

# Why Social Science Fails Blacks and How to be Truly Anti-racist

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## Introduction

This article critiques ways in which the disciplines of social science have turned, and continue to turn, an intentional blind eye to the ecclesial soil from which they grow. Such blindness has left them incapable of accurately representing people who do not have a long history of being honed by the Western Church. This article finds the following:

- A notable gap in accounts of the history of social science.
- Social science's foundations are deeply rooted in racism.
- Social science terminologies do not translate from Western to African worldviews.
- The West seeks to solve physical problems by ignoring or bypassing the holistic nature of humankind.
- "Supernatural" is not a valid category in either the African worldview or in articulations of quantum theory.

Native English, having become very secular, may render many of the terms I use in this article inaccurate in their sense, implicature, or emotional impact. I consider native users and indigenous speakers of a language to be those who have learned it in contexts native to or indigenous to its mother-tongue speakers. My focus on racism and anti-racism is on the USA, and to a lesser extent Europe. I concentrate on the tendency among intellectuals to consider racism to arise if one expects Black people to be less capable than White Westerners in functioning in secular Western society. I consider the terms secular, liberal, and modern to be synonyms. Similarly, I use the terms Western and European as synonyms.

## A notable gap in accounts of the history of social science

Histories of the development of the social sciences follow the widespread pattern shared by other secular historians.<sup>1</sup> They explore

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1. A survey of available histories of social science exposes a gaping omission. Taking *Encyclopaedia Britannica's* account of social science as my major case-example (Robert A. Nisbet, 'Social Science', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, nd. [www.britannica.com/topic/social-science](http://www.britannica.com/topic/social-science),

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the roots of Western traditions by going back to the Greek philosophers. Some allusions are made to Christianity and Christian theologians' (especially Augustine and Aquinas) "interim role." That is to say; the Church is taken as having "held the fort" for a few centuries, doing good by keeping literacy and the Greek classics alive. Eventually, with some futile efforts at resistance, these histories show the Church being forced to bow to the triumphal march of the development and growth of much superior social science disciplines.

These histories take medieval Christianity(s) largely as a set of foundationless activities and outdated beliefs whose primary

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accessed 29th June 2020.), backed by other available accounts such as those by Ross (Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.]) and Gordon (H. Scott Gordon, *The History and Philosophy of Social Science*, [London and New York: Routledge, 1991.]), a clear pattern emerges.

problem as against contemporary times was keeping a lid on new innovation. The histories fail to ask just *why* the church came to be so powerful, *why* so many people became Christian and continue to identify as Christian even today, *why* people invested their time and money into erecting church buildings that remain prominent up to today, and so on. Instead, they implicitly declare all such people naïve, misguided, and behind the times.

It was only when innovators threw off the cloak of ecclesial oppression, according to this interpretation, that radical thinkers could pave the way for the benefits of modern social science. Social science considers the Church to be rooted in irrational foundations built on arbitrary superstitious beliefs. The Church's condemnation of Galileo's discovery of heliocentrism is often cited to make this point.<sup>2</sup> Yet closer examination reveals levels of complexity underlay this condemnation. Ciampoli, who was an intimate friend of Pope Urban VIII, was in favor of Galileo's *Dialogue* being published and ready to quash opposition to it. It was his falling out with the Pope at the time that proved to be the major incident that turned the tide against the book.<sup>3</sup> The condemnation of heliocentrism of the time does not represent a blanket irrationality of the Church.

At best, the Church and its activities are understood by social science as a ladder that can be kicked away<sup>4</sup> after arriving at an evolutionary stage in development.<sup>5</sup> If the Church was ever necessary, social science sees it as a superseded prior stage in the expansion of today's advanced and superior society.<sup>6</sup> All this totally ignores ways in which ecclesial thinkers provided the conceptual foundations for what was subsequently considered secular thinking. Science is a case in point.<sup>7</sup> "The divinization of space in scholastic thought [in the Middle ages] produced virtually all the properties that would be attributed to space during the course of the scientific revolution."<sup>8</sup> "Theological assumptions unique to Christianity explain why science was born only in

## The nineteenth century that nurtured today's social sciences is the very period that produced the ethnocentric thinking that underlies race-issues today.

Christian Europe."<sup>9</sup>

It would be little exaggeration to compare contemporary secular historians' view of the Church to the kind of launch pad used by today's space shuttles (or lunar rockets of a few decades ago) that are most incredible for the way they collapse into insignificance as all eyes follow the upward-bound projectile they once supported!

