and cooperation which are able to strengthen a feeling of participation and responsibility among individuals (including for other parts of the society and for public interests). Measures also include international and global cooperation,[7] thereby producing and setting an example for exactly the kind of solidarity and responsibility that individuals are asked to exhibit on a local level. Finally, measures must include taking the plurality of "the" public interest into account. Besides public health, this involves human rights, decent living conditions and gender equality, to name but just a few.

In sum, these measures help emphasize the intrinsic connection between technological, technocratic and expert legitimacy with public interests, and thus with politics. Individual interests do not simply outrank public ones, especially when it comes to the enjoyment of human rights for everyone (else). Nevertheless, they do count. The question of *how* they count is a challenge not only for the current pandemic, but for all governance constellations that are based on some kind of legitimacy.

Steve Fuller

Prolegomena to the Political Science of Civil Libertarianism

As COVID-19 reaches its first year as a global pandemic, much has been made of the awkward fit between genuine scientific uncertainty concerning the course of the virus and the need for effective political communication and policymaking. In practice, the world has become a living laboratory, with each nation's population serving as guinea pigs in rather different experiments based on largely the same science but applied under a variety of geographical, political and cultural conditions. Moreover, there are no agreed standards to make cross-national judgements about 'success' in handling the pandemic, though obviously the actions taken by governments have consequences for those outside of their formal jurisdictions. Indeed, every pronouncement by the World Health Organization that presumes such universal standards ends up striking one or more parts of the world as annoying backseat driving.

A useful albeit unexpected point of reference is the controversy over the meaning of *Volk* in *Volkswirstschaft* ('national economy') in early twentieth century Germany. On one side stood Werner Sombart and the Brothers Weber (Max and Alfred), who

7 Armin von Bogdandy and Pedro Villarreal: "The role of international law in vaccinating against COVID-19. Appraising the COVAX Initiative," *Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law & International Law Research Paper* 46 (2020). Michael Ioannidis: "Between responsibility and solidarity. COVID-19 and the future of the European economic order," *Heidelberg Journal of International Law/Zeitschrift für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht* 4 (2020).

in their rather different ways regarded *Volk* as 'concept', roughly equivalent to the nation's culture, understood as a kind of organism that evolves over time. This *Volk* exists semi-autonomously from the people who actually live within the nation's borders at any given moment. On the other side stood Bernhard Harms, a founder of modern economic geography who recruited Ferdinand Tönnies to his institute of 'world economy' at Kiel. Harms defined *Volk* in terms of the actual residents in a nation-state at a given time – and the capacities they bring toward promoting the national interest.[8] This distinction in conceptions of *Volk* is reminiscent of the one later drawn – for the centenary of the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* – by the German-trained Harvard biologist Ernst Mayr between what he called 'typological' and 'population' thinking regarding the nature of 'species'.[9] For Mayr, that 'metascientific' shift in conceptual horizons was Darwin's ultimate achievement. In all this, we are ultimately talking about updated versions of the medieval scholastic distinction between 'intensional' versus 'extensional' definitions[10] – with Harms' *Volk* and Darwin's 'species' extensionally defined as a population of phenotypic bodies.

My sense is that Liu, Mitcham and Nordmann are biased toward the population side of *Volk* when dealing with the response to the pandemic, whereas the governments in charge across the world are more typological in orientation. At the very least, they bring both notions into play when they characterize the "grand scheme optimizing" approach of epidemiological population thinking, contrasting this to creative "patchwork satisficing" as the cultural achievement of particular knowledge-societies. Nevertheless, one can move beyond these dichotomies and imagine that particular cultures might internalize population thinking as part of their collective self-understanding. What follows is an exploration of this prospect, which I call the *political science of civil libertarianism*.

A commonplace of current political rhetoric is that governments must balance people's health against the health of the economy. And of course, policymakers across the world claim to be striking just the right balance. However, the task is made much harder when people's cultural self-understanding includes a strong sense of civil liberties, that is, when a population conceives itself as an aggregate of free individuals. In their own interestingly different ways, the US, the UK and Sweden have faced this issue squarely during the pandemic. I will sketch the different ways that I

8 See Dieter Plehwe and Quinn Slobodian: "Landscapes of Unrest: Herbert Giersch and the Origins of Neoliberal Economic Geography." *Modern Intellectual History* 16 (2019), pp. 185–215.

9 Ernst Mayr: "Typological versus population thinking." *Evolution and anthropology: A centennial appraisal*, ed. B. J. Meggers, pp. 409–12. Washington, DC: Anthropological Society of Washington 1959.

