, *Shalom and the Ethics of Belief. Nicholas Wolterstorff's Theory of Situated Rationality* (Eugene OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015).

[xvi] This is a real life example: this year, Gustave Gaye defended a PhD-thesis on

this region (2016) at the Cameroon *Institut Universitaire de Développement International* (see <http://www.iudi.org>).

[xvii] See Jonathan Chaplin, *Herman Dooyeweerd. Christian Philosopher of State and Civil Society* (Notre Dame IN: UNDP, 2011). Chaplin's writing style is more precise and readable than Dooyeweerd's.

[xviii] 'Wat het goede is om te doen kan per patiënt en per situatie verschillen. Opvattingen over wat goede zorg is zijn bovendien aan verandering onderhevig.' (RVS 2017:9).

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Spinoza ~ The Philosopher Of Counter-Radicalization



David Kenning - Foto Gerard
Arninkhof -
amsterdamsespinozakring.nl

Spinoza Lecture 2016 - Amsterdam, November 27

Part 1 ~ Personal meaning

It's an honour to address the *Spinozakring* in Amsterdam on *Spinozadag*. As a young man, I was living in Belfast during the darkest years of the terrorist Troubles, when I set out for Trinity College, in Dublin to begin 5 years of post-graduate research on the subject: "*Spinoza's Ethics and the Meaning of Life.*"

What followed was an unequal struggle – Spinoza was even more challenging than I thought – and I didn't find the meaning of life. In the process, I struggled, mentally. No one I met seemed the slightest bit interested in Spinoza and the more I read and understood *The Ethics*, the more isolated, anxious and remote from everyday life I became – as if I was going in one direction and everyone else was headed in another.

And during those difficult years, I learned new ways of thinking and *Being* – perspectives and insights on life and the human condition. Things that have stayed with me to this day; that made me who I am; and that will – I hope – play an important part in my future. After much difficulty, I learned to see and understand the world the way Spinoza saw it.

Spinoza became my anchor – my reference – for exploring life — a beacon of intellectual strength and independence. '*The Philosopher of Amsterdam*' – became my cultural hero in Belfast – not only for his philosophy, *but for his character*. And just as he was an outsider in his community, so was I.

I learned that the concept of Unity – of living with an attitude towards One-ness, cohesion, and cooperation — was central to Spinoza's thinking and that his greatest work, *The Ethics*, described a path to a radical form of mental health through three mutually reinforcing forms of unity, designed to cure three kinds of division.

The first step is to heal and unite the divided self, to overcome conflicted and self-harming emotions, using his psychology; the second, is to unite us with others in strong bonds of friendship, guided by his radical humanism; the third, a cure for ontological alienation in moments of insight when our drop-consciousness joins in an *oceanic* experience with the eternal.

These three perspectives on human existence – the psychological, the pragmatic and the metaphysical – define why Spinoza's thinking is so powerful.

Part 2 ~ The two truths

And this brings us to the tension at the centre of his *Ethics* – and indeed, the terrible contradiction at the heart of the human condition – one that generates so much religious superstition and metaphysical speculation. I'll try and put this as clearly as possible.

The first self-evident truth of the human condition is the subjective truth of Being, how we feel as we look outwards onto the world. We've already beaten *astronomical* odds to arrive as *self*-conscious beings and sense the significance of our moment. The truth of our individual identity – that we are separate and distinct from everything else – places us at the centre of our universe. We instinctively *prioritize* our needs and drives, those we love and care for, and the projects we value. Above all, we want our chance at life to continue.

The second self-evident *truth* – and it *is* just as mysterious — is that none of this matters. From the perspective of timeless eternity, whether we live or die, whether our projects succeed or fail, what we want for ourselves and others, means nothing. Everything we value – including our lives – will be taken from us, often brutally, no matter how hard we fight, how much we care, or how good or valuable we are to Mankind. If you want to believe our lives and hopes matter in some objective way, chose a religion, but don't read Spinoza to find the answer.

These two truths represent life and death, or more accurately, time and eternity. They're at war with each other and define the drama of the human condition.

Their conflict inspires great art, writing, theatre and music — acts of courage, love and self-sacrifice. But it also drives the dark side – depression, meaninglessness, war, suicide ... and violent extremism. The conflict is resolved in death, in that the second truth always wins – and we, as individuals – must surrender. *But*, it's our defiance, our stubborn striving *to hold our identity* in the face of inevitable loss that makes the human condition feel like a restless, if not urgent, roller-coaster ride.

Like many great thinkers, Spinoza tries to reconcile these two truths... and he does it beautifully. He teaches us how *both* perspectives, both truths can be held and experienced simultaneously. He shows us a way *to bring them together as a lived experience* – purely for the love, strength and peace of mind — it brings us. *This* is his magic.

His *Ethics* has gifted us a strange, extraordinary, philosophy; – *of* this world, and yet *not of* this world – that makes it one of the truly great philosophical masterpieces.

Part 3 ~ What do I do for Amsterdam?

Today, I'm a practitioner in counter-radicalization — not an academic. It was more than 30 years ago – in Jesus College, Oxford – that I last gave a lecture on "*Spinoza's Humanism*" – so forgive me if I am a bit rusty. I'm proud of my role as an advisor to the City of Amsterdam – in particular, for the opportunity to advise a Mayor who is not only a world-class politician – but a considerable fan of Spinoza.

Today, *I'm also speaking for myself*, since I also advise a number of governments and organizations around the world. Most of my work can't be made public. My approach is rooted in witnessing first-hand the community radicalization and violence in Northern Ireland, my training as a psychoanalyst – a decision inspired by reading Spinoza – and the intensity of my work in warzones. *But, what part does Spinoza play? How could ideas which were around 350 years ago, possibly impact on today's very modern and complex issues?*

Well, today – *since it's Spinozadag* – I'm going to present Spinoza as "*The Philosopher of Counter-Radicalization*." So far as I know, this is a world first. There are three ways his philosophy can help us.

The first is to use his theory of human emotions in *The Ethics* to re-think our approach to preventing radicalization

The second is to follow his radical intellectual lead in the Theological-Political Tractatus (TPT) to re-frame the situation the West finds itself in

The third is to use his political philosophy - with its emphasis on social cohesion and the management of hope over fear — to prevent polarization and radicalization.

My 4 axioms

Before I make the case, there are four simple axioms I use everyday that are inspired by Spinoza's thinking.

a) First, understand causes rather than *react*

b) Secondly, "*Do No Harm*" to *our* Here, I follow Spinoza's personal motto "*Caute*" - caution. The history of countering terrorist recruitment is littered with own-goals.

c) Third: if we are to understand decisions and direction, we must understand emotions.

d) My final axiom is, "*Be pragmatic, not ideological - take the path of least resistance.*"

Three kinds of wrong framing

The first question of counter-radicalisation is.... "*What's the most effective way to prevent terrorist recruitment without harming ourselves?*"

Well, Spinoza inspires us to take a bold new approach — as he did himself. At the beginning of the Theological-Political Tractatus he says, "*All men are by nature liable to superstition*" and, since we must re-think where we are, we must first *examine our own* false narratives and superstitions.

Not a "Clash of Civilizations"

The most damaging superstition is the West's default framing of the terrorist conflict as a religious, cultural and ideological war: a "*Clash of Civilizations*". This terrible, delusional, slogan was used to radicalise *and* militarise the West's response after 9/11 - with disastrous consequences.

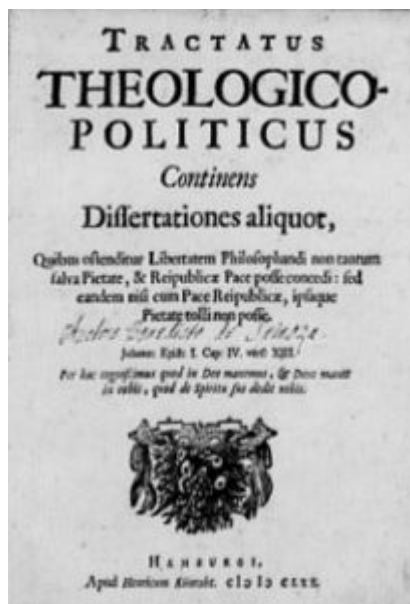
It defined the conflict in binary, emotional, terms - "*You're either for us or against us;*" "*good Muslim v bad Muslim*" — that made conflict more meaningful for terrorist recruits and enabled al Qaeda to claim, "*Islam is under attack*". We've also made the mistake of focusing on radical theology as the cause of radicalisation.

This over-determined the role of religion, fuelled Islamophobia, encouraged populism and helped to drive social and political polarization. In my view, the election of Trump as President of US can be traced directly to the failed overreaction of the US response to 9/11. And any hope that the West can recover from its mistakes has evaporated with Trump's election and his appalling appointments.

Not the ideology

It's no surprise that we're also using the wrong tactics by treating counter-radicalization as a kind of argument, a "Clash - or War of ideas" ... as if we could debate facts, apply theological arguments and alleged western values to defeat terrorism. It's called the "counter-narrative" and it has made things worse by drawing attention to the terrorists' point of view, without making any impact.

We're simply talking to ourselves. *Spinoza is very clear about this: true ideas don't have the power to remove obstinate emotions or beliefs simply by virtue of being true.* And realistically, theological debate - as Spinoza would argue — has got nothing to do with truth anyway. Put simply, we can never win this argument - *even when we're right.* It's the wrong argument - and the wrong approach.



