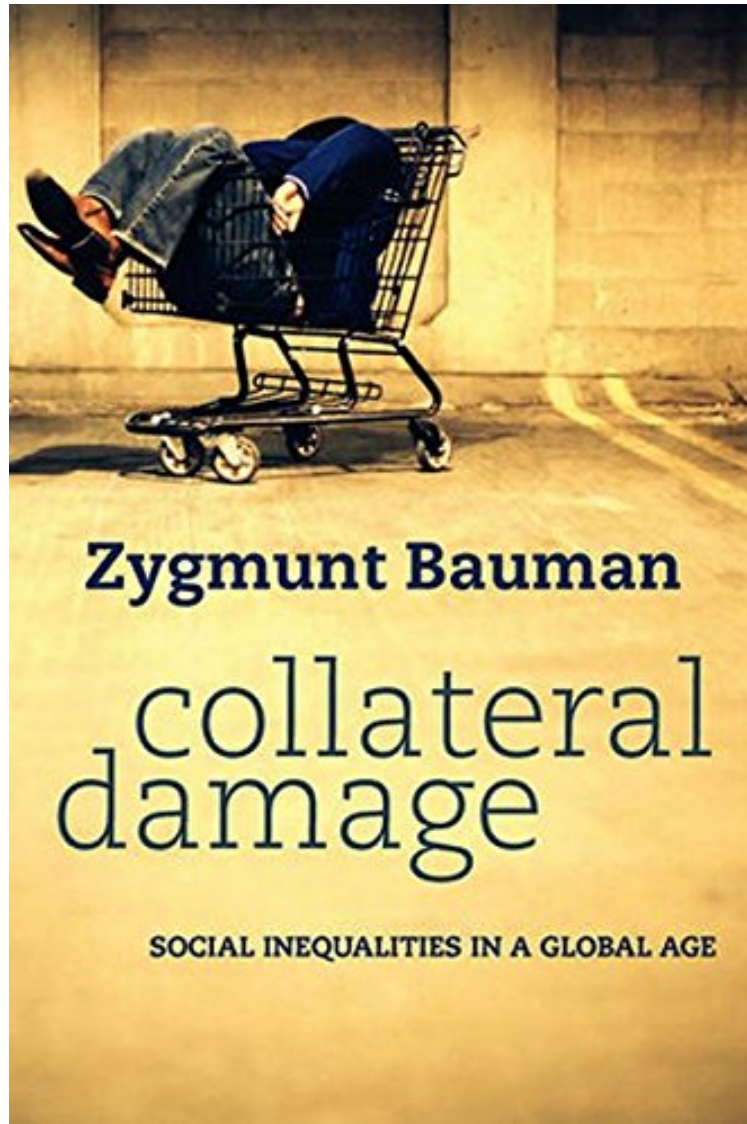


Collateral Damage: Social Inequalities in a Global Age

Zygmunt Bauman

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Zygmunt Bauman : Collateral Damage: Social Inequalities in a Global Age before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Collateral Damage: Social Inequalities in a Global Age:

0 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A sleeperBy Top SoldierWhile some may find it intellectually stimulating, I find it useful for inducing sleep, like counting sheep, although there is a theme.6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Inequality, Liquid Modernity and Global GovernanceBy Tomfrom66"Human uncertainty and vulnerability are the foundations of all political power ... "... argues Zygmunt Bauman in his latest book. When communism collapsed 'solid modernity' collapsed with it."When Henry Ford doubled his workers wages ... his

