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Volume 4

Learning for Equality



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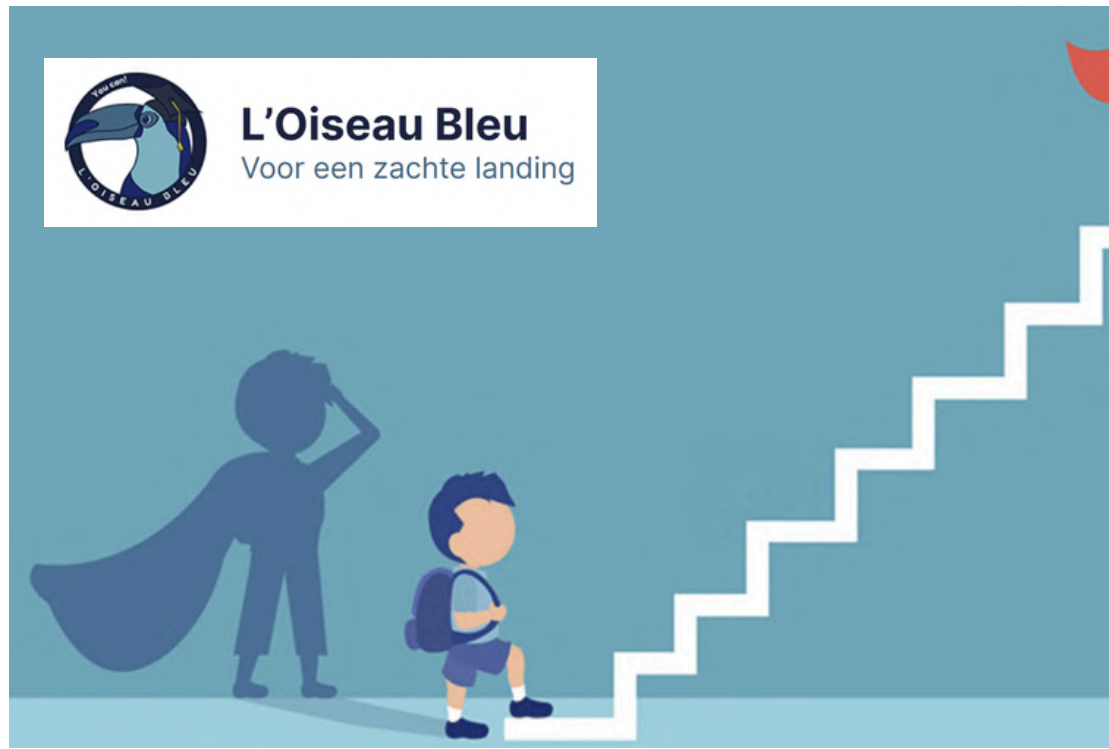
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Towards a more inclusive form of education

Ralph Ivar Berkman



Programme

BA Philosophy of Sociology |
ESPhil | EUR

In *Towards a More Inclusive Form of Education*, Ralph Ivar Berkman introduces the concept of inter-societal exile to describe the structural and symbolic exclusion faced by students in special education systems. Drawing from his own journey—from special education to university—he critically examines how educational systems often segregate rather than integrate. Through philosophical

Contact student:

projectoiseableu@gmail.com

engagement with Dewey, Arendt, and Haraway, and practical insights from disability studies and Universal Design for Learning, the thesis outlines a vision for a more inclusive educational future.

This thesis also laid the foundation for L'Oiseau Bleu, a non-profit initiative founded by Berkman that helps students from special education make the transition to higher education. The course

offered through L'Oiseau Bleu is completely free for students and is co-financed by the European Union.

[Read the full thesis here](#)

[Visit the website of
L'Oiseau Bleu here](#)



Anchored in Place: *Exploring the Influence of Place Attachment on Flood Preparedness in the Context of Climate Change Among Female-Headed Households in Mathare, Nairobi*

Beatrice Anne Garrovillas



Programme

MSc Housing and Urban Development | IHS | EUR

As climate change increases in intensity and frequency, weather-related disasters such as floods are continually exacerbating the risk exposure of urban informal settlements across the Global South. In Kenya, these low-income communities are characterized by tenure insecurity,

Contact student:

beatrice.ag@outlook.com

inadequate infrastructure and fragmented services. Mathare, one of the city's oldest and second largest informal settlements, is highly concentrated with female-headed households (FHH) who face disproportionate inequalities due to combined socio-economic and gender-based vulnerabilities. 3




This study delves into how FHHs in Mathare experience, perceive and prepare for flooding events through the theoretical lens of place attachment at the household-level. Through different qualitative methods conducted with FHHs and key informants of the community at large, four place attachment dimensions, namely physical, social, psychological, and temporal, are explored relative to flood preparedness measures adapted from the Protective Action Decision Model (PDAM) and in consideration of FHHs' socio-economic responsibilities in a flood-prone informal settlement like Mathare. Empirical findings reveal that social and psychological attachments of FHHs, manifest through their strong connections with self-help micro-saving groups or 'chamas', CBOs, neighbours, religious groups and other FHHs in the community, serves as both a protective resource and barriers to mobility. While they can depend on others for financial stability, physical support and sharing social responsibilities during floods, it also poses more risks as they refuse to relocate for fear of losing connection to their own identity and familiar surroundings. Physical attachment is less evident within the physical structures of their homes as renters but is illustrated through the importance they uphold

for specific places that provide them increased protection during floods and socio-economic stability as well as proximity to services and amenities such as hospitals, schools, and CBO halls.

Temporal attachment is complicated by the familial and intergeneration ties of FHHs, wherein their decision to stay or leave is split between wanting to be part of the change in Mathare and seeking upward mobility beyond the informal settlement. Experiences from last year has changed what many FHHs prioritize, with most of them relocating to safer, yet more expensive, areas of Mathare where they could keep their families protected and deep-seated connections within reach.

Informal stakeholders, such as NGOs, CBOs and other neighbours, were consistently perceived as more trustworthy and responsive when it comes to warnings and provision of aid by FHHs in comparison with formal authorities.

Finally, these findings underscore that flood preparedness at the household level is complex, shaped by weak institutional frameworks, where FHHs must balance caregiving responsibilities, deep-rooted emotional bonds to their homes, and heavy



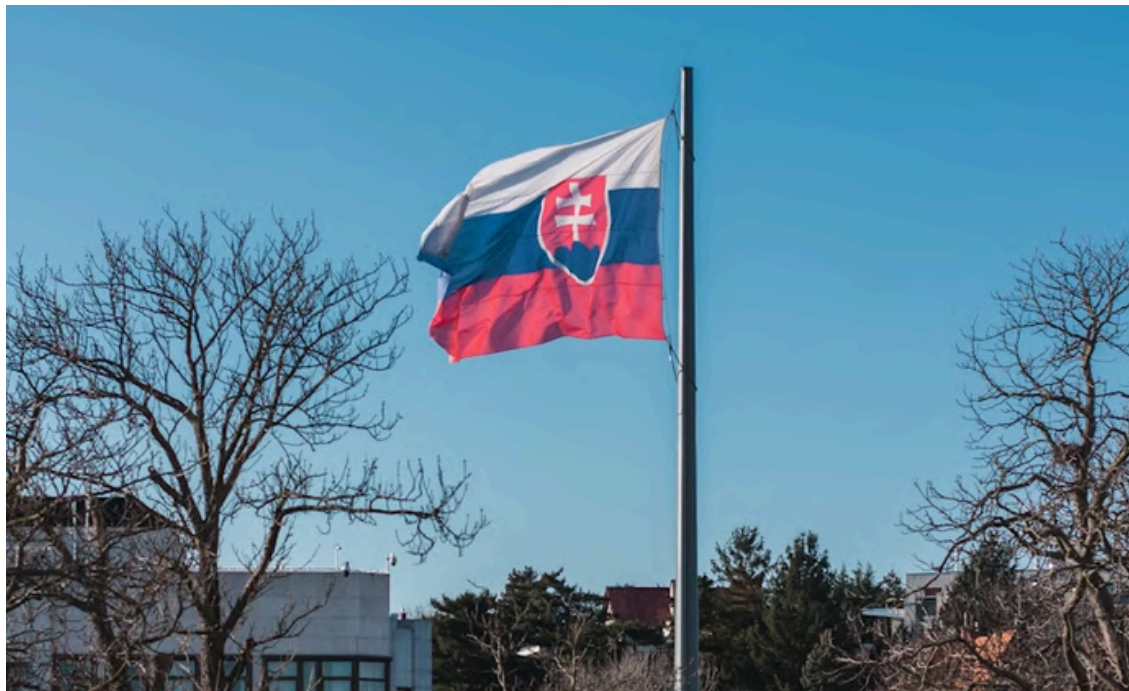
dependency on their social networks.

