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# 1AC

## 1AC – Texas

### 1AC – Plan

#### The United States federal government should adopt the principle of separating platforms from commerce.

### 1AC – Democracy

#### The advantage is Democracy:

#### Corporate consolidation subverts democratic governance. The size of dominant platforms concentrates political and economic power.

Lande & Vaheesan ’20 [Robert; Professor of Law @ University of Baltimore School of Law and Sandeep; Legal Director @ Open Markets Institute, JD @ Duke; “Preventing the Curse of Bigness Through Conglomerate Merger Legislation,” *Ariz. St. LJ* 52; AS]

Corporate size often translates to political power. An extensive body of research has found that firm size is correlated with more political activity.41 Larger firms make larger contributions to political campaigns and devote more resources to lobbying members of Congress and government agencies.42 Judicial reinterpretations of the First Amendment have granted corporate political activity broad constitutional protection. 43 Their power is not confined to these “narrow” political activities. Large businesses also use their wealth power to fund sympathetic media coverage and scholarly research. This corporate political activity benefits executives and shareholders at the expense of the rest of society.

Corporate power in politics and public life is not an academic concern and today attracts critics from across much of the political spectrum.44 A large segment of the public is deeply concerned about corporate clout and influence in American politics. From the progressive left to the nationalist or conservative right, many individuals and organizations have expressed worries about powerful corporations capturing the political system and using it to advance their narrow aims. An ideologically diverse set of figures and groups have raised concerns about the political power of large corporations and started offering remedies.

A. Corporate Size Translates to Political and Economic Power

Corporate size often translates to political and economic power. An extensive body of research has found that firm size is correlated with political activity. 45 Larger firms make larger contributions to political campaigns and other activities and devote more resources to lobbying members of Congress and government agencies. 46 They can also use their power to fund sympathetic media coverage and scholarly research.47 This corporate political activity has tangible benefits for executives and shareholders. An influential 2014 study found that members of Congress in voting on bills are responsive to the views of two groups: large businesses and the wealthy.48 In contrast, they are largely indifferent to the political concerns and preferences of the middle and working classes.49

Large firms exercise political power through campaign contributions. An extensive body of empirical literature has found that large firms make larger campaign contributions to members of Congress and political action committees than small firms do.50 Campaign contributions are an important way to build and maintain political influence. While the findings on the question are mixed, campaign contributions may increase the likelihood that the member’s votes and other actions are aligned with the donor’s interests.51

Political contributions can give corporate donors access to those in power. Lending credence to what research had found,52 Mick Mulvaney, the current director of the Office of Management and Budget and former acting director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, openly admitted this dynamic in a speech before bank lobbyists.53 He stated that, as a member of Congress, he granted preferential access to lobbyists who had donated to his political campaigns.54

Large firms also wield political power through lobbying, an arguably much more important form of political activity than political contributions.55 They often have large staffs of lawyers and lobbyists to present their messages to politicians and regulators.56 Relative to smaller firms, large firms devote more resources to lobbying activity. 57 This lobbying allows corporations to shape the narrative around an issue and influence members of Congress and regulators. Lobbying is often an effective strategy for casting doubt on the public benefits of legislation and regulation. 58 Corporate lobbyists can create counter-narratives that proposed legislation restricting their client’s activities would either not advance or undermine the public interest.59 For instance, despite triggering the worst economic crisis in nearly eighty years, large banks and financial institutions in the United States, through all-encompassing lobbying and public relations blitz, subsequently avoided structural breakups and significant restrictions on their activity.60

Indeed, the present weak enforcement of antitrust may, in part, be a product of corporate power and influence over the federal antitrust agencies.61 “Regulatory capture” occurs when a regulatory agency or enforcer is so greatly influenced by businesses that it fails to act in the public’s interest.62 Instead it acts in ways that benefits the players in the industry that the regulators were charged with policing.63 One possible cause of regulatory capture is that the agency often has limited resources compared to the regulated companies. 64 When the regulated business is a multi-billion-dollar company, the disparity in resources can be especially large and regulatory capture becomes more probable.65

The FTC and DOJ’s reluctance and unwillingness to challenge some huge mergers could, in part, be caused by the considerable influence massive companies have over them and the political environment in which they operate. For instance, FTC Commissioner Rohit Chopra recently voiced concern over the power of big tech in a trade regulation context, stating: “All too often, the government is too captured by those incumbents that use their power to dictate their preferred policies.”66 Consistent with the “capture” theory, mergers can produce large companies with substantial resources to hire the requisite numbers of lawyers, lobbyists, and experts to “capture” a regulatory agency or enforcer.

The power of large corporations extends beyond the political, regulatory, and legal realms. Their power can be characterized as hegemonic. They can shape the parameters of public debate through a variety of means. They use their advertising dollars to boost supportive outlets and voices and marginalize critical ones 67—and even co-opt individual and organizational voices that are conventionally perceived as progressive.68 They also own media outlets (think of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and his ownership of the Washington Post) and fund think tanks that can propagate their preferred narrative on a range of issues.69 Big businesses have also become adept at manipulating academic debates to their own ends, donating to universities, sponsoring new academic centers, and paying ideologically-aligned scholars to produce academic defenses.70 Indeed, present-day antitrust embodies the extraordinary influence of corporations. Over the past several decades, corporate-funded economists and lawyers have played an outsized role in antitrust debates.71

Furthermore, corporate size confers power through the control of economic resources. At a large corporation, a handful of individuals— executives and directors—make decisions that affect entire cities, regions, and even the nation. A decision to open a plant in one city, instead of another, or to relocate a plant from the United States to a foreign country can affect large numbers of people. Senator Sherman recognized how concentration of assets in a few hands amounted to private government. 72 He asked his colleagues to “consider . . . whether, on the whole, it is safe in this country to leave the production of property, the transportation of our whole country, to depend upon the will of a few men sitting at their council board in the city of New York.”73

Corporate size means that every nominally private decision has major public implications.74 They can use their control of key resources to stop unfavorable government action and induce favorable action.75

Consider the recent contest among states and cities to host Amazon’s second headquarters. Amazon invited state and local governments across the country to compete for this second headquarters in exchange for a pledge to create 50,000 local jobs.76 States and cities showered Amazon with a range of carrots amounting to billions of dollars in tax incentives. 77 Exemplifying the lengths to which governments were willing to go to lure Amazon, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo (half-) jokingly even offered to change his first name to Amazon if Amazon chose New York City. 78 This frenzied competition illustrates the power of a large corporation over democratically elected governments. And this episode is not an outlier but representative of how large corporations use their power and the threat of relocation to pressure and twist governments for their own ends.79

#### Concentration holds the populace hostage to the whims of corporate power. Reviving antitrust enforcement is key to economic democracy.

Sitaraman ’18 [Ganesh; Co-founder and Director of Policy @ Great Democracy Initiative; Professor of Law @ Vanderbilt University; “Taking Antitrust Away from the Courts”; The Great Democracy Initiative, September 2018; *Vanderbilt Law Research Paper* 19(2); AS]

Introduction: The Second Age of Monopoly Power

We live in a second age of monopoly power. The first age, which spanned from the Gilded Age of the late 19th century through the Progressive Era in the early 20th century was marked by the growth of corporations into “trusts.” From 1894 to 1904, hundreds of corporations disappeared as the “Great Merger Movement” led to consolidation and concentration in many sectors of the economy.1 Decried in the general public, the trusts were caricatured as octopuses with tentacles extending across sectors of the economy and into government.

In response to the first age of monopoly power, Americans across party lines rallied to fight the trusts and monopolies that threatened freedom and democracy. Republican John Sherman of Pennsylvania authored the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890 and was joined by the Republican “Trustbuster” Teddy Roosevelt in seeking to rein in powerful corporations. Democrat Woodrow Wilson signed the Clayton Anti-Trust Act and the Federal Trade Commission Act, supported by advocate and later Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis. Right and left, Americans of that era understood that massive economic concentration was a threat not just to a free and competitive marketplace, but a threat to our constitutional democracy. As Theodore Roosevelt put it, “There can be no real political democracy unless there is something approaching an economic democracy.”

In recent years, we have entered a second era of monopoly power, with growing concentration across sectors of the economy. Four airlines now control 80 percent of the market.2 Three drug stores control 99 percent of the market.3 Four beef companies control 85 percent of the market.4 The Fortune 100 now makes up nearly 50 percent of GDP, with the top 20 firms capturing more than 20 percent.5

Commentators across the ideological spectrum have noticed and criticized America’s monopoly problem: from progressives like Joe Stiglitz and neoliberals like Bloomberg’s Noah Smith to conservative Breitbart columnist Virgil and establishment centrists at the Brookings Institution and The Economist. 6 Even Congress has gotten involved, with members of the House creating an Antitrust Caucus and the Senate Judiciary Committee holding hearings on the question of the goals of antitrust.

There is widespread interest in corporate consolidation because the concentration of economic power is a threat not just to the American economy but also to freedom and democracy. Economically, monopolists have the ability to hold consumers hostage, raise prices on goods and services, and deliver worse quality goods and services – which is especially problematic when their goods or services are essential in a modern economy. Rising concentration also contributes to widening inequality. As mega-corporations use their market power to squeeze suppliers and consumers to gain higher profits, those benefits accrue to their executives and shareholders, most of whom are on the wealthier side of the population.7 Some economists have shown that growing concentration is leading to inter-firm inequality and with it, increased inequality in society.8 Others have found that concentrated markets lead to lower wages.9 The rise of monopolies also threatens America’s innovative and entrepreneurial status. Powerful companies don’t want competition and are likely to use their market (and political power) to stop, delay, or otherwise prevent disruptive innovators from gaining traction. In recent years, economic researchers have confirmed this: not only is the rate of new companies plummeting across sector and geographies, but consolidation is an important factor contributing to the decline in new business formation.10

#### Dominant platforms undermine the free exchange of information – loss of independent publishers generates propaganda, misinformation, and polarization.

Stoller ’19 [Matt; 10/17/19; Fellow @ Open Markets Institute, Director of Research @ American Economic Liberties Project, Former Senior Policy Advisor and Budget Analyst @ Senate Budget Committee; “Tech Companies Are Destroying Democracy and the Free Press”; https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/17/opinion/tech-monopoly-democracy-journalism.html; AS]

These two phony Facebook pages illustrate the crisis of the free press and democracy: Advertising revenue that used to go to quality journalism is now captured by big tech intermediaries, and some of that money now goes to dishonest, low-quality and fraudulent content.

This is the first presidential election happening after the business model for journalism collapsed. Advertising revenue for print newspapers has fallen by two-thirds since 2006. From 2008 to 2018, the number of newspaper reporters dropped 47 percent. Two-thirds of counties in America now have no daily newspaper, and 1,300 communities have lost all local coverage. Even outlets native to the web, like BuzzFeed and HuffPost, have laid off reporters. This problem is a global one; for example, in Australia from 2014 to 2018, the number of journalists in traditional print publications fell by 20 percent.

The signaling functions of news brands and the cultural barriers meant to guard against distorting effects of advertising have broken down. In their place, a dysfunctional information ecosystem has emerged, characterized by polarization, addiction and conspiracy theories. In Europe and in the United States, young men learn race science on YouTube. In Brazil, citizens learn that Zika is spread by vaccines. As the Center for Humane Technology puts it: “Today’s tech platforms are caught in a race to the bottom of the brain stem to extract human attention. It’s a race we’re all losing.”

There are two drivers of this crisis. The first is the concentration of online advertising revenue in the hands of Google and Facebook — global monopolies sitting astride public discourse, diverting money that used to go to publishers to themselves. The second is an ethical breakdown — a natural consequence of advertising financing an information utility like a social network or search engine — which I call “conflicted communications.”

It’s tempting to blame the rise of the internet for all of this, but it’s important to recognize that technology is shaped by law. Advertising, publishing and information distribution operate in publicly structured markets. In the past 40 years, the rules underlying these markets have undergone a radical reorganization.

As the communications historian Richard John argues, for roughly 200 years (beginning with the creation of the Post Office in 1791), American policymakers generally sought to decentralize media power and keep communication networks neutral. In the late 1970s, policymakers reversed their presumptions. They relaxed antitrust law, eliminated the fairness doctrine and eventually allowed the creation of large media conglomerates through the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

Enabled by a loose merger policy, there was a roll-up of the internet space. From 2004 to 2014, Google spent at least $23 billion buying 145 companies, including the advertising giant DoubleClick. And since 2004, Facebook has spent a similar amount buying 66 companies, including key acquisitions allowing it to attain dominance in mobile social networking. None of these acquisitions were blocked as anti-competitive.

Data is now the key input into advertising: If you know who is looking at an ad, that ad space becomes much more valuable. Google and Facebook now know who is looking at every ad, and their competitors for ad dollars — newspapers — do not. Further, newspapers now must also rely on Google and Facebook to reach their customers, and hand them valuable subscriber and reader data; when The Wall Street Journal refused to abide by Google’s formatting terms, Google removed it from its search ranks and the newspaper’s traffic dropped by 44 percent.

In other words, it wasn’t just technology but also a pro-concentration philosophy that shaped the information revolution of the 1990s and 2000s. Google and Facebook grew to control important information utilities, like general search, social networking and mapping. New forms of advertising — underpinned by unregulated use of data and sold through opaque and complex auctions — then undermined the bargaining leverage of publishers and enabled new forms of fraud using bots and falsified content.

A result of these policy changes is a radical centralization of power over the flow of information. Tech platforms now control online advertising revenue, which is the primary source of financing for news. But this is not just a problem of the monopolization of an industry — these new monopolists are not simply more powerful media behemoths taking share from smaller publishers. Google and Facebook are not in the journalism business at all; they are in the communications business, running information utilities with revenue that used to go to journalism.

Advertising financing presents an inherent conflict of interest, because advertising is a third party paying to manipulate someone. In traditional media, advertising can influence editorial choices. There are a series of ethical structures designed to inhibit excessive control of advertisers in media industries, a result of debates for hundreds of years among public figures on the nature of advertising and publishing. Some of these include the signaling effects of differentiated news brands, a diversity of news outlets, the separation of advertising and editorial departments, and guilds to protect journalistic integrity from publishing business interests. But such ethical debates have yet to occur around information utilities. Consequently, the manifestation of the distorting effect of advertising — addiction, manipulation, fraud, tearing of a collective social fabric — has been met with little cultural immunity, policy response or institutional defenses.

