

Against Expertism

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ABSTRACT

Escaping Paternalism's critique of the rationality assumption vindicates von Mises' distinction between egalitarian contracts and hierarchical commands, revealing "libertarian paternalism" as an oxymoron. Putting *Escaping Paternalism* in a zoological context lets us see in "contract and coordination" status acquired by freely given prestige and in "command and subordination" status acquired by forcefully extracted dominance. Libertarian paternalism is a form of dominance. Thus, the "zoological perspective in the social sciences" extends Rizzo and Whitman's critique of rationality and helps clarify "expertism," that is, the attempt to acquire "dominance" by leveraging "prestige." Humans have both an apish disposition to create linear dominance hierarchies and a disposition to form reverse dominance hierarchies. It is undecided whether we can strengthen reverse dominance hierarchies enough to prevent the boots of the few forever stamping on the faces of the many. It is undecided whether the liberal vision of egalitarian cooperation can prevail. But it's worth fighting for.

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When we confuse puppet rationality with real rationality, we run the risk of treating real people as puppets – and turning self-appointed experts into puppet masters. (Rizzo and Whitman, 24)

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1 Introduction

I hope to contribute to Rizzo and Whitman's (2020) foundational work by expanding on their treatment of experts (337, 339–340, 370–374, 380, 400–404) and “self-interested regulators” (317; Rizzo and Whitman, 2020 will henceforth be referred to as RW). Drawing on Henrich and Gil-White (2001), Cheng (2013), and others who distinguish “dominance” from “prestige” as human forms of status, I will define “expertism” as the attempt to acquire “dominance” by leveraging “prestige.” The risk of expertism increases the dangers of paternalism. Paternalism too easily draws out the worst in those who get on top of expert hierarchies.

Some readers may be surprised that I have dubbed Rizzo and Whitman's *Escaping Paternalism* as “foundational.” After all the book is putatively about nudging and the new paternalism. It is therefore relatively narrow in scope. But their examination and criticism of “libertarian paternalism” is so thorough and deep that it lurches toward a general treatise on political economy. I say “lurches” for a reason that may be obvious. The purpose of their book has kept them away from monetary theory, trade cycles, and other topics essential to a general treatise on political economy. Nevertheless, their critique of paternalism is also a deep and convincing lesson in the foundations of political economy.

Their treatment of rationality is the foundation stone of their critique. Rizzo and Whitman's critique of the new paternalism descends from “the most abstract and conceptual” down to “more pragmatic and applied challenges” (RW, 16). But those more pragmatic challenges build on the solid foundations of their critique of economic rationality. Rizzo and Whitman do not imagine themselves atop some lofty perch of omniscience. Rather, they consider the mundane reality of their theoretical agents. They ask Who does what? Who knows what, and how do they know it? How exactly is this supposed to happen? They thus avoid what I have called “the anthill problem” (Koppl, 2018, pp. 19–20). “In examining human society, we may easily forget that we too are humans in society. We see society as an anthill and people as ants. We gaze down upon the anthill as if we were higher beings.” The problem is that we imagine ourselves above the system even though we are in the system. The problem is that we *don't* imagine ourselves subject to any limitations, regularities, weaknesses, biases, flaws, foibles, or foolishness that we notice down there among the ants as we gaze down upon them. Just taking a theoretical perspective easily leads us into the anthill problem. “The theoretical perspective requires us to imagine ourselves above the system even though we live within the system.” Rizzo and Whitman have not forgotten that they, too, are but ants in the anthill. They avoid the anthill error through a rigorous consistency in attending to context and in assuming symmetry among the agents in their model.