[Read the full thesis here](#)

Unveiling Societal Discourses: *Online Commentary on Legal Protections for the Roma Rights in Slovakia*



Veronika Ilenčíková



Programme

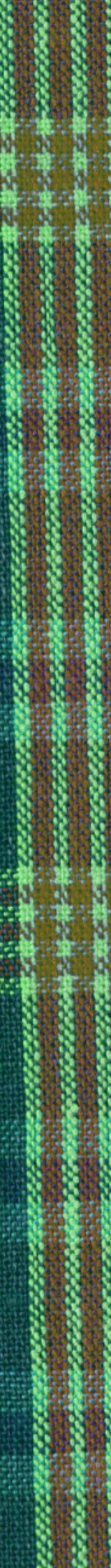
MSc Social Inequalities | ESSB |
EUR

Slovakia was the first EU member state to be sued by the European Commission in 2023 over the educational segregation of Roma students. To obtain a better understanding of this prejudice, this thesis examines how significant discrimination against the Roma population in Slovakia persists despite the existence of countless national and

Contact student:

veronika.ilencikova02@gmail.com

international legislative frameworks intended to ensure equality. Utilizing qualitative content analysis to investigate internet comments under articles on violations of Roma rights, prejudice in education, and worldwide criticism of Slovakia's treatment of the Roma, this thesis examines the sociocultural discourses surrounding Roma rights. The



results show a widespread anti-Roma sentiment that is characterized by negative stereotypes, attribution of blame to the Roma for their marginalized position, and the perception of the majority as the discriminated one. Furthermore, the discourse becomes more nuanced with holding the government responsible for the situation and the perception of the Roma as not responsible. However, instead of alleviating some discrimination from the Roma, this is used to further the societal divide. Attempts to alleviate systematic prejudice are made more difficult by criticism of the government for poor management and mistrust of foreign criticism. These findings increased the understanding of prejudice and highlighted Slovakia's societal divide, which is a necessary step in attempting to promote a more inclusive society.

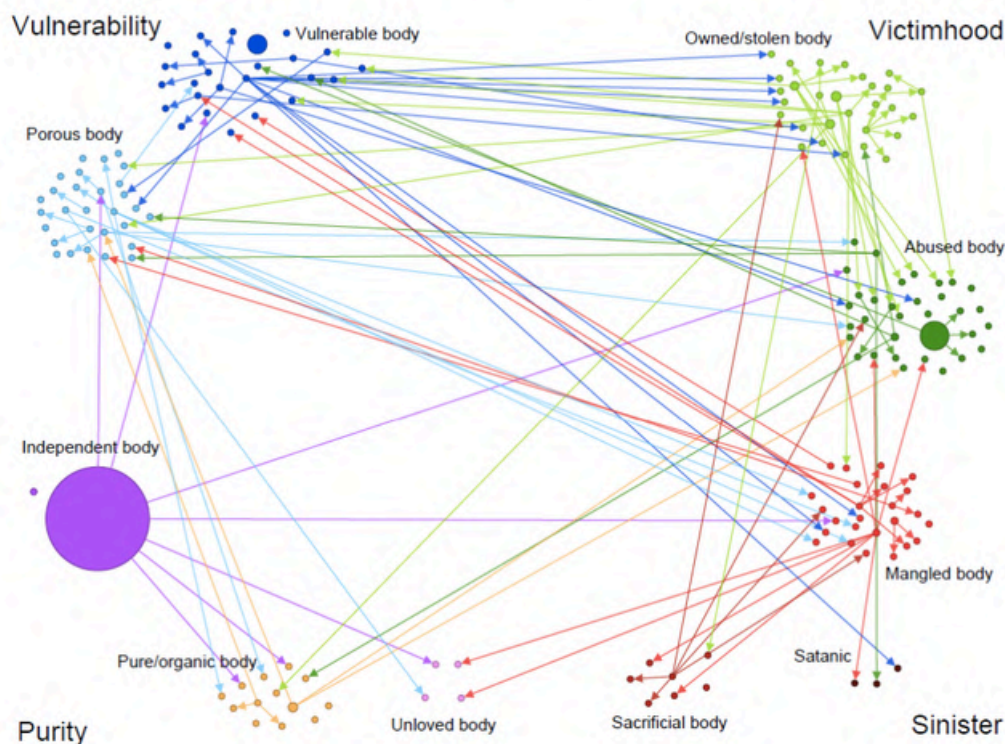
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Digital Phantasmagoria of the Monster & the Innocent Child:

Online Discourse of Child Harm Allegations Against Queer People Within Twitter's Anti-Gender Fachosphere

Franc Kravos



Programme


MSc Social Inequalities | ESSB |
EUR

In their book *Who's Afraid of Gender?*, Judith Butler describes the workings of the anti-gender movement that is populated by prominent right-wing figures like

Contact student:

kravos.franc@gmail.com

Donald Trump, Viktor Orban, Andrew Tate, J.K. Rowling and others. They have created a growing, deliberate, and senseless antagonism toward "gender,"




consequently culminating in the destabilization of democracy, affirmation of heteronormative Christian values, and dilapidation of marginalized communities. This is because “gender” has been tactically and somewhat illogically constructed to mean a plethora of terms that stoke moral anxiety, fear, and hatred. One such version is that queer people indoctrinate, groom, kidnap, and abuse children. Despite these claims being false, the image of child harm becomes so potent that any critical debate is halted, allowing hallucinatory panic to proliferate that rallies the movement to stop their adversaries from “harming children” by any means necessary, especially authoritarian ones.

This thesis consists of a digital ethnography of right-wing Twitter spaces (the Fachosphere) focusing on how users constructed the allegations that queer people harm children, specifically focusing on the conceptualization of queer people and children and how the Twitter infrastructure promotes extremism. Twitter was chosen since after Elon Musk’s acquisition it has become a festering ground for extremist viewpoints. Musk purposefully removed or suspended around a million prominent left-wing accounts while reinstating previously banned conspiracy theorists and

(neo-)fascists, all the while community guidelines were softened. Furthermore, to make Twitter more profitable for prominent users, Elon Musk introduced (1) subscription-based blue checkmarks, dissolving their previous authenticating role, (2) reply-based revenue, and (3) a reply-based recommendation algorithm. The massive tactical restructuring of Twitter has created an economy of rage-extraction that funnels thousands of dollars (up to \$150,000 or more annually per user) to rage-baiting accounts spewing extremist views such as the above discourse.

The results of the digital ethnography indicated that queer people are regularly portrayed as monstrous figures, whereas children are portrayed as mangled victims of the monsters, convincing users to believe the allegations of harm. This led to an intensification of violent emotions and symbolic denial of queerness from all aspects of life by the users. Moreover, rage bait seemed to be the most popular tactic among prominent accounts as they spearheaded the discourse toward goals that supported, what I designated the ‘rage-extraction imperative,’ which rests upon the Twitter infrastructure. The prominent users and tech



companies seemed to be working together because of the way that the Twitter infrastructure was tactical constructed and because of the promulgation of the discourse, which inculcated anti-democratic sentiments that ensured unbridled profit accumulation and political influence. This study brings awareness to the topic so that we can protect ourselves on social media platforms and start advocating for a digital space made in the interest of users instead of users being seen as pawns in political schemes.

**Contact Franc to read the
full thesis at:**
kravos.franc@gmail.com



Oneness through Authentic Leadership:

A letter to myself

Anne-Lotte Kunst

Programme

MA Media, Culture & Society |
ESHCC | EUR

Dear Anne-Lotte,
Authenticity: “the sense or feeling that one is in alignment with one’s true or genuine self” (Oc et al. 2020). In this life, we have to find our true self and stick to this person in order to thrive. Today I wrote a reflection for you. In this letter I will tell you about my learnings and unlearnings during the course Leadership Communication. This letter consists of two main themes. As people we all naturally possess talents, I reflect upon my talent as a leader to unite and inspire people. The second part touches upon how the leader in me should be nurtured, by creating a calm and collaborative environment. This course has been very rewarding regarding finding confidence in myself as a leader. Being a unique person, I have faced challenges, but in this class I found that when you use your voice correctly, people will be inspired.

Contact student:

annelottekunst@gmail.com

They will want to follow you and appoint you as their leader.


The text on system leadership (Senge et al. 2015) intrigued me, I aspire to be a system leader: someone who is engaging people across boundaries (p. 32). In my daily life I surround myself with people from various religions, generations and cultures.