Before Google became an enormous advertising company, the company’s co-founders — Sergey Brin and Larry Page — noted this problem. They looked at the problematic search engine market of the 1990s — with companies offering advertisers the chance to pay to be listed as an organic search result — and argued that financing a search engine business through advertising was fundamentally corrupting. Such information utilities would then have an incentive to keep users on their properties so that they could keep selling more ads. They would also have an incentive to self-deal, putting content in front of users that benefits the utility rather than the end user. And they would have an incentive to surveil their users, so that they could target them more effectively.

Mr. Brin and Mr. Page were right about the corrupting influence of advertising. This business model of conflicted communications is where the addiction, surveillance, fraud and clickbait come from. Unfortunately, we are living in the world they foresaw.

The combination of these two dynamics — the concentration of power and the new ethical quandaries presented by the financing of information networks by advertising — has created a crisis for democracy. The monopolization of ad revenue starves legitimate outlets of financing. More subtly, the signaling functions of news brands and the dense cultural barriers meant to guard against distorting effects of advertising have broken down. The task of policymakers is now to put together the ethical structures to mitigate these conflicts.

The collapse of journalism and democracy in the face of the internet is not inevitable. To save democracy and the free press, we must eliminate Google and Facebook’s control over the information commons. That means decentralizing these markets and splitting information utilities from one another so that search, mapping, YouTube and other Google subsidiaries are separate companies, and Instagram, WhatsApp and Facebook once again compete. It also means barring or severely curtailing advertising on any of these platforms. Advertising revenue should once again flow to journalism and art. And people should pay directly for communications services, instead of paying indirectly by forgoing democracy.

#### Structural separations preserve democratic governance by challenging the structures that produce economic concentration.

Khan ’20 [Lina, Chairperson @ Federal Trade Commission, JD @ Yale Law School; “The End of Antitrust History Revisited,” *Harvard Law Review* 133(5), p. 1655-1683; AS]

I. THE CURSE OF BIGNESS

Wu's The Curse of Bigness is structured around three key tenets: (i) that antitrust and antimonopoly are central to America's political tradition and critical safeguards of a democratic republic (pp. 16-19); (2) that the structure of our economy inextricably shapes our experience as citizens (pp. 39-44); and (3) that the decades-long project to defang antitrust is the product of an intellectual revolution that redefined how we assess competition through adopting "consumer welfare" as the law's only goal (pp. 88-91, 135).

First, Wu makes clear that his aim is to help recenter antitrust as a key “check on private power as necessary in a functioning democracy” (p. 19). Revisiting the legislative history of antitrust, he notes that lawmakers passed antitrust laws with the expressly political goal of preventing economic autocracy and prohibiting coercive conduct (pp. 30– 31).14 He analogizes antitrust to constitutional law, both in function and in import, following a tradition of scholars who have explored what it means for antitrust to serve a constitutional role (p. 54).15 Wu draws out two distinct aspects of this constitutional dimension. He argues that the passage of the antitrust laws reflected a “[c]onstitutional choice in industrial and national policy,” suggesting that lawmakers passed antitrust laws in order to codify a set of foundational principles that were to set the backdrop of American life (p. 17). Analogizing antitrust to the checks and balances of the U.S. constitutional system, Wu also underscores how constitutional design and antitrust law both reflect a distrust of concentrated power (p. 31). The steady erosion of antitrust, then, is a threat not just to open markets and fair competition, but to the basis of democratic governance.

Second, Wu makes the case that economic concentration inextricably shapes our experience as citizens and that how we structure our markets is foremost a political question that demands critical public engagement (p. 33).16 This tenet is most directly an echo of Justice Brandeis, whose 1934 book is a namesake for Wu’s.17 Justice Brandeis analyzed the phenomenology of concentrated private power, examining how living in a nation of monopolies and oligopolies — being subject to their whims and arbitrary dictates — shaped the experience of civic life.18 Wu, channeling Justice Brandeis, answers that it leads to “a certain inhumanity,” likely to both “rob the American people of their character” and “suppress[] industrial liberty” (p. 41).19 The analysis focuses on how having one’s life largely governed by unaccountable private power tends to undermine liberty and self-determination. “We like to speak of freedoms in the abstract, but for most people, a sense of autonomy is more influenced by private forces and economic structure than by government” (p. 40), Wu writes, explaining that Justice Brandeis viewed “real freedom as freedom from both public and private coercion” (p. 41). The threat to liberty posed by monopoly — which can be understood as a form of private sovereign — remains a “major blind spot for contemporary libertarianism, which is rightly concerned with government overreach but bizarrely tolerant of mistreatment or abuse committed by so-called private actors” (p. 41 n.\*).20

A striking corollary to the idea that extreme economic concentration undermines personal and political liberty is that it can also facilitate the rise of fascism. A major current underlying Wu’s book is that failing to police the growth and incursion of extreme concentrations of private power will not just come at the expense of certain republican ideals but, instead, threatens democracy altogether (p. 139). Wu argues that the German Republic’s acceptance of monopolies and concentrated industry in key markets helped give rise to Hitler, and that the mid-century push for reviving antitrust in the United States was driven, in part, by fears that — absent intervention — America, too, could fall subject to the same fate (pp. 79–82).21 In the lead-up to the passage of the Anti-Merger Act of 1950, both of the bill’s chief sponsors discussed how halting the rising tide of economic concentration was critical for avoiding totalitarianism.22

Third, Wu pegs the enfeebling of antitrust to an intellectual shift ushered in by the Chicago School (pp. 83-92). The Chicago School began with a group of economists and lawyers primarily associated with the University of Chicago (pp. 84-85). Its key founders included Professors Aaron Director, Milton Friedman, and George Stigler and the group grew to include figures such as Professor Ward Bowman and then-Professors Frank Easterbrook, Richard Posner, and Robert Bork (pp. 84-85). Backed by money from the Volker Fund, the group established a project to "promote private enterprise."123 Their scholarship applied neoclassical price theory to the study of legal rules and, in particular, to the analysis of antitrust.24 Under the guidance of Director, students and researchers studied various antitrust doctrines through the lens of price theory, criticizing prevailing case law and theories of harm.25 Perhaps the "most influential" of these efforts, Wu notes, was Bork's paper revisiting the legislative history of the Sherman Act and concluding that the sole purpose of the antitrust laws was to maximize consumer welfare (p. 88). Although a long list of scholars would subsequently debunk Bork's claim,26 the Supreme Court adopted Bork's fictitious account.2 7

The embrace of consumer welfare by courts and enforcers alike "threw out the broader concerns that had long animated the [Sherman] Act and its enforcement" (p. 89). Under the new paradigm, harm to competition would manifest solely as harm to allocative efficiency in the form of higher prices or lower output. Wu observes that Chicago's framework pledged economic rigor yet neglected to consider a host of economic costs, including stagnation and stunted innovation (p. 90). "In truth," Wu writes, "Robert Bork's attack on antitrust was really laissezfaire reincarnated" (p. 91). With the codification of Chicago's ideas, antitrust "lost its traditional goals" (p. 103).

Several factors enabled ideas once considered "lunatic fringe" 28 to redefine antitrust. Channeling the work of Professor William Kovacic, Wu notes that Chicago's triumph relied on key concessions from and alliances with the Harvard School, comprised of centrist scholars and enforcers such as Professors Donald Turner and Phil Areeda and thenJudge Stephen Breyer (p. 103).29 Kovacic's analysis focuses on how the institutional concerns that occupied Harvard School thinkers (such as their misgivings about expansive private rights of action under the U.S. antitrust system) led them to embrace some of the same prescriptions as Chicago. 30 Wu adds that these scholars were also haunted by critiques that antitrust enforcement had become arbitrary and unjustifiably aggressive, nothing short of "the blind firing of muskets at companies that just seemed bad" (p. 103). Meanwhile price theory, along with the consumer welfare standard, appeared to promise a disciplined and rigorous approach to enforcement. A decades-long attack by Chicago on the existing paradigm had left Harvard School academics more susceptible to - and perhaps less critical of - Chicago's interventions (p. 105). As the ideological makeup of the federal judiciary shifted, courts adopted Chicago's theories much more readily.

Within a decade the Chicago movement began encountering some resistance from what is referred to as the "Post-Chicago School," a group of economists and lawyers that "emerged to challenge many of [Chicago's] basic premises" (p. 107). Whereas Chicago scholars had introduced general theories, Post-Chicago academics sought to qualify them, circumscribing the set of conditions under which Chicago's predictions would hold. Yet despite their interventions, "the antimonopoly provisions of the Sherman Act went into a deep freeze from which they have never really recovered" (p. 108). Our economy today reflects this neglect, with highly concentrated product and labor markets along with a tech industry that, while once open and dynamic, is increasingly closed and controlled (pp. 114-26).

Wu closes by sketching the outlines of a Neo-Brandeisian agenda that would resuscitate antitrust. He recommends a merger enforcement program that would fulfill Congress's mandate to arrest mergers even when concentration is in its incipiency, and he proposes that antitrust agencies open up merger review to greater public scrutiny and accountability (pp. 127-30). He urges a return to the "big case" tradition that targeted AT&T and Microsoft (pp. 93-101), and implores enforcers to recover corporate breakups as a mainstay antitrust remedy, observing that the administrative difficulty of structural remedies is often overstated and the benefits (including the "self-executing" nature of breakups) underappreciated (pp. 132-33). Finally, Wu calls for antitrust to abandon consumer welfare as its stated goal and return to a "protection of competition" test, which is more faithful to legislative history and earlier precedent (pp. 135-37). Building on scholarship by Professors Barak Orbach and Eleanor Fox, 31 among others, Wu observes that the goal of preserving competition is "focused on protection of a process," whereas promoting consumer welfare prioritizes "the maximization of a value" (p. 136). Refocusing antitrust on protecting the competitive process, Wu argues, would bring enforcement more in line with actual business realities while also reflecting congressional intent.

#### Democratic governance provides social goods and remedies global problems – climate change, economic crises, and nuclear war are all exacerbated in an autocratic world.

Kolodziej ’17 [Edward; May 19; Emeritus Research Professor of Political Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; EUC Paper Series, “Challenges to the Democratic Project for Governing Globalization,” https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/bitstream/handle/2142/96620/Kolodziej Introduction 5.19.17.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y]

The Rise of a Global Society

Let me first sketch the global democratic project for global governance as a point of reference. We must first recognize that globalization has given rise to a global society for the first time in the evolution of the human species. We are now stuck with each other; seven and half billion people today — nine to ten by 2050: all super connected and interdependent. In greater or lesser measure, humans are mutually dependent on each other in the pursuit of their most salient values, interests, needs, and preferences — concerns about personal, community, and national security, sustainable economic growth, protection of the environment, the equitable distribution of the globe’s material wealth, human rights, and even the validation of their personal and social identities by others. Global warming is a metaphor of this morphological social change in the human condition. All humans are implicated in this looming Anthropogenic-induced disaster — the exhausts of billions of automobiles, the methane released in fracking for natural gas, outdated U.S. coal-fired power plants and newly constructed ones in China. Even the poor farmer burning charcoal to warm his dinner is complicit.

Since interdependence surrounds, ensnares, and binds us as a human society, the dilemma confronting the world’s diverse and divided populations is evident: the expanding scope as well as the deepening, accumulating, and thickening interdependencies of globalization urge global government. But the Kantian ideal of universal governance is beyond the reach of the world’s disparate peoples. They are profoundly divided by religion, culture, language, tribal, ethnic and national loyalties as well as by class, social status, race, gender, and sexual orientation. How have the democracies responded to this dilemma? How have they attempted to reconcile the growing interdependence of the world’s disputing peoples and need for global governance?

What do we mean by the governance of a human society?

A working, legitimate government of a human society requires simultaneous responses to three competing imperatives: Order, Welfare, and Legitimacy. While the forms of these OWL imperatives have differed radically over the course of human societal evolution, these constraints remain predicable of all human societies if they are to replicate themselves and flourish over time. The OWL imperatives are no less applicable to a global society.

1. Order refers to a society’s investment of awesome material power in an individual or body to arbitrate and resolve value, interest, and preference conflicts, which cannot be otherwise resolved by non-violent means — the Hobbesian problematic.

2. The Welfare imperative refers to the necessity of humans to eat, drink, clothe, and shelter themselves and to pursue the full-range of their seemingly limitless acquisitive appetites. Responses to the Welfare imperative, like that of Order, constitute a distinct form of governing power and authority with its own decisional processes and actors principally associated either with the Welfare or the Order imperative. Hence we have the Marxian-Adam Smith problematic.

3. Legitimacy is no less a form of governing power and authority, independent of the Order and Welfare imperatives. Either by choice, socialization, or coerced acquiescence, populations acknowledge a regime’s governing authority and their obligation to submit to its rule. Here arises the Rousseaunian problematic.

The government of a human society emerges then as an evolving, precarious balance and compromise of the ceaseless struggle of these competing OWL power domains for ascendancy of one of these imperatives over the others. It is against the backdrop of these OWL imperatives — Order, Welfare, and Legitimacy — that we are brought to the democratic project for global governance.

The Democratic Project

For Order, open societies constructed the global democratic state and, in alliance, the democratic global-state system. Collectively these initiatives led to the creation of the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and the European Union to implement the democratic project’s system of global governance.

The democratic global state assumed all of the functions of the Hobbesian Westphalian security state — but a lot more. The global state became a Trading, Banking, Market, and Entrepreneurial state. To these functions were added those of the Science, Technology and the Economic Growth state. How else would we be able to enjoy the Internet, cell phones and iPhones, or miracle cures? These are the products of the iron triangle of the global democratic state, academic and non-profit research centers, and corporations. It is a myth that the Market System did all this alone. Fueled by increasing material wealth, the democratic global state was afforded the means to become the Safety Net state, providing education, health, social security, leisure and recreation for its population. And as the global state’s power expanded across this broad and enlarging spectrum of functions and roles, the global state was also constrained by the social compacts of the democracies to be bound by popular rule. The ironic result of the expansion of the global state’s power and social functions and its obligation to accede to popular will was a Security state and global state-system that vastly outperformed its principal authoritarian rivals in the Cold War. So much briefly is the democratic project’s response to the Order imperative.

Now let’s look at the democratic project’s response to the Welfare imperative. The democracies institutionalized Adam Smith’s vision of a global Market System. The Market System trucks and barters, Smith’s understanding of what it means to be human. But it does a lot more. The Market System facilitates and fosters the free movement of people, goods and services, capital, ideas, values, scientific discoveries, and best technological practices. Created is a vibrant global civil society oblivious to state boundaries. What we now experience is De Tocqueville’s Democracy in America on global steroids.