Part 4 ~ Frame the conflict as a psychological war

So if it's not a "Clash of Civilizations", what is it? Spinoza devotes a majority of *The Ethics* to understanding human emotions. And no emotions are more important in his politics than the interplay of hope and fear. Indeed, the elimination of fear is central to his project. He says, "*a free people is led more by hope than by fear, while a subjugated people is led more by fear than by hope.*" That's our clue.

Today, he would recognize that European democracies - not the Middle East - have become the front-line *in a new kind of psychological war*, around the emotion of fear; fear for security; fear of Muslims and Islam; fear of immigrants; fear of refugees, fear of loss for a way of life - and most importantly, *fear of uncertainty and the future.* In Spinoza's terms, all this impacts our imagination,

filling us with negative, passive, emotions – anger and fear.

And we should recognize that warfare today has evolved – for all practical purposes – into knowing and understanding how to influence what people think and feel. Think of the current accusations of cold-war revivalism against Putin for his influence in the recent US elections.

Populists and IS share the same strategic objectives — to divide, polarize and radicalize our populations. We're the *front-line* of this psychological war since this is where the fear of IS and its propaganda meets the amplification of domestic populism. Populists convert these fears into nostalgia for a lost past using the language of nationalism, racism and Islamophobia. They endow nativism with an almost mystical significance.

The strategic weakness of democracy is that, without strong leadership, it struggles to cope with instability and sudden movements in mass psychology. As Obama said last week – we cannot take democracy for granted. And so Western democracies become weaker and core democratic values come under attack from within. Much of this fear is hysterical and irrational. For example, a majority of Americans now think they or their family members will be killed in an IS attack. In fact, since 9/11, they're almost 300 times more likely to be killed by a police officer – and everyday, more likely to be killed by far-right extremists than jihadists.

The result is that irrational fear has given our body politic an *auto-immune* disease – we're attacking ourselves. As Spinoza tells us (in the TPT) ... *Every system of governance is threatened more by its own citizens than by its open enemies*. And IS uses this strategic weakness to press home its psychological attack. And, by this way, populism poses a much greater threat to our democracy than IS ever could.

Spinoza's psychology – it's emotions — not the ideology

One of the major successes of Spinoza's philosophy is that it provides the basis of a modern scientific psychology and psychoanalytic theory. Spinoza's psychology places an enormous emphasis on the power of emotions to subvert everything else in human life, so let's see where that takes us.... And let's look at the facts.....

The terrorist ideology is weak in Europe. It's the best-known ideology in the world yet it inspires recruits only in random ones and twos. IS has never appealed to

more than one thousandth of one percent of Muslims and now says to recruits: "Don't worry about ideology. *We are the ideology. That's all you need to know. Obey us.*"

Spinoza's philosophy shows us how the path to extremism is likely to be individualistic, psychological and, I will argue, consumerist.

Let's consider first, the relevance of Spinoza's insights into emotions and drives. He says, "*Everyone shapes his actions according to his emotions;*" and, "*Everyone strives to increase his own sense of power, to seek his own advantage.*" People are "*conscious of their desire without knowing the causes of desire.*" "*True ideas are not enough to change negative or obstinate emotions.*" "*An emotion can only be changed by a stronger and contrary emotion.*"

To summarize these powerful insights, Spinoza's thinking teaches us that extreme acts and beliefs are expressions of extreme emotions. What people say about *why* they hold extreme beliefs is not reliable since they're *not* aware of the real causes of their feelings. Asking a jihadist exactly why he radicalized is unlikely to reveal the truth – even if he was honest.

Every psychoanalyst knows we can vigorously defend, but secretly doubt, what we believe to be our strongest held beliefs – *including* the ones we say we would die for. As John Le Carré's clever spy, George Smiley, says – "*Every fanatic is hiding a secret doubt.*" We need a stronger explanation for violent extremism than simply being convinced of a theological argument. Today we would not expect to help someone with an eating disorder by arguing with them about their nutritional needs. Something else, something much more profound is going on. We know it's a psychological condition. It's the same with our efforts in counter-radicalization.

Part 5 ~ What is the emotional attachment mechanism?

The question we now need Spinoza's help to answer is – if theological belief is not the real cause of terrorist recruitment – what is?

First, we must understand that European jihadists aren't driven by the same factors as MENA recruits. They're born, raised *and* educated with Western rather than Sunni-Islamic values. IS is a radically violent Sunni-sectarian organization and yet most European recruits have no idea of – and certainly no grievances that relate to – differences between Sunni and Shi'ia Islam. Most are wholly ignorant of the differences. Like Protestants and Catholics in Belfast – sectarianism was an

excuse for violence, not a cause.

Like everyone else, European recruits are consumers in a consumer culture, and instinctively relate to how brands use feelings and emotions to influence and communicate symbolic meaning, identity and values. They also face anti-Muslim sentiment – something that doesn't exist in Muslim countries – so there's already a distinct impetus in some towards finding a counter-cultural – anti-Western – identity. If we put these two things together – consumerism and search for identity – we come up with brands.

Consumerism and religion

Consumerism, as a form of identity building and attachment, has taken on many aspects of religious devotion. In the 17th Century *meaning, identity and attachment* were defined by religious belief, sect and congregation. Today, these are replaced by consumer desire, brand loyalty and social-media networks. In the 17th Century, the purpose of this life was to find salvation in the next; in today's celebrity culture, many seek fame and recognition as a form of redemption. (*Could we imagine Spinoza's landlady, today, asking if she'll be famous when he dies?*)

Spinoza's thinking tells us to follow the emotions. Unlike theological arguments which deal in ideas, opinions and abstractions, *brands* quickly communicate powerful emotional stories that appeal to fantasies of power, identity and a *sense of belonging*. Because they appeal to unconscious emotions, people identify with – or reject – brands for reasons that are close to love or hate – feelings that they cannot explain rationally. As the poet says, *"The heart has its reasons, of which reason knows nothing."* In Spinoza's words, we are, ...*"conscious of desire but not the hidden causes of desire."*

In the *"Korte Verhandelng"* Spinoza writes, *"We could not exist without enjoying something with which we become united and from which we draw strength."* As we shall see, for the European jihadist – where the radicalization process has become faster and faster – the union he draws strength from is *not* Allah, or the worldwide *umma*, or the Caliphate, but the powerful *"fast-food "* – the instant gratification – of the *"off-the-shelf"* jihadist *brand*. In this way, he *buys into IS as a consumer* rather than as a genuine religious believer or convert.

The IS brand

This doesn't happen by chance. IS projects its carefully managed brand package into the West to target alienated desire and lost identity — preferring recruits who have a violent criminal background - and almost 70% have. There is *no battle of ideas* on the part of IS or genuine effort to convert - simply a push for media exposure and connection.

It's a symbiotic relationship. The IS brand narrative offers a transformed life - a second chance: a sense of victimhood redeemed; becoming a player in a world-historical struggle and the promise of recognition that means, in the end, his life can be a success - a marriage of victimhood and celebrity. This is Western, not Islamic: a diet based on the values of reality TV, Hollywood revenge movies and social media profiles. And they're fixated by all of these.

Even Spinoza - in the 17th Century - recognized the devious attraction of the all-too-human weakness for fame. And in terms of branding strategy, it's exactly how the Trump campaign operated - all emotion and unspoken fantasy, an imagined, shared backstory, vague promises of greatness but lacking genuine ideological content. It works.

The point is, none of this requires *belief* in - or even the existence of — an ideology. Western recruits aren't being pulled-in by theological argument, but by their *imagination* and a series of *passive emotions and empowering fantasies*. The ideology today can be reduced to shouting "Allahu Ahkbar", and is simply one more branded product - like the black flag, a ski-mask, an unopened copy of the Koran (or, if you're French, the burkini).

If we look at this through the lens of Spinoza's theory of emotions we can see the mechanism of radicalization more rationally - it's about a mess of emotional needs and drives being matched by carefully crafted fantasies of meaning, identity, purpose, revenge, and fame.

Part 6 ~ Fear, superstition, uncertainty and Amsterdam

Social cohesion has become hugely important in preventing community radicalization and maintaining state security. In this regard, the actions of populists driving polarization by manipulating public fear are a direct threat to our security. This is why IS celebrated the election of Trump.

Spinoza recognizes that public fear of uncertainty causes conflict and breaks

social cohesion – and that people who swing wildly between hope and fear can believe almost anything. He argues that political and religious rulers took advantage of fear of uncertainty to impose standardized and manipulative belief systems. Fundamentalists and populists exploit fear of uncertainty in a self-defeating way – namely, they need to encourage fear if they are to stay relevant. It's ironic that they quickly produce *too much* certainty – that is, *intolerance* and *instability*.

Spinoza knows uncertainty can be a negative force yet he offers a radical solution – not “*How can we remove it?*” — (we can't) – but how can we use it to help improve social interaction. I think he learned something very important here from his experience as a merchant in Amsterdam.

The city's cultural DNA is rooted in an independent – pragmatic – *state of mind*, a product of internalizing the habit of negotiation from trade, and trust in commercial procedures, together with the cooperation inherent in the polder model.