I have learned that one skill of mine is that I can communicate with people from various backgrounds and bring them together.

Naturally I am a curious and confident person and therefore I, like a system leader, can motivate people for a shared cause.

In the future I hope to enforce change through community and unity, something for which a nurturing and inspiring leadership style is acquired.

I have learned in this course to find strength in my identity as a Dutch Muslim woman, something that is not very common.



Power is what I found through seeing different perspectives. I refuse to give in to low vibrational experiences, such as discrimination or prejudice, because they make me weak as a leader.


I find strength in my identity and I want to guide people towards the same. Research has shown that when a leader is humble, followers feel less vulnerable. Furthermore, the effect of leader humility is moderated by its authenticity (Burak et al. 2020). Authenticity and vulnerability thus lead to a workspace where people feel safe, and I believe in this space people and their ideas will flourish. Aside from my qualities, I also found language to describe my shortcomings. I would love to become a leader who balances the authoritative and democratic leadership styles (Goleman, 2000, p. 1). As we learned, during times of crises businesses and organisations need leaders who can create order in the chaos. I am a person who can be a creative mastermind and through all my ideas it can be difficult for me to build structure, especially when collaborating with others. Through my storm of ideas, others might feel overlooked or overwhelmed. I want to create structure for them

and myself, this will build trust and will make them feel like together we can overcome the crisis.

Authoritative leaders emphasize decision-making and providing direction. An authoritative leader should be confident and knowledgeable. This confidence inspires others to follow their lead (LeadershipQuest 2023). Confidence is thus not just coming from being authentic, but also from having the right knowledge. I am a knowledge seeker whose hunger to learn more will never be stilled. My wisdom should contribute to a trustworthy relationship between me and my followers.

Simultaneously, I believe that employees should feel heard. Through encouraging feedback and being a democratic leader, I want to make my team feel heard and seen. This brings me back to my potential of being a system leader. I truly believe that through diverse mindsets and ideas we can find the best solutions. To grow as an organization we need top-down leadership, but also bottom-up perspectives. I learned through our in-class discussions the importance of collaboration and feedback-mechanisms.

Authenticity and empathy are my strengths and they will allow me to connect people



and organisations through
oneness. Authoritative and
trustworthy is what I aspire to be
and I want to reach this point
through finding unity through
collaboration.

Loving regards,
Anne-Lotte



No HoMiisexuality?: Queerness in Tomodachi Life

Raquel Olivar Fernández



Programme

BSc International Communication
and Media | ESHCC | EUR

Contact student:

raquelolifz@gmail.com

Introduction

Tomodachi Life, a life simulation video game launched in June 2014 in North America and Europe for the Nintendo 3DS, presents a unique, whimsical take on life simulation gaming. The premise of the game is as follows: the player creates personalised avatars, hereafter referred to as Miis, representing themselves and significant individuals in their life, all of which live on a virtual island.

The gameplay centres around the player actively managing the emotional and social dynamics of their Miis, who develop relationships with each other. Miis can level up if the player resolves their interpersonal problems and gives them food, clothing or other objects they like.

Given the game's distinctive focus on customisation and interpersonal connections, it offers a fertile ground for examining how gender

and sexuality are represented in this context, especially due to its young target audience. This paper will answer the following question: **How does *Tomodachi Life* reinforce or challenge essentialist views of gender and heteronormativity within its life simulation context?**

Gender

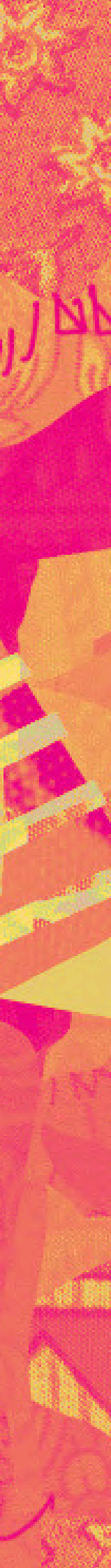
At the heart of *Tomodachi Life* lies the possibility to customise every aspect of Miis' lives: as its nomenclature suggests, Miis are supposed to faithfully reflect the player and their loved ones and this is made possible by the vast customisation options, including their appearance, personality, clothing, apartment interior and catchphrases. The Mii Maker is the tool provided by the game to create avatars. When players create a new Mii, they select their gender (male/female), which cannot be changed once the avatar is finalised; based on this choice, the new Mii will wear a shirt or a dress by default. The gender assigned influences many cutscenes in the game: for example, when Miis propose to each other, the male Mii's subtitles are blue, while the female Mii's are red; when getting married, the bride Mii and female guests wear dresses, while the groom Mii and male guests wear suits. Unlike customisation options

in other game franchises (Waddell et al., 2014; Williams et al., 2009), the Mii Maker's interface makes all hairstyles and facial features available to both genders, including facial hair and makeup (McArthur, 2019, p.234). Although it ultimately places Miis in the gender binary, the fluidity in the customisation options can be read as post-structuralist, whereby the Mii's appearance is not contained to the limits of its avatar sex.



Figure 1: "Assigning clothing to Mii" (Japancommercials4U2, 2014)

Gender performance is made more complicated by the clothing options in the game. As shown in Figure 1, clothing options are divided into five categories: masculine, feminine, unisex, formal wear and costumes. When the player puts a Mii in opposite-gender clothes, the highest rating that the Mii will give the outfit is "liked it" out of five

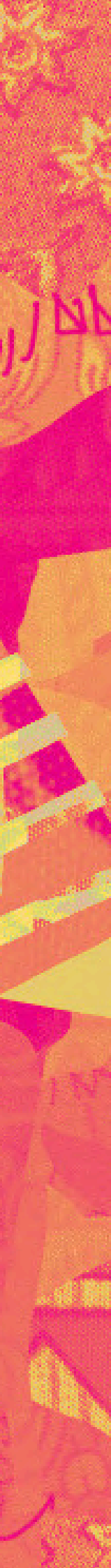


possible reactions (“loved it”, “really liked it”, “liked it”, “doesn’t like it very much” and “doesn’t like it at all...”). Moreover, when players access the clothing menu to dress their Miis, the interface defaults to the category that aligns with the Mii’s designated gender. These mechanisms mirror West and Zimmerman’s (1987) concept of “gender accountability”, which posits that individuals are acutely aware of the judgments their choices elicit based on how well they conform to culturally sanctioned standards of gender (pp.136-137). *Tomodachi Life*’s mechanics reflect gender accountability - Miis anticipate being dressed in clothes in alignment with their gender and reject alternative offerings.

Central to the game’s mechanics is the concept of progress, which is contingent upon levelling up Miis - this can only be achieved through their happiness. When Miis are given food, clothing or decor they dislike, they do not upgrade. This inability to level up diminishes their capacity to form meaningful relationships within the game. Through this, *Tomodachi Life* perpetuates the notion that confining to one’s assigned gender presentation is preferable, as it makes Miis happy and awards them social currency. While players are allowed to dress Miis in gender

nonconforming ways, the game penalises such choices. Despite the game’s premise of each Mii having unique taste, this phenomenon occurs with all characters, framing the rejection of gender-non-conforming clothing as inescapable intertextuality.

As West and Zimmerman (1987) assert, gender is omnirelevant, permeating all aspects of social interaction and thus not confined to physical appearance. This is made evident in the interactions between Miis in *Tomodachi Life*, particularly during the “chat sessions” that occur at the island’s Café. These sessions are categorised as either ‘Guys chat’ or ‘Girls chat’, involving two to four Miis of the corresponding gender. Among the 76 possible scripted conversations, 30 can occur in both settings, while 27 are exclusive to ‘Guys chat’ and 19 to ‘Girls chat’. The gender-exclusive dialogues reveal underlying messages about the interests and aspirations attributed to each gender. Female-exclusive conversations often revolve around themes of beauty, with discussions about how adding [randomised food] to one’s diet can “make you look 10 years younger”, the desire to become a “famous pop star” and other issues related to fashion and hairstyle changes. Conversely, the male-exclusive conversations



encompass aspirations to be “cooler”, build a secret base, or run faster. Topics concerning them breaking personal fitness records and engaging in video games also highlight a focus on competitiveness, which are often culturally associated with masculinity. These dialogues expose essentialist views regarding each gender’s priorities. Since these are cutscenes, they signal to the player that regardless of the uniqueness they seek to assign to their Miis, they will care about certain interests as it is intrinsic to their gender.