As for the imperative of Legitimacy, the social compacts of the democracies affirmed Rousseau’s conjecture that all humans are free and therefore equal. Applied to elections each citizen has one vote. Democratic regimes are also obliged to submit to the rule of law, to conduct free and fair elections, to honor majority rule while protecting minority rights, and to promote human rights at home and abroad.

The Authoritarian Threat to the Democratic Project

The democratic project for global governance is now at risk. Let’s start with the challenges posed by authoritarian regimes, with Russia and China in the lead. Both Russia and China would rest global governance on Big Power spheres of influence. Both would assume hegemonic status in their respective regions, asserting their versions of the Monroe Doctrine. Their regional hegemony would then leverage their claim to be global Big Powers. Moscow and Beijing would then have an equal say with the United States and the West in sharing and shaping global governance. The Russo-Chinese global system of Order would ascribe to Russia and China governing privileges not accorded to the states both aspire to dominate. Moscow and Beijing would enjoy unconditional recognition of their state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference in their domestic affairs, but they would reserve to themselves the right to intervene in the domestic and foreign affairs of the states and peoples under their tutelage in pursuit of their hegemonic interests. President Putin has announced that Russia’s imperialism encompasses the millions of Russians living in the former republics of the Soviet Union. Russia contends that Ukraine and Belarus also fall under Moscow’s purported claim to historical sovereignty over these states. Forceful re-absorption of Crimea and control over eastern Ukraine are viewed by President Putin as Russia’s historical inheritances. Self-determination is not extended to these states or to other states and peoples of the former Soviet Union. Moscow rejects their right to freely align, say, with the European Union or, god forbid, with NATO.

In contrast to the democratic project, universal in its reach, the Russo-Chinese conception of a stable global order rests on more tenuous and conflict-prone ethno-national foundations. Russia’s proclaimed enemies are the United States and the European Union. Any means that undermines the unity of these entities is viewed by Moscow as a gain. The endgame is a poly-anarchical interstate system, potentially as war-prone as the Eurocentric system before and after World War I, but now populated by states with nuclear weapons.

#### Democracy is a universal value. The intrinsic value of political participation, instrumental value in expression, and constructive role in meeting economic needs make it commitment all people have reason to see value in. Public debate, criticism, and dissent cultivate a democratic ethos to remedy political problems.

Sen ’99 [Amartya; Economist and Philosopher, Professor of Economics and Philosophy @ Harvard University; “Democracy as a Universal Value,” *Journal of Democracy* 10(3), p. 3-17; AS]

What exactly is democracy? We must not identify democracy with majority rule. Democracy has complex demands, which certainly [End Page 9] include voting and respect for election results, but it also requires the protection of liberties and freedoms, respect for legal entitlements, and the guaranteeing of free discussion and uncensored distribution of news and fair comment. Even elections can be deeply defective if they occur without the different sides getting an adequate opportunity to present their respective cases, or without the electorate enjoying the freedom to obtain news and to consider the views of the competing protagonists. Democracy is a demanding system, and not just a mechanical condition (like majority rule) taken in isolation.

Viewed in this light, the merits of democracy and its claim as a universal value can be related to certain distinct virtues that go with its unfettered practice. Indeed, we can distinguish three different ways in which democracy enriches the lives of the citizens. First, political freedom is a part of human freedom in general, and exercising civil and political rights is a crucial part of good lives of individuals as social beings. Political and social participation has intrinsic value for human life and well-being. To be prevented from participation in the political life of the community is a major deprivation.

Second, as I have just discussed (in disputing the claim that democracy is in tension with economic development), democracy has an important instrumental value in enhancing the hearing that people get in expressing and supporting their claims to political attention (including claims of economic needs). Third—and this is a point to be explored further—the practice of democracy gives citizens an opportunity to learn from one another, and helps society to form its values and priorities. Even the idea of “needs,” including the understanding of “economic needs,” requires public discussion and exchange of information, views, and analyses. In this sense, democracy has constructive importance, in addition to its intrinsic value for the lives of the citizens and its instrumental importance in political decisions. The claims of democracy as a universal value have to take note of this diversity of considerations.

The conceptualization—even comprehension—of what are to count as “needs,” including “economic needs,” may itself require the exercise of political and civil rights. A proper understanding of what economic needs are—their content and their force—may require discussion and exchange. Political and civil rights, especially those related to the guaranteeing of open discussion, debate, criticism, and dissent, are central to the process of generating informed and considered choices. These processes are crucial to the formation of values and priorities, and we cannot, in general, take preferences as given independently of public discussion, that is, irrespective of whether open interchange and debate are permitted or not.

In fact, the reach and effectiveness of open dialogue are often underestimated in assessing social and political problems. For example, [End Page 10] public discussion has an important role to play in reducing the high rates of fertility that characterize many developing countries. There is substantial evidence that the sharp decline in fertility rates in India’s more literate states has been much influenced by public discussion of the bad effects of high fertility rates on the community at large, and especially on the lives of young women. If the view has emerged in, say, the Indian state of Kerala or of Tamil Nadu that a happy family in the modern age is a small family, much discussion and debate have gone into the formation of these perspectives. Kerala now has a fertility rate of 1.7 (similar to that of Britain and France, and well below China’s 1.9), and this has been achieved with no coercion, but mainly through the emergence of new values—a process in which political and social dialogue has played a major part. Kerala’s high literacy rate (it ranks higher in literacy than any province in China), especially among women, has greatly contributed to making such social and political dialogue possible.

Miseries and deprivations can be of various kinds, some more amenable to social remedies than others. The totality of the human predicament would be a gross basis for identifying our “needs.” For example, there are many things that we might have good reason to value and thus could be taken as “needs” if they were feasible. We could even want immortality, as Maitreyee, that remarkable inquiring mind in the Upanishads, famously did in her 3000-year old conversation with Yajnvalkya. But we do not see immortality as a “need” because it is clearly unfeasible. Our conception of needs relates to our ideas of the preventable nature of some deprivations and to our understanding of what can be done about them. In the formation of understandings and beliefs about feasibility (particularly, social feasibility), public discussions play a crucial role. Political rights, including freedom of expression and discussion, are not only pivotal in inducing social responses to economic needs, they are also central to the conceptualization of economic needs themselves.

Universality of Values

If the above analysis is correct, then democracy’s claim to be valuable does not rest on just one particular merit. There is a plurality of virtues here, including, first, the intrinsic importance of political participation and freedom in human life; second, the instrumental importance of political incentives in keeping governments responsible and accountable; and third, the constructive role of democracy in the formation of values and in the understanding of needs, rights, and duties. In the light of this diagnosis, we may now address the motivating question of this essay, namely the case for seeing democracy as a universal value. [End Page 11]

In disputing this claim, it is sometimes argued that not everyone agrees on the decisive importance of democracy, particularly when it competes with other desirable things for our attention and loyalty. This is indeed so, and there is no unanimity here. This lack of unanimity is seen by some as sufficient evidence that democracy is not a universal value.

Clearly, we must begin by dealing with a methodological question: What is a universal value? For a value to be considered universal, must it have the consent of everyone? If that were indeed necessary, then the category of universal values might well be empty. I know of no value—not even motherhood (I think of Mommie Dearest)—to which no one has ever objected. I would argue that universal consent is not required for something to be a universal value. Rather, the claim of a universal value is that people anywhere may have reason to see it as valuable.

When Mahatma Gandhi argued for the universal value of non-violence, he was not arguing that people everywhere already acted according to this value, but rather that they had good reason to see it as valuable. Similarly, when Rabindranath Tagore argued for “the freedom of the mind” as a universal value, he was not saying that this claim is accepted by all, but that all do have reason enough to accept it—a reason that he did much to explore, present, and propagate.[6](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/16979" \l "f6) Understood in this way, any claim that something is a universal value involves some counterfactual analysis—in particular, whether people might see some value in a claim that they have not yet considered adequately. All claims to universal value—not just that of democracy—have this implicit presumption.

I would argue that it is with regard to this often implicit presumption that the biggest attitudinal shift toward democracy has occurred in the twentieth century. In considering democracy for a country that does not have it and where many people may not yet have had the opportunity to consider it for actual practice, it is now presumed that the people involved would approve of it once it becomes a reality in their lives. In the nineteenth century this assumption typically would have not been made, but the presumption that is taken to be natural (what I earlier called the “default” position) has changed radically during the twentieth century.

It must also be noted that this change is, to a great extent, based on observing the history of the twentieth century. As democracy has spread, its adherents have grown, not shrunk. Starting off from Europe and America, democracy as a system has reached very many distant shores, where it has been met with willing participation and acceptance. Moreover, when an existing democracy has been overthrown, there have been widespread protests, even though these protests have often been brutally suppressed. Many people have been willing to risk their lives in the fight to bring back democracy. [End Page 12]

Some who dispute the status of democracy as a universal value base their argument not on the absence of unanimity, but on the presence of regional contrasts. These alleged contrasts are sometimes related to the poverty of some nations. According to this argument, poor people are interested, and have reason to be interested, in bread, not in democracy. This oft-repeated argument is fallacious at two different levels.

First, as discussed above, the protective role of democracy may be particularly important for the poor. This obviously applies to potential famine victims who face starvation. It also applies to the destitute thrown off the economic ladder in a financial crisis. People in economic need also need a political voice. Democracy is not a luxury that can await the arrival of general prosperity.

#### Democracy is an unfinished project – institutional battles are valuable, and defeatist attitudes ensure the world remains as it is.

Glaude ’16 [Eddie S., Jr., Professor of African American Studies and Religion @Princeton and a PhD in Religion @Princeton, *Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves*, p. 185-197, Print]

CHANGE HOW WE VIEW GOVERNMENT

For more than three decades, we have been bludgeoned with an idea of government that has little to no concern for the public good. Big government is bad, we are told. It is inefficient, and its bloated bureaucracies are prone to corruption. Even Democrats, especially since Bill Clinton, have taken up this view. For example, Obama says, "We don't need big government; we need smart government."

For some on the right, big government is bad because it aims to distribute wealth to those who are lazy and undeserving. "Big government" is just a shorthand for dreaded entitlement programs-all too often coded language for race. In this view, "big government" is the primary agent of enforcing racial equality, taking hard-earned stuff from white Americans and giving it to undeserving others. Government cannot do such a thing, they argue, without infringing on the rights of white Americans. And even government-mandated redistribution will not solve the problem. As Barry Goldwater put the point in 1964, "No matter how we try, we cannot pass a law that will make you like me or me like you. The key to racial and religious tolerance lies not in laws alone but, ultimately, in the hearts of men." From this perspective, government plays no role in changing our racial habits. Why would we want to make it bigger?

But Goldwater failed to realize that governmental indifference can harden hearts, and government action can create conditions that soften them. **People's attitudes aren't static or untouchable**. They are molded by the quality of interactions with others, and **one of the great powers of government involves shaping those interactions-not determining them in any concrete sense, but defining the parameters within which people come to know each other and live together**. Today, for example, most Americans don't believe women should be confined to the home raising children, or subjected to crude advances and sexist remarks by men. The women's-rights movement put pressure on the government, which in turn passed laws that helped change some of our beliefs about women. Similarly, the relative progress of the 1960s did not happen merely by using the blunt instruments of the law. **Change emerged from the ways those laws, with grassroots pressure, created new patterns of interactions, and ultimately new habits**. Neither Obama's election to the presidency nor my appointment as a Princeton professor would have happened were it not for these new patterns and habits.

None of this happens overnight. It takes time and increasing vigilance to protect and secure change. I was talking with a dose friend and he mentioned a basic fact: that we were only fifteen years removed from the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 when Ronald Reagan was elected president and Republicans began to dismantle the gains of the black freedom struggle. Civil rights legislation and the policies of the Great Society had just started to reshape our interactions when they started to be rolled back. We barely had a chance to imagine America anew-to pursue what full employment might look like, to let the abolition of the death penalty settle in, to question seriously the morality of putting people in prison cells, and to enact policies that would undo what the 1968 Kerner Commission described as "two Americas"­ before the attack on "big government" or, more precisely, the attack on racial equality was launched. The objective was to shrink the size of government ("to starve the beast") and to limit its domestic responsibilities to ensuring economic efficiency and national defense. Democrats eventually buckled, and this is the view of government, no matter who is in office, that we have today. It has become a kind of touchstone of faith among most Americans that government is wasteful and should be limited in its role-that it shouldn't intrude on our lives. Politicians aren't the only ones who hold this view. Many Americans do, too. **Now we can't even imagine serious talk of things like full employment or the abolition of prisons**.

**We have to change our view of government, especially when it comes to racial matters**. Government policy ensured the vote for African Americans and dismantled legal segregation. Policy established a social safety net for the poor and elderly; it put in place the conditions for the growth of our cities. **All of this didn't happen simply because of individual will** or thanks to some abstract idea of America. **It was tied up with our demands and expectations**. Goldwater was wrong. So was Reagan. And, in many ways, so is Obama. Our racial habits are shaped by the kind of society in which we live, and our government plays a big role in shaping that society. As young children, our community offers us a way of seeing the world; it lets us know what is valuable and sacred, and what stands as virtuous behavior and what does not. When Michael Brown's body was left in the street for more than four hours, it sent a dear message about the value of black lives. When everything in our society says that we should be less concerned about black folk, that they are dangerous, that no specific policies can address their misery, we say to our children and to everyone else that these people are "less than"-that they fall outside of our moral concern. We say, without using the word, that they are niggers.

**One way to change that view is to enact policies that suggest otherwise**. Or, to put it another way, to change our view of government, we must change our demands of government. For example, for the past fifty years African American unemployment has been twice that of white unemployment. The 2013 unemployment rate for African Americans stood at 13.1 percent, the highest annual black unemployment rate in more than seventy years. Social scientists do not generally agree on the causes of this trend. Some attribute it to the fact that African Americans are typically the "last hired and first fired." Others point to changes in the nature of the economy; still others point to overt racial discrimination in the labor market. No matter how we account for the numbers, the fact remains that most Americans see double-digit black unemployment as "normal." However, a large-scale, comprehensive jobs agenda with a living wage designed to put Americans, and explicitly African Americans, to work would go a long way toward uprooting the racial habits that inform such a view. It would counter the nonsense that currently stands as a reason for long-term black unemployment in public debate: black folk are lazy and don't want to work.