Rather than fear of uncertainty, Amsterdam's citizens used “*constructive uncertainty*” and risk-management as a way to increase interaction by negotiating their everyday practical certainties. In this way, the positive interplay of hope and fear enabled them to embed core democratic values – in particular, pluralism, tolerance of “The Other” and a skepticism towards the brittleness of fundamentalist thinking. *The key was the development of the flexibility inherent in the democratic mindset.*

At the core is the *realpolitik* of compromise and this, Spinoza recognized, goes to the heart of the democratic process – surrendering our natural rights to gain freedom *from* fear and the security of state protection. It's a win-win situation for citizens and the state, and fundamentalists and extremists, simply cannot do this. They have to *win on their terms only* – and everyone else has to lose. This is simply not the Amsterdam way.

In terms of cooperation, Spinoza tells us that people “... *without mutual help live miserable lives....life (he says) should not be controlled by individuals, but by the power and will of everyone....and.... Men should defend their neighbour's rights as their own.*”

He also saw that the politics of group identities are both divisive and destructive

of individual freedom and social cohesion. Spinoza was more focused on defending and protecting individual freedoms than the freedom of organized religious worship.

Towards the end of the TTP, Spinoza describes how the relationship between freedom, tolerance and the state will work. He's not describing an abstract idea or Utopian vision. He's writing about the Amsterdam he knew and loved. He says, "*In this thriving and splendid city state, people from all nations and with all possible beliefs live together harmoniously... religion and sect are of no importance for it has no effect before the judges in winning or losing a cause...*"

In this way, the city's cultural DNA plays an important role in enabling Spinoza's emphasis on social cohesion and how it relates to counter-radicalization.

Part 6 ~ Finale

I want to finish by briefly mentioning two aspects of his life that are important for how we remember him.

For Spinoza, the social class, religion, nationality or ethnic group we are born into has no intrinsic value, because, as he puts it in *The Ethics*: "*All men are born ignorant of the causes of things.*" Life is a process of *becoming* - a struggle to see *what you make of yourself* - and we all have exactly the same hill to climb.

Spinoza was given the name Bento at birth. So far as we know, he never referred to himself as Baruch. We do know that from the age of fourteen he signed and called himself Bento. With his name change - from Bento the Merchant, to Benedict/us the philosopher - he quite deliberately re-invented himself - sometime in his mid-twenties - for the next phase of his life - and it was a philosophically significant moment. It was about much more than a name. It was an entire identity - a brand - complete with a motto - "*Caute*" - and the symbolic logo of the rose.

He *now* belonged to *Mankind*, transcending the passive accident of birth. We should respect his decision and refer to him by the *only name he ever chose for himself*, that he used in his correspondence and conversation with others, and took with him to the grave. He signed his name - *Benedict de Spinoza*.

I want finally to focus on one feature of Spinoza's life that is truly inspirational. He had courage. As a young man, he stood up to the bullying of his community to

conform, and in later life he endured attacks and abuse from the equivalent of today's far-right populists and ecclesiastical bullies. With the murder of the de Witts he experienced the destructiveness of populism and violent extremism. It did not stop him protesting it.

What is impressive is his inner-strength and courage even as he became weak and sickly. He argues that often it is the wisest and most peace-loving who are the targets of moral crusades and intolerance and just as often, it's the stupidest and most obnoxious who lead such campaigns. Are you listening *Geen Stijl*?

I talk to people today who feel intimidated by populists, idiot commentators and cowardly bloggers. When we remind ourselves that in the space of a few years, four people close to Spinoza were executed, murdered or died in prison because of what they believed, what we face today is nothing by comparison.

I think he would be a bit alarmed at the way the democratic centre is under pressure today but I also think he would immediately clear his thinking and get on with the fight to protect democratic values. And so must we.

Forty years after I first began to read Spinoza, he is still a ghost in my life, and standing here today, he seems closer than ever. Time has no real value in Spinoza's philosophy – nothing, he says, is more perfect for living longer.

And speaking of time, I'm sure there are many in this room who would gladly give up a *year* of their life to have the privilege of spending just *one day* in conversation with him — in the beautiful city of Amsterdam.

Thank-you for listening, and the privilege of speaking to you today.

Trump's America And The New World Order: A Conversation With

Noam Chomsky



Noam Chomsky ~ Photo:
en.wikipedia.org

For the prelude to this interview, read yesterday's conversation with Noam Chomsky on "[Trump and the Flawed Nature of US Democracy](#)", which exposes the pitfalls of the political system that made Trump's rise to power a reality.

Are Donald Trump's selections for his cabinet and other top administration positions indicative of a man who is ready to "drain the swamp?" Is the president-elect bent on putting China on the defensive? What does he have in mind for the Middle East? And why did Barack Obama choose at this juncture — that is, toward the end of his presidency — to have the US abstain from a UN resolution condemning Israeli settlements? Are new trends and tendencies in the world order emerging? In this exclusive Truthout interview, Noam Chomsky addresses these critical questions just two weeks before the White House receives its new occupant.

C.J. Polychroniou: Noam, the president-elect's cabinet is being filled by financial and corporate bigwigs and military leaders. Such selections hardly reconcile with Trump's pre-election promises to "drain the swamp," so what should we expect from this megalomaniac and phony populist insofar as the future of the Washington establishment is concerned?

Noam Chomsky: In this respect — note the qualification — Time magazine put it

fairly well (in a Dec. 26 column by Joe Klein): “While some supporters may balk, Trump’s decision to embrace those who have wallowed in the Washington muck has spread a sense of relief among the capital’s political class. ‘It shows,’ says one GOP consultant close to the President-elect’s transition, ‘that he’s going to govern like a normal Republican’.”

There surely is some truth to this. Business and investors plainly think so. The stock market boomed right after the election, led by the financial companies that Trump denounced during his campaign, particularly the leading demon of his rhetoric, Goldman Sachs. [According to Bloomberg News](#), “The firm’s surging stock price,” up 30 percent in the month after the election, “has been the largest driver behind the Dow Jones Industrial Average’s climb toward 20,000.” The stellar market performance of Goldman Sachs is based largely on Trump’s reliance on the demon to run the economy, buttressed by the promised roll-back in regulations, setting the stage for the next financial crisis (and taxpayer bailout). Other big gainers are energy corporations, health insurers and construction firms, all expecting huge profits from the administration’s announced plans. These include a Paul Ryan-style fiscal program of tax cuts for the rich and corporations, increased military spending, turning the health system over even more to insurance companies with predictable consequences, taxpayer largesse for a privatized form of credit-based infrastructure development, and other “normal Republican” gifts to wealth and privilege at taxpayer expense. Rather plausibly, economist [Larry Summers describes the fiscal program](#) as “the most misguided set of tax changes in US history [which] will massively favor the top 1 per cent of income earners, threaten an explosive rise in federal debt, complicate the tax code and do little if anything to spur growth.”

But, great news for those who matter.

There are, however, some losers in the corporate system. Since November 8, gun sales, which more than doubled under Obama, have been dropping sharply, perhaps because of lessened fears that the government will take away the assault rifles and other armaments we need to protect ourselves from the Feds. Sales rose through the year as polls showed Clinton in the lead, but after the election, [the Financial Times reported](#), “shares in gun makers such as Smith & Wesson and Sturm Ruger plunged.” By mid-December, “the two companies had fallen 24 per cent and 17 per cent since the election, respectively.” But all is not lost for the industry. As a spokesman explains, “To put it in perspective, US consumer sales

of firearms are greater than the rest of the world combined. It's a pretty big market."

Normal Republicans cheer Trump's choice for Office of Management and Budget, Mick Mulvaney, one of the most extreme fiscal hawks, though a problem does arise. How will a fiscal hawk manage a budget designed to massively escalate the deficit? In a post-fact world, maybe that doesn't matter.

Also cheering to "normal Republicans" is the choice of the radically anti-labor Andy Puzder for secretary of labor, though here too a contradiction may lurk in the background. As the ultrarich CEO of restaurant chains, he relies on the most easily exploited non-union labor for the dirty work, typically immigrants, which doesn't comport well with the plans to deport them en masse. The same problem arises for the infrastructure programs; the private firms that are set to profit from these initiatives rely heavily on the same labor source, though perhaps that problem can be finessed by redesigning the "beautiful wall" so that it will only keep out Muslims.

Is this to say then that Trump will be a "normal" Republican as America's 45th President?

In such respects as the ones mentioned above, Trump proved himself very quickly to be a normal Republican, if to the extremist side. But in other respects he may not be a normal Republican, if that means something like a mainstream establishment Republican — people like Mitt Romney, whom Trump went out of his way to humiliate in his familiar style, just as he did to McCain and others of this category. But it's not only his style that causes offense and concern. His actions do as well.

Take just the two most significant issues that we face, the most significant that humans have ever faced in their brief history on earth; issues that bear on species survival: nuclear war and global warming. Shivers went up the spine of many "normal Republicans," as of others who care about the fate of the species, when Trump tweeted that "The United States must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes." Expanding nuclear capability means casting to the winds the treaties that have sharply reduced nuclear arsenals and that sane analysts hope may reduce them much further, in fact, to zero, as advocated by such normal Republicans as Henry Kissinger and Reagan Secretary of State George Shultz, and by Reagan, in

some of his moments. Concerns did not abate when Trump went on to tell the cohost of TV show Morning Joe “Let it be an arms race. We will outmatch them at every pass.” And it wasn’t too comforting even when his White House team tried to explain that “The Donald” didn’t say what he said.