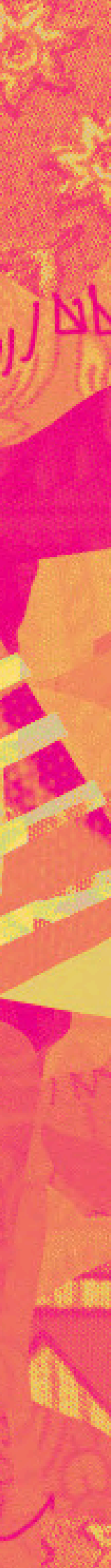
In light of West and Zimmerman’s (1987) framework, *Tomodachi Life* reinforces the dominant discourse about how gender is constructed and performed, only challenging it in select instances. While players are afforded some freedom to customise Miis beyond traditional gender boundaries, their response to this customisation, along with their personalities in cutscenes, are ultimately shaped by an essentialist perspective.

Sexuality

Another essential aspect of the gameplay in *Tomodachi Life* hinges on the player’s role in facilitating social interactions among Miis: from this, they can establish a range of relationships, including friendships,

family bonds, romantic partners (sweethearts and spouses) and previous relationships (ex-sweethearts and ex-spouses) (Kang & Yang, 2018, p.59). It is important to note that the player has limited influence over how these relationships evolve. While Miis can develop crushes on Miis of the opposite gender, players cannot control these feelings; they can only assist Miis in deciding whether to confess their affections. The game promotes a traditional relationship model in which Miis that become sweethearts can progress towards marriage, moving into a shared house and having children. This nuclear approach to romantic relationships is compounded by its heteronormative underpinnings, which presume that both the player and all created Miis are heterosexual.

Upon its release, Nintendo encountered considerable backlash from Western audiences for its exclusion of same-sex relationships (Kang & Yang, 2018). In response, the company asserted that they “are absolutely not trying to provide social commentary” (Associated Press, 2014), a statement that only intensified the controversy. The game and Nintendo’s response are steeped in heteronormativity; queer



representation is framed as optional at best and as unnatural and inherently political at worst.

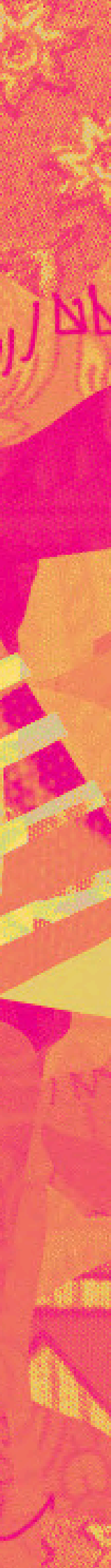
Examining the context of production is crucial to understanding this decision: as *Tomodachi Life* is the international version of the Japanese game *Tomodachi Collection*, it retained much of its original coding, including the exclusivity of heterosexual relationships. Japan's treatment of queer individuals is markedly less progressive compared to the West (Doi-Benson, 2024), so it is likely Nintendo was juggling the potential backlash it could receive from homophobic sectors domestically, especially considering the game was released in 2014. Additionally, given that *Tomodachi Life* was marketed to both children and adults, the decision to exclude queer relationships may have been driven by a desire to appease potential (parent) purchasers.

Intersectionality and a space for resistance

Kang and Yang's (2018) findings demonstrate that, despite the limited affordances of *Tomodachi Life*, queer players can independently craft a more inclusive gameplay experience through their ingenuity. Players utilise the game's aforementioned flexible customisation options to create Miis

that are technically identified by the game as one gender but whose appearance, name and other customisation options display them as the opposite gender. This inventive approach allows players to form same-sex relationships, enacting a gameplay experience akin to Duggan's (2002) concept of homonormativity. In this context, same-sex couples are treated with the naturalness that the intended gameplay accords to heterosexual relationships. Paradoxically, it is the post-structural customisation options which allow players to reshape how sexuality is played out in the game, demonstrating how diverse representation can be achieved in media texts by freeing them of all dominant discourses, including ones surrounding gender performance.

In regards to queer content in video games, Biscop et al. (2019) remark that for semi-directed digital games, these spaces for resistance depend on the player's choice to play subversively, meaning that for those "unwilling or uninterested to play as anything other than the established norm, non-binary and non-heterosexual identities are effectively erased" (p.35). This analysis can be applied to *Tomodachi Life*: players who do not find themselves needing to make their Miis queer



accept the heteronormative, essentialist boundaries of the gameplay, reinforcing dominant discourses. In allusion to life simulation games, Fantone (2009) highlights the importance of self-identification, through which players can use their cyber-personas to make sense of their identity and determine their real life behaviour. Evidently, the potential for players to fortify their sense of self is stalled by restrictive game design in *Tomodachi Life* - players are not explicitly allowed to express their identity. More optimistically, Biscop et al. (2019) also acknowledge that life simulation games can be a meaningful space for queer representation as they “make [dominant norms] visible” and “provide the tools to act out, within a safe environment, alternative identities” (Frasca, 2001, as cited in Biscop et al., 2019, p.26). *Tomodachi Life* can also be analysed through its lens - though in many ways it reproduces the dominant norms, it grants the player partial freedom to disrupt them, perhaps providing a cathartic feeling to those who cannot enact this resistance in the real world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *Tomodachi Life*, as a life simulation game, bears a significant responsibility to create an

inclusive and comprehensive gameplay experience. In many aspects, it fails to do so: through its gender stereotypes in cutscenes and omission of same-sex couples, the game's potential to create a negotiating field for gender and sexuality is halted. Any limitations to how Mii can express their identity implicitly communicate what is considered “acceptable”, which can have far-reaching implications - unlike other media, this restricts players from authentically representing themselves and their loved ones. Given that *Tomodachi Life* targets a young audience, many players - who may lack an understanding of gender and sexuality complexities - are at risk of internalising the game's messages, which present heterosexuality as the norm and normalise traditional gender norms. Addressing the research question “How does *Tomodachi Life* reinforce or challenge essentialist views of gender and heteronormativity within its life simulation context?”, a clear conclusion emerges: the game predominantly reinforces these essentialist perspectives by confining Mii interactions to traditional gender roles and upholding compulsory heterosexuality. Although customisation options offer a

limited avenue for resistance, these are mainly used by queer individuals out of necessity, rather than being encouraged by the game's design. *Tomodachi Life* cannot be said to challenge essentialist views on gender and sexuality directly, but does provide certain tools to blur the boundaries of dominant discourses.

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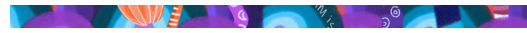
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From revelation to revolution:

An inquiry into the democratization of democracy

Annemarijn Palland



Programme


MA Philosophy Now | ESSB |
ESPhil

Grand immersive historical developments and the most mundane affairs are lumped together by Slavoj Žižek in his book on The Event. Quite literally: in his book Žižek compares the Christian Fall to falling in love, and then consequently, he connects both events to the 2012 pop-music hype Gangnam Style. But as he convincingly shows in his book, there is a clear link between all these examples: they perform what an Event entails. The Event - with a capital E to distinguish the concept Event from a particular event - has a circular structure where in the normal flow of things “something interrupting” happens, which then, “retroactively” determines and changes the initial order of things. The Event, Žižek describes, “is something shocking, out of joint, that appears to happen all of a sudden and interrupts the usual

flow of things” and which then “retroactively determines its causes or reasons.”

Falling in love, for example, is an Event par excellence. It is already in the language: the *fall* in *falling in love* shows us the abrupt and unexpected event that happens when you see *the one*. You cannot force it, but it just happens. That is an interesting insight: you do not love someone because of their beautiful eyes, you love their beautiful eyes because you happen to have fallen in love with them. The effects of love exceed its causes. An Event is the *revelationary* moment where the new situation has not only superseded the usual flow of things, but it has given it a new meaning. Once you fall in love, you think that all your life has led up to this moment (“I have waited for you all my life”). An Event does not just happen, it reframes and reshapes the way we understand reality.

Falling in love could be considered an individual event, where reality is reshaped for one (or, hopefully,




two) people. But Žižek also talks about events whose effects can be sensed much broader in society: i.e. political events. Examples are numerous. The French Revolution, for example, is considered to lay the fundamental principles for modernity and contemporary democracies. More recent events also highlight the reshaping-power of an Event. The attacks on 9/11, for example, are often considered to be related to growing Islamophobic tendencies in the West, with a “war on terror” as one of the results. And the January 6 US Capitol attack is exemplary for our current political climate, often called a time of “culture wars.” The attack was considered both an effect of the culture wars, as well as a cause for its intensification. Again, we see clearly what Žižek means when he poses that the effects of the Event exceed their causes. The reason I start this thesis with an exploration of *the Event*, is because the protagonist of this thesis too is a political Event, or perhaps, a series of events. I will explore this ambiguity later in this chapter. But first, let me introduce the events in question in chronological order.