**If we hold the view that government plays a crucial role in ensuring the public good**-if we believe that all Americans, no matter their race or class, can be vital contributors to our beloved community-**then we reject the idea that some populations are disposable**, that some people can languish in the shadows while the rest of us dance in the light. The question ''Am I my brother's or my sister's keeper?" is not just a question for the individual or a mantra to motivate the private sector. It is a question answered in the social arrangements that aim to secure the goods and values we most cherish as a community. In other words, we need an idea of government that reflects the value of all Americans, not just white Americans or a few people with a lot of money.

We need government seriously committed to racial justice. As a nation, we can never pat ourselves on the back about racial matters. We have too much blood on our hands. Remembering that fact-our inheritance, as Wendell Berry said-does not amount to beating ourselves over the head, or wallowing in guilt, or trading in race cards. Remembering our national sins serves as a check and balance against national hubris. We're reminded of what we are capable of, and our eyes are trained to see that ugliness when it rears its head. But when we disremember-when we forget about the horrors of lynching, lose sight of how African Americans were locked into a dual labor market because of explicit racism, or ignore how we exported our racism around the world-we free ourselves from any sense of accountability. Concern for others and a sense of responsibility for the whole no longer matter. Cruelty and indifference become our calling cards.

We have to isolate those areas in which long-standing trends of racial inequality short-circuit the life chances of African Americans. In addition to a jobs agenda, **we need a comprehensive government response to the problems of public education and mass incarceration**. **And I do mean a government response**. Private interests have overrun both areas, as privatization drives school reform (and the education of our children is lost in the boisterous battles between teachers' unions and private interests) and as big business makes enormous profits from the warehousing of black and brown people in prisons. Let's be clear: private interests or market-based strategies will not solve the problems we face as a country or bring about the kind of society we need. We have to push for massive government investment in early childhood education and in shifting the center of gravity of our society from punishment to restorative justice. We can begin to enact the latter reform by putting an end to the practice of jailing children. Full stop. We didn't jail children in the past. We don't need to now.

In sum, government can help us go a long way toward uprooting racial habits with policies that support jobs with a living wage, which would help wipe out the historic double-digit gap between white and black unemployment; take an expansive approach to early childhood education, which social science research consistently says profoundly affects the life chances of black children; and dismantle the prison-industrial complex. We can no longer believe that disproportionately locking up black men and women constitutes an answer to social ills.

**This view of government cannot be dismissed as a naive pipe dream**, because political considerations relentlessly attack our political imaginations and limit us to the status quo. We are told before we even open our mouths that this particular view won't work or that it will never see the light of day. We've heard enough of that around single payer health care reform and other progressive policies over the Obama years. **Such defeatist attitudes conspire to limit our imaginations and make sure that the world stays as it is**. But those of us who don't give a damn about the rules of the current political game must courageously organize, advocate, and insist on the moral and political significance of a more robust role for government. We have to change the terms of political debate.

Something dramatic has to happen. American democracy has to be remade. John Dewey, the American philosopher, understood this:

The very idea of democracy, the meaning of democracy, must be continually explored afresh; it has to be constantly discovered and rediscovered, remade and reorganized; while the political and economic and social institutions in which it is embodied have to be remade and reorganized to meet the changes that are going on in the development of new needs on the part of human beings and new resources for satisfying these needs.

Dewey saw **American democracy as an unfinished project**. He knew that the aims and purposes of this country were not fixed forever in the founding documents, but the particular challenges of our moment required imaginative leaps on behalf of democracy itself. Otherwise, undemocratic forces might prevail; tyranny in the form of the almighty dollar and the relentless pursuit of it might overtake any commitment to the idea of the public good; and bad habits might diminish our moral imaginations.

The remaking of America will not happen inside the Beltway. Too many there have too much invested in the status quo. A more robust idea of government will not emerge from the current political parties. Both are beholden to big money. **Substantive change will have to come from us**. Or, as the great civil rights leader Ella Baker said, "we are the leaders we've been looking for"-a model of leadership that scares the hell out of the Reverena Sharpton. We will have to challenge the status quo in the streets and at the ballot box. In short, it will take a full-blown democratic awakening to enact this revolution.

#### Liberalism is not a monolith – retrieving it for a radical democratic agenda challenges unjust hierarchies of domination.

Charles W. **MILLS** Professor of Philosophy @ CUNY **’12** “Occupy Liberalism,” Chapter 2 in *Black Rights/White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism* [h](https://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190245412.001.0001/acprof-9780190245412-chapter-2)

The “Occupy Wall Street!” movement stimulated a long listing of other candidates for radical “occupation.” This chapter proposes as a target for radical occupation the somewhat unusual candidate of liberalism itself. It argues for a constructive engagement of radicals with liberalism in order to retrieve it for a radical egalitarian agenda. The premise is that the foundational values of liberalism have a radical potential that has not historically been realized, given the way the dominant varieties of liberalism have developed. Ten reasons standardly given as to why such a retrieval cannot be carried out are examined and argued to be fallacious.

The “Occupy!” movement, which has made headlines around the country, has raised the hopes of young American radicals new to political engagement and revived the hopes of an older generation of radicals still clinging to nostalgic dreams of the glorious ’60s. If the original and still most salient target was Wall Street, a long list of other candidates for “occupation” has since been put forward. In this chapter, I want to propose as a target for radical occupation the somewhat unusual candidate of liberalism itself. But contrary to the conventional wisdom prevailing within radical circles, I am going to argue for the heretical thesis that liberalism should not be contemptuously rejected by radicals but retrieved for a radical agenda. Summarized in bullet-point form, my argument is as follows:

• The “Occupy Wall Street” movement provides an opportunity unprecedented in decades to build a broad democratic movement to challenge plutocracy, patriarchy, and white supremacy in the United States.

• Such a movement is more likely to be successful if it appeals to principles and values most Americans already endorse.

• Liberalism has always been the dominant ideology in the United States.

• Liberalism in the United States has historically been complicit with plutocracy, patriarchy, and white supremacy, but this complicity is a contingent function of dominant group interests rather than the result of an immanent conceptual logic.

• Therefore, progressives in philosophy (and elsewhere) should try to retrieve liberalism for a radical democratic agenda rather than rejecting it, thereby positioning themselves in the ideological mainstream of the country and seeking its transformation.

Let me now try to make this argument plausible for an audience likely to be aprioristically convinced of its obvious unsoundness.

Preliminary Clarification of Terms

First we need to clarify the key terms of “radicalism” and “liberalism.” While of course a radicalism of the right exists, here I refer to radicals who are progressives. But “progressive” cannot just denote the left of the political spectrum, since the whole point of the “new social movements” of the 1960s onward was that the traditional left-right political spectrum, predicated on varying positions on the question of public versus private ownership of the means of production, did not exhaust the topography of the political. Issues of gender and racial domination were to a significant extent “orthogonal” to this one-dimensional trope. So I will use “radicalism” broadly, though still in the zone of progressive politics, to refer generally to ideas/concepts/principles/values endorsing pro-egalitarian structural change to reduce or eliminate unjust hierarchies of domination.

“Liberalism” may denote both a political philosophy and the institutions and practices characteristically tied to that political philosophy. My focus will be on the former. The issue of how bureaucratic logics may prove refractory to reformist agendas is undeniably an important one, but it does not really fall into the purview of philosophy proper. My aim is to challenge the radical shibboleth that radical ideas/concepts/principles/values are incompatible with liberalism. Given the deep entrenchment of this assumption in the worldview of most radicals, refuting it would still be an accomplishment, even if working out practical details of operationalization are delegated to other hands.

In the United States, of course, “liberalism” in public parlance and everyday political discourse is used in such a way that it really denotes left-liberalism specifically (“left” by the standards of a country whose political center of gravity has shifted right in recent decades). In this vocabulary, right-liberals are then categorized as “conservatives”—in the market sense, as against the Burkean sense. On the other hand, some on the right would insist that only they, the heirs to the classic liberalism of John Locke and Adam Smith, are really entitled to the “liberal” designation. Later welfarist theorists are fraudulent pretenders to be exposed as socialist intruders unworthy of the title. Rejecting both of these usages, I will be employing “liberalism” in the expanded sense typical of political philosophy, which links both ends of this spectrum. “Liberalism” then refers broadly to the (p.12) anti-feudal ideology of individualism, equal rights, and moral egalitarianism that arises in Western Europe in the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries to challenge the ideas and values inherited from the old medieval order, and which is subsequently taken up and developed by others elsewhere, including many who would have been explicitly excluded by the original conception of the ideology. Left-wing social democrats and right-wing market conservatives, fans of John Rawls on the one hand and Robert Nozick on the other, are thus both liberals.1

From this perspective, it will be appreciated that liberalism is not a monolith but an umbrella term for a variety of positions. Here are some examples—some familiar, some perhaps less so:

Varieties of Liberalism

Left-wing (social democratic) vs. Right-wing (market conservative)

Kantian vs. Lockean

Contractarian vs. Utilitarian

Corporate vs. Democratic

Social vs. Individualist

Comprehensive vs. Political

Ideal-theory vs. Non-ideal-theory

Patriarchal vs. Feminist

Imperial vs. Anti-imperial

Racial vs. Anti-racial

Color-blind vs. Color-conscious

Etc.2

It is not the case, of course, that these different species of liberalism have been equally represented in the ideational sphere or equally implemented in the institutional sphere. On the contrary, some have been dominant while others have been subordinate, and some have never, at least in the full sense, been implemented at all. But nonetheless, I suggest they all count as liberalisms and as such they are all supposed to have certain elements in common, even those characterized by gender and racial exclusions. (My motivation for making these last varieties of liberalism rather than deviations from liberalism is precisely to challenge liberalism’s self-congratulatory history, which holds an idealized liberalism aloft, untainted by its actual record of complicity with oppressive social systems.) So the initial question we should always ask people making generalizations about “liberalism” is this: What particular variety of liberalism do you mean? And are your generalizations really true about all the possible kinds of liberalism, or only a subset? (p.13)

Here is a characterization of liberalism from a very respectable source, the British political theorist, John Gray:

Common to all variants of the liberal tradition is a definite conception, distinctively modern in character, of man and society… . It is individualist, in that it asserts the moral primacy of the person against the claims of any social collectivity; egalitarian, inasmuch as it confers on all men the same moral status and denies the relevance to legal or political order of differences in moral worth among human beings; universalist, affirming the moral unity of the human species and according a secondary importance to specific historic associations and cultural forms; and meliorist in its affirmation of the corrigibility and improvability of all social institutions and political arrangements. It is this conception of man and society which gives liberalism a definite identity which transcends its vast internal variety and complexity.3

What generate the different varieties of liberalism are different concepts of individualism, different claims about how egalitarianism should be construed or realized, more or less inclusionary readings of universalism (Gray’s characterization sanitizes liberalism’s actual sexist and racist history), different views of what count as desirable improvements, conflicting normative balancings of liberal values (freedom, equality) and competing theoretical prognoses about how best they can be realized in the light of (contested) socio-historical facts. The huge potential for disagreement about all of these explains how a common liberal core can produce such a wide range of variants. Moreover, we need to take into account not merely the spectrum of actual liberalisms but also hypothetical liberalisms that could be generated through novel framings of some or all of the above. So one would need to differentiate dominant versions of liberalism from oppositional versions, and actual from possible variants.

Once the breadth of the range of liberalisms is appreciated—dominant and subordinate, actual and potential—the obvious question then raised is this: even if actual dominant liberalisms have been conservative in various ways (corporate, patriarchal, racist) why does this rule out the development of emancipatory, radical liberalisms?

One kind of answer is the following (call this the internalist answer): because there is an immanent conceptual/normative logic to liberalism as a political ideology that precludes any emancipatory development of it.

Another kind of answer is the following (call this the externalist answer): it doesn’t. The historic domination of conservative exclusionary liberalisms is the result of group interests, group power, and successful group political projects. Apparent internal conceptual/normative barriers to an emancipatory liberalism can be successfully negotiated by drawing (p.14) on the conceptual/normative resources of liberalism itself, in conjunction with a revisionist socio-historical picture of modernity.

Most self-described radicals would endorse—indeed, reflexively, as an obvious truth—the first answer. But as indicated from the beginning, I think the second answer is actually the correct one. The obstacles to developing a “radical liberalism” are, in my opinion, primarily externalist in nature: material group interests, and the way they have shaped hegemonic varieties of liberalism. So I think we need to try to justify a radical agenda with the normative resources of liberalism rather than writing off liberalism. Since liberalism has always been the dominant ideology in the United States and is now globally hegemonic, such a project would have the great ideological advantage of appealing to values and principles that most people already endorse. All projects of egalitarian social transformation are going to face a combination of material, political, and ideological obstacles, but this strategy would at least reduce somewhat the dimensions of the last. One would be trying to win mass support for policies that—and the challenge will, of course, be to demonstrate this—are justifiable by majoritarian norms, once reconceived and put in conjunction with facts not always familiar to the majority. Material barriers (vested group interests) and political barriers (organizational difficulties) will of course remain. But they will constitute a general obstacle for all egalitarian political programs, and as such cannot be claimed to be peculiar problems for an emancipatory liberalism.

But the contention will be that such a liberalism cannot be developed. Why? Here are ten familiar objections, variants of internalism, and my replies to them.

Ten Reasons Why Liberalism Cannot Be Radicalized (And My Replies)

1. Liberalism Has an Asocial, Atomic Individualist Ontology

This is one of the oldest radical critiques of liberalism; it can be found in Marx’s derisive comments—for example, in the Grundrisse—about the “Robinsonades” of the social contract theory whose “golden age” (1650–1800) had long passed by the time he began his intellectual and political career:

The individual and isolated hunter or fisher who forms the starting-point with Smith and Ricardo belongs to the insipid illusions of the eighteenth century. They are Robinson Crusoe stories … no more based on such a naturalism than is Rousseau’s contrat social which makes naturally independent individuals come in contact and have (p.15) mutual intercourse by contract… . Man is in the most literal sense of the word a zoon politikon, not only a social animal, but an animal which can develop into an individual only in society. Production by individuals outside society … is as great an absurdity as the idea of the development of language without individuals living together and talking to one another.4

But several replies can be made to this indictment. To begin with, even if the accusation is true of contractarian liberalism, not all liberalisms are contractarian. Utilitarian liberalism rests on different theoretical foundations, as does the late nineteenth-century British liberalism of T. H. Green and his colleagues: a Hegelian, social liberalism.5 Closer to home, of course, we have John Dewey’s brand of liberalism. Moreover, even within the social contract tradition, resources exist for contesting the assumptions of the Hobbesian/Lockean version of the contract. Rousseau’s Discourse on the Origins of Inequality (1755) (nowhere cited by Marx) rethinks the “contract” to make it a contract entered into after the formation of society, and thus the creation of socialized human beings. So the ontology presupposed is explicitly a social one. In any case, the contemporary revival of contractarianism initiated by John Rawls’s 1971 A Theory of Justice makes the contract a thought-experiment, a “device of representation,” rather than a literal or even metaphorical anthropological account.6 The communitarian/contractarian debates of the 1980s onward recapitulated much of the “asocial” critique of contractarian liberalism (though usually without a radical edge). But as Rawls pointed out against Michael Sandel, for example, one needs to distinguish the figures in the thought-experiment from real human beings.7 And radicals should be wary about accepting a communitarian ontology and claims about the general good that deny or marginalize the dynamics of group domination in actual societies represented as “communities.” The great virtue of contractarian liberal individualism is the conceptual room it provides for hegemonic norms to be critically evaluated through the epistemic and moral distancing from Sittlichkeit that the contract, as an intellectual device, provides.