Nor do concerns abate because Trump was presumably reacting to Putin’s statement: “We need to strengthen the military potential of strategic nuclear forces, especially with missile complexes that can reliably penetrate any existing and prospective missile defense systems. We must carefully monitor any changes in the balance of power and in the political-military situation in the world, especially along Russian borders, and quickly adapt plans for neutralizing threats to our country.”

Whatever one thinks of these words, they have a defensive cast and as Putin has stressed, they are in large part a reaction to the highly provocative installation of a missile defense system on Russia’s border on the pretext of defense against nonexistent Iranian weapons. Trump’s tweet intensifies fears about how he might react when crossed, for example, by unwillingness of some adversary to bow to his vaunted negotiating skills. If the past is any guide he might, after all, find himself in a situation where he must decide within a few minutes whether to blow up the world.

The other crucial issue is environmental catastrophe. It cannot be stressed too strongly that Trump won two victories on November 8: the lesser one in the Electoral College and the greater one in Marrakech, where some 200 countries were seeking to put teeth in the promises of the Paris negotiations on climate change. On Election Day, the conference heard a dire report on the state of the Anthropocene from the World Meteorological Organization. As the results of the election came in, the stunned participants virtually abandoned the proceedings, wondering if anything could survive the withdrawal of the most powerful state in world history. Nor can one stress too often the astonishing spectacle of the world placing its hopes for salvation in China, while the leader of the free world stands alone as a wrecking machine.

Although — amazingly — most ignored these astounding events, establishment circles did have some response. In [Foreign Affairs](#), [Varun Sivaram](#) and [Sagatom Saha](#) warned of the costs to the US of “ceding climate leadership to China,” and the dangers to the world because China “would lead on climate-change issues

only insofar as doing so would advance its national interests” — unlike the altruistic United States, which supposedly labors selflessly only for the benefit of mankind.

How intent Trump is on driving the world to the precipice was revealed by his appointments, including his choice of two militant climate change deniers, Myron Ebell and Scott Pruitt, to take charge of dismantling the Environmental Protection Agency that was established under Richard Nixon, with another denier slated to head the Department of Interior.

But that’s only the beginning. The cabinet appointments would be comical if the implications were not so serious. For Department of Energy, a man who said it should be eliminated (when he could remember its name) and is perhaps unaware that its main concern is nuclear weapons. For Department of Education, another billionaire, Betsy DeVos, who is dedicated to undermining and perhaps eliminating the public school system and who, [as Lawrence Krause reminds us in the New Yorker](#), is a fundamentalist Christian member of a Protestant denomination holding that “all scientific theories be subject to Scripture” and that “Humanity is created in the image of God; all theorizing that minimizes this fact and all theories of evolution that deny the creative activity of God are rejected.” Perhaps the Department should request funding from Saudi sponsors of Wahhabi madrassas to help the process along.

DeVos’s appointment is no doubt attractive to the evangelicals who flocked to Trump’s standard and constitute a large part of the base of today’s Republican Party. She should also be able to work amicably with Vice-President-elect Mike Pence, one of the “prized warriors [of] a cabal of vicious zealots who have long craved an extremist Christian theocracy,” [as Jeremy Scahill details in The Intercept](#), reviewing his shocking record on other matters as well.

And so it continues, case by case. But not to worry. As James Madison assured his colleagues as they were framing the Constitution, a national republic would “extract from the mass of the Society the purest and noblest characters which it contains.”

What about the choice of Rex Tillerson as Secretary of State?

One partial exception to the above is choice of ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson for Secretary of State, which has aroused some hope among those across the

spectrum who are rightly concerned with the rising and extremely hazardous tensions with Russia. Tillerson, like Trump in some of his pronouncements, has called for diplomacy rather than confrontation, which is all to the good — until we remember the sable lining of the beam of sunshine. The motive is to allow ExxonMobil to exploit vast Siberian oil fields and so to accelerate the race to disaster to which Trump and associates, and the Republican Party rather generally, are committed.

And how about Trump's national security staff — do they fit the mold of "normal" Republicans, or are they also part of the extreme Right?

Normal Republicans might be somewhat ambivalent about Trump's national security staff. It is led by National Security Advisor Gen. Michael Flynn, a radical Islamophobe who declares that Islam is not a religion but rather, a political ideology, like fascism, which is at war with us, so we must defend ourselves, presumably against the whole Muslim world — a fine recipe for generating terrorists, not to speak of far worse consequences. Like the Red Menace of earlier years, this Islamic ideology is penetrating deep into American society, Flynn declaims. They are, he says, being helped by Democrats, who have voted to impose Sharia law in Florida, much as their predecessors served the Commies, as Joe McCarthy famously demonstrated. Indeed, there are "over 100 cases around the country," including Texas, Flynn warned in a speech in San Antonio. To ward off the imminent threat, Flynn is a board member of ACT!, which pushes state laws banning Sharia law, plainly an imminent threat in states like Oklahoma, where 70 percent of voters approved legislation to prevent the courts from applying this grim menace to the judicial system.

Second to Flynn in the national security apparatus is Secretary of Defense Gen. James "Mad Dog" Mattis, considered a relative moderate. Mad Dog [has explained](#) that "It's fun to shoot some people." He achieved his fame by leading the assault on Fallujah in November 2004, one of the most vicious crimes of the Iraq invasion. A man who is "just great," according to the president-elect: "the closest thing we have to Gen. George Patton."

In your view, is Trump bent on a collision course with China?

It's hard to say. Concerns were voiced about Trump's attitudes toward China, again full of contradictions, particularly his pronouncements on trade, which are almost meaningless in the current system of corporate globalization and complex international supply chains. Eyebrows were raised over his sharp departure from

long-standing policy in his phone call with Taiwan's president, but even more by his implying that the US might reject China's concerns over Taiwan unless China accepts his trade proposals, thus linking trade policy "to an issue of great-power politics over which China may be willing to go to war," the business press warned.

What of Trump's views and stance on the Middle East? They seem to be in line with those of "normal" Republicans, right?

Unlike with China, normal Republicans did not seem dismayed by Trump's tweet foray into Middle East diplomacy, again breaking with standard protocol, demanding that Obama veto UN Security Council resolution 2334, which reaffirmed "that the policy and practices of Israel in establishing settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967 have no legal validity and constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East [and] Calls once more upon Israel, as the occupying Power, to abide scrupulously by the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention, to rescind its previous measures and to desist from taking any action which would result in changing the legal status and geographical nature and materially affecting the demographic composition of the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and, in particular, not to transfer parts of its own civilian population into the occupied Arab territories."

Nor did they object when he informed Israel that it can ignore the lame duck administration and just wait until January 20, when all will be in order. What kind of order? That remains to be seen. Trump's unpredictability serves as a word of caution.

What we know so far is Trump's enthusiasm for the religious ultraright in Israel and the settler movement generally. Among his largest charitable contributions are gifts to the West Bank settlement of Beth El in honor of David Friedman, his choice as Ambassador to Israel. Friedman is president of American Friends of Beth El Institutions. The settlement, which is at the religious ultranationalist extreme of the settler movement, is also a favorite of the family of Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, reported to be one of Trump's closest advisers. A lead beneficiary of the Kushner family's contributions, [the Israeli press reports](#), "is a yeshiva headed by a militant rabbi who has urged Israeli soldiers to disobey orders to evacuate settlements and who has argued that homosexual tendencies arise from eating certain foods." [Other beneficiaries](#) include "a radical yeshiva in Yitzhar that has served as a base for violent attacks against Palestinian's villages

and Israeli security forces.”

In isolation from the world, Friedman does not regard Israeli settlement activity as illegal and opposes a ban on construction for Jewish settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. In fact, he appears to favor Israel’s annexation of the West Bank. That would not pose a problem for the Jewish state, Friedman explains, since the number of Palestinians living in the West Bank is exaggerated and therefore a large Jewish majority would remain after annexation. In a post-fact world, such pronouncements are legitimate, though they might become accurate in the boring world of fact after another mass expulsion. Jews who support the international consensus on a two-state settlement are not just wrong, [Friedman says](#), they are “worse than kapos,” the Jews who were controlling other inmates in service to their Nazi masters in the concentration camps — the ultimate insult.

On receiving the report of his nomination, Friedman said he looked forward to moving the US embassy to “Israel’s eternal capital, Jerusalem,” in accord with Trump’s announced plans. In the past, such proposals were withdrawn, but today they might actually be fulfilled, perhaps advancing the prospects of a war with the Muslim world, as Trump’s National Security Adviser appears to recommend.

Returning to UNSC 2334 and its interesting aftermath, it is important to recognize that the resolution is nothing new. The quote given above was not from UNSC 2334 but from UNSC Resolution 446, passed on March 12, 1979, reiterated in essence in UNSC 2334.

UNSC 446 passed 12-0 with the US abstaining, joined by the UK and Norway. Several resolutions followed, reaffirming 446. One resolution of particular interest was even stronger than 446-2334, calling on Israel “to dismantle the existing settlements” (UNSC Resolution 465, passed in March 1980). This resolution passed unanimously, no abstentions.

