



2014

UTBLICK

ISSUE NO 2

A VOICE FOR
THE VOICELESS
p.4

VALET AV
ETT EUROPA:
Soffpotatisarnas
kamp
p.8

THE CHOICE
BETWEEN GROWTH
& EQUALITY
Tradeoff or
no tradeoff
p.10

IS HISTORY
REPEATING ITSELF?
p.12

VARFÖR FLER VÄLJER
FRONT NATIONAL
p.14

ERDOĞAN:
Another tale of right-
wing populism toppling
liberal democracy
p.16

BACK TO NORMALCY
p.20

CANNABIS
LEGALISATION
A sound exit strategy in
the war on drugs?
p.22

A DEMOCRATIC
CHOICE
p.26

THEME: PRO-CHOICE



**Legally Responsible
Publisher:**

Josef Svantesson

Editors-in-Chief:

Josef Svantesson
Aiysha Varraich

Writers:

Mikael Boberg
Anja Johansson
Alexandros Kostoulas
Amanda Modée
Abu-Bakr Mudawi
Anton Ståhl
Josef Svantesson
Ozan Utku
Aiysha Varraich

Graphic Design:

Johan Ahlbäck
contact@johanahlback.com

Publishing House:

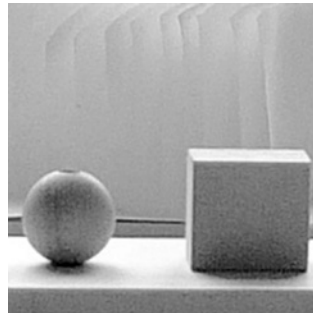
Trydells Tryckeri

Elsewhere:

www.utblick.org
Facebook.com/utblick
Twitter: @UF_Utblick

Detta material är helt eller delvis
finansierat av SIDA, Styrelsen för
Internationellt Utvecklingsarbete.
SIDA delar inte nödvändigtvis
de åsikter som här framförs.
Ansvaret för innehåll är
uteslutande författarens.

LETTER FROM



Utblick №2 features the
photo series "Ball & Cube"
by
Hsin-Chi Hsiao,
that.is.hsinchi@gmail.com

THE EDITORS

When one reads the news the idea of change, whether political, environmental, social or economic, seems rather bleak, reinforcing a certain inevitability and determinism. In spite of this we like to believe that life is not made up beforehand. On an individual plane, we are so busy with our lives that collective action appears obsolete; the world keeps on turning whether you'd like it or not, it's not up to you. And yet, there are choices to be made.

It is this dogma - choice - that in today's Western societies is constantly fed to us; one that is so intricately weaved into our mindset that we hardly question the true nature of it, specifically its effect on our day to day lives. We are taught that choice is our path to true freedom; whether shopping for jeans, choosing salad dressing at the super market or casting a vote during election time.

However, choice presents us with a paradox, most succinctly detected by the concept of opportunity cost found in economics; where the result of our choice effectively leaves behind all other choices we were able to make. It is this paradoxical nature of the freedom of choice that leads psychologist Barry Schwartz to conclude that choice has made us not freer but more paralyzed, not happier but more dissatisfied.*

How free are we to actually make choices? It is this and a little more, that we present to you in this issue, spanning from the pro-choice movement in the United States, juxtaposed against our political choices that are functioning as an impetus for the rise of the right-wing across Europe, to the other end of the spectrum where the latest marijuana legislation has sparked fierce debate.

Our generation seems compelled to indifferently believe that what happens in life is the result of our own choosing. You better make the right decision; if not, the ever greased causality-chain of choosing a course of action leading to ample results will simply stop working.

Let us indulge you in a break, to see whether there truly is a freedom or paralysis when we enter into the sphere of choice.

* www.ted.com/talks/barry_schwartz_on_the_paradox_of_choice

A VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS



Y

"WOULD YOU KILL A BABY?"

N



The words are printed in blood red on stark white, next to a picture of a giggling child. It's a typical example of the propaganda filling American pro-life websites, protesting against abortion and contraception.



The American pro-life movement is a motley of organisations and activists loosely held together. Its uniting vision is to outlaw abortions in the USA, but frequently the groups have other things in common as well. They tend to be Christian (various denominations occur but the most vocal ones are often Evangelical or Catholic) and socially conservative. Perhaps due to the varied set of proponents, the message of the pro-life movement is messy; partly referring to science and partly to God's will; partly to philosophical questions of human life and partly to botched foetal limbs. To make sense of this and look beyond the grisly imagery, we must dig deeper into the arguments, untangle the methods, and attempt to discover what lies beneath.

Though there is much overlap, the message of the pro-life movement can be roughly divided in two groups: religious and non-religious. The religious arguments are fairly straightforward. They often reference a biblical quote to substantiate the idea that abortion is morally outrageous, as all children are a blessing from God. Examples of this are "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you" (Jeremiah 1:5) and "Children are a heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is His reward" (Psalm 127:3). Quotes such as these are used to scripturally prove full human worth from conception, effectively equating abortion as essentially murder.

**"the message of the pro-life movement
can be roughly divided in two groups:
religious and non-religious"**

The non-religious arguments are often more convoluted and use several different argumentative approaches to make their point in a secular way, appealing to a more general sense of morality. Let us take a closer look at the methods used.

A frequent argument is that although abortion is legal in the United States, this does not make it right, countering an imagined argument that the legality of the procedure lends respectability and complacency. Comparisons to the Holocaust, which was also legal at the time, are common. Comparing abortion to a universally condemned past evil emphasises the humanity of a foetus through equating the suffering of an abortion with enduring continuous torture with the aim of extinction. Pro-lifers are, according to this narrative, on the "right side of history", fuelling a sense of righteousness. This argument also implies that the clinics carrying out abortions are no better than concentration camps, justifying the frequent harassment of medical staff.

Though the vast majority of pro-life arguments focus on the foetus, there are exceptions. Claims that abortions cause a higher risk

of breast cancer and infertility frequently occur, as do testimonials from women experiencing extreme regret and guilt after an abortion, as well as those from men, robbed of fatherhood. Here guilt plays a part, as well as fear of disease (the breast cancer claim has been refuted numerous times, and though there is a risk for infertility, it is minute).

