

THE PAPER MILL

THE PPE NEWSPAPER | New Year's Edition

Dear PPE-College!

Happy New Year and Welcome Back to our beautiful John Stuart Mill College. In this edition we provide you some reviews about the last year, some outlooks for 2024 and as always articles and opinions about Philosophy-, Politics- and Economics-content. Be curious to get to know Judo Baris Erturk, get to learn about upcoming elections and get inspired for New Year's resolutions.

May this year be full of interesting Encounters-Events and gripping Paper Mill editions. Furthermore: This year a new version of the PPE-Podcast will be produced - stay tuned to find out more.

You want to contribute to the Podcast? Or to the Paper Mill? Send us an email to ppeencounters@gmail.com.

We now wish you and the whole program an amazing 2024, filled with luck, success and happiness!

Best,
Your PPE Encounters

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"Globally, many local, regional and national elections are happening in 2024"

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14th of February
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10th of April
1st of May

15:30 - 17:00

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A year for all the Women

Carolina Torrinha

At the end of the year, while talking to friends and family, we are usually inclined to ask each other about the highlights of the year. It is such a common question that we never stop to wonder why we do it; maybe it comes from the need to end the year with the feeling that something good has happened, that the year was worth it and that we indeed accomplished something; or maybe we are just being polite and we don't really care about the answer we give and receive. Either way, it is a common instinct to want to summarize the year that is now behind us, to want to have something to refer to everytime in the future someone asks us about 2023.

With that in mind, I will attempt to shed some light on what felt to me were the most iconic moments of this year. Because 2023 has been referred to as the Year of the Girl, this article is meant to provide you with the perfect referrals to give someone who will question enthusiastically about it 10 years from now.

Starting off with the right foot, quite literally, this year proved to be the biggest one for Women in football for several reasons. The Women's World Cup proved to be the most successful yet, with 2 million fans attending its matches in New Zealand and Australia. On the other hand, we also witnessed outrage on this field. When the President of the Spanish FA kissed Jennifer Hermoso, Spain's midfielder, without her consent, it started a feminist uproar. Mainly, it opened the public sphere for important conversations around consent and the effects of power in this misogynistic field.

Giving a testament to women's excellence in sports, Simone Biles broke barriers by becoming the most-decorated gymnast of all time. In the entertainment field, women have made noteworthy achievements, marking several important milestones from first-time award winning actresses to breaking box office records.

First, and something that could not go unnoticed due to its immense feminist undertone, comes the Barbie movie. One could call it an unexpected coincidence, others a fortuitous event, but the fact that the movie that tackles ideas of equality, the patriarchy and self-esteem ends up being the highest-grossing film of this year, it can only reveal the ongoing progress that us as a society are making towards changing the present narrative. In addition, with this same movie Greta Gerwig became the first woman, with a sole director credit, to gross over 1 billion dollars at the box office. Making history in Hollywood enters

Michelle Yeoh, the first Asian actress to win an Oscar ever. With her performance in "Everything Everywhere All at Once", Yeoh was nominated for the Oscar, not a first in Hollywood but a second since the nomination of Merle Oberon 85 years ago. The historical lack of diversity ends up being fought against when Michelle Yeoh goes on stage to win the Oscar.

Viola Davis, who is already known for breaking barriers in the industry for Black women, just solidified her role by achieving the EGOT status. The actress who was the first Black performer to win the Triple Crown of acting, an Emmy, an Oscar and a Tony, was also the first Black actress to be nominated for three Academy Awards. Now, in 2023, she got to stand onstage at the 65th Grammy Awards breaking another milestone as the 18th person in history and third Black woman to achieve the EGOT status by winning an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony Award.

On the music field, two names already well known in the industry achieved even higher milestones nonetheless. Beyoncé became the most awarded artist in Grammy history and Taylor Swift, the first female artist to reach 100 million monthly listeners on Spotify, the first woman to appear twice on a Person of the Year cover, and her Eras Tour ended up breaking a world record. Swift's tour is now the highest grossing music tour ever and the first tour to surpass 1 billion dollars in revenue.

Despite conquering the entertainment arena, women have been leveling the playing field in many other sectors. This year has been specially marked by Claudia Golbin, the first woman ever to independently win a Nobel Prize in Economics. On top of that and adding even more meaning to her achievement, Golbin won the prize for studying obstacles that women face in obtaining equal pay. And because when one talks about milestones we immediately think of reaching the moon, Christina Koch broke barriers by being the first female assigned to a lunar mission.

Ultimately, this article is not supposed to be an exhaustive list of all the female pioneers of this year. It is, however, supposed to highlight the amazing progress that women all over the world made this year towards gender equality, signaling all the milestones achieved by them, and reminding us of the several roles that so far, but not anymore, have been occupied solely by men. My goal is to call this year for what it was, perhaps not the Year of the Girl, but the Year of the Woman.

“Why I like fireworks”

Nele Fasshauer I'll out myself. I like fireworks. I know how bad they are for the climate and the environment, I know how many people die or are injured by them each year, and I know that they are traumatising for animals. I know that the firefighters and police hate fireworks, and that they are an enormous waste of money. And I still like them.

I think that Silvester is the best holiday in the year (because it is secular, non historical, does not celebrate a monarchy, and you usually spend it with friends (after 3 days of Christmas agony with your family)), and fireworks belong to it. They are THE perfect tool for marking the end of that familiar countdown - „Three, two, one“ (everybody is shouting), „happy new years“, and the sky explodes - isn't that beautiful?

Nothing marks the specialness of new years quite as good as (private) fireworks. In Germany, Silvester is the one time of the year where everyone is allowed to buy and set on fire their own firework. That means that fireworks are unique to new years: whenever you start hearing that familiar sound of small bombs, you know that Silvester is close. A new year is close.

A fresh start. From now on, the days will start getting longer again, you have an actual chance for some snow and spring is also around the corner.

And there are the atmospheric effects of fireworks: they transform boring suburb streets into a smokey horror movie set (exciting), they transform lightpolluted orange city skies into even more lightpolluted colourful sparkly skies (pretty), and nothing is as fun for me as searching for leftover fireworks during the obligatory new years walk (adventurous).