The Government of Israel did not have to wait for the UN Security Council (and more recently, the World Court) to learn that its settlements are in gross violation of international law. In September 1967, only weeks after Israel’s conquest of the occupied territories, in a [Top Secret document](#), the government was informed by the legal adviser to [Israel’s] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the distinguished international lawyer Theodor Meron, that “civilian settlement in the administered territories [Israel’s term for the occupied territories] contravenes explicit

provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention.” Meron explained further that the prohibition against transfer of settlers to the occupied territories “is categorical and not conditional upon the motives for the transfer or its objectives. Its purpose is to prevent settlement in occupied territory of citizens of the occupying state.” Meron therefore advised that “If it is decided to go ahead with Jewish settlement in the administered territories, it seems to me vital, therefore, that settlement is carried out by military and not civilian entities. It is also important, in my view, that such settlement is in the framework of camps and is, on the face of it, of a temporary rather than permanent nature.”

Meron’s advice was followed. Settlement has often been disguised by the subterfuge suggested, the “temporary military entities” turning out later to be civilian settlements. The device of military settlement also has the advantage of providing a means to expel Palestinians from their lands on the pretext that a military zone is being established. Deceit was scrupulously planned, beginning as soon as Meron’s authoritative report was delivered to the government. As [documented by Israeli scholar Avi Raz](#), in September 1967, on the day a second civilian settlement came into being in the West Bank, the government decided that “as a ‘cover’ for the purpose of [Israel’s] diplomatic campaign,” the new settlements should be presented as army settlements and the settlers should be given the necessary instructions in case they were asked about the nature of their settlement. The Foreign Ministry directed Israel’s diplomatic missions to present the settlements in the occupied territories as military “strongpoints” and to emphasize their alleged security importance.’

Similar practices continue to the present.

In response to the Security Council orders of 1979-80 to dismantle existing settlements and to establish no new ones, Israel undertook a rapid expansion of settlements with the cooperation of both of the major Israeli political blocs, Labor and Likud, always with lavish US material support.

The primary differences today are that the US is now alone against the whole world, and that it is a different world. Israel’s flagrant violations of Security Council orders, and of international law, are by now far more extreme than they were 35 years ago, and are arousing far greater condemnation in much of the world. The contents of Resolutions 446-2334 are therefore taken more seriously. Hence, the revealing reactions to 2334 and to Secretary of State John Kerry’s

explanation of the US vote.

In the Arab world, the reactions seem to have been muted: We've been here before. In Europe they were generally supportive. In the US and Israel, in contrast, coverage and commentary were extensive, and there was considerable hysteria. These are further indications of the increasing isolation of the US on the world stage. Under Obama, that is. Under Trump US isolation will likely increase further and indeed, already did, even before he took office, as we have seen.

Why did Obama choose abstention from the UN vote on Israeli settlements at this juncture, i.e., only a month or so before the end of his presidency?

Just why Obama chose abstention rather than veto is an open question; we do not have direct evidence. But there are some plausible guesses. There had been some ripples of surprise (and ridicule) after Obama's February 2011 veto of a UNSC Resolution calling for implementation of official US policy, and he may have felt that it would be too much to repeat it if he is to salvage anything of his tattered legacy among sectors of the population that have some concern for international law and human rights. It is also worth remembering that among liberal Democrats, if not Congress, and particularly among the young, opinion about Israel-Palestine has been moving toward criticism of Israeli policies in recent years, so much so that 60 percent of Democrats "support imposing sanctions or more serious action" in reaction to Israeli settlements, according to a December 2016 Brookings Institute poll. By now the core of support for Israeli policies in the US has shifted to the far right, including the evangelical base of the Republican Party. Perhaps these were factors in Obama's decision, with his legacy in mind.

The 2016 abstention aroused furor in Israel and in the US Congress as well, among both Republicans and leading Democrats, including proposals to defund the UN in retaliation for the world's crime. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu denounced Obama for his "underhanded, anti-Israel" actions. His office accused Obama of "colluding" behind the scenes with this "gang-up" by the Security Council, producing particles of "evidence" that hardly rise to the level of sick humor. A [senior Israeli official added](#) that the abstention "revealed the true face of the Obama administration," adding that "now we can understand what we have been dealing with for the past eight years."

Reality is rather different. Obama has, in fact, broken all records in support for Israel, both diplomatic and financial. The reality is [described accurately by](#)

[Financial Times Middle East specialist David Gardner](#): “Mr. Obama’s personal dealings with Mr. Netanyahu may often have been poisonous, but he has been the most pro-Israel of presidents: the most prodigal with military aid and reliable in wielding the US veto at the Security Council.... The election of Donald Trump has so far brought little more than turbo-frothed tweets to bear on this and other geopolitical knots. But the auguries are ominous. An irredentist government in Israel tilted towards the ultraright is now joined by a national populist administration in Washington fire-breathing Islamophobia.”

Public commentary on Obama’s decision and Kerry’s justification was split. Supporters generally [agreed with Thomas Friedman](#) that “Israel is clearly now on a path toward absorbing the West Bank’s 2.8 million Palestinians ... posing a demographic and democratic challenge.” In a [New York Times review of the state of the two-state solution](#) defended by Obama-Kerry and threatened with extinction by Israeli policies, Max Fisher asks, “Are there other solutions?” He then turns to the possible alternatives, all of them “multiple versions of the so-called one-state solution” that poses a “demographic and democratic challenge”: too many Arabs — perhaps soon a majority — in a “Jewish and democratic state.”

In the conventional fashion, commentators assume that there are two alternatives: the two-state solution advocated by the world, or some version of the “one-state solution.” Ignored consistently is a third alternative, the one that Israel has been implementing quite systematically since shortly after the 1967 war and that is now very clearly taking shape before our eyes: a Greater Israel, sooner or later incorporated into Israel proper, including a vastly expanded Jerusalem (already annexed in violation of Security Council orders) and any other territories that Israel finds valuable, while excluding areas of heavy Palestinian population concentration and slowly removing Palestinians within the areas scheduled for incorporation within Greater Israel. As in neo-colonies generally, Palestinian elites will be able to enjoy western standards in Ramallah, with “90 per cent of the population of the West Bank living in 165 separate ‘islands,’ ostensibly under the control of the [Palestinian Authority]” but actual Israeli control, [as reported by Nathan Thrall](#), senior analyst with the International Crisis Group. Gaza will remain under crushing siege, separated from the West Bank in violation of the Oslo Accords.

The third alternative is another piece of the “reality” described by David Gardner.

In an interesting and revealing comment, Netanyahu denounced the “gang-up” of the world as proof of “old-world bias against Israel,” a phrase reminiscent of Donald Rumsfeld’s Old Europe-New Europe distinction in 2003.

It will be recalled that the states of Old Europe were the bad guys, the major states of Europe, which dared to respect the opinions of the overwhelming majority of their populations and thus refused to join the US in the crime of the century, the invasion of Iraq. The states of New Europe were the good guys, which overruled an even larger majority and obeyed the master. The most honorable of the good guys was Spain’s Jose Maria Aznar, who rejected virtually unanimous opposition to the war in Spain and was rewarded by being invited to join Bush and Blair in announcing the invasion.

This quite illuminating display of utter contempt for democracy, along with others like it at the same time, passed virtually unnoticed, understandably. The task at the time was to praise Washington for its passionate dedication to democracy, as illustrated by “democracy promotion” in Iraq, which suddenly became the party line after the “single question” (will Saddam give up his WMD?) was answered the wrong way.

Netanyahu is adopting much the same stance. The old world that is biased against Israel is the entire UN Security Council; more specifically, anyone in the world who has some lingering commitment to international law and human rights. Luckily for the Israeli far right, that excludes the US Congress and — very forcefully — the president-elect and his associates.

The Israeli government is, of course, cognizant of these developments. It is therefore seeking to shift its base of support to authoritarian states, such as Singapore, China and Modi’s right-wing Hindu nationalist India, now becoming a very natural ally with its drift toward ultranationalism, reactionary internal policies and hatred of Islam. The reasons for Israel’s looking in this direction for support [are outlined by Mark Heller](#), principal research associate at Tel Aviv’s Institution for National Security Studies. “Over the long term,” he explains, “there are problems for Israel in its relations with Western Europe and with the U.S.,” while in contrast, the important Asian countries “don’t seem to indicate much interest about how Israel gets along with the Palestinians, Arabs, or anyone else.” In short, China, India, Singapore and other favored allies are less influenced by the kinds of liberal and humane concerns that pose increasing threats to Israel.

Are we then in the midst of new trends and tendencies in world order?

I believe so, and the tendencies developing in world order merit some attention. As noted, the US is becoming even more isolated than it has been in recent years, when US-run polls — unreported in the US but surely known in Washington — revealed that world opinion regarded the US as by far the leading threat to world peace, no one else even close. Under Obama, the US is now alone in abstention on the illegal Israel settlements, against an otherwise unanimous Security Council. With President Trump joining his bipartisan congressional supporters on this issue, the US will be even more isolated in the world in support of Israeli crimes.

Since November 8, the US is isolated on the crucial matter of global warming, a threat to the survival of organized human life in anything like its present form. If Trump makes good on his promise to exit from the Iran deal, it is likely that the other participants will persist, leaving the US still more isolated from Europe.

The US is also much more isolated from its Latin American “backyard” than in the past, and will be even more isolated if Trump backs off from Obama’s halting steps to normalize relations with Cuba, undertaken to ward off the likelihood that the US would be pretty much excluded from hemispheric organizations because of its continuing assault on Cuba, in international isolation.