The pro-life stance does not allow abortion in any case, including that of conception from rape. This is justified through the argument that children conceived from rape are still “innocent lives”; they aren’t responsible for the atrocious crime committed, and should be allowed a shot at life. This narrative focuses entirely on the experience and rights of the foetus, ignoring those of the pregnant person. It implicitly places blame on a raped person who does not want to complete the pregnancy, and is often accompanied by testimonials by people who were conceived by rape, again highlighting the humanity of the foetus.

The blame, however, does not rest solely on those pregnant. They are victims of a greater evil: the government, enforcing nefarious laws, promoting baby-killing industries and tricking prospective parents. Providers of abortions are frequently described as making “blood money”, profiting from killing children. Abortion providers are called Abortion Industry, Abortion Mills or Big Abortion to emphasise the large-scale wholesale practice. Especially targeted is Planned Parenthood, a non-profit provider of sexual healthcare, which caters to the young and impecunious. This is especially interesting given that richer, older

people also have abortions, but in hospitals whose existence and practice are universally vilified. Somehow, an abortion on a person without medical insurance seems worse than one with.

What we can deduce from this brief analysis of the main arguments is that the language used is manipulative, relying on feelings of guilt, fear, shame and horror to dissuade pregnant people from abortion and to fuel the beliefs of pro-life activists. Notably absent from the narrative of the pro-life movement are answers to the issues that lead people to consider abortion. These reasons, which often include poverty, large families, and work situations, are varied and complex, and the pro-life cure-all of adoption does not always provide a viable solution. The thorough lack of empathy with the situation of the pregnant person, instead adding further guilt to a painful decision, must lead us to conclude that to the pro-life movement, the life of the foetus overrides the lives of all its family members, including the unwilling mother.

VALET AV ETT EUROPA

Det är ett val som pågår under tre dagar i maj då Europas omkring 400 miljoner röstberättigade medborgare ska lyftas ur sin soffpotatisställning, räta ut ryggen och stolt knata iväg till vallokalerna. Det skrivs om 2014 som ett supervalår och det Europeiska valfläsket kokas så att det nästan blir stekt. Mitt i den stekosmättade luften hörs en populistisk EU-skeptisk melodi.

ett urval av Europaparlamentsvalets teknikaliteter: För att bilda en partigrupp i EU-parlamentet krävs minst 25 ledamöter från minst sju individuella medlemsländer. En partigrupp har fördelen av att på ett tidigare stadium kunna ta beslut inom EU-parlamentets talmanskonferens. Den tjugofemte maj i år ska vi svenskar välja ut vilka 20 från Sverige som, tillsammans med de andra 731 ledamöterna från de övriga EU-länderna ska forma den europeiska politiken de närmsta fem åren.

“C'est facile!” som franska Front Nationals (Nationella Fronten) ledare Marine Le Pen säkert sa när hon slog ihop händerna i förtjusning. Hon lyfte luren och slog en pling till Nederländerna och PVV:s (Frihetspartiet) partiledare Geert Wilders och berättade om sin storslagna plan: Att tillsammans så ett frö till ett större EU-oberoende. Eller kanske till och med ett framtida EU-utträde för sina respektive hemländer. Andra partier i Europa med samma idéer som Le Pens Front National och Wilders PVV blev snabbt attraherade av den sockersöta holländsk-franska melodin som trallades över kontinenten. Den tämligen färske riksdagsledamoten tillika Sverigedemokraternas ledare Jimmie Åkesson ville sjunga med; han bjöd in Le Pen till Stockholm. Denna anti-Eurotrip har fortsatt och kommer troligtvis att göra det ända fram till valdagarna i sena maj.

I dialogen med UKIP:s (Storbritanniens Självtändighetsparti) ledare Nigel Farage har det visat sig att han är mer svårsmickrad än exempelvis Åkesson och Wilder. Farage förnekade så sent som i januari i år att det finns planer på ytterligare ett högersamarbete där UKIP ska ingå. Han hoppas kanske på att kunna valla in de likasinnade vännerna i fällan som utgör den EFD-grupp (Frihet och demokrati i Europa) i EU-parlamentet som UKIP redan tillhör idag? I EFD-gruppen ingår



– SOFFPOTATISARNAS KAMP

bland annat representanter från våra grannländer med partibroscher från Sannfinländarna och Dansk Folkeparti på bröstet.

Att infiltrera Brysselnätverket och få alla maktens korridorer att slingra ihop sig som en orm och slutligen kväva sig själv är den demokratiska vägen att gå. I synnerhet om målet är att knäcka det europeiska samarbetet. Men även om produkten av företaget endast blir en nedvriden termostat för EU:s så kallade överstatliga förmynderi. Vidare så

är den aggressiva retoriken från exempelvis Le Pens sida om att "riva Brysselmuren" eller "förgöra den europeiska Sovjetunionen" långt ifrån ineffektiv. Patriotiska krafter inom Europeiska unionen ackumuleras och under enad flagg ämnar dessa tillsammans klyva den union som skapades för att förhindra de samma. Nobels fredspris som tilldelades EU för två år sedan är - om något - ett kvitto på vikten av ett Europa i fred, försoning och demokrati. Det låter möjligen tämligen ironiskt att sammanlänka ett enat Europa på förmiddagen för att lagom till eftermiddagskaffet reformera det till ett delat.

Åter till siffrornas och matematikens logiska värld: Hitta tjugofem EU-skeptiska politiker från sju olika länder. Med belgiska Vlaams Belangs (Flamländskt Intresse) Gerolf Annemans, Heinz-Christian Straches parti FPÖ (Österrikes Frihetsparti), italienska Lega Nord, det nynazistiska grekiska partiet Gyllene Gryning, de finska Sannfinländarna, norska FrP (Fremskrittspartiet), Dansk Folkeparti och sist men inte minst Sverigedemokraterna i samma orkesterdike är ensemblen redan samlad. Med eller utan UKIP; plus eller minus något eller några av de ovan nämnda eller onämnda högerorienterade partierna.

Oberoende av huruvida dessa populistsymfoniker håller takten eller inte, när tonarterna går allt högre och texttrader om antisemitism eller en alltför utbredd islamisering av samhället sjungs ut, återstår det att se var det nyligen prisbelönta Europa hamnar. Symfonin som komponerats av Marine Le Pen på sin kammare i Paris verkar ha potential att ljuda över Europa med både liv och emfas. Den ljusa sidan är att Europa har över 400 miljoner icke-soffpotatisar som tillsammans kan se till att inte ens denna kakofonis första ton spelas.