Context and symmetry drive the whole analysis of *Escaping Paternalism*. Which is to say that the errors of paternalism can often be attributed to context-thin or asymmetric theorizing. The paternalists' theorizing may be context-thin because it relies on experimental results that translate poorly to the natural social world. Rizzo and Whitman scrupulously note that not all experiments neglect the contextual nature of real choice (RW, 221). But "many experiments are devoid of relevant context" (RW, 221). Importantly, the continuing flow of novelty discussed by O'Driscoll and Rizzo (1985) is always a part of the context of human action. The paternalists' theorizing is asymmetric when it assumes (generally implicitly) that the nudger is cognitively superior to the nudged. "Policymakers," however, "are subject to cognitive biases just as regular people are, and we should expect those biases to manifest in policy choices" (RW, 329). Throughout their book, and especially on pages 329–347, Rizzo and Whitman assume a motivational and epistemic symmetry between the nudger and the nudged and, importantly, between the theorizer and the theorized.

Rizzo and Whitman call the rationality standard common to both traditional orthodox economics and the new paternalists "rationality for puppets" (RW, 40). Once we assume puppet rationality, the imaginary creatures peopling our models "do not have minds of their own." They are "puppets because they evaluate or choose exactly as they have been programmed to do by their handlers" (RW, 41). They append a footnote quoting Alfred Schutz's description of model actors as "puppets or homunculi" whose "stock of knowledge at hand" is "imputed to them by the scientist" who created them (Schutz, 1962, 41; quoted in Rizzo and Whitman, 2020, 41). Puppet rationality has "descriptive usefulness" for many scientific purposes, but it was not originally meant to be a "normative value" (41 and 55).

When I introduced the anthill problem (Koppl, 2018, pp. 19–20), I also quoted Schutz on puppets and homunculi. I quoted Schutz saying the puppet's "destiny is regulated and determined beforehand by his creator, the social scientist, and in such a perfect pre-established harmony as Leibnitz imagined the world created by God." The very act of theorizing society puts you in a spurious godlike position. "What counts is the point of view from which the scientist envisages the social world" (Schutz, 1943, pp. 144–1445). Each ant in the anthill knows something the other ants don't. (This point follows from Hayek's notion of dispersed knowledge. Koppl, 2018, 116–147 includes a history of thought on the division of knowledge.) If this vital epistemic fact is to be reflected in our theorizing, we had better let our puppets have knowledge we did not endow them with. Cutting the puppet's strings seems, therefore, an inevitable consequence of the division of knowledge in society (Koppl, 2018, pp. 142–143). As I have said before (Koppl, 2018, p. 20), the permanent and ineradicable crisis of social science is the theorist's dual role as equal participant and godlike observer. Rizzo and Whitman remind us that theorists and policymakers are equal participants and not at all godlike.

I have tried in this introduction to suggest that the great power in Rizzo and Whitman's book comes from their deep critique of the rationality assumption. I would like now to suggest an extension of their argument. A likely next step in building on their foundations would be to fold in an explicitly evolutionary account of human nature. I believe Nelson and Nelson (2002) were right to speak of the "necessity of setting human knowledge into the biological evolutionary framework congruent with that of other animals" (725). I will discuss only one of the many relevant dimensions of the biological evolutionary framework of human action: status.

2 The Zoological Perspective in Social Science

In 1966 Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox published their classic paper, "The zoological perspective in social science." They decry the "distinction between the biological and social sciences," and call for the "integration" of these two branches of knowledge into "a comprehensive theory" of "social behavior" (Tiger and Fox, 1966, p. 75). They say, "A major intellectual system which is capable of achieving this integration is that based on Darwinian phylogenetic analysis" (*ibid.*). The "systematic study of the evolution of human behavior," they say, "might require a fundamental change in some basic assumptions. about the nature of man and about the nature of social science" (*ibid.*). They warn against seeing their call as no more than the celebration of "analogical" uses of Darwinism. They sought a "comprehensive, zoological approach to the evolution of man as a gregarious organism" (*ibid.*, 76). We need to see "man" as an animal and to recognize the probability that human universals are often biological adaptations and generally the products of a Darwinian process of biological evolution. As Wilson and Daly (1992) illustrate, such adaptations need not be "good," particularly in the modern world. "When faced with any recognisably universal unit of human social behaviour such as dominance/sub-dominance, gregariousness, smiling response, male bonding, greeting, etc., the prime scientific question must be," Tiger and Fox tell us, Lorenz's (1966, 274) question: "what is the function whose selection pressure caused this particular organisation to evolve?" (Tiger and Fox, 1966, p. 76).

