The NHS as a Sacred Value

Linda Woodhead
Figure 1 Public satisfaction with the NHS, 1983–2019

- Very or quite satisfied
- Very or quite dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

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Figure 12: Satisfaction with the NHS overall and social care services, 2019

- Very and quite satisfied
- Very and quite dissatisfied
- Neither
- Don't know/refused

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Clap for carers
Huge thanks to all our NHS staff & all other key workers.
Change in proportion of public services budget spent on health

1955-56

11.2% NHS

Rest of budget

2016-17

30.1% NHS

Source: IFS
How the health budget has grown
Real-terms spending, 2018-19 prices (£bn)

Source: Nuffield Trust
STAY HOME
PROTECT THE NHS
SAVE LIVES
Figure 5 Reasons for satisfaction with the NHS overall, 2019

- The quality of NHS care
- NHS care is free at the point of ...
- Good range of services and tre...
- Attitudes and behaviour of NHS...
- Don't have to wait long for a G...
- How much money the governm...
- Other
- Money is spent wisely in the NHS
- Government reforms that affect...
- Stories in the newspapers on th...

Percentage of respondents stating that they were 'very' or 'quite' satisfied

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Max Weber

Instrumental rationality

&

Value rationality

My argument: the NHS is a symbol and repository of our most sacred values
Operationsrum Sankt Joseph Hospital København 1901 (Sankt Joseph Søstrenes arkiv, København)
The Post-war Welfare Project

*L’État-providence*

Many of the architects of welfare state were Christian, including Prime Minister Harold MacMillan, Archbishop William Temple, William Beveridge, and Richard Tawney. Bishop J.W.C. Ward called the welfare state ‘an expression at the national level of the humanitarian work of the Church.’
YOUR HEALTH SERVICE

HOW IT WILL WORK IN SCOTLAND
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHURCH</th>
<th>HEALTH SERVICE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Rationalism, science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paternalism, amateurism</td>
<td>Paternalism, professionalism</td>
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<td>Charity, sacrifice</td>
<td>Care, equality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Piecemeal</td>
<td>Systematic, universal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Statutory</td>
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Richard Titmuss: blood donation as the modern eucharist

HUGE THANKS TO ALL OUR NHS STAFF & ALL OTHER KEY WORKERS
1978, San Francisco
London, 2019
The NHS today symbolises

Equality

Diversity (caring respect for each unique individual)

Care

National identity and pride
Enter the market

Entrepreneurial values:

Competition, innovation, efficiency, individual success
Matt Hancock to take control of NHS and scrap decade-long drive for internal competition

Move comes amid concerns that controversial Cameron-era reforms hampered Government's response to Covid pandemic

By Henry Bodkin, HEALTH AND SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT and Harry Yorke, WHITEHALL EDITOR
5 February 2021 • 7:00pm
Political appropriation
Émile Durkheim

Society and the sacred:

Symbol and ritual

Collective consciousness

Holding up a better image of society
Dangers

Uncritical, ‘turn a blind eye’

Political appropriation

The weight of idealisation

The NHS can’t do all that religion can – e.g. death, suffering, injustice
Causes of death in England and Wales

- Heart disease: 28.8% (15.7%)
- Cancer: 16.8% (27.8%)
- Stroke: 11.2% (6.2%)
- Tuberculosis: 4.7% (0.0%)
- Dementia and "senility": 2.6% (10.5%)
- Diabetes: 0.8% (1.1%)
However important the science, we are really dealing with a faith.