THE CHOICE BETWEEN GROWTH AND EQUALITY – TRADEOFF OR NO TRADEOFF?



Is the cure for inequality worse than the disease itself? That is the question posed by a recent IMF report as it examines the relation between taxes, inequality and growth. A relationship that will become increasingly important when combined with the transformative economic impact of new technology.

The authors of the report bring into question the importance of a fundamental microeconomic tradeoff, introduced by Arthur Okun in 1975, regarding incentivisation and redistribution. The tradeoff concerns the loss of economic efficiency that occurs when redistribution takes place within a society. He puts the associated loss down to both the administrative efforts required as well as the reduced incentives that it leads to. The reduction appears both on the high and low end of the income scale. Progressively higher marginal tax for those earning a lot and transfers that decrease with higher income for the poor, both lessen incentives to work and therefore hurt growth. However there is also evidence that high levels of economic inequality, increasingly present around the world, is also harmful to growth by causing investment-reducing political unrest as well as undermining broad progress in health and education. The paper, then, seeks to establish the relative importance of the two factors.

With the exceptions of extreme levels of redistribution, the conclusion of the research is that there is no empirical evidence to support the thesis that redistribution has a net-negative effect on the growth rate. In other words the pro-equality and disincentive effects more or less balance each other out. The research is based on a large collection of data from around the world and thus claims to hold lessons for policy makers worldwide.

Furthermore the problem formulation is interesting in that it highlights GDP growth as the paramount societal goal. Inequality, as concerned in the research, is only an interesting variable to the extent that it effects growth. This quite accurately reflects the starting point for a lot of the political mainstream; focus is on equality of opportunity, not equality of outcome. However as *The Economist* highlighted in a recent issue, we are on the verge of a fundamental economic shift. It will have a huge impact on the structure of the economy in the coming years and as it does, inequality will become an increasingly important political topic.

New technology will fundamentally reshape the markets and in the process displace jobs in large parts of the economy as capital, both human and real, is directed to new, more productive sectors. The impact that IT has had on jobs has so far been relatively mild. Machines have replaced humans in performing only the most monotone and repetitive tasks. However, as new software is developed and computing power increases, the ability to automate the production process will move up the value chain. An Oxford study estimates that 47 percent of the jobs currently held by humans will be automated in the coming twenty years. New jobs will be created in new sectors but not nearly at the pace with which the old ones are being displaced. This lag represents an enormous challenge for politicians around the world as widespread unemployment receives huge profits of the winning technology companies and inequality soars. This threatens to polarize societies and cause major social and political unrest. As is evident in countries across Europe, economic hardship often proves a fertile ground for political populists and fringe parties who capitalize on uncertainty.

A lot of the arguments for dismantling parts of the social safety net in rich countries have been based on the supposed adverse effect that it has on growth. The questioning of this causal link should provide the increasingly confident progressive anti-austerity movement in the West with potent policy ammunition. But all of the mainstream political parties who want to stay in power will have to find ways to offset increasingly unequal economic outcomes, papers like this may turn out to be essential in getting the right policies implemented in time.

IS HISTORY REPEATING ITSELF?

If one were to take a quick overview of the European continent and its socio-political state today, an eerie resemblance to the 20TH century appears; where the failure of right-wing capitalist policies, creates economic instability that heavily affects the common man. This misery and insecurity is the prime breeding ground for extreme right-wing parties to gain popularity, as they utilize the situation to their advantage by both playing on people's sentiment and helplessness, convincing them of the inherent danger that is posed by the chosen scapegoat. Effectively; securing themselves within the political establishment through democratic means.

In the 20TH century the trigger (capitalist right-wing policies) was the crash of Wall Street in 1929, where capitalism failed and led to the Great Depression across most of the Western world. In the 21ST century, once again, the failure of capitalism and its right-wing political philosophy (through deregulation of banks, allowing banks a free hand to be gambling with public money) materialised with the Lehman Brother's demise on Wall Street, causing a ripple effect across much of the Western World - known as the financial crisis of 2008. The solution to this failure: for governments (i.e. the public sector) having to bail out the failing banks (private sector). The common man, i.e. the tax payer, had to shoulder the failure of the right-wing capitalist experiment, which effectively, coupled with government imposed austerity measures, caused today's Great Depression. The net result: the common populace has become insecure, both economically and socially. In the 20TH century the scapegoat provided by right-wing parties took shape in anti-Semitic waves over the continent, where Jews were pointed out as the primary danger to Europeans' way of life. Today, the scapegoat chosen and targeted by the right-wing takes the shape of Islamophobia, where Muslims are the prominent threat to the European way of life, as evidenced by debates varying from bans on minarets (Switzerland) to heated discussions of wearing head scarves in public.

This stretched out process, spanning almost over an entire decade, is the rise of the right-wing parties once again, which can easily be understood through The Guardian's interactive map of Europe*. In the 20th century, the right-wing's rise reached its pinnacle with Hitler democratically accessing power. Today, we await our results with the European Parliamentary elections.

* www.theguardian.com/world/interactive/2011/nov/06/europe-far-right-nationalist-populist-interactive

As our common memory of WWII and its aftermath fades into the background, we are in danger of allowing our societies to be penetrated by fear and loathing for citizens that have been contributing citizens within our society. However, what differs between Europe of the 20TH and 21ST centuries, is the supranational European Union's government, that all EU member states willingly acceded to, which is one of the many reasons the elections are so eagerly awaited.

The extreme right-wing element has never really disappeared from society, instead it has hidden in the background, awaiting the right circumstances to reappear, which is evidenced not only by the reemergence of right-wing parties such as Sverigedemokraterna in Sweden, where they now hold seats in the Riksdag, but also by incidents like the massacre unleashed by Norwegian Anders Breivik, who had nurtured nationalist and extreme right-wing opinions since youth. The fact that

“In the 20th century the scapegoat provided by right-wing parties took shape in anti-Semitic waves over the continent, where Jews were pointed out as the primary danger to Europeans’ way of life. Today, the scapegoat chosen and targeted by the right-wing takes the shape of Islamophobia, where Muslims are the prominent threat to the European way of life...”

these examples are taking place in nations that are known for their tolerance and left wing party politics should act as a warning for us as citizens and point out the importance of acknowledging the presence of these extreme elements in our societies. Furthermore, it is imperative to actively discuss the matter in public forums and debates, allowing space for discussion of what kind of dangers extremist views result in, instead of cold shouldering the issue completely. If we are aware of the dangers, society as a whole will not look for scapegoats, instead the focus will revert to finding solutions to the problems at hand. The EU was formed on the basis of right-wing capitalist initiatives, with open borders to trade with each other, in similar lieu to Bismarck's trade union ahead of the German unification. However, what strengthened and enabled today's EU, were the fundamental leftist ideals of universalism, allowing immigration through open borders as well as a common legal system that has produced one of the strongest human rights bills in the world. The EU itself is a testament to a balance being reached, where moderation has enhanced the continent as a whole. Europe as a continent has not only witnessed the backlash of extreme right-wing swings, but had to bear the brunt of what resulted in WWII and its aftermath over a number of years.

