

Assorted In-Sights

Scott Douglas Jacobsen
&
Friends



Assorted In-Sights

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Dedications

To the love in my life.

Scott

Huffington Post

Government Won't Save Us, But Dumb Government Could Eff Us Up

Rick Rosner and Scott Jacobsen

August 8, 2016

Imagine the year 2040 in all its weirdness. You'll be old or oldish but will look and feel pretty good because medicine will be amazeballs. You'll be way more plugged into social media and streaming sensory input through wearable information feeds. You'll never be more than two feet away from something that's chipped or roboticized. Daily life will be a battle between the familiarly human and the inexorable incursion of science fiction. And 2040 is only six Presidential elections away.

The major changes in our lives will come from market-driven technology, not politics. It's already that way. Politics didn't give us smart phones and Instagram. Government didn't force us into our device-centered lives – the irresistibility of an endless flow of entertainment and personalized information did. Technology will save us or will at least compel us to join the next stages of civilization.

No government on earth will do a great job of coping with the tech explosion over the next 20, 50, and 100 years. But non-stupid governments will do better. Government that gets hung up on trans people in bathrooms will fail at making reasonable and timely decisions about AI.

Thanks to gerrymandering, we currently have an excess of dumbness in government. Gerrymandered districts which safely belong to one party send creeps and idiots to Washington to intentionally obstruct and break government.

Gerrymandering: Creating weirdly shaped Congressional Districts to screw over your rival party. Stupid, fanatical voices are overrepresented. Anti-science, anti-change, anti-reason viewpoints have too much power – power exercised by voters who have been encouraged by cynical leaders to think that belligerent ignorance is patriotic common sense. (See the Dunning-Kruger Effect, where dumb people tend to be too dumb to realize they're dumb.)

Of course there are issues besides dumbness in this election – jobs, wages, education, racism, sexism, polarization, terrorism, social change, medical coverage, the environment. And for many of these issues, no political party has adequate solutions, though no politician will admit it.

Politics can't solve the problem of jobs lost to automation. Effective medical care would still be fairly expensive even if our greed-encouraging payment systems were somehow fixed. Some of these problems will never be solved – they'll just be replaced by the problems of the future (just as the problem of too much poop on city streets went away when cars replaced horses).

But we need a functioning government, politicians who aren't saps, and political dialogue that consists of non-stupid arguments about non-stupid issues. Otherwise, we'll fall behind in the tech

explosion, and you can't catch up with an explosion – you can only ride it. China and India have a combined population eight times that of the United States. They have their own dysfunctions, but they have much more human capital – hardworking, smart people – with which to overcome them. We can't be a nation of dopes and keep up.

We cannot elect a bombastic yahoo President who will empower the forces of dumbness. For our own citizens and to continue to attract the best brains from around the world, America must continue to be a shining beacon of awesomeness and among the most promising places for the future to unfold.

Despite our current political crapshow, the US still leads the world in technology. Here's what we need for the US to continue to lead in tech:

Education: Colleges that continue to have a strong international reputation. Public schools that haven't been ravaged by backwards state legislatures.

Quality of life – coolness, social mobility, safety, rule of law: America is where big, showy dreams come true. It's the best country in which to be rich and famous – you might get to make out with a member of Kylie Jenner's posse. But the fun is dampened if we have to worry about poisoned water or shooty folks or a Hate-Enabler-in-Chief.

Tolerance for change: Sooner or later, it'll all happen – robot girlfriends and boyfriends, downloadable consciousness, genetically engineered PermaPuppies. Some parts of the world will wall themselves off from the future. Those places will suck worse than places that are reconciled to change.

Not being a clown show: We need to be pro-science and pro-smartness. Calling dumb spokespeople and dumb, contrary-to-fact ideas stupid shouldn't be taboo. (For instance, Jeffrey Lord = moron.)

Not being (seen as) evil: In and after World War Two, the US was seen as heroic. We thought of ourselves as heroic. But WW2 was an unusually clear instance of good versus evil and was more than 70 years ago. We have to make some effort to look like we're living up to American Part of that effort can include not electing a mega-jerk President.

With Hillary, we at least get something that acts like government. It won't solve everyone's problems, but it will at least function, allowing America to continue to be a place in which tech can flourish. And a Democratic President will nominate Supreme Court Justices who may help clean up gerrymandering.

We need some reasonable amount of government. For every American alive in 1789, the US now has more than 100 people. We have \$37 trillion worth of infrastructure, more than \$100,000 per person, but spending on infrastructure has plummeted (because of dumbness-based political gridlock).

The future is coming. We can't hide from it under a triple comb-over.

Good Cop, Bad Cop on Climate Change

August 12, 2016

Rick Rosner and Scott Jacobsen

SCOTT: Climate change is an increasingly urgent problem. However, moderate social change can go a long way towards addressing it. For a sustainable future, we should incentivize positive social change. We're already witnessing the degradation of the environment. No one person or nation is to blame, but climate change is here. We have to work to solve it, now.

We can't duck responsibility, throwing caution to the wind. We're big-brained primates and global citizens. Let's act the part. We can't ignore global warming – facts don't care about political squabbling and gridlock. Climate change is about a threat to human survival. To have quality of life, you can't be dead.

In many parts of the world, politics and policy are coming into agreement with the overwhelming scientific evidence for global warming. The necessity for dealing with climate change is recognized by 190+ countries under the Paris Agreement to mitigate greenhouse gases.

Climate change is also recognized as an important threat by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate (IPCC), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Does your individual denial of the facts outweigh these experts? Not just individual experts, but big international swarms of experts.

America and Canada need to get their houses in order, and fast. The more quickly we get on it, then the more coastal indigenous peoples and coastal metropolises can be saved. It's not hard. It's just long-term thinking. So, what can we do?

You can network together with other people, can join organizations, sign petitions, work towards sustainability in your own community, and volunteer time with sustainability initiatives. You can donate money to scientific organizations, to non-profits devoted to sustainability, and to companies revolutionizing nuclear and solar power.

You can learn more about the pressing scientific topics of the day. You can talk about it with friends and family and write about it, even talk about it (!). If you have some knowledge, or someone else knows something that you don't, then either educate them if they're open or admit ignorance to their expertise and be curious and learn something. That's the start of a conversation.

You can try to invent something yourself if you have any relevant skills, abilities, knowledge, or talent. You can become a scientist, train in the relevant fields, contribute to it, and invent products that help the environment.

You can have fewer kids and invest in them more. People are both resources and resource-intensive - act accordingly. You can support the empowerment of women. Women are more likely to invest in family and community. That benefits all of society.

We have to be active in combating climate change. It's urgent, long-term, and unignorable.

RICK: Most of this kumbaya stuff, we're not gonna do. People are assholes. You may remember what happened in the late 70s – we had gas crises. Oil prices skyrocketed. Endless lines at gas stations. President Carter urged us to conserve energy. He wore a sweater to show us he was saving energy on heating the White House. So we fired him and elected Reagan. Gas prices dropped, and we started driving enormous SUVs.

Can't wear a sweater and be President - reminds people of Mister Rogers.

Climate change will eventually get fixed, but by market forces and science fictiony technical change, not by humanity suddenly becoming ultra-conscientious. Here's how it'll go:

Climate change will keep getting worse – more drought, more severe storms, rising temperatures and sea levels, seasons shifting, oceans acidifying, many animal species and residents of coastal cities getting effed-over. Some jerks and idiots will continue to deny that it's happening or will argue that it's a good thing. Eventually these people will get old and die. Good.

Millions of climate change refugees will add to the world's misery and tension. (My town, LA, may become unlivable – the current drought has lasted five years. Fancy entertainment industry types might not tolerate living in a hot-ass desert. Over the next 40 years, the industry may migrate to Silicon Valley or Vancouver.)

Vehicles *will* become more efficient. There will be more telecommuting. At some point, air travel will be taxed to reflect its huge carbon footprint. But the world population will continue to grow beyond 10 and 12 billion, and developing countries will continue to spew shmutz. The rate of CO2 being pumped into the air will eventually level off and drop, but the damage will have been done.

We'll be looking at hundreds of years to undo the damage. Various fixes will be tried, such as shooting stuff into the atmosphere to reflect more light away from earth. Some of the fixes will reduce some of the problems, often while creating other problems. Tech will reduce the recovery time of many centuries to less than 200 years. Meanwhile, thousands of species on land and in the oceans will become extinct. Hundreds of towns and cities will be abandoned or diked.

However, beginning about 80 years from now and really starting to catch on in the middle of the next century, we'll have transferrable consciousness. We'll figure out how to digitize people's brains, and more and more people will spend more and more time living virtually. And medicine will become able to extend our lives indefinitely (if you live in the right country), so people will put off having kids until later and later in their lives, if at all. The world population will begin to drop (though the number of minds in the world will expand fantastically) along with population pressure on the environment.

So, sometime in the 2200s, most effects of climate change will be alleviated or reduced to secondary concerns as the earth is completely reshaped by the fantastic tech of the digital

consciousness revolution. Extinct species will be resurrected. The entire planetary surface will be precisely monitored, with much of it engineered to display a pristine fake naturalness. Earth will be Disneyfied. It won't be utopia, but it'll be something the weird mega-brain a-holes of the future can live with.

SCOTT: Major developed nations are in general the greatest per capita polluters. In a way, this implies more responsibility per average citizen. America and Canada continue to be great nations, capable of great grassroots leadership in fighting climate change. [Note: Scott is Canadian.]

Don't be selfish and dumb. You can make the sacrifice of five-minute showers instead of 20-minute showers. Use less water, use less energy heating water, get solar panels on your roof, use more energy-efficient technology, and don't consume piggishly. Compared to every other century in history, the 21st century offers so much great stuff. We can make some environmentally responsible concessions and still lead awesome lives.

RICK: Maybe we can make some concessions, but I tend to believe that even the most conscientious, granola-ish hipster sustainable fiber-wearing American leaves a huge carbon footprint. And BTW – Prius drivers stink. “Ooh, I'm saying the world, so I can drive like a jackass.”

Good Cop, Bad Cop on Teaching Evolution

September 7, 2016

Rick Rosner and Scott Jacobsen

SCOTT:

Let's set the groundwork:

Evolution is descent with modification in biology. From the small-scale evolution seen in the differential gene frequency within a single population to large scale changes among different species over time, evolution explains the diversity of life. Everything shares a common ancestor.

We are all distant cousins, including bacteria, butterflies, cats, chimpanzees, dogs, dolphins, gorillas, sheep, spiders, and willow trees. Evolution explains adaptation, development, and speciation using biological and demographic mechanisms and evidence from the natural world.

The evolutionary tree of life. Don't try to understand this if you're from a red state.

Creationism is literal interpretation of scripture. According to the literal interpretation of the Bible's Book of Genesis, all species were all created at approximately the same time by a loving, benevolent, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, perfectly just, and self-existent Creator.

Creationism uses religious narratives to interpret evidence from the natural world.

Obviously, these perspectives differ. The vast majority of biologists and other scientists consider evolution rather than creationism to be correct.

RICK:

Evolution makes sense and fits the evidence. But, even though the theory as laid out by Darwin in *On the Origin of Species* is 157 years old, less than 60% of Americans believe in evolution. We have large pockets of what might be called obstinate stupidity. (It's not as simple as that, but I'm under no obligation to characterize it as otherwise.)

Darwin's evolution isn't perfect. No theory is. Einstein modified Newton and will be modified himself. Darwin didn't know about genetics and wasn't aware of punctuated equilibrium, where species stay stable for long stretches of time and change fairly rapidly under certain conditions.

But modifications to evolution generally strengthen it rather than wrecking it.

So what do we do about evolution deniers (and deniers of other well-established areas of science)? We can:

Offer them the facts

Realize they're dumb or lying. Just being on TV or in Congress doesn't make someone smart or truthful.

Ridicule them – point out dumbness. On 24-hour TV news, every viewpoint needs an opposing viewpoint, even when the opposing viewpoint is false, cynical, and/or stupid. Calling out dumb stances is a good thing, even if it's bad manners.

Ignore them

Let them get old and pass away. Like the rest of us, people with dumb beliefs get old and die. Though they might pass away at a higher rate because of ignorance and unhealthy lifestyles. Which is sad (slightly less sad if they're a-holes).

Realize that many non-believers in well-established science have hollowed-out and inconsistent systems of belief. What they say they believe or don't believe doesn't match their actual doubts.

We all contain multitudes, including anti-science jerks. Not everyone with dumb beliefs is beyond reach.

Work to reduce the influence idiots have on our lives. Shame people for voting for schmucks and for putting schmucky spokespeople on TV.

SCOTT:

Our communities, schools, friends, parents and guardians of children, and the media can contribute to proper education about evolution. Together, we all can do this, Americans and Canadians. The deceptive apparent simplicity of evolution facilitates communication and misunderstanding at the same time. Evolution is an essential part of biology and medicine, which are essential parts of our economy. Advanced societies can't be science deniers.

Theodosius Dobzhansky wrote an essay entitled *Nothing in Biology Makes Sense Except in the Light of Evolution* (1973). The title sums up the mainstream position of almost all biologists.

Even so, according to an [Angus Reid Poll](#), only 6/10 Canadians and 3/10 Americans believe “human beings evolved from less advanced life forms over millions of years.” “God created human beings in their present form within the last 10,000 years” is believed by 5/10 Americans and 2/10 Canadians. Unbelief in evolution could be due to sloppy media coverage, poor education, creationist parents and religious leaders, or the relative newness of *On the Origin of Species* (1859).

Parallel solutions exist for the understanding of evolution by the religious and the irreligious in a respectful and positive light. For the religious, the Bible and other religious texts can be read with appreciation for metaphor along with comprehension of science for a deeper theological understanding. For the irreligious, organisms can be seen as developing without spiritual forces but rather, from natural processes, without denigrating religious people.

RICK:

With regard to science-deniers, we pretty much know what's gonna happen. The future will arrive and kick all of our asses. Ignorant people's asses will get kicked slightly harder. Most of us will die as people always have. Some of us will ride advanced technology indefinitely into the future and be crazily transformed, along with the rest of the world.

Those who come after us will think of us, when they think of us at all, as sad, primitive prisoners of ignorance and biological limitations – of our own evolved nature. Our descendants will take charge of their own evolution and transcend us in awesome and, to us, soul-crushing ways. As the future unfolds, there will always be room for some religion and spirituality. But legit, enduring spirituality won't deny fact. Our era's deniers of fact will be remembered (vaguely) as minor villains.

Whoever Wins, the Future is Coming (Fast)

November 1, 2016

Rick Rosner and Scott Jacobsen

Whether we elect Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump, the future will bring most of the following changes in the next hundred years:

RICK:

Artificial intelligence will proliferate. By the year 2100, earth's AI population could be a trillion. Many people will have AI add-ons or built-ins (like the Borg).

Climate change will get more scary and severe.

Gender roles, sexuality and lifestyles will become more fluid. Social media will extend its tendrils further into our lives and brains.

Entertainment will become more immersive and taboo-busting. Medicine will make our lives longer and healthier. Risk tolerance will decrease as lifespans increase. People will have children later in life (if they have them at all).

Gene-tweaking will become commonplace. Robots will swipe more and more jobs. Average number of hours worked per week will steadily decrease.

The population will continue to increase, perhaps slowing by the end of the century.

Standards of living will continue to rise in much of the world.

Terrorists and lunatics will find old and new ways to attack.

Opinions will slowly become more liberal and science-based (except in places that impose constraints) as the elderly and relatively more ignorant pass away. Personal transportation will shift from an ownership model to an on-demand model (and miles traveled may slowly decrease as telepresence increases).

There will be water shortages. Animal species will continue to go extinct at an alarming rate, though many of their genes will be stored for future resurrection.

The moon and Mars will slowly be colonized. (People will be excited by this only every once in a while, as with the Olympics.) We'll use more nuclear power.

Food will become more engineered and less unhealthy. We'll gain some control over our desire to eat junk food.

For the next four or eight years of these changes, I'd prefer to not have a belligerently ignorant scam artist leading the United States. (Agreed – Scott)

And we need a cabinet-level Department of the Future. The disruption caused by new tech will roughly equal the disruption caused by a fighting a world war each decade until the end of the century - we should try to get a handle on it.

SCOTT:

We have to confront the future, whether we want to or not. The future's not so ominous, just rapid, uncertain, and prodigiously creating new stuff. (This is our version of Dave Chappelle's, educated guess line.)

AI has shown increasing competence in more and more areas. Google Deepmind is an example. And Go and examining people for macular degeneration and maybe even *Starcraft II*.

In coming years and decades AI will be embedded in clothing, glasses, contacts, and other intimate interfaces. This also implies eventual direct links to the brain as we begin to map the brain with greater and greater sophistication. There will be huge, sometimes tragic mistakes for some individuals, as with artificial hearts, but will eventually be enormously beneficial.

Climate change is going to kick everyone's asses, but especially the world's poor (who are disproportionately women and children). But world population will continue to increase.

However, an increasing number of people in the developed world will choose to be childless.

Instead, they will focus on upgrading themselves and surpassing biological limitations. We see this now with physical augmentation, surgery, and various other cosmetics. This will move into adult genetic tweaking and neurological engineering for the rich at first and much of the population later on.

There will be predictive software to let you know what you want before you know you want it.

It'll be big, and mostly employed frivolously. This means massive databases, maybe in Utah, that track and catalog everything about you. Your information plus algorithms will be used to sell you music, food, entertainment, gadgets, romantic partners, and so on.

Religion will change more during the 21st century than in all of previous human history.