decision was prompted by a ... rational consideration: while his workers depended on him for their livelihood, Ford in turn depended on them ... "Unlike his descendants a century later (he) was denied the ultimate 'insecurity weapon', the choice of moving his wealth to other places ..." Transgressing the limits set by interdependence would mean destroying the sources of their own enrichment ... in a nut shell there were limits to the inequality which capital could survive ... " [p.43ff]'Liquid modernity' came to its full fruition as a result, not only of the fall of the Berlin Wall, but also from the results of Milton Friedman's visit to China in 1980, where he found - according to Naomi Klein - that Deng Xiaoping "was enthusiastically committed to converting to a corporate-based economy". [Shock Doctrine, p.184-185]As the Chinese people were to find out in Tiananmen Square, he "clearly understood that repression would be crucial" to the success of the post-Communist economy. The same year - 1989 - was the year of Francis Fukuyama's "End of History" and the "unveiling" of the Washington Consensus. Solid modernity's "mutuality of dependence" was at an end. "The state washes its hands of the vulnerability and uncertainty ... of free markets." "The noxious frailty of social status is now redefined as a private affair, a matter for individuals to deal with and cope using the resources in their private possession ... and having ... (removed) ... the residual constraints on profit oriented activities ... the contemporary state must seek other, non-economic legitimacy ..." "That alternative seems to have been recently located ... (in) ... overt or hidden, genuine or putative fear of ... pandemics and unhealthy ... lifestyles ... criminal activities, anti-social conduct by the 'underclass, or most recently global terrorism ..." "Unlike the existential insecurity born of the market ... the state hopes to ... inspire a sufficient volume of fears ... (to) ... outweigh, overshadow and relegate to a secondary position the economically generated insecurity about which the state ... can do next to nothing ... the non-materialization of the predicted threats ... can be applauded as a great victory of (government) ..." p.52-54 Suddenly a variety of irritating, pointless and intrusive reports, take on meaning. They are on stage to keep us docile. Panics about bird flu, obesity, and smoking, are at the non-violent end of the scale, deaths in Afghanistan - that endless war that, we are assured, will prevent another 7/7 - at the violent end of the scale. The agenda - the displacement activity - diverts attention from the fact that full employment is not coming back, the post-war 'cradle to grave' social spending is being wound-down, and no major political party is calling a halt to the onward march of globalization. In its wake other, and more problematic developments flourish. The most obvious - but least commented upon - is the expansion of the putative labour force, which now includes working mothers, the unemployed on workfare, people who thought they were retiring at 65, and - above all - immigrants. The ostensible rationale - in the UK at any rate - is the elimination of 'the deficit'. The fact that - two years into the coalition's cuts - the deficit is actually bigger than it was in 2010, is not something you hear Cameron and Osborne boasting about. But there is another reason for the current line-of-travel, spelled out in Bauman's earlier book "Europe - An Unfinished Adventure" ... "Governments are reduced to the role of standortkonkurrenz to seduce free-floating capital to flow in and to cajole it to resist the temptation to flow out ... (it is the) ... pedlar/beggar role to which governments have been reduced in their struggle to keep their subjects alive and away from mischief ... " ["Europe" - page 58] Hence the programme to reduce corporation tax, and the blind eye turned by the British tax collectors to major tax avoiders. For example, The Independent reported that ... " ... about 5,000 British homes are believed to be registered in a way that would allow their owners to avoid a slew of property taxes ..." "On Cornwall Terrace, an upmarket conversion of eight imposing period houses overlooking Regent's Park in London, the average asking price is 35m, making it the world's most expensive row of Georgian mansions. "Every home sold has reportedly gone to an offshore company, meaning the buyers would have to pay only 52,500 to buy shares in the company, instead of 2.45m in stamp duty at 7 per cent ... Not only are the seriously wealthy not being asked to fund the lifestyle of the 'feckless and workshy', there is even less concern about the matter at the heart of Bauman's new book: inequality. Now that latter-day Henry Fords, like Angela Ahrendts, are freed from an 'interdependence' with her workers, she has access to wealth undreamed of by her predecessors. "At the turn of the twenty-first century, the richest 5 per cent of people receive one-third of total; global income, as much as the poorest 80 per cent." ... "Under conditions of a planetary deregulation of capital movements, economic growth does not translate into the growth of equality. Quite the opposite: it is a major factor in enriching the rich and further impoverishing the poor." p.49-50 Worse ... " ... countries that seemed not long since to have got rid of jarring social inequalities once and for, the sky's-the-limit growth of the distance between the 'haves' and 'have nots', known in the Europe of the early nineteenth century, is coming back with vengeance." p.51 And where is democracy while all this is taking place? Bauman claims that we now have power free from politics, and politics devoid of power. "Power is already global, politics stays pitifully local." "Territorial nation states are local 'law and order' police precincts, as well as local dustbins and garbage remove; and recycling plants for the globally produced risks and problems." "The fate of freedom and democracy in each land is decided and settled on the global stage ... " "As regards the potential for supra-national democracy, however, the example of the EU does not bode well. Its nations remain resolutely nations, with little sign of any groundswell movement towards a democratic transfer union on the US model. If the economic imperative to greater global economic security and equality is not going to win hearts and minds, there will, therefore, be even less hope for that other agenda which Bauman describes in its relationship with the central activity of the global economy: consumerism. Consumerism, charges Bauman, is the new measure of self identity, becoming an accessory to the falling apart of human bonds, which it replaces. However ... "We know all too well ... that the limited