For context: I usually celebrate Silvester at home in Berlin. If you've never done that - it's sort of like a war zone. In Wedding, my district, they usually start before Christmas with the fireworks - or rather firecrackers. Every few hours you think that a bomb just landed next to your house. It intensifies around the 28th / 29th, and becomes a constant background noise around Silvester. At 00:00, the streets go insane. Most of the time, you cannot even see the end of the street because of all the smoke. People spend hundreds of euros on fireworks. Neukölln, a district in the south of Berlin, is an entire no - go zone. It's the most irrational and nonsensical day in the whole year. I love it.

And if I did not convince you, maybe you can at least appreciate fireworks a bit more :).

New Year's Resolutions **Eylül Kangalli**

It is being said that one has to exert three different activities into their life, one each for your mind, body and soul in order to maintain balanced lifestyle. It may sound easy to implement that in your life but even coming up with realistic goals seems to be a challenge itself. Most people set up highly demanding goals for their New Year's revolution. They try to change themselves fundamentally and become a person that does not even resemble themselves. This article will cover sustainable goals that will not turn your lifestyle upside down, but will suggest viable goals that will improve the quality of your life and your „uni-life-balance“. First of all, working on yourself should never be considered a chore, so if one wants to start from scratch, it is a great start if one picks a goal containing an activity that the person already enjoys. The goal is to improve your skills or craftsmanship in a specific activity. A goal becomes maintainable when it does not take much time out of your day so that you could carry that goal on as a habit. Reflecting on your experiences and sentiments while trying to achieve a goal is a crucial part of the process. That way you can

implement the most effective method beneficial for your goal. Finding the perfect balance can be difficult to settle which is why the following list suggests explicit goals defined in more details:

- Learning a new language
- Taking part in a book club
- Spend more time outside
- Visit new countries
- Learning about new cultures
- Journaling
- Volunteering
- A sustainable lifestyle/ using less plastic
- Spending quality times with your friends and loved ones
- Speaking
- Picking up photography as a hobby
- Learning how to make your own clothes
- Learn knitting/crocheting

But in the end, the most important lesson remains that one should never forget that progress is not linear. It is never too late to pick up a new habit and improve yourself.

How to stick to New Year's resolutions

Katharina Graf

"Go to bed early, eat healthier, do more sports, drink less, learn another language, read more books, call grandma more often..." - New Year's Resolutions that are made every year anew. As the new year is getting started, it feels like a new beginning – it feels like the time for a change. Thus, many people want to change for a better. Although good intended, this often ends in disappointment or guilty conscience. When asking my friends, one of them told me: "I never make New Year's resolutions. No one is ever sticking to them anyways."

Isn't that a sad way of thinking about it – that would mean that there is no point of trying to change, no point of intending to do better. I do believe in New Year's resolutions and that they are for a good. I don't think that we are too incompetent in realizing them. Maybe it's the resolutions that need to be better:

1. If you want to make resolutions you can actually stick to, make them concrete. You want to do more sports? Set yourself a certain goal – like lifting a certain amount of weight, doing a certain amount of push ups or running a certain amount of kilometers. If the resolution is too vague, you don't actually know, what you are aiming for and especially can't know when you achieved your goal. Only with certain numbers and an objective you will keep your motivation to keep on going.

2. Set yourself a goal that is achievable. If you subconsciously know, you won't be able to achieve your goal, you will be too afraid to start anyways. If you want to learn a new language, don't try to be a fluent speaker this year already. Be happy with some basic conversations and use every chance to try that out.

3. Don't make your resolution just a wish. It should be a real goal – relevant and impactful. Make yourself clear why you want to change a certain situation, why you want to achieve this goal and what it does for a better in your life. You will only have perseverance if you know why you are actually making the resolution. And only if you make it something that lies in your hand, you can be the one to change it. But still - even if you have the right and achievable New Year's



resolution – how can you actually stick to them?

1. Very helpful for sticking to your resolutions, is by keeping a streak. You might now the pressuring feeling when Duo sends you a reminder to do your next lesson or when you must send a picture to your friend to keep up your Snapchat-streak. Hence, you should make yourself a list where you can tick off steps of your goal or set a daily reminder you can turn off. As life gets more stressful and full of meetings throughout the year, only through reminders we won't forget to keep on track

2. Don't stay on your own. Realizing resolutions is more fun and more realizable if you do it together with a friend. Then, you don't have to carry the responsibility on your own and you don't have to motivate yourself. If you want to eat healthier – cook together, if you want to read more books – talk about them, if you want to drink less – go to a cinema together instead of bar. And additionally, you immediately always have something, you can do together.

3. And the most important and maybe even most difficult thing: Don't be too hard on yourself. Making new year resolutions doesn't mean that you have to change your life entirely in the new year. And it also doesn't mean, you are failing if you don't stick to them. New Year's resolutions can just be a good reflection on things you might want to go a little bit different. They can be a good motivator to try something new. Every single book you read, every new meal you try out, every run you go for is already a nice thing you achieved in your new year. So, enjoy every little goal you achieve throughout this year. Maybe it is one, you don't even know about yet. But it will make your 2024 be great. Happy New Year!

What 2024 will bring

Oliver Clemits

The year 2023 brought mixed results politically. Elections in the Netherlands specifically brought a unique insecurity to many living in the Netherlands as right-wing populist party PVV won the most seats in recent parliamentary elections. Globally, many local, regional and national elections are happening in 2024, which I won't be able to give justice to in this article alone, for that reason I have decided to mention elections that stand out for their influence on international relations, global trends and ironic futility. I must stress that if you feel that I have not given enough historical context or analysis into the elections of the following states, you are absolutely right, there are word limits I must abide by.

That being said, I actively encourage you all to write articles about upcoming elections you feel deserve greater attention ;)

To begin, let us discuss with the UN Security Council (UNSC) Election, in which 10 non-permanent UNSC seats will be rotated amongst regional blocs consisting of Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and two seats for Western Europe and the "Others group" including Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the USA. Throughout its history, the UN's influence has been undermined by the veto power of nation states, but new leadership may bring about necessary change in an increasingly divided and violent world. It is worth noting that often the failures of the UN are screamed, while its successes are whispered, that being said, there is something uniquely disappointing watching diplomats speak of human rights and a bright future whilst our media bombards us with the newest developments of human conflict.