Supernatural epistemologies will become outmoded, having outlived their utility. Natural epistemologies from science will mimic a global renaissance. This will be seen in the greater importance of this life and less importance of the soul, Sin, Heaven and Hell, even Heck and Limbo. More importance on well-being, health, longevity, social life, risk avoidance, and self-development. Some pure hedonism will emerge from this.

Religions with sci-fi elements such as Scientology and Mormonism may gain minor ground with this new tech. New sci-fi cults will emerge. Some will become detrimental to human well-being but large and rich enough to be accepted as religions.

Old taboos will dissolve or bust, with new taboos emerging frequently. Norms will be more dynamic. It will be confusing, but generally seen as part of a natural widening of acceptance.

This will make us value human life in all its diversity even more than before, while also being a point of conservative political grandstanding. (Rick's point in other writing.)

Genome scanning will be refined. Genetic and epigenetic pathways will be better understood, making it possible to predict outcomes of gene-tweaking. Both in vitro and adult genetic manipulation will become not uncommon.

There will continue to be mass unemployment from robotics and narrow artificial intelligence.

Some form of basic income will be implemented, which will replace some social safety nets.

Trial programs will likely start in Europe and North America, and then spread to other regions.

Some widespread taboos against laziness based on the Protestant Work Ethic will disappear.

Same with other socio-religious and cultural expectations of citizens, as the result of changing social norms.

One version of what happens when robots do all of our stuff for us - we become even dumber than people on reality shows.

Small armed conflicts will occur more frequently because there are simply more people, but per capita, things will continue to improve faster than at any other time in human history. It'll be like climate change, warmest year ever (just like last year). It'll be the best year ever (just like last year).

Biological warfare will emerge, but governments such as the US have prepared for these inevitabilities for decades, so maybe we'll be able to tap-dance away from bio-Armageddon. Lifespans on average will climb to new heights – oldest year ever (just like last year).

Future medicine could turn us all into Benjamin Button. Hey - why didn't Benjamin just swap blood with Cate Blanchett every once in a while? Then they could've both stayed the same age.

Nutrition will be more precise and medicine will be more individuated. This will be the era of precision medicine and dietary regimens. There will be safe, as now, GMO crops in widespread use, and at the same time resource scarcity because of too many people. This will spark political conflicts and international treaties and improvements in desalination. Like Israel's awesome system, or Singapore's. More than 300 million people currently rely on desalinated water. Many more will in the future.

The number of nuclear weapons will decrease, but the risk will remain high.

Extraterrestrials won't visit Earth. Rather, superterrestrials will emerge on Earth: AIs and modified people. Different communities and enclaves will emerge to accommodate differing levels of acceptance of tech.

Elon Musk will fulfill his dream of travelling to and dying on Mars, but "just not on impact." The sci-fi future won't seem like sci-fi to future people, the same way the present world doesn't freak us out much but would make people from the 14th century go crazy.

RICK:

I've been dawdling over this piece, while obsessing over Trump. But with two weeks to go until Election Day, Trump apparently has less than a ten percent chance of winning. So, what future developments should we be getting ready to worry about if we're fortunate enough to defeat The Donald? (Now it's one week to go, and Trump's chances have increased. But still – eff that bloated old monster.)

Death. Sucks that most of us were born about 20 years too soon for immortality (even though such immortality will be a weird, kinda depressing combination of plumped-up old flesh, bio-robotic parts, and replicated consciousness in some kind of social media cloud. (See the excellent "San Junipero" episode of *Black Mirror* on Netflix, and not just for the awesome 80s music.)

Mass death. The 20th century featured death on a grand scale via a flu epidemic, wars, genocide and political purges. We don't yet know how the 21st century will kill millions of us at once, but it's not unlikely.

Climate change. It's here, even if you're a frickin moron denier evolution-disbeliever who thinks Trump is gonna win. Have fun being dumb all your life.

Empowered idiots. The Republican Party, the news cycle, and new media have given a sense of legitimacy to aggressive, horrible schmuckfaces. They're not going away after Trump loses. They'll be watching Trump TV and believing the endless crap he shovels at them.

Continuing broken government. It'll take a few election cycles to squeeze most of the obstructionist a-holes out of government, even if we're very lucky.

The robot economy. Tech will continue to suck up work once done by people. We'll have to adjust to it without turning into *Idiocracy*.

Superempowered: How We Turned Into A Nation (And A Planet) Of Assholes

April 6, 2017

Rick Rosner and Scott Jacobsen

Rick: There are a zillion reasons why Americans have elected the biggest bunch of jerks ever to hold national office – gerrymandering, Russian propaganda bots, meddling by the FBI, inept and money-driven news media, imperfect Democratic campaigning, jobs lost to outsourcing and automation, sexism, racism, the intentional dumbing-down of the Republican electorate by conservative think tanks and Fox News, and so on.

But it remains that 63 million voters elected a transparently dishonest and incompetent jackass – a classic asshole according to the definition from UC philosophy professor Aaron James in his book *Assholes: A Theory*: someone whose “sense of entitlement makes him immune to complaints from other people...The asshole thinks he’s entitled to do things that he’s not entitled to do. He does them defensively, and he’s unwilling to listen to our arguments.”

Why did so many people vote for an asshole? Because people feel empowered. Powerless people band together to protect themselves, their loved ones, and their communities. And in joining together, they embrace fairness, respect, and shared sacrifice. Think of World War II – America’s and its allies’ greatest group effort.

Today’s social forces are very different from those of 75 years ago. We are catered-to – well-fed, entertained, empowered, with the world at our thumbtips. Whenever awake, we consume a feed of deliciously personalized information. We can broadcast our opinions anonymously and without consequence. Being an asshole is about getting stuff and getting away with stuff. Which we do.

- (1) allows himself to enjoy special advantages and does so systematically;
- (2) does this out of an entrenched sense of entitlement; and
- (3) is immunized by his sense of entitlement against the complaints of other people.

The three characteristics of an asshole, from *Assholes: A Theory*. Weird how assholes can be immunized by their sense of entitlement yet still be anti-vaccination creeps.

Scott:

Technology gives us the world and amplifies human impulses, for good and for ill. We have the same mental hardware as our ancestors 200,000-100,000 years ago. Our unenlightened selfishness, self-deception, and cognitive biases emerge more than ever before. We send bolts of contentious nonsense into the social media thought cloud—storms erupt.

People take offense. The intolerants' intolerance is reinforced. The disgusted become the intolerant. We all drift down into the muck. Tweets can spark protests and reform or violence and hate.

Yet our non-political lives get better and better. Cell phones, food, Netflix, porno, and video games on demand. New forms of entertainment. AI assistants and navigational aids. We live easy, entertaining, superficial and distracted lives as never before. Few 21st-century North Americans would trade lives with a king or queen in 1679 (well, maybe for a few days). But our limitless desire for comfort and stuff makes life hollow.

Rick:

Superhero movies are the masterworks and crowning myths of our overentitled age. Since 2012, one-quarter of the ten top-grossing films of the year have featured superheroes. They're fantastically powerful but still all-too-human and spend much of their time and powers trying to fix messes that they themselves made. Superheroes are us – powerful but overly convinced of our competence and rightness and largely unwilling to question our own judgment.

Look at all of these (box office) billionaires. They're like Trump's cabinet, but not as gross. With growing confidence in our individual power and righteousness, we elected our first jerk President. (He beat a candidate whose slogan was Stronger Together. But who wants to sacrifice and compromise to be stronger together when we're so powerful on our own?) Not all 63 million Trump voters are jerks, but tens of millions are. How do we get them to quit being jerks or at least quit being overrepresented in politics?

Well, the sheer arrogant incompetence of the Trump administration may help. Two months in, his Presidency is shaping up to be the most embarrassing in history. But that's just short-term. In the medium term – over the next few decades – the technology that now empowers us will eventually kick our asses, as power shifts to the somewhat creepy hybridized humans who establish the most intimate and productive relationships with thought-augmenting devices. And who mostly won't have been Trump voters.

Scott:

The Era of superempowerment and superentitlement makes us confident in and comfortable with our lazy opinions, encouraging belligerent ignorance and bigotries old and new. Climate change, when life begins, guns, whose lives matter...

It's sweet not to have to learn anything new, to absorb the right attitudes about everything just by being a solid American. (You know the type – the true patriots with two American flag emojis in their Twitter handles – a breed that must eventually dwindle due to demographics and economics and science and the relentless future.)

Empowerment is good when the empowered are the ignored and the oppressed and less good when they're the oppressors and backlashers and sellers of mugs for liberal cuck tears.

Empowerment means being able to pick your facts and “fact”-providers from the comfort of your information cocoon. We have (usually ignored) historic declines in crime, murders, and violence along with unjustified killings based on black skin and blue uniforms, and hysteria along both political aisles.

And with the world in what increasingly looks like turmoil and chaos (but really isn’t – thanks, 24-hour news cycle), the only safe spot seems to be within our warm circle of technological empowerment.

In-Sight Publishing

Protecting Multicultural Canada

Cameron McLeod & Scott Douglas Jacobsen

August, 2016

"More than most other countries, Canada is a creation of human will."
Preliminary Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism: 144

In everyday discussions about Canada and its politics, there is often a distinct lack of nuance.

And it's a sad fact that the most pressing challenges a country might face are not often the most easily framed in a digestible way, or accessible to the average person. It would be pointless to hark on this, it's just the way our busy, multifaceted lives work. And so in order that every conversation not necessarily begin with a framing of the essentials, then a defining of the parties, and then with each party stating their background in coming to the Canadian conversation — a society like ours rests on assumptions to create an accessible narrative of national conversation. This is multiculturalism. It's a series of assumptions and basic modes of thinking about the country, that really is the closest thing we have to a national ideology.

But our argument is that resting on assumptions is a lot like resting on one's laurels. And that can be dangerous. Canada might just be fundamentally more susceptible to a populism that appeals to our baser emotions exactly because those emotions have been starved of air for so long.

Canadians take for granted equilibrium. The politics of division, racial animosity, and religious intolerance are - at present - very far removed from the majority of Canadians' daily lives. This is not the case everywhere else. There isn't the space here to define multiculturalism in very much depth, but here's a shot at a summary. Since 1971, Canada's official policy is a pluralist doctrine called "multiculturalism." This is where no one culture is dominant or more Canadian than any other. As that might be contentious, a multicultural approach is probably best defined inversely.

Multiculturalism is where no culture, religion, or ethnicity, is unqualified to be Canadian and co-exist in Canadian society. This way of thinking is frequently articulated, referenced and adhered to, from and across Canada's political landscape.

As citizens, we're very proud of this way of thinking because it really self-evidently works. And it's hardly understated, it's how we justify our successes and where we look for redemption in our failures. Pierre Elliot Trudeau's government made it official. And as a young man, Pierre Trudeau, wrote that Canada respects "the big and the small, the one and the several." (Allen Mills, Citizen Trudeau: 122). I think his is a well put summary.

Still looking at Trudeau, multiculturalism's founder, he also called Canada a country of *la petite patrie*. *Small homelands*. Our country is not home to one nation, but, in Trudeau's estimate, two.

And more recently we've come to recognize many more. Our society, its institutions, its communities, and its people have the ability to identify both with the region and with the nation at large. This has made Canada an open society. On this point, you will find little debate. As a society, we remain loyal to our differences.

This is highfalutin', sure, but it's also what we've decided to build a country with. Now, it seems, Canada exists coherent and vanquished of much old-world baggage, and free of the tensions of the melting pot down-south.

A Canadian has no particular ethnicity. They speak no particular language (while expected to have English or French, this will never be enforced). They have no particular religious beliefs, and were not necessarily born here. He or she has not necessarily lived here for the majority of his or her life, and has not necessarily been educated a certain way.

They do not hold any particular ideological position (not even that of multiculturalism). Neither must they have any kind of political affiliation, conviction, or loyalty; nor can they have any past affiliations, convictions, or loyalties challenged or used to undermine their "Canadian-ness".

Canada's multiculturalism is based on an absence of conditions. Following from this, it takes on a positive character: racism is bad; discrimination according to ethnicity or culture is unacceptable; and ethnicity should not be referenced or described unless in an explicitly positive fashion. And that immigration is fundamental to the country and will continue to be in the future.

These are assumptions, and assumptions students our age have never encountered heard any other way.

This description is to emphasize how "Canadian" is, as all nationalities arguably are, something constructed. Canada is a "creation of human will," as well as our imagination. Canada, understood as something made, is also something to be maintained.

The best way to do this is to challenge our most fundamental assumptions, not necessarily to disown them, but to better understand where threats to them might strike. We should do this now. We should do it in our schools.

Each generation does not necessarily need to begin again, but it must redefine Canada for itself, if it is to safely lead it deeper into this century. Most importantly, in creating a society where we might drive those not unquestionably subscribed to a multicultural Canada outside the proper opinion corridor, with an out of mind, out of sight sort of complacency - we lost sight of any kind of perspective of where we are, and where we still need to go.

We need voices who question immigration policy, who question what it means to be properly Canadian, and especially if this makes us deeply uncomfortable. If Canada's pluralistic approach is correct which we believe it is - then we can defend our vision of this country.

Because the most popular narrative is of us as a free, open, democratic, pluralistic, multicultural, and multi-ethnic society, this does mean other narratives do not insidiously live outside that

mainstream. In opening up the conversation to voices not traditionally in sight, most likely crude, older politics, we better prepare ourselves for real opposition that might threaten the future of this country.

In being so loose, so malleable, this country is particularly vulnerable to the 21st century's challenges from and against the global order, especially those for and against the nation state.

The hope is that our generation will have been the last raised never having encountered a serious challenge to their way of thinking. We are concerned with how far our tolerance will stretch before it breaks - and with it, Canada.

Our worst enemy might turn out to be our own, less noble instincts. Mel Hurtig has left us and it's up to the young today to define a new nationalism fit for this century and this country, and strong enough to embrace open societies and markets, and stable enough to preserve what is fundamentally Canadian - whatever we might want that to be.

An Interview with Blair T. Longley, Marijuana Party of Canada Leader (Part One)

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

October 15, 2016

In terms of culture, family, geography, language, and religion/irreligion, what is your background?

I was born on the barbaric fringe of the British Empire, *i.e.*, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, in 1950. I grew up in Dollarton, North Vancouver. In retrospect, it was sort of "*frozen in history*" when I was young.

The natives had been genocidally wiped out by viral diseases, and then relegated to small reservations, many miles away from Dollarton. The area was only beginning to be developed when I was young.

There were many miles of beaches and forests that I could explore around my home, where there were almost no other people. Those areas are developed now, such that it is no longer possible for me to go back "*home*."

The community I grew up in was almost totally White Anglo Saxon Protestant (there were a few Catholics.) Up until the year 1971, when I was 21 years old, Dollarton had a clause in its property titles which explicitly stated that those properties could not be sold to anyone who was not Caucasian.

Therefore, the elementary and high schools that I went to had zero "diversity," as people would now think of that kind of multiculturalism. I grew up in a family that may be referred to as "*third generation atheists*," inasmuch as for three generations nobody in my family had believed in any of the established religious dogmas.

When I went through the academic and technical educations of the British Columbian schools' systems I was taught to respect rational evidence of facts and logical arguments. In high school I did best in science courses. Therefore, my primary ways of thinking were based on mathematical physics. My first philosophy was statistical materialism.

How did this influence development?

When one pursues the prodigious progress made in mathematical physics, one learns about the history of scientific revolutions, whereby there were series of intellectual revolutions, and profound paradigms shifts. Those trends that follow from attempting to more seriously consider what mathematical physics is telling us about the "*real*" world.

One finds that those more and more re-converge with ancient mysticism. I have spent several decades pursuing those convergences between mathematical physics and mysticism, with particular emphasis upon attempting to reconcile physical science with political science.

What were your early involvements in activism and politics prior to the Marijuana Party of Canada?

My first participation in registered political activities was going to the founding convention of the Green Party of Canada in Ottawa, in 1983. In 1984, I became a Green Party candidate in the General Federal Elections, in order to help the Green Party, become a registered party under the Canada Elections Act.

At that time, my main concern was the nuclear arms race between the USA and the USSR, which became quite insane during the 1980s, and reached its most insane point in 1986. (Of course, that situation after getting somewhat better for a while, has now become worse than it has ever been before.)

Back at that time, the Green Party was tending to become more mainstream, and therefore, my kinds of radical politics were not approved of by the more mainstream members of the Green Party. That ended up with my also being endorsed as a Rhinoceros Party candidate on the last day of the nomination period, which made national news, due to my becoming a Green Rhino.

During the 1984 General Federal Elections, one of the most important turning points in my life took place when I attended an election expenses seminar given by Elections Canada officials, where the *political contribution tax credit* was explained. I realized the awesome potential of that *tax credit*, and spent the next few decades attempting to realize that potential.

I became a registered agent of the Rhinoceros Party, which enabled me to work on using the *tax credit*, as political experiments that enabled me to build the factual basis for a court case against the government of Canada regarding the uses of political contribution funds. From 1982 to 1987, I was publicly cultivating cannabis plants in university family housing gardens, first on SFU's campus, and then on UBC's campus.

During 1986 I engaged in substantial correspondence with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, and some of his other ministers, regarding the criminalization of cannabis. In 1987 I was growing several dozen marijuana plants in the center of the family housing garden, in order to gain standing to challenge the constitutional validity of the marijuana laws.

However, when I went to court, the RCMP witness, crown prosecutor, and judge, conspired to make deliberate errors in law, so that they could summarily acquit me, and therefore, not have to bother to look at the evidence nor listen to the legal arguments that I had prepared for that case.

In other words, that court case ended in a completely goofy way. Since then, it has been repeated, over and over again, that Canadian courts were too corrupt to engage in a proper Charter of Rights examination of the original purpose and subsequent effects of the laws that criminalized cannabis.

