

UNIVERSITAS ATMA JAYA YOGYAKARTA
GEDUNG SANTO THOMAS AQUINA

Science of Knowledge I

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg

Dr. Marcel M. Baumann

DAAD Guest Lecturer

Department of Political Science, University of Freiburg



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Please feel free to contact me!!



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Don't be shy!

marcel.baumann@politik.uni-freiburg.de

There are no stupid questions. There are only stupid answers!!



Lecture Series



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Travelling to Indonesia with German Thought

*Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta Lecture Series on New Trends
in Applied Social Theory and Conflict Studies*

speaker

Dr. Marcel M. Baumann

Areas of expertise:
Peace and Conflict Studies, Social Theory,
Terrorism, Conflict Transformation

Lecturer and Senior Researcher, Department of Political Science, University of Freiburg
Visiting Lecturer, Department of Sociology, FISIP, Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta



CLASS
LECTURE

20
OCT
2016

Science of Knowledge I

27
OCT
2016

Science of Knowledge II

03
NOV
2016

Critical Theory

🕒 07.30-10.00 | 📍 Room 4306, Campus 4 FISIP UAJY

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German Academic Exchange Service



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PUBLIC
LECTURE

10

NOV
2016

Dialectic of Enlightenment

17

NOV
2016

*Hannah Arendt & Günther Anders
in Yogyakarta*

24

NOV
2016

*Conflict Transformation:
from Northern Ireland to Maluku*

🕒 10.00 - 12.00
📍 Ruang Diskusi,
Basement of
Campus 2 UAJY

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Overview about today's lecture



- **Reflection:** Sociological theory, theoretical thought, *awareness*
- What is science? What is research?
- The “production” of knowledge:
“*Erkenntnisinteresse*” (research interest)
- “*Werturteilsfreiheit*“: free of value-judgement
- Conclusions: Science of knowledge as a constant journey



The “real” scientific journey 1

Sociology or science are not difficult ...



Theodor W. Adorno: Culture industry:
Enlightenment as mass deception:

“yet [they] base their popularity precisely on the magic of the unintelligible as creating the thrill of a more exalted life.”

Don't use difficult words to explain difficult terms or concepts. But use simple language for understanding and explanation.



Don't use buzzwords! *Plastic words*



Discourse instead of ***debate***

Deconstruction instead of ***analysis***

Advanced instead of ***very good***

Dialectical instead ***related to***

Ambivalent instead of ***difficult***

Postfactual instead of ***wrong***

Implementation instead of ***doing***

Straight: Keep it short and simple!