The upcoming Russian elections are noteworthy, not because any of us are curious as to who will win, but rather that political unrest may emerge as the Russian populace grows increasingly frustrated with the War in Ukraine, large brain drain and increased tensions between Russia's poorer states in the south and their more economically prosperous urban population within large cities. Former opposition politician Alexei Navalny is reported to be in a prison in Siberia, making the chances of him running against Vladimir Putin to be negligible. The role of Russia in Eastern Europe and Central Asia cannot be undermined. A weaker, unstable Russia may have heads turning towards more reliable allies further West or East.

Just across the Bering Sea lies Russia's best mates; The USA. In 2024 the USA will have its Presidential Elections. As of now multiple states'



supreme courts have barred Donald Trump from running as a Presidential Candidate in their states, citing the Fourteenth Amendment of the US Constitution, which prevents US officers that have engaged in insurrection or rebellion from holding office. Current polling suggests Trump to be most popular among US voters, but much can change as Trump faces ongoing legal battles and may be barred from more states.

The often overlooked India will be holding general elections in 2024. At the moment, a coalition named NDA consisting of 14 parties alongside independents holds the majority in the Lok Sabha; the lower house of the Indian legislative body that holds significant power in Indian politics. This coalition is led by Narendra Modi's BJP party. The opposition coalition is called I.N.D.I.A, with its largest party being the Indian National Congress. These two political bodies will be competing for votes, within a context of a fast growing economy, still growing population and frustration from political opposition, a variety of separatist groups, as well as the wealthier southern states that have long felt their tax-rupees to be used to fund the welfare of the less prosperous North India. Although the majority is not expected to shift in the upcoming elections, Indian politics nevertheless deserves more attention as it continues to grow in influence.

The European Parliament will also be holding elections this year. The European Parliament represents the second largest democratic electorate in the world (behind India) with more than 400 million eligible voters. The European Parliament is the legislative branch of the EU. The largest parties as of now are the European People's Party Group (EPP) and the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D). Current polling suggests decreased support for the EPP, but not enough to remove its lead. The Dutch farmers party, BBB, (who I have heard only good things about from our cohort) are set to join the EPP. The far right Eurosceptic party is currently the sixth most popular party in the European Parliament, but recent elections across Europe may suggest an increase in popularity. The deputy Prime minister of Italy has also voiced his hopes for this in a recent meeting where he expressed the objective for the Identity and Democracy party (ID) to become "at least the third-largest".



The three unknowns: risk, uncertainty and the Netherlands

Wilders' victory plunges the country into uncharted territory [Take Watanabe & Roos van den Doel](#)

The result of the Dutch election resounded as a massive shock for most at the John Stuart Mill College. In peripheral regions that were left behind by globalisation decades ago and in recent times by government actions and spending, there was celebration and an immediate increase in institutional trust. The historic victory of Geert Wilders' Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV) can be explained by political blunders from the VVD such as making migration the main topic linked to all other topics such as housing and cost of living. As migration remained a dominant issue for those who felt left behind and framed as the root cause of all issues, the PVV remained the issue owner as the ones with the most visible and supported ideological response. Alongside this, the VVD opened the doors even further by promoting the PVV as an acceptable government partner. Fueled by the dissatisfaction with the government and the dissatisfied population's search for a messiah, electoral movement — and the willingness of previous non-voters to vote ultimately swung in the favour of the PVV. Since Wilders' victory, minorities and those placed left of the political centre are left in uncertainty on whether the Netherlands will follow in the deliberalising steps of Hungary and the late Polish government, while drastic changes for Dutch and international

students in particular seem imminent when the anti-elitist and populist Prime Minister-in-waiting takes office in *Het Torentje*.

After it became clear that the VVD could no longer demand the status of senior partner in a right-wing coalition, Dilan Yeşilgöz (VVD) stated that the VVD only desired to enter a confidence-and-supply agreement with the proposed PVV, NSC and BBB coalition. When seen from the perspective of a political scientist, the VVD's true intention may be to secure major concessions from the PVV and proceed to abandon their feigned stance in favour of joining the coalition in the name of the 'national interest'. With caretaker Prime Minister Mark Rutte desiring to be Secretary General of NATO and still wielding considerable influence within the VVD, he would have surely advocated for this Machiavellian approach: Wilders as Prime Minister would greatly hurt Rutte's bid due to Wilders' antagonistic relationship with Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, which would make it unacceptable for Erdoğan to support a Dutch candidate.

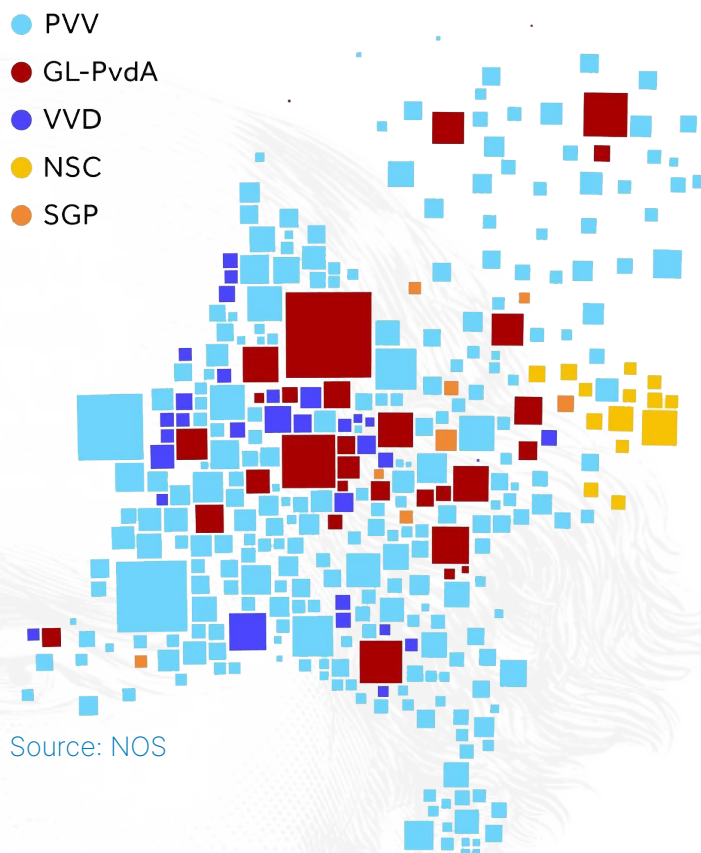
Pieter Omtzigt's *Nieuw Sociaal Contract* (NSC) is hesitant to fully commit to a coalition with the PVV, citing unconstitutional pledges by the PVV as the reason to first hold preliminary talks regarding policies that infringe on the

