



ANTHROPOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

Video Transcript English

Whose (in)security?

SERENA O. DANKWA: When it comes to security, we are actually faced with a certain paradox, that often violence or the threat of violence, of prisons etc., are involved or threatened in order to create a sense of security. But I wonder now, are there also other means that are not so violent, that don't rely on punishment or military presence, which in turn unsettle certain other people, so that only creates security for certain individuals. But when it comes to creating genuine security for everyone, then what would, how could one approach that, what would be the alternatives to achieving greater security for everyone?

FATIMA MOUMOUNI: Well, there are many abolitionist theories, which are precisely about abolishing the violent creation of security altogether. And I actually find it interesting that they are always accused of naivety and of not thinking far enough, because abolishing security would mean insecurity. And I think what's important there is actually the factor of utopia. And I think that's what we need, because conservative theories and politics, as the name suggests, want to conserve something, and wanting to conserve something is always something fearful. That's always something that favours the status quo because it's afraid of what could be. And so the status quo, regardless of whether it's good or not, gets a certain authority that it may not deserve at all. And I think if you look at Switzerland, for example, where you can set up a cash box on a mountain and say, here, we have some cheese for sale, we trust that you will pay for it. If one believes in that, then one would also have to believe that many other interactions could be carried out with less violence and control, especially. That we're allowed to do that. That we're allowed to dare to think of alternatives and to do so with the thought in mind that the way it is now, that doesn't work either. It doesn't work at all. It's not good at all.

SERENA O. DANKWA: Not for everyone.

FATIMA MOUMOUNI: Yes.

SERENA O. DANKWA: I think the reason why it's so hard to let that go is clearly fear, but also the question of what happens in this moment of transition. There are also concepts of how justice can then be established, like restorative justice, because when people are so conditioned to be punished and to run up against boundaries, I don't mean national borders, but that one can only get something if one is also violent oneself, then many people think that it's utopian to want to change that from one day to the next.



So I think these are long processes but ones I find very exciting. And the question then is, in order to motivate people to engage with something like that, to say, okay, we now have less security personnel and maybe something might happen, but maybe we will also gain something from it. What is, what could be the gain? How could it benefit us to dare to live with more insecurity, initially, or to say goodbye to things that one feels are simply necessary, for example, without the police, nothing would work anymore. How can one motivate people for that, or what would then, what would there be to gain, perhaps?

FATIMA MOUMOUNI: So what I have used for years for myself, but also for exactly these conversations, is a quote that I have borrowed from James Baldwin and which I would now like to read in translation, because I think it's actually about a promise that things could be better.

"Any real change implies the breakup of the world as one has always known it, the loss of all that gave one an identity, the end of safety. And at such a moment, unable to see and not daring to imagine what the future will now bring forth, one clings to what one knew, or dreamed that one possessed. Yet, it is only when a person is able, without bitterness or self-pity, to surrender a dream they have long cherished or a privilege they have long possessed that they are set free. That they are set free for higher dreams, for greater privileges."

So that means, at the end of the hard work there is...

SERENA O. DANKWA: At the end of security.

FATIMA MOUMOUNI: Exactly... there awaits a big cookie. And I think that can really be seen positively, in the Baldwinian sense.

SERENA O. DANKWA: That new worlds and new freedoms open up, of which we have no idea, no idea at all.

FATIMA MOUMOUNI: Yes.

SERENA O. DANKWA: Thank you very much.