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HOW POWER CORRUPTS

By Ricardo Blaug

For democrats, we do not manage our leaders well. Be they, Members of Parliament or investment bankers, they endlessly misbehave. Ask anyone if they agree with Lord Acton's observation that 'power corrupts', and they will nod knowingly. Then they will offer other examples, and perhaps a caveat. Before long they are holding forth on one of the classic problems of politics.

Corruption by power occurs so frequently we are barely surprised by it. Mad kings, psychotic dictators, insane warlords and self-satisfied politicians all attest to our collective inability to manage our leaders. On a smaller scale, and across our daily lives, most offices have their petty tyrants, families their martinets and children's playgrounds their little emperors. Corruption by power causes widespread suffering, organisational mission drift, wasted effort and inefficiency. This is why it is not enough to describe corruption merely in terms of personal financial gain or promoting one's friends. What we are here considering is a change in personality, an inflation of the self, a deep and moral degeneration. We see this when our leaders speak to camera. They are not lying when they say they are uniquely qualified to lead, and that they alone are all that hold us from disorder. They really believe it.

Gandhi said, 'Possession of power makes men blind and deaf', Dewey, that 'all special privilege limits the outlook of those who possess it.' Corruption by power is an inability to see, a disorder of perception. It occurs when holding power over others changes the way we think. Organisational privilege, and indeed, unequal status of almost any kind, makes some things invisible.

When a colleague is promoted and begins to change, we say that 'power has gone to his head'. We watch warily as his confidence increases, he becomes more interested in 'organisational goals' and more irritated by his subordinates. As the arrogance sets in, we notice that he increasingly thinks what is good for him is good for the organisation; indeed, he begins to think he is the organisation; that it exists through him alone. Now surrounded by 'yes men', he becomes isolated and cannot be approached or questioned. Increasingly defensive, separated, casually cruel and reckless,

he is utterly convinced of his own abilities, and so becomes dangerous. Like a miniature Caligula, Hitler or Stalin, like Thatcher, Blair and Mubarak, from this point on he will need to be removed, probably by force.

When we ask *how* power corrupts, we partly ask 'in what way does it corrupt?' but also, 'what makes it happen?' To the first, we can answer: it corrupts by distorting our perception. The few studies that look at the problem suggest that these distortions include a:

- growing *personal aggrandisement*, arrogance and loss of control
- progressive *contempt* for subordinates, suspicion and arbitrary cruelty
- gradual *separation* from others and choice of advisors who always agree
- total *lack of awareness* that any corruption is happening at all.

Of these symptoms, it is perhaps that last that is most troubling, for it makes the other three very difficult to treat. The corrupted leader, be it of a country, an organisation or a family, becomes blinded by power, angered by those who point to what he cannot see and so unable to correct his mistakes. To criticise him is thus to risk one's life or career. If he is to be removed, we must overcome our fear and lose the benefits of a quiet life. And so we try to tolerate him, to get by. It's true he treats us like fools, and accuses us of shirking responsibility; true also that we never know when he will explode and punish. There is little point in trying to mend our organisation, as he does not listen. There is no appreciation of our efforts, and to survive, one must learn to watch him carefully. So, gradually, we become alienated, passive, dependent and lost in a world of *his* making. As he expands, we shrink back. In this way, we become collaborators, and power corrupts both leaders and followers.

Now we inhabit a completely dysfunctional organisation. We are no longer oriented to the common good, but to meeting the corrupted leader's individual needs. The knowledge of subordinates is wasted; the leader cannot learn and although circumstances continue to change, we remain firmly stuck. Sooner or later, the castle will fall, to be rebuilt by yet another leader who will repeat the process. In this way, hierarchies replicate themselves: spoiling, wasting, separating and finally

collapsing – with suffering meted out at every turn.

From this, we gain three lessons. First, that hierarchy is a dangerous way to organise collective activity. It threatens the corruption, by power, of both leaders and subordinates. This lesson has been well learned by many, for today, we mistrust our political representatives and our managers. It is for this reason that people smile knowingly and nod when asked if power corrupts. It is also why liberal democracy learned to separate political power, and to restrain it with institutional 'checks and balances'. Hierarchy must be handled with great care, its costs closely monitored, for it has a strong tendency to separate, corrupt and to try to maintain itself beyond its usefulness. We are thus suspicious of hierarchy, and rightly so.

Yet now we confront a second, and entirely contradictory, lesson, for it seems that hierarchy cannot be avoided. Surely, a ship needs a captain, and an army, bereft of a chain of command, is chaotic. Real democracy is a nice idea, but it takes too many meetings. It's all just talk, and eventually, a leader will emerge anyway. Power corrupts, but we will always need the efficiency that, apparently, only hierarchy can deliver.

In this, of course, we are mistaken. Most collective activity is not in fact organised hierarchically, but rather by informal networks and decentralised markets. In addition, hierarchy can be carefully managed and its damaging tendencies reduced. Here we arrive at a third lesson: that the best way to manage hierarchy is democracy.

In a democracy we choose and limit our leaders. Smart citizens are those that choose with care, and only when such choices become necessary, when circumstances require specialist knowledge or ability. The ones we choose are those we trust: those who understand the temptations of corruption, and who agree to do what they are told. Uncorrupted citizens appoint their

leaders for only short periods, and watch them throughout like hawks. The general public make excellent leaders, and the more we alternate between leading and following, the more we learn. Methods by which we manage the negative effects of hierarchy, yet use it carefully when it suits us, are deeply democratic. Though usually hidden by the long cult of leadership, there are many excellent and practical examples of such democratic control. They can be found throughout the history of republicanism, the labour and cooperative movements, in democratic activism and community organising. In republican Rome before the emperors, victorious generals were accompanied by a slave, who, among the adulation and tumult, repeatedly whispered in their ear: 'remember you are mortal'. In ancient Athens, citizens demanded that their chosen leaders return to the assembly at the end of their period in authority, there to publicly answer for their actions. Today, we should develop and practice methods that actively manage those who act in our name, and prevent the formation of a settled, corrupt and self-regarding political elite. In this way, citizens avoid their own corruption and, in turn, that of their leaders.

Rousseau said, 'Once you have citizens, you have all you need.' What he meant was that citizens who are wide-awake are the best way to control the corruption of elites. So, for example, we have recently seen that while power corrupts, investment banking corrupts absolutely. Those responsible for our economic crisis really believe they are not to blame, though in truth, we allowed this to happen. Standing before global capitalism, the cult of leadership and our stunted representative democracy, we are helpless, frustrated and dependent. Elites act with impunity; we work in hierarchic organisations and mostly do what we are told. If leaders are corrupted into tyrants, citizens are corrupted into blind obedience. It is therefore worth remembering – when we are 'just doing our job' or ignoring what elected leaders do in our name - that the most serious wrongs most of us ever commit are seemingly minor 'crimes of obedience'. It is in this sense that we are all and regularly corrupted by power, either as power holders or as subordinates; often as both, switching

effortlessly between them as we turn from one person to another.

Again, to ask *how* power corrupts is to inquire not only 'in what ways does it do so', but also, 'how does it come about?' If corruption is a disorder of perception, what is its cause? Recent research into how the mind works gives us an important clue. Human thinking was once seen as a triumph of reason imposed on a 'buzzing, blooming confusion'. Now we know this to be incorrect. Neurobiology and cognitive science show that our real genius is our *ability to ignore*. When we walk, reach for an object, solve a problem, we do so by *selecting* what is important from the confusion that surrounds us. Human thinking has thus evolved to *simplify* the world, to filter information and make rapid assumptions. To do this, we use chunks of information, mostly unreflectively. These enable us to make rapid short cuts, solve problems and move quickly through the world. A simple example of this occurs when we greet another, shake a hand, ask how it's going. Our lives are made easier by learning these codes and processes, but easier still when they sink deeply into our minds. Now they become 'automated,' and operate beneath our awareness. When we stop at a red light, even though we are thinking of something else, we show our extraordinary ability to automate our thinking. In this way, we move effectively through a complex and changing world, and avoid being entirely overloaded by information. Sometimes, of course, we simplify by making assumptions too quickly, as for example, when we view others as stereotypes. When stereotypes become automated beneath awareness, used unthinkingly and with casual cruelty, we show that our ability to make cognitive shortcuts can sometimes be very dangerous indeed.

So it is with corruption by power. Upon promotion, you want to do things well, and the cult of leadership whispers to you, telling you how to do so, how to avoid failure, how to treat your new subordinates. You are elected, and brought into the elite village, taught its ways, wined, dined and given an expense account. You are working hard, holding responsibility and, every day, your relative power is recognised in the eyes of your subordinates. At the

same time, you are absorbing cognitive shortcuts from your new surroundings. As these ways of thinking become automated and sink beneath awareness, you become more arrogant, annoyed, distrustful of others, and bold. Now your constituents or employees fade into the background, only intruding when they complain or avoid responsibility. Gradually, you are separating. When someone suggests you are making a mistake, you hold it against her. Now you can look directly to camera and believe the nonsense you are saying to be true.

Corruption by power is a distortion of perception that operates beneath awareness. This is the case for both leaders and subordinates. Corrupted perception is a dangerous side effect of hierarchy, and also serves to maintain it, often well beyond its sell-by date. It can reduce leaders to petty tyrants, and subordinates to helpless followers. The stuck and separated hierarchies that clog our everyday organisational lives thus turn out to be parasitic on our innate tendencies to think in certain ways. As individuals, we benefit from our selective cognition, just as organisations benefit from the simplicity of hierarchy. But both have their costs, and both require us to drag our thinking back into consciousness, there to interrogate it. For this, discussion and disagreement are required, and the watchful eye of a suspicious public; which is precisely what democracy does best.

Corruption by power makes tyrants large and small, and in both our public and private lives. Yet the informed control of tyranny quickly makes us democratic citizens. We see them everyday, shouting, jumping and waving in the central squares of the world.

THE NEW MATERNAL STATE

Jessica Pykett on the gendered politics of governing through behaviour change

Is the state too much like your nanny, your dad, or your uncle? Which familial figure should the state be in relation to the cultivation of citizens and the appropriate extent of government regulation? And what are the political implications of these gendered metaphors for describing state practices? Governments have long been concerned with governing through changing behaviour: 'soft' or 'libertarian paternalism' denotes one increasingly popular idea about the state's role in contemporary liberal democracies.

Popular with the Obama administration, and in the UK with both New Labour and the Conservatives, soft paternalism is a mode of governing that aims to shape the contexts in which people make decisions, whilst increasing the range of these choices. Described in the influential book *Nudge* (Sunstein and Thaler, 2008) as a 'relatively weak, soft, and nonintrusive type of paternalism because choices are not blocked, fenced off, or significantly burdened', it is a distinctive settlement between state and citizen grounded in new cultural practices of governing through behaviour change.

