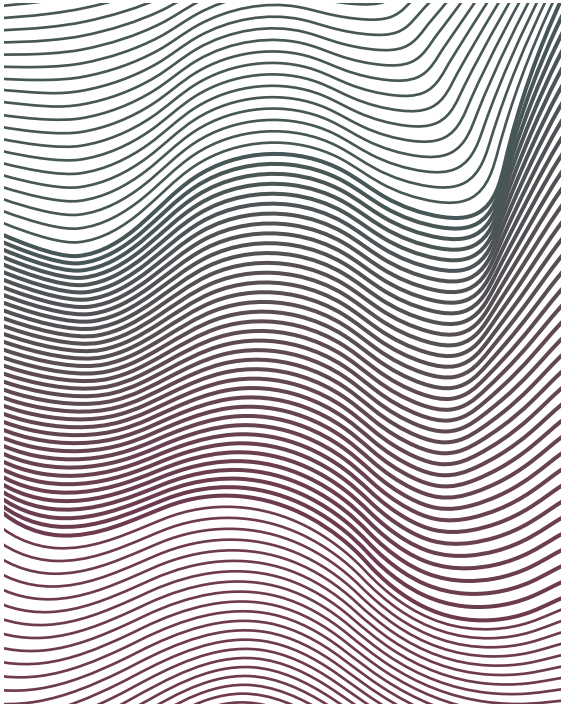


How to Disagree

Guidebook of Deradicalisation



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Introduction

The conduct of this research was driven from my positional confusion. It thrived from my personal insecurity of where do I stand in the world, and the fear of where do we, citizens' as a whole, head from here.

¹ The term “citizens” here refers to the group that “frames the appeals, in terms of principle, which everyone can affirm, instead of the certification granted administratively and politically.” Mark Lilla, “Introduction: The Abdication,” in *The Once and Future Liberal: After Identity Politics* (New York: HarperCollins, 2017).

If we look closely, all politics are identity politics. Demands from different groups in society, whether racial minority, working class, or gender community, fuel the political domain. Therefore, to critique “identity politics” itself is inaccurate. That is not to say that identity politics, despite its misnaming, is invincible because it indeed has its flaws, for example, the overextending and twisted misuse. And in practice, it appears with the face of “callout culture”, which does more harm than benefit in the current state, whether deliberately or accidentally.

After the description of the counterproductive effects, a handy manual would be proposed on how to tackle the situation under such conditions: from the attitude towards differences among ourselves to a practical

tactic named “call-in” strategy.

This is the guidebook for those who feel lost in these social justice movements of progression and need some supportive alliance to keep on moving ahead.

Chapter 0

In meteorology, a typhoon is a rotating system that sucks in the clouds around the area and creates thunderstorms wherever it reaches. It originates from tropical and subtropical waters and potentially damages the coastal regions. There are a few essential requirements to form a typhoon: warm temperature, a certain level of humidity, atmospheric instability, and most importantly, vertical convection of different flows that moved from bottom up and top down. A typhoon brings strong winds, large waves, torrential rains, and floods throughout its trajectory, except its very centre. The centre, which is called “the eye”, is peaceful, windless, and literally “the calm before the storm”.

Social justice movements, just as the nature of typhoon’s distinctive flows meeting each other, starts from divergent priorities, demands, or simply ideologies between different groups in the same society. It’s the natural process on the path to reaching better coexistence.

In the eye of the typhoon is where I stand; and to be even more specific, I have my back against the typhoon wall. It's the seemingly tranquil area before the turbulence reaches; it's where I observe the surroundings but expect to be affected, if not subconsciously already. Nevertheless, this is not to say that social justice movements exclusively create destruction, even though some might disagree, but that they generate beneficial and necessary disturbance in society as a whole on moving towards a more considerate and conscious environment. And to create change in an already set habitat, drastic measures are organically required.

I used to be a proud (and hypocritical) observer standing outside of the typhoon and believe in the prime importance of impartiality, only to realise that observation itself is fundamentally biased. I do not consider myself an activist since the word itself carries so much weight and I lack the courage to own it up. But activism comes with diversity. Historically, activism has been dominantly a symbol of loudness. In Collins Dictionary, synonyms of "activism" are action, force, and exertion; for "activist", it even goes as far as militant and warrior. However, the credits of "quiet activist" shouldn't be diminished either. To take action doesn't mean to use merely one tactic; more so, the more varied the tactics the better.

I peeked in the typhoon and I see some wrongdoings that are eclipsing the good intention.

Chapter 1

In Name of Diversity

“Solidarity does not assume that our struggles are the same struggles, or that our pain is the same pain, or that our hope is for the same future. Solidarity involves commitment, and work, as well as the recognition that even if we do not have the same feelings, or the same lives, or the same bodies, we do live on common ground.”

- Sara Ahmed²

Communities are anything but harmonious; it is precisely the dissent that shapes a community. Just as a democracy is maintained by the constant interplay of criticism and conflict between the ruling and the opposition, a community displays cohesion through internal tension, clashes, and debates. While consensus leads to homogenisation and stability, it is the strain among tastes, styles, subcultures, political affiliations, religious convictions, and social/ethnic groups, etc. that are kept alive in the common. Cohesion then is not defined by the consensus, but the will to enter into conflict with each other.

² Sara Ahmed, “Feminist Attachments,” in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).

The matter is the attitude on how to handle the disagreements between one another.³

³ Pascal Gielen and Thijs Lijster, "Culture: The Substructure for a European Common" in *No Culture, No Europe: On the Foundation of Politics*, ed. Pascal Gielen (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2015).

The Tendency Lived-reality Politics

The modern concept of the term “identity politics” was formulated and coined by Combahee River Collective in the 1977 Statement. Combahee River Collective was a collective of Black feminists that was involved in the process of defining and clarifying politics while actively committing themselves to the struggles against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression. In the statement, Combahee River Collective framed the necessity of emphasising one’s experience in the core of political analysis and place the root of the politics in one’s particular identity:⁴

“This focusing upon our own oppression is embodied in the concept of identity politics. We believe that most profound and potentially most radical politics come directly out of our own identity, as opposed to working to end somebody else’s oppression.”⁵

The usage and understanding of identity politics have certainly changed and been adopted differently from its origin throughout the social justice movements in

⁴ Asad Haide, “Identity Politics,” in *Mistaken Identity: Race and Class in the Age of Trump* (London: Verso, 2018).