After my own efforts had resulted in clearly demonstrating that was going to be the case, I stopped doing any more activism on that topic, but rather, devoted all my time and energy, from

1988 to 2000, in working on my court case against the Canadian governments regarding the ***political contribution tax credit***.

After I finally won that case, by proving that the government had been arrogantly dishonest about the legal uses of that ***tax credit***, in 2000, I attempted to interest all the other registered political parties in adopting my ideas. NONE of the other registered parties were willing to adopt my ideas regarding the possible uses of that ***tax credit***, EXCEPT the newly registered Marijuana Party.

Therefore, the reason that I became associated with the Marijuana Party is that it was the ONLY registered party that was willing to attempt to realize the full potential of the ***political contribution tax credit***. In 2004, the Canada Elections Laws were changed in ways which deliberately decimated the Marijuana Party. After the Marijuana Party had been effectively destroyed by those changes in the Elections Laws, I became Party Leader, because there was nobody else who was willing and able to do so at that time.

I primarily did so in order to continue to work on the ***political contribution tax credit*** potential, by finding ways to work around the changes in the Elections Laws which summarily criminalized most of what the Marijuana Party had been successfully doing from 2000 to 2003. (That is what I continue to do now through authorizing autonomous Marijuana Party Electoral District Associations.)

Becoming Party Leader enabled me to have another court case against the Canadian government regarding Elections Laws that made votes for big parties be worth about \$2 per vote, per year, for the big political parties, while votes were worth nothing to smaller political parties. We originally won at trial, however, we lost under appeal in 2008, which effectively made sure that the Marijuana Party could not compete with the bigger political parties.

The big parties actually made money from participating in General Federal Elections, while the smaller parties went broke by attempting to do so. The Elections Laws are set up in every possible way to favour the big parties, while screwing the smaller parties.

However, since the big parties also appoint the judges, the typical patterns are for the courts to up-hold as constitutionally valid the laws regarding the funding of the political processes which accumulate to result in Canada NOT being a "*free and democratic society*," but rather, being a runaway fascist plutocracy juggernaut.

Overall, Canada is deteriorating from colonialism towards neofeudalism, while the vicious spirals of the funding of all facets of the political processes are the main factors driving that to happen...

An Interview with Blair T. Longley, Marijuana Party of Canada Leader (Part Two)

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

October 16, 2016

You are the Leader of the Marijuana Party of Canada. What is the primary policy of the Marijuana Party of Canada?

The Marijuana Party was primarily founded as a single issue party, based upon the related aspects of "legalizing marijuana." The only founding policy beyond those related to "marijuana legalization" was to change the voting system, such that there would be better representation achieved than the existing first-past-the-post electoral systems, which tends to wipe out smaller parties, while possibly giving total power to the dominate minority.

Of course, I have always, without making any effort to do so, been riding along with the waves of events that were happening during the historical times and places where I happened to exist. Hence, it is consistent with my continuing to surf the waves of change that the current Liberal Party Canadian government is currently working upon both those issues, of "legalizing marijuana" and "electoral reform."

What derivative policies, which have details and acts as sub-clauses to the primary policy, follow from the primary policy?

That depends upon to what degree one is able and willing to accept and integrate the more radical hemp truths, that hemp is the single best plant on the planet for people, for food, fiber, fun and medicine. Neolithic Civilization has always been based upon being able to enforce frauds. Within that overall context, marijuana laws are the single simplest symbol, and most extreme particular example, of the general pattern of social facts: only a civilization which was completely crazy, and corrupt to the core, could have criminalized cannabis.

Do cults, ideologies, and religions restrict the advancement of society to greater technological, socio-cultural, and spiritual levels?

That is quite the hyper-complicated question! One of the first sociologists, Emile Durkheim, explained some of the various ways that paradigm shifts are achieved, which have been restated by many others, such as represented in these quotes from Gandhi & Schopenhauer: *"First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."* & *"Every truth passes through three stages before it is recognized: In the first it is ridiculed, in the second it is opposed, in the third it is regarded as self-evident."*

Those patterns were documented happening over and over again by Thomas Kuhn in his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Similarly, there is famous quote from John Stuart Mill regarding how: *"Yet it is as evident in itself as any amount of argument can make it, that ages are no more infallible than individuals; every age having held many opinions which subsequent*

ages have deemed not only false but absurd; and it is certain that many opinions, now general, will be rejected by future ages, as it is many, once general, are rejected by the present."

Within that context, Globalized Neolithic Civilization is running out of enough time to be able to change enough to adapt. The facts are that sociopolitical systems based upon being able to enforce frauds are becoming exponentially more fraudulent, while there appears to be nothing else which is happening which is remotely close to being in the same order of magnitude of changes to be able to adapt to that happening, because Globalized Neolithic Civilization is the manifestation of the excessive successfulness of being controlled by applications of the methods of organized crime through the political processes, in ways which overall are manifesting as runaway criminal insanities.

That society appears to have become too sick and insane to be able to recover from how serious that has become. Marijuana laws illustrated the ways that the repetitions of huge lies, backed by lots of violence, controlled civilization, despite that doing so never stopped those lies from being fundamentally false. Everything that Globalized Neolithic Civilization is doing is based upon the history of social pyramid systems of power, whereby some people controlled other people through being able to back up lies with violence.

The history of successful warfare was the history of organized crime on larger and larger scales. Being able to back up deceptions with destruction gradually morphed to become the history of successful finance based upon public governments enforcing frauds by private banks. It was within that overall context that it was possible for a whole host of other sorts of legalized lies to become backed by legalized violence, which included the example of criminalizing cannabis.

Who are important individuals in the party of aim of the legalization of marijuana apart from you – or general statements about the membership at large?

A registered political party can not exist without individual members. Each and every individual who agrees to become a registered member is vital to the overall existence of the party. After having 250+ members, during general elections, the party has to have 1 officially nominated candidate for election. The Marijuana Party operates in totally decentralized ways. Our candidates are practically in the same situation as independent candidates. Our electoral district associations are as autonomous as the elections laws allow them to be.

What does the research state about the benefits and harms of marijuana – by any means of intake such as smoked, ingested, and so on?

The overall answer continues to be the same as the Royal Commission reported in 1972, that marijuana is the safest of drugs. The history of pot prohibition was always based upon huge lies, which grossly exaggerated the harmfulness of marijuana, which set of lies may be referred to as "*Reefer Madness*." In my opinion, smoking marijuana is the worst way to consume cannabis. My view is that smoking should only be done ritually and ceremonially.

Due to the history of the criminalization of cannabis, cannabis culture became similar to a slave society, within which context many people became proud of the relatively stupid social habits

that they developed during those decades of prohibition. Cannabis should be food, first and foremost. Vapourization is a superior alternative to smoking.

An Interview with Blair T. Longley, Marijuana of Party of Canada Leader (Part Three)

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

October 24, 2016

What have been the most regressive policies in provincial, territorial, and national history from your perspective for the legalization and regulation of marijuana?

The total criminalization of the cultivation of cannabis, which took effect in Canada in 1938, wiped out the hemp industries which could have grown hemp for food and fiber. We are living inside of *Wonderland Matrix Bizarro Worlds*, where everything has become as *absurdly backward* as possible, due to society actually being controlled by enforced frauds.

Everything regarding the history of how hemp became marijuana, and thus, cannabis became completely criminalized, is but one of the tiny tips of an immense iceberg of integrated systems of legalized lies backed by legalized violence, which almost totally dominate Globalized Neolithic Civilization.

The ruling classes, the pyramidion people in those entrenched social pyramid systems, are becoming increasingly psychotic psychopaths, while most of the people they rule over are matching that by becoming increasingly impotent political idiots.

People who do not know anything but what their schools and the mass media tell them know nothing but bullshit, which they have been brainwashed to believe in their whole lives.

They may be told relative truths about trivial facts, but otherwise they are massively **LIED TO BY OMISSION** regarding the most important facts, as well as generally misinformed about everything, in proportion to how important those things are.

Again, the ways in which the schools and mass media, operated by professional hypocrites, have presented grossly disproportional and irrational risk analysis regarding the exaggerated harms and dangers of marijuana, simply symbolized the ways in which the vast majority of people were brainwashed to believe in bullshit, in ways which have become more and more scientific brainwashing, as manifested within the context of an oxymoronic scientific dictatorship, which has primarily applied progress in science and technology in order to get better at enforcing frauds, while adamantly refusing to become more genuinely scientific about itself.

The biggest bullies' bullshit world views have been built into the basic structure of the dominate natural languages and philosophy of science, such that almost everyone thinks and communicates in ways which are absurdly backwards, and moreover, are tending to actually become exponentially more absurdly backwards, as the progress in physical science and technology continue to be applied through sociopolitical systems based upon being able to enforce frauds, which are thereby becoming exponentially more fraudulent.

Since the most socially successful people living within systems based upon enforcing frauds are the best available professional hypocrites, there are no practically possible ways to prevent that from continuing to get worse, faster...

Although the laws of nature are never going to stop working, and therefore, nothing that depends upon the laws of nature is going to stop working, natural selection pressures have driven the development of artificial selection systems to become based on the maximum possible dishonesties, which are not getting better in any publicly significant ways, but rather, are actually becoming exponentially more dishonest. Globalized Neolithic Civilization is headed towards series of psychotic breakdowns, a tiny component of which is the psychotic breakdown of pot prohibition.

You have moderate exposure in the media. What responsibilities come with this public recognition?

The public opinions regarding the Marijuana Party tend to be similar to the rest of the systems of public opinions, which are based upon generation after generation being brainwashed to believe in the biggest bullies' bullshit world views by their schools and mass media.

The general public opinions of the Marijuana Party could hardly be lowered by anything that I could possibly do. In my view, the vast majority of Canadians, literally more than 99%, always behave like incompetent political idiots, (while the fraction of 1% that are the pyramidion people in those social pyramid systems are more competently malicious.)

Inside that context, I tend to not want to volunteer to be a performing clown, who can be drafted into the narratives which are presented by the mass media. Meanwhile, I regard those people who have been made become more relatively famous by their greater mass media coverage publicity as being mainstream morons and reactionary revolutionaries.

While I may still somewhat entertain vain fantasies that I *should* promote more radical truths, including more radical hemp truths, from any overall objective point of view society has become too terminally sick and insane to recover from the degree to which that has become the case.

One tiny manifestation of that are those ways that the "legalization" is currently indicated to become based on compromises with the same old huge lies, while more radical hemp truths are not expected to be able to change that.

Therefore, "legalizing" marijuana now looks like it is headed toward becoming ridiculously restrictive regulations, which will actually amount to "**Pot Prohibition 2.0**" based on "**Reefer Madness 2.0**."

Who are activists, authors, bloggers, writers, and so on, that influence you, and deserve greater exposure?

I am not aware of any particular sources which I would unreservedly recommend. My opinions are due to sifting through vast amounts of information, such that what I have distilled is nothing like anything which was similar to what was originally presented in those sources.

In my view, it is politically impossible for any publicly significant *opposition* to not be controlled. I am not aware of any "alternatives" that are more than "alternative bullshit." The best one gets is relatively superficial analyses, which are correct on those levels, but which then tend to collapse back to the same old-fashioned bogus "solutions" based upon impossible ideals.

It is barely possible to exaggerate the degree to which almost everyone takes for granted the **DUALITIES** of false fundamental dichotomies, and the related impossible ideals. I am not aware of any publicly significant "opposition" that is not controlled by the ways that they continue to almost completely take for granted thinking in those ways.

(Of course, that includes the publicly significant groups that the mass media have most recognized as those who have campaigned to "legalize" marijuana.) Ideally, *we should* go through series of intellectual scientific revolutions and profound paradigm shifts.

Primarily that means *we should* attempt to better understand how human beings and civilization live as manifestations of general energy systems, and therefore, *we should* attempt to use more **UNITARY MECHANISMS** to better understand how human beings and civilization actually live as entropic pumps of environmental energy flows.

However, I am not aware of anyone who is publicly significant that sufficiently does that, especially because going through such series of profound paradigms becomes like going through level after level of more radical truths, which amounts to going through the fringe, then the fringe of the fringe, and then the fringe of the fringe of the fringe, *etc....*

I present what I call the **Radical Marijuana** positions as being those **Fringe Cubed** positions, which are based upon attempting to recognize the degree to which almost everyone currently almost totally takes for granted thinking and communicating through the uses of the dominate natural languages and philosophical presumptions, which became dominate due to those being the bullshit which was backed up by bullies for generation after generation, for thousands of years.

Not only has civilization been based on thousands of years of being able to back up lies with violence, while progress in physical science has enabled those systems to become exponentially bigger and BIGGER, but also, those few who superficially recognize that then still tend to recommend bogus "solutions" which continue to be absurdly backwards, because they do not engage in deeper analysis regarding how and why natural selection pressures drove the development of artificial selection systems to become most socially successful by becoming the most deceitful and treacherous that those could possibly become.

Since those are the facts, everything that matters most is becoming worse, faster ... Within that context, the bogus "legalization" of marijuana, based upon recycled huge lies, is too little, too

late, and too trivial to matter much. Rather, what is happening is that the *Grand Canyon Chasms* between physical science and political science are becoming wider and WIDER!

Human beings and civilization have developed in ways whereby they deliberately deny and misunderstand themselves living as entropic pumps of environmental energy flows in the most absurdly backward ways possible, while yet, almost everyone continues to take that for granted, which includes the degree to which the central core of triumphant organized crime, namely, banker dominated governments, are surrounded by layers of controlled "opposition" groups, which stay within the same bullshit-based frame of reference.

There is almost no genuine opposition, but rather, the only publicly significant "opposition" is controlled by the ways that they continue to think and communicate using the dominate natural languages and philosophy of science, without being critical of those.

Of course, that characterizes the controlled "opposition" groups, which have been campaigning to "legalize" marijuana. As those campaigns have become more mainstream, those campaigns have become less radical, and therefore, have tended to even more be able and willing to compromise with the same old recycled huge lies.

Therefore, in general, one is watching the "legalization" of marijuana turn into a mockery of itself, whereby what is actually happening is becoming more and more absurdly backwards to what was originally being promoted by those who long ago were campaigning to try to "legalize" on the basis of promoting more radical hemp truths.

Instead, "legalized" marijuana is being more and more forced back to fit inside the established monetary and taxation systems, which are almost totally based upon public governments enforcing frauds by private banks. The current news trends indicate that "legalized" marijuana is only happening INSIDE the systems that criminalized cannabis in the first place.

Hence, overall, the campaigns to "legalize" marijuana are more and more being betrayed, such that what is most probably going to actually happen are sets of ridiculously restrictive regulations. (Of course, we will have to wait and watch to see what finally happens in those regards during the next couple of years. However, there are no good grounds to be genuinely optimistic about that at the present time.)

An Interview with Blair T. Longley, Marijuana Party of Canada Leader (Part Four)

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

October 31, 2016

What seems like the most emotionally ‘taxing’ part of activist and political work for you?

Since about 2008, I no longer am able to maintain even the slightest shreds of idealistic optimism towards the foreseeable finite future of the civilization that I was born into. Therefore, the most difficult psychological adjustments are related to coming to terms with the degree that civilization is manifesting runaway criminal insanities, due to almost everything becoming almost totally based upon enforcing frauds, which are automatically becoming exponentially more fraudulent!

Canada is moving in a progressive direction. What seem the main domains of progression on drug policy based in evidence, science, and compassion to you?

It my opinion, it is **delusional** to think that Canada is moving in a *"progressive direction."* Rather, I repeat my view that Canada is degenerating from colonialism towards neofeudalism, which shall likely be a phase towards something much worse.

Canada is one of the few countries in the world which still has enough natural resources left to strip-mine at an exponentially accelerating rate. Therefore, Canada is one of the few countries where Globalized Neolithic Civilization continues to superficially appear to make "sense," despite that it is actually based upon operating through runaway criminal insanities, which operates through fundamentally fraudulent financial accounting systems, since Canada is integrated into globalized systems that are based upon public governments enforcing frauds by private banks, whereby "money" is made out of nothing as debts, in order to "pay" to strip-mine Canadian natural resources.

Fraudulent financial accounting systems present that as being *good and positive* things to do, because those enforced frauds present everything in absurdly backward ways. Canada has always been integrated into the Anglo-American (Zionist) Empire, which is the most dominate group inside the overall Globalized Neolithic Civilization.

Since Canada still has enough natural resources left to continue to be able to strip-mine at an exponentially increasing rate, the Canadian ruling classes continue to becoming increasingly psychotic psychopaths, while the Canadians ruled over continue to increasingly become impotent political idiots, since the established political systems in Canada continue to be able to deliberately ignore the problems of diminishing returns, through which manifest limits to growth.

The alleged *"progressive direction"* of Canadian society is actually based upon nothing more than the misrepresentations of the best available professional hypocrites, who are currently able to dominate Canadian society. I see nothing whatsoever that is some genuine *"progression on drug policy based in evidence, science and compassion."*

Anything like that would necessarily have to be based upon better understanding of human ecology, inside of which operates the political economy.

However, there is nothing which is more deliberately ignored and/or misunderstood, in the most absurdly backward ways, than human ecology, which ramifies throughout every other way in which Globalized Neolithic Civilization has psychotic attitudes towards its ecological environment, and which is, therefore, actually manifesting as runaway criminal insanities, as far as the longer term consequences are concerned.

In general, the younger, you are (and even more so for future generations) the more you are being lied to, cheated and robbed by the established political systems. One of the various ways that manifests are those ways that young poor people are primarily the victims of marijuana laws, while the current news trends regarding the so-called marijuana "legalization" continue to be dominated by professional hypocrites, whose claims to protect young people are very probably going to continue to backfire badly.