classical basic rights and rule of law. Omtzigt has undoubtedly lost his favoured negotiating position due to the stance of the VVD: NSC instead of the VVD in a confidence-and-supply agreement would reduce the risk of damaging the NSC's image as the embodiment of checks and balances while also eliminating their responsibility for any government wrongdoing. Under pressure from his electorate to take governing responsibility, the option of backing out will inevitably trigger a snap election and cause his disappointed voters to look to the PVV, CDA and VVD instead.

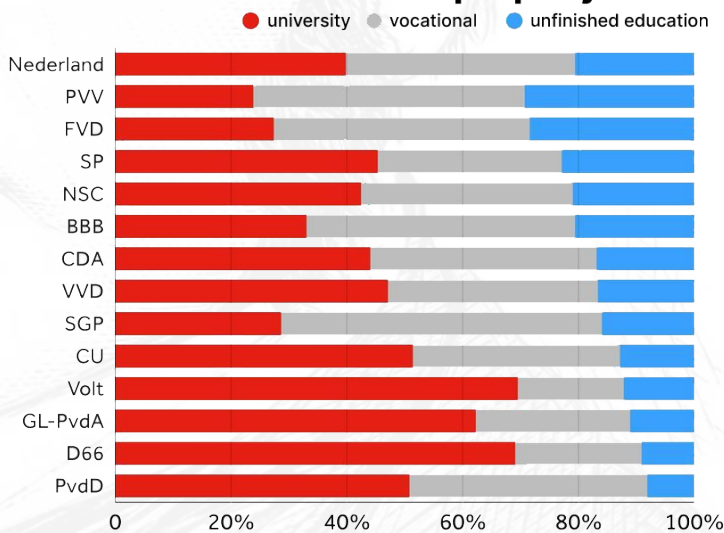
The proposed PVV-NSC-BBB coalition will attempt to fulfil their tightening pledges on migration, which was made the hot topic of the election by the VVD. Migration, in its broadest definition, also includes international students that compose a large part of the Dutch student population and the John Stuart Mill College. A majority of parties in parliament want to reduce the amount of international students coming in. This will be done through asserting that all degrees in principle should be taught in Dutch, bar internationally oriented masters and disciplines majorly reliant on English or another language. This may affect the PPE programme in the future if it is judged that the international character of the degree is unnecessary for the graduates' future in academia or working life. Changes for PPE students in the near future are hard to predict as of this moment, other than that some options for a future Master's degree in English will likely disappear here in the Netherlands.

To join in the PVV's new electorate in ignoring the party's illiberal rhetoric, there is also good news for your bank account. The PVV promises to reduce the interest rate on Dutch student loans to 0%, the sales tax on groceries to 0% and the costs of public housing. This fits within the analysis of the Dutch Parliamentary Behaviour Dataset that the PVV is not necessarily economically left-wing and more so fiscally irresponsible, as they plan to increase government spending without taxation measures. The outcome of the preliminary talks can have a tremendous impact on minorities, students and the PPE community in the coming years. Will the Netherlands retreat from the globalised world

Biggest party per municipality: corrected for population



Level of education of voters per party



and make itself a pariah for international students, minorities and European allies? Only time can tell.

The underrepresentation of Eastern European perspectives in PPE

Nele Fasshauer, Opinion

I have an ongoing debate with Joseph about whether I am truly “Eastern German”. I was born in “West Germany” (of course this is all after 1989 anyway) in Wuppertal (the only city in the world with a [suspension monorail](#) as public transport!), but I grew up in East and West Berlin equally. My mom is from East Germany, and my dad is from West Germany. And yet, that makes me one of the few people in PPE in my year who come from an “Eastern” background (although all true Eastern Europeans would despise me for counting myself in). In my year, I know of six other students who were born in a country of the former Eastern Bloc, which is remarkably little.

This lack of Eastern perspectives was most prominent in our recent discussion of realism in the second-year International Relations course. Specifically in the claim that the West is “at fault” for the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Although we read an article that pointed out how that was “westsplaining” (effectively denying the agency of Eastern European countries in *choosing* to join NATO), many students still seemed to endorse the perspective that Russia was legitimately claiming to be threatened by the West expanding its sphere of influence. It is easy to speak about the Russian invasion of Ukraine in such technical matters if you have never been there, know nobody from there, and are not impacted by the war on a major scale. And it is also easy to dismiss someone as “biased” when they become emotional - because they have friends that are being bombed right now.

I have never been to Ukraine. I *have* however been to (and even lived in) a country that neighbours Ukraine - Poland. One year in Warsaw mainly taught me one thing: that our view on Poland is one-dimensional. We perceive the Polish hesitancy towards European integration as irrational - without acknowledging the immense trauma of „not being on the map“ for 123 years (and being forced into communism right after by the Soviets). We listen to PiS’s demands for sovereignty and think they are being nationalistic. In Germany, the only time, Poland was in the news is when the PiS got rid of another aspect of liberal democracy. What we missed is the heterogeneous political landscape (I never met a single Pole who was in favour of PiS), and the reasons why PiS got so popular - the child transfers, and addressing the fate

of elderly. Populism is not just an Eastern European phenomenon - we have it at home too. We make fun of Eastern Germany for voting for the AfD. We answer „Why does the AfD have 30% in polls in Saxony?“ with „Because they are all Nazis“, without acknowledging the history of injustice and institutional distrust towards the state in the GDR. My Eastern German uncle was forced to do an apprenticeship as a salesman instead of studying because the “workers and farmers state” was fighting the educated “bourgeoisie”. It depressed him so much that he threatened my grandfather to flee over the border - and risk getting shot. When they did manage to flee (half legally), the Stasi tried forcing my uncle to become a spy in exchange for being allowed to visit the extended family. My grandparents lived together for two years after they got divorced because of the flat shortage. And in my mom’s class, you were not cool if you did not wear Western German clothes - the communist state, in trying to eliminate status symbols, only exacerbated the divide between those who had relatives in the West and those who did not.