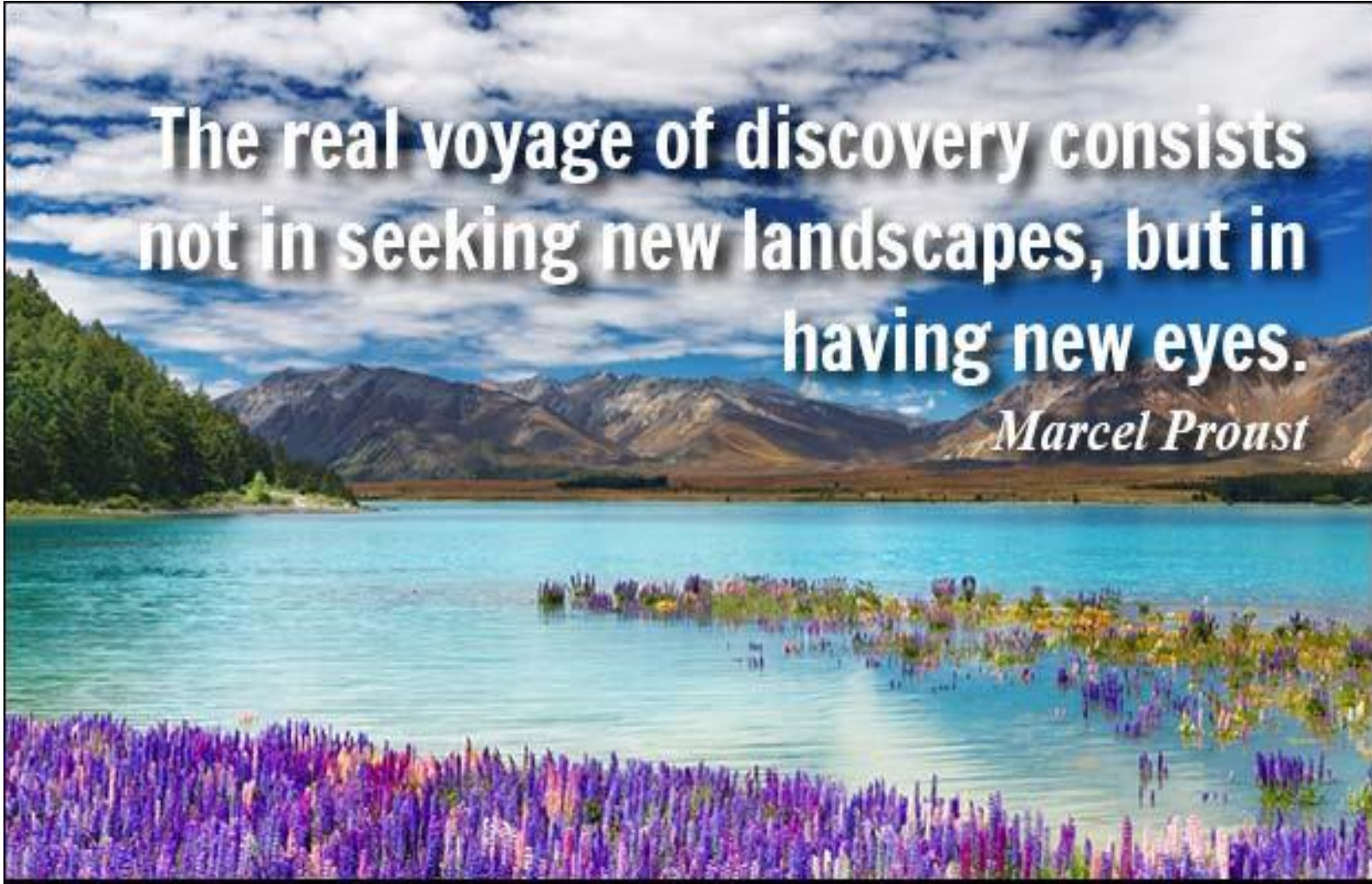


The “real” scientific journey 2



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The real voyage of discovery consists
not in seeking new landscapes, but in
having new eyes.
Marcel Proust



Reflection: Sociological theory



- *Sociology* = “the study of the development, structure, and functioning of human society; the study of social problems.”
- The real voyage of scientific discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes
- new awareness, a new way of looking at things, new approaches to **understanding** of the development, structure, and functioning of human society; the study of social problems



“Our main goal is to extend scientific rationalism to human conduct [...] What has been called our positivism is but a consequence of this rationalism.”

Émile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895)



Reflection: Sociological theory



“[Sociology is] ... the science whose object is to interpret the meaning of social action and thereby give a causal explanation of the way in which the action proceeds and the effects which it produces.”

Max Weber, *The Nature of Social Action* (1922)



Reflection: Sociological theory



“The deepest problems of modern life flow from the attempt of the **individual** to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign powers of **society**, against the weight of the historical heritage and the external culture and technique of life. The antagonism represents the most modern form of the conflict which primitive man must carry on with nature for his own bodily existence. ...”