In order for drug policies to become *better based on evidence and science*, as well as thereby become genuinely *more compassionate*, as the result of that degree of higher consciousness, it would be necessary to better base the general understanding of government itself on evidence and science.

However, doing so requires integrating and surpassing the profound paradigm shifts already achieved in physical science into political science, which requires that political science go through series of intellectual scientific revolutions and profound paradigm shifts.

In order to understand how and why the currently established drug policies have become about as absurdly backwards as possible, one has to go through the processes of not only discovering and demonstrating that governments are the biggest forms of organized crime, dominated by the best organized gangs of criminals, but also, go through deeper levels of analysis regarding how and why those are the actual social facts.

What the established drug policies have actually done are what those were actually intended to do, which were to enable organized crime to flourish on every level, and especially to enable governments, as the biggest forms of organized crime, dominated by the best organized gangs of criminals, to flourish.

Hence, the drug policies became the "War on Drugs," while about 75% of that was the "War on Marijuana," which enabled the fascist plutocracy to build its fascist police state, while the profits from making those "drugs," and especially "marijuana," become illegal would eventually end up in the biggest banks, which then could enable the profits from frauds to be reinvested in more frauds.

In general, the essential political problems are due to the ways that human ecology was driven by natural selection pressures to become based on the maximum possible deceptions and treacheries.

Therefore, it has become politically impossible to have any relatively *rational* public debates about any important public issues, because of the degree to which the most important issues are buried as deeply as possible under the maximum possible bullshit social stories, which were spouted by the biggest bullies, for generation after generation, while those lies were backed up by violence, in ways which made those huge lies become the overwhelmingly dominate social stories.

It continues to be the case that huge lies about "marijuana" dominates the public spaces, and therefore, marijuana "legalization" continues to be based upon bullshit, which will surely backfire badly in the longer term, while yet enabling a tiny minority to make more money, by screwing the vast majority, which will be basically the same as it always was...

It continues to be tragically ironic that those who called for *more evidence and science based drug policies* tend to NEVER do so with respect to better understanding government itself in those ways. Therefore, not only do drug policies make no genuine progress, but also, every other political issue is also trapped in vicious spirals of political funding resulting in enforcing frauds.

The best available professional hypocrites have the most socially successful careers, such as that those politicians who are the best professional liars and immaculate hypocrites tend to win the elections, and thereafter continue to drive the entrenched vicious spirals to become worse, faster...

Overall, there are exponentially increasing contradictions between progress in physical science WITHOUT any progress in political science.

Moreover, at the present time, there are no feasible ways for those contradictions to not continue to get worse, faster, because it continues to be politically impossible for enough human beings to better understand themselves as also being manifestations of general energy systems, since doing so would require enough of them recognizing the deep degrees to which they were brainwashed to believe in bullshit about everything, on level after level, where those lies were different at every level, and which sets of lies included those which criminalized cannabis, and which currently appear to be able to continue to dominate its bogus "legalization."

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion?

I *WISH* that I could come to better conclusions. However, after spending several decades learning about politics, the most consistent theme has always been that **THE MORE I LEARNED, THE WORSE IT GOT.**

The about exponential progress in physical science has primarily been applied to become better at enforcing frauds, such that civilization overall has become about exponentially more fraudulent. At the present time, it appears to have been nothing more than a vain fantasy that *more rational evidence and logical arguments* regarding hemp truths would make any significant differences to marijuana laws.

Rather, the preponderance of current news indications is that marijuana "legalization" is going to continue to mostly be based upon the same old huge lies, and therefore, will backfire badly overall, except to the degree that relatively small minorities will be able to extract the maximum personal profits from ridiculously restrictive regulations.

Thank you for your time, Mr. Longley.

US Women's Rights Hero: In Celebration and Appreciation of Lana Moresky

Scott Douglas Jacobsen and Angelos Sofocleous

November 13, 2016

An Ohioan women's rights hero has been at the forefront of the fight for women's rights for decades. Her name is Lana Moresky, who is a Shaker Heights resident in Cleveland, Ohio. She acted as the President and Coordinator for the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1972 after moving to Ohio, where she was previously living in Pittsburgh. Her fights for women's rights, and against the regressive forces in American culture and society, have been for the "legalization of abortion, employment equity and the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, an effort that failed in 1982," the Advance Ohio reports.

The tremendous, arduous, and emotionally difficult efforts have extended to work to have women elected into office through attempts to have the first woman appointed to the Northern Ohio federal bench. Moresky continues the same fight for women's rights right into the present, which is a noble aspiration, actualized, and an inspiration for many. No doubt. Women's rights in the United States began, effectively, in the 1920s.

By which we mean, American democracy began in the 1920s, as Louis CK astutely noted in the opening section of one time that he hosted Saturday Night Live, because women finally got the right to vote at that time. Moresky relates her personal experience in tears within the video (linked in the first paragraph) because at the start of the decades-long work she did not expect to see these kinds of events in her lifetime necessarily.

These kinds of changes appeared too far into the future, but now girls can see a woman in power and making decisions with an impact as a leader in the most powerful country in the world. She made a powerful statement in this recent, brief, interview about finally feeling a part of the country, of The United States of America. It provides an insight to the status of women, emotionally, in that many probably felt, and sometimes likely still feel, like outsiders to the mainstream political process and socio-cultural milieu.

Women are still unfairly treated in a society that often praises itself to be one of the most democratic in the world. It is not the largest democracy in the world. India is the largest democracy in the world, but America has made significant progress compared to other countries on freedom of speech, for example. However, as noted earlier, women in the United States only gained the right to vote in the 1920s, which makes democracy relatively recent in the US.

In 2016, American women fall below men in various sectors - education, job prospects, salaries, and government representation. Black and Latino American women have it even worse. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) notes that American women make 78 cents for every dollar earned by American men and also that over 1,000 public K-12 schools in the United States have single-sex education programs. What is more, women take less than 20% of the seats of the United States House of Representatives.

As Jabril Faraj brings it, “For much, if not all, of human history, women have been little more than property — subjected by men, bought and sold (in the name of “marriage”) and viewed as not much more than vessels for procreation.” Thankfully, things have changed now. But we’re anywhere where we need to be on protecting women’s rights and ensuring sex equality. Lana Moresky is a notable example of people who take action against inequality and advocate women’s rights by pressuring to get more women elected into office. Moresky has been a top Democratic activist and fundraiser for Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign during the last year and it’s women like Moresky that brought about any change in women’s position in society and their representation in the political life.

Lana Moresky stresses the fact that it’s a major mistake that women are considered unable to make decisions or lead an organization. In fact, she emphasizes that when NOW pressures to get more women involved into politics it faces fierce opposition from male politicians or members of the government. A notable example is the unwillingness of the Senate to vote for the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which is an international treaty that has been signed and ratified by 189 UN states, following states like Somalia, Iran, and Tonga.

The CEDAW focuses and aims exactly on what its name says: ending the elimination and discrimination against women in marriage, employment, political participation and education. The United States of America does not have a right to be proud of respecting mothers of newborns as it’s the only high-income developed country that does not offer a paid maternity leave to women. The gender gap is clear in wage inequality as the USA ranks 65th out of 142 countries in wage equality for similar work, according to the 2014 Global Gender Gap Report. These are all immediate and long-term concerns that need to be addressed persistently by activists, politicians, and citizens of the US.

Lana continues her work into the current, urgent, and ongoing issues for women throughout America, and we wish her success in her pursuits, and wish this to be positive highlight and expression of appreciation for her tremendous dedication and long-term commitment to women’s rights in the US. Here’s in celebration and appreciation of Moresky!

Marriage Rejected in Mexico

Pamela Machado and Scott Douglas Jacobsen

November 15, 2016

Wednesday was a difficult day for progressive Mexicans, according to the BBC. After the surprising Trump victory, which produced, as a consequent, the plunge of the Mexican Peso, the Lower House Committee rejected a proposal for a constitutional amendment, announced earlier in May in order to consecrate same-sex marriage and adoption rights.

Global news reports that President Enrique Peña Nieto's lower house of congress voted the attempted measure to enshrine same-sex partners' right to marry down 19-8. That is, same-sex marriage is not legal based on the vote by the Commission on Constitutional Matters. Edgar Castillo Martinez, the Commission Chairman for the Chamber of Deputies Chamber of Deputies, described the decision as "totally and definitively concluded."

However, even with the 19-8 vote against the measure, the Supreme Court of Mexico, in 2015, stated unequivocally that the barring of same-sex couples from getting married was unconstitutional, but did not change the formal legal system. In that, it did not change the laws in the books. This did not change the fundamental framework for progressive change in the 2016 vote, even if the vote went in the favour of the progressive Mexicans.

And so a year onward, even with the hopes of the LGBTQ+, especially the gay, community in 2016 within Mexico behind the measure to make same-sex marriages constitutional, the 19-8 vote against went not-so much with the prevailing winds of change. Indeed, only some jurisdictions, such as the capital city of Mexico, remain bastions of legalized same-sex marriage.

The committee rejection happens a bit more than a month after protests against LGBT rights took place in Mexico City. Thousands of Mexicans were fighting to preserve the traditional 'family values and the institution of marriage', and not against LGBTQ+ rights in general. Thus, the traditional divide in the arguments between 'family values' and LGBTQ+ rights remain in conflict just south of the American border.

Homosexual partnerships had permission from the Mexican government to form civil partnerships. However, the recent ruling would provide the equivalent marriage rights to homosexual, or gay, couples as those already given to hetero-sexual, or straight, couples.

In fact, other countries in Latin America have provided the identical rights to gay couples for same-sex marriage as that provided to opposite-sex partnerships including Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, and partially in Mexico (depends on the areas of the country such as Mexico City and certain states), and most recently in Colombia as well.

The other issue in the country was adoption rights, as noted by The Huffington Post. And, indeed, once more, the Supreme Court pre-empted the rights of gay couples to have same-sex marriages as heterosexual couples have the constitutional right to marry, according to

Nonetheless, the recent vote of 19-8 relied on the constitutional right of gay couples to marry with some facets including adoption rights for married couples, which would mean the expansion of adoption rights to same-sex married couples, too.

Despite their political success, Far-Left and Left-leaning parties have had difficulties in the past two decades. Latin America remains moderately conservative regarding same-sex relationships. Catholicism, as the predominant faith in Mexico, may be behind the popular resistance to change values that challenge traditional, conservative Christian principles.

Mike Pence is Still Here, Folks

Dominic Sylvia Lauren and Scott Douglas Jacobsen

November 16, 2016

In the wake of the recent surprise election of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, we must remain mindful of the President-elect's shadow: Mike Pence. He is the Vice President-elect of the United States. Furthermore, he believes a series of bizarre things, if not outright falsehoods, which we will explore in this piece. One positive comes out of this. He is upfront about them.

Pence is someone "who sees the last 40 years of progress on abortion, gay rights, civil rights, criminal justice reform and race relations as a disaster for the country," the Huffington Post reports. His views, if implemented at a national level, can be legitimate threats to women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and the environment.

Mike Pence has been fixated on defunding Planned Parenthood throughout all of his years in politics. He had already caused a lot of uproar on the matter even before he teamed up with sexist lunatic no.1, Donald Trump. He flirted with his anti-women's reproductive rights ideal before 2007, when he was in Congress, as he pushed for the legislation to defund Planned Parenthood. It wasn't until the government shutdown in 2011 that sparked like-minded Republicans to join Pence's obsessive anti-abortion and anti-women's rights campaigns.

Texas has been Pence's pride and joy in this domain as the state has been a leader in such drastic and conservative affairs. In 2013, Texas brought Pence's dream to life, as the state "successfully cut the network of clinics out of its public family planning program for low-income women" (Sarah Kliff, Vox). No access to contraceptives led to more babies being born in Texas, and no regard for women's reproductive rights ultimately led to women's personal life decisions being neglected and controlled.

Pence's absurd obsession with defunding Planned Parenthood has not only negatively impacted the citizens of Texas; he even threw his own state, Indiana, under the bus. By leading outrageous and undemocratic campaigns against reproductive health, Scott County in Indiana became a hotbed for STDs, as Pence cut funding for the only HIV testing provider in Scott County in 2013. As a result, the County suffered a disastrous HIV outbreak.

Mike Pence's proposed bill on anti-abortion is even too conservative for most conservatives. His proposed law, which was thankfully overturned by a Federal judge, supported banning abortion, even in the case of irreversible fetal anomalies. In addition, his law included forcing women who chose to undergo an abortion to also perform funeral services for their fetuses. This would require women to keep any of the discarded fetal tissue and to either cremate or bury it.

He is not in support to *Roe v. Wade*. "I long for the day that *Roe v. Wade* is sent to the ash heap of history," Pence said. *Roe v. Wade* has effects right up to the present influencing the public debate on abortion. How could such a mentality even be considered in a supposedly "free" America? The United States prides itself on being a democratic and free nation. This is simply a fallacy when such laws are being imagined and such individuals are being elected to govern.

Canada Drops in Index Ranking Women's Rights

Phoebe Davies-Owen and Scott Douglas Jacobsen

November 17, 2016

International women's rights apply to every nation including Canada. Female Canadian citizens, in general, have difficulties faced throughout life not seen, or not experienced to the same degree, on average, by Canadian men. Recently, a United Nations committee examined and analyzed the status of women and women's rights in Canada. The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) described the situation in Canada for women's rights as not much being done to improve the state for women within the country.

CEDAW was founded in 1982 and based in the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was adopted in 1979. Member states of the UN become party of CEDAW through "ratifying or acceding to the Convention," which necessitates review by the committee on fulfillment of the obligations implied by being a member of the committee. In review of the obligations by the CEDAW, the committee, Canada has fallen since 1995 "from 1st to 25th place on the UN Gender Equality Index," Canadian Civil Society Organizations reports.

The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) Secretary-Treasurer, Elisabeth Ballermann, said, "How much more evidence does our government need to prove that women continue to face inequality and discrimination?" In fact, the over two-decade decline in the status of Canada on the international stage for women's rights implementation occurred throughout the Prime Ministerial leadership of The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Stephen Harper, Paul Edgar Philippe Martin, and Joseph Jacques Jean Chrétien, which have been through long periods of both Liberal Party of Canada and Conservative Party of Canada leadership.

No one Canadian federal political party to lay blame on for this. It amounts to a societal issue. A problem in how Canadian citizens, to some degree and in many domains, relate to one another day-to-day in public and private life. "We need a government that will not just talk about improving equality but one that will actually act," Ballermann said. Another portion of the report relates to the gender wage gap. The report notes that the gender wage gap in Canada is double the amount of the global average. Indeed, the executive director of West Coast LEAF, Kasari Govender, described the 'motherhood tax', which is the pay gap for mothers in general compared to women without children. "Canadian mothers earn 12 per cent less than women without children," Govender said, "The gap increases as the number of children goes up."

According to Kate McInturff, a senior researcher at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives who specializes in gender inequity and public policy, no improvements have been made regarding the gender wage gap in Canada. In her piece "Budget 2016: not enough real change for women," she found that 43,000 new jobs were promised in 2016 and 100,000 for 2017/18, the majority of which would actually be created for the construction industry. This industry, which is 88.5% male, is continuously prioritised over female orientated industries like health care. The consequence of this is that women currently comprise 36% of beneficiaries of new budget measures intended to create jobs.

Trudeau himself, who has repeatedly made grand public gestures about being a feminist, is part of the larger problem. Many remember the political and gender equality maneuver for a 50/50 gender split Cabinet with the meme-quote that spread afterwards: "...because it's 2015." There is no right way to be a Feminist, but it is a problem when people think the Prime Minister is a great feminist, when in reality, he and his government are failing to address and actually change the injustices faced by Canadian women, in particular, those women who are considered to be on the margins of society.

Dr. Pam Palmater, the chair of Ryerson University has said that Indigenous Canadian women "suffer some of the world's highest suicide rates, overrepresentation in prison and high rates of sexualized violence" and it seems to be a trend which has continued for years. During the year of the release of Amnesty International's "Stolen Sisters," the organisation said that women between the ages of 25 and 44 were five times more likely to die as a result of violence, and a report by the RCMP (Royal Canadian mounted police) calculated that more than a thousand indigenous women had been murdered since 1980, and another 152 had gone missing since 1982.

An inquiry was launched by the Canadian government in August to investigate the situation, but it remains to be seen whether the inquiry can be conducted in a way that satisfies public opinion and actually secures justice for women within indigenous communities. The final key point made in the report was on austerity and women's rights in Canada. It was termed a "double-whammy for women" because the global financial crisis create restriction in wages, i.e. that stagnation of wages if not decline, and the cuts to the benefits for women.

"These austerity decisions ensure that women who are already economically disadvantaged bear even more of the consequences," Ballermann said. An associated list of other problems within Canada for every single woman included lack of protection of women's social and economic rights, support systems, violence against women, and access to abortions, among others.

The LGBTQ+ community should remain concerned about Pence. He has passed religious freedom laws that have permitted the prevention of services to LGBTQ+ community members based on 'religious freedom'. He opposed motions to provide funding for those suffering with HIV/AIDS. Unless, of course, the federal government actively discouraged the right of same-sex individuals to marry. You can see the association between the two within that framework of reasoning by Pence. Indeed, he even resisted attempts to have hate-crimes laws put in place to LGBTQ+ community members.

On climate change or global warming, Pence remains staunchly skeptical of the reality in the face of the overwhelming and vast majority of the qualified, professional scientists studying the environment. It is unequivocal. The atmosphere is warming, sea levels are rising, and in the light of the fact that human beings began the Industrial Revolution. It starts with hydrocarbons producing fuel sources.