The Cabinet Office document *Personal Responsibility and Changing Behaviour* (Halpern et al., 2004) discusses how psychological and economic theories can be used both to make public policy more efficient, and to change the relationship between state and citizen so that citizens have more responsibility for the delivery of public services: 'co-production'. Drawing explicitly on Sunstein and Thaler's libertarian paternalism, Halpern et al. outline the 'more subtle ways in which government might affect personal behaviour'. These include: entrenching habits; harnessing people's tendency to stick to their commitments; changing lifestyles and values; and cultivating willingness and motivation. The document identifies employment, health, crime and education as policy sectors for which such an approach would be especially appropriate. Initiatives such as exercise-promotion, anti-smoking, patient compacts, presumed consent for organ donation, acceptable behaviour contracts, tenants agreements, home-school agreements and parenting programmes are some of the vast range of initiatives, the document argues, that

a behaviour-change approach could make more effective.

At seminars, and in policy and discussion papers and highly influential reports from the Institute for Public Policy Research, the New Economics Foundation and other think tanks, psychological and behavioural theories are used to justify this shift to behaviour change and 'co-production': from Pavlov and Skinner's early work on stimulus-response and conditioning to the work of social theorists such as Bourdieu and Putnam on community and interpersonal behaviours. Texts from behavioural economics, psychology, marketing and business, and, to a lesser extent, social theory, appear to constitute a shared culture for policy-makers and 'opinion formers'. A relatively new field of 'neuroeconomics' is also rapidly becoming established: this makes potentially revolutionary claims about the use of neurosciences for measuring and predicting economic decision-making.

GENDERED ACCOUNTS

Yet these justifications for soft or libertarian paternalist forms of governing are based on insights from sometimes highly gendered accounts of human behaviour: feminist insights from economics, critical psychology, political theory and philosophy are notably absent from these approaches.

This omission perhaps explains why there is some confusion as to the precise lessons to be taken from psychology and the neurosciences about the brain, decision-making, and irrational behaviour. Thaler and Sunstein divide the brain into the 'automatic system' and the 'reflective system': they equate the former with gut feelings, and present the latter as the more sophisticated plane of conscious thought. Dan Ariely (*Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces that Shape our Decisions*, 2008) sees the emotional part of the brain as a driving force that we can overcome to make better decisions. Robert Cialdini sees our automatic side as one which can be easily exploited by 'compliance professionals: sales operators, fund-raisers, recruiters, advertisers and others'. Malcolm Gladwell (*Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, 2005) claims that people have two distinct minds, while Taleb (*Fooled by Randomness*, 2007; 2004) claims that

"Human behaviour is not simply the result of intuitive, affective modes of action arising within the brain prior to action; rather, it is shaped by deeply ingrained social norms, expectations and aspirations pertaining to the specific historical and discursive experiences of both men and women alike."

we have three brains: 'The very old one, the reptilian brain that dictates heartbeat and that we share with all animals; the limbic brain center of emotions that we share with mammals; and the neocortex, or cognitive brain, that distinguishes humans and primates.'

All these accounts challenge the thesis of 'rational economic man'. This explains why feminist economists have largely welcomed the developing discipline of behavioural economics. Appreciating the diversity of human behaviour, espousing the universalising tendencies of rational choice theory, and incorporating intuition, emotion, personal relationships and social cognition into economic models are all seen as complementary to the feminist project in economics (see, for example, Ferber and Nelson, *Feminist Economics Today: Beyond Economic Man*, 2003). Behavioural economics is said to embrace a mode of economic thought formerly denigrated as feminine and 'soft', and to lend itself to soft forms of state paternalism.

However, this complimentary relationship is decidedly one-way: important contributions from feminist theory are clearly missing from behavioural economics. Indeed, it could be argued that the behavioural economics favoured so much by UK policy-makers lacks any engagement whatsoever with feminist-inspired understandings of the relationship between brain and mind, emotion and reason, embodied behaviour and gendered, contextualised decision-making.

Feminist theory can shed new light in a number of areas on our understanding of governing through behaviour change, and on the inadequate accounts of human subjectivity provided by the promoters

of behavioural modes of governing. One such area is our understanding of gendered, embodied behaviours.

EMBODIED BEHAVIOUR

That human behaviour is both embodied and gendered is hardly a novel insight. But it could be argued that those promoting soft paternalist policies in the UK have not fully realised the implications of understanding behaviour in this way. In relying heavily on neuroscientific accounts of the human mind and decision-making processes they ignore the discursive and historical context of embodied consciousness as an integral part of subjectivity and inter-subjectivity. To remedy this, we must turn, as Hilary Rose suggests, to an understanding of consciousness as 'changeable, embodied, recognisably composed of feeling, cognition and intentionality' – incorporating Marx's notion of false consciousness and its meaning in relation to the Black consciousness movement, feminist consciousness-raising and environmental consciousness (in Rees and Rose, eds, *The New Brain Sciences: Perils and Prospects*, 2004). Subjectivity is socially learnt in specific times and spaces.

Moreover, to talk of embodied subjectivity reflects the notion that knowing, decision-making and behaviour in this sense are associated with specific bodies, their historical-material circumstances and the political dynamics of social movements – rather than with an individualising project which seeks to locate 'free will', homosexuality and emotion in specific regions of the cerebral cortex. These contextual factors in turn constitute the subject positions we take up, and cannot be fully understood within the narrow frame of a neuroscientific approach to the brain.

Rose praises a new wave of scientists (Daniel Goleman, Antonio Damasio, amongst others) for their engagement with emotion and feeling; but she is shocked by their exclusion of feminist theorising. She argues that this exclusion obscures the social and environmental aspects of rationality. Discounting embodied subjectivity and our inter-subjective encounters with others from our understandings of behaviour thus demonstrates a failure to acknowledge the diverse gendered aspects of
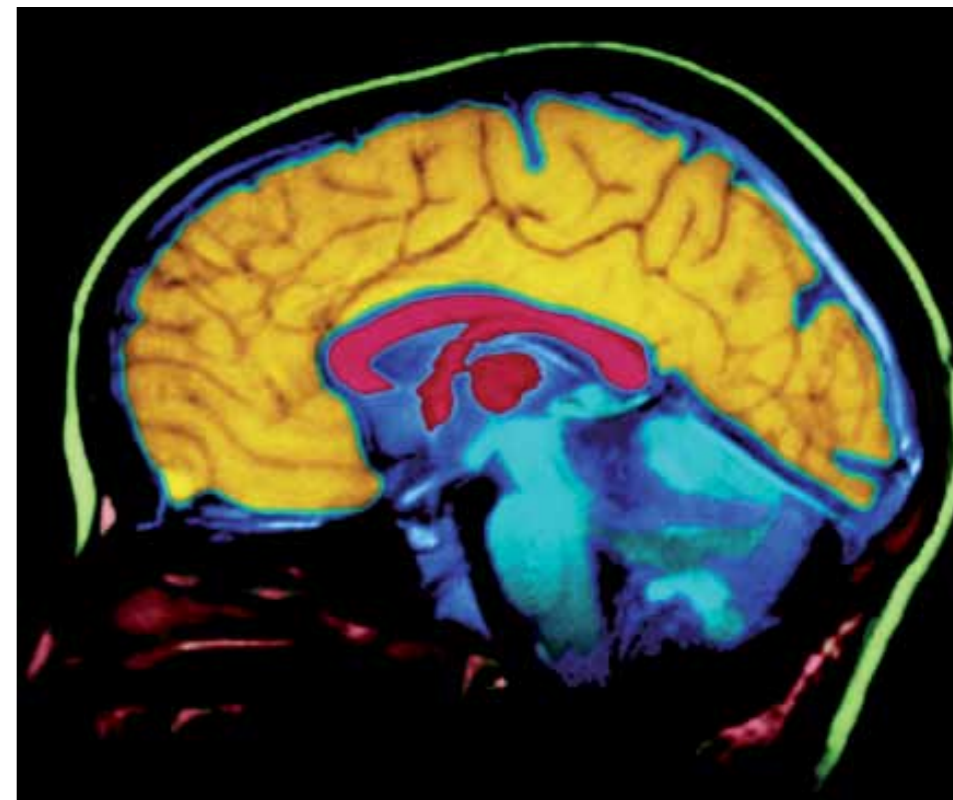
consciousness and decision-making. This is likely to lead to soft paternalist policies that are at best ineffective, and, at worst – as they seek to 'correct', govern or work through the irrational behaviours associated with the feminised emotional brain – perpetuate gender inequalities.

However, these observations do not mean that behavioural economics needs to be supplemented with an account of the distinctive nature of women's decision-making as determined by their biology. Rather, the assumptions underpinning soft paternalist policies must be problematised. Decision-making cannot be understood without consideration of long-running cultural processes as they are mediated through gendered bodies. Human behaviour is not simply the result of intuitive, affective modes of action arising within the brain prior to action; rather, it is shaped by deeply ingrained social norms, expectations and aspirations pertaining to the specific historical and discursive experiences of both men and women alike.

For some feminist scholars (for example, E. Wilson, *Psychosomatic: Feminism and the Neurological Body*, 2004), the neuroscientific lessons of authors such as Damasio (*Descartes' Error. Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*, 1994) are taken as evidence of the infinite possibility of affective, embodied human behaviour, said to operate outside of ideologies and belief systems (and thus are allied with a progressive, emancipatory feminism). However, for others, such theories are still equated with a biological essentialism (conveying automatic,

genetic behaviours), which feminists have for so long sought to challenge. Concerns about the political implications of an 'affective' account of behaviour have been the subject of much recent debate in human geography, as well as in political theory. For Pile, the false division between feminist accounts of emotion as expressed and representable, and 'non-representational' theorists' accounts of affect as located below cognition, consciousness and reflectivity, risks partitioning the mind—body into discrete sections – giving little sense of how the psyche or subjectivity are formed (*Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 35, 2010).

Others have pointed out the way in which Damasio's theories need to be understood as highlighting the enculturated aspects of corporeality – the impact of socially learned behaviours on the biophysical processes in the brain – rather than vice versa. The status of embodied behaviour 'after neuroscience' and its implications for a feminist politics are still a matter of significant debate;

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the certainty envisaged in the Cabinet Office's Personal Responsibility and Changing Behaviour now appears misplaced. Equally, there must still be a place for understandings of embodied experience as being shaped by material and discursive contexts, and by subjective and inter-subjective relations – such as to explain the constraints under which decisions are made and the cultures in which people's decisions are governed.

CONCLUSION

Looking through the lens of the maternal state opens up different questions about soft-paternalist cultures of governing. First, it scrutinises critically the biological claims used to inform such cultures and attempts to govern the irrational citizen through affective, bodily means. In social theory more generally, the turn to the body need not be accompanied by a return to a biological determinism that pays inadequate attention to the social, cultural and political contexts in which people make decisions.

Secondly, feminist perspectives challenge the certainty with which scholars and policy-makers draw out the policy and political implications of research in fields such as neurosciences, psychology and behavioural economics. Policy-makers and government strategists need to be aware of the incompatible political claims made in the name of neurosciences. More attention also needs to be paid to conflicting or inconsistent evidence coming from fields such as behavioural economics, psychology and neuroscience; and policy strategists would do well to engage with the emerging field of neuroethics, critical neuroscience, and with critical sociological accounts of so-called 'neuroliberalism'. Particular academic disciplines should not be elevated to a status which appears to be beyond ordinary (unscientific) critique. The political theorist Sharon Krause (*Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation*, 2008) argues that, far from being immanent, 'gut feelings' are shaped by long-running social values, learned attachments and ingrained habits that inform our emotional judgements. This analysis questions initiatives aimed at changing people's behaviour through affective means.