Confined to Europe, assumptions that became foundational to social science, made in the nineteenth century, did not seem erroneous.<sup>10</sup> Since European people shared much of the same history. The influence of Christianity had been deep and pervasive over hundreds of years throughout all those considered to be truly "human" (i.e., Europeans) in the heyday of racism.<sup>11</sup> Dominant scholars who were endeavoring to throw off the Christian cloak were happy with social science. I will use the rest of this article to peer into that area of understanding rendered taboo in modern times.

### Social science's foundations are deeply rooted in racism

"The extent to which both the sciences and the arts [of the nineteenth century] were determined by assumptions about race is consistently under estimated."<sup>12</sup> The nineteenth century that nurtured today's social sciences is the very period that produced the ethnocentric thinking that underlies race-issues today. Herbert Spencer's ideas about the "survival of the fittest" in a society, known as social Darwinism, assumed that Black people were inferior, and "the major founding pioneers of both sociology and psychology in the United States were intellectual disciples of Herbert Spencer"<sup>13</sup>

2. William Shea, "Galileo and the Church," 114-135 in David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers (eds.), *God and Nature: historical essays on the encounter between Christianity and Science*. (London: University of California Press, 1986), 114.

3. Shea, "Galileo," 129.

4. Ha-Joong Chang, *Kicking Away the Ladder: development strategy in historical perspective*. (London: Anthem Press, 2002.)

5. Jonathan H. Turner, "Using Neurosociology and Evolutionary Sociology to Explain the Origin and Evolution of Religions" in *Journal for the Cognitive Science of Religion*, 2018, 4: 7-29.

6. The term "religion" is frequently used in place of "church." Use of this term presupposes the church to be just one in a wide category of religions, thus whatever debunks religion is taken as undermining the church. For more on contemporary understanding of religion and religions see Harries. (Jim Harries, "Shadow-boxing: the missionary encounter with Christian theology in world religions," in *The Pneuma Review, Journal of Ministry Resources and Theology for Pentecostal and Charismatic Ministries & Leaders*, (2016), <http://pneumareview.com/shadow-boxing-the-missionary-encounter-with-christian-theology-in-world-religions/>)

7. While reference here is to "physical science," it is such on which social science subsequently sought to model itself.

8. Edward Grant, "Science and Theology in the Middle Ages," 49-75 in Lindberg and Numbers, eds. *God and Nature*, 57.

9. Rodney Stark, *For the Glory of God: How Monotheism Led to Reformations, Science, Witch-Hunts, and the End of Slavery*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 3.

10. They were largely atheistic: Spencer, as a founding figure of sociology, was "anticlerical and antideistic." (Thomas C. Leonard, "Origins of the myth of social Darwinism: The ambiguous legacy of Richard Hofstadter's Social Darwinism in American Thought," in *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 71 (2009) 37-51, 39 (footnote 7).)

11. Which I take as being the nineteenth century.

12. Robert C. Young, *Colonial Desire: hybridity in theory, culture and race*. (London: Routledge, 1995), 90.

13. Ibram X. Kendi, "Black Doctoral Studies: the radically anti-racist idea of Molefi Kete Asante," in *Journal of Black Studies*, 2018, 49(6), 542-558.

Extremities, illogic, and unscientific works were normal in America in 1900, normal among the scientific racists who dominated the academy. Most scholars simply were silent on the African subject. But those who spoke almost always lectured with ridicule and condescension. Historians were justifying slavery and writing against the evil days of Reconstruction. Anthropologists and sociologists were situating African people as either sub-White or subhuman on the evolutionary scale close to the ape. Political scientists were proclaiming that they were unworthy of the ballot, unworthy of American citizenship. Biologists were finding their physical features beastlike or inferior to Whites. Psychologists were quantifying their primal immorality and ignorance. Criminologists were proclaiming them a national menace. Educators were championing training for submission as the penultimate pedagogy for African Americans. Physicians were gauging their disease levels and predicting eventual extinction, while eugenicists were calling for their immediate eradication. Ironically, all of this came in the age of zealous avowals of detached, unbiased, scientific assessments ... All of this was rushing into journals and book stores as the American academy was proclaiming itself to be undergoing a revolution toward objectivity and the mass use of the scientific method.<sup>14</sup>

We need to grasp that when global bodies function on an understanding of what it is to be human, they are drawing on social science that developed in a time when Blacks were considered not-human.<sup>15</sup> To avoid the embarrassment of being associated with this assumption (and being seen as “racist”), social scientists now have to make an *a priori* assumption that Blacks are no different than Westerners, even if that should strictly not be the case. Opposition to racism is a last-ditch effort at papering over an emerging massive fissure in the comfortable story of the victory of modernity, including social science.