One loose end, which might become one in the educational domain devoted to science, is the denial of evolution theory by Pence, Forbes reports. "[Charles Darwin] offered a theory of the origin of species which we've come to know as evolution," Pence said, "Charles Darwin never thought of evolution as anything other than a theory. He hoped that someday it would be proven by the fossil record but did not live to see that, nor have we." There you have it.

Pence uses the common tactic of conflation of 'theory' with hunch or guess. Proper theories, in the context of science, amount to the theoretical framework best supported by the evidence, which tends to be best judged by the professionals in the relevant disciplines such as biology in this case.

Some other loose ends for Pence are the fact that in 1990 he used public donations to pay for the mortgage on his house. Nice: one might get the sense that he doesn't care of ordinary Americans. Indeed, with much of the aforementioned, he could very good mortgage the future of the lower class and lower-middle class (even the middle class or what's left of them) in America.

Americans should wake up and realise the absurdity of the US's current political state. If such mentalities are already being accepted into the White House, the country will continue to endure a downward spiral, and its people will be left socially crippled and disabled of their basic rights and freedoms. We should not solely be blinded by Trump's outspoken nature, because Pence may well be an even bigger threat to American society.

The UK's Soft Exit from the EU

Michael John Bramham and Scott Douglas Jacobsen

November 18, 2016

One of the biggest ongoing issues in the headlines is Brexit, which is the motion for Britain to leave the European Union. On June 23, 2016, the UK held a referendum on whether or not the country should stay in the European Union. The question asked in that referendum was the following: "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?"

The votes were open to British, Irish, and Commonwealth citizens over the age of 18. 52% of the UK population voted in favor of leaving the EU. Prime Minister Theresa May stated that Article 50 of the Treaty of the European Union would be invoked to implement the results of the referendum to leave the EU. A Department of Exiting the European Union was created in the light of this.

Britain's membership in the European Union has been controversial since the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, which ushered in a new era of closer integration in Europe. This is, in part, due to unresolved historical questions of identity that have plagued the British political psyche since the dissolution of the British Empire.

Indeed, Article 50 of the Treaty of the European Union notes the statement from the Lisbon Treaty that provides the right of the member state, in this case the UK, to exit the European Union. Prior to that point, the potential for any sort of withdrawal from the EU was difficult. The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) has been the main campaigner in support of leaving the EU since its foundation in 1993.

UKIP was established to campaign against continued integration with the European Union and to campaign for the UK to leave. UKIP was not alone in its hostility to the EU. In fact, many Conservative Party backbench MPs also came to oppose the EU for its liberal internationalist agenda. Although, largely a marginal player, UKIP was able to bring the issue of the EU into the mainstream from the mid-2000s onwards, largely thanks to the increasing division within the Conservative Party over the issue between the party's traditional conservative and more neoliberal factions.

Seeking to resolve the increasing division in his party, under pressure from anti-EU MPs and hoping to silence opposition to the EU, Prime Minister David Cameron vowed to have a referendum on the issue as a major part of his manifesto at the last general election in 2015.

Unfortunately, he underestimated the strength of opposition, the lack of knowledge about the EU among certain elements of the general public and the depth of the division in his own party.

The result was that 51.89% of voters voted in favour of leaving the EU to 48.11% in favour of remain. Discredited, Prime Minister Cameron announced his resignation a few hours after the result was announced leading to the accession of his Home Secretary Theresa May to the premiership on 13th July.

The main complication in the light of the referendum vote is the fact that there is an ongoing debate over whether or not PM May has the right to initiate proceedings for leaving the EU, or if she needs to win a vote in Parliament first. It is a legal dispute.

This raises complications around the political and legal history of the country. Take, for example, the half-reformed status of the UK, and the systems, some of them, that haven't changed since the 17th century and the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688.

The government claims it can use the PM's royal prerogative to trigger proceedings. However, given that the UK entered the EU by act of parliament, campaigners are arguing they need another act of parliament in order to leave.

When Britain established itself as a parliamentary democracy they did so by effectively transferring most of the absolute powers of the monarch to parliament and through parliament to the Prime Minister. Thus, today, the Prime Minister has many reserve executive powers they can call upon via the Queen, which are leftovers from the days of absolute monarchy.

However, May's ability to use these powers at this juncture are ambiguous due to the fact that as an international treaty it was an act of parliament that took the UK into the EU and acts of parliament cannot be repealed by anyone except parliament.

Another complication, which has been of comfort to remain campaigners, is that the act that committed the government to having a referendum quite clearly states that it was 'advisory' and not legally binding.

As such, the government and parliament are under no legal obligation to leave the EU in spite of a leave vote, which leaves the UK parliament and the public in a bind regarding the EU.

Especially since the majority of MPs were in favour of staying in the EU, even in spite of this glaring complication and the majority of the MPs having been in favour of staying in the EU, PM May has vowed to push ahead through the legal wilderness to ascertain the coveted Brexit, CBC reports.

New developments in the past few days have seen the leader of the opposition Jeremy Corbyn announce that his party would block any deal over Brexit that did not ensure the UK's continued access to the single-market.

This is a blow to Theresa May and her cabinet colleagues who seek a 'hard Brexit' which would inevitably have to include a withdrawal from the single-market in order to be implemented.

With the referendum turnout voting in favour of Brexit the possibility of leaving the EU seems likely. However, with the legal complications, the opposition in parliament and the demands for continued access to the single-market, then PM May, if she does go through with Brexit, may be forced to go for a 'soft Brexit' rather than a 'hard' one.

Turkish Government Proposes Raped Women Marry Rapist for Rapists' Acquittal

Phoebe Davies-Owen and Scott Douglas Jacobsen

November 19, 2016

Turkey continues to invite criticism from the international community (Russia Today, 2016a). After it emerged that it's government was putting forward a bill that would pardon rapists if they married their victims, the motion was brought to the Turkish Parliament for consideration today, as a way to skirt the legal complications with child marriage, which make up 33% of Turkish marriages (Russia Today, 2016b).

The AKP (Justice and Development party in power, who favour conservative ideology) have supported the policy, and Justice Minister Bekir Bozdag on Saturday moved to reassure opponents that the bill would not pardon rapists.

"The bill will certainly not bring amnesty to rapists.... This is a step taken to solve a problem in some parts of our country," Bozdag told a NATO meeting in Istanbul (Channel News Asia, 2016). The proposal states that, in the case of child rape, if the act was committed without "force, threat, or any other restriction on consent," and if the victim agrees to marry the aggressor, the sentence of the condemned shall be postponed (Al Jazeera, 2016). Does anyone else see troubles with this?

Indeed, it has been heavily criticised. For example, the opposition party said the proposal would "encourage forced marriages" and "legalize marriage to rapists," but some in the women's rights community in Turkey have gone so far as to claim that this movement in legislation would legalise and encourage the rape of minors (Hurriyet Daily, 2016).

On the same day, around 3,000 protesters turned up to the Kadikoy Square in Istanbul to show their contempt. A UN children's fund spoke out about the bill as deeply concerning. It is criminal. This bill, if passed, will only put pressure on rape victims to spend their lives with their rapists in order to avoid a scandal. That is, the doubt of a woman's honour and virginity.

Child marriage, which is common in Turkey, is not defined as a criminal act - Yasar University law professor Mustafa Ruhan Erdem has said that Girls under 16 are allowed to marry in Turkey with Sharia Court permission.

According to Nuriye Kadan (İzmir Bar Association Central Executive Board Member and women's rights advocate), there are 181,036 child brides in Turkey, and when speaking at a conference to tackle the matter of child marriage, made the claim that the number could actually be far higher than estimated because most child marriages are performed with only the presence of an Imam, not registered by authorities (Buchanan, 2016).

This makes sense. The number of listed child marriages, as a safe assumption, will be lower than the real number. Who would want to accurately detail the quantity of child marriages in their country?

And if so, what would be the temptation to misrepresent the number, individually, familially, or nationally? The *Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages* from 1962. It unequivocally states that “Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses” (Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages, 1964).

UNICEF states child marriage “is one of the most pernicious manifestations of the unequal power relations between females and males” and “both a cause and a consequence of the most severe form of gender discrimination” (UNICEF, 2008). Is it no wonder this is a controversial proposal by the Turkish government?

An Introduction to the Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society

Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society: Scott Douglas Jacobsen and Felix Kongyuy
November 21, 2016

Scott

The Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society (BIES) is a registered non-profit society. It has a vision of facilitation of integration founded on accountability, compassion, equality, resilience, and trust for the disempowered across all community, cultural, and ethnic lines. The BIES mission aims to empower families and individuals. We want to be a nexus for multiculturalism and partnerships with discrimination based on age, political affiliation, race, or religion.

Our values follow the REACH formula: Respect, Empathy, Accountability, Commitment, and Honour. Respect with equal treatment and sensitivity for culture in all services. Empathy for all individuals without regard for ability or means. Accountability tied to honesty and openness for resource management for clients and stakeholders. Commitment to professional standards in provision of services for those in need. Honour via the nobility of the Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society.

We offer numerous services and programs within the vision, mission, and values statements of the organization. In Canada, whether native speakers of English (Anglophone), French (Francophone), or other native languages, we offer the opportunities and tools for inclusion of the vulnerable members of these populations. Some supports from the BIES are the work experience, confidence and self esteem building, reduction of culture shock and isolation, and the encouragement of entrepreneurship and volunteerism.

These exist alongside themed activities such as dialogues, relationship building for families, healthful lifestyle, and community spirit, and the promotion of arts, communication, culture, education, health, poverty reduction, and technology. The content and purpose for the activities and events within the vision, mission, and values comes from the strategy. It is an inclusive strategy with an emphasis on the aforementioned activities, events, and promotions.

Of course, the disempowered, as stated at the outset, are the most vulnerable, which tend to be the young, the old, and minorities. Our bilingual programs cater to these population because of an identified need by Felix and others. We target those populations to assist them. British Columbia, as one of the wealthiest and well-off places in the world (and, therefore, one of the most in human history), should have few of these sub-populations living in poor conditions.

Within that spirit, we would hope to emphasize BIES and its role in the facilitation of integration of those communities for harmony and greater wellbeing of individuals, families, and the community as a whole.

Felix

Did you know that in Surrey and Greater Vancouver?

As of 2010, the child poverty rate in the Greater Vancouver region was 37.8% and 43.8% among children of recent immigrants (those who immigrated during the 2006-2011 period). Numerous studies show the benefits of physical activity beyond maintaining a healthy weight. Physical activity is linked with positive mental well-being, increased academic performance, improved confidence and self-esteem, and the prevention of future health problems.

Do you ever wonder where the money comes from to support low income children, refugees, and newcomers in Surrey and Greater Vancouver?

It doesn't come from the government or from city funds. Most comes from organizations like Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society (Charity Number, BN: 801100686RR0001) and individuals like you. When we're asked, "Why we should care about what happens in Surrey and Greater Vancouver?" I think about Bang, who is a program participant. When Bang first came to our program, he couldn't communicate with other children or enjoy our sports activities because he always wanted to play his computer games.

Oftentimes, Bang will run away from our coaches. He never said a word to anyone. After four sessions, our coaches engaged him during our circle time to tell a story about his video games. As he started speaking, they asked him during the next game if he would like to become the leader. He agreed. Since then, he felt comfortable, made friends, and asked to help other children who came to the program. As the coaches discovered his passion for leading, he was nominated to lead a group of children during circle time for a week.

Because of his interest and compassion, we were able to provide Bang with a t-shirt, soccer shoe, water bottle, and a soccer ball to take home. Since that day, his parents said he plays soccer after school regularly, studies effectively, and, more important, stays away from video games. BIES has the goal to reach more than 200 low income children next year in Surrey through our Inclusive Sports program, and investing in vulnerable and low income children. Those investments are like investing in every child in Surrey.

This year, we have the ambitious goal of increasing our programs to 3 different communities in Greater Vancouver. Please consider helping give children and refugees a brighter future with a special gift of \$50 or more. The donation is tax deductible. Without people like you, their lives would be a nightmare.

P.S. Thanks for making the dream of children, youths and families become a reality. All cash donations of \$25 dollars or more will be receive a tax receipt from us. Please, give me a call at 604-585-6775, or visit www.baobabinclusive.ca, if you need more information about our mission and work.

If You Want to be Heard, Use Your Feet

Scott Douglas Jacobsen and Angelos Sofocleous

November 23, 2016

The solution to problems identified by individuals and groups is not words alone. You have to use your feet. As we catalogued in an article entitled *US Women's Rights Hero: In Celebration and Appreciation of Lana Moresky*, it can come in the form of a lifelong struggle for the equality and dignity of women in one country by one person (Jacobsen & Sofocleous, 2016).

In other cases, it can take more people, which becomes the basis for social movements. Undoubtedly, one person can bring change. They always, however, necessarily need other people's support; and that's where social movements begin to form and bring change in the world.

Where the frequently cited heroes and heroines of various countries and eras are cited as the catalysts, but, in fact, they might turn out to be the downstream consequence of culture. That is, the cultural setting pitted the desires of various individuals and groups in society apart from one another, where the most viable solution seemed to come from the citizenry becoming fed up. They wanted more from something or of someone in society.

Those social movements can be seen throughout the history of the world. Indeed, right through the Civil Rights movements, and other social movements, even the blogging (writing) campaigns within Bangladesh continue, especially as things come to a head (Sofocleous, 2016).

From the era of Ancient Greece, where masses could decide to expel (ostracise) any citizen of the city-state of Athens, to the various movements in the 20th century that managed to bring an end to colonialism around the world, and the social movements which fought for equal human rights among people of different genders, colours and religions, one might feel as though there is a periodic and cyclic nature to the continual uprisings.

Recently, there have been plans for a women's march in Washington (Rogers, 2016) as despite the fact that the inequality gap between various societal groups has shortened in the last century, there is still a lot to cover until we are able to praise ourselves that we have achieved equality (Jacobsen & Sofocleous, 2016).

It was a reflection of women among other peoples distressed by the divisive rhetoric on the American campaign trail by the, at the time, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, who is now the President-elect.

For the women's march planned for January 21st, 2017 from the Lincoln Memorial to the White House, which was planned on Facebook and is meant to be after the Trump inauguration, 100,000 women planned to take part in it. Breanne Butler is an organizer for the women's march on Washington.

“We’re doing it his very first day in office because we are making a statement,” Butler said, “The marginalized groups you attacked during your campaign? We are here and we are watching.” (Rogers, 2016).

Real emphasis needs to be given on such marches: While the internet can play a massive role in getting the general public informed and involved in protests, and as it serves as a concrete means to set up, advance, and organize a social movement, there is no doubt that real change takes place in the streets where the voice of people is heard and practical action is taken.

Of course, the statements do not come to the level of the Turkish government’s recent proposals about rapists being acquitted based on marrying the woman that they sexually assaulted (Davies-Owen & Jacobsen, 2016).

Despite the recent attempts of the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to establish an authoritarian regime, after the coup that took place in the country in July 2016, by imprisoning thousands of military generals and officers, journalists and scholars who opposed the Turkish government (Said-Moorhouse, 2016), thousands have taken the streets to oppose the proposed bill (Al-Jazeera, 2016).

“We will not shut up. We will not obey. Withdraw the bill immediately!”, the protesters shouted to the government, giving a very straight and clear view of what a social movement taking the streets can bring about (News Limited, 2016). Statements of the Justice Minister Bekir Bozdag that this “is a step taken to solve a problem in some parts of our country” cannot be described in any other way than being utterly ridiculous.

The words, then the actions, followed by the attempts for a culmination, but each began from the catalyst of reaction to events by individuals and groups to divisive rhetoric. The divisive rhetoric on the campaign trail. No need to reiterate details known to most. Word of mouth, social media, conversations with spouses, within families, with friends, and in communities and organizations turned into action.

Actions such as the increased monetary funding and socio-cultural support for nonprofit organizations representative of particular aspects of political platforms and policies including the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and the American Civil Liberties Union (Chokshi, 2016).

The marches planned on Facebook for Washington seem akin to the protests and marches for Black Monday in Poland over reproductive health services and rights including abortion services by tens, even hundreds, of thousands of women and the 70,000 women marching and protesting in Argentina over the high femicide, murder of women, rate in the country (Jacobsen & Jackson, 2016; Jacobsen & Machado, 2016).

Without these marches, the above issues would be a mere headline in a newspaper or another issue commented on the news. But because of all those thousands of people that became united under a common goal and scope, the above issues have managed to get globalized. Thus, frustration and anger caused by the above proposed laws, and pressure to the respective

governments, is no longer Polish, Argentinian, or Turkish. It is global. And this is all thanks to those social movements.

These feet marching and protesting are heard by the leaders and tend to create either more uproar, at a minimum debate, and sometimes substantial democratic reform to create a country more aligned with the desires of the citizenry, which is part of the international human rights movements and has been for a long time.

Center for Inquiry-Uganda - Humanism and Science in Uganda

Deo Ssekitooleko and Scott Douglas Jacobsen

November 24, 2016

The term humanism implies multiple interpretations dependent on the domain of endeavour in life. According to the American Humanist Association, numerous definitions exist such as Literary Humanism, Renaissance Humanism, Western Cultural Humanism, Philosophical Humanism, Christian Humanism, Modern Humanism, Secular Humanism, and Religious Humanism. Each implicates different areas. Every area devoted to aspects to humanism. On *What is Humanism* (2008) states:

Literary Humanism is a devotion to the humanities or literary culture.

Renaissance Humanism is the spirit of learning that developed at the end of the middle ages with the revival of classical letters and a renewed confidence in the ability of human beings to determine for themselves truth and falsehood.

Western Cultural Humanism is a good name for the rational and empirical tradition that originated largely in ancient Greece and Rome, evolved throughout European history, and now constitutes a basic part of the Western approach to science, political theory, ethics, and law.