Thirdly, feminist perspectives on soft paternalism bring the social back into our analyses of governing practices. Attending to embodied difference requires understanding not simply the internal dynamics of the brain, but the experiences of being differently gendered, classed, 'able', raced, etc. as social processes of differentiation. There is a need for research into the implications of new modes of governing for our understanding of embodied subjectivity. The debt to feminist theory in this area should not go unacknowledged.

The political implications of research in behavioural economics, psychology and neuroscience are far from straightforward; and their use in the justification of behaviour change policies is a political manoeuvre. Findings from these fields could equally be exploited to argue for the re-focussing of government attention away from changing individual behaviour within the micro-contexts in which people make decisions, and towards changing the wider contexts in which behaviours are learnt over a much longer time-scale. A culture of governing based on mechanisms of soft paternalism therefore risks producing subjects with a narrow concern for self-reliance and self-improvement. It also cultivates a sense of the state as a behaviour-shaper rather than an arbiter of competing democratic claims. The gendered assumptions of soft paternalism, and the stark lack of engagement with feminist thought in this area, demonstrate that the democratic implications of governing through behaviour change still need to be unpacked.

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ARE WE EUROPEAN BY NATURE?

Thomas Moore on the dilemmas of European integration and the current financial crisis

Most students of politics don't concern themselves much with thoughts of a European Union liberated from the tyranny of 'national interest'. Yet when the United States encountered the dramatic events of 9/11, the European Union spoke with clarity and unity of purpose: EU heads of state and government, the presidents of the European Parliament and the European Commission, and the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy declared that 'the horrific terrorist attacks on the United States have shocked *our* citizens'.

We have become accustomed to enjoying the fruits of the European Union project in terms of four economic freedoms: the free movement of goods, of capital, of services and of people. But when the economic pendulum swings in an opposite direction to long-held beliefs about economic productivity and marketization we overwhelmingly revert back to 'national interest' as our reference point for understanding the financial crisis.

The problem with conceiving the European project exclusively in economic terms is that it overlooks how these four 'freedoms' possess a social, political and moral character. The European single market can be understood as a question of political economy – in which economic and political forces interact – but if we neglect the social dimension of the European project we lose the symbolic power of integration and forget how European identities are shaped through this project.

Historians of the European Union looking at the current financial crisis will undoubtedly document the retreat from the European and the return to the national. But we should be careful about erasing the successes of the European project in responding to the current fiscal crisis affecting Greece, Portugal, Ireland, and other countries. In February 2012 finance ministers from the Eurogroup agreed a financial rescue package for Greece which would provide 130bn until 2014.

Prime Minister David Cameron's call for a 'firewall to prevent contagion in the Eurozone' shows how metaphors reveal underlying political assumptions about the European financial crisis. To talk of 'contagion' suggests an understanding of the European financial crisis in which dysfunctional economies are riddled with disease, ready to poison the lifeblood of 'healthy' European economies. But is also suggests a broader trend towards a moralisation of the market within the European public sphere. A geopolitical assessment of the financial crisis brings out the worst in political leaders, linking economic performance to the general moral character of entire political communities.

This moralisation of market performance can be seen in Channel 4's *Go Greek for a Week* (broadcast in November 2011), which promised to offer British viewers a snapshot of the Greek mindset as 'three British families experience first-hand some of the causes of Greece's financial meltdown, from

hairdressers retiring aged 53 to surgeons enjoying favourable income tax rates'. Instead, it offered a crude assessment of the Greek national character, washed down with considerable vitriol about the work ethic of an entire people. What is missing from the discussion of the Greek crisis is an honest consideration of the philosophy of European integration: its function, its values and its potential to transform the European community. We undermine the European public sphere by reducing the current financial crisis to 'sovereign' debt.

In the European context, the mechanisms of response should allow considerable reflection on how we got here in the first place. In his most recent book, *The Enigma of Capital and the Crises of Capitalism*, David Harvey comments that '[w]hen capital encounters barriers or limits within a sphere or between spheres, then ways have to be found to circumvent or transcend the difficulty'. The current financial crisis both demonstrates that national economies are intrinsically global and reveals the fragility of regional expressions of capitalism. If Europe sneezes then Europe clearly has a cold.

It is important for European states to think through the question of how and why we got into the state we are in today. If we do this through discourses of nationalism then we overlook the underlying principles of political economy, especially the speculative nature of the market economy and how this implicitly relies upon the concept of trust.

The French sociologist Émile Durkheim provided an account of capitalism in which the social relations of the market were at the forefront of production and exchange. The growth of markets has not diminished the importance of the social in our understanding of life. Durkheim famously argued for the social regulation of the market. This social regulation included key moral principles that European economies might have reflected upon well before the current financial crisis: norms of justice must always inform the market; communal goods must always triumph over individual gains; profiteering should be secondary to professionalism and ethics; and the failure to regulate the economic domain will affect our moral habits in every other area of social life.

The problem with the current response to the financial crisis is that we still view European integration as a 'yes' or 'no' proposition. This has resulted in binary thinking on the European Union: either you are with us or against us. This logic has failed us in foreign policy (as the 'War on Terror' demonstrates) and will almost certainly sink Europe economically. This type of thinking is not sufficiently anchored in the institutional realities of the European Union. In many respects, the debate on European integration has too often been expressed as a debate between federalists and their critics. A naive cosmopolitanism has typically been offered in response to the brute claims of hardnosed realists when debating European integration. Prominent philosophers have defended the European project as bringing a post-national community. Jurgen Habermas has comprehensively defended the moral project of European integration, arguing that 'modern Europe has developed institutional arrangements for the productive resolution of intellectual, social and political conflicts'.

What is intriguing about the current European crisis is how European states have reverted to old forms of national diplomacy rather than imagining European responses to European problems. The European financial crisis arises from economic systems which are not particular to any one member state. There are differences in fiscal policy and welfare systems, but we should not overlook the global dimensions of the financial system. To reduce questions of sovereign debt to individual states alone will result in crooked thinking on the market. We impoverish our thinking by neglecting the European dimension of this sovereign debt. National economies must work together, ensuring that the European public sphere retains its moral value.

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Is democracy a luxury good that the global and European economy cannot afford – at least, given the exceptional character of the euro crisis?

It has been argued that the euro-crisis raises serious questions about democracy in the member states of the European Union (EU). The reason for these questions was the formation of governments headed by technocrats – first in Greece and then in Italy – following the forced removal of prime ministers viewed, suddenly, as weak and spineless.

In contrast with the popularly elected regimes they replaced – slow and feeble in the eyes of both the people and the international community – technocratic governments responded speedily to the crisis: they reassured the markets that something was being done to tackle economic uncertainty.

More importantly, technocratic governments embodied the promise of consensus, rationality, expertise and stability – all presented as key criteria for averting global recession, preventing the collapse of the euro, and securing the survival of the EU. What is portrayed as altogether less crucial in averting these catastrophic scenarios is democracy, understood as popular input and legitimacy.

This is precisely where the quandary surfaces for the European Union. If the survival of the euro and Europe requires speed and consensus, whatever the cost for democracy, then perhaps there is little space for democracy in the EU.

Of course, the argument that there is a democratic deficit in Europe is not new. Popular input into European affairs has always been a missing component of the European unification project, portrayed as an undertaking driven by an elite. However, there is a difference that present arguments are quick to capture. The difference is in the undertone. Whereas, in the not too distant past, what was at issue was the lack of popular input – the de facto absence of engagement with European processes on the part of its peoples, confirmed by one Eurobarometer poll after another - today it is the role of democracy (recast as surplus to requirements) that is the issue.

At least, this is what European policymakers pointed towards with the issuing of ultimatums and the rushed adoption of ever-stronger neoliberal stratagems. They spelled out that

democracy is a luxury good that the global and European economy cannot afford – at least not given the exceptional character of the moment. The euro crisis, then, touches on the most febrile of questions: might it be the case that democracy is simply incompatible with a supranational, non-state entity such as the EU?

To be sure, it can be argued that the way one understands democracy ultimately shapes the response to this 'incompatibility question'. However, as soon as we move onto the terrain of democracy, and examine the different positions involved, we notice a curious convergence. Both the proponents and opponents of representative democracy agree that what is currently happening in Europe in terms of democracy is simply 'unacceptable', to use the word of one commentator on Newsnight. Of course, their reasons differ. For the proponents of 'real democracy', who measure contemporary democracies against the Athenian ideal of self-rule, which involves having a direct say in the affairs of government, the problem is that European peoples (and even more so Greeks) have not willed the austerity measures imposed by Brussels. And this lack of say by the constituent power, a

lack of 'sovereign will' behind the neo-liberal measures adopted, reveals, in turn, that Europe and democracy (much like representative democracy for that matter) are incompatible.

It is perplexing in this context why the referendum proposed in October 2011 by the Papandreou government in Greece was greeted with such horror by the Greek left.

By contrast, for those content with institutions of representation and the party system, the problem is not the absence of grassroots involvement and support. Rather, it is the delay of elections, the main mechanism for conferring democratic legitimacy, that widens the gap between Europe (with its dictates) and democracy. (With the hurried formation of interim technocratic governments, elections have been the first casualty of the euro crisis.)

This curious convergence of opinion among proponents and opponents of representative democracy confirms the suspicion that democracy is under challenge on the Continent – or at least, it confirms the feeling that the euro crisis raises serious enough questions about democracy as to doubt the compatibility of an elite-driven European Union with a people-driven democratic process.

Yet, in another reading, this convergence might point to something else: the euro crisis does not open up questions about democracy in itself (at least, not directly and immediately); instead, it foregrounds questions about the sovereignty of the nation-state – which European member states have uncomfortably transferred to Brussels.

The reason why the sovereignty of the nation-state (and not democracy) takes centre stage in the face of the euro crisis is straightforward. States like Italy, and even more so Greece, have to consent not just to external interference in how they run their economy (which they have already consented to through membership in the euro) at the price of popular support for their elected governments. They must also consent to immediate and visible interference in their internal political affairs. The visibility of this interference, its public staging, worrying to European eyes, is precisely what leads to the confusion of questions about national sovereignty with questions of democracy – or, to be more precise, with questions about national democracy.

Indeed, references to the 'nation' and the 'national' are telling in present debates. They confirm that the problem has more to do with national sovereignty than with democracy. To see this, we need only reread the familiar argument through a 'national' lens (dominant, for instance, in the Greek press). It goes something like this: if Greeks (and Italians), the unquestionable constituent power, cannot decide for themselves, and they cannot immediately elect their representatives, then there is certainly a problem with democracy (as a result of membership in Europe). But is it really a problem with democracy per se, or is it a problem with the sovereignty of the nation state, visibly undermined as a result of the euro crisis?