Georg Simmel, *The Metropolis and Mental Life* (1903)



Reflection: Sociological theory



... “The eighteenth century may have called for liberation from all the ties which grew up historically in politics, in religion, in morality and in economics in order to permit the original natural virtue of man, which is equal in everyone, to develop without inhibition; the nineteenth century may have sought to promote, in addition to man’s freedom, his individuality (which is connected with the division of labor) and his achievements which make him unique and indispensable but which at the same time make him so much the more dependent on the **complementary activity of others.**”

Georg Simmel, *The Metropolis and Mental Life* (1903)



Back to the future: 2016

WHY do we need sociological theory?



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“Inside Putin’s Head”:

Putin’s influences

Putin’s ideology

Putin’s view of the world

Sociological theory:

Understanding Putin:

Understanding Putin’s “isms”



Thesis: *Travelling to Aleppo with Max Weber?*



- ***Putinism***
- post-Sowjet Ideology
- The Russian Way
- Imperialism
- Eurasia, Eurasianism
- Slawophilism



Thesis: *Travelling to Aleppo with Max Weber?*



Sociological theory can explain the present situation in the Ukraine and Syria

2014: US President Obama threatened Russia: The West will defend the countries of the Eastern bloc at all costs

Some commentators: WWII, there might be no tomorrow!!

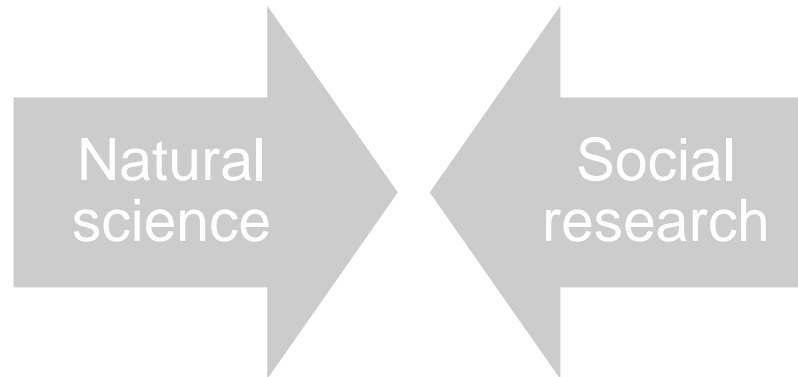
Sociological theory may even save the world!



What is science? What is research?



- Science is producing scientific knowledge
- Research is the way to achieve scientific knowledge
- BUT: In what way does **biologist** differ from a **sociologist**? Are both scientists or are both researchers?



What is non-scientific research?



- Language studies
- History
- *Hukum*

Is there such a thing as non-scientific research at all?

Compromise: Everything that is done at the university is scientific (enough)



Danger: *Lumpenintellectuals*



- Karl Marx: “Lumpenproletariat”
- Yehuda Baur: **Lumpenintellectuals** were a major reason for the Holocaust
- Fake science
- Bogus research practices
- Applied science with a distinctive agenda or aim: industrial-military complex
- Project Kamelot (next session)
- German example: Research to justify the war in Afghanistan (next session)



The production of knowledge



- Normativity, normative
- Creating, drafting, developing norms
- Research interest: *Erkenntnisinteresse* (Jürgen Habermas)
- Positivism (Karl Popper)
- Critical theory (Horkheimer & Adorno): Frankfurt School
- Positivists always refused to be labelled as positivists
- The members of the Frankfurt School argued to developed theory outside of any “school”



How and why



- ***normativ-ontological***: practical philosophy; applying Aristoteles, Platon
- ***empirical-analytical***: technological character (positivism); there is no distinction between natural science and social research
- ***critical-dialectical***: emancipatory and critical: changes of society with the help of critical theory



Falsifiability



Glauben Sie mir, bitte, kein Wort! Ich weiß, das ist zuviel verlangt, denn ich will ja nur die Wahrheit sagen, so gut ich sie kenne. Aber ich warne Sie: Ich weiß nichts; oder fast nichts. Wir alle wissen nichts oder fast nichts. Das ist, wie ich vermute, eine Grundtatsache unseres Lebens. Wir wissen nichts, wir können nur vermuten: Wir raten. Unser bestes Wissen ist das großartige naturwissenschaftliche Wissen, das wir in 2500 Jahren geschaffen haben. Aber die Naturwissenschaften bestehen eben nur aus Vermutungen, aus Hypothesen. (Karl Popper, 1985)



Falsifiability (more in the next session)



Principle of falsifiability states that a hypothesis can be considered as a scientific theory only if it can be disproved.

