

## Knowledge is Power. Or is it?

(and if yes – is it egalitarian and democratic or elitarian and aristocratic?)

**Knowledge is power**, says an actor in "A Game of Thrones". The Queen tells her soldiers to cut his throat. Before the knife touches him, the Queen changes her mind and tells her soldiers to go away. She tells the shaken actor: "**Power is power**" and leaves. Views and values produce intentions. Power, coercion and violence produce consequences. What trumps what and when? The answer, dear friends, is blown in the wind. Of history. Listening to this wind requires sensitivity to cross-cultural currents and streams. Knowledge can, and should become power. How could we help? First, by making dreams of digital sublime come true and avoiding the new dark ages of surveillance on demand. Second, by learning to moderate power holders and break monopolies of knowledge locked by professional gate-keepers (cf. Farivar, 2018). Last not least, by cultivating local multicultural skills in global intercultural encounters (cf. Guesmi, 2018). In other words, more democracy should be a remedy. More local representatives in global knowledge networks should help us gain a more balanced view of what the natives really want. More democracy should safeguard us against dictatorship of ideology. If more African researchers than experts from former colonial powers shape our view of African conflicts – we are all multiculturally better off. More democracy should also protect us from dictatorship of technologies. If we do not succumb blindly to technology – we can gain more than one alternative to the googled facebook of the internet. Knowledge may become power. Democratic power.

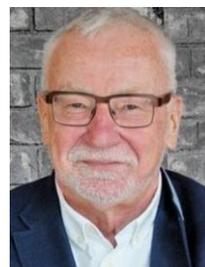
But how democratic and powerful is our democracy? Is parliamentary representation enough? Can a few hundred millions citizens rely on a few hundred politicians to make the best possible decisions day in day out? Once in a few years we can select political representatives. But can we trust them to know what they should know and to want what we want? After all, politicians network and play global games, bypassing democracy, arranging Brexits or wars. Could the citizens of Europe prevent Brexit, by moderating power games of unelected meritocrats from Brussels? We could, we the people, but we would have to know. What knowledge do we need?

A knowledge before strings are, were, will be attached. Knowledge is born free, but it is copyrighted, copywronged and strings are attached soon after. Knowledge requires data, info, but most of all critical minds with multicultural competences. How democratic is a democracy, if our data are under lock and key? If our info is profiled and stereotyped by the emperors of the multimedia? If our knowledge is produced in academic corporations, by professionals with easily captive minds? In academic corporations, whose democratic alibi is shaky at best? Without captive minds, no progress of systematic knowledge. With captive minds, no free knowledge for free citizens. This is the history of the big bang of knowledge explosion, which happens now, and which all of us play a role in. All of us play our role in growing knowledge, in developing multicultural skills and in empowering ourselves. We are powerfully changing our social and natural environment – even the temperature of our public debates is rising (cf. Magala, 2015).

There is a new name for this changing cultural climate. It is called the Anthropocene, the age of the humans. Can we get more empowered and become more knowledgeable? Should we? Could we? How free are we, the people, for critical intercultural self-reflection, if we spend most of the time staring at screens mounted on the walls of our urban caves or carried in smart gadgets inside our pockets? Can we trump this infotainment? Can we switch to edutainment?

### Literature

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