Those are all real effects that (the Eastern German interpretation of) communism had on people. I think that you cannot ignore them, especially if you call yourself a communist, or socialist, or whatever. But a lot of people who have no connection to this (even Western Germans) are quick in brushing it over.

Lastly, there is also something to be noted about staff in PPE: While there are Eastern European Junior Lecturers, I have not had a single Eastern European Professor. It is probably a generational thing, and as more people move up the ladder of academia, we will notice changes higher up too. But I would still appreciate Eastern European perspectives. I know that „how we treat the east“ is not as much of a topic of public debate in the Netherlands as for example in Germany, for obvious historical reasons, but I think that as Dutch universities become more and more part of the „European family“, we will have to address it.

How not to Languish in Language: smoother Dutch

Ray Polman

“Smoo-y...no, esmeyih. Smuhyig?” Much to my stepfather’s and my own amusement my mother attempts to pronounce the word menacing the peanut butter jar; ‘*smeuig*’ meaning ‘creamy’ or ‘smooth’ in ‘*Nu extra smeuig*’. Even after thirty years of living in the Netherlands and more than twenty-five of working in Dutch speaking professional environments, certain words still prove positively unpronounceable to my mum’s Spanish tongue.

Such words as *vliegtuig*, *schreeuwen* and *gelijkwaardig* are other surefirers in revealing non-native speakers. And natives and newbies alike struggle with the infamous ‘*dt’s*’, while not only eager freshmen international students end up with a sore throat from attempting the guttural ‘hard g’ sound but many people in the southern Netherlands and Flanders find this phoneme to sound absolutely demonic as well. The combination of these factors prompts many people to remark that Dutch is an incredibly hard language to learn, but is that really the case?

What makes a language difficult or easy to learn anyway? The intuitive thing to look for is complexity. It only makes sense that a convoluted language is harder to learn than a straightforward one. And it is linguistically uncontroversial to say that a language like German with its grammatical cases, gendered nouns and various verb conjugations is harder to learn than, say, English, which has neither grammatical genders nor a case system and where verbs have but a handful of conjugations. For a more striking example you can compare Latin to any of the Romance languages that evolved from it, which quite literally are the same language but simplified (and spiced up by the inclusion of new sounds, letters and loan words of course). By this logic, the easiest language to learn should be Esperanto or another artificial language expressly made to be easily mastered. Yet the group of people who speak Esperanto, let alone conlangs like Simplo, Kosmo or Latino sine flexione, is vanishingly small, while (as for example the BRICS maintain) the desire for (more neutral geopolitics and thus by proxy) a neutral lingua franca remains high.

Complexity isn’t everything then. One contributor to the Esperanto moment’s brevity was the fact that the language wasn’t as neutral as purported, since its vocabulary almost entirely drew from European languages. So even though Esperanto was artificially made simple for everyone, European speakers still had an unfair advantage as the ease by which you acquire a foreign language is directly correlated to how closely it is related to your native language. Since all human languages are more or less derived from a single ancestor language (as Homo Sapiens once emerged in a

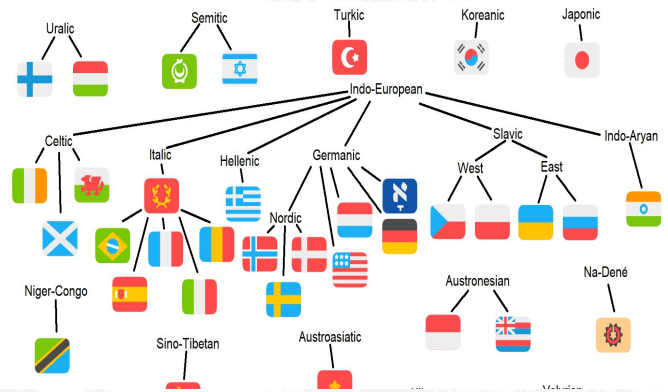
quite confined spot of land in and around modern-day Ethiopia) you can simply trace the language family tree and see how closely your main language and your goal language are connected, to get an idea of how challenging the ordeal will be. There are some 147 language families (and more than 7.000 total languages) in the world, but with the Germanic, Romance, and Slavic language families supplemented by the individual languages of Arabic, Mandarin and Hindi you’ve already got 95% of the world population covered. Languages of the same family will typically have the same syntax (e.g. subject-verb-object), similar grammar and largely comparable vocabulary. And of course being from the same family – or even from the same superfamily like the Indo-European one that connects Germanic, Romance, Slavic and other languages by linking them to a hypothesised Proto-Indo-European ancestor language – will mean that all the more practical stuff around language (e.g. alphabet) will be similar as well. In the case of Dutch this means that speakers of other Germanic languages and English will have a much easier time than Romance language speakers who will still be better off than speakers of say Greek who will be up to a herculean task, if you will, while to native speakers of East Asian languages such as Cantonese or Thai a Dutch text or soundbite might as well be Greek since for them even the subtler points like tone and written characters are completely different.

A small third factor in determining how hard a language will be is the availability of resources. With internet access automatically come tons of free teaching materials on any given language so textbooks will seldom be lacking. A resource hard to come by might very well be the opportunity for immersion though. Learning a new language is easiest if you hear and see that language spoken and spelled often, but if you’re learning a new language from the comfort of your home country you might not encounter any speakers of the other tongue. Music, shows and language tutoring platforms like Itaki go a long way in remedying this, but as anyone who has tried to pre-charge their language nubbin using Duolingo before they went on a long holiday (or semester abroad) knows, substitutes fall desperately short of the real thing. What makes learning Dutch uniquely challenging is that it is exceedingly rare to be truly totally immersed in the language. Since near-everyone speaks English, any person with sub-perfect Dutch will immediately be replied to in English. Furthermore, increasingly many advertisements, store names and other texts in the public space are written in English making it exceedingly harder to learn Dutch by immersion.