False

True &
verified

Falsified



The problem of induction



- Karl Popper: there is no such thing as induction, induction is a myth
- ***“Swans are white until the first black one has been found”***
- There is no such things as an eternal truth, there are only assumptions or hypotheses



Research interests compared



- ***Value-free, empirical***: natural science and social science have to have the same methods, the same ontology; developing ***laws***
- ***Emancipatory***: changing society for the better; developing ***norms***



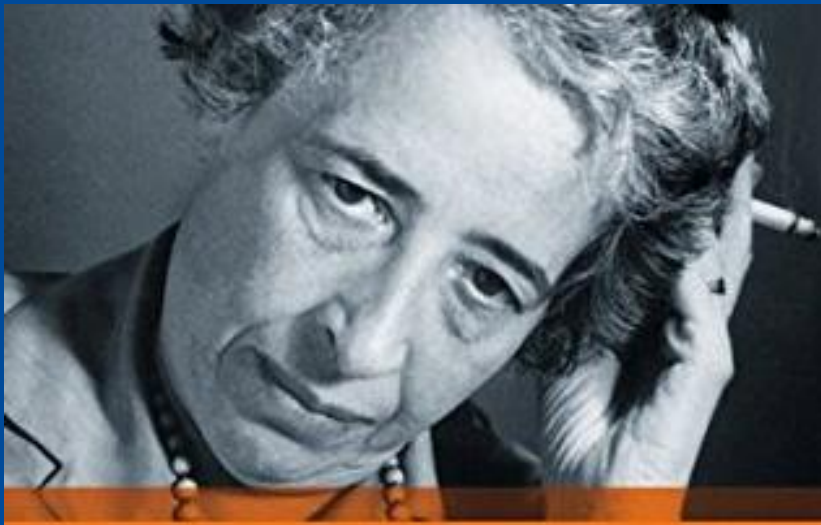
Norms vs. Laws



- **(Natural) laws:** a body of unchanging moral principles regarded as a basis for all human conduct; an observable law relating to natural phenomena
- **(Social) norms:** informal understandings that govern the behavior of members of a society; rules of society



Werturteilsfreiheit Value-free judgements



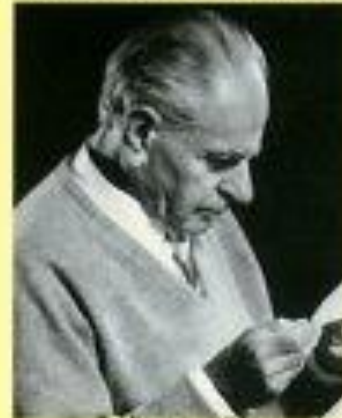
**Hannah
Arendt**
Denken ohne
Geländer

PIPER

**KARL R.
POPPER**

**Objektive
Erkenntnis**

Ein evolutionärer Entwurf



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Sociology of understanding



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Max Weber
(1864 – 1920)



Historical background: World War One



- You cannot understand Max Weber without World War One
- To a large degree, you cannot understand the development of the discipline “sociology” without an understanding of World War One
- WWI: July 28, 1914 – November 11, 1918
- *Weltenbrand*: world breaking down. Doomsday. End of days
- Many German sociologists were big *fans* of WWI – in an analytical sense



Das weiße Band / The White Ribbon



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Ideological preparedness



World War One: invention of “isms”



Nationalism
National identity
Patriotism
Liberalism
Defence of democracy
Democratization

No end in sight?
Putinism



WHY MAX WEBER?