⁵ Combahee River Collective, “The Combahee River Collective Statement,” April, 1977.

history. Whether interpreted as “not being a certain race, ethnicity, or gender, it becomes an invitation to chastise, castigate, and/or dismiss anyone who doesn’t have any of those characteristics” or “unless suffering from a particular kind of oppression, one has no role in the struggle against it and the emphasis on the experience seems like the main certification to fight that particular oppression.”⁶ In a recent interview, Barbara Smith, co-founder of Combahee River Collective, clarified the timely context and the usage of the term:

“What we were saying is that we have a right as people who are not just female, who are not just working class, or workers - that we are people who embody all of these identities, and we have a right to build and define political theory and practice based upon that reality. [...] We didn’t mean that if you’re not the same as us, you’re nothing. We were not saying that we didn’t care about anybody who wasn’t exactly like us. [...] But as I have explained, the reason we used the term ‘identity politics’ is that we were asserting at a time when Black women had no voice.”⁷

No matter how the term has been misused, misplaced, and misunderstood, what is certain is its position in the centre of controversy for decades, whether in the left/right-wing, liberal/conservative, or in-between discourses. Along with the development and interpretations, some problematic phenomena emerged.

Even though I stand by the fact that much of the oppression and injustice is related to whether gender, race, class, etc. and support the identity-oriented cohesion that comes along, the term identity politics isn’t accurate in today’s politics. All politics, fundamentally, are identity politics. If we associate politics with collective decision-making, it is unavoidable to define the individuals’ identity regarding who is inside of the community’s concern and under what terms.⁸ Moreover, the implication of “identity” in the term is that only groups of specific

⁶ Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor mentioned these interpretations in an interview with Barbara Smith on clarifying the content of the Combahee River Collective Statement. Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, ed. “Barbara Smith,” in *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2017).

⁷ Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, ed. “Barbara Smith,” in *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2017).

⁸ Mathew Yglesias, “All politics is identity politics,” Vox, June 5, 2020, <https://www.vox.com/2015/1/29/7945119/all-politics-is-identity-politics>.

certification, for example, women, black, LGBT, could own up the name. This implication of highlighting could also lead to reinforcing the current absurdity of perceiving “white male” as the standard default due to the emphasis on differentiation.

Another reason for not using the term “identity politics” is that identity itself not only causes consequences but itself is the consequence. Identity is the demand made by power - the guidelines for “tell us who you are so we can tell you what you can do”. By complying with that demand, meaning “dancing with the devil”, we fall into, instead of dismantling, the trap of power structure voluntarily. To critique “identity politics” as such is to respond to the oppressive demand that identity itself creates.⁹

Putting aside the misleading rhetoric, for the fluency of reading, I will refer to the so-called identity politics as “lived-reality politics” in the rest of the text.

The trouble with lived-reality politics lies on the modern tendency of cementing individualism; instead of collaboration, it searches for exclusion among the self-defined¹⁰ groups. In the massive discussion and criticism of lived-reality politics, Mark Lilla, a self-described liberal professor of political science at Columbia University, elaborates the problem in detail in the book *The Once and Future Liberal: After Identity Politics*.

There are two phases of lived-reality politics developed in the Democratic side under the United States context, according to Lilla. The first phase might not comprehensively reflect the global scale of social justice movements since it was much rooted in the U.S. and its background of the awakening of civic moments. The second phase, however, could be served as a reflection for Europe and many other areas in the world.

It began in the 1980s when social movements consisting of various groups demanded their rights. The agenda during that time was equality as citizens,

⁹ Madhavi Menon, “Introduction,” in *Indifference to Difference: On Queer Universalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

¹⁰ “Self-defined” here refers to the self-defined identity instead of the social-constructed and social-implicated one.

meaning shared citizenship because “we are the same as you but we are not being recognised with equal rights and equal protection.” Then a shift of that agenda turned to expressing and emphasising the divergence between “me and you” - difference was introduced in the vocabulary and accusatory elements were embodied in the language. The claims focused on the base of personal position and transformed into picketing on the ones that don't belong within the self-defined groups. This phenomenon led to a paradox that wasn't able to gain popularity democratically in the political field and the society in general.

To put extra attention on minorities seems the reasonable decision since they are most likely to be overlooked. However, in a democratic society and its flawed reality, to meaningfully defend and support minorities in a practical way is to win elections and gain political power. To reach that, appeals and persuasions for recognition from outside the self-defined groups cannot be stressed on merely the differences but the shared elements. Just as coalition governments, social groups that seek for significant influence, whether politically or socially, need to involve the bigger crowd to build alliance. Lived-reality politics limits itself in that respect. It defines its inner circle and excludes the outer one and consequently falls into a paradox under the mechanism of the current democratic structure.

A linguistic impact of lived-reality politics that defused from education to the public was displayed by Lilla through an example:

“Over the past decade a new, and very revealing, locution has drifted from our universities into the media mainstream: *Speaking as an X...* This is not an anodyne phrase. It tells the listener that I am speaking from a privileged position on this matter. (One never says, *Speaking as a gay Asian, I feel incompetent to judge this matter.*) It sets up a wall against questions, which by definition come from a *non-X perspective*. And it turns the

encounter into a power relation: the winner of the argument will be whoever has invoked the morally superior identity and expressed the most outrage at being questioned.”¹¹

¹¹ Mark Lilla, “II: Pseudo-Politics,” in *The Once and Future Liberal: After Identity Politics* (New York: HarperCollins, 2017).

In short, the message in the air at the moment is about the understanding and affirmation of the self-identity and not how to engage with the rest of the world. Besides, the more the differences are emphasised, the less likely people circled out will feel outraged about the mistreatment.

Nevertheless, there’s hope.