It should be clear that dominant social science models and understandings may very well not apply, and may not be helpful in promoting comprehension of the being and behavior of Black people today, whether in America or Africa. Popular anti-racism’s determination not to find Black people’s understanding and capabilities different (“inferior”) from those of White Westerners is not evidence based. It is *a priori* exactly insofar as it is unthinkable for the West that they should have to ditch, or even seriously back-pedal, on so-called progress in social science that has occupied the previous two centuries.

Because two centuries of progress have been built on liberal

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social science foundations, today’s powerful players are very wary of the catastrophe that could result from having to redefine humanity to include Black people as they are, or appear to be, in which they do not fit the categories of Western thinking and moral values, such as work ethic and trustworthiness. The kind of “catastrophe” I am referring to includes a potential collapse of the conceptual foundations underlying the United Nations, World Bank, Democracy, the contemporary structure of global trade, globalized educational systems, capitalism, and so on. Such collapse could, by rendering the above institutions transparently incoherent, result in loss of credibility, which could in turn generate considerable chaos in the global systems that have been constructed around them and that these days rely on them.

In this failure to take into account the differences among the variety of peoples of the world, the West has distanced itself from the teachings of the gospel. Unlike the above modern systems, Jesus had the foresight to incorporate all peoples into his vision for the Kingdom of God on earth. Luke 15 opens with Jewish leaders questioning Jesus’ practice of associating with sinners. But Jesus was not preparing a kingdom on earth that would have some people be better than others. Instead, he was preoccupied with reaching out to those who were considered inferior by the ruling class. Hence the Kingdom of God always builds by bringing in those rejected by others, rather than by building up the in-group while classifying others as “not-human”, as secular modernism has done.

I concede that the West is likely to consider that it is endeavoring to incorporate all into its “kingdom”, as Jesus did. The catch here is that the West’s material wealth tends to silence critique. Asking people “do you agree with me?” is likely to result in an affirmative answer if such brings material aggrandizement, for example a well-paying job.

### **Social science terminologies do not translate**

Saying that terms used in the disciplines of social science don’t translate into African languages is in some ways to state the obvious since social sciences are thoroughly Western in origins, in principle,

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14. Kendi, “Black,” 552.

15. Although as already mentioned I am concentrating on people of African origin, I note that Arabs, Chinese (and others) were widely similarly degraded (Losurdo, Domenico, *Liberalism: a counter history*. [London: Verso, 2011], Translated by Gregory Elliot, 240 & 252).

and in practice.<sup>16</sup> Hence a foundational reason people have seen it appropriate to promote use of European languages internationally is to enable minority and poor populations to have their say in global discourse.

While the theory that learning an international language enables participation in international discourse is widespread, and has elements of truth in it, it presupposes that knowledge of a language includes knowledge of how to use it in the context under consideration. We might ask ourselves what it is to “know a language.” Various answers might avail themselves related to vocabulary, grammar, ability to communicate simply, ability to communicate profoundly, and so on. There is a lot one can do with a language without having acquired deep knowledge of the life presuppositions of its native users. At the same time, a surface knowledge of a language, or one rooted in a different context to that of native users, even if one might be able to vocalize that language fluently, can result in foundational failures in communication with indigenous speakers. Endless examples could illustrate this. Native English speakers sometimes refer to people as “folk”, a phraseology apparently not used amongst East Africans, who can think one is referring to “fox” or another negative animal term. The other way around, East African English users sometimes use the English term “yes” to translate the Swahili *ndiyo* or *ee*. There being no specific Swahili term to translate “yes” causes difficulties. *Ee* and *ndio* mean something more like “indeed” than “yes”, which easily becomes confusing.