Now that the super election year is at our doorstep, let us hope that history in this instance does not repeat itself.

VARFÖR FLER VÄLJER FRONT NATIONAL



För tio år sedan var det otänkbart att det franska högerpopulistiska partiet Front National skulle kunna bli ett parti att räkna med. Deras ihållande popularitet sedan framgångarna i presidentvalet 2012, vilken även bekräftas i undersökningar inför det kommande Europaparlamentsvalet, visar att toleransen inför partiet och dess politik har blivit större. Många fransmän motsätter sig fortfarande Front Nationals åsikter och känner oro inför utvecklingen men faktum kvarstår att deras popularitet ökat de senaste åren, vilken gör det rimligt att ställa sig frågan hur det har kommit att bli så.

Man kan tänka sig flera anledningar till populariteten. En teori är att det handlar om ett nationellt svar på ett Europa i kris. Människor är rädda för att behöva förändra sina vanor och tar därför skydd i sina egna traditioner. Front National vill stärka Frankrikes gränser och samarbeta med de europeiska länder som delar deras syn i frågor som invandring och kapitalflöden. De menar att Frankrike är ett av de länder som missgynnats av öppnandet av gränser i och med Schengen-avtalen. Utöver denna teori finns det förklaringar på mer nationell nivå som kan belysa problemet från fler håll.

Frankrike befinner sig i en ekonomisk och social kris där ojämlikheterna ökar. Eurokrisen drabbade Frankrike hårt och ledde till att

staten fick se sin kreditvärdighet sänkas under 2012. Arbetslösheten i landet låg i slutet av 2013 på 9,8 procent. Den ekonomiska krisen har, även på global nivå, ökat tävlan om resurser, inklusive anställningar och nyttjandet av offentliga tjänster. Denna resurskamp drar Front National nytta av i när de i sina argument betonar att invandring är en betydande kostnad för den nationella gemenskapen.

Vidare finns ett utbrett missnöje med storpartierna Union pour un Mouvement Populaire och det regerande Parti Socialiste. Politiker från både högern och vänstern har vid upprepade tillfällen varit inblandade i skandaler, varav ett exempel är Cahuzac-affären. Det var förra våren som det uppdagades att den förre budgetministern Jérôme Cahuzac olagligen hade fört över pengar till ett hemligt konto i Schweiz, samtidigt som han officiellt stod bakom förslaget om 75 procents skatt för landets rikaste invånare.

2013 publicerades en artikel i *Patterns of Prejudice* som försökte förklara varför Front Nationals politik normaliserats i Frankrike. Artikel-författaren menade att partiets framgångar var en produkt av den retorik den förre presidenten Nicolas Sarkozy förde i samband med presidentvalet 2007, vilket ledde till en legitimering av högerpopulistiska åsikter. Sarkozy var inte den förste franske ledaren att flirta med den radikala högerens argument men han var unik i hur öppet och konsekvent han gjorde det. Med hjälp av begrepp som osäkerhet, nationell identitet och immigration försökte han vinna väljare från Le Pen och hennes Front National. Denna taktik visade sig vara ett smart drag för honom - undersökningar pekar på att mellan 21 och 38 procent av Le Pens valkrets röstade på Sarkozy i första valomgången 2007.

De fransmän som oroar sig för högerpopulistiska partiers starka utveckling torde vara mindre nöjda över Sarkozys tillvägagångssätt. På det sätt som den moderata högern mainstreamade vissa av Front Nationals idéer, och avsaknaden av ett svar från den moderata vänstern, har lett till att Front Nationals politik blivit allmänt accepterad som en del i det politiska etablissemangen. Denna normalisering, som innebär att partiet nu anses demokratiskt och icke-våldsamt, är även vad som är nyckeln till partiets möjligheter att växa ytterligare.

Det finns många teorier om varför Front National rönt sådana framgångar men det är sannolikt att legitimeringen av en nationalistisk retorik har hjälpt till att normalisera partiets åsikter och i längden därmed ökat deras stöd. Tydligt är dock att fenomenet inte är unikt för Frankrike, och i maj återstår det att se hur starkt fäste nationalismen lyckats få på vår kontinent.

När denna text skrivs hålls kommunval i Frankrike, vars utfall kommer bli en indikator på hur stort stödet för Front National är hos den franska befolkningen.

ERDOĞAN: ANOTHER TALE OF RIGHT-WING POPULISM TOPPLING LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

On 17TH December 2013, people were arrested in police raids in Turkey, including the sons of three ministers, a mayor from the government party, the head of the state-run bank Halkbank, famous Turkish and Iranian businessmen. These were carried out over allegations about money laundering, bribery and fraud and more importantly, an oil deal with Iran that was supposed to be paid through illegal channels such as gold due to the UN sanctions against Iran. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's reaction to this corruption investigation further deepened the scandal. He called it "a dirty operation of dark alliances" and an "operation of parallel state", pointing to the Islamic community "Gülen Movement" that - claimed to have infiltrated the national intelligence department, police department and judiciary.

Tens of thousands of civil servants from these departments, considered to work for Gülen Movement, were reshuffled or sent into exile by Erdoğan's government. Along with these counter-operations, Erdoğan also prevented the arrest of his son. The police he put under prosecutor's order did not perform the orders of the prosecutor who had issued an interrogation of the son.