To invite a crowd, who is not as involved, in engaging in social justice movements, here are some directions to consider. In the short term, the image of welcoming yet flawed, inclusive yet imperfect should be established. Borrowing the words of Maurice Moe Mitchell documented by adrienne maree brown: “We have to have a low bar for entry and a high standard for conduct.” In the mid term, movements should prioritise the capacity and skill of receiving newcomers and the means of how to sustain the gluing agency of one another, including the collective visions, values, and purposes. In the long term, and the key to maintenance, it’s to specify the harm and intentions, accept adequate apologies and consequences, build trustworthy boundaries and reliable healing resources.¹²

¹² adrienne maree brown, “Introduction,” in *We Will Not Cancel Us: And Other Dreams of Transformative Justice* (Chico: AK Press, 2020).

**Chapter 1:
In Name of
Diversity**

The Approach Callout Culture

“For the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.”

– Audre Lorde¹³

¹³ Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (New York: Ten Speed Press, 1984).

Even though callout culture is often considered equivalent to cancel culture, the latter is closer to be the consequence of the former. Here is a holistic definition of cancellation: “an attack on someone’s employment and reputation by a determined collective of critics, based on an opinion or an action that is alleged to be disgraceful and disqualifying.”¹⁴ Cancel culture, as damaging as it appears, is not the real problem. The root of it, the callout, is where attention is needed. Furthermore, for the sake of clarification, disapproval of callout culture is no near disapproval of callout action. There are exceptions that callout as final deed are indeed necessary, which will be addressed later on.

¹⁴ Ross Douthat, “10 Theses about Cancel Culture: What We Talk about When We Talk about ‘Cancellation,’” *The New York Times*, July 14, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/14/opinion/cancel-culture-.html>.

The action of calling out is no stranger in the history of social justice movements. It might have had different names but it attracted the same controversy as today.¹⁵ The callout culture that has taken over the internet and accordingly the real life is mostly said to reach its peak in the wake of the #MeToo movement in 2017. In the context of #MeToo, calling out was used as a strong tool for holding powerful people accountable on social media.¹⁶

Callout culture is the tendency among progressives, radicals, activists, and community organisers to publicly name instances or patterns of oppressive behaviour and language used by others. It's usually directed at people whose statements and actions are said to be sexist, racist, ableist, or other sorts of discrimination.¹⁷ Note that it tends to address the person and not the incident itself.

The features of callout culture are clearly laid out into 7 characters by Natalie Wynn, a former PhD student of philosophy who is currently running a social-philosophical Youtube channel:

- / Presumption of guilt: “believe the victim” is put before the facts in contrast to “presumption of innocence”
- / Abstraction: the lack of detailed narrative which leads to the incapacity of verification and challenge
- / Essentialism: criticism of a person's action escalates to criticism of a person's authenticity
- / Pseudo-moralism: genuine motivation in disguise of moral integrity or intellectual rigour
- / Unforgiveability: all apologies are considered insincere and manipulated; to not apologise implies dodging the accountability
- / Contamination of others: guilt by association
- / Dualism: binary thinking of either good or evil, in or out, etc.¹⁸

As a Taiwanese with a certain and broad understanding of how the Chinese government runs its country with fear, I can't help to notice the

¹⁵ Joreen, “Trashing: The Dark Side of Sisterhood,” *Ms.*, April, 1976, <https://www.jofreeman.com/joreen/trashing.htm>.

¹⁶ “Cancel Culture Part One: The History,” Pound & Grain, August 18, 2020, <https://poundandgrain.com/blog/cancel-culture-part-one-the-history/>.

¹⁷ Asam Ahmad, “A Note on Call-out Culture,” Briarpatch Magazine, March 2, 2015, <https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/a-note-on-call-out-culture>.

¹⁸ ContraPoints, “Canceling | ContraPoints,” January 2, 2021, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjMPJVMxV8&t=2656s>.

resemblance between the characters of the two. First and foremost, vagueness in the Chinese law and regulations are left intentionally so it could be interpreted in favour of the government in any case. A person's authenticity is related to the action or language when it comes to political stands especially in the Chinese entertainment field, which is closely monitored by the government. Criminal accusations are frequently the disguise of political ones. Once labelled as dissent, it's almost impossible to regain social credit anymore.¹⁹ As for contamination, even though it's been executed much more subtle now, there's this ancient saying of “株連九族 [implication of nine generations]”, which in modern times it's named as 連坐法 [collective punishment].

I might picture a too destructive image of the consequences of callout culture, but it is to reflect the potential danger of how the online and offline environment could become if we are not aware of these actions. The Chinese method of governing with fear is the climate haunting the current social movements whether taken place on the internet or as simple as public speaking. Constructed with the trepidation of accidentally making a wrong action, this is not an appealing direction to move forwards.

The complication of callout culture is that it appears to originate from using the social justice movement as personal therapy; therapy for not only those oppressed but those that hold the guilt of the non-oppressed for their immutable characteristics.²⁰ Social justice movements, except for their ultimate goal of eliminating injustice, could be seen as a sanctuary, where experiences of all are met with centred and grounded invitation to grow. It's a sanctuary where achievements mean not only mass but also intimate healing, instead of measurement of one's loss and pattern of harm; where trust and honesty of improvement are valued and giving/receiving apologies are welcomed; where disagreements are normality and changing the minds are acceptable.²¹

As for the realistic downsides of callout culture, first

¹⁹ The Social Credit system was introduced by the Chinese Communist Party in 2014. It rates its citizens based on a range of behaviours from shopping habits to online speech. According to Human Rights Watch, people's "trustworthiness", which is assessed by the government, determines their access to desirable social goods, such as the right to live in an attractive city, getting government jobs, send one's children to a private school, or travel by plane or high-speed train. Those with low scores will face obstacles in almost every aspect of daily life and consequently find difficulty getting back to their feet in the Chinese society.

²⁰ Dan Harris, "#316: How to Call People in (Instead of Calling Them out) | Loretta Ross," Ten Percent Happier with Dan Harris, January 18, 2021, Podcast audio, <https://open.spotify.com/episode/67Nx8eEatlkPSFhdAEsh eC?si=3lpqL11SgyF1jtUE7ZRVQ>.