December 22, 2022 - We propose: A potential party-ban.

Just before the winter recess of 2022, the former Minister of the Interior published a design for a

renewed law for Political Parties (Wet op Politieke Partijen, in short: WPP). The aim of this law was to strengthen democratic resilience by expanding the existing rules for political parties.⁶ Some of those adjustments seem to go by unnoticed. For example, the mandatory publication of a parties’ advertisement policy. Much more attention, however, was given to one specific part of the law that grants the judiciary power the authority to ban political parties when they undermine the democratic rule of law.


Earlier that year, the liberal democratic party (D66) had already proposed to broaden the possibilities for a ban through a simple amendment in the Civil Code. Their proposal was prompted by statements made by the right-wing anti-establishment party (FVD). D66's proposal was not supported by the sitting Cabinet because of its legal imprudence. Nevertheless, the same Cabinet did propose a similar arrangement in the WPP. A potential party-ban should strengthen the resilience of our democracy. “The parties that gain our trust with our vote must at the same time never compromise our democracy,”⁷ says the former Minister of the Interior, Hanke Bruins Slot.



May 25, 2023. Be warned: Anti-Institutional Extremism on the rise.

In 2023 the Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service (Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst: AIVD) had published a report with the title: Anti-institutional extremism in the Netherlands: a serious threat to the democratic legal order?⁸ The report warns of a rise of “anti- institutional extremism” in Dutch society, and allocates quite specifically what group is linked to this form of anti-institutional extremism. This group, the AIVD explicates, supports a “worrisome narrative” that has gained popularity over the last years. The narrative is often critical of- and sometimes even hostile towards democratic authorities, including politicians and scientists. The people supporting this narrative, the AIVD writes, “paint a picture that an evil elite is in power in the Netherlands that wants to oppress, enslave or even murder the population.”¹⁰ Although the AIVD intentionally presents this picture as a “narrative” and thereby dismisses any reality that would underlie these claims, the AIVD does warn of the real consequences that this worldview can have, such as the undermining of the legal order and the danger of violence used against authorities.

Even though I have presented these events in chronological order, it would be a mistake to consider their relationship as causal. To do so would lead to an unfair conclusion that the WPP is a result of the worrisome narrative that the AIVD defines, or that the narrative has gained popularity due to the discussion on the WPP. But of course, you cannot help but notice that there is a clear correlation in the sentiment that these events express. This sentiment is that democracy is something to be valued, but also something to protect. Democracy's existence is not a given, instead, its existence is dependent on a constant re-evaluation of democratic values. And, most importantly, the need to protect democracy is not a hypothetical statement, but it is a mission statement. These events described above articulate a fear that democracy is under threat right now (AIVD) and that there is an urgent need for the right measures to be in place to prevent these threats from materializing (WPP). These events show a dynamic where the “democratic” people are distinguished from the “undemocratic” people, and where the former need to be protected from the latter. The events show the tendency to exclude this



undemocratic other as a way to avoid conflict, rather than to confront the other and face the conflict. To further illustrate this new sentiment, I take this opportunity to introduce one last event where both the WPP as well as the AIVD report were central themes of discussion.

June 28, 2023. Let's talk: Around-the-table-discussion on Democratic Resilience.

On the 28th of June, the Dutch parliament initiated an *around-the-table-discussion* on the topic of democratic resilience. A longer lingering feeling of political polarization, the rise of so-called extremist parties and a discussion on a potential party-ban was enough reason for a roundtable discussion between politicians and political scholars concerning the question: *how can a democracy defend itself against self-destruction without becoming undemocratic in the process?* What makes this discussion so interesting for the sake of my analysis, is that this talk had revolved mostly around the new WPP and the AIVD report on anti-institutionalism, furthermore highlighting their correlation. Questions concerning the WPP covered issues like representation and democratic legitimacy. For example, given that political parties are at the core of our

representational democracy, what does it mean for a democracy when these parties can be excluded from parliament? Even more so considering the fact that the party represents a considerable part of the electorate? The scholars at the table agreed on the matter: a ban on political parties is undesirable, but at the same time cannot be ruled out completely. A party ban should be the ultimate and final measure to protect our legal and democratic order when these are threatened from within. Anti-institutional extremism as explicated by the AIVD, was an example of such a possible threat. Again, the sentiment of a “dangerous other” that threatens “our” democracy dominated the conversation. To ensure a resilient democracy, this other should be monitored, neutralized or in most extreme cases excluded from political participation.

It is not hard to see how such an approach can actually be counterproductive towards the goal of a resilient democracy. The AIVD report, for instance, provides further reason for anti-governmental sentiments to flourish. Given that AIVD is part of the government and therefore part of the authority that is suspect, it is probable for anti-institutional extremists to increasingly distrust



the authorities when these authorities label them as misguided and dangerous. This is not only a hypothetical situation, on the contrary: this dynamic was clearly visible during the talk on democratic resilience. Invited to share his insights from the recent AIVD report, AIVD foreman Erik Akerboom was one of the authorities present at the discussion. Thierry Baudet, party leader for an openly anti-institutional political party (FVD) took this opportunity to ask Akerboom why exactly the claims made by anti-institutional extremists would be a part of mere narrative and not actual reality. Earlier in the discussion, Baudet had asked another scholar whether Dutch society is actually governed by an extremist majority, unlike the generally accepted opinion that it is the political flanks that are extreme. In both these cases, the answer to his questions is not relevant. By only asking the questions, Baudet openly distrusts the authorities at the table and thereby caters to his own supporters. The loud applause that had followed Baudet's questions should be taken as no surprise. This part of the discussion in particular was shared avidly amongst Baudet's supporters on social media. With that, his message was strengthened furthermore. We must


realize that identifying claims as a "false narrative" does not dismiss this narrative, it actually presents its supporters with reasons to hold on to it.

No turning back

The reason I was hesitant to refer to these events as three separate affairs, is because I argue that these three events actually point to one and the same shift in Dutch politics, or in Žižekian language, an Event. These affairs point to an Event in which the Dutch political authorities *have realized* that there is an undemocratic subject threatening our democratic institutions. As if it is a revelation: once you know it, you cannot let go of it and you have to do something about it. But what?

The events above show that at present, there is the tendency to exclude the undemocratic subject from the political arena as a way to avoid conflict and strengthen democracy's resilience. Unfortunately, we see that conflict is not avoided, but that resistance towards democratic institutions is reinforced. I would call this a "counterproductivity" of state actions against the undemocratic subject.


It is important to stress that discussions surrounding resilient democracy are not new, but have



existed for a longer period. For instance, the in March 1933 democratically elected NSDAP demonstrated how antidemocratic forces can exploit democratic tolerance. As a reaction to the horrors of Nazism and Fascism, and to strengthen democratic resilience, in 1948 the United Nations had drawn up the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in which the formal rules of democracy get the status of human rights. In that same post-war period, the predecessor of the AIVD was established. Whereas the service was firstly preoccupied with the effects of World War II, during the Cold War the service kept an eye on anti-democratic threats from the East. Between 1949 and 1995, the Dutch Intelligence service structurally monitored potential anti-democratic parties, such as the far-left Communist party (CPN) or the extreme-right nationalist party (NVU). Lastly, the rise of populism in the late 20th century and the terrorist attacks of 9/11 have contributed to the importance of a resilient democratic discourse. It begs the question: what makes this Event different?

The three events have taken place in a context that many people have diagnosed as a turbulent political time. Many scholars, journalists and other opinion makers agree that the political debate has hardened, *post-*

truth politics has grown and that there exists a *culture war* in and outside the political arena. Especially remarkable about our current political atmosphere is the impact of a wide access to (Social) Media. What can be considered a *democratization* of the public sphere is the fact that everyone and anyone can engage in public debate. It has been highlighted in many articles that this does not necessarily lead to better quality information and deliberation, but actually towards a growing polarization and distrust in authorities. Interesting for my cases above is that institutions also seek publicity more often. The Dutch newspaper NRC writes about the "sharply changed attitude of secret services in the public debate: much less media shy than say twenty years ago and proactively enlisting journalists to spread their own, sometimes political message, often with effective clickbait." The events above therefore do not take place in a governmental *vacuum*, but are open for everyone to see and to judge. It is not a matter of "mere" governance, this Event has become a matter of public opinion. An Event is indeterminate in nature. Does one *fall* in love at the moment of encounter, or is it an ongoing Event for the years to




follow? In this case: are the WPP, AIVD report and around-the-table-discussion results of an Event that has existed for a long time, or have they caused it to come into existence? Most likely, it is a combination of the two. But the main point is this: there is no turning back. The Event I have described is the realization that there is an undemocratic subject in our midst, and that we must deal with this. Conversely, there is the realization that you are seen as undemocratic, put away as dangerous or a "wappie." Once these words have been spoken there is no returning, and one must find a way to deal with it. That is the Event: a production of its own continuation.