The "perspective" of Tiger and Fox is "zoological" because it is a broadly Darwinian integration of the social and biological sciences. The word "zoological" is just meant to identify any such integration. It covers, therefore, a variety of perspectives including, as I note below, sociobiology, the modern theory of gene-culture co-evolution, and most or all varieties of evolutionary psychology. I don't wish to endorse the precise conception of the zoological perspective expressed by Tiger and Fox in 1966. Both the biological and social sciences have changed since they wrote. Lamarkian mechanisms have a greater place today than when they wrote, as Mameli (2004) illustrates. Group

selection has been rehabilitated (Wilson, 1975; Wilson and Wilson, 2007). We now have convincing theory and evidence of gene-culture co-evolution (Boyd and Richerson, 1985; Henrich, 2016) which did not exist in 1966. And so on. But I do endorse integrating the social and biological sciences, seeing human universals as possible adaptations, tracing social causation back to our pre-human ancestors, and drawing out inferences about human nature.

We should probably consider Darwin's *Descent of Man* (1871) and *The Expressions of Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872) as the first works adopting the zoological perspective in social science. Many writers before Darwin recognized that humans somehow evolved. But they did not have sufficiently clear and correct ideas about how humans evolved or from what earlier forms to produce a satisfactory zoological perspective in the social sciences. For example, humans are not necessarily apish in Spencer's (1857) theory even though humanity is fully embedded in cosmic evolution and emergent from it. Darwin not only recognized that humans are descended from earlier species and share an evolutionary history with all terrestrial life forms. He also argued that we can and should understand human nature as being at least partly shaped by this evolutionary descent. We are apish because we are apes. Darwin is the original of this genre because earlier efforts did not have a sufficiently clear, complete, and correct set of mechanisms of human evolution to draw useful and grounded inferences.

Even after Darwin provided a workable framework for situating humans among the beasts, the zoological perspective in social science stumbled. Veblen (1898) famously asked "Why is Economics not an Evolutionary Science?" But it is probably fair to say that he did not adopt a zoological perspective in the social sciences. Hodgson (2008, 399 and note 3, 404) says he applied the Darwinian logic of variation, selection, and retention to "individual habits and institutions." But this application does not commit us to an apish model of humans. More generally, generalized Darwinsim (Hodgson and Knudsen, 2010) does not necessarily imply a zoological perspective in the social sciences. Nor does the sort of evolutionary economics inspired by Joseph Schumpeter.

Nelson and Winter's (1982) *An Evolutionary Theory of Economic Change* is indeed "evolutionary." But it does not adopt the zoological perspective in social science. Blute (2013) was probably right to describe Hull (1988) and Campbell (1965) as "among the most forceful of the early modern theorists to appreciate" how "Darwinian-style evolutionary principles based at their most simplest [*sic*] on social learning, variation and selection apply to sociocultural phenomena" (115). But this appreciation puts them in the same generalized-Darwinism box with Hodgson and Knudsen (2010) and others rather than the zoological-perspective box with Tiger and Fox (1966) and others.

Confusion about biological Darwinism may have delayed the arrival of the zoological perspective in the social sciences. Hard Darwinian logic holds that natural selection is driven by advantage to individuals and that group selection,

which Darwin also affirmed, is driven by advantage to the group or society. Even this “hard” statement is loose. But it is hard enough to underline the fact that neither natural selection nor group selection is driven by advantage to species.