²¹ adrienne maree brown, "Introduction," in *We Will Not Cancel Us: And Other Dreams of Transformative Justice* (Chico: AK Press, 2020).

and foremost is the pressure of walking on eggshells; then comes the performative and the curating of actions and words; lastly, it's driving bystanders away from the mud. Logically speaking, it prevents people from giving out honest opinions and leads to collective silence. Even worse, for the activists directly affected by the callout culture in the movement, it could force them out, drown them in the shame, or even return with egregious unprincipled action as methods.

But it does not mean we are doomed.

The most urgent task should be defining the intention: mistake, misunderstanding, contradiction, critique, harm, conflict, and abuse are not the same. They should be distinguished degree-wise. Here is a simplistic clarification of the above by adrienne maree brown:

- / Mistake: A mistake is as simple as a mess-up that can be resolved with an authentic and informed apology.
- / Misunderstanding: It's an incorrect interpretation or/and miscommunication that can be resolved through a clarification
- / Contradiction: The presence of ideas, beliefs, or aspects of a situation that are opposed to one another that can be handled by widening the perspectives and acknowledging that oppositional truths co-exist.
- / Critique: An analysis or assessment of particular works or practices that is to be used as the tool of sharpening one another.
- / Conflict: Disagreement, difference, or arguments between people at the personal or structural level. Genuine conflict is not easily resolved but there's the chance for conciliation through identifying the root of the issue and holding an honest conversation.
- / Abuse: Physical and emotional behaviour that is intended to gain, exert, and maintain power over others.²²

²² adrienne maree brown, "Bringing Abolition Home: Learning and Untangling in Public," in *We Will Not Cancel Us: And Other Dreams of Transformative Justice* (Chico: AK Press, 2020).

It has been said that extremism as a political position lacks three elements that could form an efficient debate: the capacity to develop nuanced views, the capacity to reach compromises through dialogue, and the capacity to be modest.²³ Recognising nuance will give the response more ground to stand. Nuance matters - not all flirtatious man is a potential rapist, nor every racially challenged white person is a Trump supporter, to quote Loretta Ross.²⁴ To discern is the backbone for social justice movement to generate belonging: discerning allies, discerning intentions, and discerning roots.

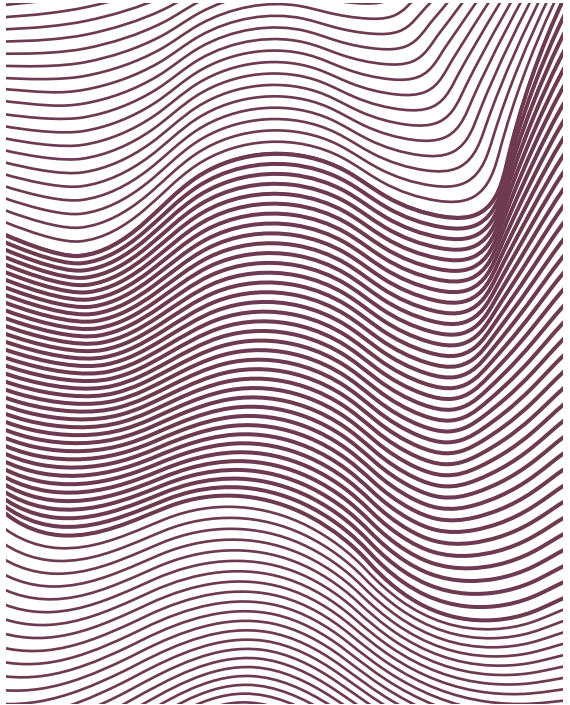
Certainly, calling out is not to be dismissed under all circumstances. When power is greatly imbalanced and efforts have been made to stop ongoing harm and the accused of harm does not participate in the accountability process or honours the boundaries set, a callout should be used with the purpose of healing the harm (caused in conflict and abuse.) They should be placed as the last option.

²³ Alicja Gescinska, "Intellectuals, Populist Rhetoric and Democracy," in *The Mind and Body of Europe: a New Narrative* (Brussel: European Commission, 2014).

²⁴ Loretta Ross, "I'm a Black Feminist. I Think Call-out Culture Is Toxic.: There Are Better Ways of Doing Social Justice Work." *The New York Times*, August 17, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/17/opinion/sunday/cancel-culture-call-out.html>.

Chapter 2

The Guidebook



Difference as Value

“I want there to be a place in the world where people can engage in one another’s differences in a way that is redemptive, full of hope and possibility. Not this ‘In order to love you, I must make you something else’. That’s what domination is all about, that in order to be close to you, I must possess you, remake and recast you.”

- bell hooks²⁵

²⁵ bell hooks, “What’s Passion Got to Do with it? An Interview with Marie-France Alderman,” in *Reel to Real: Race, Sex, and Class at the Movies* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

The concept of “normality” has attracted much attention as it implies “abnormality” outside of its boundaries in social studies. It carries ideological baggage as it creates marginalisation by false objectiveness. I want to shift this implication of “normality” from division to establishment - an establishment that is based on the recognition of being different, as an unbending reality of co-living.

We’ve been taught to condition differences as simplistic opposition to one another: dominant and subordinate, good and bad, superior and inferior,

native and strange, norm and abnormality. The nature of identity categorisation programmed in human beings embeds the element of exclusivity.²⁶ A redefinition and re-attitude of difference are vital. Institutional rejection of difference has been seen as a necessity in our society for the very practical reason of economy as it needs outsiders to be the surplus. Thus, we have been programmed to deal with differences by first ignoring it, becoming it if it's dominant, or destroying it if it's subordinate. Differences have been misnamed and misused in the service of separation and confusion. That was no human difference but human deviance. A possibility had been forgotten which is that differences of each other could be equal. We should recognise differences as neither superior nor inferior but enrichment of our visions.²⁷

Instead of dealing with differences that reality continuously generates in terms of metaphysical values, these values could be understood as choices deriving from values that people adhere to for a variety of reasons.²⁸

I want to display the case of the Netherlands' integration policies to show its position from highlighting to overlooking the difference between its citizens and later its newcomers - a trajectory of shifting attitude and approach - before elaborating the guidebook.