The democratization of democracy

In this thesis, I focus particularly on one way this Event is dealt with, which I classify as *the demand for a democratization of democracy*. From a governmental perspective, this call comes from the realization that our current democratic institutions bear something within them that could be a potential threat for democracy's survival. In other words, we are in need of a *democratization of democracy*, because our current democratic institutions do not suffice. At the same time, the opponents invoke

the same desire. However, they seek to accomplish the *democratization of democracy* not by protecting current institutions, but by demolishing them and rebuilding new ones.¹⁶ In this thesis, *I will investigate the differences in the demand for a democratization of democracy in relation to the identification of an undemocratic subject.*

I will do so with the events above in mind, but primarily from an analysis of radical democracy theory. In political philosophy, we find the demand for a *democratization of democracy* primarily in the works of radical democracy, a line of thought developed in the late 20th century as a critique and revision of Marxist theory. I will investigate the problem described above with an analysis of three prominent thinkers in the radical literature: Claude Lefort, Jacques Rancière and Étienne Balibar. These three French thinkers agree with the actors above that democracy is not finished in its current form, and that political challenges of today indeed need *more* democracy. However, their added value actually lies in their different ways of thinking from the actors described above. Because of this, we might understand the "counterproductivity" in current



attempts to democratize democracy
and envisage what collective
democratic life could look like
instead.

[Read the full thesis here](#)



Who cares? Household service migrants and the labour market outcomes of Australian women

Mietta Richardson

Programme

MSc Policy Economics | ESE | EUR

Exploiting geographic variation in the distribution of migrants across Australia, I estimate the causal effect of female household service migrants on the labour market outcomes of Australian women. In line with a simple time-use model, I find a statistically significant positive effect on the hours worked by women in the top wage quartile. I also find that the increase in hours worked is lower for mothers of children under the age of 17 who experience a larger income effect than comparable non-mothers when household service prices decrease. Using novel data on the historical male-to-female sex-ratio across Australia, I find new evidence on the role of ingrained gender norms on the uptake of household services. Women in areas with a historically high ratio of men and thus more

conservative attitudes today reduce their hours worked less than women in areas with lower historical sex-ratios, consistent with a higher valuation of leisure. Further, I distinguish between the effect of inflows from formal household service workers (e.g. childcare and aged care) and informal household service workers (e.g. cleaners and laundry workers). I find that while both have a statistically significant positive effect on the hours native women work, the effect from an inflow of informal workers is substantially larger in magnitude.

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The evolution of imperial logic: *Racialization in US interventionism*

Valentina Someso Mundaray



Programme

BSc International Communication
and Media | ESHCC | EUR


Contact student:

vsomeso@gmail.com

Introduction: What is empire?

In our current era of supposed decolonisation and global sovereignty, scholars continuously question whether “empire” has truly disappeared. Go (2011, 7) defines empire as a “sociopolitical formation wherein a central political authority exercises unequal influence and power over the political processes of a subordinate society, peoples or space”. This general definition often prompts images of 19th

century European presence in Africa or 15th century Spanish settlement in the Americas: the most blatant displays of territorial expansion and subjugation of one peoples over another. It is therefore common reasoning nowadays that, following surges in state independence and absence of land acquisition, empire is hidden in the darkest corners of our past. Nevertheless, a more nuanced academic perspective of empire (Go 2011, 10-11)



acknowledges its covert continuation, distinguishing between “formal” imperialism – involving explicit political power over a territory and the subjugation of its residents – and “informal” imperialism – exercising power in the mechanisations of independent states in ways falling just short of annexation. It is the latter that many scholars examine currently.


Whether formal or informal, ingrained into the concept of empire is the notion of hierarchy (Go 2011, 9). But what determines this hierarchy? A presiding force in scholarship points to the concept of racialization, tracing its origins in informing the first formal expressions of empire to its now informal mutations. It is this section of literature I aim to contribute to, exploring racialization as a form of colonial rationale and its continued presence today as a consequent form of colonial legacy to answer the question *“In a world of sovereign states, are empires a thing of the past?”*.

To structure this argument, I look explicitly at the US and the role of racialization in legitimising its interventions. I begin by outlining the impregnable position of racialization in US colonial history. Using these conceptual underpinnings, I then examine the persistence of racialization as a

legitimising tool for the current informal character of US “interventionism” via specific cases within the two most recent, significant eras of global American intervention: the Cold War and the “Global War on Terror”.

Historical foundations of racialization in US colonialism

Taking ideas from Isoke (2015, 742) and Du Bois (quoted in Itzigsohn and Brown 2020), I articulate racialization as the continuing social and political process of constructing racial categories and resulting hierarchies by ascribing meaning to human differences, operating via power systems to shape national identities and validate systems of dominance and subordination. An important distinction is that this is not limited to physical traits but extends to wider mechanisms of thought about people (Gruffydd Jones 2013, 65) that have produced “race” in various fictitious categories, one of which is biological (Isoke 2015, 742). The hierarchical logic within both definitions of empire and racialization is obvious, but how has this informed US colonialism specifically? To explain its historical foundations, I apply Martinot’s (2003) detailed analysis of the genesis of American national




identity as “white” and its influence on US imperial action, examining this via Gruffydd Jones’ (2013) historical stages of racialized thinking in imperial discourse. Apart from hierarchical, Gruffydd Jones (2013, 53) conceptualises racialized thought as creating an “ontology of difference”, wherein we explain reality based on human difference as opposed to similarity – comparably to the definition above – with each stage of racialized thinking she describes corresponding to a separate criteria of human difference.

The first of these phases is the production of race on a religious basis. Specifically, Gruffydd Jones (2013, 57) looks at the slavery debate in the 16th century Spanish colonial empire, which conceived difference – and therefore race – in terms of people's ability to embrace Christianity, placing Amerindians above Africans to justify the rescinding of enslavement to the former while continuing to suppress the latter. Similarly, Martinot (2003, 120) highlights how early 17th century English settlers in North America first distinguished themselves as Christians, opposing Native American and African “heathens”.

The second phase, corresponding to the Enlightenment era, produced two forms of racialized thinking:


scientific ideas of race in relation to “corporal difference” and a static, “stadial” conception of history (Gruffydd Jones, 2013, 59). The latter is related to the classification of African societies along a continuum of “civilisation” based on their proximity to centralised (European) political structures, where those deemed “uncivilised” or “primitive” were inferior and therefore justified grounds for European colonial settlers to benevolently “civilise” them (Gruffydd Jones, 2013, 59). The former of these two strands is paralleled in the use of anti-miscegenation laws in the US to secure a white-race nation (Isoke 2015, 751), which Martinot (2003, 122) argues founded the “biologization of the concept of race”. The second is exemplified in Martinot’s (2003, 127) discussion of the American “Manifest Destiny”, which described the belief that Anglo-Americans were divinely appointed to govern continental North America, “civilising” these peoples. Martinot (2003, 127) illustrates how civilisation under Manifest Destiny was conflated with notions of “clearing the land” – the elimination of existing sociopolitical infrastructures in settled territory, replaced by those homogenous to American “white” social order, as occurred in Mexico



in 1846. This “clearing” mirrors European colonialism in Africa, which racialized other societies as lesser due to their distance from European political mechanisation. The final stage of racialized thought described by Gruffydd Jones (2013, 61) hinges on presumed differences in states’ ability to govern, determined by their affinity to Western liberal models, which she argues informs current discourse of “state failure” and “good governance”. She explains how this discourse emerged from vocabularies of development and modernity, which inherited the racial *ideology* of (formal) colonial “civilisation” but purposefully expelled all *language* of race: the discursive categorisation of states into less developed, developing and developed was identical to the stadial view of societies progressing towards civilisation in the Enlightenment period – both based on their approximation to preferred Western political models – but had to dissociate itself from racial vocabulary to survive in 20th century anti-colonial sentiment (Gruffydd Jones 2013, 62). Martinot (2003, 128) reiterates these ideas in the transformation of the US’ civilising mission to one of democratising post-World War II, exercised in (informal) interventions in South American countries in the

mid-late 20th century, where the US dispelled democratically-elected governments under claims of being undemocratic and “saving” Latin peoples, thus “clearing the land” of their sociopolitical structures to refashion these with those acceptable to US interests. Here, Martinot (2003, 128) highlights the hypocrisy of this democratising mission: if democracy is to be established in a nation, its people have to be – by the very nature of the concept – self-governing; the infliction of a foreign system – as liberating and democratic as it may be framed – inherently infringes on the sovereignty democracy rests upon. American democracy then is fundamentally racialized as “white” democracy because it assumes non-white versions as undemocratic.