Certainly, it can be argued that the link between democracy and the nation is so intimate as to be impossible to distinguish between the two. However, it is one thing to affirm a connection between two conceptually separate entities, the nation and the body politic, and quite another to take the two as interchangeable, and then infer from this that the European Union undermines democracy. This is far too familiar, and far too predictable.

Once more, 'postnational' Europe stumbles against the 'nation' and related terms – the nation-state, national sovereignty, national democracy. More worryingly, the implication of this situation, which drives us to conflate questions of nation-state sovereignty with democracy, is that it obscures the really worrisome development - the hailing of the forced removal of unpopular, yet popularly elected, representatives as if this were a democratic victory.

Paulina Tambakaki is a Senior Lecturer in Political Theory in the Department of Politics and International Relations. An earlier version of this article appeared in *Open Democracy* in November 2011.

"They spelled out that democracy is a luxury good that the global and European economy cannot afford – at least not given the exceptional character of the moment. The euro crisis, then, touches on the most febrile of questions: might it be the case that democracy is simply incompatible with a supranational, non-state entity such as the European Union?"

DEPARTMENT NEWS

STAFF NEWS

◀ DIBYESH ANAND'S

monograph *Hindu Nationalism in India and the Politics of Fear* came out in 2011. In June 2011 he organised a conference at the University of Westminster on 'Democracy and Dissent in China and India'; in June 2012 he hosted a public lecture by the Dalai Lama at the University.

◀ ROLAND DANNREUTHER

is a member of the Research Enhancement Framework Politics and International Studies sub-panel.

◀ PATRICIA HOGWOOD

won the Political Studies Association (PSA) Politics Journal Prize for best paper published in *Politics* in 2011 for '"How happy are you…?" Subjective well-being in East Germany twenty years after unification' (*Politics* 2011 31(3): 148-58. In 2011 she was made a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for German Studies (IGS), University of Birmingham.

◀ RICHARD BARBROOK

will be a keynote speaker at the *International Film and Television Festival*, Cologne, Germany, in October 2012. During 2012 he has co-organised two exhibitions on the political implications of games and simulations: *Games People Play,* Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World, Haldon Forest Park, Exeter; and *Invisible Forces,* Furtherfield Gallery, McKenzie Pavilion, Finsbury Park, London.

◀ AIDAN HEHIR'S

book *The Responsibility to Protect: Rhetoric, Reality and the Future of Humanitarian Intervention* is published by Palgrave (2012).
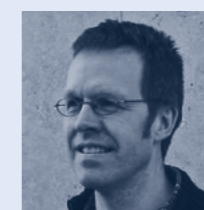
◀ SIMON JOSS

has been awarded a £115,000 Leverhulme Trust international research network grant. The three-year network, 'Tomorrow's City Today', which is led by the University of Westminster, will focus on the international comparison of policy frameworks for urban sustainability.

NEW STAFF MEMBERS

The department is delighted to be welcoming two new postdoctoral teaching and research fellows in September 2012. They are Matt Fluck, who obtained his PhD from the University of Aberystwyth in international relations theory; and Jamie Allinson, who obtained his PhD from the University of Edinburgh and is a specialist on the politics of the Middle East.

DPIR is also very pleased to announce that Graham Smith has been appointed Chair in Politics. Professor Smith, who joins DPIR from the University of Southampton, currently has two main research interests: democratic innovations – institutions designed to increase and deepen citizen participation in the political decision-making process – which builds on the theoretical approach he developed in *Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation* (Cambridge University Press, 2009); and how third sector organisations respond to environmental problems, in particular climate change.

STUDYING AT DPIR

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For more than 20 years the University of Westminster has been a leader in providing quality undergraduate programmes in politics and international relations. We offer our students a supportive and encouraging academic environment, reflected in the exciting range of modules within the undergraduate programme. Our modules are both policy-oriented and prepare you for professional life.

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- Politics and International Relations BA Honours
- International Relations and Development Studies BA Honours

We are committed to research-led teaching and have research strengths in three areas: the theory and practice of democracy; security studies and international relations; and environmental politics.

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- International Relations and Democratic Politics MA
- International Relations and Security MA

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Our Masters courses will appeal to those who wish to acquire knowledge and develop critical skills in order to pursue a career in international organisations, business, or to progress to a doctoral degree.

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For detailed information about our Masters programmes visit
westminster.ac.uk/internationalrelations

PhD Programme

The Department has a highly regarded MPhil/PhD programme with over 25 research students enrolled. These high quality students are attracted to the work of DPIR's internationally renowned staff. Staff members' research covers various geographical regions and a broad spectrum of interests in political theory, international relations, cultural studies, and media and civil society, among others. Several of our students have received scholarships from both British and international funding bodies.

Current PhD topics include:

- Nationalism and identity
- Anti–terrorism legislation and the future of dissent in the Muslim community
- EU integration and subjectivity
- The construction of the discourse of secularization in the Turkish Republic, 1924–45
- Statebuilding in the Balkans
- Reinventing democracy in the era of the internet

FOR INITIAL ENQUIRIES ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT'S MPHIL/PHD PROGRAMME EMAIL:

Dr Maria Holt
E: m.c.holt01@westminster.ac.uk

For more detailed information visit
westminster.ac.uk/dpir

DPIR EVENTS

CSD HOSTS A RANGE OF EVENTS AND ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES, INCLUDING:

The CSD Seminar, at which speakers from CSD and other academic institutions – in the UK and abroad – present papers on a wide range of subjects in politics, international relations and cultural studies. Recent topics and speakers have included:

The Resilience of Democratic Institutions in Wartime
Professor John Owens, University of Westminster

Constructing Security Publics: The Re-Securitization of Maritime Piracy, 1980–2008
Dr Christian Bueger, Greenwich Maritime Institute

Socialism, Biopolitics, Futurity
Dr Claudia Aradau, King's College, London

Mapping the Community Arts: Artistic Autonomy, Repressive Tolerance and Pastoral Power
Dr Pascal Gielen, Groeningen University

The annual CSD Encounter
at which CSD members and outside academics discuss in detail the work of a leading thinker in his/her presence. The 2011 Encounter was with Judith Butler.

The annual C R Parekh Lecture
The 2012 lecture was delivered by His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama (see page 16).

The Westminster International Relations Forum
Recent topics and speakers have included:

The R2P: A Moral Responsibility in a Morally Bankrupt World?
Dr Adrian Gallagher, University of Leicester

Is Russia a Revisionist Power?
Professor Richard Sakwa, University of Kent

The Atlanticist Vision in a post-American World
Chris Coker, London School of Economics and Political Science

From Liberal Peace to Hybrid Peace: Statement and Resistance in post-Dayton Bosnia
Outi Keranen, London School of Economics and Political Science

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT EVENTS ORGANISED BY DPIR
Contact Susie Robson: s.robson@westminster.ac.uk

The Department of Politics and International Relations (DPIR) is a dynamic department which includes over 20 members of staff and more than 500 undergraduate and postgraduate students. With an active and dynamic teaching and research profile, DPIR has a growing and increasingly popular undergraduate programme and offers degrees in Politics, International Relations and Development Studies. It also hosts the Centre for the Study of Democracy (CSD).

There are three Masters degrees with the latest addition being the International Relations and Democratic Politics MA. Although research at DPIR covers a wide range of topics and issues we have particular research strengths in three areas:

- Critical democratic theory and practice. This research is carried out in the Centre for the Study of Democracy. Current research projects include agonism; citizenship and democracy; Islam and democracy; and international democratic state-building
- Security and International Relations The principal research includes international security studies theory, intervention and state-building, borders and identities in Europe, and the international politics of Russia, China and India
- Environment, Resources and Development Research in this area is incorporated in the Governance and Sustainability Programme and includes work on eco-cities, sustainable housing and energy politics.

The Department is committed to external engagement and has an active programme of seminars, workshops and conferences, details of which can be found on **westminster.ac.uk/dpir**
DPIR is located in the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Languages (SSHL).

THE BULLETIN

The CSD Bulletin aims to inform other university departments and public organisations, and our colleagues and postgraduate and undergraduate students at the University of Westminster, of DPIR's research activities.

Comments on the content of this Bulletin, or requests to receive it, should be directed to:

CSD Bulletin
Department of Politics and International Relations
32-38 Wells Street
London W1T 3UW

As with all DPIR publications and events, the opinions expressed in these pages do not necessarily represent those held generally or officially in DPIR or the University of Westminster.

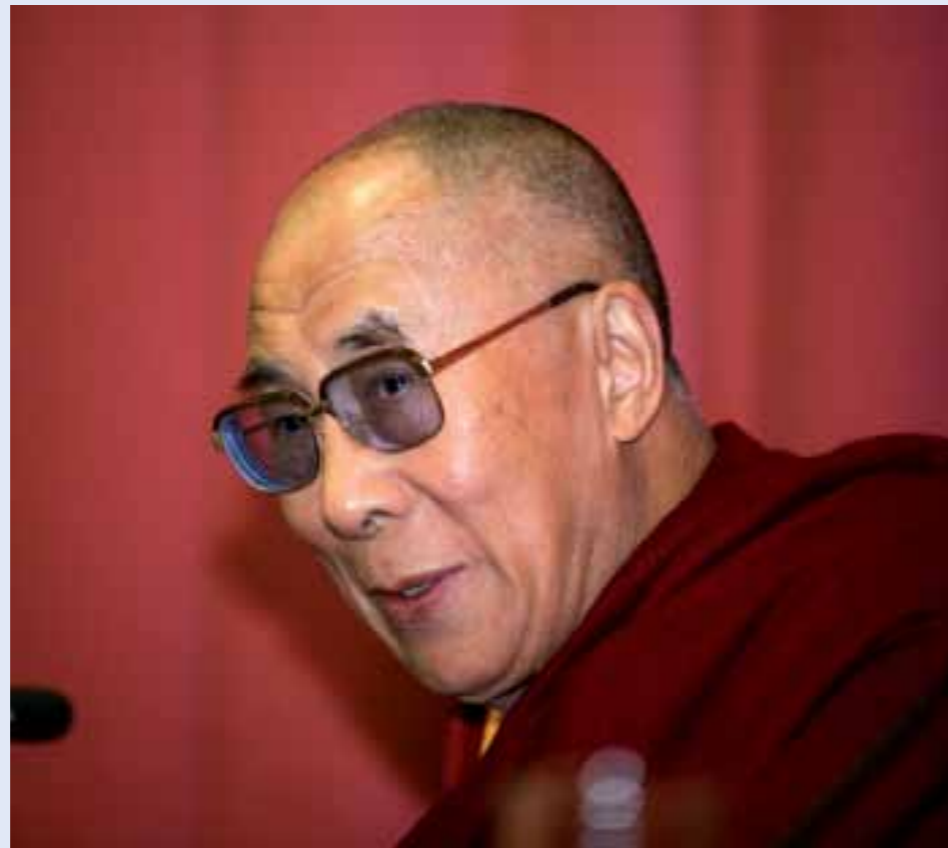# THE DALAI LAMA AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER

Dibyesh Anand

In contemporary times when democracy as an idea has been endlessly used and misused by politicians and institutions, analysed by thinkers, and fought for by the activists, it is rare to come across a simple, but genuinely heart-felt, defence of the values of democracy.