While it enjoys its international reputation from the outside as a multicultural country,²⁹ the Netherlands, in fact, struggles to continue the path set by the post-war predecessors, especially after the 9/11 attacks in 2001, followed by the murders of Pim Fortuyn (politician) in 2002, and Theo van Gogh (film director) in 2004, who are both, to describe lightly, public objectors of Islam in the Netherlands. Nowadays, the Dutch have been said to favour tolerance, which ignores differences, rather than multiculturalism, which implies "no need to integrate".³⁰

²⁶ Zygmunt Bauman, "Introduction: The Quest for Order," in *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

²⁷ Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (New York: Ten Speed Press, 1984).

²⁸ Barend van Heusden, "European Culture: Between Rationality and Reason," in *No Culture, No Europe: On the Foundation of Politics*, ed. Pascal Gielen (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2015).

²⁹ Lonneke van Noije and Annemarie Wennekens, "Nederlandse identiteit in geschreven media [Dutch Identity in Written Media]," in *Denkend aan Nederland: Sociaal en Cultureel Rapport [Thinking of the Netherlands: Social and Cultural Report]*, ed. Sjoerd Beugelsdijk, Joep de Hart, Pepijn van Houwelingen, and Maroesjka Versantvoort (The Hague: Uitgeverij SCP, 2019).

The Dutch case

³⁰ Jonathan Sacks, "Having Pride in Britain Protects All Cultures: Despite Good Intentions, Multiculturalism Has Created a Void That Fascists Could March Into," *The Sunday Times*, February 7, 2011, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/having-pride-in-britain-protects-all-cultures-gp3p28p3zb8>.

Before the 1980s, the Dutch approach to differences among themselves could be observed by the concept of *verzuiling* (pillarisation); after the 1980s, with the rise and awareness of the newcomers, the integration policies provide us with some traces of how they deal with this ongoing challenge of “living together”.

Verzuiling

Before reflecting on how the Dutch see their settlers in the latest decades, aside from its policy-making development, the specific Dutch notion of *verzuiling*, translated into “pillarisation” in English, provides more clue on this matter even though it was discouraged since the 1960s.

The concept originated in the late 19th century and was mostly referred to the period between the 1920s and 1960s in Dutch history. It was deliberately welcomed by the Catholics and Protestant in particular as a mean of withholding political power. At its peak, pillarisation divided members of society into four pillars based on views of life, religion, and political tendency: the Catholic, the Protestant, the socialist, and the liberal.³¹

Despite the attempts to put an end to this social division system after the World War II, the legacy has remained in the climate of the policy-making process. Even at this time, traces of pillarisation is still visible in daily Dutch life. The main newspapers, for example, are respectively distinguished into De Volkskrant as the Catholic, De Standaard as the Protestant, Het Vrije Volk³² as the socialist, and NRC Handelsblad as the liberal.

³¹ “Verzuiling [Pillarisation],” Parlement.com, <https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrpfxub/verzuiling>.

³² Het Vrije Volk published its last edition in 1991.

Attitude towards outsiders

According to the report *Migration Policymaking in Europe*³³, the Netherlands didn’t conceive itself as an immigration country initially. The reconstruction after the war led to labour shortage, hence the recruitment of foreign workers to fill in the vacancies. The term *gastarbeider*, meaning temporary guest worker from another country, was introduced to the Dutch dictionary in 1964, originated from the

³³ María Bruquetas Callejo, Blanca Garcés-Mascareñas, R. Penninx, and Peter W.A. Scholten, "The Case of the Netherlands" in *Migration Policymaking in Europe: The Dynamics of Actors and Contexts in Past and Present*, ed. Giovanna Zincone, Rinus Penninx, and Maren Borkert (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011).

³⁴ Instituut voor de Nederlandse Taal [Dutch Language Institute], s.v. "gastarbeider", accessed February 19, 2021, <https://ivdnt.org/woordenboeken/zoeken-in-woordenboeken/?w=gastarbeider>.

³⁵ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, "Hoofdstuk 3. De Jaren Tachtig: De Jaren Van Het Minderhedenbeleid" in *Onderzoek Integratiebeleid*, 28689 nr. 11, Den Haag: Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 2004, [House of Representatives, "Chapter 3. The Eighties: The Years of Minorities Policies" in *Research Integration Policy*, 28689 nr. 11, the Hague: House of Representatives, 2004.] <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/kst-28689-11.html#IDA11L5>.

³⁶ Jan Willem Duyvendak and Peter Scholten, "Deconstructing the Dutch Multicultural Model: A Frame Perspective on Dutch Immigrant Integration Policymaking," *Comparative European Politics*, vol. 10 (2012): 266–282.

³⁷ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, "Hoofdstuk 4. De Jaren Negentig: Het Integratiebeleid" in *Onderzoek Integratiebeleid*, 28689 nr. 11, Den Haag: Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 2004, [House of Representatives, "Chapter 4. The Nineties: The Integration Policy" in *Research Integration Policy*, 28689 nr. 11, the Hague: House of Representatives, 2004.] <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/kst-28689-11.html#IDA11L5>.

³⁸ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, *Rapportage Integratiebeleid Etnische Minderheden 2003*, 29203 nr. 1, Den Haag: Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 2003, [House of Representatives, *Report on Integration Policy Ethnic Minorities 2003*, 29203 nr. 1, the Hague: House of Representatives, 2003.] <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/kst-29203-1.html>.

³⁹ Common citizenship, according to "Deconstructing the Dutch Multicultural Model: A Frame Perspective on Dutch Immigrant Integration Policymaking" is based on the belief that the unity of society must be found in what members have in common.