Unfortunately, early interpreters of Darwin were “muddled” about Darwinian mechanisms and given to confused accounts of “higher-order laws” in which evolution was propelled by the “good” of “species or ecosystems” (Gould, 1982, p. 381). Gould says Williams (1966) and Maynard Smith (1978) “have done great service in identifying and correcting this confusion” (note 11, 386). Thus, 8 years after Tiger and Fox’s classical article, there was still widespread confusion on the basics of Darwinian mechanisms. Given this confusion, it is not surprising that a reasonably coherent version of the zoological perspective in social science seems to have arrived only about 1960.

Smith *et al.* (2001) traced the zoological perspective back only as far as about 1976. “It is 25 years,” they say, “since modern evolutionary ideas were first applied extensively to human behavior, jump-starting a field of study once known as ‘sociobiology’” (2001, 128). The four foundational texts of “evolutionary social science,” in their telling, are Wilson (1978), Dawkins (1976), Alexander (1979), and Chagnon and Irons (1979). They suggest that sociobiology gave way to the evolutionary psychology (Barkow *et al.*, 1992), human behavioral ecology (Krebs and Davies, 1997), and “dual inheritance theory” (Boyd and Richerson, 1985). Caporael (2001, 2007) provides an overview of some broad trends in this direction.

The zoological perspective requires us to see both what humans have in common with other beasts and what is unique in them. Nelson and Nelson (2002) convey the point well. They advocate “setting human knowledge into the biological evolutionary framework congruent with that of other animals, where the point is to learn about and adapt within the world. But at the same time,” they note, researchers must recognize and incorporate “the special human capacities for symbolic communication and collective problem-solving.” Moreover, “a critical factor in human cultural evolution is that humans have constantly and radically changed the environment itself, thus changing the nature of the adaptation problem in significant ways” (725).

Since the rise of sociobiology and its various offshoots, zoological perspectives have gained ground. The literature on the zoological perspective is now large and heterogeneous. Contributions to this literature integrate the social and biological sciences by drawing from evolutionary science one or more inferences about human nature and applying such inferences to the human sciences. It unites biology with all the human sciences, including economics (Hayek, 1988), political science (Rubin, 2002), sociology (Alland, 1969), and literary criticism (Carroll, 2004). Paul Rubin’s *Darwinian Politics* is a good example for his breadth of vision and careful treatment of evolutionary issues. Sober and Wilson’s *Unto Others* is a good example of a more narrowly focused

work adopting the zoological perspective. Henrich (2016) and Barkow *et al.* (1992) have been helpful to me in thinking through the zoological perspective. Wilson's *The Property Species* (2020) illustrates how the zoological perspective can change our understanding of basic categories in social science. Koppl *et al.* (2018), Cazzolla Gatti *et al.* (2020), and Koppl *et al.* (2021) unite evolutionary considerations with Arthur's (2009) theory of combinatorial evolution to produce a zoological perspective on the history of technology.

I note in passing that the zoological perspective in the social sciences carries us beyond the distinction between "behaviorism" and "behavioralism." Both terms can have loose and fluid meanings within the economics literature, and space limitations prevent me from treating them adequately here. But in the usual treatments, neither view traces learning mechanisms back to their evolutionary origins. Sometimes "behavioralism" means something like the list of supposed "heuristics and biases" uncovered in the human-subjects laboratory. We have seen that Rizzo and Whitman's treatment of inclusive rationality reveals such "behavioralism" to be context-thin and often asymmetric. From the zoological perspective, neither "behaviorism" nor "behavioralism" as usually construed within the economics literature gives us a sufficiently rich, complete, and grounded account of human learning.

We can and should put the analysis of Rizzo and Whitman into the context of the evolution of *Homo sapiens*. I think their textured account of economic rationality is consistent with current best science, including evolutionary theory, neuroscience, and psychology. In other words, it seems to fit the picture of human nature we get from science in general and evolutionary science in particular. Puppet rationality is not apish, but inclusive rationality is. Apish humans "[e]xperience internal conflict," have "preferences that depend on context," and so on (RW, 26–27). Importantly, apish humans "[h]old beliefs that serve purposes other than truth-tracking" (RW, 26). Natural selection did not mold minds to achieve truth; it molded minds to achieve differential reproductive success.