Scandals have been continuing since December. On almost a daily basis, new voice recordings of telephone conversations of either Erdoğan or his government circle have been leaked to social media. These wiretappings are rebutted by the government as a "product of montage". However this claim does not seem to convince public opinion entirely. Some of these wiretappings are related to corruption scandals while others are totally irrelevant. For instance, a relevant tapping was Erdoğan's phone call to his son to tell him to "dispose the money" in his house on the day of the first police investigation over his expectation of a police raid on his house. On the other hand, an example of irrelevant leaks was Erdoğan's phone calls with owners or managers of some of the biggest media organizations, (NTV, Haberturk, Milliyet and Star). The calls were either to get some columnists, reporters or commentators

fired or to pressure the owners or managers to change their editorial/broadcasting policy in various subjects. Such irrelevant leaks substantiate Erdoğan's claim that this operation is not only about the corruption scandal, rather parts of a conspiracy organized against him. Public opinion compromised on the fact that this fight is between Erdoğan and the members of Gülen Movement who infiltrated to police force and judiciary.

Newspapers, those with close ties to Erdoğan's government, claim that "Gülenists" had "illegally" wiretapped over 7 000 people including ministers, politicians, writers, businessmen etc. since 2011. Erdoğan's accusation of Gülen movement to be a "parallel state" should not be underestimated although there has not been given a single lawsuit petition by him about these accusations. However, the claim that Gülen Movement infiltrated state institutions is not within the scope of this article. Instead, I will focus on how Erdoğan continues to survive and hold his position despite big scandals.

"Erdoğan's intervention in the judiciary... undermining constitutional rights such as freedom of communication (e.g Twitter ban), in the name of the "nation" are revealing his right-wing populist understanding of democracy."

The politicians involved in scandal allegations in Western democracies step down from their positions. This is partly because the political tradition in these countries tells them to do so and partly because of the idea that the public would react negatively to the parties in the elections due to the fact that these people still hold their positions. However, the situation in Turkey shows that Erdoğan is not considering resignation as an option. His policy is to present these investigations and leakages to the public as a conspiracy against him. Surveys show that even though there is a decline in AKP's votes, it is still holding the first place. On the strength of these results in surveys, Erdoğan continues to violate the main principles of liberal democracy; such as the rule of law and judicial independence, by intervening in investigations, reshuffling prosecutors, police and by passing new laws in favor of his government. Therefore, one can claim that institutions of liberal democracy in Turkey are almost non-functional and Erdoğan points at the ballot box as the court to judge corruption.

As a primary principle of a liberal democracy, if there is a crime, it must be the independent courts who give the verdict not the ballot box. However, what we see in Europe for the last decades, with the rise of right-wing populist parties, is the undermining of the main

institutions and values of liberal democracy, such as the independent judiciary, constitutional protection of minority rights and civil rights, on the grounds of what result the ballot box produces. For instance, putting the minaret ban to referendum in Switzerland in 2009 has been widely debated and criticized from this angle. Populist parties defending such decision making mechanisms are doing this in the name of an extremist interpretation of democracy. However, such an understanding of democracy is a narrow-minded one that reduces democracy to the will of “majority,” which can also be labeled as, “tyranny of majority” as the proper term, since it is also a rejection of all the limitations on the expression of the so called general will and popular sovereignty.¹

Erdoğan's intervention in the judiciary, as mentioned earlier, undermining the constitutional rights such as freedom of communication (e.g Twitter ban) in the name of the “nation” are revealing his right-wing populist understanding of democracy. Besides, the fact that Erdoğan himself is being problematized in discussions rather than the party itself –including myself in this article– clearly points that this party has a very significant hierarchical internal structure and cult of leadership along with charismatic leadership. This can be seen as the other two classical signifiers of right-wing populist parties. One clear example of this is AKP's recent campaign songs which focus on Erdoğan himself and praise him rather than promoting the candidates. Even though the elections are local, it is Erdoğan who is on the billboards and on the TVs rather than the local candidates.

These characteristics clearly show that Erdoğan's AKP is a typical right-wing populist party. These parties reduce democracy to a “majoritarian” understanding of popular sovereignty that comprises a ground to implement illiberal policies against other groups in society. However, the question of how Erdoğan has significant public support despite all these scandals is still a valid one. We now come to the next characteristic of populist extremism that could be explanatory for this “success”: The strategy of “polarizing” society and maintaining a “state of emergency” discourse within this highly polarized friend-enemy environment.

Many intellectuals compromised on the fact that Gezi protests made Erdoğan lose his “composure”. The police reacted brutally to an environmentalist protest made against a mall construction in Gezi Park in the center of İstanbul, by using tear gas and burning protestors' tents in a dawn raid. Such cruel and meaningless police attacks turned into country-wide demonstrations and clashes within a couple of days. Rather than trying to compromise with the demonstrators, Erdoğan chose to behave hawkishly and defined the huge masses of demonstrators as “looters”, “marginal groups”, “terrorists” etc. As a result, 8 young demonstrators died during the protests due to police violence. Yet many people think that a simple announcement of the cancellation of the construc-

1. Also see
Cas Mudde, *The
Populist Zeit-
geist* (2004):
[http://works.
bepress.com/
cas_mudde/6/](http://works.bepress.com/cas_mudde/6/) and
Simon Bornschier,
*Cleavage Politics
and the Popu-
list Right*, Part 1
(Philadelphia:
Temple University
Press, 2010)

tion in the first days of the protests would have been enough to cool the intense situation.

The reason why Erdoğan criminalizes the other side was to consolidate his support base that was about to loosen due to his meaningless attitude. The ones who did not feel such a big commitment to him, i.e. the potential floating center right voters, could take their support back.² However, once lost composure, Erdoğan applied to cheap conspiracy theories as a typical third world nationalist leader would do and tried to convince his supporters that the demonstrators were collaborators of some bigger enemies. Gezi, according to Erdoğan, was an “operation” in which “foreign powers”, “interest lobby”, “foreign secret agents” are involved in to provoke people to topple him as against to “national will”.

Gezi demonstrators lost its first place to Gülen Movement in Erdoğan’s “public enemies” list. Erdoğan took his conspirative discourse one step further after the corruption and bribery investigations. He mentions “preacher lobby”, “robot lobby” along with the usual suspect foreign powers, pointing the Gülen Movement and its so-called collaborators. Perhaps farcical to many, but the fact that he presents all these as parts of a big “operation” against him-*and so to the national will* - seems to work to consolidate sufficient number of votes to keep AKP the first party in the surveys. Such state of emergency discourse - *as Erdoğan calls it the 2nd independence war*³ - seem to convince people to underestimate the corruption scandals as well as the collapse of the institutions of liberal democracy such as rule of law and judicial independence.