Philosophical Humanism is any outlook or way of life centered on human need and interest. Sub-categories of this type include Christian Humanism and Modern Humanism.

Christian Humanism is defined by Webster's Third New International Dictionary as "a philosophy advocating the self-fulfillment of man within the framework of Christian principles." This more human-oriented faith is largely a product of the Renaissance and is a part of what made up Renaissance humanism.

Modern Humanism, also called Naturalistic Humanism, Scientific Humanism, Ethical Humanism, and Democratic Humanism, is defined by one of its leading proponents, Corliss Lamont, as "a naturalistic philosophy that rejects all supernaturalism and relies primarily upon reason and science, democracy and human compassion." Modern Humanism has a dual origin, both secular and religious, and these constitute its sub-categories.

Secular Humanism is an outgrowth of eighteenth century enlightenment rationalism and nineteenth century freethought. Many secular groups, such as the Council for Secular Humanism and the American Rationalist Federation, and many otherwise unaffiliated academic philosophers and scientists, advocate this philosophy.

Religious Humanism largely emerged out of Ethical Culture, Unitarianism, and Universalism. Today, many Unitarian Universalist congregations and all Ethical Culture societies describe themselves as humanist in the modern sense.

Center for Inquiry (CFI) follows these perspectives, which tend to associate with “science, reason, freedom of inquiry, and humanist values.” About (2016) by CFI provides description of the fundamental beliefs, principles, and values of the institution. CFI argues “scientific methods and reasoning should be utilized in examining the claims of both pseudoscience and religion.”

Both pseudoscience and religion represent counterproductive forces within societies. Pseudoscience defined by beliefs and practices presented as science without meeting proper scientific criteria. Religion defined by belief in a superhuman power in control of everything outside of human beings, whether singular (God) or plural (gods).

CFI rejects “mysticism and blind faith” and promotes “human values based on a naturalistic outlook.”³ CFI created programs to assist in these endeavours such as the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry and the Council for Secular Humanism.

CFI cautions in “aiming to foster a secular society, we do not seek to abridge the rights of believers. We vigorously object to government support of religion and the use of religious dogma to justify public policy; we do not oppose the free exercise of religion.”

Reason and compassion become the basis for the advancement of secularism and humanism with rights and dignity of everyone respected and implemented within all societies. CFI targets three objectives in general:

- 1. an end to the influence that religion and pseudoscience have on public policy*
- 2. an end to the privileged position that religion and pseudoscience continue to enjoy in many societies*
- 3. an end to the stigma attached to being a nonbeliever, whether the nonbeliever describes her/himself as an atheist, agnostic, humanist, freethinker or skeptic.*

CFI-Uganda follows the same tradition in values from the institution of CFI and the efforts to advance secular humanism. Humanism in Uganda, at least in its philosophical, secular, and scientific orientation, was officially introduced in Uganda with the formation of the Uganda Humanist Association (UHASSO), which became a loose umbrella of numerous independent associates and affiliates.

It includes the more vibrant Center for Inquiry International-Uganda (CFI-Uganda). CFI-Uganda is supported by and affiliated with the Center for Inquiry International (transnational), Amherst, New York, USA. In Uganda, we try to translate intellectual, scientific, secular, and philosophical humanism into practical projects that can easily make a positive impact on communities.

Where as in the USA there are such issues as pseudoscience, in Uganda and Africa at large, humanists are disturbed by beliefs in primitive witchcraft practices and the insurgence of evangelical Pentecostal beliefs from the USA.

Witchcraft practices in Africa are diverse in nature, form, and impact on society. It is a combination of diverse ancient African beliefs that include gods, spirits, ghosts, animism, and all other superstitions flavored by all forms of exploitations by the respected practising charlatans.

These beliefs claim to control humanity in form of health, life fortunes, success and failures of all kinds. On the other hand, apart from witchcraft, which is a combination of superstition and use of traditional herbal medicine, there are purely traditional healers who use only traditional medicine without superstition.

The problem with this latter group is that their medicine is not scientifically tested and the diseases they claim to treat are not scientifically diagnosed.

It can be easily observed witchcraft is both a traditional belief system and a superstitious pseudoscience used by charlatans to exploit society. They take advantage of the African situation characterised by poverty, low levels of formal education, especially in villages, limited social welfare, political conflicts, inadequate health welfare, and high prevalence of diseases such as malaria, AIDS, and many other diseases of the poor.

Africans, therefore, have limited choices, but to resort to witchcraft as an intervention force, to ameliorate their situation on earth. Witchcraft has been responsible for some of the following disturbing ills in our African societies:

- Infertile women contract HIV/AIDS from which doctors who mislead them to have sex with them before their husbands in order for the medicine to be effective.
- Witchdoctors discourage people from accessing modern hospitals as they claim to have powers to treat all diseases using superstition and herbal medicine. It is unfortunate that many people die of such treatable diseases such as malaria, dysentery, cholera, tuberculosis, and influenza.
- Government immunization programs are undermined by witchdoctors leading to the deaths of many people by diseases such as measles, whooping cough, and tetanus.
- The war against HIV/AIDS is increasingly being undermined by witchcraft because AIDS victims are discouraged from scientific counselling and treatment with anti-retroviral therapy (ART).
- Witchcraft has promoted disharmony in society. Many old people, especially women, are accused of many 'evils' in society such as famine, failed rains, and outbreaks of diseases. In most cases, if police fail to intervene in time, they are banished from their homes or their property is destroyed. Surprisingly, this is normal news on our Radio and Television stations; both private and public.
- Witchcraft gives people false hope to succeed on earth - be it in marriage, business, academics, and politics without analyzing the factors responsible for success or failure. This undermines peoples' ability to appreciate, realize, and utilize their human potentials. They submit to the will and advice of the witchdoctors in all human endeavors.

In all their work, witchdoctors demand offers in the form of consultation fees, land plots, houses, cattle, and poultry - thereby promoting poverty in society. Unfortunately, apart from humanists with a limited voice and means, there is no one speaking out against witchcraft.

The religious leaders try, but they are guilty of promoting other forms of superstition. The Ugandan government has officially licensed the non-scientific traditional healers in the spirit of promoting indigenous African medicine and in the spirit of Pan Africanism! Even further, many people in government believe in witchcraft.

Apart from witchcraft, the other non-scientific issue that disturbs African humanists is the insurgence of American-born and sponsored new forms of Christianity known as evangelical Pentecostal churches, but named with various trade or company names according to the choice of the owner or promoter. In most cases, the Preachers, known as Pastors, are devoid of even basic religious ethics.

They preach the prosperity gospel of wealth and success on earth as they exploit their folk and enrich themselves. They preach miracles and faith healing. They claim to treat all diseases including HIV/AIDS. Their only difference with witchdoctors is that they claim to get their powers from Jesus of Nazareth, Jewish ancestors/spirits, and their one God in the Middle East.

Yet, the Ugandan witchdoctors claim to get their powers from African spirits, or ancestors, and their gods. The other difference is that the Pastors are both more educated and extremely very rich. They have easy access to American Dollars from their donors and they easily financially exploit their folk.

Witchcraft and Pentecostal beliefs pose a challenge to humanist action and response in the following ways:

- Many people including politicians, public officials, and academicians believe in various forms of superstition because our African parental or grandparental families originate from superstitious lineages which combined culture, African traditions, history, and beliefs all in one. The advances of Western religion, culture, and
- secularism some 120 years ago have changed the African mainly in nominal identity, but not in philosophy.
- Because Western religions are also superstitious and yet they were the first ones to found formal schools in Uganda, their product; the current typical educated Ugandan is also superstitious. Ugandan education system is devoid of critical, skeptical, rational, and science skills. It emphasizes acquisition of factual knowledge rather than life skills.
- Pentecostals and witchdoctors have easy access to media outlets such as radio and television sets.
- Pentecostal Preachers and witchdoctors are very rich and have easy access to communities and policy makers.
- The local and international laws favor religious charlatans who exploit society. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights has an article on freedom of belief and religion, which has been enshrined in most national constitutions.

CFI-Uganda is trying to grow and stand up to do some work in some small Ugandan village communities. The first approach is to limit armchair conference humanism in big towns and the city because such an approach is expensive with no tangible impact. Many sensitization seminars on the dangers of superstition, and the values and advantages of rationalism, have been organized.

We train communities about health and community development. Health seminars help participants to identify causes, prevention, and treatment of various diseases, which include, but are not limited to malaria, cancers, diabetes, and HIV/AIDS. Our work is to supplement government work in its health departments, which, unfortunately, do not highlight the role of superstition in undermining health systems in Uganda. In most cases, it is the community members who select the topics of their next training.

We have done a lot of work in organizing health counselling, disease testing, provision of condoms and immunizing people against killer diseases. Last year, we commemorated World AIDS DAY. However, in most of our campaigns, we highlight humanist principles of reason, skepticism, free inquiry, and critical thinking. Apart from health, we have a program of rural development through informal community skills education.

We promote skills such as bee keeping, fish farming, horticulture, agroforestry, and food processing among others. CFI-Uganda started a program to reach out to schools to supplement formal education with informal skills education. We engage teachers and students with science skills, especially with topics taught in schools such as evolutionary theory, environmental science, climate change, standard Big Bang cosmology, planetary systems, recycling of resources, and so on.

We promote debates about human rights, history, international affairs, and so on. Every year, starting from this year, 50 selected students and some teachers will always attend a humanist conference on life skills. We expect to use such fora to build a network of activists and fellows to promote our advocacy and visibility. CFI-Uganda has tried to promote intellectual philosophical humanism by organizing the pioneering evolutionist Charles Darwin birth day. We expect to revive this as a core project.

During the previous event we organised a civilized jovial and intellectual dialogue with non-religionists and religionists of various sects. We debated religion, philosophy, and science. Participants debated evolutionary theory, standard Big Bang cosmology, origin of life, and the prospect of life on planet other than Earth and the possibilities of the afterlife.

Advocacy campaigns are necessary to influence policymakers and the public at large. As we find it difficult to access mainstream media, we must resort to social media. Nonetheless, CFI-Uganda must intensify fundraising efforts to have at least a one-hour Radio or Television program every week. CFI-Uganda hereby makes a formal appeal to link up with all people who want to make a positive rational contribution to improve the situation in Uganda.

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Collective Organization Remains Integral to Healthy Communities

Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

November 22, 2016

Communal feelings arise in general contexts. Those environments devoted to the needs and wants of the community, especially those devoted to the early and advanced ages, or the young and the old. In the modern world infused with technology, we continue to lose aspects of this.

Indeed, this does not impact everyone the same, or at the same rate. To build communities, especially in the modern world, it, as with all of human history, requires collective action.

Boys and young men are affected in a different way than the girls and young women. It has affected boys and young men throughout developed countries infused with modern electronics.

The digital technology crept into the nooks and crannies of modern society, into the homes of families, and into the rooms of children.

In the midst of the technological takeover of personal and professional lives, we lost aspects of those communal feelings based on simple time distribution. If we spend time on cellphones, computers, laptops, smart phones, and other devices, then the time is not spent in social interaction, in family dinners and events, and out in the world.

It is a complex problem worth exploring, but manageable within a narrowly defined set of factors. Collective action can be one person to another or a group, one group to another or a person. The core principles are cooperation, trust, mutual support, and solidarity. Communities flourish from these ingredients. In other words, healthy communities come from the trusts and cooperation between individuals and groups within communities in general.

The assistance in English education of a new neighbour struggling within Anglophone communication. The free tutoring in French for someone planning to travel to Quebec for a few months. The more established families providing relationship lessons and parenting guidance for younger couples and those with newborns. Communities pitching into provide adequate and nutritious meals for the single parents in the community.

Free plays and fundraisers for various community activities and children, or the coaching little league games, even someone to chalk the field lines for an upcoming soccer game. All of these individual and group contributions makes for collection action for healthy communities. For those that could only think in monetary terms, where things have a “capital” value, they have labelled this, within the literature, as social capital, akin to economic value with a communal qualitative valuation.

Social capital is the lifeblood of healthy communities. Without it, many would not flourish in their individual lives. To be able to take the time for that needed midnight or AM walk from a stressful evening, for the fun in the park on the weekend, for the Church, Synagogue, Temple, or

Mosque service in a clean place of worship, all of this comes together through pluralistic community building. Healthy communities built by and for the people of the community. Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society is part of this perennial tradition.

An Interview with Tim Moen, Libertarian Party of Canada Leader (Part One)

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

December 4, 2016

In terms of culture, family, geography, language, and religion/irreligion, what is your background?

I grew up on a farm in Northern Alberta about 80 km NE of Grande Prairie with my mom and dad and younger brother. My grandparents were Mennonite Brethren who were branded Kulaks and fled Stalinist Russia and settled in Southern Alberta around Lethbridge. They worked hard to build a life in Canada and I'm grateful for their legacy of hard work, responsibility and sense of connection to something greater than one's self.

Our family went to a non-denominational Church and I was a very involved and earnest evangelical Christian and truth seeker. I spent a year in Bible College immediately after high school studying theology with an eye towards serving as a pastor. That year left me with the impression that there were no real answers to be found and I realized I'd have a difficult time being a pastor selling any kind of certainty so I moved on to a career in Emergency Services.

I've spent over 22 years working in Emergency Services in various roles and still work today as a Firefighter/Paramedic. I love helping people and I consider my primary purpose in life to protect people from destructive forces whether its acute illness, fire, trauma, authoritarian force, or unclear thinking.

At the time, what images of religion and God were in mind for you?

My image of God at the time was one of an omnipotent, omniscient, mostly compassionate celestial dictator. A God that knew my every thought and desire and had a plan for me. Religion to me was the institution where one became educated in order to obtain salvation and more closely align one's beliefs with a very real spiritual realm.

What argument and evidence seemed the strongest in favour of the God of evangelical Christianity to you? This can include traditional arguments such as the Cosmological Argument (from contingency), *Kalam* Cosmological Argument (based on the beginning of the universe), Moral Argument (based upon moral values and duties), Teleological Argument (from fine-tuning), and the Ontological Argument (from the possibility of God's existence to His actuality).

The most compelling argument I've heard for a God is probably the Unmoved Mover argument. The way Tom Woods explained it here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJ2oY7nvM-M> is very compelling to me.

I'd always thought of the Unmoved Mover as a way of saying that there must be a beginning to the universe ergo God must have started it, which seems fairly easy to dismiss, but Woods

explains that it that this view of the Unmoved Mover is a straw man and further explains that bringing potentiality into actuality is an ongoing process and demands a God.

In other words; for reality to *continue* to exist requires a supreme being. If one then takes a layman's interpretation of the quantum realm and how strange and difficult to explain the substrate of reality becomes it becomes compelling to imagine a supreme being there.

It satisfies a deep psychological longing to explain reality in a way that is easier to understand and also a longing to never cease existing. In fairness I haven't thought very deeply on these issues for years so I haven't delved into the arguments for or against the Unmoved Mover in any depth.

Once you have a compelling argument for the existence of a supreme being you still have all your work ahead of you to argue for the "God of evangelical Christianity". There are as many interpretations and conceptions of God as there are believers so its difficult to know how one would go about proving the existence of a particular conception.

For example, what is the null hypothesis for a Young Earth Creationists argument that the Earth is only 10,000 years old? What about Evangelicals that believe in an old Earth and evolution?

Are we expected to believe that God ignored humanity for its first 100,000 years, essentially sentencing them to eternal torment, and then suddenly showed up with a bunch of rules and then sent his son to die and offered everyone in the past 2000 years another path to salvation that didn't exist before?

These types of questions are ones that vexed me in the past and essentially turned me into an anti-theist for a period of time, but I now think this is probably not helpful to try and demand a literal description of material reality from scripture in the same way it is not helpful to propagate the idea that the scripture is a literal description of material reality.

I have considerably softened my view of Christianity over the years. My mind started to change towards Christianity after reading the writing of Michael Dowd who is a Christian pastor and author of the book "Thank God for Evolution" has a completely different conception of evangelical Christianity that doesn't require belief in the sort of supernatural person in the sky I believed in as a child. It was further softened as I went through grad-school and read research on optimal mind states and started practicing some forms of meditation, based on peer reviewed research, that looked very similar to how I was taught to pray.

Expressing gratitude is peer reviewed and is also happens to be how many religious practices teach to begin prayer. So when I've attended religious ceremonies and church over the last few years I've come to view them through a different lens. There are likely good evolutionary reasons these institutions emerge and there are very good things going on here and they fill a deep human need. In summary, I think there are some compelling reasons to believe in a supreme being although I remain unconvinced. I think that Evangelical Christianity can comport with these compelling reasons to believe in a supreme being if it isn't taken as a literal description of material.

Women Can Wear Or Not Wear What They Want

Scott Douglas Jacobsen & Brittani Bumb

December 5, 2016

2016 has been a strange year. It has been a dangerous year, too - not only in climate change and the increased potential for nuclear catastrophe, but in the predictable human preoccupation with unhealthy nationalism, and xenophobia, and ethnic, religious, and clothing chauvinism.

Take, for instance, the common case of tacit expectations of women rather than men in terms of what to wear or not wear (American Civil Liberties Union, 2016). In particular, this has impacted American Muslims more because of targeted hate crimes.

Indeed, even today, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights expressed “deep concern about the rise in reported hate crimes cited in the FBI’s November 2016 report, “Hate Crime Statistics, 2015”. Since last month’s election, there have also been an alarming number of hate crimes and incidents reported.” (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2015).

With 2016 drawing to a close, many American Muslims are fearful and anxious as to how they will be treated or perceived by their non-Muslim counterparts in the coming years (American Civil Liberties Union, 2016).