Did you know?

Having now gathered the factors that determine language difficulty, we can answer the question 'Is Dutch hard?' with a resounding: it depends. Dutch is a grammatically simple Germanic language, so shouldn't be too hard to master for speakers of not-too-far-related native languages who put in the effort to seek out immersion. That is, learning grammatically correct Dutch shouldn't be too hard. Speaking fluent native-sounding Dutch is something else. This is where the actual hurdles of Dutch come in. Dutch spelling and pronunciation is infuriatingly irregular and the bane of any non-native's sanity. Aside from its seemingly arbitrary rules for when to double a consonant in forming plurals and conjugating verbs ('blik' and 'blikken', but 'monnik' and 'monniken' for one), there's tons of loanwords where pronunciation rules are useless and you simply have to know the sound (*ch* in 'chaos', 'chips', and 'computerchips' all sound different). And even if, like my mum, you know the pronunciation of a particular word, you might simply be unable to utter the sounds (due to myelination), since Dutch is littered with otherwise uncommon vowel combinations, or diphthongs, such as *eu* and *ui*. And to end it all there is of course the voiced velar fricative, more aptly known as the 'hard g' sound. This sound is not exclusive to Dutch and also exists in Semitic languages like Arabic and Hebrew, which actually makes it stranger that this phoneme should pop up in an Indo-European language.

So it seems that Dutch may justifiably be called hard, depending of course on your native language and on what level of proficiency you want to reach. As my mother can attest to, it shouldn't take a motivated student too long to be able to make themselves understood in the language, but the road to fluency is rather *crunchy*, so to speak. The toll of forcing immersion furthermore, isn't exactly peanuts either, but with the information just dispensed the ride should at least be just a smidge *smoother*.



Society

Always Rooting for the Anti-Hero [Arthur Vuister](#) Could Taylor Swift be Rishi Sunak's best chance of getting reelected?

"Sweet like justice, Karma is a queen!", the whole cinema sings loudly as the world's biggest popstar dances across the screen for the last song of the "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour" movie. The film itself is little more than a recording of the globally sold out, pop culture phenomenon, that is the Eras Tour, albeit in stunning quality and superbly produced. However, despite being a big fan of Swift, my mind keeps returning to the potentially large and unintended side effects that could follow from the megatour's move to the UK this coming summer.

In the wake of the 52 shows played across the US this summer, much was made about the economic impact felt by host cities. Areas that hosted the Eras Tour witnessed as much as a \$48 million increase in local GDP when hosting two shows. The California Center for Jobs and the Economy estimated that the 6 shows that Taylor Swift played in LA added \$320 million dollars to the local economy. Attempts to aggregate the total effect of the

tour estimated a fiscal stimulus close to \$5bn. Additionally, research has shown that the tour created new jobs at above average pay in areas where Swift played; local businesses that hopped on the Swiftie bandwagon saw a massive increase in sales; and the hospitality sector, still recovering from the pandemic, received massive increases in revenue.

Following the success of its (first) US leg, the Eras Tour is going global and, with no fewer than 15 shows on the schedule, the UK has the second most stops out of anywhere in the world. Some quick back-of-the-napkin-maths tells us that, if estimates of the impact in the US are correct and fans in the UK are similarly prolific in spending as their US counterparts, Swift's visit could amount to a £1bn stimulus. While this amount may seem insignificant in comparison to the UK's GDP. This potential stimulus is still more than, for instance, the entire amount of spending announced for "Levelling Up" in the government's

spring budget. In short, there may be some in government who should start to pay attention, not least of which the Prime Minister.

For months, the media has been speculating as to when Rishi Sunak will hold the next general election, with the potential date being as late as January 2025. However, the consensus opinion seems to be that Sunak will call the election whenever the economic conditions are favourable enough that he has some chance of winning. His two main challenges appear to be the persistently high inflation rate still haunting the Prime Minister and the anaemic growth rates threatening to push the UK into recession. Furthermore, these problems are intertwined. In order to address the excess inflation, the Bank of England has continually pushed up the interest rate, increasing the likelihood of a recession. For Sunak, there may only be a very narrow window of time when prices have stabilised, but the country has not yet plunged into recession.

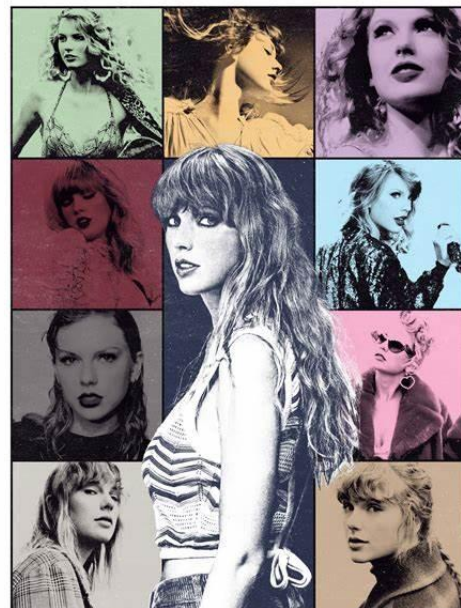
This window of opportunity is likely not far away, inflation finally showed a significant fall in October and could be getting close to target rates this summer. Therefore, it appears that there is a realistic scenario that the Prime Minister's post-inflation, pre-recession economic moment could be delivered right when Taylor Swift begins touring in the UK. The effects of Taylor Swift's fan induced fiscal stimulus could arrive late enough to avoid compounding inflation problems, but early enough to boost spending in the economy, potentially buying enough time for Sunak to hold (and win) a general election.

The economically educated reader might rightfully argue that the period of positive economic indicators could simply happen to coincide with the Eras Tour being in the UK, with very little of the positive signs in the economy actually being attributable to Swift. Undoubtedly, we should not overestimate the importance of the Eras Tour; it will not single handedly stave off recession. Nevertheless, there are several reasons why the tour may still have an outsized fiscal impact.