If translating the simple English word “yes” is a problem, one should not expect social science terminology to be easily translatable into all languages. “The social sciences originated in the eighteenth century in an effort to understand the character and future of modern society.”<sup>17</sup> This attempt to understand society was for a long time confined to a small part of the global population, namely Western peoples. Its terms in European languages not having close-equivalents in other tongues should have us at least be concerned that this will limit the applicability of social science to people with a history unlike that of the West.

Economics, one of the recognized social sciences, has long debated over the universality of profit maximizing behavior. Economic theory states that people should increase production as long as marginal revenue is greater than marginal cost. This reasoning presupposes a mathematical approach to business that, I suggest, not all African business people share. I concede that it may not be easy to articulate this convincingly using a secular mathematically oriented language like English, which of course is part of our issue.<sup>18</sup>

16. “Basic European-centered objectives are to be found among cultural anthropologists as among other social scientists ...” (Nisbet “Social.”)

17. Ross, *The Origins*.

18. We could do well to remember the likely ongoing impact on the ongoing development of the West of the emphasis on calculation in theology from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, when “theological problems ... were frequently formulated in the language of mathematics and measurement” (Grant *Science*, 60).

One theory on how to deal with such concern with respect to terms arising from modernity that pre-modern members of the global family do not share, is education. The thinking behind this is that universalizing secular education will enable everyone to be able to understand what the West is doing, and how, and why, and to enable non-Westerners to do the same. Unfortunately, or fortunately, very deep and real obstacles stand in the way of this process.

Another example would be the normative assumption made in sociology that sexual relations should only occur where love precedes and where the term love is implicitly connected with self-giving, as modelled by Jesus on the cross. However, this model of love, which is due to the West’s long Christian history, is unlikely to be acknowledged outside of the contemporary West. It may be much less pertinent or even absent in non-Western societies where there has not been a long-term influence of the gospel.<sup>19</sup>

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19. I explain more on this theme, of the foundational impact of Christianity on creating “normative” social science, in section four below.

20. Margaret Jepkirui Muthwii, “Language Planning and Literacy in Kenya: living with unresolved paradoxes,” 46-62 in Anthony J. Liddicoat, (ed), *Language Planning and Policy: issues in language planning and literacy*. (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 2007.)

countries. Kenyanizing English would interfere with the role of the English language as the herald of social science. Adapting social science to Kenyan-English would result in “failures” from a Western perspective.<sup>21</sup> That is, contextual changes arising from implicit categories and connections associated with Kenyan English would undermine the sense that social science is intended to make. Kenya is left employing a language the correct use of which they cannot understand.

Problems of Kenyan English parallel those of the American Black language, Ebonics, which clearly maintains its distinctiveness in the USA.<sup>22</sup> Unless Blacks in the USA (i.e., Americans of African origin) are profoundly and deeply integrated into the community that has come up with terms related to social science, there is a major risk that they may not have appropriated the necessary conceptual history to engage intelligently as insiders with wielders of social science terminologies and concepts.<sup>23</sup> They may not live in a way that social science would predict.<sup>24</sup> Social science having become very foundational and widespread in Western countries like the USA, this can leave a problematic gap in understanding, resulting in social, political, economic, and other forms of marginalization.<sup>25</sup>

Essentially my question is—how were medieval European Christians different from today’s people of African origin (including those now living in various parts of the world), such that they could swallow a progression that led to social science, which progression I suggest gets thoroughly stuck in Black throats today? The answer, or at least a pointer to a part of the answer (that in full complexity is beyond a short article like this one), is that Medieval populations of Europe had done away with the need for *sacrifice*, whereas today’s Blacks have not.

## Holistic healing

The answer to questions regarding the basis of pre-scientific means

21. Muthwii “Language,” 53.

22. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ebonics>

23. I take histories as being “appropriated” if a people who biologically speaking did not share in prior events underlying that history nevertheless consider themselves to have done so, and behave accordingly. Thus, relatively recent immigrants to a country might consider themselves to be “full members” of their host communities. Many people read biblical history as if it is their own. (The Samaritans’ dubious reputation in the eyes of Jews, depicted in the New Testament, arises in part at least because they were not biological descendants of Abraham, but were brought in to take the place of exiled Israelite people, who then endeavored to live according to the God of the land they inhabited, i.e., according to Mosaic Law.)

24. Much research by anthropologists, usually considered social scientists, demonstrates that non-Western people’s cultures are different from those of people in the West. Yet “liberal theory ... cannot coherently allow for persistent cultural difference nor the legitimacy of claims based on it.” (James P. Boggs, “Anthropological Knowledge and Native American Cultural Practice in the Liberal Polity,” *American Anthropology*, 2002, 104 (2), 599-610, 604.)