No one fears the unknown more than Muslim Women, many of whom expressed their fears via Twitter shortly after Donald Trump won the Presidency of the United States. With anti-Muslim rhetoric being spouted on his campaign trail, it is no shock to witness these women’s uneasiness rise, especially considering many wear a rather prominent symbol of their religion and culture: Hijab.

Examining this relationship brings up a rather pointed question surrounding the Hijab and what kind of significance it yields to the women who wear it. Many in Western Society view the Hijab as a form of oppression to the women who wear it. In some instances, this is true. In many others, it is simply false.

To many Westerners, it symbolizes the inability to show one’s self off fully or express one’s self honestly out of fear. There’s some truth to that, but it is largely a stereotype and a myth. Whether that “fear” stems from the men who allegedly *en masse* force women to wear them or an over-zealous religion that deems walking outside without being covered from head to toe as “immodest,” are either of these two viewpoints entirely accurate?

It depends, and for the vast majority the answer would appear to be a resounding, “No.” Upon plumbing the depths of the ‘mystery’ that seems to surround the Hijab, we begin to realize that the relationship is more complex than what many view on the surface, and it is highly personal to each woman who adorns herself with one daily.

So, why is it that so many in public officials feel they have any right to tell women what they are permitted to wear or convince the public why going against the society-deemed standard should be viewed in a negative or fearful light?

It is rather astounding. It takes a brief honest look to observe some Western countries, by law, banning the Islamic garb for Muslim women (Sanghani, 2016; Rubin, 2016) and some Eastern countries forcing, by law or culture, Islamic garb for Muslim women.

One might think women's autonomy isn't the problem here, but, rather, the denial of fundamental rights, freedoms, privileges, and, therefore, restriction on autonomy. It is not as ridiculous, but is absurd to have France ban the Niqab, or the government tell women what they can't wear, as it is in some fundamentalist societies tell women what they can wear.

Men dress themselves; hence, women should too. It is a simple ethical precept advocated by the dominant Western religion, Christianity, and by the dominant Eastern religion, Islam: Golden Rule. Unless they wish to act as the Pharisees, as men can wear or not wear whatever they want; women should be able to as well. In short, women should be able to wear whatever they damn well please.

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An Interview with Tim Moen, Libertarian Party of Canada Leader (Part Two)

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

December 7, 2016

What were your early involvements in activism and politics prior to the Libertarian Party of Canada?

I started writing and expressing a political opinion about a decade ago. I didn't have much of a political opinion before and generally went along with TV pundits like Bill Maher and his 90's show "Politically Incorrect". About 10 years ago I went through a period of self-exploration where I examined my faith and realized I had not reasoned my way into this belief system.

I realized that if I had been born in another country my view about the nature of reality would be completely different and I'd be worshipping a completely different deity. My beliefs had been a product of my environment, my culture, my family more than anything else. This was very disconcerting and left me feeling like I couldn't trust that many beliefs and I started examining my world view through the lens of skeptic trying to parse out truth from falsehood.

Examining political beliefs through this lens caused me to realize that politics was essentially a set of implicit and explicit claims about the morality of using force. I started blogging, making videos and appearing on podcasts to promote clearer thinking and scepticism towards extraordinary claims about government and the use of force.

In 2009 the Province embarked on centralizing control of Emergency Medical Services taking control away from communities and local practitioners. My first foray into the political sphere was appearing as a panellist at a local town hall meeting trying to alert the public to what we could clearly see was going to hurt them.

In the fall of 2013 I wrote an article about my experience working with Neil Young on a film project about the Oil Sands and what I saw as some hypocrisy and unclear thinking. The article went viral and was noticed by some libertarian activists who started trying to convince me to run as a candidate for the Libertarian Party of Canada (LPoC) in the 2015 general election.

I was very resistant to that idea at first, I saw involvement in politics as implicitly supporting an idea I found immoral, but ultimately they convinced me that I'd be missing out on an opportunity to connect a lot of people to important ideas.

A few days after committing to run for office in 2015 my MP resigned and I was thrown into a by-election in early 2014 with zero clue about how to even file candidacy paperwork or run a campaign. I had a number of volunteers sign up to help me including a guy who moved across the country to volunteer for my campaign.

We threw a lot of things at the wall including a meme that said, “I want gay married couples to be able to protect their marijuana plants with guns.” That meme went viral and got me a lot of attention. I was interviewed on Fox, CNN and “This Hour Has 22 Minutes” made fun of me.

This wave of attention led to me being nominated for leader of the LPoC in May 2014. One of my goals as leader was to expand the party and get more people involved. We worked hard for a year and half and had our best result in 43 years in the past election.

Following election to the leadership, what were the feelings for you?

I felt very honoured to be given the trust of my fellow party members. This was followed by an immediate weight on my shoulders as I came to realize the fact that I carried a responsibility to be a competent caretaker and communicator of a message we all felt tremendous passion for.

You have moderate exposure in the media. What responsibilities come with this public recognition?

Whenever you start getting a bigger audience there is a temptation to tell people what they want to hear. This is particularly true when you are a politician who is in the business of trying to win popularity contests. This is why so many politicians seem like vacuous and soulless caricatures of what voters want rather than their authentic selves.

It is understandable, its really cool to be held in high esteem and have adoring fans who see you as the answer to all their problems and it really sucks being the villain that everybody hates and be seen as the anti-thesis to everything good.

I understood this when I agreed to get involved in politics and it was a real concern. I was really concerned about this toxic pull to bury my authentic self in exchange for popularity. In fact, I wear a replica of The Lord of the Rings ring of power to remind myself of this corrupting influence.

So with all that said the responsibility that comes with public recognition is to hold on to my humanity, my authentic self, to not portray myself as something I’m not. This is first and foremost a responsibility to my self, then my family and friends, and finally as a responsibility to the public.

Then there is also an incredible responsibility to my party and people who I speak on behalf of to present the message that is so important to all of us in the most genuine, authentic, and grounded way possible.

The by-product of speaking from an authentic, grounded place is that the message has much more integrity and is far more difficult to dismiss. Our message can seem shocking to some people and I think its important to be sympathetic and connected with listeners as I am delivering the message.

What great wisdom comes from The Lord of the Rings, besides insights into the potential corrupting nature of power, for you?

Power should only be entrusted to those who view it as a burden not as a tool to achieve some noble end. I think it also provides a path forward for fellowship and cooperation among dramatically different cultures.

In today's divisive political and cultural milieu, it offers a demonstration that different cultures can be against globalism or imperialism, the idea that a particular culture ought to be the dominant one, and that they can work together for the common goal of guarding against the desire to dominate while maintaining their own cultural identity.

It reveals that real leadership and fellowship emerges when courage is combined with a servant's heart.

Tankers Can Tank Cultures

Scott Douglas Jacobsen and Zachary R.W. Johnson

December 7, 2016

Indigenous populations throughout the world work within longstanding cultures, or remnants thereof. International agreements provide substantiation to preservation of their land, culture, religion, and language. In North America, terms and phrases can be “Native American” as well as “American Indian, Amerindian, Amerind, Indian, aboriginal American, or First Nation person” (Pauls, 2016). Two major documents and three United Nations bodies, in the international community, and two sections (at least) from the Canadian Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms hold substantial weight – and if not, then should - within the nation.

First, internationally, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), or UNDRIP, is guided by the UN Charter, which affirms the equality of indigenous peoples, affirms their contributions to global civilization, shares concern about the injustices against Indigenous peoples, recognizes the need for respect of Indigenous peoples (as with all peoples reflected in the UN Charter, too), acknowledges prior documents instantiating rights, expresses being convinced about the recognized rights of Indigenous peoples as fundamental to peaceful cooperation between Indigenous peoples and the State, and solemnly “proclaims the following United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a standard of achievement to be pursued in a spirit of partnership and mutual respect” (United Nations, 2007).

The declaration opens in this tone and reiterates this throughout itself. As well, another document emerges from the work of the International Labor Organization (ILO) from 1989. The International Labor Organization C169 – Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (1989) covers ‘land, recruitment and conditions of employment, vocational training, handicrafts and rural industries, social security and health, education and means of communication, contacts and co-operation across borders, administration, and general and final provisions’ (ILO, 1989). For the purpose of this article on tanker spills, the impacts of tanker spills connect with both the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) and International Labor Organization C169 – Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (1989) (United Nations, 2007; ILO, 1989).

In addition, an advisory body of the United Nations entitled the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII or PFII) reports to the United Nation Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with the first appointed president, Chief Ted Moses of the Grand Council of the Crees, from Canada (Division for Social Policy and Development of Indigenous Peoples, 2016). The UNPFII is one of three UN bodies. The others are the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2016a; United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2016b). These organizations work within the UN for Indigenous rights too.

Second, aside from the international community, for Canada, it was “in 1982 the federal government enshrined Aboriginal rights in Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution, and in

Section 25 of the Charter of Rights in Freedoms, the government further ensured that Charter rights cannot “abrogate or derogate” from Aboriginal rights” (Hanson, 2009a; Hanson, 2009b; Government of Canada, 1982a; Government of Canada, 1982b).¹ By implication, individuals and collectives can argue for the rights of Indigenous and tribal peoples, especially in relation to the health of the water needed for sustenance, either as the source of water or the life support system for food such as fish - or as part of a lifestyle including methods of fishing and culture around it (Parliament of Canada, 1996).

1 *Constitution Act* (1982) Section 25 states:

The guarantee in this Charter of certain rights and freedoms shall not be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from any aboriginal, treaty or other rights or freedoms that pertain to the aboriginal peoples of Canada including:

- (a) any rights or freedoms that have been recognized by the Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763; and*
- (b) any rights or freedoms that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired. (94)*

Marginal note: Other rights and freedoms not affected by Charter Government of Canada. (1982). *Constitution Act, 1982*. Retrieved from <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-15.html>.

It seems ‘part and parcel’ of self-determination. Throughout the world, tanker spills impact Indigenous communities more than nonindigenous communities. Those with the necessity to live by rivers and other waterways have both their food and water sources polluted with contaminants. These contaminants can be, and often are, health deteriorating, and more.

Transport Canada has reported on liabilities and compensation for victims to some degree. (Transport Canada, 2016). As catalogued by the Coastal First Nation Great Bear Initiative, the impacts range widely and could include:

A tanker spill would adversely impact the environment:

- ☐ Threats to endangered and rare species;
- ☐ Damage to or loss of habitats;
- ☐ Population declines, particularly in top predators and long-lived species; and
- ☐ And the transformation of natural landscapes.

A spill would also have the following impacts:

- ☐ Negative effects on human health, well-being, or quality of life;
- ☐ Shrinkage in the economy and unemployment;
- ☐ Detrimental changes in land and resource use by our communities; and
- ☐ Loss or serious damage to commercial species and resources. (Coastal First Nations, n.d.)

Further, this is not dead history; it is living memory, even right into the present. In light of a somewhat recent development in public opinion over the Trudeau governments dedication to campaign promises, specifically the protest of working class youth at the National Young Workers Summit in Ottawa and the lone wolf pumpkin seed protester in Hamilton, the Liberals do seem to be attempting to keep their election promise on pipelines. That being the selective nature which Prime Minister Trudeau has brought to the governments approval process for proposed pipelines.

A moratorium for tanker traffic off the British Columbian north coast could be seen as an indirect expression of the governments disapproval toward the controversial Northern Gateway Pipeline (Tunney, 2016). Though such a moratorium is likely to appease some environmental activists as well as locals against the pipeline, the real benefactors would be the Haida, Tsimshian, Haisla, Heiltsuk and other First Nations of the surrounding area (Kew, 2015; Goldi Productions Ltd., 2007). Not only will the coast on which Aboriginal people have lived for countless generations stay unviolated by a life threatening substance, they will have been spared the burden of cleaning and restoring the area to at best a small fraction of what it is today, let alone the unknown ramifications for future generations in the area.

Our province has seen a similar scenario play out in October of 2016 when a diesel barge sank in the Seaforth Channel off the coast of Bella Bella (Lindsay, 2016). The barge is operated by the American-based corporation Kirby Offshore Marine, self-titled “the nations [US] largest offshore tank barge fleet.” First responders to the outpouring of diesel into BC coastal waters were the First Nations themselves, specifically the Heiltsuk people, who haven’t the resources necessary to even attempt a mass clean-up effort. “On the West Coast, we want to involve Aboriginal coastal nations who want to be involved with the whole issue of marine safety. We also need to look at derelict vessels,” Transportation Minister Marc Garneau said.

Transportation Minister Garneau’s statement about his understanding of the risks involved with an even greater amount of tanker traffic off the British Columbian coast is less than reassuring in its lack of detail. The fact that the federal government is not already involving First Nations of the area is nearly disgraceful to Trudeau’s government and overly disrespectful to First Nations.

As for looking at “derelict vessels,” there should already be an ongoing practice of maintenance or the regular recycling of the materials for outdated vessels by the corporation which owns them. Not only provincial as a concern, it is national and international, especially based in the history of the documentations in the United Nations about things that should be respected: land, language, culture, religion, and people.

Some Pro-Life as Anti-Human Right

Scott Douglas Jacobsen and Phoebe Davies-Owen

December 8, 2016

Abortion remains contentious. Two vague positions dominate the discourse: pro-life/anti-choice and pro-choice/anti-life. The forward-slash indicating an “or” implies the respective opposition’s position implied view of them. That is, a pro-life position is seen as anti-choice; a pro-choice position is seen as anti-life, logically at least.

We could expound on a long, boring, and worn-out discussion on abortion and reproductive health alone. However, we will not; we will focus on human rights and international law focused on reproductive health, which emphasizes abortion for this brief discussion. We will not define pro-life or anti-choice as absolutes - too many abound. We will make the case for human rights.

As with Human Rights Watch (HRW) on abortion, HRW said, “...equitable access to safe abortion services is first and foremost a human right,” (Human Rights Watch, n.d.). That is, abortion equals a human right.

The Human Rights Commission of the United Nations affirmed abortion as a human right as well (Grimes, 2016; Flynn, 2016; Amnesty International, 2016). Abortion, as a service within reproductive rights and health, implies the on-the-ground impacts on *millions of women throughout the world*.

Continually, international human rights, and international women’s rights, connected to reproductive health and rights implies international law. Center for Reproductive Rights states:

In 2008, an estimated 86 million women had unintended pregnancies...Governments that prosecute and punish women who have had abortions penalize women for exercising their basic rights...International legal support for a woman’s right to safe and legal abortion are found in numerous international treaties...Laws that restrict abortion have the effect and purpose of preventing a woman from exercising any of her human rights or fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men...Laws that deny access to abortion, whatever their stated objectives, have the discriminatory purpose of both denigrating and undermining women’s capacity to make responsible decisions about their bodies and their lives... (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2011)

Where these are violated, the rights of women to safe and legal abortion, the international law is violated because the international rights are violated. Violations imply illegality; illegality implies its complement legality, and so legality implies laws, followed or violated. Pro-life positions, if defined by, premises in its argument on, restriction of women’s right to safe and legal abortion, equate to positions against human rights.

Some definitions of pro-life equate to anti-human right; some pro-life positions and actions stand in violation, in practice or theory, of international law. Pro-life positions seem dominated by conservative perspectives.

The nuances differ between those holding “pro-life” positions, whatever those happen to mean for them, and so ‘pro-life as anti-human right’ does not implicate all, even most, conservative (or other) positions on abortion. Most likely, some pro-life positions are anti-human right by the aforementioned reasons and ratiocination. Of course, sociological and economic factors count too.

Indeed, the rich countries, and wealthier women, can afford the reproductive health services, including abortion, more than the poor countries and women in poverty. Furthermore, lack of access to abortion associates with poverty for women as well (O’Hara, 2016).

Even so, it seems that, although the issue of abortion is contentious, women, and Western women in particular, are adamant in their refusal to be denied their right to terminate a pregnancy. The vast majority of the unsafe abortions occur in impecunious conditions, which remains the developing world (Cohen, 2009).

To illustrate this, in France, on the first of December, the French Assembly approved a motion that would criminalise websites that appeared neutral on the issue, but promoted an anti-abortion agenda and put pressure on women to terminate their pregnancies (Toor, 2016).

This has, inevitably, led to arguments on the right of freedom of expression, but the government sees that these groups are working in “a masked way,” deliberately trying to trick women (Chrisafis, 2016). Women have protested proposed restrictions on abortion in Poland (Jacobsen & Jackson, 2016). Others in Ohio in the United States (Ingles, 2016). Other women protested in London in solidarity with women in Ireland (The Socialist, 2016).

At the moment, the situation in Ireland is tenuous. In the republic, abortion is illegal and it carries a sentence of up to a life in prison - unless the pregnancy endangers the life of the mother.

But on Wednesday the thirtieth of November, the government agreed to compensate a woman for travelling to the UK to receive an abortion, the first incident of its kind. Amanda Mellet was offered £25,000 in compensation after being forced to travel to England in 2011 to receive an abortion after being told that her baby would not survive outside of the womb.

It is situations and individual narratives such as these that instigate serious reflection on women’s right for health and wellbeing, especially in the domain of reproductive services and health including abortion. In reaction to the restriction to “the first and foremost a human right” becomes the basis for outrage, letters, piecemeal reform attempts, even moderate to large protests or mass social movements at the extremes, the international stipulations state that this is such, not simply two writers or handfuls of individuals (Human Rights Watch, n.d.).

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What Can We Do About Suicide?

Scott Douglas Jacobsen and Nicola Young Jackson

December 10, 2016

So, what's the deal with suicide? Mental health continues to be a growing concern in the UK with the increase in suicides for men and the attempts for women with both populations having not equal, but different, problems (Mental Health Foundation, 2016a). Each suicide is a tragedy, ripping apart the lives of people around the victim.