- The most important point: Weber's thoughts, ideas and methodology is still relevant today because it can be applied to current phenomena
- „*soziales Handeln deutend verstehen und dadurch ursächlich erklären*“: ***interpretive understanding and causal explanation of social action***
- analysis of the meaning people attach or give to their own social world or reality. Reality is constructed by people themselves in their daily lives





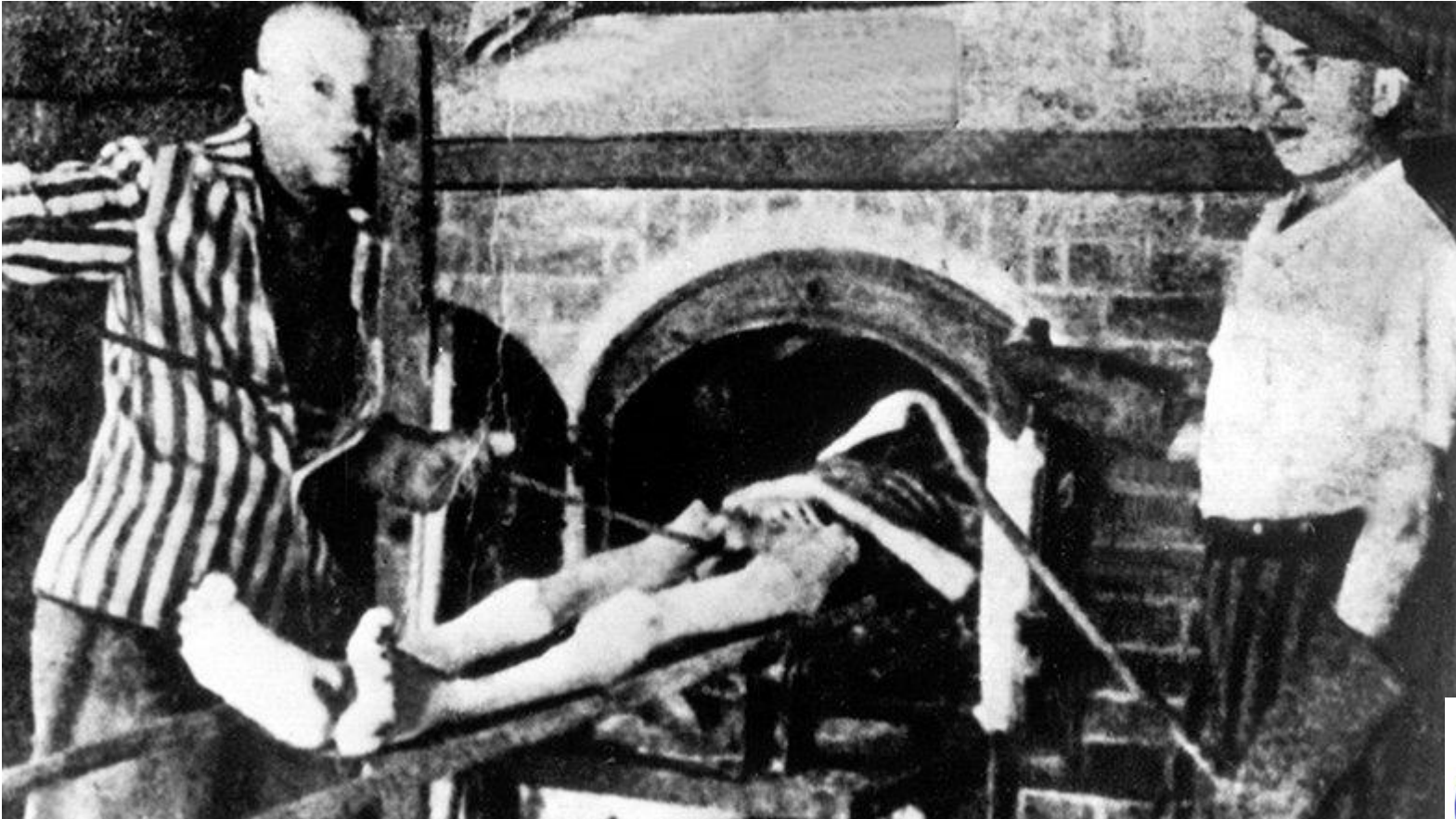
- In the area of methodology, Weber sought a resolution of the dualism between social science and natural science, and he argued that academic research must be freed from **moral judgements**
- However: there can be conclusions drawn and lessons learned, but a social scientist is **not** a preacher; a political scientist is **not** a politician
- Can we be neutral when researching conflicts?
- Can we be neutral when confronted with violence, murder and genocide?
- Can we talk about the Holocaust value-free?