25. My discussion raises the implicit question of the status of not-Black Non-Western “minorities” in the USA. My experience being in Africa, I confine myself to populations of African origin.

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of solving inter-human problems (in non-Western languages defined by terms often translated into English as “healing”), is in contemporary times typically left blank, considered suspect, taboo, risking being racist, or otherwise not politically correct. At best, holistic ancient healing practices are given credit for being pseudo-scientific; presumably the herbs used by the witchdoctor contained chemicals we would today consider efficacious against a particular ailment. Alternatively, traditional rituals, including sacrifices, are credited for having an effect comparable to what is today recognized as placebo.

The protective armor and screen built around today’s formal sacrosanct areas of knowledge, including social science, is such that it is very hard to enact any threat to it.<sup>26</sup> This is reflected in the widespread view in the West that traditional African ways of life are transitory and about to disappear, somehow effortlessly, into thin air.<sup>27</sup> Hence on the African continent there is a growing dearth of Westerners taking any serious interest in local ways of life. I emphasize this to explain the means of my own exposure to Africa. My own “penetration” into African worldviews, partial as it remains, has only been achievable at great personal “expense.”<sup>28</sup> Now, thirty-three years after my first travelling from Europe to East Africa in 1988, I can share some observations.<sup>29</sup>

In passing to mention, that my “research methodology” may

26. Harries explains how secularism has been “ring-fenced” to shield it from critique. (Jim Harries, *How Western Anti-Racism Harms Africa and How We Can Do Better*, (Chichester: Faithbuilders Publishing, in press.)

27. Use of terms like “primitive” to describe traditional African ways of life point to the ongoing assumption of cultural evolution that underlies the West’s presupposition that Africa should and will become more and more similar to Europe.

28. It has obliged me to remain single. Authorities made two major attempts to cut short my missionary journey. Fictionalized accounts of these are included in a novel by Harries. (Jim Harries, *African Heartbeat: and a vulnerable fool*. (London: Apostolos Publishing Limited, 2018.))

29. I lived in Zambia until 1988, then in Kenya from 1993.

in some circles be considered unconventional.<sup>30</sup> I find that the implicit understandings I have acquired on African people I have now long-related to in a vulnerable way,<sup>31</sup> may not be traceable to quantifiable data, facts, or even “evidence”. Instead, presumably by diverse means, I find I have imbibed (through want of a better term) an understanding resulting from long-term daily deep sharing in African ways of life. I draw on Polanyi’s observation, that human knowing is based in far more than objective identifiable evidence, so that one can know more than one can explain.<sup>32</sup>

My personal exposure to African people’s holistic means for acquiring prosperity and healing has been very convincing. In contrast with it, I nowadays find Western people’s prescriptions for problems to be fragmented, incoherent, and having negative side-effects. I say “negative” in so far as they seek to solve physical problems by ignoring or bypassing the holistic nature of humankind. Recent major efforts at countering coronavirus represent a tip to such an iceberg—the solutions proffered by the West (and by global bodies like WHO in tow) stand in denial of what in Africa it is to be human, i.e., to relate to others through close proximity, including touch and face-to-face conversation.<sup>33</sup>

The Western scholar who in my understanding has come closest to identifying insights that help us to perceive what truly characterizes non-Western people, is René Girard. I here endeavor to paraphrase his thinking for my own purposes.<sup>34</sup> People everywhere (even if this is more concealed in the West) desire things and states that other people have, known by Girard as mimetic desire.<sup>35</sup> This desire approximates to envy. Seeking to achieve one’s desires unfortunately frequently results in what Girard calls scandal (people become stumbling blocks interfering with one another’s satisfaction of desire), that produces interpersonal tensions. These tensions being widely correlated with lack of wellbeing, often known by terms like uncleanness or impurity, are on a “very reasonable basis” considered to be foundational to human non-thriving. (I consider this to be a “very reasonable basis” because, certainly in the absence of use of modern statistical techniques but I suspect even if they were to be applied, a succumbing of others to problems and suffering can raise one’s personal feeling of wellbeing.)

30. Jim Harries, “Some Ethical and Procedural Requirements for Research by Westerners among Indigenous People,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 48:1 (January 2021).