Firstly, the UK tour dates, unlike the US, have attracted a large number of international fans. The vast majority of European countries have not received nearly as many concert dates as the UK, so many foreign fans are choosing to travel to the UK especially for the show. This is significant in terms of spending because visitors to the UK tend to spend more money on transportation, hotels, etc. Moreover, the purchases made by foreigners in the UK are seen as pure gains to GDP, whereas some portion of spending by domestic fans would likely have been spent on other goods and services if the Eras Tour was not around. Secondly, contrary to most government stimulus programs, the

Eras Tour is in town for only one summer and all the spending occurs in this limited period of time. Rather than spreading out the effect, Swift's presence will be like one sudden jolt. Such a short-lasting and intense shock could change the direction of travel for the economy. British economist John Maynard Keynes introduced the idea that a negligible change in economic circumstances could turn into sudden optimism and reverse a decline, what he called "animal spirits".

Whether the fiscal stimulus and surge in "animal spirits" will actually materialise remains to be seen, but it seems a damning indictment of both the power of pop-culture billionaires and of the UK electorate, who are focused almost entirely on economic issues, that a societal group who care disproportionately about equality, women's rights and progressivism could facilitate the reelection of an explicitly 'anti-woke' Prime Minister. Clearly, for British fans of Taylor Swift, Karma is neither just nor sweet.



TAYLOR SWIFT
THE ERAS TOUR

TAYLOR SWIFT
TOURING



Eating Tacos in Texas

Johanna Rieken, an interview with Isabel in Texas

Travelling somewhere new is fun, the new culture, new people, the nature and the food, everything is interesting and special for a few weeks. But how much time is enough to really know a place? Would you already call yourself an Amsterdammer? Maybe it took you just a few days, maybe weeks or months until the feeling settled in, that we are not on Holiday in the Netherlands anymore but we are actually living in Amsterdam. Maybe you still feel like a tourist walking past the canals.

Indulging in a completely new culture and experiencing a different way of life is exciting. What is the best memory that stays from such an experience? What are the struggles? We talked to some of our third year students who are currently abroad to get answers. This is what they told us:

Isa chose Texas for her study abroad because she figured that it would be something different than she is used to. "I don't think I would have ever chose Texas as a holiday destination, so I thought that studying and living there would be a great opportunity". Her initial thought when choosing Texas was that it would be a location different enough to experience something completely new but familiar enough to get immersed in the culture. "There was not a language barrier which made it easier for me to adapt".

From four months in Texas Isa can say: "Life as a student is quite different than in Amsterdam". "I think my most favorite thing during my time abroad was travelling with friends."

She went to New York, New Orleans, Austin and all kinds of places. "It was really fun to explore around because the US is a country in which you can find a lot of contrasts" says Isa. "You can go to a State and it can be radically different from another State and even within the same state you can find completely different landscapes and communities", which she finds fascinating.

One thing that Isa had to get used to was the lifestyle of the people. "I feel like the people around me were very focused all the time on studying, working or exercising because the way in which their communities are structured doesn't allow for a lot of spontaneity since they are very dependent on their cars. In Europe, going out for a beer after work to disconnect after a long work day is pretty normal, whilst Americans don't really do that as much. Being used to having all places to go rather close in Amsterdam, Isa had to get used to living in a college town.

However, finding friends was not a problem. "I think the Americans are really nice and open even though it takes them some time to open up and I think that it is in part to the lack of spontaneity that I mentioned before". She lived with three roommates who all came from different



backgrounds but they were Texan. "Texas is bigger than my home country so it was crazy to see how, for instance, my roommates were so different from each other and had different values too". At first she was a little overwhelmed when coming to Texas. "I found some situations triggering at times and it took me some time to understand how different life is over there and the role that their system also plays in it". "However, I think that also being able to see certain things that made me uncomfortable at a societal level were also the best thing of exchange. I think that it is all part of living the experience and exploring other contexts", she says. And looking back at it she reflects: "I think I was critical at the beginning but you just have to accept the differences, stay curious and embrace it". The most important thing, Isa thinks is to take enough time to process all the new information that you are getting. "You need to be patient with yourself, I think". Uni wise she was very satisfied with her courses: "I took all philosophy courses which also helped me make the most of the experience because a lot of the concepts and theories I learned could be applied to that reality. For example, Gender studies was a really insightful class that I absolutely recommend to anyone going to Texas for exchange. Philosophy of Art was also very cool".

The very American experience Isa expected when signing up for her time in Texas, she got: "It was a lot of sports, especially the big football culture, old west aesthetic and the warm southern charm" However, she expected more from the party scene. "As a Spaniard, I expected to dance more but a lot of Americans mostly associate partying with drinking." However Isa is very happy she chose Texas as her study abroad destination. "Texas is a state with a really strong identity and you can really see that in how people behave and take care of each other, that was very fun to see."

We asked her about her tips for a student that is considering to go to Texas in their third year. This is what she told us: "You should definitely join a sports club or any of the hundred of organizations offered. It will help you get more in touch with the culture and meet Americans that can show you their ways. Try to integrate and be close to the locals". Another tip she has: "Take advantage and eat a lot of Tacos! And travel too!".

Isa's time in Texas in one word: "Metamorphic! It definitely challenged me but it also brought me a lot of clarity and great experiences!".

Get to know PPE staff: Barish Erturk

Roos van den Doel & Oliver Clemits

Could you introduce yourself?

My name is Barish Erturk, I'm from Turkey and this is my fourth year at PPE. All PPE junior lecturers are here with a 50% teaching 50% research contract. PPE Judos are here for six to seven years nice because we teach more frequently and we stick around longer, I think it's nice for the PPE soul.

You are currently getting your PHD, about?

Politicization of the European union's external relations and how this transformation of Europeans national sphere affecting the EU's external relations. There is some literature claiming that the traditional left-right social-economic understanding of division contestation is transforming into more social-cultural division based on our identities, like cosmopolitan identities versus more national identities. My dissertation is basically: if this is true, how is it reflected in the European Union's external affairs? Basically I wonder that most of the time nationalist anti-systemic parties are against the EU because they don't want their country to transfer authorities to any supreme organization. I think there is this story that some people are the winners of the globalization process and some are the losers, this identity is what now affects your political behavior.