In December 2013, the question if a prime minister in a liberal democracy can rescue his son from getting arrested by using his power was answered yes in Turkey. Erdoğan is an extreme example that reveals how main institutions and values of liberal democracy such as the independent judiciary, equality before law, constitutional protection of civil rights and liberties could be trampled by the ballot box. Right-wing populism is a growing threat to humanity’s main ideals of equality, freedom and respect for the “other”. At this crossroads, people should seriously question if the democracy they want is composed of one ballot box filled with many right-wing populist words or not.

3. AKP’s recent ad is a good example of this populist discourse of corny nationalism. In the ad we see many people mobilized to save a Turkish flag that is attempted to lower on the flagpole by a scary looking man in black suit and black gloves. Erdoğan’s voice is heard during the ad reciting a passage from the Turkish national anthem: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80J0F-Ce69to>

2. One other structural reason to be able to keep the floating mass easily within the lines of the party is the lack of some other center right parties. This is partly because of the 10 percent threshold to get in the parliament in the Turkish election system which easily works in the way to exclude smaller parties. But also it is partly because Erdoğan’s strategy of the last 5 years to convince the leaders and important figures of other small parties to join AKP by giving them higher positions in the party.

Text:

Josef Svantesson, josef.svantesson@utblick.org

BACK TO NORMALCY

“The show [of democratic process] helps to normalize the situation. It diverts people on to useless routes: negotiations, advice, legal representations, efforts with the media – until the common understanding becomes that anyone who’s accused is guilty, that it’s up to the revolutionaries to avoid being imprisoned or killed.” – Alaa Abd El Fattah



Imprisoned Egyptian activist awaiting trial

As of now, 525 supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood have been sentenced to death, while 683 more are awaiting trial and probably equally severe penalization in the same court. Never mind the two days of procedures it took the court to reach a verdict being some form of record, the acclaimed 21 000 political prisoners that harbor Egyptian prisons give a hint that hawkish policies are on the move - from Crimea to Cairo.

Commentators haven't been late in condemning Abdel Fatah al-Sisi's turn to autocratic decree as a shame; simply printing disapprovals that could have been stored up, written in advance - sort of like a pre-written obituary of Egyptian democracy. The trajectory from military takeover to authoritarianism in Egypt should not have been so hard to foresee. Following mass protests against Mohamed Morsi and the Brotherhood's regime last July, the military "coup" and the installment of an interim government, al-Sisi finally is due to stand election for president - promising stability for Egyptians and normalcy for foreign investors and supporters.

The response from the Obama administration has been ambiguous, to say the least. Included in the crack down on the Brotherhood is the expulsion or imprisonment of secular activists such as Mohamed ElBaradei and Wael Ghonim, in a state of lockdown that seems to provoke little more than a calm sigh of relief from Washington. Indeed, the upcoming election furthermore propels a return to "business as usual". The US secretary of state, John Kerry, has professed his wishes to unblock the currently halted military aid to Egypt, in a bid to satisfy Israeli demands for a restored, strong military rule in Cairo capable of containing Hamas in Gaza. Al-Sisi may use "unorthodox methods", but to the degree they are effective, they'll also be tolerated.

But the big stick with which the runway is apparently cleared before the upcoming campaign take-off could prove too big to carry on swinging. It is often assumed that the return to normalcy means total grip of power on behalf of the army chief. This is not necessarily the case. Rather, it is evident that his support is by no means universal, and it is unclear whether the army, the police, the judiciary or the interim government is actually pursuing coherent policies in any cohesive fashion, or acting inconsistently - preluding outright societal collapse. Although al-Sisi is widely believed to win a presidential election, taking care of the problems that have plagued his predecessors will not be a selective matter; choosing the hawkish way to manage financial and structural issues means using claws for handling thin fabric. A fabric that easily breaks apart.

CANNABIS LEGALISATION: A SOUND EXIT STRATEGY IN THE WAR ON DRUGS?

If the Chinese Zodiac calendar coincided with current events, 2014 would be the year of the herb. In the US states of Colorado and Washington, cannabis was legalised for recreational use and officially available for consumption from the 1st of January 2014. A few weeks earlier, the Uruguayan government legalized sale, consumption and cultivation of the very same plant, thus becoming the first country in the world to legalize cannabis. Key figures in several countries, such as Mexico, Argentina and Morocco, are currently debating and propositioning a

1. The reefer madness era signifies a period in American history when anti-drug policies emerged from the presumption of supposed dangers of cannabis, instigated by propaganda productions with racist undertones and a complete lack of scientific validity. The name of the era is derived from the most notable propaganda movie "Reefer Madness", initially released in 1936.

more lenient legislation towards cannabis, in what appears to be a ripple effect of the drug politics in Uruguay and USA.

As in any heavily polarised debate, pro-cannabis legislatures and politicians are being met with resistance from vocal opponents. President Raymond Yans of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), an organization that oversees national implementations of narcotic conventions set out by the United Nations, expressed disappointment towards the developments in USA and Uruguay. In its annual report released earlier this month, the INCB stressed that cannabis should be confined to the medical and scientific realm, whilst earlier describing Uruguay's move as a breach of international treaty.

Moreover, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) executive director Yury Fedotov conveyed similar sentiment while also contesting Uruguay's role as an initiator of a global legalisation movement, stating that he does not see any countries that are likely to follow suit.

Nevertheless, it is hard to dismiss the emerging liberal attitudes towards cannabis that are being reflected in various government chambers today. If one is to believe that the paradigm shift is attributed to the coming-of-age of a new group of adults who grew up thinking that cannabis is "just weed", an argument can be made that the opposition's rationale is a remnant of the reefer madness era¹. However, this superficial depiction of the discord only serves to render pro-cannabis supporters as hedonistic and the opposition as obsolete.

More likely, the effect criminalisation has on individual lives is much more likely to exert an effect on public opinion. Proponents that are not cannabis consumers, and may even be vehemently anti-drug, may sway towards a more liberal stance when factoring in the detrimental effects of criminalisation. Variables such as incarceration and attaining a criminal record are undoubtedly perceived as more debilitating to one's prospect of securing a good job, and in turn financial security, than smoking an occasional joint.