What makes this defence remarkable is that it has been made by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso – a person who is regarded as a god but calls himself a simple monk; a symbol of a nation who has resigned from all political roles; a venerated religious leader who as a global icon preaches compassion and secular ethics; a leader who, even though his country, Tibet, has been under Chinese occupation for over half a century and the Chinese government shows no sincere commitment to negotiate, remains committed to working for Tibet's autonomy within the People's Republic of China.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama delivered the Department of Politics and International Relations' annual C R Parekh Lecture at the University of Westminster on 19 June 2012. Addressing more than 500 people – Westminster students and the public – on the subject of 'Values of Democracy and Tibet', he talked about, amongst other things, the need to rejuvenate the spirit and practice of democracy; and he said that the only practical solution to the problem of Tibet lies in China: the problem will be solved, he argued, if the Chinese government becomes more open and allows its citizens to become more aware of the situation in Tibet.

The Dalai Lama defended his political stance of giving up the demand for Tibetan independence and, instead, of seeking genuine autonomy within China. He argued that even the big democratic states – including India and United States – will become inhospitable for Tibetan exiles if Tibetans start demanding independence. The Dalai Lama's political stance stems from his recognition of the overwhelming dominance of China, the realpolitik that shapes the attitudes of other states, and his absolute commitment to non-violence.

The Dalai Lama displayed a remarkable consistency on a range of issues, even at the cost of becoming politically 'incorrect'. For instance, on the Palestine question, he said that both sides have no alternative but to talk and negotiate, and he expressed his personal view that not all Israeli leaders are belligerent. On George W. Bush and the Iraq war, he repeated that he considers the ex-president to be a good man using wrong means. He could have attracted a lot of more applause had he adopted a different position. But this was not a surprising stance from a leader who remains committed to non-violence, negotiations and a middle way between complete independence for Tibet and the total assimilation of Tibetans within China. The Dalai Lama urged Tibetans and their supporters to engage more with the Chinese people; and to treat them not as enemies but as fellow humans.

For a religious leader, the Dalai Lama is surprisingly secularist. He promotes a secular ethics that respects all beliefs, religious, non-religious and anti-religious, but is not based on any one belief. Though a national leader, he is a universalist. He accepts that national identities are important but, in the end, that individuals are first and last human beings and that this must be enshrined in modern education.

The excitement in the audience was palpable. When the Dalai Lama entered the venue – he was 20 minutes late (which he compensated for by staying longer than planned), having just come from a personal meeting with another icon of democracy – Aung San Suu Kyi – there was a loud gasp from the audience. In contemporary politics, with politicians who model themselves as managers and are obsessed with controlling their public image, few leaders can match the Dalai Lama's charisma.

The audience enjoyed the opportunity to listen to the Dalai Lama; the Dalai Lama, for his part, was impressed with the 'attentiveness' of Westminster students. Problematising and conceptualising democracy is the staple of our intellectual life: it was refreshing to hear a simple, honest defense of democracy as a system.

Dibyesh Anand, who organised the Dalai Lama's talk, is Reader in International Relations in the Department of Politics and International Relations. For a video of the Dalai Lama's talk go to **youtube.com/watch?v=Esn5qKNLWOA**

YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU

James Pattison argues that the all-volunteer force is the most legitimate way of organising the military

In their accounts of the requirements of *jus ad bellum*, just war theorists typically assert that war must have legitimate authority. They tend to overlook the importance of a further, morally significant issue in the ethics of war: the moral legitimacy of the military used to fight the war. Who should carry out the war? Should it be conscripted citizen-soldiers, because this is the fairest way of organising the military? Or should it be an all-volunteer force (AVF), such as that found in the UK and US, because it will be more effective and cohere better with individual autonomy? And should we avoid the employment of private military and security companies (PMSCs)?

The legitimacy of the military is morally significant. First, it is a major normative issue in its own right. It concerns matters of major moral import, such as the fair distribution of the burdens of fighting, the individual autonomy of those required to fight, and the importance of democratic control. Second, the legitimacy of the military will often be a significant factor in the justifiability of a particular war. Indeed, the legitimacy of the military may *determine* whether the war is just. For example, the justifiability of a state's humanitarian intervention may be moot according to the standard just war criteria, but its reliance on conscripts renders its war unjust. Third, the moral legitimacy of the military may also determine whether a particular just war criterion is met: a military that is generally inefficient may be unlikely to meet the just war requirement of a reasonable prospect of success. Fourth, the composition of the military affects the likelihood of the state fighting just or unjust wars.

The issue of the legitimacy of the military is also politically significant. Since the 1960s and 1970s, many states have replaced conscription-based forces with AVFs. However, the AVF

> "There have been widespread criticisms (particularly in the US) of the All-Volunteer Force for its unrepresentative make-up and for being too distant from society – and, subsequently, calls for the reintroduction of the draft to tackle these problems."

has recently been subject to two major challenges. First, there have been widespread criticisms (particularly in the US) of the AVF for its unrepresentative make-up and for being too distant from society – and, subsequently, calls for the reintroduction of the draft to tackle these problems. Second, several states have been moving away from relying purely on the AVF to perform military functions, hiring instead the services of PMSCs such as Aegis, ArmorGroup (now part of the G4S group), Erinys, KBR, and Academi (formerly 'Xe' and 'Blackwater'). This privatisation of military force raises the question of whether the large-scale employment of PMSCs is a morally acceptable way of organising the military.

THE MODERATE INSTRUMENTALIST APPROACH
The Moderate Instrumentalist Approach to the legitimacy of the military asserts that three factors largely determine the justifiability of a particular arrangement: (i) a military's effectiveness at fighting just wars and deterring unjust threats, which is the primary, a necessary, and, when *extremely* effective, a sufficient factor in its legitimacy; (ii) a military's subjugation to democratic control, which is a significant and typically necessary factor; and (iii) its proper treatment of military personnel, which, likewise, is a significant and typically necessary factor. How, according to the approach, do each of the options for organising do?

PRIVATE MILITARY AND SECURITY COMPANIES
Industry proponents often highlight the effectiveness of PMSCs; this effectiveness derives from their hiring of experienced military professionals with extensive training and expertise. Yet the extensive use of PMSCs can be expected to threaten the employers' ability to fight just wars and deter unjust aggressors. First, because it is doubtful whether in several roles PMSCs will be militarily effective in the field. Private contractors are recruited from databases and do not train together, which harms the cohesion and the preparedness of PMSC operations. More generally, the use of PMSCs reinforces a narrow, technical view of protection and war fighting

as being simply a question of military and security efficacy, thereby ignoring other key – often political – factors that are crucial to fighting a just war and to deterring aggressors successfully.

Moreover, any (alleged) efficiency savings from the hiring of PMSCs are likely, at least in part, to result from cuts to areas that are important for the legitimacy of military force. These areas include the mechanisms necessary for effective democratic control, and reductions in labour costs. Vetting procedures are also likely to be compromised, with the probable result of an increase in contractor ill-discipline, thereby weakening PMSCs' fidelity to the principles of *jus in bello*.

Nevertheless, it might seem that using PMSCs is beneficial for democratic control (the second criterion) because it reduces the 'civil-military gap', given that it introduces civilians into the military. However, far from tackling the civil-military gap, the use of PMSCs further reduces the role and visibility of the military, both because of the general lack of transparency and knowledge surrounding the industry; and because the regular soldiers who remain focus increasingly on combat operations and thereby become even more distanced from the polity.

It might also seem that the use of PMSCs does well in regard to the proper treatment of military personnel (the third criterion). This is because private contractors seem to consent freely to participate in a war. However, it cannot be reasonably expected that all contractors will freely consent to their particular operations. There are incentives and opportunities for PMSCs to conceal the roles and risks of what will be a financially lucrative contract for the firm. This is particularly the case for 'third-country nationals' (TCNs): individuals not from the host or sending state. In theatre, thousands of miles from home, it is difficult for a TCN to do much in response to the broken promises about their role. Moreover, TCNs have been subject to notable labour violations, such as not being paid, working long hours, and being supplied with inadequate food, water, and shelter. These issues arise partly because PMSCs, as private companies, want to reduce labour costs, but lack powerful incentives to look after their employees, such as a unionised

workforce, enforced international regulations, or strong public pressure. Accordingly, the use of PMSCs also raises concerns about the abrogation of the responsibility of care.

Hence, the employment of PMSCs does poorly according to the Moderate Instrumentalist Approach and is therefore generally illegitimate.

CONSCRIPTION

For proponents of civic republicanism vision, the health of the democratic institutions of the state depends on its citizens participating fully in all aspects of the state. Civic republicanism implies, then, a citizen-soldier model of the soldier, where conscripted citizens perform compulsory military service.

First, however, the effectiveness of a conscripted force is doubtful. A short term of duty means a conscript cannot be trained properly, which is particularly a concern in more complex military operations. A longer term of duty may allow for greater training, but will reduce the number of those drafted overall, which impacts on the case for tackling the civil-military gap, and, given that it is longer, significantly undermines individual autonomy. In addition, a system of universal or random conscription can be expected to conscript many individuals unsuited to perform effectively military operations.

Nevertheless, for civic republican defenders of obligatory military service, a central advantage of conscription is that it leads to only a small civil-military gap. Yet, as most modern armies are smaller than the number of young adults eligible for military service, very few individuals would actually gain experience of military matters; to minimise the gap, a much larger and potentially more unwieldy conscripted army would have to be maintained.

It is also claimed that conscription means that governments will be more responsive to their citizens' views on foreign policy, since citizens will demand that their opinions on foreign policy are taken into account. It also follows, according to this argument, that conscription reduces the number of wars fought since hawkish tendencies in the polity dissipate when citizens have to fight. Moreover, conscription reduces the number of *unjust* – but not just – wars launched: citizens may be

willing to fight in defensive wars, but not in foreign interventions. The contrary, however, is true: conscripted armies can generally be expected lead to *more* unjust wars. This seems to be because states with conscripted armies have a ready supply of labour. Furthermore, the ready source of soldiers that conscription provides may mean that wars will be more destructive: leaders will be less worried about the deaths of their own soldiers and so be more willing to take on casualty-heavy operations.

Nor is a state based on conscription likely to reflect its citizens' wishes in its foreign policy. In general only the young are conscripted; and they are likely to possess far less political sway than their older, perhaps more hawkish, fellow citizens. Moreover, citizens' interest in foreign policy does not depend on them taking on the burdens of war fighting.

Conscription also does poorly in regard to the proper treatment of military personnel. Conscription potentially violates self-ownership, since the individual's body is used in a manner that they do not choose. In addition, it denies freedom of occupational choice and freedom of movement (restricted during the period of conscription). If conscientious refusal is not permitted, conscription may also threaten an individual's freedom to select the wars in which they participate and, potentially, their freedom of religion.