A final note to point out is Martinot’s (2003, 129) concluding argument, compellingly outlining the three structural elements of modern US interventionism as being directly correlated with those of racialized white US identity. These are: 1) “allegiance to itself as a messianic concern”, viewing itself as a global saviour with a moral duty to spread its values, paralleling how whiteness demands loyalty to its own supremacy; 2) the unilateral, often




unreasonable “arbitrary denigration” of another nation undemocratic or chaotic, just as white US identity historically relied on constructing non-white groups as threatening; and 3) “gratuitous and self-justifying violence”, where force is used beyond accomplishing strategic goals to become excessive and affirm the imagined threat, similar to the self-maintenance of white supremacy through racialized violence framed as necessary for security against a fictitious danger. These conceptual underpinnings outline the unassailable roots of racialization in rationalising colonialism and the evolution of this relationship in conforming to the global conjecture of the time. To demonstrate this continuation, these conceptions will be applied to the following eras of US interventionism.

The Cold War and Korea

Looking at Cold War interventionism on Third World countries, Westad (2007, 4) argues the two superpowers were motivated by the belief they were each the champion of modernity, seeking to prove the universality of their ideologies via the imposition of these on newly-independent countries. Westad (2007, 4-5) regards this as a perpetuation of European colonial vocation in Africa

because, in the same way the Europeans rationalised this as “saving the natives”, the Cold War superpowers saw themselves as “assisting natural trends”. Clearly echoing the transformation of US formal empire under Manifest Destiny and its civilising mission to its post-World War II informal empire under its democratising mission (Martinot 2003, 128), the racialized thinking of categorising of societies in their proximity to a designated Western political model progresses from one of racial civilisation to one of un-racial modernisation (Gruffydd Jones 2013, 62). Gruffydd Jones (2013, 62) assigned the sterilised language of “modernity” to the Cold War period, which was purposefully ahistorical in its lack of racial vocabulary to ignore colonial histories and consequently legitimise American interventionism at a time of strong anti-colonial sentiment and threat of revolution. Essentially, the worry was that if newly-independent states realised the connection between liberal capitalism and its influence in fabricating global inequalities under prior formal colonialism, they would revolt against US interventionism (promoting liberal ideology) to side with the Soviets (promoting alternatives to liberal capitalism); the discourse of modernity would




not remind people of its roots in the blatantly racial civilisation discourse despite its closeness to it because it excluded racial language.

Moreover, framing such trends as “natural” exposes its racialized character, deemed as such purely because these stem from a “white” system, proving Martinot’s (2003, 128) critique of Americans’ democratising mission as hypocritical as this conceptualisation assumes Third World societies to be unnatural simply because they are non-white. This relates to racialized notions of “clearing the land”, as in imparting their “natural” modernity, the US must rid societies of present constitutions. Finally, Westad (2007, 4) states the superpowers justified their ideological extension as a defensive act, which relates to the arbitrary denigration Martinot (2003, 129) claims structures US interventionism: for the US to assert it is motivated by security, it has to assume the other is threatening this and therefore dangerous.

A clearer depiction of Martinot’s (2003) three structural elements can be found in Cumings’ (2013) analysis of US orientalism – a form of racialized thought – in the 1950s Korean War. The arbitrary slander is most apparent in the racialized portrayal of Koreans as chaotic and dismissive of human life. Cummings

(2013, 8) highlights how US discourse framed Koreans as disparate from American “elevated” conceptions of warfare, making them so intrinsically alien that even the Nazis seemed morally superior in their ability to value individual lives (21) – an extreme juxtaposition constructing Koreans as uniquely barbaric. A moral hierarchy is fabricated along racialized lines, placing Koreans at the bottom based on their perceived delineation from white social organisation, which the Nazis partially possessed despite their tangibly horrific actions. Additionally, Cumings (2013, 7) notes the use of racial slurs like “gooks” by US soldiers to refer to Koreans as ways of stripping them of their humanity to brutally kill them, conforming to American imaginations of themselves as gracious democratising forces instead of invaders.

The US’ deployment of gratuitous, self-justifying violence in response to this imagined threat is perhaps the most obvious of the three elements. Cumings (2013) describes the massive urban destruction inflicted on Korea that surpassed that in Germany or Japan (20), the saturation bombing (2), massacres like those at Nogun (8) and the exorbitant use of napalm (18), which were reasoned




as crucial for weakening North Korean morale (18). Furthermore, the firestorms of World War II were revived and executed at their most destructive capacities due to the unequal opposition posed by North Korean (lack of) anti-aircraft weaponry in comparison to that of the Germans (Cumings 2013, 17). The disproportionality of violence and destruction against an already weaker enemy underscores its gratuitous nature, reinforced by the indiscriminate mass killing of civilians by bombing and napalm despite its justifications of exhausting morale (Cumings, 2013, 2), while the racialized framing of Koreans as life-devaluing served to legitimate the excessiveness (Cumings, 2013, 21). American violence went beyond accomplishing strategic goals in its immoderation and thus became about validating the threat perceived in their racialized denigration of Koreans.

Finally, Americans proved the messianic nature of their intervention in their positioning of themselves as “friends” to the “simple, primitive and barbaric” Koreans (Cumings 2013, 8). The racialized thinking is glaring in its reversion to the language of racial civilisations despite the general trend excluding racial language in interventionist discourse at this time

period (Gruffydd Jones, 2013, 62), reminiscent of Manifest Destiny’s civilising mission (Martinot, 2003, 127).

The “Global War on Terror” and Iraq


One of the main reasons the US professed for invading Iraq in 2003 was the suspicion of Iraqi possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) (Calabrese 2005, 155; Bush 2003). This rationale can be understood as racialized through the lens of Gusterson’s (1999, 113) nuclear orientalism theory, which describes Western constructions of non-Western custody of nuclear weapons as untrustworthy and unsafe. While WMDs encompass more than nuclear arms, the framework remains relevant. Among the many facets of this racialized discourse, most pertinent to US’ framing of Iraq is that of them as politically immature, incapable of the strategic rationality ascribed to Western nuclear powers (Gusterson, 1999, 123), which is reflected in US President Bush’s (2003) speech announcing the war where he frames Iraq as unstable and their ownership of WMDs as one that “threatens the peace”. This constructs Iraq as reckless and thus dangerous, contrastingly to the implicitly



disciplined US. Moreover, Calabrese (2005, 156) points out the lack of evidence to support claims of Iraqi WMDs, claims discredited “before, during, after and ever since the war” but received minimal scrutiny from American public and media. The willingness to accept such a visibly unsupported claim can also be explained by nuclear orientalism (Gusterson, 1999), as it reflects an innate Western belief that non-Western societies are so impulsive and politically unstable that even flimsy suspicion of these weapons comprises a justifiable cause for war, pointing additionally to the racialized denigration described by Martinot (2003, 129).

Bush’s (2003) speech contains an undeniable racialized logic when examined through Martinot’s (2003) three structural elements of US interventionism. Firstly, Bush (2003) continuously refers to the American aim in Iraq as one of “freedom”, which is an “honour” and “duty”, portraying the US as a benevolent saviour, intervening as part of a larger moral responsibility under their messianic self-image, echoing the American democratising mission which racialized non-white nations as needing to be “saved” (Martinot, 2003, 129). This is reinforced under the claim that America “has no ambition in Iraq, except to remove

a threat and restore control” (Bush 2003) which ironically exposes the inversion of this mission (Martinot, 2003, 128) as the notion of “restoring” suggests not an acceptance of Iraqi self-determination – despite claims of “no ambition” – but an imposition of American (white) governing principles. Furthermore, the idea of “removal” aligns with the mission’s intention to “clear the land”, necessitating erasure of existing political order (Martinot, 2003, 128). As Gruffydd Jones (2013, 62) would argue, Iraq is constructed as a “failed state” in need of “good governance”, a racialized discourse which she deems characteristic of the War on Terror, used to legitimise its “interventionary and pre-emptive world order”. Secondly, Bush (2003) villainises Saddam Hussein, denoting his regime as having “no regard for conventions of war or rules of morality” while presenting US military as “honourable and decent”, implying a racialized hierarchy of morality with Americans at its peak, which strongly parallels the savagery attributed to Koreans as both are framed as removed from the “correct” (American, white) rules of war. Thirdly, Bush (2003) insists on “decisive force”, that “this will not be a campaign of half measures”,



preemptively legitimising unbridled violence by equating destruction as necessary for peace.