⁴⁰ It is said that the Netherlands is the only country in the world that imposes language requirements on people still living abroad.

foreign labour of this period.³⁴ Integration of the workers was not prioritised until the beginning of the 1980s when the presence of long-term immigration as reality was recognised. Minderhedenbeleid [Ethnic Minorities Policy] (1983)³⁵ was introduced as a welfare state policy intended to stimulate equality and equity of vulnerable groups in the society with the assumption that the developments of identity - both individual and group - would stimulate the minority's emancipation within the community and lead to a positive influence on the integration in the broader society.³⁶

In response to the criticism of the Ethnic Minorities Policy's overemphasis on cultural aspects, Integratiebeleid [Integration Policy] (1994)³⁷ was introduced throughout the 1990s to stress more the individual's citizenship responsibility in the integration process. It even resulted in the nationally instituted courses given to newcomers as an introduction to Dutch society. The aim was no longer towards compatibility but commonality that preserved national values and thus enhanced social cohesion.

A dramatic shift took place in the early 2000s. Internationally, 911 played a major role along with the rise and death of Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh domestically. These incidents contribute to the image of policy failure and the fierce criticisms of the Dutch model of multiculturalism. In light of the public demand for a tougher approach to the integration to turn immigrants into "full citizens", Integratiebeleid Nieuwe Stijl [Integration Policy New Style] (2003)³⁸ was brought to the table. It followed the paradigm of the 1990s as it was based on the two concepts of common citizenship³⁹ and self-responsibility. The stress was very much put on the cultural adaption of the immigrants to Dutch society. The following measurement exemplifies this approach: apart from the selection of immigration, newcomers were obligated to prove their language skills and knowledge about Dutch culture before entering the Netherlands;⁴⁰ and once admitted, they

⁴¹ Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, *Wet inburgering*, BWBR0020611, Den Haag: Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2006, [Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, *Civil Integration Act*, BWBR0020611], the Hague: Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2006.] <https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0020611/2021-01-01#Hoofdstuk2>.

have to attend civic integration courses.⁴¹ During this period, the pursuit of social and cultural differences was considered an obstacle to integration and the concern of the disappearance of national identity grew simultaneously.

The anticipation in the 1980s was that by encouraging cultural emancipation of immigrant minorities, integration into Dutch society would inherently follow; during that time, empathy towards minority groups seemed to stand behind and support those measurements. Entering the 1990s, the transition from personal identity emancipation to assimilation into the broader society began. The early 2000s was the peak of the hostility towards immigration and its second generation, along with the public opinion on the failure of integration policies.

Today, it is said that public opinion has been affected greatly by the so-called political rhetoric, especially the political climate created by Geert Wilders.⁴² In spite of that factor, what could be observed is that differences should and would never be eliminated, but a certain level of overlooking is necessary in this complexity-escalating world.

⁴² Han Entzinger, "Forty Years of Dutch Integration Policy: Rhetoric and Reality," *Reviews & Critical Commentary*, December 2, 2015, <http://critcom.councilforeuropeanstudies.org/forty-years-of-dutch-integration-policy-rhetoric-and-reality/>.

The takeaway from the Dutch case

The display of the Dutch experience is to showcase the evolution of the attitude towards different social communities in the Netherlands: from the emphasis on divergent features and creation of deliberate separation to the backfire of these measurements and advocacy of integration. The path of the Netherlands is the counterexample of merely focusing on specific communities (ex. minorities) while overlooking the society as a whole; and also the example of arching towards merger while remaining certain qualities, even though the shadow of pillarisation from the past still follows. The path towards harmony suggests to learn each other's differences as "plus" instead of degrading them as "minus"; rather than assimilation in society, we could try to spot the affinity.

is to break the usual pattern on determining one another by dismeasuring - meaning dropping the typical way of measuring, then, as Madhavi Menon suggests, is to hold on to the attitude of indifference towards differences, and lastly, is to redefine the concept of citizenship by taking “Commonism” into account.

To Dismasure

Pascal Gielen is a sociologist that investigates the function and usage of culture. In his editorial publication *No Culture, No Europe*, he borrows Rudi Laermans’ definition of culture: a socially shared reservoir of repertoire of signs. Gielen refers this “repertoire of signs” not only to a formal semiotic game of similarity and differentiation but also to assigning meaning as the sense that gives direction and reason for existence to both people and societies. This understanding of culture is the first step to a more welcoming world of diversity.⁴³

⁴³ Pascal Gielen and Thijs Lijster, “Culture: The Substructure for a European Common” in *No Culture, No Europe: On the Foundation of Politics*, ed. Pascal Gielen (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2015).

Gielen then proposes the method of “the dismeasure of culture”. In essence, the method is to break the routine of the usual. If cultural agents only confine themselves to socialisation and qualification,⁴⁴ two of the culture functions introduced by him, the development and process of cultural production would come to a halt; in that case, cultural agents would merely bring values and ideas into the existing order and qualify them by applying set value hierarchies. Hence, the practice of “dismasure” to move forwards from that circulation. An accessible example would be: socio-cultural workers reaching out to migrants or newcomers, by doing so, they consequently make room for a different measure than the familiar cultural one that was accustomed to. This could change the view of how a community sees itself and lead to a redirecting of its social order. In short, it is to create room for mutation in a world that deems mutation as oddity. Interestingly, culture, on the one hand, provides the guidelines to measure people’s lives, on the other hand, uses art and cultural heritage to dismeasure the world.

⁴⁴ Gielen concludes the functions of culture into three aspects: socialisation, which is social integration; qualification, which is the reality check; and subjectification, which is to take an autonomous/independent role within the others.

Although Gielen talks about dismeasure in the specific domain of culture, the concept could also be applied to the bigger picture of the mechanism of current society. The reason for this displacement and borrowing is that much of the present social crisis related to politics and economics are in fact fundamentally a cultural crisis. For example, political actions can't act without the interpretation and signification of social reality, just like economic issues often rose from the distrust of the commonality. Culture is the bedrock of society and to fix the evident flaws of the present working system that is leaving people discontent, actions have to be taken.

Succinctly put, it's the stir of role between "host" and "attendee".