It may be replied that in some states with conscription, citizens may perform other civic services. Thus, conscription does not violate individual autonomy since there is a choice whether or not to perform military service. Moreover, certain states allow their conscripts a right of conscientious refusal to participate in a particular war. The problem with this response, however, is

that, first, a right of conscientious refusal does not reduce the general problem of the violation of conscripts' autonomy. This is because conscripts would still be required to undertake peacetime terms of service where their freedom is restricted. Second, although the transgression of individual autonomy seems less serious with compulsory civic service, this autonomy is still violated.

THE ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE

The effectiveness of the AVF is one of its greatest benefits. A standing, professional army provides the possibility of extensive training and integration: these enhance flexibility since soldiers can prepare for a variety of potential conflicts. It has been argued that the AVF is effective as, first, the recruits perform better because they volunteer; and, second, it can select well-qualified recruits, which means that its recruits are more easily trained and present fewer disciplinary problems.

In terms of democratic control, however, the AVF cannot be expected to do so well. This is because of the civil-military gap between the AVF and the polity; professional, volunteer soldiers can become distanced politically from the polity that they are supposed to defend. This can potentially threaten subjugation to the democratic control of the polity.

Similarly, the current, state-based AVFs can be expected not to treat military personnel properly. Declining job security, narrowing career options, worsening living and working conditions, and lengthier deployments give the impression that states are no longer keeping their side of the implicit state-soldier covenant. It is also sometimes claimed that, although volunteer soldiers agree to enlist, their consent is not truly free: the AVF recruits from the more disadvantaged members of society. Thus, it may appear to follow that when volunteer soldiers enlist this is the only reasonable option that they possess. This overstates matters somewhat. It is more accurate to say that the lack of equality of opportunities often only means that joining the AVF is *relatively* a better option, rather than the *only* option, for the poor and disadvantaged than for their more advantaged fellow citizens. Nonetheless, although soldiers may not have been

coerced into an AVF, they may often have been manipulated to a certain degree by recruitment officers, given that, like PMSCs, the AVF recruits from the market. In particular, there are pressures to hire the best candidates at the lowest cost, which is likely to lead, at some point, to some misrepresentation of the roles on offer. The US Army, for instance, has been accused of targeting children in a manner similar to 'predatory grooming', and of lying to student recruits.

However, these concerns about the AVF's degree of democratic control and proper treatment of military personnel are unlikely to mean that many current AVFs are illegitimate. This is for several reasons. First, a number of measures may be adopted to reduce the civil-military gap. For example, programmes such as the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) can increase representativeness and a reduction in the size of the military can reduce the seriousness of any gap (since a smaller military poses a smaller threat to the polity). Moreover, even when there is a notable civil-military gap, the military may still be subject to control by the polity because of the socialisation of the military into the norm of accepting civilian command. Second, despite some transgressions, there is generally reason to expect the AVF to maintain its responsibility of care for its personnel. The implicit soldier-state contract means political and military leaders are likely to be pressurised to maintain the proper treatment of military personnel. Third, recall that effectiveness is the most important factor on the Moderate Instrumentalist Approach. The effectiveness of the AVF means that any failings in its subjugation to democratic control and its treatment of military personnel may not be fatal to its overall legitimacy. If these failings are not grave then the AVF can make up the loss of legitimacy by being highly effective. Overall, then, despite these problems, an AVF may sometimes be likely to possess an adequate degree of legitimacy and, given the more serious failings of the use of PMSCs and conscription, is generally the most legitimate way of organising the military.

Hence, according to the Moderate Instrumentalist Approach, the AVF is the most legitimate way of organising the

military. Both conscription and the use of PMSCs pose several major concerns. Accordingly, in our thinking about the justice of a war, we should consider not simply whether the war meets the more commonly cited *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* criteria, but also whether it is fought by volunteer soldiers rather than conscripts or private contractors. If it is not, the war is morally more problematic. Thus, we can regard, for instance, the US war in Vietnam as even worse for its reliance on conscripts and, more recently, the US and UK-led action in Iraq as more objectionable given its reliance on PMSCs.

James Pattison is a Lecturer in Politics at the University of Manchester. This is an edited extract from a talk he gave to the Intervention and State-Building seminar series in the Department of Politics and International Relations in 2011. A full version of the article is forthcoming in the *European Journal of Political Theory* (available on OnlineFirst, DOI 10.1177/1474885111425119). It was written while Dr Pattison was in receipt of funding from the ESRC (RES-000-22-4042). For details of his ESRC project on the Morality of Private War, see **jamespattison.co.uk**

TRANSNATIONALISM AND THE LEFT–RIGHT METAPHOR

Jonathan White asks what significance the Left—Right dichotomy has for public life beyond the modern state

From its first articulation in the late-18th century, and above all following its globalisation in the late-19th century, the Left–Right dichotomy has been an established part of the modern world. Political actors have defined themselves in its terms, while commentators have used it to anchor their observations. But what of the dichotomy's significance for public life away from a well-ordered world of stable boundaries, hierarchical power and the ties of nationhood? Sites of transnational integration such as the European Union (EU), or more widely of what is sometimes called the 'world polity', have not displaced the modern state but have sharply reorganised it, producing arenas where decision-making is dispersed in space and where populations may be better thought of as multi-national. What normative and practical relevance does Left–Right politics have in settings such as these?

"With its intonations of division, yet division which is normal and non-fatal, the Left–Right dichotomy can be viewed as an emblem of conflict tamed, of conflict which is unavoidable yet which can be accommodated within the daily life of the community."

CONFLICTING INTERPRETATIONS

Modern democracy is typically understood as pluralist both in an empirical sense – its citizens are apt to embrace diverse and potentially conflicting political views; and in a normative sense – recognition of the fact of pluralism, even its valorisation, forms part of the political community's self-understanding. One way to read the significance of the Left–Right dichotomy is as a symbolic rendition of both these ideas. With its intonations of division, yet division which is normal and non-fatal, it can be viewed as an emblem of *conflict tamed*, of conflict which is unavoidable yet which can be accommodated within the daily life of the community.

However discomforting the image of enduring division may be, it is likely to be an important one for those who take political disagreement seriously, one with the potential to consolidate the idea of democracy in the public imagination. Rather than being a mere disciplining exercise, manufacturing a passive form of consent towards the democratic regime, it contains the seeds of a critical disposition: to the extent that division is normalised, one can expect a healthy suspicion in those moments when political contestation is absent.

The Left–Right dichotomy permits more and less conflicting interpretations. It is both a language of action and of analysis, addressing the 'realm of involvement' and the 'realm of observation'. As a device for popular mobilisation, some may play up its adversarial dimension, presenting it as denoting actors in sharp opposition. In its guise as a language of political commentary, the adversarial dimension may be softer, with Left and Right evoking a continuum of opinions which shade into one another. In both cases it is an idiom expressive of pluralism, although it is the first reading which foregrounds the centrality of contestation to political life.

The pluralism evoked by the Left–Right metaphor is, moreover, one in which the competing positions seem to enjoy equality of political status. They are as peers. Whereas *up–down* spatial metaphors are said by linguists to evoke notions of superiority and inferiority, dominance and subordination, the left-right metaphor evokes a lateral arrangement whose points appear on the same plane. In Steven Lukes's terms, there is a 'principle of parity' to be inferred. The contending positions certainly need not be considered *morally* equivalent, but the implication is that each should be heard, that they should have equal access to political channels. It may be read as one of the decisive symbolic shifts accompanying the advent of democracy that the dominant axis of societal representation was hereby 'rotated', such that what was celebrated was no longer the vertical, class-based divisions associated with feudal hierarchy but the lateral clash of contending forces formally equal in legitimacy.

Not only does the Left–Right metaphor evoke a pluralism of equals, but it casts that pluralism in explicitly political categories, ie ones which point to allegiances based on shared chosen beliefs rather than inherited ties of circumstance. The protagonists to this encounter – Left, Right, and variations thereof – cannot be reduced to social categories, eg of ethnos, class, religion or territorial affiliation. While such categories may provide underpinning to them – workers, blacks, women or oppressed colonial groups are sometimes named as causes on whose behalf the Left is active; the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie and, in some contexts, whites have been associated with the Right – the terms themselves transcend these categories and cannot be essentialised by association with specific groups. They can only be fully understood in terms of political goals susceptible to choice and revision.

One way to understand the significance of this is that it makes division comprehensible not as mere *factionalism*, as an array of self-seeking efforts by social groups bound by shared interest to better their situation, but as *partisanship*, ie the clash of competing efforts to enact a vision of the *public* good. It stands for a pluralism of political ideas, in other words, rather than a pluralism of interest-groups. Of course, the metaphor is for the same reason always vulnerable to a negative counter-reading: precisely because 'Left' and 'Right' can never be tightly linked to the interests of a certain group, they can be portrayed as lacking in content, as symbols of arbitrary difference. Their symmetry of form can be read as indicating an instinctive negativity, suggesting disagreements rooted in a structural need to oppose the Other rather than in considered evaluation. At its best, however, the Left–Right metaphor may be said to dignify political conflict by presenting it as irreducible to private interest – something surely crucial to any normative model of politics.

EUROPEAN UNION

If the Left–Right metaphor has symbolised the legitimacy of political discord within the nation-state, it may have special appeal in the context of a compound, multi-national polity such as the EU. For in contexts such as this, where constitutional structures are weak and the polity's dissolution into its component parts an ever-present possibility, this is a message easily forgotten. Political disagreement is liable to seem threatening to the polity's integrity, a possible source of fragmentation, and for this reason denigrated or suppressed. In effect one may see a reversion to the pre-modern preference for a holist image of political community, and the justification of decision-making with recourse to putatively incontestable standards. This is to some extent what one finds in the present EU, where the style of politics – its discourse as much as its institutional structures – is primarily technocratic rather than adversarial. Only in the European Parliament, traditionally the weakest of the EU institutions, is division in its political guise made manifest. If there is a hegemonic spatial metaphor to be identified in EU politics more generally, it is not that of Left–Right but that of the moving object (forwards–backwards, as in the sense of advances in integration and periodic retrenchments) or that of the container (inside–outside, as in the sense of a state's membership in or exclusion from a policy regime, be it the euro, the Schengen zone, or the EU as a whole).

These are metaphors which have little to say regarding the legitimacy of political disagreement. Insofar as successful EU politics is often considered to lie at the leading edge of 'forwards' or 'inside' – that is, when the Union is 'deepening' its *acquis* rather than becoming 'sclerotic', or enlarging to include new members rather than acting the 'fortress' – it is cast in terms which are uncompromising towards alternatives. Being 'behind' and 'outside' risks becoming equated with being recalcitrant and irrelevant. And insofar as passages of successful integration are accounted for by agreement amongst the

"The Left–Right metaphor evokes a pluralism of equals in explicitly political categories, that is, ones which point to allegiances based on shared chosen beliefs rather than inherited ties of circumstance."

actors involved (and their failure equated with insuperable differences), the reality of persistent disagreement within the political arrangements thereby created becomes harder to acknowledge and give significance to.