Neutral when faced with genocide?



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Neutral when faced with genocide?



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Neutral when faced with ...?



- research with plants
- laboratory research with cells etc.

Weber's key argument: different interest of research

We can't do research about the gas chambers in an objective way

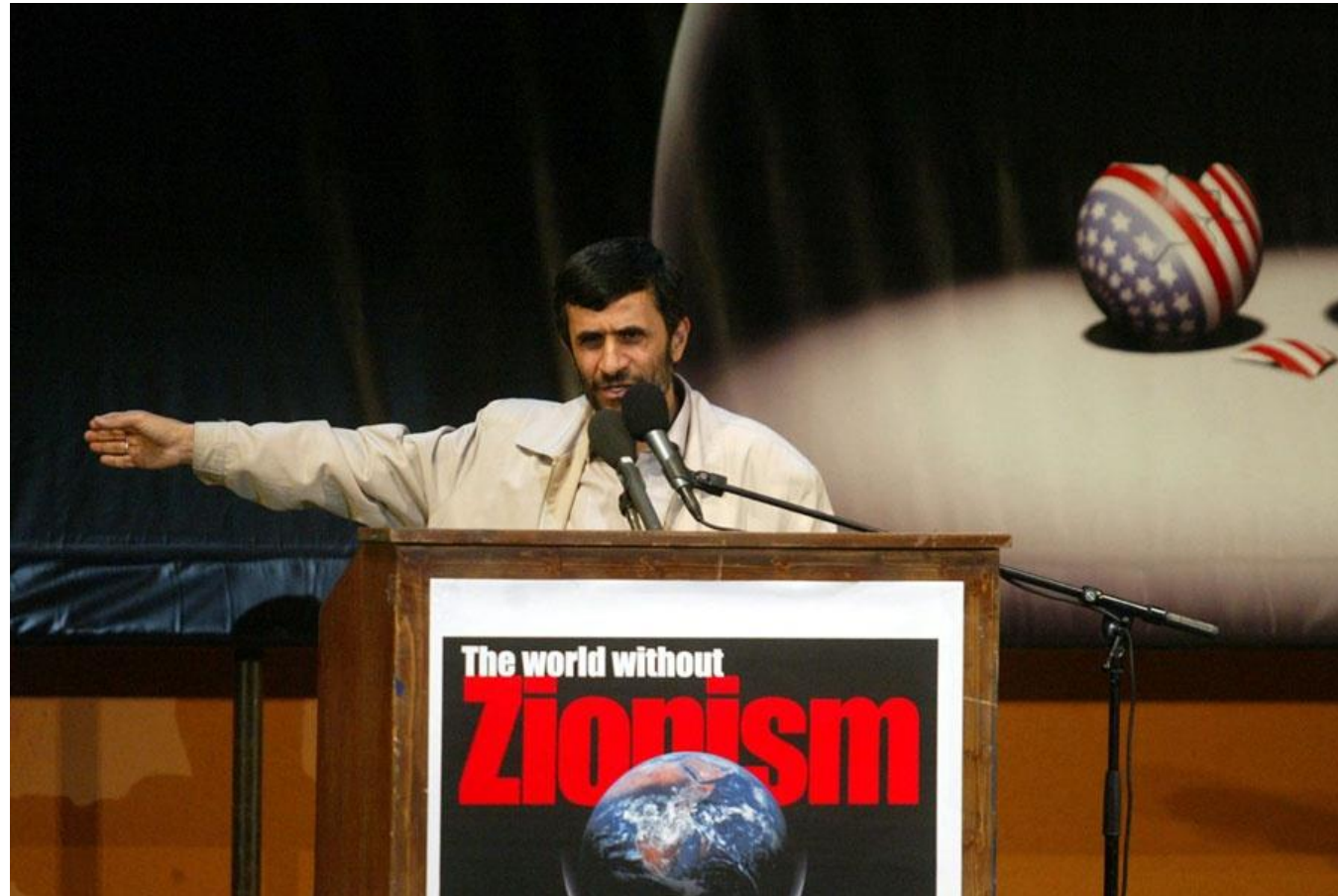


Value-free analysis of the Holocaust?



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Holocaust conference in Teheran 2006