2. Liberalism Cannot Recognize Groups and Group Oppression in Its Ontology—I (Macro)

The second point needs to be logically distinguished from the first, since a theory could acknowledge the social shaping of individuals while denying that group oppression is central to that shaping. (So #1 is necessary, but not sufficient, for #2.) The Marxist critique, of course, was supposed to encapsulate both points: people were shaped by society and society (post-“primitive (p.16) communism”) was class dominated. The ontology was social and it was an ontology of class. Today radicals would demand a richer ontology that can accommodate the realities of gender and racial oppression also. But whatever candidates are put forward, the key claim is that a liberal framework cannot accommodate an ontology of groups in relations of domination and subordination. To the extent that liberalism recognizes social groups, these are basically conceived of as voluntary associations that one chooses to join or not join, which is obviously very different from, say, class, race, and gender memberships.

But this evasive ontology, which obfuscates the most central and obvious fact about all societies since humanity exited the hunting-and-gathering stage—that is, that they are characterized by oppressions of one kind or another—is not a definitional constituent of liberalism. Liberalism has certainly recognized some kinds of oppression: the absolutism it opposed from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, the Nazism and Stalinism it opposed in the twentieth century. Liberalism’s failure to systematically address structural oppression in supposedly liberal-democratic societies is a contingent artifact of the group perspectives and group interests privileged by those structures, not an intrinsic feature of liberalism’s conceptual apparatus.

In the preface to her recent Analyzing Oppression, Ann Cudd makes a striking point: that hers is the first book-length treatment of the subject in the analytic tradition.8 Philosophy, the discipline whose special mandate it is to illuminate justice and injustice for us, has had very little to say about injustice and oppression because of the social background of the majority of its thinkers. In political theory and political philosophy, the theorists who developed the dominant varieties of liberalism have come overwhelmingly from the hegemonic groups of the liberal social order (bourgeois white males). So it is really not surprising that, given this background, their socio-political and epistemic standpoint has tended to reproduce rather than challenge group privilege.

Consider Rawls, famously weak on gender and with next to nothing to say about race. Rawlsian “ideal theory,” which has dominated mainstream political philosophy for the last four decades, marginalizes such concerns not contingently but structurally. If your focus from the start is principles of distributive justice for a “well-ordered society,” then social oppression cannot be part of the picture, since by definition an oppressive society is not a well-ordered one. As Cudd points out, A Theory of Justice “leaves injustice virtually untheorized,” operating on the assumption “that injustice is merely the negation of justice.”9 But radically unjust societies—those characterized by major rather than minor deviations from ideality—will be different from just societies not merely morally but (p.17) also metaphysically. What Cudd calls “nonvoluntary social groups” will be central to their makeup.

Accordingly, Cudd contends that a conceptualization of “nonvoluntary social groups” must be central to any adequate account of social oppression: “without positing social groups as causally efficacious entities, we cannot explain oppression.” Contra the conventional wisdom in radical circles, however, she is insistent that the ontology of such groups can be explained “[using] current social science, in the form of cognitive psychology and modern economic theory, and situat[ing] itself in the Anglo-American tradition of liberal political philosophy.”10 Identifying “intentionalist” and “structuralist” approaches as the two broad categories of competing theorizations of social groups, she recommends as the best option a compatibilist position, holding that while all action is intentionally guided, many of the constraints within which we act are socially determined and beyond the control of the currently acting individual; to put a slogan on it, intentions dynamically interact within social structures… . My theory of nonvoluntary social groups fits the description of what Philip Pettit calls “holistic individualism,” which means that the social regularities associated with nonvoluntary social groups supervene on intentional states, and at the same time, group membership in these and voluntary social groups partly constitutes the intentional states of individuals.11

If Cudd is right, then, such a theorization can indeed be developed within a liberal framework, using the resources of analytic social and normative theory. But such a development of the theory is not merely permissible but should be seen as mandatory, given liberalism’s nominal commitment to individualism, egalitarianism, universalism, and meliorism. These values simply cannot be achieved unless the obstacles to their realization are identified and theorized. Social-democratic (left) liberalism, feminist liberalism, black liberalism all historically represent attempts to take these structural realities into account for the purposes of rethinking dominant liberalism.12 They are attempts to get right, to map accurately, the actual ontology of the societies for which liberalism is prescribing principles of justice. What Cudd’s book demonstrates is that it is the ignoring of this ontology of group domination that is the real betrayal of the liberal project. A well-ordered society will not have nonvoluntary social groups as part of its ontology. So the path to the “realistic utopia” Rawls is supposedly outlining would crucially require normative prescriptions for eliminating such groups. That no such guidelines are offered is undeniably an indictment of ideal-theory liberalism, which is thereby exposed as both epistemologically and ontologically inadequate. But that does not rule out a reconceptualized (p.18) liberalism, a non-ideal-theory liberalism that, starting from a different social metaphysic, requires a different normative strategy for theorizing justice.

3. Liberalism Cannot Recognize Groups and Group Oppression in Its Ontology—II (Micro)

But (it will be replied) liberalism suffers from a deeper theoretical inadequacy. Even if it may be conceded that liberal theory can recognize oppression at the macro-level, it will be argued that its individualism prevents it from recognizing how profoundly, at the micro-level, individuals are shaped by structures of social oppression. Class, race, and gender belongings penetrate deeply into the ontology of the individual in ways rendered opaque (it will be claimed) by liberalism’s foundational individualism.

But what those seeking to retrieve liberalism would point out is that we need to distinguish different senses of “individualism.” The individualism that is foundational to liberalism is a normative individualism (as in the Gray quote above), which makes individuals rather than social collectivities the locus of value. But that does not require any denial that individuals are shaped in their character (the “second nature” famously highlighted by left theory) by oppressive social forces and related group memberships. Once the first two criticisms have been refuted—that liberal individuals cannot be “social,” and that the involuntary group memberships central to the social in oppressive societies cannot be accommodated within a liberal framework—then this third criticism collapses also. One can without inconsistency affirm both the value of the individual and the importance of recognizing how the individual is socially molded, especially when the environing social structures are oppressive ones. As already noted, dominant liberalism tends to ignore or marginalize such constraints, assuming as its representative figures individuals not merely morally equal, but socially recognized as morally equal, and equi-powerful rather than group-differentiated into the privileged and the subordinated. But this misleading normative and descriptive picture is a function of a political agenda complicit with the status quo, not a necessary implication of liberalism’s core assumptions. A revisionist, radical liberalism would make the analysis of group oppression, the denial of equal standing to the majority of the population, and their impact on the individual’s ontology, a theoretical priority. Thus Cudd’s book, after explicating the ontology of involuntary groups, goes on to detail the various different ways—through violence, economic constraint, discrimination, group harassment, and the internalization of psychological oppression—that the subordinated are shaped by group domination.13 But nothing in her account is meant to imply either that they (p.19) thereby cease to be individuals or that their involuntary group memberships preclude a normative liberal condemnation of the injustice of their treatment.

4. Liberal Humanist Individualism Is Naïve about the Subject

A different kind of challenge is mounted by Foucault (though arguably originating in such earlier sources as the “anti-humanism” of Althusserian Marxism).14 Here, as John Christman points out, in contrast to the “thick” conception of the person advocated by communitarianism, in critique of liberalism, we get the theoretical recommendation that “the notion of a singular unified subject of any sort, however thin the conception, [must be] abandoned.”15 As Foucault writes:

How, under what conditions, and in what forms can something like a subject appear in the order of discourse? What place can it occupy in each type of discourse, what functions can it assume, and by obeying what rules? In short, it is a matter of depriving the subject (or its substitute) of its role as originator, and of analyzing the subject as a variable and complex function of discourse.16

The subject is not merely molded by power, but produced by power, and, in effect, vanishes.

I agree that liberalism cannot meet such a challenge, but I think the premise of the challenge should be rejected. Here I am in sympathy with Christman, who, reviewing various critiques of the classic liberal humanist conception of the self, argues for a socio-historical conception that concedes the absurdity of the notion of people springing from their own brow (“originators”) while nonetheless making a case for “degrees” of self-creation:

Selves should be seen as to a large extent formed by factors not under the control of those reflective agents themselves… . This will help accomplish two things: to provide grounds for the rejection of models of agency and citizenship that assume Herculean abilities to fashion ourselves out of whole cloth; and to force us to focus more carefully on what powers of self-shaping we therefore are left with… . The point must be that the role of the self’s control of the self (and the attendant social elements of both ‘selves’) will be circumscribed by the ways in which our lives are shaped for us and not by us.17

A commitment to humanism does not, as pointed out above, require the denial of the obvious fact that human beings—especially the (p.20) oppressed—are constrained by material structures and social restrictions in what they can accomplish, nor that, as products of particular epochs and group memberships, their consciousness will have been shaped by dominant concepts and norms. Marx emphasized long ago that though people make history, they do not make it under conditions of their own choosing, that agency is constrained by structure and circumstance. But, contra Althusser, this was never intended as a rejection of the claim that it is still people who ultimately assert their personhood in struggle.

And in my opinion, the retort applies to the Foucauldian version of the thesis also. To make the familiar left critiques: such an analysis not only deprives us of a normative basis for indicting structures of oppression, not only deprives the subject of agency, but is flagrantly inconsistent with the actual history of people’s resistance to the systems that have supposedly “produced” them as subjects. The anti-colonial struggle, the anti-Fascist and anti-Stalinist struggles, the civil rights struggles of white women, people of color, gays, the recent “Arab spring” all give the lie to such a diagnosis. Radical liberalism is capable of recognizing both the extent of our socialization by the existing oppressive social order and the ways in which, nonetheless, many people resist and struggle against this oppressive social order.

5. Liberalism’s Values (Independently of the Ontology Question) Are Themselves Problematic

Even if the ontological challenge can be beaten back, though, another front remains open. It will be argued that liberal humanist values are themselves problematic in nature and incapable of advancing a radical agenda. But the obvious reply is, Which values? And what exactly is the problem supposed to be: (a) that the values are intrinsically problematic? (b) that the values involved have historically been extended in an exclusionary discriminatory way? (c) that the values have been developed in a fashion that is predicated on the experience of the privileged? These are all different claims.

Start with the first. Admittedly, some values associated with the liberal tradition could be judged to be intrinsically problematic, such as the “possessive individualism” C. B. Macpherson famously attributed to Hobbes and Locke.18 But this is a value specific to right-wing liberalism, not liberalism in general (it does not appear on Gray’s list), and would be opposed by left-wing/social democratic liberalism. Such values as “freedom,” “equality” (moral egalitarianism), and “fraternity/sorority” classically emblematic of the liberal tradition have not usually been seen as problematic by radicals and have indeed been emblazoned on radical banners. Freedom from oppression, equal rights/equal pay/equal citizenship (“I AM A MAN”), (p.21) fraternity/sorority with the subordinated (“Am I not a man and a brother? Am I not a woman and a sister?”) have all served as values for progressive movements seeking social emancipation.

To be sure, it is a familiar point to radicals, if somewhat less so to the non-radical majority, that the population as a whole has not historically been recognized as deserving the protections of these norms, so that the opponents of emancipation have all too often themselves been liberals. Freedom has been construed as justifiably resting on the enslavement of some; equality has been restricted to those deemed worthy of it (i.e., those more equal than others); fraternity has been literal, an all-boys’ club. Domenico Losurdo’s recently translated Liberalism: A Counter-History provides a devastating exposé of “liberal thought [not] in its abstract purity, but liberalism, and hence the liberal movement and liberal society, in their concrete reality.” It is an illuminatingly sordid history of the ideology’s complicity with racial slavery, white working-class indentureship, colonialism and imperialism (“A ‘Master-Race Democracy’ on a Planetary Scale,” in one chapter’s title), and the conceptual connection between the Nazi “final solution” and Europe’s earlier extermination programs against indigenous peoples.19

Yet it is noteworthy that in his concluding pages, Losurdo still affirms the “merits and strong points of the intellectual tradition under examination.” His “counter-history” has been aimed at dispelling the “habitual hagiography” that surrounds liberalism, and the related “myth of the gradual, peaceful transition, on the basis of purely internal motivations and impulses, from liberalism to democracy, or from general enjoyment of negative liberty to an ever wider recognition of political rights.”20 In reality, he emphasizes, “the classics of the liberal tradition” were generally hostile to democracy; the “exclusion clauses” required “violent upheavals” to be overcome; progress was not linear but a matter of advances and retreats; external crisis often played a crucial role; and white working-class and black inclusion in the polity came at the cost of their participation in colonial wars against native peoples.21 Nonetheless, his final paragraph insists:

However difficult such an operation might be for those committed to overcoming liberalism’s exclusion clauses, to take up the legacy of this intellectual tradition is an absolutely unavoidable task… . [L]‌iberalism’s merits are too significant and too evident for it to be necessary to credit it with other, completely imaginary ones. Among the latter is the alleged spontaneous capacity for self-correction often attributed to it… . Only in opposition to [such] pervasive repressions and transfigurations is the book now ending presented as a “counter-history”: bidding farewell to hagiography is the precondition for landing on the firm ground of history.22

So for Losurdo one can accept the indictment of actual historic liberalism, and its failure to live up to its putative universalism, without going on to conclude either that liberalism must therefore be abandoned or that liberalism’s own internal dynamic will naturally correct itself. Rather, the appropriate conclusion is that liberalism can be retrieved, but that it will take political struggle to do so.