If Rizzo and Whitman have hit the mark without the benefit of the zoological perspective, we can praise and celebrate their achievement. But why drag in biology? Why bone up on lots of natural science for which we may have no training and little appetite? There may be a reason even if there is no analytical payoff for economics. Showing that their analysis is consistent with our knowledge of humans and their evolution might prevent it from being falsely ignored or dismissed by economists who have self-consciously taken up the zoological perspective. That might be reason enough to trouble ourselves with the biological angle on their work. It keeps them where they deserve to be: in play. But there is, I think, an analytical payoff to bringing biology in. I think the zoological perspective would help to advance Rizzo and Whitman's argument. I will support this conjecture by considering the role of status in human groups.

3 Status

People like status. This familiar home truth is reinforced by the findings of modern ethology. Social animals are often organized in “dominance hierarchies” (Chase *et al.*, 2002). Importantly, “Practically all multi-male/multi-female non-human primate societies are organized on the basis of social dominance hierarchies” (Butovskaya, 2020). Humans are primates, and primates are hierarchical. In a dominance hierarchy, aggressive acts such as bites and threats mostly flow down the hierarchy from the most dominant to most subordinate member of the group, while benefits such as food and access to sexual partners disproportionately flow up the hierarchy.

Not all dominance hierarchies are created equal. Some are “steeper” than others. De Vries *et al.* (2006) introduced a measure of “steepness” for dominance hierarchies. Their brief characterization is uninformative for the uninitiated. “Steepness of a hierarchy is defined here as the absolute slope of the straight line fitted to the normalized David’s scores (calculated on the basis of a dyadic dominance index corrected for chance) plotted against the subjects’ ranks.” The “David’s scores” they refer to capture how lopsided encounters are within a group. If your interactions with others in the group get you a lot of “wins” and few “losses,” you have a high David’s score. The more lopsided your win-loss record, the higher your David’s score. Low steepness means everyone has about the same David’s score and the group or society is relatively egalitarian. High steepness means David’s scores grow sharply with rank, and the group or society is relatively hierarchical. It seems only plausible to guess that environmental conditions will influence steepness. Vehrencamp (1983, p. 667) says, “When it is to the advantage of the dominant to maintain the group, the dominant will ultimately be limited in the degree of bias it can impose by the options available to subordinates outside the group.”

Dominance hierarchies exist in primate societies. We are apes. We are of the same “order” as other primates, including lemurs, new world monkeys, and apes. This order probably emerged 55–85 million years ago (Masters, 2006). The apes form the “superfamily” of “Hominoidea.” The great apes, including gorillas, chimps, bonobos, and humans are a “family” known either as “Homoinidae” or hominids. The Hominini or hominins are a smaller group, a “tribe”, that includes chimps, bonobos and humans, but excludes gorillas. The human evolutionary line probably split from the line that produced chimps and bonobos between 7 and 13 million years ago (Butovskaya, 2020, 15). This split is sometimes called (as in Butovskaya, 2020) the “Homo-Pan split.” But genus *Homo* did not emerge until about 2.8 million years ago (Villmoare *et al.*, 2015) and genus *Pan*, presumably, also emerged only after the “Homo-Pan split.” Thus, the split occurred before either genus, *Homo* or *Pan*, had yet emerged. From this rough history and the universality of dominance hierarchies among primates we can reasonably infer that the human “love of domination and

tyrannizing” noted by Smith (1763 [1982], p. 186) was already present 55 million years ago, whereas any phenotype not shared with other primates probably emerged not more than 13 million years ago.