Value-free analysis of the Holocaust?



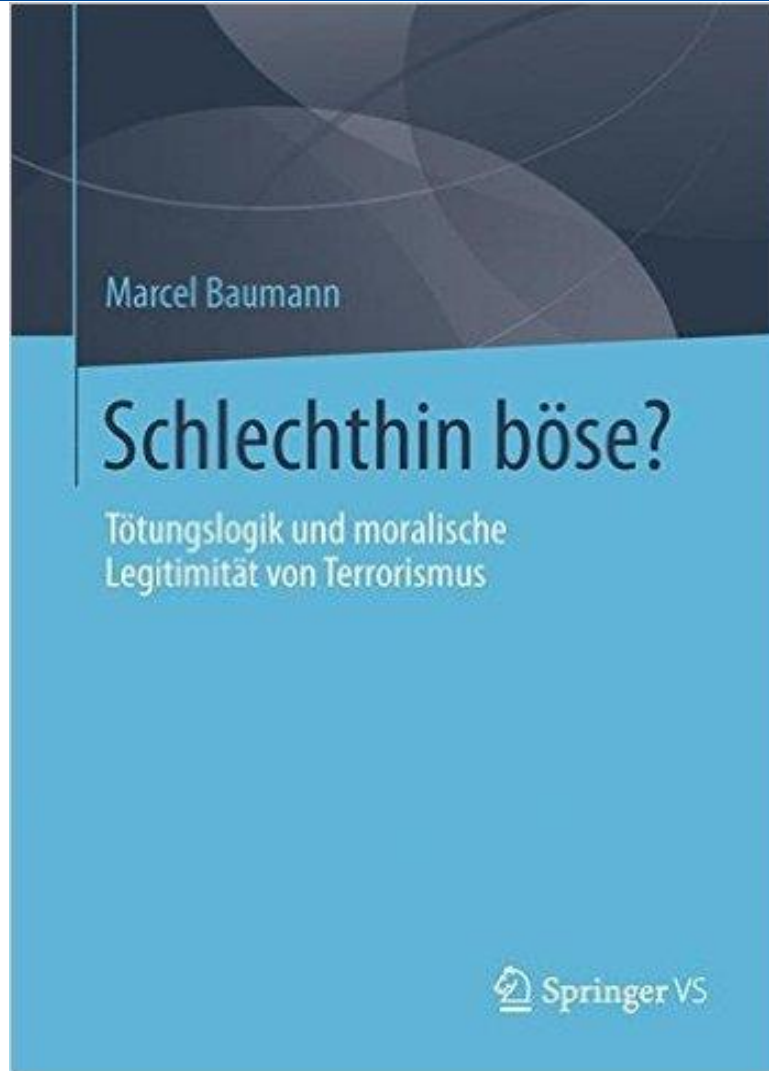
- 6 million Jews were murdered in the concentration camps
- Denying the Holocaust is a criminal offence in Germany: “*Volksverhetzung*” (“incitement to hatred”): up to 5 years of prison
- There were a lot of “*Lumpenintellectuals*”, and there are some still today, trying to prove that the Holocaust did not happen. Almost all of them are now in prison. And this is the place for them to be – not the universities!