To In-differentiate

While difference is valued for its ability to cross borders, it is also effectively utilised when those borders are closed against the threats of the stranger. To be indifferent is not to be heartless or ignore difference; it's the state of acknowledging and embodying difference without becoming that difference.

Indifference would remove the sense of ownership over moral property embedded in the notion of identity. It provides a chance to walk away from the burden of identity specificity that builds up the base of much violence today.

Rather than suggesting to ignore differences and consolidate others so that only a few, crucial ones remain, or that we should use differences to join rather than separate people, Madhavi Menon advocates "an indifferent universalism".⁴⁵ Embracing indifferent universalism does not ask for sacrificing the particulars but to be indifferent about them. It demands acknowledging and mingling around our restless movements of travelling. Rather than elevating one's difference as the central matter, indifference serves as the traversable vehicle that flies over boundaries. This traversable character does

⁴⁵ Madhavi Menon, *Indifference to Difference: On Queer Universalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

not mean differences don't exist, rather, it removes differences from the obsessive basis of which to formulate and navigate the truth of identity. Rather than suggesting to ignore differences and consolidate others so that only a few, crucial ones remain, or that we should use differences to join rather than separate people, Madhavi Menon advocates "an indifferent universalism". Embracing indifferent universalism does not ask for sacrificing the particulars but to be indifferent about them. It demands acknowledging and mingling around our restless movements of travelling. Rather than elevating one's difference as the central matter, indifference serves as the traversable vehicle that flies over boundaries. This traversable character does not mean differences don't exist, rather, it removes differences from the obsessive basis of which to formulate and navigate the truth of identity.

Menon also points out that we are, as a matter of fact, already living in an indifferent universalism due to the role of "desire" played in our lives. I would suggest that rather than desire, which according to Menon, is the element that leads to "us stretching against identitarian constraints", "imagination"⁴⁶ is the core. Desire is indeed the apparent incentive, but I would push it even further because we are not there yet - we are still depending on our imagination to reach the "indifferent universalism" utopia. I would borrow Menon's sentences here to elaborate on it. "Desire Imagination is that which in every instance hollows out ontology." "Whether it is libidinal desire imagination for someone who falls outside the bounds of what we consider 'our' sexuality, or a losing that stretches beyond of our politics, desire imagination does not respect limits." "Desire Imagination is surprising because it can erupt at the most unexpected moments and in the most inconvenient circumstances." "Desire Imagination is too fickle to be contained by any one theoretical idiolect."

In conclusion, to quote from the words of Menon:

⁴⁶ Imagination here refers to the ability to form pictures in the mind and think of new ideas instead of something one thinks exist but in fact is not real.

“Difference asks us to abide by the contrasts of its agenda, while indifference does not require any adherence whatsoever. Instead, indifference allows us to travel without asking for a visa to authenticate the legality of our desire.”⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Madhavi Menon, “Introduction,” in *Indifference to Difference: On Queer Universalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

Plan C: Commonism

If we vaguely divide society into three domains: politics, economy, and culture, the former two seem to gain most of the attention. However, calls for a new model of ideology has been made. In economy, the Anglo-Saxon model⁴⁸ and Rhineland model⁴⁹ can't satisfy people anymore; in politics, the left-right spectrum is no longer sufficient to articulate the complexity of today's world. A third proposal of how to live together, as a response to globalisation, was first introduced by Tom DeWeese's manifesto *Commonism: The New Face of Communism*.⁵⁰

DeWeese's Commonism politics is based on “commonising” private intellectual property and nation-controlled natural resources. Furthermore, in its doctrines, words such as “liberty” or “freedom”, which are traditionally more associated with individualism, are seldom mentioned; instead, it calls for “justice”, for example, economic justice, environmental justice, racial justice, etc. Up to this point, Commonism seems to be a utopia yet a directional path and vision to move forwards.

Commonism was narrowed down as an appeal for the cultural domain in society by Pascal Gielen and Thijs Lijster.⁵¹ They essentially ask for more awareness in culture, which they interpreted as “meaning of life”, to remain the equilibrium with politics and economy for the sake of European solidarity.

To elaborate Commonism in a more attainable way, I want to bring up the notion of citizenship as a potential outcome of it. The “citizenship” here does not imply the classical model of belonging to a territory, an ethnicity, and/or a nation state, but citizenship as an assertion of the sense of “we”. This citizenship bonds all members of a political society,

⁴⁸ Anglo-Saxon model originates from Adam Smith, calling for low level of governmental regulations and privatisation of assets. “Anglo-Saxon Capitalism - Definition and Meaning,” Market Business News, accessed February 1, 2021, <https://marketbusinessnews.com/financial-glossary/anglo-saxon-capitalism/>.

⁴⁹ Rhineland model is also called “the Capitalism with a human face”. It's the combination of free market economic and social policies. “Rhineland Model V21,” Van Haren Publishing, December 20, 2012, <https://www.vanharen.net/blog/rhineland-model-v-2-1/>.

⁵⁰ Tom DeWeese, “Commonism: The New Face of Communism,” October 30, 2000, <http://www.enterstageright.com/archive/articles/1100commonism.htm>.

⁵¹ Pascal Gielen and Thijs Lijster, “Culture: The Substructure for a European Common,” in *No Culture, No Europe: On the Foundation of Politics*, ed. Pascal Gielen (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2015).

regardless of their individual characteristics, and gives them both rights and duties that are reciprocal. Even though it goes beyond the group and personal identity, to say that we all are citizens is not to say we are alike in every respect. It's a political status and generous tool for inclusion that is extendable and its meaning expandable. It also provides a political language of solidarity that transcends identity attachments. This citizenship does not demand cultural assimilation of the newcomers but absorbs ethnic attachment rather than excludes it.

To sum up, I want to borrow Mark Lilla's words:

“In the absence of a motivating charitable faith, the only way one can hope to induce a sense of duty is by establishing some sort of identification between the privileged and the disadvantaged. Citizenship is not an identity in the way we currently use the term, but it provides one possible way of encouraging people to identify with one another. Or at least it provides a way to talk about what they already share.”⁵²

⁵² Mark Lilla, “III: Politics,” in *The Once and Future Liberal: After Identity Politics* (New York: HarperCollins, 2017).

