

Thoughts on the ENLIGHTENMENT MODEL

No detailed scientific explanation is required to establish that the human being's characteristics include the will to survive and the ability to devise or create the best possible framework conditions for his or her existence by employing the brain. With the help of body and mind, it is a matter of reconciling two goals - the striving for *security* in favour of survival and the urge for *freedom* in favour of controlling existence. Both goals contain two aspects each: external *security* refers to orderly conditions in the interest of provision, protection and certainty (in the broadest sense of the terms), while internal *security* includes knowledge, understanding and precaution. The human drive for *freedom* contains both the possibility of being able or allowed to change something about the existing framework conditions for one's own existence, as well as the option of rejecting collectively binding orders in the assumption that one can do without them. If we look at the course of human history, it becomes clear that the effort to find a balance between *security* and *freedom* has not yet resulted in a definitive solution, but must always be found anew, on both a small and a large scale.

Building on countless attempts under the most diverse conditions and with the most diverse results over countless generations, a concept was developed in the course of the 18th century that we call the ENLIGHTENMENT MODEL. In favour of the urge for *freedom*, it was a matter of questioning traditional patterns of thought, behaviour and organisation (feudalism, dominance of the crown and the church), which were perceived as outdated and which, at their core, were based on security thinking, and of setting new ones in motion.

The will to favour *freedom* over *security* at that time had become so strong that insufficient planning had been done on how to proceed after a radical change, however, and violence was also largely regarded as a legitimate means. The historical development since this impulse in the 18th century can therefore be understood as a chain of attempts to come to terms with the once new and untried ENLIGHTENMENT MODEL, which had been elevated to the status of a model for the future. What are its three most important components?

The first component is the postulate of qualified knowledge, which is always anew the basis for providing the tools to understand the world and therefore to be able to regulate it more effectively. The accumulation of knowledge requires that it be processed and made accessible so

that it can be applied, but also that it be constantly revised in order to learn to distinguish between what is wrong and what is right and to be able to judge what is relevant and what is not. The second most important component is to integrate as many people as possible into the knowledge-based way of life, depending on the organisational possibilities. This requires two maxims: general education and professionalisation were elevated to indispensable tools in the interest of guaranteeing external and internal *security*; democratisation had the purpose of extending co-determination to those concerned in the order promising security (legal system, control). The third component is rooted in the principle of *humanism*, in which not only the value of the human being in itself plays a central role (ethical and charitable dimension), but also the awareness of the embedding of humanity in the cosmos (ecological dimension).

What is the origin of the ENLIGHTENMENT MODEL in spatial-temporal terms?

The development of this model emerged from the communication of scholars between England, France, Italy and Germany, from where the discourse and the activities that could be derived from it, gradually spread outwards - to the various peripheral regions of the European continent and to the other continents. The local framework conditions in each case have - in total - ensured that the ENLIGHTENMENT MODEL was handled in very different ways. This model has often been questioned for various motives, but it has never been abandoned; on the contrary, the so-called "West" has remained on the stance that this model, despite all its weaknesses, is the best and most proven option for shaping the future. It is therefore expedient to take a look at its strengths and weaknesses.

One of the strengths is that the postulates of expertise and qualified knowledge are indispensable to finding solutions to problems that have become complex in the interest of striving for *security*. One of the strengths is also the insight not only to stick to one line of approach, but also to think about and implement others if necessary (*freedom*). A third strength is the idea of looking at the world as a whole - and not just in the present (a fluid category), but also in the (at least near) future.

Weaknesses include the presence of physical and intellectual counterforces that reject the ENLIGHTENMENT MODEL either in part or in whole, without offering comparably effective alternatives that do justice to the balance of *security* and *freedom*. Another weakness is revealed when one

considers the handling of the model: If the urge for *freedom* (tolerance in the interest of unrestricted diversity) takes precedence over the striving for *security* (manageability, controllability), the balance threatens to be lost. Ultimately, a third central weakness can be derived from this: The aforementioned balance can only work if enough people with responsibility and a sense of proportion are committed to it - otherwise "the scales" inevitably keep tipping back and forth...

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