Considering that social despair stemming from unemployment is a strong risk factor for crime and addiction to crack cocaine and heroin, an argument can be made that decriminalisation of cannabis can hinder problematic drug-use of hard drugs. In terms of facts, however, criminalization of cannabis-smokers is seemingly doing more harm than good, and it is not particularly effective in thwarting cannabis usage. Comparing UK to the Netherlands where cannabis consumption is *de facto* decriminalised, the prevalence rate of cannabis smokers in the former nation do not differ significantly from the latter. Increasing the deterrence factor by changing the classification of cannabis from class C to class B, effectively reinstating the threat of arrest for possession, has not exactly yielded the desired results.

According to a University of York study, hospital admissions for cannabis induced psychosis have increased after the reclassification. Although the authors speculated that the observed increase may be attributed to unrelated systemic changes to mental healthcare, cannabis usage has not decreased since reclassification. Thus, criminalising the drug further has not worked. Some may argue that decriminalisation or reclassifying would open up the proverbial floodgates of greenery, and that the current UK classification,

corporate greed, are we to witness profit-driven transgressions to public health reminiscent of Big Pharma pharmaceutical scandals? The tobacco industry has spent large sums solely for the purpose of impeding anti-smoking laws, in order to maximize profit. If cannabis companies grow equally powerful, will we see the ascension of profit-oriented corporations that will use their financial power to promote pro-cannabis lobbying despite social harm, similar to tobacco companies?

Indeed, legalisation poses some

“Proponents that are not cannabis consumers, and may even be vehemently anti-drug, may sway towards a more liberal stance when factoring in the detrimental effects of criminalisation.”

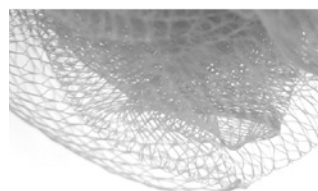
although not lowering the prevalence, hinders an out-of-control increase. Counter-argumentatively, the prevalence of smokers was declining from 2003 until it stabilized in 2009 when the reclassification occurred. Deductively, if reclassifying had any effect on cannabis consumption, it was not the intended one.

Despite the evident drawbacks of criminalisation and the dubious outcomes of the policies therein, even the most zealous pro-cannabis activists must acknowledge that any discussion pertaining to the long-term effects of global legalisation remains conjectural. Criminal elements aside, the majority of the cannabis industry today comprises of farmers and workers in small-scale independent dispensaries and coffee-shops; a relatively harmless group. However, this may change as the already multi-billion dollar cannabis industry provides lots of fiscal legroom for the emergence of powerful corporations.

Conjoining the potential therapeutic benefits of medical marijuana with

serious challenges. However, the criminalisation of cannabis presents an interesting conundrum: how do you bar something that the people seemingly want without hurting them? Thus far, the answer has been horrifically exemplified in real life, with people all over the world suffering criminal penalties for a drug that causes considerably less collateral damage than alcohol. Moreover, there is no scientific consensus regarding the association between lung-cancer and cannabis, and if the drug is ingested by other means, the threat of death is virtually eliminated. In addition, criminalisation has diverged governmental resources to an unproductive cause, and adding insult to injury, enabled criminal entities to profit by supplying the demand untaxed without product regulation.

Maybe, just maybe, it is time to try something new.



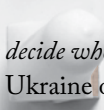




Text:
Alexandros Kostoulas, alexandros.kostoulas@utblick.org

A DEMOCRATIC CHOICE

"Tell Obama to keep his nose out, we decide who to do business with"
– Factory worker in Eastern Ukraine on BBC News



On March 16TH, a referendum was held for about 2 million residents of Crimea, in Ukraine, providing them with the ability to choose between rejoining the Russian Federation or staying as part of Ukraine with more autonomy. With a turnout exceeding 80 percent, over 96 percent of the voters chose to join the Russian Federation, which means that over 78 percent of the overall Crimean population supported the result. The decision for this referendum was taken by the elected Crimean Parliament. One March 15TH, a US drafted resolution condemning the referendum was brought before the UN Security Council. Thirteen out of 15 members voted in favor of the resolution before it was vetoed by Russia (China abstained). That is, that 13 UN countries, among them Argentina and Rwanda, voted that the 58.5 percent of Russians living in Crimea and their fellow citizens shouldn't be given the choice to re-join Russia. The G7 also decided that it would not recognize the outcome of the referendum.

The Ukrainian, interim non-elected, government also viewed the referendum as "illegal" and in fact issued warrants for the arrest of Crimean parliament speaker Volodymyr Konstantynov and former Prime Minister Sergei Aksyonov, charging them of attempting to seize state power. That is, that they will prosecute them for doing what they themselves did some weeks ago. Backed by the US and the EU and for various reasons, they overthrew the democratically elected president Viktor Yanukovych (elections of 2010, 48.95 percent of the votes in what was characterized by independent observers including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as a free and fair election). The most important cause of the uprising was the choice, made by president Yanukovych in November 2013, in contrast with his pre-election agenda, to refuse the signing of a proposed EU-Ukraine Association Agreement that would have been a huge step for Ukraine towards trading and integrating with the EU but whether it was a fair or unfair uprising is not the purpose of the current article. The interim government until the new elections are held, includes 3 ministers and the vice prime minister, originating from the social-nationalist, far-right Svoboda party, among them the Ministry of Defence. They are the same guys that go all around Kiev wearing masks and waving baseball bats. They are the same guys that say that Ukraine is only for Ukrainians. They are the same guys emerging all around Europe with sophisticated tattoos which resemble Nazi symbols but aren't Nazis, according to their own statements in international media like the BBC and the Associated Press.

Taking for granted that Ukraine is on the verge of economic collapse. Ukraine's largest bi-lateral trading partner is Russia (other than the EU that consists of 28 countries). The majority of the goods produced in eastern Ukraine, including Crimea, are exported to Russia. The Crimean population consists of 58.5 ethnic Russians. The tourism

sector of the area is dependent on Russian tourists. It is obvious what the Russians wanted. But now imagine being one of the hundreds of thousands of Greeks, Jews, Bulgarians, Albanians and other minorities living in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. The economic reasons apply, but then the political realities as they were shaped in Kiev, also apply. Is an integration with Russia worse than being ruled by a government they did not elect, with ministers accepting the “Ukraine is for Ukrainians” motto and under the danger of economic collapse? More importantly, is it against the spirit of the UN and the international law that those people should have a choice? Before you answer yes, think about human rights and the spirit of the international law not the practice.