10 See Steve Fuller: "Our love-hate relationship with humanity. Review of D. Chernilo, *Debating Humanity*," *Distinktion* 21/1 (2020), pp. 67–73.

see them handling the matter, including theoretical remarks which finally offer a philosophically perspicuous perspective on the pandemic.

Most of the media and scholarly focus relating to the US response has been on Donald Trump's near-denial of the pandemic's severity. This ignores the extent to which civil libertarianism is embedded in American culture. After all, the US is a federal republic, which means that state governors have considerable discretion on how they handle matters under their jurisdiction. The *de facto* result is a largely devolved approach to the pandemic, in which states that take the pandemic more seriously impose their own, often Europe-style lockdowns. This places limits on the 'effective' response that any central government can make to a nation-wide, let alone global pandemic. The UK, which characteristically 'muddles through' any crisis, recognizes this as well. To his credit, Boris Johnson is much more self-conscious in his rhetoric and actions about his nation's civil libertarian tradition than Trump. Although the UK media discourse is very much focussed on 'lives vs jobs', the UK government is aiming for a more sophisticated approach. It 'nudges' rather than compels people to do the right thing, advertising its policies for several days before they are enforced (if they are), in order to enable people to get used to them. Tellingly, 'Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition' is not calling for the government's downfall. Indeed, the UK Labour Party has been largely supportive of the government's efforts, complaining mainly about the lack of clarity in messaging. In the UK, like the US, concerns for civil liberties persist, regardless of who happens to be in power during the pandemic.

Sweden provides a very interesting variation on this theme, given its early open endorsement of a 'herd immunity' approach to the pandemic, which the UK echoed in more muted terms – and then retracted from, at least officially. At first, the relationship between herd immunity and a civil libertarian culture may not be apparent. However, it begins to make sense in the light of epidemiological population thinking and Sweden's self-understanding as a nation-state that raises people to be responsible individuals and then simply lets them get on with it, based on the information made available to them and a sense of mutual trust between the state and the individual. At a conference on children's rights, the Swedish journalist Henrik Berggren illuminated this sensibility in terms of the story of Pippi Longstocking, in which the state stands for Pippi's absconded parents, who nevertheless left her a chest of gold coins with which to manage her affairs.[11] Pippi rises to the challenge with a strange combination of recklessness and generosity.

There is much to say about the relationship of the state and the individual implied here. It ultimately reflects the implicit Deist theology of civil libertarianism, what Voltaire ridiculed as *deus absconditus*: the divine perpetrator who flees from the sce-

11 Henrik Berggren: *The autonomous child and the moral logic of the Swedish welfare state,* New York: Columbia University (2006), unpublished.

ne of the first crime, Creation! Such Deism is evident in the US Founding Fathers, who held that no human governor should be more powerful than the deity in whom the governed believe. This was their civil libertarian response to Hobbes' challenge that God should simply be replaced by a secular state holding the monopoly of force in society. On their view, even if God is gone from the scene, humans – no matter how powerful – are always in less than absolute control over their own fate. It is easy to see how this plays into the emergence of probabilistic reasoning and statistical population thinking in the Enlightenment, and more specifically how it provides the incentive to take risks – what I have called the 'proactionary' attitude.[12] That's Pippi's gold chest, which is now courtesy of the welfare state. It affords her the recklessness and generosity that are the hallmarks of the 'natural born liberals' that the welfare system was designed to breed.[13]

So, what does this mean with regard to the current pandemic?

At the most basic and seemingly trivial level, it means that the state can rely on having sufficiently 'raised' its population to trust the state whenever it needs to issue any further instructions concerning their behaviour. As the agricultural metaphor of 'raising' crops and livestock suggests, what states provide is an expansive potential for response, somewhat along the lines perhaps of creative "patchwork satisficing". This incurs the risk of failure, and there will be failures. The elderly and those with 'underlying' health conditions are more likely than others to die from COVID-19. To be sure, statistical population thinking implies – as Keynes famously reminded us – we are all dead in the long run. Does this amount to a cavalier attitude towards those who might soon die anyhow, with or without COVID-19? The political science of civil libertarianism doesn't allow that much wriggle room for a precautionary view of saving supposedly sacred lives. There will be blood whoever is in charge.

Christopher Coenen

Breaking the Spell of TINA – An Integrative Notion of Socio-Technical Progress

This short text is so complex and full of ideas that trying to answer all the relevant points would require the writing of several essays. I will therefore only address three questions here, all of which relate to the role of philosophy of technology, or the wi-

12 Steve Fuller and V. Lipinska: *The Proactionary Imperative*, London: Palgrave Macmillan 2014.

13 Ibid., p. 76.