31. See [vulnerablemission.org](http://vulnerablemission.org)

32. Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*. (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1983).

33. Two clarifying comments here. One, not all designers of counter-covid-19 strategies have been Westerners, yet Westerners’ “secular” wisdom having become global, can be said to underlie it all. Two, I am not suggesting that African people are more warm and sociable than others around the world (in non-covid-19 circumstances), but just that warm social ways (for want of better adjectives) of relating are more irreducibly considered to be a part of healing and not a part of producing disease.

34. I draw particularly on Girard (*I See*).

35. James G. Williams, ‘Foreword,’ ix-xxiii, in René Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2001), x.

Knowing that arranging the demise of a particular other will improve my own thriving, the foundation for the long-standing tradition in human communities of sacrifice, results in a tendency for people to come together in search of a victim, known as a witch, or scapegoat.

Here are some examples of how relief to one’s own anxieties (uncleanness, impurity) can arise from the demise of another:

When the husband to my beloved dies, I can take her over.

If the owner of the contested land leaves the area, I get to use the land.

My neighbor’s child getting an E in an exam makes me feel better about my own child’s D grade.

Should the best wrestler be injured, then I have a better chance of being considered number 1.

When that old woman stops staring at me as I eat, I feel relief.

It feels good to be told that what appeared to be my incurable problem can be resolved should so-and-so be given my illness,<sup>36</sup> or by some other means suffer (becomes ill, leaves, dies and so on) on my behalf.

All of the above means to healing, prosperity, wholeness, fulfillment, happiness, even “success” or contentment, arise as a result of a decline in someone else’s fortunes. Knowing that arranging the demise of a particular other will improve my own thriving, the foundation for the long-standing tradition in human communities of sacrifice, results in a tendency for people to come together in search of a victim, known as a witch, or scapegoat.<sup>37</sup> The demise of that victim is expected to bring resolution to problems. A less immediately deadly way of acquiring some of the same benefit that arises from killing somebody, is to reproduce associated feelings by dramatically re-enacting a killing. Incorporating animal sacrifice in such re-enactment is a very effective way of reproducing the drama so as to acquire thriving without killing someone else. This is the basis of ritual. Rituals, broadly imitative of sacrifice of human victims, thus become a foundation for healing. Such

36. In the Luo language of Western Kenya; *loko dhooh*.

37. In common translations into English from African languages, a witch. Girard uses the term scapegoat.

holistic healing has little or nothing to do with understandings of biology or chemistry, or analytical thinking. It does not work by physically or conceptually dividing human beings into ever smaller pieces so as to comprehend how they work.<sup>38</sup> It is healing “from the inside” arising from the conviction that someone else’s suffering brings me benefit, a process that Girard makes clear is frequently (probably intentionally, as it may appear primitive and unhelpful) unrecognized in today’s social science.<sup>39</sup>

The above basis, whereby constant attention to sacrifice, be it human, or animal in place of human, or ritual in place of both, continues to be understood as the source of “healing” (basis of thriving) in Africa today, and I dare suggest to a large extent among Blacks in the West today. It is also found among Whites, although of a different shape, and is understood at different levels. The notion that other people stand in the way of your prosperity is universal to mankind. What differs is how much it is emphasized, or how the suffering of others is used as a basis of “healing.” In traditional Africa, this is the foundation of the witchdoctor’s craft. This is not structural, analytical or mathematical—it runs strongly in the face therefore of what the West does today in the name of science (hence fear of these practices by dominant secular powers that I have mentioned above), including social science. This brings the antagonism within anthropology (one of the social sciences), that at times recognises mechanisms of healing we are referring to here. “Liberal theory [is] incommensurable” with anthropologists reliance on “culture theory.”<sup>40</sup> If we take seriously the kinds of cultural differences that anthropologists find, then “liberalism becomes one cultural way of life among others.”<sup>41</sup> This “deeply compromises the legitimacy of rationales for Western [including Western social science’s] hegemony.”<sup>42</sup>

To explain how Europeans created a distance between themselves and the insistence on the necessity of others’ suffering for one’s benefit, one need go no further than the Bible, and especially Christ’s giving himself on the cross. The self-giving of Christ is the central-foundation on which Christianity is built.<sup>43</sup> This is evidenced among other things by the fact that the cross, actually an instrument of torturous killing, is widely taken as the symbol of the church. Christianity substitutes the death of Christ on the cross for the killing of witches and scapegoats.