However, one could not have imagined this violence to be as gratuitous as that of the torture of Iraqi prisoners by US officials in Abu Ghraib, arising from the arbitrary denigration of the detainees in their assumed criminality, racialized as “terrorists” without fair trial to prove otherwise (Hernandez 2007, 3). Hernandez (2007, 7) compares this to the unfounded criminalisation of Black men in the US as rapists of white women to justify their lynching, arguing the continuation of American racialized violence. Thus, in both cases, the denigration itself – rather than any concrete wrongdoing – becomes justification for their mistreatment. This is worsened by the revoking of Geneva protections by the US to accused “terrorists” (Hernandez 2007, 3), which jointly exposes the self-justifying nature of this violence as it detaches itself from the victims themselves, their actions and the norms of justice the US claims to defend to instead confirm the threat fashioned in their racialized denigration. The excessiveness is evoked in the act torture itself – embodying violence in its most extreme form – including rape, electric shocking, starvation, sensory deprivation among many

other aspects within its wicked arsenal (ICoCA n.d.). The irony in Bush’s (2003) condemnation of Hussein’s regime for disregarding the “rules of morality” while his own administration rescinded and systematically violated those very legalities is horrifyingly brazen.

Conclusion: Empire transformed

The endurance of empire in the modern world, as Go (2011) suggests, lies in its transformation from formal rule to informal “intervention”. This shift remains deeply racialized in its repackaging of racial hierarchies, from discourses of civilisation, development/modernisation and state failure (Gruffydd Jones, 2013). US interventionism reflects this in the mutation of Manifest Destiny’s civilising mission to one of democratising, in addition to its three structural pillars of messianic self-conceptualisation, denigration and exorbitant, self-justifying violence arising from the construction of “whiteness” in US history; this is what underscores the paradoxical nature of current US intervention, which seeks to spread democracy by undermining the very sovereignty it claims to uphold (Martinot, 2003). Ultimately then, it is clear that “empire”, even in a world of sovereign states, has not vanished but evolved alongside

the racialized power structures it is founded in.

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Inclusive Education for Teenage Mothers in Mpwapwa District, Tanzania:

A Critical Analysis of The School Re- entry Guideline (2022)

Sophia August Temba



Programme


MA Development Studies | ISS | EUR

The study explores the implementation of The School Re-entry Guideline (2022) in Mpwapwa District in Tanzania. It specifically aims at understanding the experiences of teenage mothers in Mpwapwa District in the formal education system, and the challenges they face. The study analyses the experiences of pregnancy, and of motherhood of teenage mothers after returning

Contact student:

tembasophia@gmail.com

to public school in Mpwapwa District. The researcher identified the challenges faced by teenage mothers in accessing formal education and explored strategies to promote their inclusion in the educational system. By using a child rights-based approach and women's empowerment framework, Tanzania's School Re-entry Guideline (2022) and its implementation was assessed



based on two mentioned frameworks. Through interviews with teachers, government officials, and representatives of Civil Society Organizations as key informants, their insights and views on the subject could be gathered.

The study underlines the critical role of education in empowering teenage mothers by equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills that challenge gender inequality. The study highlights the need for a comprehensive policy review and improved community support to create a more inclusive and welcoming learning environment for teenage mothers. This study adds to the ongoing conversation in Tanzania on inclusive education by supporting the advocacy programs targeted to address the specific challenges experienced by teenage mothers by enabling them to balance their role as students and mothers while pursuing their academic goals.

[Read the full thesis here](#)



Bounded Rationality in European Policymaking Processes:

The Development of European Legislation to Address Future Responses to the Instrumentalization of Migration

Luke van de Wouw



Programme

MSc Public Administration:
Governance of Migration and
Diversity | ESSB | EUR

On 14 May 2024, the Pact on Migration and Asylum was adopted by the Council of the European Union (hereafter the Council). Although this Pact was first proposed in September 2020, its adoption took nearly four years. The final file to be agreed upon was the Crisis and Force Majeure Regulation (CFMR) (DG

Contact student:

luke@van-de-wouw.nl

HOME 2024). Some of the controversy surrounding the CFMR are elements related to the instrumentalization of migration, which found their origins in the proposed Instrumentalization Regulation (IR).² The European Commission (hereafter the Commission) defined the instrumentalization of migration as

a situation

“[...] where a third country instigates irregular migratory flows into the Union by actively encouraging or facilitating the movement of third country nationals to the external borders, onto or from within its territory and then onwards to those external borders, where such actions are indicative of an intention of a third country to destabilise the Union or a Member State, where the nature of such actions is liable to put at risk essential State functions, including its territorial integrity, the maintenance of law and order or the safeguard of its national security.”

In this research, Simon's (1990) concept of bounded rationality is applied to the policy process of the IR proposal to produce an understanding of bounded rationality in migration policy development. It answers the question: 'What was the role of bounded rationality in the agenda-setting and policy formulation phases of the development of European legislation to address the instrumentalization of migration against the European Union?'

The Commission's definition of the instrumentalization of migration is similar to strategic engineered migration, a concept which Greenhill (2008, p. 7-8) defined as migratory movements that are deliberately induced or manipulated by state or

non-state actors with certain political or military objectives. The four forms of strategic engineered migration are dispossessive, exportive, militarized, and coercive engineered migrations. In her later book *Weapons of Mass Migration* (2010), Greenhill focuses on coercive engineered migrations as one of the four types of strategic engineered migration. According to Greenhill (2010, p. 17), there have been at least four attempts to engage in coercive engineered migration against the EU in the 2000s (two by Belarus and two by Libya). Thus, it may come as no surprise that academics have accepted and built upon the concept coercive engineered migrations in recent years, with a particular focus on Europe (e.g., Gökalp-Aras 2019; Bekić 2022; Kuźelewska & Piekutowska 2023). However, during an interview Greenhill classified the attempt by the Belarussian regime to strategically engineer migration against the EU in 2021 as an example of exportive engineered migration (Blake-Martin 2023). Exportive engineered migrations are those migratory movements induced or manipulated by state or non-state actors “either to fortify a domestic political position [...] or to discomfit or destabilize foreign government(s)” (Greenhill 2008, p.


7-8). However, others have argued that the Belarussian attempt additionally contained coercive elements, making it a combination of expulsive and coercive engineered migration. For example, Bekić (2022, p. 160) argued that objectives of the Belarussian regime were to coerce the EU into relinquishing support for anti-Lukashenko protests and to end sanctions against Belarus.

Regardless of the form of strategic engineered migration that Belarus engaged in, the situation led the Commission to propose the IR in December 2021. From its publication onwards, the IR proposal attracted criticism from NGOs (e.g., ECRE 2022; Amnesty International 2022), academia (e.g., Forti 2023), and think tank researchers (e.g., Rasche 2022; Šimonák 2023). As such, it leads to questions regarding the origins and arguments underlying the proposal. Furthermore, the fact that Greenhill (2008, p. 12-13) identified >100 attempts to strategically engineer migration between 1951-2008, prompts the question of timing. Therefore, this research investigates the development of the IR proposal and its subsequent merging with the CFMR whilst relying on Greenhill's (2008) concept of strategic engineered migration and Simon's (1990)

concept of bounded rationality. Simon (1990) considered humans' rationality in decision-making to be bounded by human cognitive capabilities such as having a limited attention span and a short-term memory as well as the environment.

Ultimately, the research argues that policy actors' rationality is bounded by human cognitive limitations, in particular their limited attention span, organizational loyalty, and their preference for analyzing prepared solutions rather than deliberating for new ones. Other factors such as humans' short-term memory, the tendency to apply heuristic methods in deliberating for solutions, and institutional friction are found to be of lesser importance.

This research contributes to existing research on policymaking processes and strategic engineered migration. In particular, it contributes to an understanding of policy actors' access to and selection of information from the policy environment, an under-researched area of policymaking processes (Peters & Thynne 2022). Furthermore, recent legislative actions by Finland to deal with allegedly instrumentalized migrants from Russia increase the relevance of this research, as the Finnish



measures are perceived to go beyond the CFMR (Liboreiro 2024) – which will enter into force on July 1, 2026. Additionally, the research contributes to migration studies by investigating the relationship between strategic engineered migration and the instrumentalization of migration. Finally, it contributes to migration research by highlighting the controversy of migration policy at the EU level, with a particular focus on instrumentalization as an important aspect of the Pact on Migration and Asylum. The increased attention to strategically engineered or ‘instrumentalized’ migration is unsurprising considering that Greenhill (2010, p. 264) found that “migration-related fears can prove even stronger and more influential than concerns about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.”

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