Sociology of understanding



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Methodology:
Interpretative sociology
integrated with
Ethics / Moral Philosophy



Two-dimensional research



Understanding
& Reflection

Normativity



Two-dimensional research



- Don't start with the normative dimension
- The normative dimension has to be based on the empirical dimension: reflection & understanding
- Action-oriented sociological theory is most valuable, if it is backed up with **basics research (Grundlagenforschung)**
- Basics research may lay the solid foundation for **applied sociological theory**



Keep in mind: You don't have to be normative,
but you can be



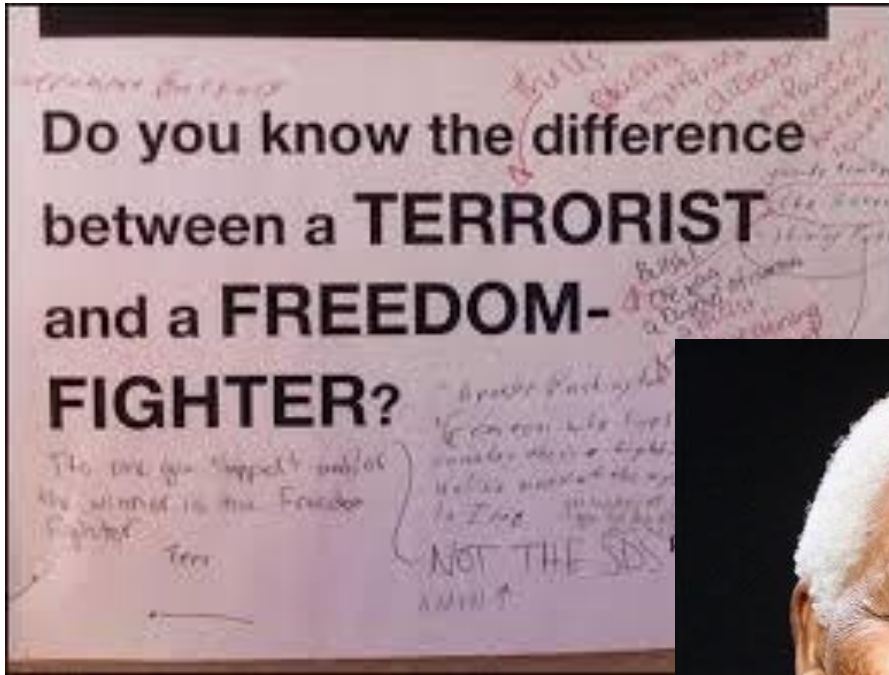
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Understanding
& Reflection

~~Normativity~~



Application: Researching “terrorism”



Understanding “terrorism”



- Sociology of understanding based on Weber
- Understanding is **not**: justification, making excuses or naive relativity
- Understanding is the basis for fighting politically motivated violence: *“In order to fight the beast, you have to know it. And you have to know it well.”*
- United Nations: does **NOT** have a definition of terrorism; no understanding, no social theory



Conclusions



- Sociological theory can never be detached from the phenomena it tries to explain
(*Werturteilsfreiheit; value-judgements*)
- A sociologist is not a preacher, not a politician, not a pastor and not a medical doctor
- Science of knowledge as a constant journey
- *Zeitgeist*: relational? Related to a specific decade or era? Trend-setting?
- Sociology theory should **not** be a trend-setting discipline, but it should *set trends*



Conclusions



- Sociological theory is a necessary journey to manage, understand and intervene within the realm of society
- Sociological theory must be and is relevant to every-day life

**The United Nations could need some sociologists to work on “terrorism”
Maybe from Atma Jaya!!**





**Thank you very much for your
attention!**

