

Funding the Future

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Sociocide and pleonexia are not just words. They describe what's happening in plain sight: the destruction of society by those who refuse responsibility for the common good. This video asks whether tax avoidance is sociocidal — and what we should do about it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCnrOSLIGYg&si=ky7VapfALAPJ2Q3s>

This is the audio version:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=py9vk-193fd16-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=auto&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a

This is the transcript:

Sociocide. That's a word you've probably never heard of before, but it's real, it exists, and it has a valuable role to play in discussions on the wealthy because sociocide is about the deliberate and chosen destruction of society from within by the wealthy, who are tearing our social fabric apart.

This is greed or pleonexia, another word, which I'll get to in due course, in action.

So what is sociocide? It's a term created by the Norwegian Johan Galtung, in the 1980s. He used the term which he created to describe the destruction of our societies, the social fabric that ties us together, in effect.

It's not genocide because that's the elimination of people. And it's not violent. But it's about the erosion of trust and reciprocity, the bonds that exist between people if a society is to flourish. And in the case of sociocide, there is a deliberate attempt to kill society by undermining those relationships of trust.

But the fact of the matter is, we can only live in society. Whatever anyone says, this is all we have and all we know. The libertarian idea of the individual in isolation, living without the support of others and making their own fortune, is complete and utter nonsense in reality.

Nobody does that. Nobody can do that. That is not how humans exist. We are tribal. We always have lived in societies, and we always will. So, in that case, we need to make societies work because we are dependent upon each other, absolutely, whoever we are.

And taxes, I would suggest, make society possible. Tax lubricates the mechanics of our social systems, and tax is not just about money. Like all things to do with money, it's about reciprocity. It's about how we share to ensure we can provide what everybody needs. It binds us together in obligation to fulfil that duty of care, and it is the steering wheel of our economy and society because it says what we do and don't want to do, and what priorities we have. In other words, it creates, as I once put it, the 'Joy of Tax'.

So what about the wealthy when they're trying to avoid tax? They are seeking to opt out of their responsibility for society, and to society. They undermine reciprocity.

Their claim is that rules are for other people, or as Leona Helmsley once said before she went on to serve a prison term for tax abuse, "Tax is for little people."

Those who seek to avoid tax are trying to shift the burden of tax onto those least able to pay it.

They corrode trust in institutions, and they deny collective services, the resources they need, because, and I make this point very clearly, what they're trying to do is to remove tax from the fiscal cycle that is a necessary part of the management of those collective services.

The consequence is obvious. Inequality is widened. Resentment spreads. Communities fragment, and cynicism is normalised.

And this is sociocidal. Why? Because it isn't about technical cleverness with tax loopholes. Nor is it about smart accounting or legal practice. And it's certainly not about liberation in the way that tax havens claim they can provide. Instead, this activity of tax abuse is sociocidal because it's a deliberate assault on the common good.

It destroys the possibility of society itself. And we are seeing that all around us in the breakdown in the social relationships that people obviously crave, and wish that politics would recreate at present, but which it can't because the wealthy are denying us that

opportunity by trying to undermine the democracy in which we live, and by trying to replace it with authoritarianism, feeding upon people's anger about the actions of the wealthy in themselves, and this is pleonexia in plain sight.

Now that's another word that isn't in common use, but which seems to be relevant in this context.

It has an ancient Greek origin. It's basically the insatiable greed for more. And that's not just about money, of course. It's about power, privilege, status, and all the other things that go with wealth. And wealth is hoarded as a consequence of pleonexia. It's hidden from the benefit of society. It is designed to break down that society.

The division within society is actually the goal of the person who suffers from this condition. And I think I do describe it as a condition, because it is an affliction that is destructive of the person who suffers from it, as well as those who suffer from the consequences of it.

Naming these things as sociocide and pleonexia is important in my opinion. We have to call out this behaviour. We could use just tax avoidance. We could use the term avarice or greed. But somehow giving them names which seem to be really identifiable with the problem that we are facing is important because we are naming those who are doing these things as not being innovators or wealth creators, and they're not astute or smart; they are sociocidal.

They are the destroyers of society because they are suffering from pleonexia, which too often seems incurable in their cases. Naming them exposes their true role.

So what should we do about this?

Well, quite clearly, let's call tax avoidance what it is. It is sociocide. It is the destruction of society. And to tackle this problem, we need to close tax loopholes. And most particularly, we need to strengthen tax enforcement. We do need well-resourced tax authorities because they are one of the fundamental underpinnings of a democratic society.

We have to make reciprocity central to tax systems and talk about that fact. And that means we do have to tax the wealth of the wealthy more. Otherwise, we cannot reduce inequality, we cannot stop wealth trickling up, and we cannot restore trust to show that no one is above obligation.

Sociocide is real. It happens when the wealthy avoid tax.

It is driven by their pleonexia, which a whole industry feeds into by praising those who have more than they will ever need.

It corrodes trust. It weakens democracy. And it fragments society, and so it harms us

all. To rebuild the future, we must confront and end it.

Do you agree?

We want to know. There's a poll below this video.

If you would like to take part, please do.

We're asking you some very simple questions.

Do you think that tax avoidance is a deliberate assault on democracy?

Do you believe that those taking part of it are committing sociocide, trying to destroy the society that we live in?

And are they suffering from pleonexia - avarice and greed, in other words?

Or haven't you made up your mind yet?

Let us know because these polls do shape the direction of our future video-making and our opinions. Thank you.

Poll

[poll id="186"]

Taking further action

If you want to write a letter to your MP on the issues raised in this blog post, there is a ChatGPT prompt to assist you in doing so, with full instructions, [here](#).

One word of warning, though: please ensure you have the correct MP. ChatGPT can get it wrong.

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