resources of the planet are too modest to accommodate the levels of consumption that are rising everywhere to meet the standards currently reached in the richest parts of the planet ... a feat (which) would require multiplying the resources of our planet by a factor of five ... yet the invasion and annexation of the realm of morality by consumer markets has burdened consumption with functions it can perform only by pushing levels of consumption even higher ... (yet) ... the prospect of setting limit to the rise in consumption, not to mention cutting it down to an ecologically sustainable level, seems both nebulous and abhorrent - something no 'responsible' political force ... would include in its agenda ... " p.80-81 The failure of the Copenhagen, Durban, and Rio summits attests to the size of the mountain to be climbed. What is left is Richard Heinberg's argument, that a game of 'last nation standing' is being played out in front of us. Which takes me back to my review of Alistair Beaton's satire "A Planet for the President", which reached the same conclusion.

The term 'collateral damage' has recently been added to the vocabulary of military forces to refer to the unintended consequences of armed interventions, consequences that are unplanned but nevertheless damaging and often very costly in human and personal terms. But collateral damage is not unique to the world of armed intervention - it is also one of the most salient and striking dimensions of contemporary social inequality. The inflammable mixture of growing social inequality and the rising volume of human suffering marginalized as 'collateral' is becoming one of the most cataclysmic problems of our time. For the political class, poverty is commonly seen as a problem of law and order - a matter of how to deal with individuals, such as unemployed youths, who fall foul of the law. But treating poverty as a criminal problem obscures the social roots of inequality, which lie in the combination of a consumerist life philosophy propagated and instilled by a consumer-oriented economy, on the one hand, and the rapid shrinking of life chances available to the poor, on the other. In our contemporary, liquid-modern world, the poor are the collateral damage of a profit-driven, consumer-oriented society - 'aliens inside' who are deprived of the rights enjoyed by other members of the social order. In this new book Zygmunt Bauman - one of the most original and influential social thinkers of our time - examines the selective affinity between the growth of social inequality and the rise in the volume of 'collateral damage' and considers its implications and its costs.

"Catalogues the almost irreparable damage and corruption visited on the fabric of humanity and its collective values of solidarity, as well as shared interests, by the practices of modern capitalism." Morning Star "A wise old man, raging against the rise of new evils and yet retaining a passion for a redemptive and transformative mission for sociology and its concerns, is something laudable." Times Higher Education From the Back Cover The term 'collateral damage' has recently been added to the vocabulary of military forces to refer to the unintended consequences of armed interventions, consequences that are unplanned but nevertheless damaging and often very costly in human and personal terms. But collateral damage is not unique to the world of armed intervention - it is also one of the most salient and striking dimensions of contemporary social inequality. The inflammable mixture of growing social inequality and the rising volume of human suffering marginalized as 'collateral' is becoming one of most cataclysmic problems of our time. For the political class, poverty is commonly seen as a problem of law and order - a matter of how to deal with individuals, such as unemployed youths, who fall foul of the law. But treating poverty as a criminal problem obscures the social roots of inequality, which lie in the combination of a consumerist life philosophy propagated and instilled by a consumer-oriented economy, on the one hand, and the rapid shrinking of life chances available to the poor, on the other. In our contemporary, liquid-modern world, the poor are the collateral damage of a profit-driven, consumer-oriented society - 'aliens inside' who are deprived of the rights enjoyed by other members of the social order. In this new book Zygmunt Bauman - one of the most original and influential social thinkers of our time - examines the selective affinity between the growth of social inequality and the rise in the volume of 'collateral damage' and considers its implications and its costs. About the Author Zygmunt Bauman (1925-2017) was Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University of Leeds, UK. He is the author of many books that have become international bestsellers and have been translated into more than thirty languages, including 44 Letters on the Liquid Modern World, Liquid Times, The Art of Life and Living on Borrowed Time.