In spite of our long-standing apish love of domination and tyrannizing, we also have egalitarian impulses. We seem to be the only animals with “reverse dominance hierarchies” (Boehm, 1993a). Boehm (1993b, p. 247) says, “A reverse dominance hierarchy is present only when the strongest individuals in a group are denied power by assertive collective action on a continuing basis.” Reverse dominance hierarchies create egalitarian societies.

Uniquely among the beasts today, it seems, humans have both dominance and prestige as a “distinct yet viable avenues to social rank” (Cheng, 2013). Humans have both dominance and prestige. It is this double path to status that makes possible “expertism” – the attempt to leveraging prestige to acquire dominance.

Prestige is “social rank that is granted to individuals who are recognized and respected for their skills, success, or knowledge” (Cheng, 2013, p. 8). Thus, prestige is status freely given rather than forcefully extracted. Henrich and Gil-White say, “Prestige is a consequence of the evolution of direct social learning capacities in the human lineage” (2001, 173).

Prestige probably became a path to status for humans because we are a cultural species. That is, we do things we learned without the aid of instinct. This happens in other species too, as with imprinting. But learning in other animals usually does not involve “the transmission of both goals and motor patterns.” In “local enhancement,” for example, the learner animal reinvents a skill rather than “directly acquiring” it. Local enhancement is “learning,” however, however because “the learner’s proximity to a skilled individual (and any necessary materials) increases the chance of reinventing” the skilled behavior in question (Henrich and Gil-White, 2001, p. 174). In what Henrich and Gil-White (2001, p. 173) call “true imitation,” however, “a human imitator can copy the behavior or behavioral strategy of a model, including the motor patterns and objectives.” They say, “most other animals completely or almost completely lack” such “true imitation.”

I have said that humans are a cultural species. Importantly, cultural learning has shaped the human genome which, in turn, has shaped our disposition to cultural learning. This mutual shaping over time is the gene-culture co-evolution proposed by Boyd and Richerson (1985), Henrich (2016), and others. Powerful evidence seems to support the general idea of gene-culture co-evolution. For example, humans are “biologically committed to a diet of cooked food” (Wrangham and Carmody, 2010, p. 189) and we have “greater manipulative ability” with our hands than other modern apes (Panger *et al.*, 2002, p. 238). Henrich (2016) is a useful introduction that explains how our bodies are dependent on technological innovations that are not instinctual. Citing (Henrich, 2016, pp. 65–69), Koppl *et al.* (2021) say, “Modern humans

seem to have no instinct for the control or ignition of fire, and yet our puny intestines, unsatisfactory jaw muscles, and small mouths make us dependent on cooking to survive.”

In the tradition of Boyd and Richerson (1985) and Henrich (2016), imitation is the key mechanism of cultural evolution. Imitators require cues indicating whom to imitate. Prestige provides such a cue. But because prestige is freely given, opinions may differ on who has higher status. And status in one area does not automatically confer status in other areas. A hunter who knows how to wield a spear may not know how to make a spear, and a skilled craftsman who knows how to make a spear may not know how to wield a spear. Dominance creates a linear order, prestige does not.

Koppl *et al.* (2021) draw heavily on the work of Boyd, Richerson, and Henrich. But they give greater weight to technology. And, following Kauffman (1988), Arthur (2009) and others, they think the great driver of technological change is not imitation, but recombination. It seems reasonable to guess that the emergence of prestige is linked to toolmaking. Once toolmaking begins, there would seem to be strong evolutionary pressure favoring changes that augment toolmaking skills. Evolutionary pressure would seem likely to favor those individuals, and perhaps those groups, who give deference and attention to the best tool makers in the group.

Evolutionary pressures would seem to favor those individuals who gave good toolmakers deference and attention. Such deference and attention would put them in a better position to make good tools, which would have enhanced their position within the group and, therefore, their reproductive success.

Evolutionary pressures would also seem to favor those groups in which good toolmakers received deference and attention. Such deference and attention would enhance the group’s toolmaking tradition, which would correspondingly enhance the group’s success in hunting large mammals. The stronger and healthier group would likely grow in numbers, and it would be more likely to prevail in wars with other neighboring groups.