Much the same is happening in Asia, as even close US allies (apart from Japan) — and even the UK — flock to the China-based Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the China-based Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, in this case including Japan. The China-based Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) incorporates the Central Asian states, Siberia with its rich resources, India, Pakistan and soon, probably Iran, and perhaps Turkey. The SCO has rejected the US request for observer status and demanded that the US remove all military bases from the region.

Immediately after the Trump election, we witnessed the intriguing spectacle of German chancellor Angela Merkel taking the lead in lecturing Washington on liberal values and human rights. Meanwhile, since November 8, the world looks to China for leadership in saving the world from environmental catastrophe, while the US, in splendid isolation once again, devotes itself to undermining these efforts.

US isolation is not complete, of course. As was made very clear in the reaction to

Trump's electoral victory, the US has the enthusiastic support of the xenophobic ultraright in Europe, including its neofascist elements. The return of the right in parts of Latin America offers the US opportunities for alliances there as well. And the US retains its close alliance with the dictatorships of the Gulf and Egypt, and with Israel, which is also separating itself from more liberal and democratic sectors in Europe and linking with authoritarian regimes that are not concerned with Israel's violations of international law and harsh attacks on elementary human rights.

The developing picture suggests the emergence of a New World Order, one that is rather different from the usual portrayals within the doctrinal system.

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Critique Of Heaven And Earth Equality ~ Religion And Political Emancipation According To Karl Marx



Introduction

Both left-wing and right-wing parties and movements claim to defend Western Values while demonstrating against Islam or against Islamophobia and Populism. From both sides we hear words like Liberty and Equality. Both sides are pointing to the Enlightenment as the core of European Values. When defending 'European Civilisation', everyone points to the French Revolution and its Manifesto, the Declaration of Human Rights. The French struggle against privilege, for equal political rights was the start of the political emancipation of the citizens that

after 1789 spread all over Europe.

I think we all agree that the legacy of the French Revolution is worth to be defended, but there is a new struggle going on about its Interpretation: do the European Values come in a ready-made package, to be accepted and implemented by the whole world or at least by everyone coming to Europe? Or is the French Revolution still an unfinished business and do we still have to struggle for the realisation of equality and liberty in our societies? I would like to show you why I am of the opinion that the latter is the case, by looking more closely into the heritage of this project for liberty and equality from the 18th century.

I will do so, using a text of the German thinker Karl Marx. (Trier, 5 may 1818 - London, 14 march 1883) He is mainly known for his economical ideas about Capital and Labour, but his political texts are in no means less insightful.

If you want to know how equal and free a society is, it is always a good idea to look at the rights of those who are looked upon as 'different' from everybody else. Those who claim equal treatment because they are being discriminated against. Marx does exactly this. He addresses an issue that was debated fiercely during the 19th century, just like it is today. I am talking about the relation between State and Religion. Back then the big issue was the position of Jews in society. The state was not secular, but Christian, and Jews were second-class citizens with less rights than our minorities have now. Things are different today, but we can still recognize the questions of the 19th century: does Jews have to renounce their religion in order to obtain full citizenship? Are Jews a threat to society because of their different customs and religious practices? Today, we would never pose these questions in relation to Jews. But they are openly discussed in relation to Muslims.

Marx, of Jewish origin himself, intervenes in 1843 in the debate, publishing the essay *Zur Judenfrage. On the Jewish Question*, is written 24 years before *Capital*. In this text, he laid a fundament for his later work. The text is a polemic reaction to an earlier article called *Jewish Question* from Bruno Bauer, who belonged to the same philosophical-political group as Marx, the Hegelians.

His first point, which is crucial, is a change of perspective: while discussing the *Jewish Question*, do not look at the behaviour and aspirations of the Jews, but look at the role of the State. Marx uses the Jewish Question to analyse the mechanism of political emancipation in a modern society. In this endeavour, the criticism of religion is the condition of a criticism of politics.

Criticism of religion: what religion and political emancipation have in common

What are we talking about? We are talking about human rights. We have to realise that the original Declaration from 1789 was called *Declaration of the rights of Man and of the Citizen* (French: *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*) In 1948, when the UN adopted the Declaration it became the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. The Citizen disappeared.

That is striking, since the core of the analysis by Marx lies in the difference between 'Man' and Citizen'. In his words, between emancipation as such and political emancipation. By letting the Man and the Citizen fuse into the Human, an essential procedure of political emancipation is covered up. Who is this 'Man' in the Declaration?

Niemand anders als das Mitglied der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft. Warum wird das

Mitglied der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft 'Mensch', Mensch schlechthin, warum werden seine Rechte Menschenrechte genannt? Woraus erklären wir dies Faktum? Aus dem Verhältnis des politischen Staats zur bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, aus dem Wesen der politischen Emanzipation. (p.363-364)

The 'Man' in the Declaration is not the universal Human Being, it is a very real, tangible person – and yes, in the original declaration it was a man! – someone who makes a living in everyday- society. Mostly, it is the homo economicus, the merchant that had done well, but did not have the political rights the nobility had. This 'Man' was the driving force behind the French Revolution. The word Marx is using for this real person, is *bourgeois*. I will use this word from now on. The *citoyen* (French for citizen), on the other hand, is the member of society in its political function. The *citoyen* represents the political rights of the *bourgeois*. By differentiating between the two of them, a separation, or even a schism, is created in the human being itself. This separation is necessary to be able to talk about political rights, but it still has this effect of a division within the human being. The consequence of this is that the very character of political emancipation is alienation. The similarity between the character of religion and the character of political emancipation is precisely this: alienation.

Die Religion ist eben die Anerkennung des Menschen auf einem Umweg. Durch einen Mittler. Der Staat ist der Mittler zwischen dem Menschen und der Freiheit des Menschen. Wie Christus der Mittler ist, dem der Mensch seine ganze Göttlichkeit, seine ganze religiöse Befangenheit aufbürdet, so ist der Staat der Mittler, in den er seine ganze Ungöttlichkeit, seine ganze menschliche Unbefangenheit verlegt. (p.353-354)

This is the relation between State and Religion according to Marx: they both recognize the Human Being only in a roundabout way, thus alienating man from himself. This self-estrangement has to be unmasked and criticized. Marx turns Feuerbachs criticism of religion into a critique of the modern state. Alienation does not only exist with regard to religion, it is also part of the much-praised political emancipation. In that sense criticism of religion is the condition of all criticism, as Marx states in the Introduction of his 'Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right', which was written a year after *On the Jewish Question*.

In this Introduction he talks about the transformation of the criticism of Heaven (religion and theology) into a criticism of Earth. This is not an easy, straight-

forward procedure. Heaven and Earth do have a complex dialectical relationship. Marx unmasks religion as earthly and the political state as religious. The Dutch theologian Arend van Leeuwen (1972, p. 175) has formulated this dialectical relationship as follows:

The criticism of Heaven is the condition of the criticism of Earth; The criticism of Earth is the fundament of the criticism of Heaven.

To have a better understanding of this procedure we will read two extracts from *On the Jewish Question* from 1843. In the first, Marx develops his proposition about the separation between the human being and the citizen, in the second, he speaks about the religiosity of the political state.

Extract 1: the alienation between human being and citizen. (369-370)

This extract is about three topics:

- The relation between political emancipation and the emancipation of Jews.
- Marx' criticism of political emancipation
- The difference between political emancipation and human emancipation.

Marx essay is a response to an article of Bruno Bauer, who represents a view that is still often heard: the best reaction to the tension between state and religion is the suppression of religion. For Bauer, emancipation, or the acquisition of equal rights, is only possible if believers – Jews in this case – renounce their religion. Real political emancipation means the end of religion. So the vital question for Bauer is: how to get rid of religion?

Surprisingly, Marx does not agree with Bauer. He thinks Bauer is mistaken by confusing political emancipation with human emancipation. Political emancipation does not yet emancipate human beings from religion. Marx points to the United States as proof: the only secular state in his time was still very religious. We could point to our own societies as well to support Marx on this. Marx does not agree with the idea still living with a lot of liberals and socialists or social democrats, that the veritable modern society is a society without religion.

According to Marx, political emancipation means that the state is secular, not having a religious attitude with regard to religion. The same goes for all other social elements.

Den Widerspruch des Staats mit einer bestimmten Religion, etwa dem Judentum, vermenschlichen wir in den Widerspruch des Staats mit bestimmten weltlichen Elementen, den Widerspruch des Staats mit der Religion überhaupt, in den

Widerspruch des Staats mit seinen Voraussetzungen überhaupt. (p.352-353)

Political Emancipation means that the State maintains political relations with all particular elements in society. The State has become a Public Affair, representing the common good. Not one particular element is favoured. The principle of equality is at the heart of political emancipation.

But: this doesn't mean that these particular elements stop to exist. The private realm is very real: property, family, labour. To be able to represent the common good, the state has separated itself from society. It does not represent the interests of one group in particular, like the Christians, the Richs or the Nobility, but it represent the general interest. This means that the private is no longer political, but it still constitutes the precondition for the State. Without the private, there would be no State.

The State has abstracted itself from the real existence of its citizens and the citizens have handed over the political function to the state. As a consequence, the individual is split into two beings: one is the very real and particular member of the civil society (bourgeois); the other is abstract and political: the citizen. (citoyen)

Bauer does not see this cleavage, and that is why he is expecting something from the State that it cannot do: realising human emancipation, since it has only power over the political domain. That is: Marx thinks it is a delusion to think that the State in its actual form can realise not only political equality, but also social equality.