Finally, even when the “exclusion clauses” are formally overcome, their legacy may well remain in the form of values now nominally extended to everybody, but in reality articulated in such a fashion as to continue to reproduce group privilege—for example, a “freedom” that repudiates caste status but does not recognize illicit economic constraint as unfairly limiting liberty, or an “autonomy” that does not acknowledge the role of female caregiving in enabling human development, or a “justice” resolutely forward-looking that blocks issues of rectification of past injustices. But what such tendentious conceptual framings arguably call for is a critique and a rethinking of these values and principles in the light of these exclusions (as with left, feminist, and black liberalism). That does not refute their normative worth; it just underlines the necessity for taking the whole population into account in revising them and developing a blueprint of their internal architecture adequately sensitized to the differential social location and social history of such groups, particularly those traditionally oppressed.

6. Liberalism’s Enlightenment Origins Commit It to Seeing Moral Suasion and Rational Discourse as the Societal Prime Movers

Liberalism is often associated with a historical progressivism, but a belief in the possibility and desirability of meliorism (see Gray) certainly does not commit one to Whiggish teleologies. One can oppose conservative fatalism and pessimism in its different versions—Christian claims about original sin, Burkean distrust of abstract reason, biological determinism in its ever-changing and ever-renewed incarnations—without thinking that there is any inevitability about the triumph of progress and reason. A liberalism that is “radical” will necessarily need to draw on the left tradition’s demystified analysis of the centrality of group domination to the workings of the social order.23 As earlier noted (sections 2 and 3 above), a revisionist ontology that recognizes as key social players nonvoluntary social groups in structural relations of domination and subordination will perforce have a more realistic view of the (in)efficacy of moral suasion than an ontology of atomic individuals. (p.23)

Such a revisionist liberalism will acknowledge the role of hegemonic ideologies and vested group interests in the preservation of the status quo, and their refractoriness to appeals to reason and justice. Indeed, it will often be precisely in the names of a “reason” and “justice” shaped by the norms and perspectives of group privilege—of class, gender, and race—that egalitarian social change is resisted. As Losurdo makes clear, no immanent developmentalist moral dynamic drives liberalism’s evolution. It is not at all the case that an endorsement of democratized liberal norms implies any corollary belief that the democratic struggle for a more egalitarian social order is guaranteed to be successful. Progress is possible; defeat and rollback are also possible. In general, a radical liberalism should, in some sense, be “materialist,” recognizing the extent to which both people and the social dynamic are shaped by material forces and not over-estimating the causal role of rational argumentation and moral suasion on their own. Radical liberalism takes for granted that political and ideological struggle will be necessary to realize liberal values against the opposition of those who all too frequently think of themselves as the real liberals. Radical liberalism can be descriptively realist (realizing the centrality of interest-based politics) without being normatively realist (abandoning morality for realpolitik).

7. Liberalism Is Naïve in Assuming the Neutrality of the State and the Juridical System

Again, while such a claim may be true of dominant varieties of liberalism, it need not be true of all. (Note that nowhere in Gray’s characterization is any such assumption made.)

The neutrality of the juridico-political system is a liberal ideal, a norm to be striven for to reflect citizens’ equal moral status before the law and entitlement to equal protection of their legitimate interests. To represent it as a sociological generalization of liberal theory about actual political systems, including systems self-designated as liberal, would be to confuse the normative with the descriptive. Liberalism has certainly historically had no trouble in seeing the illicit influence of concentrated group power in the socio-political systems it opposed (see section #2). The original critique of “feudal” absolutism, the twentieth-century critique of “totalitarianism,” relied in part on the documentation and condemnation of the extent of legally backed state repression in curbing individual freedom. Liberalism’s blind spot has been its failure to document and condemn the enormity of the historic denial of equal rights to the majority of the population ruled by self-styled “liberal” states: the “absolutism” and “totalitarianism” directed against white women and white workers, and the nonwhite enslaved (p.24) and colonized. Patriarchal democracy, bourgeois democracy, Herrenvolk democracy have all been represented as “democracy” simpliciter, with no analysis of the mechanisms of structural subordination that have characterized such polities, or the ideological sleights-of-hand that have rationalized them. But to claim a necessary conceptual connection between such evasions and liberal assumptions is to confuse the contingent necessities of the discourse of hegemonic liberalism—aimed at preserving, whether by justifying or obfuscating, patriarchal, bourgeois, and racial power—with what is taken to be some kind of transworld essence of liberalism. In recent decades, a large body of literature has developed that investigates the impact of class, race, and gender dynamics in the actual functioning of the state and the legal system.24 Radical liberalism would draw on this body of literature in seeking to put in place the safeguards necessary for guaranteeing equal protection not merely on paper but in reality.

8. Liberalism Is Necessarily Anti-Socialist, So How “Radical” Could It Be?

“Socialism” is used in different senses. Assuming that a romanticized return to pre-industrial communal systems is not in the cards for a globalized world of seven-plus billion people, there are three main alternatives so far (two tried, one theorized about): state-commandist socialism, social democracy, market socialism. State-commandist socialism (a.k.a. “communism”) is indeed incompatible with liberalism but would seem to have been refuted as an attractive ideal by the history of the twentieth century.25 Social democracy is just left-liberalism, whether in Rawls’s version or in versions further left, like Brian Barry’s, more worried about the inequalities Rawls’s two principles of justice leave intact.26 Market socialism is yet to be implemented on a national level, but many of the hypothetical accounts of how it would work emphasize the importance of respecting liberal norms.27 In other words, market socialism’s putative superiority to capitalism is not defended by invoking distinctively socialist values but by showing how such uncontroversial and traditional liberal values as democracy, freedom, and self-realization are not going to be achievable for the majority under the present system (or through the appeal to more recent values like sustainability, generated by awareness of the impending ecological disaster, which the present order will make achievable for nobody!)28 Other possibilities are not ruled out, but their proponents would have to explain how their models have learned the lessons of the past in both (a) being economically viable and (b) respecting human rights, the common global moral currency of the postwar epoch, which is best developed in the liberal tradition. Criticism (p.25) of the existing order is not enough; one has to show how one’s proposed “socialist” alternative will be superior (and in more than a vague hand-waving kind of way).

9. The Discourse of Liberal Rights Cannot Accommodate Radical Redistribution and Structural Change

Marxism’s original critique of liberalism, apart from deriding its (imputed) social ontology, represented liberal rights—for example, in “On the Jewish Question”29—as a bourgeois concept. But that was more than a century and a half ago. Lockean rights-of-non-interference centered on private property, “negative” rights, are indeed deficient as an exclusivist characterization of people’s normative entitlements, but such a minimalist view has been contested by social democrats (some self-identifying as liberal) for more than a century. A significant literature now exists on “welfare” rights, “positive” rights, “social” rights, whose implementation would indeed require radical structural change. The legitimacy of these rights as “liberal” rights is, of course, denied by the political right. But that’s the whole point, with which I began—that liberalism is not a monolith but a set of competing interpretations and theorizations, fighting it out in a common arena.30 The US hostility to such rights is a manifestation of the historic success of conservatives in framing the normative agenda in this country, not a necessary corollary of liberalism as such. As earlier emphasized, liberalism must not be collapsed into neo-liberalism. Nor is it a refutation to point out that having such rights on paper does not guarantee their implementation, since this is just a variation of the already discussed imputation to liberalism of a necessarily idealist conception of the social dynamic (section #6), in which morality is a prime mover. But such a sociological claim is neither a foundational nor a derivative assumption of liberalism.

Moreover, in the specific case of the redress of racial injustice, one does not even need to appeal to such rights, since the situation of, for example, blacks in the United States is arguably the result of the historic and current violation of traditional negative rights (life, liberty, property), which are supposed to be the uncontroversial ones in the liberal tradition, as well as the legacy of such practices as manifest in illicitly accumulated wealth and opportunities. Here again the hegemony of Rawlsian “ideal theory” over the development of the mainstream political philosophy of the last forty years has had pernicious consequences, marginalizing such issues and putting the focus instead on principles of distributive justice for an ideal “well-ordered” society. But an emancipatory liberalism would be reoriented from (p.26) the start toward non-ideal theory and would correspondingly make rectificatory justice and the ending of social oppression its priority.31

10. American Liberalism in Particular Has Been so Shaped in Its Development by Race that Any Emancipatory Possibilities Have Been Foreclosed

Liberalism in general (both nationally and internationally) has been shaped by race, but that does not preclude reclaiming it.32 Moreover, it is precisely such shaping that motivates the imperative of recognizing the multiplicity of liberalisms, not merely for cataloging purposes but in order to frame them as theoretical objects whose dynamic requires investigation. The conflation of all liberalisms with their racialized versions obstructs seeing these ideologies as historically contingent varieties of liberalism, which could have developed otherwise. A Brechtian “defamiliarization” is necessary, a cognitive distancing that “denaturalizes” what is prone to appear as the essence of liberalism. Jennifer Pitts’s A Turn to Empire, for example, which is subtitled The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France, and Sankar Muthu’s Enlightenment against Empire, both seek to demarcate within liberalism the existence of anti- as well as pro-imperialist strains, thereby demonstrating that liberalism is not a monolith.33 Admittedly, other scholars have been more ambivalent about some of their supposed exemplars; see, for example, Losurdo, already cited, and John Hobson’s recent The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics, which develops a detailed and sophisticated taxonomy of varieties of Eurocentrism and imperialism that demonstrates the compatibility of racism, Eurocentrism, and anti-imperialism.34 (For instance, many European liberal theorists were anti-imperialist precisely because of their racism—their fears that the white race would degenerate as a result of miscegenation with inferior races and the deleterious consequences of prolonged residence in the unsuitable tropical climates of colonial outposts.) But the mere fact of such a range of positions illustrates that a liberalism neither Eurocentric nor imperialist is not a contradiction in terms.

In the United States in particular, as Rogers Smith has demonstrated, liberalism and racism have been intricately involved with one another from the nation’s inception, a relationship Smith conceptualizes in terms of conflicting “multiple traditions,” racism versus liberal universalism, and which I see as a conflict between “racial liberalism” and non-racial liberalism.35 My belief is that formally identifying “racial liberalism” as a particular evolutionary (and always evolving) ideological phenomenon better enables us to understand the role of race in writing and rewriting the most important political philosophy in the nation’s history, from the overtly racist liberalism (p.27) of the past to the nominally color-blind liberalism of the present. From the eighteenth- to nineteenth-century accommodation to racial slavery and aboriginal expropriation to the twentieth-century tainting of welfare and social democracy on this side of the Atlantic,36 race has refracted crucial terms, concepts, and values in liberal theory so as to remove any cognitive dissonance between the privileging of whites and the subordination of people of color. Correspondingly, the shaping of white moral psychology by race and the distinctive patterns of uptake of abstract liberal values (“equality,” “individualism”) in such a psychology then become legitimate objects of investigation for us.37 One begins from the assumption that these norms will be color-coded in their actual operationalization, so that any efficacious framing of an interracial political project will need to anticipate and correct for this differential understanding rather than being naively surprised by it. But such racialization (as popular interpretation and reception) is going to be a common problem for any American ideology with emancipatory pretensions. Liberalism is certainly not unique in that respect, as the history of the white American left and socialist movements illustrates. As Jack London famously put it at a meeting of the Socialist Party in San Francisco “when challenged by various members concerning his emphasis on the yellow peril”: “What the devil! I am first of all a white man and only then a Socialist!”38 Herrenvolk socialism existed no less than Herrenvolk liberalism.

#### Criticism of liberalism and universalism prove the necessity of our method – dominance of liberalism makes persuasion and change more likely.

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“Liberalism” may denote both a political philosophy and the institutions and practices characteristically tied to that political philosophy. My focus will be on the former. The issue of how bureaucratic logics may prove refractory to reformist agendas is undeniably an important one, but it does not really fall into the purview of philosophy proper. My aim is to challenge the radical shibboleth that radical ideas/concepts/principles/values are incompatible with liberalism. Given the deep entrenchment of this assumption in the worldview of most radicals, refuting it would still be an accomplishment, even if working out practical details of operationalization are delegated to other hands.

In the United States, of course, “liberalism” in public parlance and everyday political discourse is used in such a way that it really denotes left-liberalism specifically (“left” by the standards of a country whose political center of gravity has shifted right in recent decades). In this vocabulary, right-liberals are then categorized as “conservatives”—in the market sense, as against the Burkean sense. On the other hand, some on the right would insist that only they, the heirs to the classic liberalism of John Locke and Adam Smith, are really entitled to the “liberal” designation. Later welfarist theorists are fraudulent pretenders to be exposed as socialist intruders unworthy of the title. Rejecting both of these usages, I will be employing “liberalism” in the expanded sense typical of political philosophy, which links both ends of this spectrum. “Liberalism” then refers broadly to the (p.12) anti-feudal ideology of individualism, equal rights, and moral egalitarianism that arises in Western Europe in the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries to challenge the ideas and values inherited from the old medieval order, and which is subsequently taken up and developed by others elsewhere, including many who would have been explicitly excluded by the original conception of the ideology. Left-wing social democrats and right-wing market conservatives, fans of John Rawls on the one hand and Robert Nozick on the other, are thus both liberals.1

From this perspective, it will be appreciated that liberalism is not a monolith but an umbrella term for a variety of positions. Here are some examples—some familiar, some perhaps less so:

Varieties of Liberalism

Left-wing (social democratic) vs. Right-wing (market conservative)

Kantian vs. Lockean

Contractarian vs. Utilitarian

Corporate vs. Democratic

Social vs. Individualist

Comprehensive vs. Political

Ideal-theory vs. Non-ideal-theory

Patriarchal vs. Feminist

Imperial vs. Anti-imperial

Racial vs. Anti-racial

Color-blind vs. Color-conscious

Etc.2

It is not the case, of course, that these different species of liberalism have been equally represented in the ideational sphere or equally implemented in the institutional sphere. On the contrary, some have been dominant while others have been subordinate, and some have never, at least in the full sense, been implemented at all. But nonetheless, I suggest they all count as liberalisms and as such they are all supposed to have certain elements in common, even those characterized by gender and racial exclusions. (My motivation for making these last varieties of liberalism rather than deviations from liberalism is precisely to challenge liberalism’s self-congratulatory history, which holds an idealized liberalism aloft, untainted by its actual record of complicity with oppressive social systems.) So the initial question we should always ask people making generalizations about “liberalism” is this: What particular variety of liberalism do you mean? And are your generalizations really true about all the possible kinds of liberalism, or only a subset? (p.13)

Here is a characterization of liberalism from a very respectable source, the British political theorist, John Gray:

Common to all variants of the liberal tradition is a definite conception, distinctively modern in character, of man and society… . It is individualist, in that it asserts the moral primacy of the person against the claims of any social collectivity; egalitarian, inasmuch as it confers on all men the same moral status and denies the relevance to legal or political order of differences in moral worth among human beings; universalist, affirming the moral unity of the human species and according a secondary importance to specific historic associations and cultural forms; and meliorist in its affirmation of the corrigibility and improvability of all social institutions and political arrangements. It is this conception of man and society which gives liberalism a definite identity which transcends its vast internal variety and complexity.3

What generate the different varieties of liberalism are different concepts of individualism, different claims about how egalitarianism should be construed or realized, more or less inclusionary readings of universalism (Gray’s characterization sanitizes liberalism’s actual sexist and racist history), different views of what count as desirable improvements, conflicting normative balancings of liberal values (freedom, equality) and competing theoretical prognoses about how best they can be realized in the light of (contested) socio-historical facts. The huge potential for disagreement about all of these explains how a common liberal core can produce such a wide range of variants. Moreover, we need to take into account not merely the spectrum of actual liberalisms but also hypothetical liberalisms that could be generated through novel framings of some or all of the above. So one would need to differentiate dominant versions of liberalism from oppositional versions, and actual from possible variants.