For women, they attempt suicide much more than men (Good, 2016). For men, they attempt and complete suicide much more than women (Ibid.). These need to be discussed more in a calm, sober way. We can then work on solutions to these major health problems, as mental health and medical professionals work on them every day. An ill-functioning brain is a medical and healthcare issue as much as an individual, physical, and social issue.

Let's look a little deeper into who are the people that are choosing to take their own life. Around twice as many men than women take their own lives. Of those men, unemployed are 2 - 3 times more likely to take their own life. Research by Samaritans has found that men who have experienced social disconnection, relationship breakdown, and mid-life challenges are 10 times more likely to take their own life.

Mental health and illness reflect opposite sides of the output of a physical structure, the brain. All structures imply functions. There are genetic factors for the structure, and function, of an organ within a species. Also, there are individual differences within a species. The brain and its associated mental states are the same. There are environmental influences too. Those relate to mental health/illness. For much of our species (*Homo sapiens*) recent evolution, it was in favor of a life spent as a hunter-gatherer.

Modern environments come with associated problems in the lives of individual United Kingdom citizens. These count as risk factors. Many of the risk factors for suicide include:

- *drug and alcohol misuse*
- *history of trauma or abuse*
- *unemployment*
- *social isolation*
- *poverty*
- *poor social conditions*
- *imprisonment*
- *violence*
- *family breakdown.* (Mental Health Foundation, 2016b)

Suicidality, like all mental illnesses or symptoms, can be treated. They need to be identified, targeted, and treated in a compassionate and timely manner. For mental illness, there are some general preventatives. According to the *Mayo Clinic in Mental Illness: Prevention* (2015), some of the basics for mental illness prevention are as follows:

- ***Pay attention to warning signs.*** Work with your doctor or therapist to learn what might trigger your symptoms...
- ***Get routine medical care.*** Don't neglect checkups or skip visits to your health care provider, especially if you aren't feeling well...
- ***Get help when you need it.*** Mental health conditions can be harder to treat if you wait until symptoms get bad....
- ***Take good care of yourself.*** Sufficient sleep, healthy eating and regular physical activity are important. (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2015)

No certain means exist to buffer against mental illness, and indeed suicidality, completely, but lifestyle interventions can be effective in personal life. And if things become too difficult, a focus on immediate contact with a healthcare provider is an important step for appropriate professional assistance where lifestyle practices fail.

But what are some of the lifestyle practices? First, you can get up. Sedentary lifestyles decrease overall physical strength, endurance, and flexibility. Active lifestyles increase overall strength, endurance, and flexibility.

Second, you can get more sleep. Sleep is an important part of health in addition to mental health (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2016). You can take into account a consistent sleep schedule and relaxing prior to bed for a good night sleep. There are some sleep aids accessible over-the-counter. Even so, they should not be used in the long-term. In summary, suicide is a multifactorial condition.

Gender, age, culture, lifestyle, diet and what is happening in a person's life, are all factors that can contribute to such a devastating result. It is important to be aware of potential causes, signs and symptoms. Keep an eye on people around you. Be there for friends, family, neighbours, colleagues, and acquaintances. It is the duty of us all, to be there when others are at risk.

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An Introduction to the Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society

Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society: Scott Douglas Jacobsen and Felix Kongyuy
December 12, 2016

Scott

The Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society (BIES) is a registered non-profit society. It has a vision of facilitation of integration founded on accountability, compassion, equality, resilience, and trust for the disempowered across all community, cultural, and ethnic lines.

The BIES mission aims to empower families and individuals. We want to be a nexus for multiculturalism and partnerships with discrimination based on age, political affiliation, race, or religion.

Our values follow the REACH formula: Respect, Empathy, Accountability, Commitment, and Honour. Respect with equal treatment and sensitivity for culture in all services. Empathy for all individuals without regard for ability or means.

Accountability tied to honesty and openness for resource management for clients and stakeholders. Commitment to professional standards in provision of services for those in need. Honour via the nobility of the Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society.

We offer numerous services and programs within the vision, mission, and values statements of the organization. In Canada, whether native speakers of English (Anglophone), French (Francophone), or other native languages, we offer the opportunities and tools for inclusion of the vulnerable members of these populations.

Some supports from the BIES are the work experience, confidence and self esteem building, reduction of culture shock and isolation, and the encouragement of entrepreneurship and volunteerism.

These exist alongside themed activities such as dialogues, relationship building for families, healthful lifestyle, and community spirit, and the promotion of arts, communication, culture, education, health, poverty reduction, and technology.

The content and purpose for the activities and events within the vision, mission, and values comes from the strategy. It is an inclusive strategy with an emphasis on the aforementioned activities, events, and promotions.

Of course, the disempowered, as stated at the outset, are the most vulnerable, which tend to be the young, the old, and minorities. Our bilingual programs cater to these population because of an identified need by Felix and others. We target those populations to assist them.

British Columbia, as one of the wealthiest and well-off places in the world (and, therefore, one of the most in human history), should have few of these sub-populations living in poor conditions.

Within that spirit, we would hope to emphasize BIES and its role in the facilitation of integration of those communities for harmony and greater wellbeing of individuals, families, and the community as a whole.

Felix

Did you know that in Surrey and Greater Vancouver?

As of 2010, the child poverty rate in the Greater Vancouver region was 37.8% and 43.8% among children of recent immigrants (those who immigrated during the 2006-2011 period). Numerous studies show the benefits of physical activity beyond maintaining a healthy weight. Physical activity is linked with positive mental well-being, increased academic performance, improved confidence and self-esteem, and the prevention of future health problems.

Do you ever wonder where the money comes from to support low income children, refugees, and newcomers in Surrey and Greater Vancouver?

It doesn't come from the government or from city funds. Most comes from organizations like Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society (Charity Number, BN: 801100686RR0001) and individuals like you.

When we're asked, "Why we should care about what happens in Surrey and Greater Vancouver?" I think about Bang, who is a program participant. When Bang first came to our program, he couldn't communicate with other children or enjoy our sports activities because he always wanted to play his computer games.

Oftentimes, Bang will run away from our coaches. He never said a word to anyone. After four sessions, our coaches engaged him during our circle time to tell a story about his video games. As he started speaking, they asked him during the next game if he would like to become the leader.

He agreed. Since then, he felt comfortable, made friends, and asked to help other children who came to the program. As the coaches discovered his passion for leading, he was nominated to lead a group of children during circle time for a week.

Because of his interest and compassion, we were able to provide Bang with a t-shirt, soccer shoe, water bottle, and a soccer ball to take home. Since that day, his parents said he plays soccer after school regularly, studies effectively, and, more important, stays away from video games.

BIES has the goal to reach more than 200 low income children next year in Surrey through our Inclusive Sports program, and investing in vulnerable and low income children. Those investments are like investing in every child in Surrey.

This year, we have the ambitious goal of increasing our programs to 3 different communities in Greater Vancouver. Please consider helping give children and refugees a brighter future with a special gift of \$50 or more. The donation is tax deductible. Without people like you, their lives would be a nightmare.

P.S. Thanks for making the dream of children, youths and families become a reality. All cash donations of \$25 dollars or more will be receive a tax receipt from us. Please, give me a call at 604-585-6775, or visit www.baobabinclusive.ca, if you need more information about our mission and work.

Collective Organization Remains Integral to Healthy Communities

Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

December 12, 2016

Communal feelings arise in general contexts. Those environments devoted to the needs and wants of the community, especially those devoted to the early and advanced ages, or the young and the old. In the modern world infused with technology, we continue to lose aspects of this.

Indeed, this does not impact everyone the same, or at the same rate. To build communities, especially in the modern world, it, as with all of human history, requires collective action. Boys and young men are affected in a different way than the girls and young women. It has affected boys and young men throughout developed countries infused with modern electronics. The digital technology crept into the nooks and crannies of modern society, into the homes of families, and into the rooms of children.

In the midst of the technological takeover of personal and professional lives, we lost aspects of those communal feelings based on simple time distribution. If we spend time on cellphones, computers, laptops, smart phones, and other devices, then the time is not spent in social interaction, in family dinners and events, and out in the world. It is a complex problem worth exploring, but manageable within a narrowly defined set of factors. Collective action can be one person to another or a group, one group to another or a person. The core principles are cooperation, trust, mutual support, and solidarity. Communities flourish from these ingredients. In other words, healthy communities come from the trusts and cooperation between individuals and groups within communities in general.

The assistance in English education of a new neighbour struggling within Anglophone communication. The free tutoring in French for someone planning to travel to Quebec for a few months. The more established families providing relationship lessons and parenting guidance for younger couples and those with newborns. Communities pitching into provide adequate and nutritious meals for the single parents in the community.

Free plays and fundraisers for various community activities and children, or the coaching little league games, even someone to chalk the field lines for an upcoming soccer game. All of these individual and group contributions makes for collection action for healthy communities. For those that could only think in monetary terms, where things have a “capital” value, they have labelled this, within the literature, as social capital, akin to economic value with a communal qualitative valuation.

Social capital is the lifeblood of healthy communities. Without it, many would not flourish in their individual lives. To be able to take the time for that needed midnight or AM walk from a stressful evening, for the fun in the park on the weekend, for the Church, Synagogue, Temple, or Mosque service in a clean place of worship, all of this comes together through pluralistic community building. Healthy communities built by and for the people of the community. Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society is part of this perennial tradition.

Language Barriers in an International Fashion Market with English as the Main Language

Guadalupe Garcia Jerez and Scott Douglas Jacobsen

December 26, 2016

The *lingua franca* of fashion is English. But what about speakers of other languages? There can be difficulties for them. What does this mean for fashion world, for them?

Modern fashion is synonymous with elegance. Paris is the new cradle of good taste and refinement. From the beginning, the ability to speak French was synonymous with modern fashion. But what has changed so far, especially with the new obstacles is communication in fashion?

Globalization governs the production system. It affects human interactions, means of communication. It influences lifestyles, promotes cultural exchanges, language too, e.g. “lol” for “laugh out loud.” In this, it becomes necessary to choose a universal language. A *lingua franca* that favors communication between people from one end of the world to the other.

We know most prevalent languages at the international level are: Chinese Mandarin (increasingly demanded), English, and Spanish. Where English is the language most requested by companies, with 89.5% over any other language, it is considered as the language of business *par excellence*. Equally in fashion, French was the main language; nowadays, it is considered a diplomatic language, which is in contradistinction to English. English is the new universal language.

Currently, in an international context, the main obstacle in fashion for foreigners is lack of proficiency in English, which implies limitations in fluent communication. That is, one being able to speak clearly without being limited by their level of English, or for doing a poor translation of their mother language.

It may lead to misinterpretations in meaning. That is why in many cases the essence of communication is lost and can be seen as, frankly, limited when it comes to making purchases, sales, creating and maintaining new contacts, and conducting good business negotiations. On the other hand, when talking about certain more technical topics in which your vocabulary limits you considerably, the sense of the message you want to transmit is sometimes lost, or at least very limited.

However, in the field of fashion, it is not as problematic as it could be in other fields, since the visual support here is very important, which considerably helps the understanding, where in many cases as the saying goes: *‘an image is worth more than a thousand words.’*

A Brief Overview of Humanism for Ghana - Rights, Frameworks, Culture, Exemplars, and Modernity

Scott Douglas Jacobsen and Roslyn Mould

February 3, 2017

Rights

International women's rights are, as such, global because there are no boundaries to the high ideals universally agreed to, at least on paper and stipulated in international declaration, by humanity at large. Violations in rural villages and urban metropolises are no different at root. Violations are violations.

Violations of women's rights are violations of women's rights regardless of race, creed, color, religion or irreligion, or political ideology. Humanism, as a democratic and rights-based life stance, overlaps with these stipulations. Any humanism, defined properly, will incorporate them into life as well as possible.

Same with Ghana. Ghanaian women deserve equal rights and status with men. All women deserve rights and privileges recognized at the international level in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Human rights contain women's rights. Women's rights remain distinct. In that, human rights and women's rights remain distinct and substantially overlapping domains of stipulated rights in international documents from the United Nations. Let's look at some of the examples.

Frameworks

United Nations Women (UN Women) follows numerous documents for guidance on the rights of women. UN Women is the organization of the United Nations devoted to women and girls. It developed from the international need of the implementation of international women's rights for women's advocacy, emancipation, and empowerment, and one can argue facilitated by the feminist ideological stances of the previous Secretary-General of the UN, Ban Ki-Moon. "I am proud to call myself a feminist," Mr. Ki-Moon said.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA), UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (2000), and some of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (and some of the previous Millennium Development Goals or MDGs, 2000 to 2015) hold import within the international context of the United Nations.

CEDAW remains devoted to the all UN Women programmes with over 185 countries party to the convention, which means in general agreement about it. The Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (PFA) was adopted in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women to enhance government commitments to women's rights, where Member States of the UN decided to reaffirm and strengthen for the global review process that happens every 5 years.

This was reiterated by Member States of the UN at the review in 2005, 2010, and 2015. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (2000) had recognition of the ways women are affected by war in disproportionately compared to men. There was a reaffirmation within the document to increase women's role in the decision-making processes for conflict prevention and resolution.

Following the partial fulfillment/non-fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals by the international community (2000 to 2015), the Sustainable Development Goals were made active and effective for the Member States that remain part of them, which means most or all of them.

There are 17 new ones for the agenda with over 169 targets for the elimination of poverty in addition to combat inequalities with a distinct focus on prosperity promotion connected to the protection of the environment. Of course, international women's rights links to Ghana as well. The Gender Inequality Index (GII) ranks Ghana 140th in the world in terms of gender inequality.

That's low. This has implications for the economy, the political system, and women's status with the country. Numerous sub-factorial rankings within the GII represent these facts such as the relative high maternal mortality rate alone at 380 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, and the mean expected educational years for women at 5.6 years and men at 7.9.

These remain distinct disparities based on the societal disadvantage of women in terms of livelihood and life prospects. There have been inroads made with respect to Ghanaian gender equality and international women's rights, but most societies seem to have longstanding cultures. Ghana has one, too.

Culture

Culture influences the implementation of women's rights in Ghana too. In that, the perception of a woman's proper place in society. The concept of the ideal female. The status of women tends to relate to the marital, religious, and parental status of the woman. For marital status, if the woman is not married to a man, and if she does have this officiated within a traditional parental and religious authoritative context, then the woman loses status within the perception of the community.

For religious status, if the woman is irreligious or of a discriminated against religious status, and if tied to the marital status, then the woman will be discriminated against in the concept of an ideal female. That is, a woman requires the legitimation of religious authority in both personal and professional life including marriage.

For the parental status of the women, if a woman does not bear children and raise them, and if the woman does not have a husband, and if a family for the woman is not in a religious context, then the woman loses respect and experiences pressure from the community to have children, become religious, and get a husband. The pressures and discrimination can be persistent, and at times painful, in daily life.

Exemplars

The major levers of power come from elected representatives. Votes are cast. The will of the people is put to the test. The societal preferences are then seen in mass. The sex disparity is readily foreseeable with the 140th placement in the GII, for instance. Ergo, the sex disparity in politics can, to some extent, be an indication of gender equality. First woman running mate, Brigitte Dzogbenuku, was the running mate for the People's Patriotic Party (PPP). Also, another woman, Charlotte Osei, was the first woman selected as Chair for the electoral commission of Ghana.

She has been praised. People worried about declaring the man that selected her for president. People were happy with the way the election went. Ghana has never had a civil war. Conspiracy theories abounded about the election. The winner was obvious. There were rumors about the electoral website being hacked, but there is substantive evidence. The winner was the first woman flagbearer and founder of her party, NDP, and former first lady, Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings.

Modernity

The clash between modernity and fundamentalist religion within the country is something important to humanists in the region because human preaches to the human rights and scientific worldview-oriented. It is a small sector of the Ghanaian population, but something deeply important for the maintenance of the global humanist movement within the localized context of Ghana.

The north of the country is mostly Muslim, but demographics are changing because people are seeing the Christian God as more 'right' than the Muslim God. The northern region in Ghana is one of the poorest areas. The Upper East, the Upper West, and the Northern region make the Northern part of Ghana. The Northern region is the biggest region in size in Ghana and is one of the least dense in population.

Each region has a regional capital. The biggest one is Accra. Basically, people wake up and can start a church, even on the side of the street. People don't necessarily need to go to seminary or theological schools and train to become a priest, pastor, minister, and so on. The reason given is that the "Holy Spirit" works in mysterious ways. You do not have to be anybody. The new priests aren't necessarily educated, or even need to speak English. This is dangerous.

The recently most popular is Daniel Obinim. He has been arrested. He is in custody because, finally, he had a church of hundreds of people, where he claimed to be an angel. He would do anything to stop anybody. But he was known to be originally selling yogurts on the street. Now, he wears colorful suits and has lots of money.

There were viral videos of him. He would say you're going to get rich later, or you'll die soon. Well if you get rich, then you give him money; if you think you'll die soon, then you give him

money. And if you don't get rich, then no problem, just another ignored miss. Jon Benjamin is the only British ambassador in Ghana. He is very Ghanaian, though. The main point is people really believe this stuff.

In the light of individuals believing the fundamentalist creeds, and with the cultural environment providing the possibility to start from the street, there seems to be the greater need for a humanist movement in Ghana, and external support from countries with more established humanist movements because of high levels of religiosity, subsequent discrimination against the secular, and difficulties faced in family life, employment, and political life for humanist in Ghana.

As this remains true for the general humanist Ghanaian community, it remains even more so for women, so women's rights and human rights are tied together with humanism in a Ghanaian context. Whether from a humanist, human rights, or women's rights perspective, we should share the common goals.

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