Call-in

A Tender Manifesto for a New Strategy

“Difference must be not merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic. [...] Difference is that raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged.”

- Audre Lorde⁵³

⁵³ Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (New York: Crossing Press, 1984).

To call in is calling out made with love.

With the controversy raised by callout culture, the alternative of calling in has been raised by many; however, Loretta Ross is the one that formulates the concept with details and practicalities.

Loretta Ross has been an activist since the 1970s at the D.C. Rape Crisis Center, focusing on women’s human rights, reproductive justice, white supremacy, and women of colour organising. Ross teaches at Smith College in the US about callout culture and white supremacy. In an interview, Ross revealed the turning point throughout her activism career was due

to the following words: when you ask people to give up hate, then you need to be there for them when they do. And that led to her advocacy of calling in.⁵⁴

As mentioned previously, call-in is the response to the problematic tendency of callout culture in the current social justice movements. Call-in is the choice of grace and generosity. Call-in pleads for accountability through radical love and integrity, instead of merely awareness and public shaming. Call-in facilitates human rights-based conversations where inclusion is the norm and not just a catchline. Call-in degrades the priority of the trauma-informed lenses⁵⁵ and recognises the complexity of incidents and people. Call-in invites self-reflection and self-correction into the discussion. Call-in disrupts oppressive spaces and avoids replication of the system that is intended to be overthrown.

The practice of call-in is rather simple yet laborious. In contrast to callout culture, call-in is based on real-life interactions such as face-to-face conversations, private messages, or personal phone calls (even though rare these days but still handy.) Call-in approaches and invests in each other as members of the social justice movements. Call-in remembers the broader context but demands clarification rather than arbitrary assumption. Call-in acknowledges the benefit of the doubt and the importance of nuance. Call-in adopts the language of “what you said didn’t land well with me; what made you think that way?” or “I beg your pardon but I didn’t fully get what you mean.”

Call-in is not a comprehensive strategy; it is welcoming yet selective. In the words of Ross, she perceives the world through percentage - herself is surrounded by the so-called 90% bubble consists of like-minded progressives, sometimes even called radicals.⁵⁶ Outside of the bubble lies the first layer called the 75%-ers which is the people that are alliances of the bubble: they don’t adopt the inside jargon but share the world view of the 90%-ers. The next layer is the 50%-ers; there might not be

⁵⁴ Dorey Scheimer and Meghna Chakrabarti, “Why Scholar Loretta Ross is ‘Calling in’ Call out Culture,” On Point, December 3, 2020, <https://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2020/12/03/feminist-scholar-loretta-ross-is-calling-out-cancel-culture>.

⁵⁵ The term “trauma-informed” comes from an approach and practice called “trauma-informed care”, which presumes an individual is more likely to have trauma than not.

⁵⁶ Ross also admitted that a problem of the 90% bubble is that it often spends too much time trying to turn each other into “100%-ers”, meaning that much effort is put on convincing one another to align with every thought in the social justice movements.

much common vocabulary from the bubble but they recognise the value-driven language in order to understand the 90%-ers. Then is the 25%-ers who, to put it lucidly, are the true-believers.⁵⁷ The last one is the 0%-ers, which is the escalated version of the 25%-ers. Call-in is for the 75% and 50%-ers. Call-in is the approach for the 90%-ers in the tug of war⁵⁸ against the 25%-ers. Call-in is not for the 0%-ers; callout should be used on the 0%-ers.

⁵⁷ According to Ross, the 25%-ers are the majority that stormed in the US Capitol in 2021. They honestly believe that the Western civilisation would collapse if certain people don't remain in power.

⁵⁸ Tug of war is the athletic contest which different teams pull on opposite ends of rope as a test of strength and solidarity.

Conclusion

At the End of the Day

I was born and raised in a progressive family under the Taiwanese context regarding political tendency, national recognition, and social issues, etc. Gradually along the way, I've noticed this discontent, almost resentment, towards certain social affairs, particularly centring around racism, feminism; yet, I couldn't identify nor elaborate on what specific aspects I was discontent about. What was noticeable was that I couldn't help myself but frown upon those topics with the guilt of lack of empathy quietly embedded within me. There was this mixture of irritation and self-condemnation growing.

Until one day, out of the blue, it hit me: I've been misunderstanding dissatisfaction as discontent - dissatisfaction of searching for more. I start the path of making peace with my resentful self by listing what exactly I am dissatisfied with within the social justice movements. And here is what I got so far.⁵⁹

There are some problematic aspects concerning the attitudes and the tactics in the current social

⁵⁹ I see this as the first step of reconciliation with my younger self and that this is an ongoing journey with direction but not destination (yet).

movements aiming for justice. Identity politics, carrying the inaccurate name to start with, brings misinterpretation as “identity” circles out the majority of potential allies which goes against the mechanism of democracy that is much about gaining support from the public. The face and outcome of such tendency appear as callout culture. In comparison to callout action, callout culture shares some features with the methods a dictatorial regime rules a country. Moreover, the consequence of callout culture is that the involved agents end up walking on eggshells and carefully curate and perform each vocabulary and action, personally and systematically. To differentiate the difference between mistake, conflict, and abuse is essential. Nuance matters.

Having said that, we are nowhere near being doomed. We shall start treating difference among us as a value instead of an excuse of division. To dismeasure means breaking the circulation of measuring the same values with the same set of rules and consequently creating room for mutation. Following that, a shift of attitude comes into the picture: to indifferenciate, aiming for acknowledging and embodying difference without becoming that difference. And to finalise that up with a more comprehensive treatment, Commonism is introduced. Commonism is better understood as citizenship - citizenship as an assertion of the notion of “we” that bonds every member of the society despite the individual characters. In practice, regarding how to deal with the counterproductive tendency addressed above, call-in serves as a response to callout culture. It is, in essence, calling out made with love which takes place privately and recognises the benefits of the doubt in a seemingly black-and-white world.

This is the guidebook for the lost, and hopefully, found.

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