Once the breadth of the range of liberalisms is appreciated—dominant and subordinate, actual and potential—the obvious question then raised is this: even if actual dominant liberalisms have been conservative in various ways (corporate, patriarchal, racist) why does this rule out the development of emancipatory, radical liberalisms?

One kind of answer is the following (call this the internalist answer): because there is an immanent conceptual/normative logic to liberalism as a political ideology that precludes any emancipatory development of it.

Another kind of answer is the following (call this the externalist answer): it doesn’t. The historic domination of conservative exclusionary liberalisms is the result of group interests, group power, and successful group political projects. Apparent internal conceptual/normative barriers to an emancipatory liberalism can be successfully negotiated by drawing (p.14) on the conceptual/normative resources of liberalism itself, in conjunction with a revisionist socio-historical picture of modernity.

Most self-described radicals would endorse—indeed, reflexively, as an obvious truth—the first answer. But as indicated from the beginning, I think the second answer is actually the correct one. The obstacles to developing a “radical liberalism” are, in my opinion, primarily externalist in nature: material group interests, and the way they have shaped hegemonic varieties of liberalism. So I think we need to try to justify a radical agenda with the normative resources of liberalism rather than writing off liberalism. Since liberalism has always been the dominant ideology in the United States and is now globally hegemonic, such a project would have the great ideological advantage of appealing to values and principles that most people already endorse. All projects of egalitarian social transformation are going to face a combination of material, political, and ideological obstacles, but this strategy would at least reduce somewhat the dimensions of the last. One would be trying to win mass support for policies that—and the challenge will, of course, be to demonstrate this—are justifiable by majoritarian norms, once reconceived and put in conjunction with facts not always familiar to the majority. Material barriers (vested group interests) and political barriers (organizational difficulties) will of course remain. But they will constitute a general obstacle for all egalitarian political programs, and as such cannot be claimed to be peculiar problems for an emancipatory liberalism.

#### We must appropriate the social contract – ceding to dominant hegemonic interpretations denies the untapped potential of radical democratic political theory.

Charles **MILLS** Poli Sci @ Northwestern **‘7** *Contract and Domination* co-published with Carol Pateman p. 104-105

Appropriating the Contract

My recommendation, then, is that we — egalitarians, feminists, critical race theorists, and progressives in general in political theory who are concerned about real social justice issues — work toward a paradigm shift in contract theory. not conceding the contract to mainstream theorists. but seeking to appropriate it and turn it to emancipatory ends According to the Kymlicka quote cited earlier, contract is really just a “device which many different traditions have used for many different reasons" (1991: 196). Rawls, similarly, sometimes refers to his updating of the contract (the veil, the original position) as an “expository device" ( l999h: I9). So given this essentially instrumental identity of the contract, there is no principled barrier to developing it in a radical way: the domination contract as an “expository device" for non-ideal theory. Once one recognizes how protean the contract has historically been. and how politically pivotal is its insight of the human creation of society and of ourselves as social beings, one should be able to appreciate that its conservative deployment is a result not of its intrinsic fea- tures, but of its use by a privileged white male group hegemonic in political theory who have had no motivation to extrapolate its logic. Far from being a necessarily bourgeois or necessarily sexist or necessarily racist apparatus. contract theory has a radical potential barely tapped. and can serve as a vehicle for translating into conventional discourse most, if not all, of the crucial claims of radical democratic political theory.

The key conceptual move is simply to strip away the assumptions and corresponding conceptual infrastructure of an individualism once restricted to bourgeois white males and still shaping the contract's fea- tures today. and replace it with an ontology of groups (1. Young 1990). Rousseatfs class contract. Pateman's sexual contract, my racial contract (ideally combined, of course), can all then be conceptualized as still being within the contract tradition in the minimal defining sense out- lined above. viz, the assertion of, indeed insistence upon, the historic role of human causality in shaping the polity, and the commitment to the substantive realizration of moral egalitarianism in its necessary transformation. By contrast. the assumptions of the mainstream con- tract in its contemporary form. presuming universal inclusion and general input, handicap the apparatus in tackling the necessary task of corrective justice by, in a sense, assuming the very thing that needs to be substantively achieved. Once one adds women of all races, and male people of color (to say nothing of the white male working class), one is actually talking about the majority of the populations being excluded in one way or another from the historical contract, and its present descendant! A theoretical device whose classic pretensions are to repre-sent universal sociopolitical inclusion actually captures the experience of just a minority of the population, since inequality has not been the exception but the norm in modern societies.

Far from the domination contract representing “minority" concerns, then, it actually provides an accurate depiction of the situation for the majority. And far from being anti-Enlightenment. it has a much better claim to be carrying on the Enlightenment legacy. Getting the facts right is supposed to be an essential part of the Enlightenment mission. and in its mystified picture of the origins and workings of modern poli- ties, mainstream contract theory certainly does not do that. And if the Enlightenment is supposed to be committed to moral egalitarianism and a transformation of society to realize this imperative, then ignoring the ways in which class. gender, and race void nominal egalitarianism of substance is hardly the way to achieve such equality. Through the more accurate descriptive mapping of the domination contract, the emanci- patory reach of the egalitarianism of the prescriptive contract can then gain its full leveling scope rather than being, as at present, effectively conﬁned to achieving the freedom and equality of a few.

In sum, a case can be made that radical contract theory, which deploys the domination contract as its descriptive mapping device, is, far from being a theoretical usurper. the true heir to the social contract tradition at its best, and it is mainstream contract theory that has betrayed its promise. If war is too important to be left to the generals. one could say that social contract theory is too important to be left to the social contract theorists We should reclaim it.

#### Denying gains is politically and rhetorically disastrous – if you can’t persuade people to be liberals, you can’t persuade them to be anti-systemic actors.

Charles **MILLS** Poli Sci @ Northwestern **‘7** *Contract and Domination* co-published with Charles Mills p. 31-33

CM Like Macpherson, we both have obvious sympathies with the left (or, as the joke has it, what's left of the left). So if you think of yourself as a political progressive today, what do you do? Well, one reaction is to aim at more realizable goals, given the prevailing climate. Though I don't use the phrase in The Racial Contract, I've been arguing in more recent work for a "non-white-supremacist capitalism." In other words, if capitalism limits our horizons, then at least let's have a capitalism that lives up to its "society open to talents" advertising. Obviously I'm making several assumptions here. One is that white supremacy can be conceptually and (more importantly) causally separated from capitalism. Another is that non-white-supremacist capitalism would be morally preferable to, more just than, white-supremacist capitalism. On the first, it's often pointed out to me by people on the left in campus or conference audiences where I'm speaking - or often claimed, I should say - that capitalism caused racism and white supremacy in the first place. And my response is that even if that's historically true (and I'm certainly sympathetic to the claim), it doesn't follow that in the present period sufficiently powerful material forces can't be marshalled to struggle for a nonracial capitalist order now. On the second, it's sometimes been argued to me that there'd be no difference. And I think that's just false - I think that racist capitalism has peculiar features, peculiar oppressions, of its own, and that eliminating them would represent real moral progress. Note that these objectors' position implies that the black civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s would not have been worth supporting by the white left, since for the most part they weren't anticapitalist in character but antisegregation, anti-Jim Crow, antiwhite- supremacy. They were struggles for equal inclusion in the polity and the capitalist economy. So you'll recognize the position - it's basically the racial equivalent of the liberal feminist argument. That would be my first response to you, that while I agree completely that commodification has spread everywhere, to areas Marx would never have dreamed possible, isn't it still better in a market, property-dominated society to have property not distributed in such a racially inequitable way?

CP I agree that it is better to have a racially equitable distribution of property, just as it would be better for women to have an equitable share of global property, wealth, and income. But why must we let (a certain form of) capitalism limit our horizons? In practice, a neoliberal form of capitalism has gained great power but I do not see why we should merely accept that power when we are doing political theory and thinking about "the good society." This is why I have been challenging the widespread assumption that the institution of employment, which, like David Ellerman, I have come to see as the lynchpin of capitalism, is a necessary part of democracy. Even in practice, prevailing economic doctrines are being challenged, especially in Latin America, and also by many grass-roots movements around the world. I agree that we should argue for a racially- and sexually- equitable property distribution but I disagree that this precludes keeping much broader goals in mind at the same time. There are different ways of working toward a change in the distribution of resources and some ways of going about it may be conducive to more than one political aim, as I have argued elsewhere, for example about a basic income for all citizens.

CM You're right, of course, that one can be an activist, or a theorist (what "activism" comes to for most academics), on more than one front. In a classic left framework, that would have been negotiating the relationship between reform and revolution. So struggling for reforms within the system wouldn't necessarily rule out struggling against the system itself. But I guess for me the global defeat of the socialist project (in the Marxist sense) has been so overwhelming that I'm just pretty dubious about the current possibilities for antisystemic change of that kind. What's been happening in Latin America has indeed been inspiring, and I'm all for it. But that's social democracy, left-liberalism, not socialism in the classic sense of working-class ownership of the means of production. If that's what you mean by "socialism," then fine, I'm happy to support such redistributivist programs, and to endorse basic income arguments. We certainly have a lot of models for that, for example in Western European social democracy. What we don't have are models for an economically functioning and politically attractive postcapitalist socioeconomic order. As you know, there are many people formerly on the orthodox left who concluded that the collapse of state socialism did indeed vindicate the original criticisms of the Austrian school, i.e. that market mechanisms are crucial for informational reasons. Hence the work in recent years on trying to work out viable models of market socialism. But apart from the intrinsic problems of modeling such an alternative, there are also the extrinsic problems of trying to win over a population thoroughly socialized (at least in this country) to associate anything even slightly left with totalitarianism, the antichrist, etc. After all, "liberal" was successfully transformed by the right into a term of invective decades ago. So if people run scared of liberalism - milquetoast, boring, (once) respectable liberalism - how are you going to convince them to be socialists?

#### Critique of democracy makes the abstractions of modernity matter more than the concrete experience of colonized peoples in response to the many different oppressive agents.

Frederick **COOPER** History @ NYU **‘5** *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* p. 22-23

Can one really provincialize Europe? One way to do so is to dig more I deeply into European history itself, and there is no more central myth to / be dissected than that of narrating European history around the triumph of the nation-state. Much recent scholarship has exaggerated the centrality of I the nation-state in the "modern" era, only to exaggerate its demise in the present.40 Post-Revolutionary France, as I will explain in chapter 6, cannot be understood as a nation-state pushing into colonies external to it. The Haitian Revolution of 1791 revealed how much questions of slavery and citizenship, of cultural difference and universal rights, were part of debate and struggle across imperial space.41 This complex, differentiated empire, expanded into continental Europe by Napoleon, did not produce a clear and stable duality of metropole/colony, self/other, citizen/subject. Political activists in the colonies, until well into the 1950s, were not all intent upon asserting the right to national independence; many sought political voice within the institutions of the French Empire while claiming the same wages, social services, and standard of living as other French people. If one wants to rethink France from its colonies, one might argue that France only became a nation-state in 1962, when it gave up its attempt to keep Algeria French and tried for a time to define itself as a singular citizenry in a single territory.

A fuller version of the story of European colonial empires in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can also come from telling it alongside the histories of the continental empires with which they shared time and space, the Habsburg, the Russian, and the Ottoman, and those empires that lay outside Europe, notably the Japanese and the Chinese, not to mention two powers with wide reach and an ambivalent sense of themselves as imperial powers: the United States and, after 1917, the Soviet Union. At times colonialism was layered: late-nineteenth-century Sudan, for instance, was colonized by Egypt, which was part of the Ottoman Empire but itself experienced heavy British intervention.42 The sharp separation of a certain kind of empire-which produces colonial and postcolonial effects-not only precludes the posing of important questions about critical historical moments and interrelated processes, but reproduces a form of Eurocentrism. Central Asian Muslims conquered by the tsars and subjected to the violent and modernizing project of the Soviets do not receive the attention devoted to North African Muslims colonized by the French; 1989 is not marked in postcolonial circles as a milestone of decolonization.43

The narrowing of the range of inquiry is based on certain assumptions: that these empires were not truly colonial, and above all that they were, except for the Soviet case, not "modern." The latter argument reads backward the collapse of the Ottoman, Habsburg, and Russian Empires in 1917-23 into a thesis of the inevitable transition from empire to nation-state. But excellent historical research has shown that far from being beleaguered holdouts against claims to the nation, these empires produced a strong empire centered imagination that captured the minds of many self-conscious minority activists within their territories until World War I, a theme developed in chapter 6.

At the heart of colonialism, Partha Chatterjee has argued, is the rule of difference. .'44 It might be more useful to emphasize the politics of difference, for the meanings of difference were always contested and rarely stable. As broad comparative study suggests, all empires, in one way or another, had to articulate difference with incorporation. Difference had to.be grounded in institutions and discourses and that took work. "Modern" empires were in some ways more explicit about codifying difference-and particularly codifying race-than aristocratic empires, for the giving way of status hierarchies to participation in a rights-bearing polity raised the stakes of inclusion and exclusion. Just where lines of exclusion would be drawn-in terms of territory, race, language, gender, or the respectability of personal or collective behavior-was not a given of the "modern state," but rather the focus of enormous and shifting debate in nineteenth- and twentieth century Europe. The openings and closures of such debates deserve careful examination. 45 New imperial endeavors confronted the dilemmas of older ones: geographic dispersion, extended chains of command, the need to make use of regional economic circuits and local systems of authority and patronage. The most technologically sophisticated, bureaucratized, self-consciously rational empires were compelled to give elites of conquered and subordinated people a stake in the imperial system and to produce subordinates and intermediaries who also had a stake in the system, a problem also faced by the Romans and the Ottomans. The most powerful empires were often in danger of being hijacked by their agents, by settlers, or by indigenous collectivities in search of alternatives to cooperation with an imperial center. Within empires, Enlightenment thought, liberalism, and republicanism were neither intrinsically colonial nor anticolonial, neither racist nor antiracist, but they provided languages of claim-making and counter claimmaking, whose effects were shaped less by grand abstractions than by complex struggles in specific contexts, played out over time.