The major blunder of secular historians, especially of the social sciences, has been to *ignore* the role of the cross as a building block to modernity, to pretend it has been inconsequential, unimportant, and merely “private.”<sup>44</sup> Such ignoring of Jesus’ role as key to

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human thriving results in leaving a brick wall in the path of Blacks wanting to participate in modernism. (I do not state that as if Christianity is a “formula” producing modernity! Far from it. To be a Christian is to be in obedient relationship with the living God. I am simply saying that Christian salvation is necessary, which when not realized by today’s moderns, has produced the need for “anti-racism.”) “The secularization of knowledge [led to] ... members of non-white races [being] intellectually classified as sub-human.”<sup>45</sup> The “missing component” that I am here identifying, my reader will appreciate, is not of a nature of a tweak to what is currently happening in social science. It is more like a revolution. Today’s determination to stamp out so called “racism” (actually, finding people’s pre-Christian ways distasteful), continues without cognizance of what is going on under the surface.

### **Supernatural is an invalid category in both African and scientific worldviews**

I want here to fill what I perceive are some gaps in people’s understandings regarding section four above. Some think that to be a Christian requires belief in “the supernatural.” I take this to be a misleading belief.<sup>46</sup> (Certainly in Africa where there is no comprehensive understanding of what is “natural” that someone else can be super-of, so there is no way that Christians can believe in “the supernatural.”<sup>47</sup>) The problem underlying such mis-accusation, I believe, can clearly be located in today’s modern tendency to continue with unwarranted belief in positivism, and in strictures associated with Newtonian science. Contemporary atheism was founded on the back of Newtonian mechanics.<sup>48</sup> Yet, Newtonian

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45. Oludamini Ogunnaike, “From heathen to sub-human: a genealogy of the influence of the decline of religion on the rise of modern racism” in *Open Theology*, 2016, 2, 785-803, 802.

46. Dawkins uses this supposed Christian belief as ammunition in his case for godlessness. Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006), 32-33.

47. Even should they use this term to describe their belief, its original meaning being rooted in a worldview foreign to Africa, Africans should not be understood as meaning that they believe in “supernatural” as known in the West.

48. If we take Laplace as the “original” modern atheist. Roger Hahn, “Laplace and the Mechanistic worldview,” 256-276 in Lindberg and Numbers, eds. *God and Nature: historical essays on the encounter between Christianity and Science*. (London: University of California Press, 1986), 256-259.

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38. A tendency found in social science and other reductive practices that characterize modern times.

39. René Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, James G. Williams, trans. (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2001), 88-89.

40. James P. Boggs, “The Culture Concept as Theory, in Context,” *Current Anthropology* 45(2), April 2004, 187-209, 188.

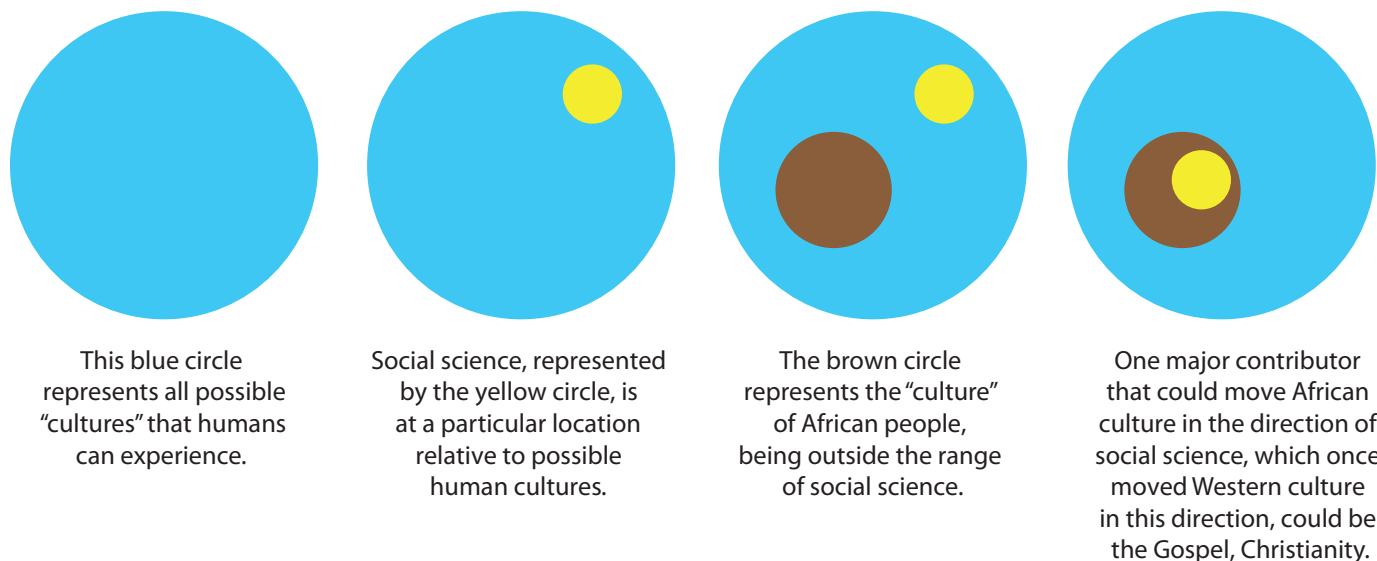
41. Boggs, “The Culture,” 189.

