

The recovery plan – an ideological riddle

As I was sitting the other day on the beach, I finally realized that the summer has just made a pit stop in Denmark. Everything appears so charming and idyllic, yes indeed, everything under this treacherous sun looks so perfect, that the last thing that comes to my mind is that something is in need of recovery or recue. What have we lost? I'll rephrase the question, are we missing something?

Sure we are. Everyone is talking these days about the great recovery plan for all of us fragile economic souls on the verge of bankruptcy. So, I have to have a closer look at it.

There seems to be a catch to this. The loss appears mysterious. It is like a riddle, and no ordinary methods may prove sufficient in trying to solve it. Luckily, the sun has been so nice to me lately that I just couldn't help feeling so democratically free, and among all freedoms democracy can give us, the freedom of analogy is the one I like best. Hence, I analogized freely while trying to solve the mystery of the big disaster, which the great recovery plan

should somehow put an end to.

The riddle

I recalled a story about different body parts disputing about the importance each of them has for the whole body. Brain claimed to be the most important, since it decides on everything, it only can think. Heart claimed the greatest importance since it pumps all the blood that nourishes our body. Eyes said, we look for all of you, and you would not be able to find your way around if it was not for us. Legs said, we carry you guys; without us no one is getting anywhere. Stomach replied, wait a second, I feed you all, you would starve without me. And in the end the ass said, I'm important too. All the other organs looked at it with the mixture of disbelief and arrogance, and then they laughed at it.

The ass got so mad that it decided to go on strike. For several days it stubbornly refused to do any work whatsoever. By the end of the week, the brain got dizzy, the stomach got swollen, the legs were aching, and the eyes turned red, the heart could barely pump a drop. So they said,

ok ass, we give up, you are the most important.

What is the moral of this story? Well, it could simply be this, *never mess with the ass*.

However, the analogy which helped me solve this riddle goes roughly like this. If the body was a society, then the ass would be what seems to be the most precious to it, consumption. Some would object, what about stomach? Well, I admit it is an ally or a fifth column at best, but it doesn't really matter, does it? I'll leave to the reader to guess which functions of the society other bodily parts symbolically stand for.

Hence, it is the well-being of our asses that is at stake here. Indeed, it did not escape my attention that our bodies grow bigger and bigger asses, that our society is about consuming more and more, that our standards of happiness originate from our ass, and that those who think and work for our good always listen to the ass. The ass has become sacred; a solid point of reference, our God, which, as it grows larger, becomes more soft and comfortable to sit on. So the very foundations of our society have been shaken, and should our consump-

tion be even more threatened or harmed, then it is our patriotic duty to defend it by making it grow again. Indeed, it is our patriotic duty to consume more. Didn't I hear the American president George W Bush making this very statement a few years ago?

I know that this sounds like a joke, so far at least. But, let me have a moment of quasi-academic seriousness and I'll make myself clear.

In what follows the reader is free either to read the whole content or to read just between the lines.

I'll start with the academic definition of an ass

Consumerism is a social and economic order that is based on the systematic creation and fostering of a desire to purchase goods or services in ever greater amounts.

The Source: Wikipedia.

And in addition to this the following may be rendered true

Conspicuous consumption is a term used to describe the lavish spending on goods and services acquired mainly for the purpose of displaying income or wealth. In the mind of a conspicuous consumer,

such *display serves as a means of attaining or maintaining social status. ...Thus, the concept of conspicuous consumption has been discussed in the context of addictive or narcissist behaviors induced by con-sumerism, the desire for immediate gratification, and hedonic expectations.*

The Source: Wikipedia

Hence, the ass, no doubt, is important, but let's see who is the boss

Studies of political consumerism originating especially from political science have demonstrated that the market mechanism can be regarded as another channel for political participation, and that the consumers are both able to and willing to use this channel to achieve political goals.

The source: Political Consumerism

Hence, when the ass gets political it does get bossy too. However, this may not yet settle the issue. Nonetheless, some would say it also gets moral

Late modern consumers do more than just think about their own wellbeing when doing their daily shopping. Increasingly, consumers express non-economic

values through the market arena, especially with regard to such issues as human rights, animal rights, global solidarity and environmental responsibility. What we see in the Nordic countries and elsewhere is that people are active in boycotting and "buycotting" (i.e. positively choosing) products and producers for ethical and political reasons.

The source: Studying Political Consumerism Magnus Boström, Andreas Føllesdal, Mikael Klintman, Michele Micheletti and Mads P. Sørensen

Still, others may have their doubts regarding this when saying openly that

...political consumerism will never become an influential regulatory tool because individual consumers cannot be convinced, organized, and trusted sufficiently to express ethical and political values in the marketplace. A final group of scholars asserts that political consumerism is not a move towards sustainable development because it encourages continued overconsumption.

The source 1. Studying Political Consumerism Magnus Boström, Andreas Føllesdal, Mikael Klintman, Michele Micheletti and Mads P. Sørensen

And for all we know they might even be right about this, some places at least

In an opinion segment of New Scientist magazine published in August 2009, reporter Andy Coghlan cited William Reese of the University of British Columbia and epidemiologist Warren Hern of the University of Colorado Boulder, saying that human beings, despite considering themselves civilized thinkers, are "subconsciously still driven by an impulse for survival, domination and expansion... an impulse which now finds expression in the idea that inexorable economic growth is the answer to everything, and, given time, will redress all the world's existing inequalities."^[8] According to figures presented by Rees at the annual meeting of the Ecological Society of America, human society is in a "global overshoot", consuming 30% more material than is sustainable from the world's resources. Rees went on to state that at present, 85 countries are exceeding their domestic "bio-capacities", and compensate for their lack of local material by depleting the stocks of other countries.

The source Coghlan, Andy. "Consumerism is 'eating the future'". http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_templates. Retrieved 2009-08-07.

At least, from this we learn that some asses are definitely more important than other

Danmark er stadig i top fem, når det gælder udviklingsbistand. Det siger udviklingsminister Søren Pind (V), efter regeringen og DF har besluttet at fastfryse udviklingsbistanden på 15,2 milliarder kroner de næste tre år.

The source: Extra Bladet, article 1351498

Anyways, in the times when the financial institutions were lending money we didn't make in order to consume goods we don't really need, someone was sober enough to call for an alarm saying

Vi ser nu, at den globale finansielle og økonomiske krise er afløst af risiko for en offentlig gældskrise. Den seneste uro på de finansielle markeder er afledt af gældskrisen i Europa.Store offentlige underskud og stigende gæld kan skabe nervøsitet på de finansielle markeder og presse renterne op, som vi lige nu ser det i Europa.

The source: Ministry of Finance Denmark

So the rescue mission has to start immediately proceeding in four steps

For det første vil vi samlet set holde driftsudgifterne i

den offentlige sektor i ro i perioden 2011-2013. *For det andet* vil vi suspendere de automatiske stigninger i skattefradrag overførselsindkomster, så de fastholdes uændret i kroner i de næste to år. *For det tredje* vil vi udskyde den planlagte forhøjelse af indkomstgrænsen for topskat i 2011 i to år. *For det fjerde* vil vi gennemgå budgetterne med en tættekam for at finde ordninger, vi kan drosle ned eller undvære.

The source: Ministry of Finance Denmark

And there it is, The riddle is solved. The sun is gone; our ass is on diet, but only for a short while. Soon it will be growing again, placed safely on our ideological throne.

ID Zone

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