The potential worth of the Left–Right metaphor here need not lie in discrediting the EU polity, exposing it as irredeemably non-democratic. Nor need it be to highlight the necessity of democratisation, though clearly this is one possible application. More modestly, it would lie in reminding us that, even in a political association consensual in style and of which membership is voluntary, political agreements have value choices and compromise at their origin, and that alternative political paths are conceivable. Even if the exact meaning of 'Left' and 'Right' remains weakly defined, the Left–Right metaphor functions as a mnemonic to the contestability of political decision-making and the ineradicability of division, discouraging the passive conception of citizenship which says decision-making is appropriately understood as an expert-led search for optimal solutions.

Beyond the danger that disagreement is overlooked in a compound polity, there is the danger that, where acknowledged, it is cast solely in territorial terms. The EU's institutional structure embeds the member-state as the pre-eminent actor (in the Council of Ministers and the increasingly powerful European Council), and when conflicts emerge they tend to be cast using nation-state categories: consider the articulation of the EU's current economic problems as a confrontation between Germany and Greece, and media discussion of budgetary issues in terms of national contributors and beneficiaries. In the multinational polity, these territorial units are, moreover, often seen as expressive of distinct cultural identities. Disagreement is thus liable to be denominated either in state-territorial or

Ali Paya discusses critical rationalists'
understanding of objectivity

socio-cultural categories, and seen as a function of the clash of brute interests or identities rather than the clash of (more or less) chosen, criticisable and revisable political beliefs.

Thus Germany and Greece are presented as locked in a conflict born of irreconcilable state interests, inflamed by differing ways of life (cf. national stereotypes pitting profligate and workshy Greeks against hard-working, thrifty Germans). The 'unity in diversity' of which the EU motto speaks is generally interpreted as unity in the face of differences of culture and state interest, not differences of political commitment. Here again, for those seeking a more contestable legal order, the Left–Right idiom may seem desirable, offering possibilities for redenominating conflicts in political categories, thereby re-endowing actors with responsibility for their positions and rendering these susceptible to debate. While it is possible that in a compound polity, with its nested legal and cultural orders, territorial denominations will enjoy a certain pre-eminence, there may be value in symbols which counter this tendency.

WAXING AND WANING
The Left–Right dichotomy, understood as a metaphorical language shaping citizen practice and self-understanding, has potentially important things to contribute to politics beyond the context of the modern nation-state. As an emblem of legitimate division, amongst other things, it may have a role to play in giving sense and visibility to political disagreement.

However, while under existing conditions the Left–Right metaphor finds some application at the transnational level, its prospective democratic contribution is weakly fulfilled. In order to prosper, it would probably need the promotion of political actors themselves, something many have recently been reluctant to do. Insofar as many current political figures are 'fugitives' from the Left–Right dichotomy, the plausibility of evoking it at a transnational level is diminished.

Perhaps an actorless conception of the Left–Right metaphor is destined to become dominant. This, after all, is largely how it is taught in universities, where political scientists generally use

it to map 'political space', and where the political world is widely cast as a 'system' to be understood in terms of its structuring forces and resultant regularities rather than the goals of its human subjects. And if, as one hears, scepticism towards encompassing, programmatic ideas is one of the irreversible trends of the contemporary age, there may be limited scope for the Left–Right dichotomy to be understood principally as signifying principled oppositions. Still, a world which is hostile to utopian thinking, assuming the characterisation is appropriate, is not necessarily one that is unresponsive to narratives of political struggle and amelioration. Categories of political abstraction of one kind or another are likely to remain politically sought after, and while these may take a variety of forms, it is premature to write off a more spirited version of the Left–Right metaphor.

One is tempted to see enthusiasm for the Left–Right metaphor, and its presentation in more conflictual or more dispassionate, analytical terms, as something likely to proceed in cycles. Where it is the dominant idiom of political life, a countervailing tendency to reject it in the name of a consensual politics that transcends division seems likely to emerge. Where politics is played out in largely technocratic or moralised terms, the emergence of others wishing to denounce this as false objectivism seems predictable and necessary. If the fate of the Left–Right metaphor is bound up in that very modern antinomy of the universal and the particular, its popularity may be fated to wax and wane. It would seem ripe then for rediscovery in coming years, as processes of transnationalisation yield depoliticising tendencies.

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> "The potential worth of the Left–Right metaphor would lie in reminding us that, even in a political association consensual in style and of which membership is voluntary, political agreements have value choices and compromise at their origin, and that alternative political paths are conceivable."

The humanities and social sciences emerged in the 19th century under the long shadow of modern natural – physical and biological – sciences. This set the stage for the creators of humanities and social sciences to move in two distinct directions.

Positivists, of whom Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mill, and the logical positivists are the best known representatives, declared that humanities and social sciences should imitate the natural sciences with respect to methods and methodologies, aims and objectives; they should be part of the natural sciences. By contrast, advocates of 'culturalism', represented, amongst others, by Dilthey – who popularised the term *Geisteswissenschaften* (in contrast to *Naturwissenschaften*) – subjective phenomenologists and interpretivists, have maintained that humanities and social sciences are a distinct branch of knowledge.

In 1966 Paul Diesing (*Philosophy of Science*, 33), commenting about the dispute between the two camps, wrote that

"The issue of objectivism (positivism) vs. subjectivism (culturalism) has long been a topic of discussion among philosophers and social scientists. On the one side, the objectivists have argued that the scientific method requires publicly observable, replicable facts, and these are available only in the area of overt behaviour. Subjective phenomena such as intending, conceiving, and repressing can be studied only indirectly through their connections with overt behaviour, if at all. On the other side, the subjectivists have argued that the essential, unique characteristic of human behaviour is its subjective meaningfulness, and any science which ignores meaning and purpose is not a social science. Human action is governed by subjective factors – by images not stimuli, by reasons, not causes. Consequently an adequate science of man must understand action from the standpoint of the actor, as a process of defining the situation, evaluating alternatives in terms of goals, standards, and predictions, and choosing to act."

As early as 1945, in *The Open Society and Its Enemies* and *The Poverty of Historicism*, and in the context of two pioneering critical discussions of the 'sociology of knowledge' and 'historicist philosophies', Karl Popper, who is regarded as the founder of the school of critical rationalism, convincingly explained the accurate meaning of objectivity – and argued that both culturalists/interpretivists and positivists are radically mistaken about the nature of the natural sciences, and thus about the notion of objectivity.

Culturalists/interpretivists had been led astray because they had had accepted the positivists' view about natural sciences and their definition/criteria of objectivity.

For the positivists natural sciences begin with, and are based on, observations from facts. The next stage is to produce hypotheses. These are inductive generalisations from patterns found in data collected about facts and/or observations of regular events. These hypotheses, which receive confirmation in subsequent observations/empirical testing, are elevated to the status of 'laws'. Finally, groups of related 'laws' are combined and incorporated into general 'theories'. A series of 'correspondence rules' provide the necessary links between the abstract concepts at the level of 'theories' and the concrete level of factual evidence.

This hierarchical model represents the structure of science, that is, natural science, which, according to the positivists, is the only valid form of knowledge.

Objectivity, which, for the positivists is tantamount to 'scientificity', means empirical verifiability of the claims made about natural reality. It is no wonder that such an approach in the realm of human social sciences soon leads to behaviourism. Human beings are natural systems with characteristic 'system functions'. The behaviour of these systems – that is, the way they produce 'outputs' in response to 'inputs' – can be studied by means of their 'system functions' and in a factual, 'objective' – that is, allegedly verifiable – manner.

Popper, who had already shown the mistakes of the positivists, in his debate with the culturalists/interpretivists made it clear that all sciences, whether natural or cultural, far from being based on inductive generalisations from 'facts',

"start from myths – from traditional prejudices, common sense, pre-conceptions, etc beset with error – and from these we proceed by criticism: by the critical elimination of errors. In both, the role of evidence is, in the main, to correct our mistakes, our prejudices, our tentative theories – that is, to play a part in the critical discussion, in the elimination of error."

Popper, who dubbed his approach to knowledge 'critical rationalism', suggests the following schema as a general method for acquiring knowledge in all sciences, whether natural or cultural:

$$P_1 \rightarrow TT \rightarrow CD \rightarrow P_2$$

"This schema is to be understood as follows. Assume that we start from some problem P_1 – it may be either a practical, or a theoretical, or a historical problem. We then proceed to formulate a tentative solution to the problem: a conjectural or hypothetical solution – a *tentative theory*, *TT*. This is then submitted to *critical discussions*, *CD*, in the light of evidence, if available. As a result, new problems, P_2, arise."

The above diagram neatly summarises the meaning of 'knowledge' in the view of Popper and his fellow critical rationalists. Knowledge of reality, whether natural or socially constructed, consists of conjectures produced by us or other practitioners to describe/explain particular aspects of reality that are presented to us as 'problems'. Such conjectures must be subjected to the severest critical examination either by empirical means or by rational, analytic appraisal. The conjectures that stand their ground and defeat our best efforts to falsify them are regarded – provisionally, until better conjectures are found or more effective ways of assessment devised – as our best candidates for knowledge about reality. The better conjectures are those that provide more comprehensive explanation of the phenomena under consideration; unify more disparate phenomena in more effective and coherent ways; and produce better predictions. More effective ways of assessment are those more sophisticated experiments or arguments that can expose the limitations or mistakes of our best candidates for knowledge.

From a critical rationalist point of view, knowledge is always conjectural. From this many corollaries follow. One is that 'knowledge' per se is not important: what matters is 'the growth of knowledge'. Knowledge grows as the mistakes in our existing conjectures are corrected and more conjectures produced in the hope of finding out more about unexplored or unknown aspects of reality. A corollary of this claim is that our chances of improving our knowledge about reality increase in a pluralistic environment in which various conjectures are introduced into the marketplace of ideas and are subjected to critical assessment. Another corollary of the conjectural status of knowledge is that the pursuit of absolute, indubitable knowledge – the aim of many epistemologists – is futile.

All conjectures are man-made and therefore fallible. Our knowledge of reality, contrary to what the positivists and also many practitioners in human and social sciences and (possibly) natural sciences believe, is neither justified true belief, nor reliable true belief, nor warranted or confirmed belief, nor highly probable belief, and so forth. As critical rationalists argue, justification is impossible: every justification, in turn, needs to be justified. Confirmation, warrant, and the like may provide psychological assurance; but they do not add to the epistemic worth of the original knowledge claim. Moreover, approaches in which confirmation or warrant or high probability are used to argue for the value of a knowledge claim are based on the mistaken view that knowledge is acquired by means of induction from facts.

A critical rational approach to knowledge, though conjectural and mildly sceptical, succumbs neither to relativism nor to radical scepticism nor to subjectivism. It is not a relativist approach since it regards Truth, or the true picture of reality, as the ultimate goal of all theoretical exploration of reality. For critical rationalists, truth is defined in terms of its correspondence to reality. Truth is not relative to forms of life, paradigms, traditions, cultures, civilisations, and so forth. Defining truth in terms of correspondence to reality means that reality – not 'man' or 'individuals' – is the final arbiter in ascertaining the truth of claims made about reality.