Henrich and Gil-White say, “acquiring prestige may confer a capacity for force threat, in turn evoking dominance psychology in subordinates” (2001, 171). It is this conferring of “force threat” that I am calling “expertism.”

We see the attempt to turn prestige into dominance already with Socrates, as I have pointed out elsewhere (Koppl, 2018, pp. 46–47). In Xenophon’s version of *Apology*, Meletus exclaims to Socrates, “I know those whom you persuaded to obey yourself rather than the fathers who begat them.” Socrates admits it, but insists that we should always defer to “the wisest authorities” (Xenophon, 2007, pp. 6–7).

Certain 19th century “men of science” also expressed a desire to turn prestige into dominance. These “men of science” were expert witnesses at law who objected to being challenged by competing experts (see Golan, 2004; Koppl, 2018, 56–67). One such expert, Smith (1860, p. 141), advocated the creation

of “a scientific assessor on the bench beside the judge, who shall examine the witnesses, if needful, and who shall advise the judge.” This assessor “shall not be questioned as a witness, but sit as assistant to the judge.” Smith endorses the proposal he attributes to “the Rev. W. Vernon Harcourt” that “these assessors shall be appointed by the Secretary of the State for Home Affairs. This would render him independent in his position.” The assessor “would sit with the judge, hear the evidence, and . . . inform the judge as to the scientific bearings of the evidence.” In other words, the scientific expert should be in charge. If the assessor is appointed by the Crown instead of the court, he would “speak less as an inferior or an employed of the judge.” This whole arrangement would “cause to cease much unnecessary contradiction and opposition.”

These “men of science” hated opposition. The proposal to be made “assessors” immune to challenge was an attempt to transform their prestige as scientists into dominance within the courtroom. They are not to be challenged but obeyed.

More recently, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) has become a special-interest lobby aimed at empowering scientists. Their “Public and Policy Statements” (<https://www.aaas.org/statements>) take policy stances and are therefore inappropriately political. The AAAS’s statement of 23 June 2020 on migration, for example, is inappropriate because science cannot imply any policy stance without the addition of normative judgments. No organization can avoid all normative judgments. An organization must act and all actions aim at ends, thus evincing a preference for the actions taken over those not taken. But an organization devoted to science should seek to generally avoid expressing value judgments or embracing controversial judgments. Unfortunately, only a portion of the American electorate favors substantially freer migration. For the very reason, however, it is a topic the AAAS should avoid.

The AAAS’s statement on migration is disturbing because it seems to discriminate among potential immigrants, favoring “highly-skilled scientists” over the homeless, the tempest-tost, and the wretched refuse of foreign shores. The AAAS objects only to “[p]reventing highly-skilled scientists and postdocs from entering the US.” It favors, in other words, those who would benefit less over those who benefit more from moving to the United States.

Some degree of nationalism seemed present in their statement of 30 January 2017. It reads in part, “As other countries increase their attention to and investments in science and technology, the United States will make falling behind a new reality.”

On 15 January 2021, the AAAS journal *Science* published a news article proclaiming, “Science could benefit as Democrats take power” (Malakoff and Mervis, 2021). It makes no argument to support the claim that the laws and policies the Democratic Congress will enact will be beneficial to science, apparently because this view is taken for granted. For example, they say the

new political balance in Congress “bodes well for more aggressive government action on climate change,” without seeming to imagine the possibility that ecosystem management is a “wicked” problem requiring adaptive decision-making processes that “span across administrative boundaries” (DeFries and Nagendra, 2017). They seem to welcome the prospect of “rejoining the Paris climate pact,” without recognizing the evidence, found in Peters *et al.* (2020) and elsewhere, that Paris has been ineffectual. They seem to celebrate Senator Schumer’s record of “promoting clean energy” without recognizing that, “owing to the complexity of economic systems and human behavior,” clean energy doesn’t do much environmental cleaning (York, 2012).