The international diplomacy, is understandably anxious about the precedent set by the Crimean referendum and they probably worry that it will open the door for other secessionist movements, like the Basques or the Turks of Thrace, to support their cause. The question though, remains that if the US can invade a country to introduce democracy, why can't Russia to ensure protection? Especially, after being invited by the territory it occupied and especially when the aftermath shows that the Crimean people chose Russia over Ukraine. Was Russia supposed to invoke the Responsibility to Protect? Since we live in a world that embraces democracy in the decision making process, which of the two decisions was taken in a democratic fashion? The decision taken by a part of the Ukrainian people to oust their democratically elected leader or the decision taken by over 78 percent of the Crimean people to join Russia? I would go for the second, supporting that if you sympathized with the Ukrainians going out at Independence Square to oust Yanukovich then you should sympathize with the Crimean people that want to have an actual choice of fate, in the midst of a political, economic and social storm. That is, if you embrace democracy.

The European Election

On the 22–25 of May, EU voters will elect 751 representatives in one of the most hyped-up events EU has hosted in the internet age – judging from its interactive and flashy website, that is. Too bad that participation in the elections continue to be a lot lower than national turnout. This arguably, whether or not you're for the Union itself, needs to be turned around.

Therefore, visit the ambitious website and gain an understanding of the process, and you'll surely find it worthwhile to actually make your voice heard!

Sweden votes on 25th May, and you find all the info on elections2014.eu/en

Poliforum, On the European Elections

Poliforum, a Gothenburgian student initiative, will host a series of lectures and debates during April and May concerning the European elections.

There are two bigger events to keep your attention on, both held at Studenternas hus at Göteborgsgatan 17:

- The National Debate, April 24th 17:00–19:00, between representatives of the respective Swedish parliamentary parties' youth leagues. They will discuss the upcoming elections from a youth perspective.
- European Parliamentary Debate, 22th of May 16:00–18:00, between the Swedish European MPs. These guys will disclose answers to controversial issues on the European agenda, such as migration and refugees!
- In addition, on 20th of May, 12:00–13:00, Cecilia Malmström will speak of the European Parliamentary Elections, in Malmstenssalen at Handels, and mini lectures will be held at Humanisten and Campus Haga on 21th of May.

Note that the times are approximate and that Poliforum reserves the occurrence of changes in the schedule, so keep your eyes open for the posters located around town!

Okryu-gwan, in Dubai

If you find yourself in Dubai and are on the lookout for something world unique you never have to search for too long. Although when your preferences are oriented towards the culinary fashion, the North Korean restaurant Okryu-gwan in the district Deira offers you a truly genuine food experience. The employees at Okryu-gwan have special permission from president Kim Jong-un to live and work outside North Korea. This is most likely your once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to try Kimchi or the "Okryu-gwan special dish" while having a chat with a North Korean waiter.

Recommended by: Mikael Boberg

MEET THE STAFF



Anja Johansson

I am a University of Gothenburg alumni with a masters in human rights and an abiding passion for the European Union, feminism, and maps. My many years in academia, starting with toddling about in the dusty corridors of GU during my formative years, have left me with a job as a researcher for the university and the personality of an ornery (look it up) nerd. I write for Utblick to vent the opinions my friends have tired of listening to and to learn cool new things from my fellow utblickers!



Amanda Modée

Uppväxt utanför Göteborg där jag stannade för att studera globala studier och internationella relationer. Den här våren har min favoritstad bytts ut mot södra Frankrike, en annan plats jag håller kär, för en utbytestermin. Att skriva för Utblick är ett perfekt sätt att kombinera mitt intresse för att skriva med internationella frågor.



Utrikespolitiska
föreningen
Göteborg

Utblick

The Society of International Affairs' own Journal

Contemplating on *choice*, I realize that I can land in vastly different places if I play an association game with myself. It's apparent that who I am in this moment determines my perception of the choices that are relevant to make. Having spent the last autumn in Southern Europe, I became increasingly aware of how malleable the nature of expectations is. Time after another, I tried engaging in political discussions with my Italian friends, making references to what I think is wrong in Sweden. What I found was a lack of understanding for this - did I really believe that the problems of Sweden were comparable to those of Italy?

So, while becoming frustrated, I also learnt about the need to be humble when dealing with different perspectives. However, I would say that we are often too cautious in questioning the exact mechanisms of thought that a specific perspective leads to, and we often settle with concluding that nothing can be done since our perceptions and experiences aren't the same. No one is freed from having to rely on the use of simplifications, but many of you can recognize the feeling of discovering some hidden knowledge leading to the questioning of the established order of today. This leads us to the realization that answers which had their prime in one place can be underappreciated at another point in time.

In April, the Society of International Affairs (UF) will shed light on the occupation and naval blockade of Palestine. On the 14TH of April, the human rights activist Majed Abusalama will visit us for a lunch lecture, and on the 23RD, we will screen the acclaimed documentary *5 Broken Cameras*. Comparing my own situation with those living under occupation, I realize how different the political choices that we stand before are. But it's the inevitable challenge, as a political being, to make sense of the questions where you have the power to influence and to base your decisions on well-adapted perspectives.

Adam Josefsson
President

The Society of International Affairs Gothenburg is a non-governmental organization with the ambition to spread knowledge and spark discussion about foreign policy issues. We organize lectures and trips, host movie screenings and publish the magazine Utblick. A one-year membership is 50 sek and everyone can join.



A VOICE FOR
THE VOICELESS
p.4

VA TILJAV
ETT EUROPA:
Soffotatisternas
kamp
p.8

THE CHOICE
BETWEEN GROWTH
& EQUALITY
Tradeoff or
no tradeoff
p.10

IS HISTORY
REPEATING ITSELF?
p.12

VARFÖR FLER VÄLJER
FRONT NATIONAL
p.14

ERDOĞAN:
Another tale of right-
wing populism toppling
liberal democracy
p.16

BACK TO NORMALCY
p.20

CANNABIS
LEGALISATION
A sound exit strategy in
the war on drugs?
p.22

A DEMOCRATIC
CHOICE
p.26

2014

UTBLICK

ISSUE NO 2



THEME: CHOICE