How did growing up in Istanbul affect you?

I was not born in the poorest region, but of course relatively the conditions are harsher than here. One of the serious problems was the education. You figure out how to learn English on your own. Thanks to the Erasmus program I was able to go abroad but usually it's not common for Turkish people to go abroad. In some aspects it taught me how to survive by myself, learning language by myself and finding the illegal websites for books. You also really understand this difference between people trusting and people not trusting the system. When corruption is that common, your everyday life changes drastically, it means that you have to fight constantly. You don't believe what government officials say to you, you have to understand whether it is time to give a bribe or not.

What is your most prized possession?

When i was at an antique store, I learnt that in Turkey the 50s you needed a license for bicycles. In a box of documents I found an old bicycle license. I think it's very interesting and we had that system for 10 years but they abolished it.

In class you gave some advice on what to do when getting hit with teargas, how did you obtain this knowledge?

In 2013 in Turkey they wanted to build a shopping

shopping mall at Taksim instead of a green area, and people were against that. At first 10 people went there, then 20, then 200 - it was 45 days of occupation of this public place and just sleeping over at the park. Slogans changed from "we will never let you build this shopping mall" to "freedom, democracy, etc.". There was a brutal police force against the protest because the issues for those semi-authoritarian regimes is, once people think that other people are not perceiving it as legitimate, that's trouble. I was in there, they were throwing tear gas and you were using your own cocktails like migraine medicine or something. It was to relieve your eyes and then go back. I was not injured, but when the police was pushing you, you had to run back. If you were lucky, people opened their doors so you could come in. Many times I just found myself in a random apartment with 20 people who were just trying to recover and get some water. When that didn't happen, the issue was that when someone fell down and people were unconsciously running, everyone is just falling down, and you kind of tackle them.

Do you have any advice for PPE students?

Protect your attention. Have some time that you just you are just out of everything, no phone, no computer, just thinking about something or reading about that. I can recommend a very nice book about that, "Stolen Focus" (Johann Hari). It explains that your focus is an asset for all the companies, for TikTok, for Be-Real, for Facebook and for Twitter.

What do you do in your free time?

I like Ij-hallen, it's a second hand Bazaar once in a month. I sometimes even buy a typewriter and fix it, i like that kind of stuff. I also have a museum card. To the RijksMuseum, I've been maybe six or seven times but I still haven't finished it. There are some rooms where you want to spend more time and brain energy, so you have to divide it into sections. Every activity that I like is quite nerdy but that's okay. I also like coffee and of course beer, like going to pubs. But most of all I like to travel. My life most of the time is just save money and then travel. The beauty of this job is, that when you are not teaching it does not matter where you are, I just take my laptop and travel.

Favorite Quotes

“Somebody should have the courage not to specialize and look at how one can bring things together”

- Ester Boserup

“Can’t you sympathize with my procrastination”

- Plato, The Republic, 472a

“I apologise for such a long letter - I didn’t have time to write a short one”

- Mark Twain

“I dreamed I was a butterfly, flitting around in the sky; then I awoke. Now I wonder: Am I a man who dreamt of being a butterfly, or am I a butterfly dreaming that I am a man?”

- Zhuangzi

“Truth is on the march; nothing can stop it now”

-Émile Zola

“Science is what you know. Philosophy is what you don't know”

- Bertrand Russell

“You have power over your mind - not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength.”

- Marcus Aurelius

Announcements

Dear Everyone!

2023 was a year of extremes - may it be the climate, wars or national politics.

As the seventh Board of KallioPPE, we feel content with last years accomplishments and the part we and our committees played in building the PPE community. We hope to have helped form new connections and nurture existing bonds within and beyond PPE and have had a great time organising various events with and for you. One of our favourite memories of 2023 is our very first party hosted at Huis van Iemand Anders in September (the vibes will most definitely be resurrected in 2024). We look forward to starting this new year with its new opportunities and await your ideas and spirit to make this year one of the best KallioPPE has seen. The sky is the limit and we want no less than to live, laugh, love with you no matter what might come.

Now a little Look into the future:

Soon, we will be joined by our beloved 3rd years from exchange. New and will meet during the welcome back party and the "Top Studieopleiding" celebration. You will also have the opportunity to find new love during our Valentine's party with our sister association AIM (or not). In March, KallioPPE has a birthday to celebrate... Later, in period 5, we will have the biggest event of the year, the PPE Gala. And finally, we will conclude the year with our PPE BBQ. The rest is up to you. We are looking forward to your contributions. Don't hesitate to take actino and make KallioPPE a better community! Approach us or the Committees at any time.

We wish you all the best for the coming weeks!

Love,
Board VII

Entertainment

2024 Bingo

Save this bingo card. With your friends, fill in the blanks. Who off you will get the first Bingo this year...

B	I	N	G	O
A new Pope is appointed		CGI artists will go on strike	China Invades Taiwan	ANC will get less than 50% of the votes in the South-African elections.
.....(celebrity) is cancelled	Ukraine joins NATO	 gets assassinated	Joe Biden Dies
	Deepfakes will cause a major scandal.	Putin wins the Russian presidential elections	NASA discovers aliens	
King Charles of the United Kingdom dies		FPÖ will win the Austrian parliamentary elections.		2024 surpasses 2023 as the hottest year measured
.....(country) will win(amount) medals in the Olympics.	X will go bankrupt		Smartphone companies will launch AI voice assistantswill win the US elections

Thank you!

THE PPE NEWSPAPER

THANKS!

A big Thank You to everyone contributing to the New Year's Edition of the Paper Mill - the whole Encounters-Committee, the Paper Mill-Team and to all our individual submitters. Please approach us for feedback, critique or questions via email to ppeencounters@gmail.com or in person. Stay tuned for the next Editions and for our PPE-Podcast!

Coming soon...

DON'T MISS OUT!

- 23.01.** Big Clothing Swap (with other associations)
- Date tba** Welcome Back-Party (with 3rd years joining)
- Date tba** "Top Studieopleiding"-Celebration
- February** Valentines-Day-Party (with other associations)
- 29.02.** Night at the library (with humanities faculty)

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