This cleavage was born together with the political state during the French Revolution and it is still defining our society. This is the cleavage between the political and the social, between the general and the particular, and between true and real, and ideal and practice. In Marxist terms: the cleavage between *citoyen* and *bourgeois*.

This perception is not new, Marx has learned this antithetical thinking from Hegel, who explained the period of terror after the French Revolution as a consequence of the strong tension between the abstract revolutionary ideal and the specific content of the Revolution. But whereas Hegel speaks of a *Weltgeist*, that has to be alienated from itself to be able to progress, Marx is talking about the real, private human being. For him, it is not a matter of a dialectic of the spirit, but a human tragedy. For in the end it is not the State that creates the human Being, but the human being who creates the State. Political Emancipation

has separated the true human being from the real human being. This real human being, the bourgeois, member of civil society, is just like the religious human being estranged from himself. He has outsourced the very best part of himself to the State, just like the religious person has outsourced his very best part to God. On this point, Marx is following Feuerbach, who said that by being religious, human beings are projecting the very best of themselves outside themselves. But just like with Hegel, Marx takes it a step further by not only looking at this as an individual procedure, but also as a social and political procedure, which doesn't only occur regarding religion, but also regarding politics. Now we can see clearly Marx's criticism of political emancipation. In the extract, he says it like this:

Die politische Revolution löst das bürgerliche Leben in seine Bestandteile auf, ohne diese Bestandteile selbst zu revolutionieren und der Kritik zu unterwerfen.

In the end, the ideal of liberty and equality cannot be realised by an abstract State, in a political public domain; only the real people themselves can do this, by acting accordingly to their ideas and creating another practice. The overcoming of the cleavage within the human being, the victory over alienation: that is the real challenge for a movement for equal rights. Only then, human beings will be truly free. But, this cannot be done without having achieved political emancipation first. Historically spoken, the political emancipation accomplished by the French Revolution, was a necessary move.

Die politische Emanzipation ist allerdings ein großer Fortschritt, sie ist zwar nicht die letzte Form der menschlichen Emanzipation überhaupt, aber sie ist die letzte Form der menschlichen Emanzipation innerhalb der bisherigen Weltordnung.
(p.356)

However, we should not mistake the political emancipation for a complete project of human liberty and equality. We are only halfway. To project needs to be finished before we can speak of real liberty and equality. The movement who will accomplish the project, thus Marx, will break up the actual world order and turn it upside down, because it will start to realise the abstract ideal of the political State within the real social and economic relations. Here, we already have the Marx of the Communist Manifesto of five years later.

So, the final answer Marx gives to the question of his colleague Bauer: how to get rid of religion, sounds like this: in the same way as we will get rid of the State and of the modern shape of human alienation. Marx replaces Bauers question by a new one, that is entirely different: how can we end human alienation and the

inequality and injustice it brings?

To answer this, we have to look again at the relation between the criticism of Heaven and the criticism of Earth, but this time from another angle.

Extract 2: the religious character of the modern State.

This passage shows the conclusion of the debate between Marx and Bauer about the question whether or not political emancipation requires that Jews and other believers, have to renounce their religion. Bauer affirms this, Marx not.

For Marx, the relationship of the State with religion is the same as the relationship of the State with all particular elements in society, like property, family etcetera. The individual doesn't have to renounce all these things, stronger: he or she is not able to do so. They only lose their political meaning. A State can already be a liberal State, without the member of its society being truly free. (p. 351-353).

As a consequence, people lead a double life: one as a political sovereign being – their ideal, let's say heavenly existence. The other as a private citizen – their material, real, earthly existence. Marx says it like this in our excerpt:

Der politische Staat verhält sich ebenso spiritualistisch zur bürgerlichen Gesellschaft wie der Himmel zur Erde.

An important interjection: Marx makes a difference between Christian and religious. According to him, the Christian State of his time was in contradiction with itself. It was not really a State, because his relation to the particular elements in society was not really political, but theological. In the same time it was not really Christian. If the State wanted to realise Christianity, it would have had to abolish itself, like the New Testaments demands in some of its parts. (p. 359)

It must be clear that Marx analysis that the State has a religious character, doesn't concern the Christian, incomplete State, but the complete, modern and secular, State. In a certain way, this State has partly a Christian character, because it represents a certain stage of human development in which Christianity is the ideal conscience. (p.360) The democratic State realises the dream and the presupposition of Christianity, the sovereignty of the human being. But it does this only in part, separated from the real human being. (361) Exactly on this point is the State religious. Just like religion, the State is "the recognition of man in a roundabout way" (*Anerkennung des Menschen auf einem Umweg*, p.353) It is because of this religious character of the modern State, that people cannot be

asked or forced to renounce their religion. It would be unfair, because all members of the State are religious:

Religiös sind die Glieder des politischen Staats durch den Dualismus zwischen dem individuellen und dem Gattungsleben, zwischen dem Leben der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft und dem politischen Leben, religiös, indem der Mensch sich zu dem seiner wirklichen Individualität jenseitigen Staatsleben als seinem wahren Leben verhält, religiös, insofern die Religion hier der Geist der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, der Ausdruck der Trennung und der Entfernung des Menschen vom Menschen ist. (p.360)

To Marx, religion is a deficiency, an aberration, since it is the product of the self-estrangement of the human being. People are not religious by nature. In its modern shape, religion is the consequence of the nature of the political State. This is how criticism of religion becomes criticism of the State. Criticism of Heaven is the condition for criticism of Earth.

The whole issue of the paradox between the *bourgeois-citoyen* is caused by the religious character of the State. The *bourgeois* can only recognize his true human nature except through the citizen, by making a detour through the political State. Marx has transformed the theological questions of Bruno Bauer into worldly, earthly questions by saying that religion has the same relation to the State as the rest of the civil society. The theological problem of Bauer – the conflict between the Christian State and Judaism has been turned into a political problem: the conflict between the democratic State and the civil society.

This works like this: as soon as the criticism of religion has unmasked the real condition of the human being, he has to understand that he doesn't have any true reality, but that he is an illusory being.

Die Religion ist die phantastische Verwirklichung des menschlichen Wesens, weil das menschliche Wesen keine wahre Wirklichkeit besitzt. (Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie, p.378.)

In the modern world as it is now, religion has a right to exist, whether it is religion in its Christian, Jewish, Islamic or Political form. The only way Religion can be suppressed, is by changing the social conditions from which it emanates.

Marx doesn't believe in the liberal approach to religion, which puts religion politically and socially out of action by banishing it to private life. He does the exact opposite, by preserving the political aspirations of religion but taking them out of the religious sphere into the social struggle. Marx criticism of religion is

immanent criticism. He raises the religious vision of a world without suffering, in which peace and justice will reign, to a social and political level, to be able to realise it for all humankind. In other words, Marx is concerned about human emancipation instead of political emancipation.

How he looks at the State is similar. He unmaskes the State as religious. He shows the heavenly face of the Earth, as he has shown the earthly face of Heaven. The two criticisms are intertwined. The statement of Arend van Leeuwen I quoted before, has become more clear:

The criticism of Heaven is the condition of the criticism of Earth; The criticism of Earth is the fundament of the criticism of Heaven.

The 'condition' in the quote points to the false consciousness which gives the State a religious character. Marx is criticising Hegel here (through Bauer). Hegels Idea of the State as the Incarnation of the Absolute Spirit is, says Marx, in reality a mask behind which the real antithesis between *bourgeois* and *citoyen* is hidden.

The word 'fundament' points to this real antithesis, which Marx rejects as well. On the one hand he unmaskes a false consciousness and on the other hand he shows a wrong reality. De alienation is both heavenly and earthly.

Marx opposes the false consciousness by criticising the State and by unmasking it as religious. Image and reality (superstructure and substructure as he will call them later) confirm each other. (Van Leeuwen p.159) The circle has been closed.

Conclusion

The ambitious assignment Karl Marx has given himself is to break the circle of heaven and earth by giving people a true reality. Criticism of religion cannot stop by shattering illusions, which people need to be able to bear their difficult life. Criticism therefore has to be follow by the changing of reality.

Criticising the political emancipation and the French Revolution means really to accomplish this Revolution by giving the abstract ideal a reality. But this reality asks for a new revolution, which will cancel out the French Revolution. The new Revolution is about reconciling the cleavage the French Revolution has created, the one between the *bourgeois* and the *citoyen*.

The bourgeois has to become more political, more idealistic you could say. He has to think more about the common good and less about his own interest. But this can only turned out well if the *citoyen* becomes more real, more social, by giving

his ideals a practice and not only realising them on an abstract political level. It is not enough to change the political structures. The real conditions of our existence have to be changed. After all: who changes the earth, will also change heaven. And who criticizes heaven, also criticizes the earth.

This is how Karl Marx criticises the French Revolution, without dismissing her. He has shown that the European Enlightenment is everything but a finished project. It is a semi-finished product which leaves a lot to be desired. Especially modern Thinkers, adepts of the French Revolution like Karl Marx, knew about this.