The critical rational approach is not radically sceptical. Although it maintains that we may never find the truth or – even if we find it – we may not be able to recognise it as such, it does emphasise that it is possible to approach the truth about reality by eliminating our mistaken pictures about reality. The systematic process of producing fresh conjectures and eliminating errors would/could lead to the emergence of a sequence of theories with ever greater explanatory, unificatory and predictive power and informative content in comparison to their predecessors. A case in point is the following sequence: Ptolemy's planetary laws, Kepler's three laws, Newton's theory of gravitation, and Einstein's theory.

Nor is a critical rationalist approach to knowledge about reality 'subjectivist'. It is 'objective' but not in the sense advocated by the positivists, including the logical positivists.

Popper goes on to explain why and how the mistakes made by the culturalists/interpretivists concerning the true nature of natural sciences has caused them to develop mistaken ideas about the role of 'intuition', 'common sense', and 'understanding' in cultural and natural sciences. Intuition assists all researchers in all fields of inquiry in two important ways: it can lead inquirers to form new conjectures concerning the problems they are grappling with; and it can help them formulate ideas for critically assessing existing theories and conjectures. With regard to common sense, Popper explains that all knowledge, in whatever field, begins from a commonsensical grasp of reality. This is because knowledge cannot emerge in a vacuum.

However, since we ought to constantly subject our conjectures to critical assessments, what has emerged out of our commonsensical understanding

of reality should soon turn into more sophisticated explorations of deeper layers of reality, whether a natural or social phenomenon or a text. Moreover, what is called common sense is itself, like all other phenomena, constantly changing: the frontier of scientific and technological knowledge of one generation could turn into the common sense of future generations.

Objectivity seems to be a poorly understood concept among many practitioners in various fields of sciences, including, and perhaps especially, in the human and social sciences. Critical rationalists have argued that objectivity does not mean verifiability. Objectivity should be contrasted with the notion of subjectivism as defined by the culturalists/interpretivists. While the latter refers to something which is only available to the subject, the former boils down to a simple maxim: public accessibility and assessability of our conjectures. All those claims which can be subjected to public scrutiny are objective. Public scrutiny can be effected analytically or empirically. Non-empirical (for example, philosophical) claims are examined in analytically; scientific claims in both ways.

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TOUGHEN UP

Resilience has a special significance in policy circles as a tool for encouraging communities to prepare for environmental disasters and security threats. But, as **Liza Griffin** argues, the idea of resilience contains inherent tensions.

In both academic and policy circles in Britain the idea of resilience has been connected to the notion of community. In part this is because 'modern' local government in the UK is based on 'an emphasis on public participation in decision-making and public involvement in community governance' (Noordegraaf and Newman, *Public Management Review*, 2010). In part it is for ideological reasons: the current government links community and resilience as part of the 'Big Society' agenda – which, for David Cameron, is about 'empowering and enabling individuals, families and communities to take control of their lives so we create the avenues through which responsibility and opportunity can develop'. In order for this to happen, individuals and communities must be self-sufficient and resilient to crisis.

It is no co-incidence that much of the political work to instil resilience in the UK is done in the Department of Communities and Local Government. Here, resilience explicitly entails 'communities and individuals harnessing local resources and expertise to help themselves during an emergency'. Whereas until relatively recently the dominant paradigm for addressing local threats to community in the UK was centralised planning, today, communities are being asked to be 'resilient' to natural and human-induced threats.

Yet resilience as community governance for mitigating and withstanding risk contains tensions with regard to power, space and time.

POWER: EMPOWERMENT OR PRESCRIPTION?
Current UK resilience strategies have emanated primarily from the Community Resilience Program – established to develop national guidance on promoting community and individual resilience and led by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat/Cabinet Office – and Local Resilience Forums (LRFs). The LRFs were created in response to emergency planning legislation, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004; they are multi-agency partnerships made up of representatives from local and national organisations and the voluntary sector whose aim is to help prepare local communities for emergencies.

Details on what such resilience programmes might entail are hazy – and deliberately so. Resilience is meant to involve a trial-and-error approach, where people *learn* how to 'bounce back' as dangers are dealt with as they arise. According to the UK's Cabinet Office, resilience is to be 'done by people [and] not to people'. 'Self-selecting' 'community networks and relationships' deploying existing 'local knowledge' will decide what is to be achieved. Activities 'must go with the grain of existing citizen engagement initiatives' that are already in place and decided upon.

Yet, despite this ostensibly bottom up approach, there is a plethora of frameworks and guidelines to steer and guide the bodies that will facilitate resilience initiatives. So in practice, how much scope does the policy actually afford communities? Setting prescriptive limits for community action – in an attempt to produce accountable policy – goes against the spirit of resilience as empowerment.

Furthermore, hazard management is still a 'professional' endeavour that is often conducted in complex state bureaucracies allied to particular political power bases. If this remains the case in the UK, genuine empowerment will be difficult.

The message, then, is mixed. As a result, governance strategies for building resilience locally have met with varied responses: for some the concept might be empowering – it allows communities to determine their own needs and rely less on the centre. For others the strategy might have a more insidious character. For example, does resilience as governance mean leaving individuals to cope on their own in an economic environment where government spending is tight? Norris et al. (*American Journal of Community Psychology*, 41, 2007) are particularly anxious that the practice of resilience does not become a 'justification for denying help to individuals or communities in crisis. Like social capital… resilience is an easy concept to co-opt as a basis for arguing that community-based interventions are

unnecessary when, on the contrary, disasters are times when community resources may require the greatest boost'. Departments charged with delivering resilience have not generally been afforded significant budgets. There is, for example, no dedicated source of funding for the Community Resilience Program. There might thus be limits to the support available to communities – and so their capacity to implement programmes might be undermined.

There are also less material issues at stake. Frank Furedi's comparison of UK floods in 1950s and 2000s (*Cultural Sociology*, 1, 2007) reveals a fundamental shift in the way these disasters and their aftermaths are perceived and reported as well as in the communities' reaction to them. He argues that, despite the rhetoric of empowerment, there has been a shift from a model of genuine – and yet unplanned – resilience (in the 1950s) to one of apparent vulnerability where people are thought to be in need of steering and guiding. If this is so, it does not chime with the idea of resilience as empowerment.

The UK resilience rhetoric hints at this tension between over and under governing. Foucault famously said that 'if one governed too much, one did not govern at all', which is perhaps at the heart of the current regime's desire to appear more hands off. But at the same time, providing little guidance about what should be done smacks of what Zygmunt Bauman calls 'compulsive and obligatory self determination' (*Society Under Siege*, 2002). Here citizens are 'responsibilised' and impelled to act which, for Bauman at least, is a kind of domination in itself.

SPACE: INDIVIDUAL OR COMMUNITY?
The second tension is between the respective roles of the individual and the community in resilience governance. Strategies for achieving resilience carry with them the baggage and values of the regime attempting to implement them. Resilience delivered through the Big Society is ambiguous. For example, it might be possible to read governing by resilience as 'neoliberalism': that is, a promotion of a greater role for individuals and the market in crisis management at the expense of more accountable state involvement. But in

its call for *community* action, the Big Society is clearly trying to move beyond a simple conception of society being comprised of discrete *individuals*. Yet precisely what or who this community encompasses is unclear. The Cabinet Office recognises different ways of viewing community and explains that they are to be 'self-selecting'.

But this does not solve the dilemma. Where do communities begin and end? Is it even possible to locate them in space? The ascendancy of the communities discourse in risk management might be partially explained by its resonance across the whole of the ideological spectrum. For neoliberalism, communities might be an inward-looking, place-based collections of individuals; radicals might envision communities more as 'collectives' of people linked by their similar social positioning; while, for greens, the community is likely to be viewed as the local basis for a more environmentally benign, small-scale form of social organisation. While communities should of course not automatically be equated with localities (since communities can be epistemic, virtual or imagined as well as place-based), it appears that the way that communities are conceived of by government and official agencies is almost interchangeable with the local.

A further dilemma involves what is to be sustained. Resilience has built within it the idea that communities should adapt or spring back from an external perturbation. This is a somewhat reactionary idea. Many of the stresses faced by localities are in fact caused by their internal dynamics. For instance, as Doreen Massey reminds us (*World City*, 2007), the financial crisis affecting communities in London can be said to have been generated by the inherently unstable financial sector, which is partially orchestrated by the City of London.

This links to a further and related dilemma: precisely who is being made resilient? Who speaks for communities? If they are to be self-selecting, will their leaders or spokespeople be self-selecting too? But what if there is disagreement? Whose frameworks provide the mechanisms to ensure accountability? Will these, too, be drawn up by communities?

TIME: CHANGE OR STASIS?
A third tension involves the relationship between change and stasis. The main difference between different theoretical treatments of resilience is between the acceptance or rejection of two assumptions. One assumption is that there is a fixed point of 'equilibrium' from which the system moves when disturbed and to which it returns once the disturbance has passed. This assumption reflects the notion that resilience is a static property of systems. However, some reject this assumption of ideal stability, particularly in relation to social systems. The second assumption, therefore, is that 'over long time-horizons, systems not only change, they also change how they change' (Bodin and Wiman, *Environmental Science Section Bulletin*, 2, 2004). The main difference between the two assumptions is whether a system is stable or adaptive. The latter conception of resilience holds the idea that a system has the capacity to learn and to adapt to new conditions. Norris *et al.* argue that resilience is better conceived as a *process* than as an outcome and as *adaptability* instead of *stability*. Using this latter notion, community resilience would be 'a process linking a set of adaptive capacities to a positive trajectory of functioning and adaptation after a disturbance'.

It is not clear if community resilience as governance in Britain relates to the first or the second conception, that is, whether it is trying to promote communities that can adapt and change or communities that bounce back and remain static. The implications of this are profound. The idea of bouncing back to a state of equilibrium is a deeply conservative idea. For example, what if a community's status quo features a high level of poverty, an impoverished environment or chronic unemployment?

Bouncing back to privation is hardly desirable. And if resilience is imagined in this way by today's policymakers then it will have little scope to consider communities as dynamic and potentially evolving entities.

A further dilemma is over what time scale communities are to be resilient. Political decision-making processes generally operate over short time horizons and thus are generally mainly concerned with, in Handmer and Dover's words, 'visible, near-term costs and benefits'; this may militate 'against more substantial changes with their longer payoff times' (*Organization and Environment*, December, 1996). They argue further that responses to environmental change are 'shaped by what is perceived to be politically and economically palatable in the near term rather than by the nature and scale of the threat itself'; as such they wonder if an approach dedicated to individual choice and market mechanisms – as this current one appears to be – will really deliver resilient communities.

Distinct formulations of resilience bring with them diverse political values and expectations. Not only should this diversity of uses be acknowledged, attention should be given to precisely how resilience is used in policy practice, for what ends and with what effects. Presenting resilience as involving a set of tensions and dilemmas enables us to see that the issues are not straightforward. The development of new governance strategies entails domination and power politics. But such strategies' ambiguities and unintended consequences also provide spaces for empowering, radical local politics. As Noordegraaf and Newman and Furedi point out, crises and threats can create opportunities for public action. The current governance discourse, though fraught with tensions, remains ambiguous and relatively open to interpretation: it could thus provide opportunities for a more empowering community politics.

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