The AAAS has endorsed a vision of technocratic rule. One clear statement is found in a 2016 video entitled “Stand with AAAS to support science” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ja1TPIBqiP8&feature=share>). “The world has a few problems,” we are told. The AAAS wants a “scientific approach to creating change and solving problems.” The narrator proclaims, “We can influence how policymakers approach problems,” and “We can stop the trend of online factless information.” And without irony the narrator exclaims, “Scientists unite!” It is shameful and shocking that the AAAS has forgotten that science advances by contestation and disagreement, not unity. The technocratic vision of the AAAS would make scientist our overlords. Science nerds want to be policy jocks.

Eisenhower (1961) warned of the problem I raise in his famous farewell speech. In this speech he famously warned of the “military-industrial complex.” Less famously, he also warned of a “technological revolution” that had changed “the conduct of research” in American universities. “Akin to, and largely responsible for the sweeping changes in our industrial–military posture, has been the technological revolution during recent decades.” Eisenhower said, “Partly because of the huge costs involved, a government contract becomes virtually a substitute for intellectual curiosity. For every old blackboard there are now hundreds of new electronic computers.” In this situation, “The prospect of domination of the nation’s scholars by Federal employment, project allocations, and the power of money is ever present and is gravely to be regarded.”

Expertism is a problem that makes paternalism even more dangerous. It is not only that the worse get on top, as Hayek (1944, pp. 100–113) argued. It is also that our innate apish desire for dominance calls out the worse from those who reach the tops of expert hierarchies.

4 Conclusion

I do not know all the ways in which the zoological perspective in the social sciences might enrich and expand upon Rizzo and Whitman’s critique of

rationality. Future knowledge exists only in the future. But I have given an example. The zoological perspective in the social sciences leads us to recognize humanity's apish disposition to create linear dominance hierarchies. It also directs us, however, to the equally human disposition to form reverse dominance hierarchies and to the categorical distinction between dominance and prestige. These conceptual tools point to expertism and to an explanation of its power and persistence in human life. More generally, the zoological perspective in the social sciences helps us to better understand the unending human saga of equality and hierarchy, liberty and tyranny. Whether such understanding will help tip the balance in favor of equality and liberty is future knowledge.

Rizzo and Whitman's *Escaping Paternalism* is a vindication of von Mises' (1949, 196) distinction between "cooperation by virtue of contract and coordination, and cooperation by virtue of command and subordination or hegemony." Rizzo and Whitman show that von Mises was right say that with "contract and coordination" the "logical relation" between parties is "symmetrical," whereas "command and coordination" produce an "asymmetrical" relation in which the dominated parties are "mere pawns" of the "director." Rizzo and Whitman show that "libertarian paternalism" is an oxymoron. Do we respect the equal dignity and autonomy of our fellow humans or not? von Mises did. Cosmopolitan liberals do. Libertarian paternalists do not. Placing Rizzo and Whitman's analysis into a zoological context allows us to see in "contract and coordination" social relations in which status is acquired by freely given prestige and to see in "command and subordination" social relations in which status is acquired by forcefully extracted dominance.

Liberalism is the vision a society of equals. It calls for a society without concentrated or unchecked power. In such a society, like that of our hunter-gatherer ancestors, the main avenue to status is freely given prestige. The path to dominance in such a society is checked and limited by the egalitarian ideology of the many. *Homo sapiens* passed 200,000–300,000 years (Stringer and Galway-Witham, 2017) in reverse dominance hierarchies in which the prestige was the primary path to status. Since the Neolithic Revolution, which was hardly more than 10,000 years ago, dominance has become predominant in human societies. Can this recent short period of linear dominance hierarchies be brought to an end? Or are we doomed to live with the boots of the few forever stamping on the faces of the many? It is undecided whether the liberal vision of egalitarian cooperation can prevail. But it is worth fighting for.

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