Marx gives account of the historical situation in which the French Revolution took place, he analyses its limits and asks himself what is needed for the promises of the French Revolution to be redeemed. In this way he prevents that liberty, equality and fraternity become themselves abstract symbols without reality, in other words: religious concepts.

This attitude seems to be useful in the actual debate on religion and Islam. Who criticises religion with a plea of equality and liberty, should take the historical and political context of that religion into account and should also be aware of the limitations of the ideals of political emancipation. Those who manifest their support of Western Values as the answer to all kind of evil that strikes our world, should be careful not to defend abstract ideals as if those are the reality itself. By pretending that freedom and equality are not only ideals in our society, but completed accomplishments, find themselves guilty of a false reconciliation. Their criticism of religion consequently becomes religious.

Which image does best represent the state of our European Values?



Images: Philip McIntyre

If we follow Marx, those Values do not appear as a shiny, but impenetrable

monument, but more like a temporary shelter of some dwellers in time (the hut has a text of Heidegger written on it), who have to choose their position and their Values time after time.

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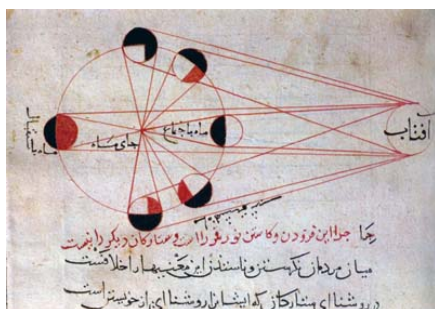
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This is the text of a lecture at Queens University Belfast, July 2016.

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Muslim Calvinism - Internal Security and The Lisbon Process In Europe



The European Social Survey Data, and Internal Security in Europe

Muslim Calvinism systematically evaluates the freely available data, contained in international open sources, such as the European Social Survey, on the problems of internal security, and social policy in Europe. The book is the attempt to try to present an interpretation pattern for the complex reality of poverty; social exclusion, religious and societal values, and day to day contact of different population groups in Europe with the law.

The optimistic results of this study are in line with recent very sophisticated and advanced quantitative research results, especially by authors from the neo-liberal school of thinking, who maintain that instead of engaging in a culturalist discourse about the general “disadvantages” of Islam, Europe rather should talk about economic-growth-enhancing migration, property rights, discrimination against minorities on the labor markets, and that by and large, Islam is well compatible with democracy and economic growth (see also Noland M. (2004), Noland M. (2005), Noland M. and Pack H. (2004), Pettersson Th. (2006), Pryor F. (2006), Soysa I. De and Nordas R. (2006), and Tausch A. (2003)). If there is anything as “integration deficits” of the Muslim communities in Europe vis-à-vis the law, defined in this study along indicators of document fraud as well as indicators of lack of trust in the police and in European institutions, these deficits are caused rather by market imperfections and market failures in the European political economy, largely characterized by state intervention, and not by any intrinsic destabilizing or simply “evil” “character traits” of Muslims.

In many ways, the polarizing events in France are a kind of laboratory and testing ground for our theories – high state sector involvement, a mediocre Lisbon performance, and a high, and increasing poverty among the country’s Muslims, which all contribute to rising social tensions, violence and protest in the „banlieus”.

In general, social policy is being influenced in a variety of ways by various forms of criminal behavior in society. Massive tax evasion, for example, will lower the tax base from which social expenditures have to be financed. Massive illegal claims of social benefits would lower the expenditure base, which could be handed out to the real needy in society, and document forgery will not only be of concern to the police, but also to the social policy administrators at state, regional or local government level.

In its design, the European Social Survey (ESS), which is the fourth pillar of data collection by the European Commission – besides Eurostat, Eurobarometer, and the European Foundation for the Study of Living Conditions surveys – does take

the most frequent patterns of day-to-day criminality into account, and flatly asks people whether or not they were involved over the last years in activities like

- Falsely claiming government benefits
- Insurance fraud
- Kept change
- Misused/altered card/document
- Paid cash with no receipt

The ESS surveys, based on truly representative, standard questionnaires in the countries of the EU-27, the European Economic Area (EEA), EFTA, the Ukraine and Israel, since the year 2002 also ask people in a two-year rhythm whether or not they trust national and European institutions, such as by the questions on

- trust in the European Parliament and
- trust in the police

Being a standard social scientific questionnaire, people are also asked about a very great number of background variables, such as employment status, religion, income, household size etc.

Apart from presenting data from the European Social Survey, we evaluate and compare our research results to the best of our knowledge with other research materials, derived from cross-national political science and value research. Thus, a variety of results and methods will be presented to our readers - aggregations of our survey results at the national level, cross-national Microsoft Excel comparisons of these survey results with cross-national political science data; SPSS factor analyses of the opinion and civic culture structure of the totality of Muslims and non-Muslims in all of Europe, multiple regressions of the determinants of their trust in the police, in democracy, and in personal happiness, and a re-linking of our "Muslim Calvinist" results with new and as yet unpublished European and global level data about the shadow economy (provided by the European Social Survey), migration, Islam, and national well-being.

At the end of this journey of rigorous quantitative political science, we arrive at the conclusion that Islamophobia is baseless, and that European Muslims; above all, deserve economic freedom, markets and respect.

From the very outset, the authors are well aware of the enormous ethical and moral issues linked to such a type of investigation.

At a time, when in more and more countries of the European Union outright xenophobic or racist practice and slogans seem to be on the increase, the

motivation to look into the patterns of social exclusion and internal security are manifold. In the dark days of the world depression and the Second World War, empirical social science was born. Its early development was driven by the desire to confront authoritarian tendencies and authoritarian regimes. More than 80 years after the early path-breaking investigations by researchers like Gabriel Abraham Almond, Harold D. Lasswell and Paul Lazarsfeld and their associates, our investigation asks very simple questions about the great who, what, to whom, when, with what effects, and why from the publicly and freely available pan-European data collection, the ESS, and other openly available international sources. What about poverty of the Muslim and the non-Muslim populations in Europe? Is Islam a threat or in reality even an asset to the European social scene? Do Muslims in reality share the same concerns about jobs, security, employment, democracy, as their non-Muslim European counterparts? What are the effects of poverty on conditions that lead people into conflict with the law? Is there a relationship between the overall aims of European social policy, like the now failed famous "Lisbon targets" to make Europe by 2010 the world's leading economy, and the social exclusion of Europe's Muslim populations? Is it state sector intervention, which improves the social situation of the Muslim populations in Europe, or is it rather state sector patronage, which excludes thousands and thousands of European Muslims from productive employment and ultimately drives them into the shadow economy, and possibly into wider conflicts with the law? And when, and why?

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Arno Tausch, Christian Bischof & Karl Mueller - [Muslim Calvinism](#) - Internal Security and the Lisbon Process in Europe - ISBN 978 90 5170 995 7

Comments:

The book "Muslim Calvinism: Internal Security and the Lisbon Process in Europe" provides a new and challenging scientific analysis about Muslims and non-Muslims in Europe and their trust in policy, democracy and personal happiness; a challenging book for all interested readers, especially with the focus of the Muslim and non-Muslim policy in Europe.

Prof. Dr. Dr.h.c.mult. Friedrich Schneider Johannes Kepler, University of Linz
Department of Economics

Die Idee, daß Moslems wegen ihres Glaubens einzigartig sind und eine Drohung

zu den europäischen Werten und zu den Aspirationen aufwerfen, wird gänzlich entlarvt. Professor Tausch sollte für das Holen der systematischen Analyse beglückwünscht werden, um eine allgemeine Darlegung zu betreffen, die vom grossen Fall, von den jingoist Mitteln, von einer nervösen Öffentlichkeit und von den opportunistic Politikern gefahren wird.

Indra de Soysa (PhD), Professor Dept. von der Soziologie-und politische Wissenschaft norwegischen Universität der Wissenschaft und der Technologie (NTNU) N-7491 Trondheim, Norwegen

Das Buch liefert ein faszinierendes Profil der moslemischen Gemeinschaften von Europa, basiert auf einer breiten Reihe Sozialwissenschaft Daten und forscht das Problem ihrer Sozial-, ökonomischen und politischen Integration in Europa nach. Die Autoren sehen den Zustand der moslemischen Integration in Europa als Art Lackmusaussage für den Erfolg oder den Ausfall der Entwicklung des europäischen Anschlusses und seiner Lissabon Strategie. Indem sie Defizit in der Integration von einer von Minoritäten Europas überprüfen, können sie auf Defizit in der gegenwärtigen Entwicklung des europäischen Projektes zeigen. Breit sprechend, ist das ein Defizit in der Entwicklung von einem Sozialeuropa. Ähnlich einer neuen Studie durch das Bertelsmann Stiftung, argumentiert das Buch, daß es ein Fehler ist, zum von Relationen mit moslemischen Gemeinschaften als nichts zu behandeln aber Polizei und Sicherheit Problem und zu Islamophobia führt, und hebt den Wert der Sozial- und ökonomischen Maße hervor. In übereinstimmung mit der Theorie von Gerechtigkeit durch Rawls, nimmt moslemisches Calvinismus durch Tausch und Teilnehmer die Ansicht, daß die Gesellschaft von Europa nicht eine gerechte Gesellschaft sein kann, wenn sie Gerechtigkeit bis eine seiner benachteiligten Minoritäten tun nicht kann.

Gernot Koehler, Professor emeritus, Sheridan Hochschule, Oakville, Kanada.