42. Boggs, “The Culture,” 189.

43. 1 Corinthians 1:23 and Galatians 6:14.

44. <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/religion-as-private-and-public-good/>

Diagram 1. Social science and Christianity, with respect to Africa



mechanics have been superseded for 100 plus years. Widespread faith in atheism (including that which of necessity underlies secularism) is without clear foundation. Amazingly, and without known cause, quantum scientists find that human observation is the creative force underlying what they term “collapse of the wave function,” which collapse at the same time is the sole basis for the existence of the world as we know it through the use of our senses.<sup>49</sup> The realization, that the whole of human existence is rooted in what is in Newtonian terms “miraculous,” re-opens doors to possibilities of eternal life,<sup>50</sup> and other so-called “miracles” as being part of, and not super to, nature at all. Amazing things that God does are simply part of being in this world as we know it. Logically, then, God, even if super to nature, is also implicit to “nature.”<sup>51</sup>

49. Sean Carroll, “A Conversation with Rob Reid on Quantum Mechanics and Many Worlds,” *Sean Carroll’s Mindscape*, 2019, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjDiOu5\\_oA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjDiOu5_oA) (accessed 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020)

50. These videos endeavor to show ways in which quantum mechanics speak in favor of life after death:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDatTy9BU2A>  
<http://www.thehealersjournal.com/2013/12/30/life-after-death-quantum-physics/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HaI411S8aoM>  
<https://www.outerplaces.com/science/item/4518-physicists-claim-that-consciousness-lives-in-quantum-state-after-death>

51. Deason credits the reformers Luther and Calvin with “arguing for the passivity of matter.” Gary B. Deason, “Reformation Theology and the Mechanistic Conception of Nature,” 167-191 in Lindberg and Numbers, eds. *God and Nature: historical essays on the encounter between Christianity and Science*. (London: University of California Press, 1986), 170. While this was intended to demonstrate the “radical sovereignty of God” (Deason “Reformation,” 170), it has arguably had the effect in more recent times of implying that nature can function without God. Newtonian physics has been used to support such a position, that social sciences have in turn drawn upon. Quantum physics having discredited Newtonian physics pulls the rug on this.

## Conclusion

I can illustrate my conclusion with Diagram 1, which though a simplification, I hope will get across the main point that I want to make in this article.

The very development of social sciences having been founded on the back of assumptions regarding the sub-humanity of non-Western people, leaves them up to today accurate and helpful primarily, or sometimes exclusively and only, for the West. As a result of the above, social sciences have an aversion for what I am here calling “holistic healing,” the ways the majority of non-Western people traditionally consider human thriving to be garnered. Social science is silent on means by which people can move away from holistic healing towards modern conceptions of health and thriving that understand bodily processes biologically, statistically, and scientifically. An absolutely key part of the history that has enabled social science has been the role of the Church, which social scientists have often despised. In conclusion we can say that social sciences’ illogical turning of a blind eye to most past and ongoing activities of the Church has left it with an Achilles heel that renders it incompetent for all but Western people, and certainly for people of African origin. The solution to this predicament lies in revival of the Church, which requires overcoming some contemporary political correctness regarding race and racism.

52. I do not intend to imply that the move of “culture” to the right in this diagram reflects movement according to “left” and “right” politics today.