Ideologies of imperial inclusion and differentiation were challenged by people acting within the ideological and political structures of empire, as well as by people who tried to defend or create a political space wholly outside. At certain moments, empires needed to soften differentiation and enhance incorporation, when the need for colonial soldiers rose-in the French Caribbean of the 1790s or European campaigns of 1914-or at many other moments when people in the middle of relations of authority proved too important to making colonies work, too reflective of the actual ambiguities of colonial societies. At other moments, sometimes in reaction to activism in the colonies, rulers became more intent on articulating a colonizer/ colonized dualism, a more national conception of the polity. But such conceptions were as hard to sustain in practice as the fiction of belonging to a unified polity. And colonial elites did not always agree on which direction they should lean. Among colonizing elites-even if they shared a conviction of superiority-tensions often erupted between those who wanted to save souls or civilize natives and those who saw the colonized as objects to be used and discarded at will. Among metropolitan populations, colonized people sometimes provoked sympathy or pity, sometimes fear-as well as the more complex sentiments that emerged during the actual encounters and political struggles in the colonies themselves.

IMPERIAL SPACE AND THE VARIETIES OF POLITICAL IMAGINATION

The backward projection of the post-196os world of nation-states into a two-century-long path of inevitability affects our understanding not only of the relationship of national and imperial regimes but of the diversity of opposition to them. Pan-Arab, pan-Slavic, and pan-African movements put political affinity into a nonterritorial framework. Territory-crossing politics today, far from being a new response to a new globalization," have a long pedigree-and, beginning with antislavery movements, a record of some effectiveness.

As I will argue in the final essay in this volume, there is a danger that ahistorical history encourages an apolitical politics. To write as if "post Enlightenment rationality" or "the cunning of reason" or the "insertion of. modernity" were what shaped the political possibilities of colonial situaitions is to give excessive weight to the determining power of agentless abstractions and offer little insight into how people acted when facing the possibilities and constraints of particular colonial situations. We lose the power of their example to remind us that our own moral and political choices, made in the face of the ambivalences and complications of our present situation, will have consequences in the future.

The view of an atemporal modern colonialism goes along with a notion of resistance as heroic but vain. Only at the end, in some views at least, could it have much effect-in an anticolonial moment in which iconic figures like Nkrumah and Fanon stand in for an epoch. But the heroic moment proved ephemeral, and much of the impetus behind postcolonial theory has been the failure of decolonized states to fulfill an emancipatory project-a disillusionment that then turns its critique toward the emancipatory project itself, now seen as fatally linked to its imperial genealogy.46 The view expounded in these pages acknowledges the impetus behind this version of postcolonial theory but takes a different view of the history. I argue that colonial regimes and oppositions to them reshaped the conceptual frame- works in which both operated. Struggle was never on level ground, but power was not monolithic either. The intersection of locally or regionally rooted mobilizations with movements deploying a liberal-democratic ideology, with attempts at articulating a Christian universalism, with the mobilization of Islamic networks, with the linkages of anti-imperialist movements in different continents, or with trade union internationalism helped to shape and reshape the terrain of contestation. Collaborators and allies of colonial regimes-or people simply trying to make their way within empire- also pushed rulers of empire to change the way they acted􀂛 Subtle and dramatic changes at critical conjunctures are both part of the story.

The conjuncture of the post-World War II era indeed produced a situation in which longer-term political processes, with diverse goals, focused on fundamentally transforming the colonial state. Revolutionary mobilization, especially in Indonesia and Vietnam, as well as the climax of India's nationalist movement, had effects well beyond the immediate territories involved. But attempts at change within empires had a profound effect too (see chapter 7), for the danger that social movements operating within imperial frameworks could effectively make demands upon colonial states for resources equivalent to those of the other-metropolitan-:-members of the polity raised the question of whether a postwar empire could aspire to legitimacy without taking on an impossible burden of social and economic expenditures, with the threat of violence lying behind the demands. That such demands were phrased in a language of citizenship, progress, democracy, and rights both reflected social movements' serious engagement with the categories of colonizers and profoundly changed the meaning of those categories because of who was speaking. At the same time, movements outside of such frameworks-sometimes denounced by colonial rulers as atavistic, demagogic, or antimodern-raised the stakes for colonial regimes to contain tensions within familiar institutions and allowed African political movements room to maneuver between different visions of the future. One needs to appreciate the sense of possibility of these years and to understand what ensued not as an imminent logic of colonial history but as a dynamic process with a tragic end.

#### Commitment to democracy challenges racialized structures. Rejecting the solidarities of pluralistic, radical struggles for multiracial democracy falls prey to Eurocentric essentialism.

Christopher **MURRAY** PhD Candidate IR LSE **’20** *Anti-imperial world politics: race, class, and internationalism in the making of post-colonial order* p. 238-243

Throughout this study I have demonstrated how analysis of anti-imperial globalism from ‘above and below’ allows us to foreground plural and contested visions of the post-colonial state and political community to world politics. This framework provides more than more nuanced history. It provides a critical response to the notion that the post-colonial nation-state in its post-1945 form was the only or most desired form of political organisation after empire; while at the same time, a better understanding of the structural constraints of those who pursued a more progressive and inclusive state as the means to end colonial rule. Anti-imperial globalism from above can be seen to represent all the lessons that mainstream IR has traditionally wrung from decolonisation: struggles for sovereignty and recognition, the assertion of ‘non-Western values’, the construction of regional inter-governmental orders. However, rather than reproduce a unitary actor ontology, I have shown how these politics were shaped through their relational co-implication with other political discourses and visions. Anti-imperial globalism from below was also a part of the world politics which helped shape the post-1945 order. These politics stressed the dialectical relationship between global racial disparity and domestic social injustice: two ‘levels of analysis’ traditionally kept as distinct by mainstream IR.

Sovereignty and recognition were only worth pursuing to the extent that they would remake imperial-colonial power relations at state and international levels, and not reproduce them in a new form. Likewise, ‘non-Western’ culture and knowledge were valued to the extent that they could bring about a more modern politics, and could form the basis for class collaboration in political organising. Global order was necessary only to the extent that it could provide fairer and more peaceable relations between societies. Throughout the anti-imperial struggles of the 20th century, we can see the relationship between different anti-imperial globalisms from above and below at work. This does not mean political uniformity across a seamless global transition from empire to nation-state. Instead it reveals a plurality of different ideas about resistance, reform, and progress, which were connected through their reaction to more prevalent events and racialised structures.

International and transnational solidarities were a prevalent feature of activist and ethnic minority nationalist politics after WWI. They arose in response to the global crises of the Great War and the subsequent crises and great power conflicts left in its wake. WWI provided a global demonstration for many colonial subjects that the emperor had no clothes when it came to world civilization’s deeper promise of democracy, progress, peace, and prosperity. This feeling was underpinned by the demonstration of black and Asian colonial forces fighting for the integrity and expansion of imperial territory. Race leaders, like Marcus Garvey, W.E.B. Du Bois, and J.E. Casely Hayford, were indicative of a rising transatlantic black power and a growing intolerance for the colour line. For some, their politics also demonstrated the limit to which essential representations of ‘blackness’ could be used to argue for greater inclusion of black populations into the liberal capitalist order, without a more fundamental reform of that order. Radical thinkers like Hubert Harrison and Cyril Briggs, suggested an alternative politics through their critiques of these race leaders. Each argued that global transformation would need to come from colonised populations on the ground: harnessing the actually existing potential for ethno-cultural and class collaboration within communities on both sides of the Atlantic. This included a rejection of imperial ‘civilisationism’, but not globalism, inter-racialism, or federalism. Harrison and Briggs show that, historically, it has not been the idea of ‘world civilisation’ itself that is imperial, but white societies’ claim of ownership to it, and their claim of the right to lord its standards over other societies.

The various political mobilisations spurred by the Italian invasion of Abyssinia and the expansion and decline of the COMINTERN showed a connected and galvanised black internationalism. Yet, they also reveal divergences in the way that ‘revolution’ could be articulated rhetorically by different black intellectual activists in different social milieu. Revolutionary politics were not like an instruction manual passed down from the Enlightenment as a way to show non-European people the road to sovereign statehood. Rather, ideological texts, like Marxist-Leninism, were one part of a larger pool of resources used, in a selective and creative fashion, to guide and mobilise anti-imperial struggles. These struggles were directly precipitated by the colonial encroachments and racism experienced by people throughout the empire, and they helped bring about a dominant global discourse of revolution. However, they were also informed by more widely prevalent discourses about the need for political integration and world government. These were interpreted by different people in different ways, and did not follow one logical path from colonial enslavement, to sovereign statehood, to world government. Claude McKay and others saw the potential for revolution in the mismatch between black subjectivity and global modernity. They argued that black subjects were inherently ill-suited to modernity, and therefore would continue to represent its limits and potential for transformation outside of formal institutions. These more anarchistic conceptions resonated with those of federalists, like James, Padmore, Du Bois, and Jones, who argued that the state needed to be remade as a radically democratic and egalitarian institution. McKay, Padmore, and Du Bois shared the belief that white supremacy, globally and in colonial societies, was an impediment to any truly revolutionary course of action. McKay’s first-hand experience with the COMINTERN and white labour led him to largely give up on organised political movements. Du Bois concurred that ‘the wages of whiteness’ were a roadblock to inter-racial collaboration, and so he argued for strategic and temporary segregation as a path to multiracial democracy. Padmore, James, and Jones argued for black sovereignty for Africa and the Caribbean, but each imagined this as a path to federalism, which would embody and defend multiracial democracy, social freedom, and egalitarianism. Each saw these forms of political organisation – not as abstract -- but already in place through various patterns of labour organising, particularly the longstanding tradition of West Indian labour federation.

While more of a subject for contention in previous generations, the idea that Africans and the diaspora shared a path to development with the West became dominant in the post-WWII discourse of African, Caribbean, and black American Third Worldists. This reflected both a perceived need to establish robust development economies to pay for state independence, and to enter into new forms of international cooperation with the Great Powers. At least in the case of many African and Caribbean nations, the rhetoric of non-alignment often concealed new forms of imperial dependence between emerging post-colonial states, the United States, and the Soviet Union. Though they mattered more than some post-colonial leaders wanted to, or could, admit, Cold War geopolitics and colonial legacies with Britain and France delimited the possibilities for political union and more direct and equal popular sovereignty.

Again, racialised discourse and policy played an important role. New African leaders sought to promote traditional cultural difference in order to legitimate democratic and socialist reforms. Various African Socialist programmes were devised with progressive intentions, but, in practice, often served ethno-nationalist and authoritarian ends. Promoting a single traditional ‘African difference’ often put the ruling party and majority ethnic group at the head of multinational constituencies, which could not conform to this totalising statist vision without coercion. Native African opposition was labelled ‘reactionary’, ‘nativist’, or ‘neo-colonial’, if it was not amenable to new development targets and state building policies. These political divergences were often framed in terms of ethnic difference—some Africans were more ‘fit for modernity’ than others. Obversely, both in Africa and the Caribbean, black sovereigntism could be used to justify exclusion and suspicion of non-black residents – or progressive, ‘communist’ ideas -- on the grounds that they were inauthentic or neo-colonial. This combination: new leaders maintaining hierarchical ties with the Great Powers and former empires, and legacies of imperial racialisation, are both necessary to explain why the interwar politics of anti-imperial globalism and progressive federalism from below did not survive the transition of power in African and the Caribbean. This is not to say that no movements for multi-racial unity and social egalitarianism exist today– far from it. But arguments that these values could become foundational for the conduct and form of state and world government – the basis for international relations between former empires and colonies -- are far scarcer today than they were in 1919, 1935, or 1957.

These histories offer context and lessons for analysis of contemporary international relations. First, IR should expand or depart from its overemphasis on order, and make space for an analysis more attuned to justice claims. This is not to say that IR scholars must devote themselves to the political theoretical work of ethics or normative evaluation. However, scholarship concerned with the constitution of international relations should be attentive to the ways that movements and arguments for justice play a key role in shaping politics and identities between societies. Order based in a norm of sovereignty has often been a potential or actual impediment to the justice claims of marginalised groups, and thus cannot be assumed as the taken-for-granted end goal of world politics. Justice claims and movements might, of course, involve demands for sovereignty, but IR should not only pay attention to them when they do. The West Indies Federation and United States of Africa did not come to fruition in the form imagined, but we should expect that global injustice and inequality will continue to inspire reformist and revolutionary politics, including those to remake the state as a progressive force, or to seek new forms of inter-societal unity.

Second, the politics of the ‘non-West’ are not reducible to recognition of the particular or the different, any more than ‘the West’ should continue to claim its privileged access to ‘universal knowledge.’ Claims to difference are often arguments for alternative universalisms, and might also contain a potential or actual impetus to shape the world in the claimants’ image. A valuable contribution of scholarly work to ‘provincialise Europe’, is not necessarily to demand that we recognise cultures and politics outside Europe, but to show that trans-boundary power, imperialisms, and totalising ideologies always come from a particular place, though they might create global forms of engagement and conflict. Scholars should also be cautious when promoting recognition, that they are not enacting colonial recognition. IR can and should study recognition claims, but should not define groups of people in terms of fixed characteristics or essences.

Third, empires engender thick social relations and boundary-crossing discourses, which have determining effects on social practice. These social relations and discourse can provide an important analytical orientation for future inquiry into empire, racialisation, their legacies in, and effects on, contemporary international relations. The recent interest in race in IR carries with it the potential for a proliferation of anti-racist sentiment, which can simply ascribe ‘racism’ to individuals and attitudes, without a deeper exploration of why racialisation persists in many societies throughout the world. This is not to draw a false equivalency between different racisms. Rather, I merely suggest that the academic goal when it comes to racialisation should be understanding, not litigation or defence. IR has recently begun to draw upon related disciplines for better understanding social relations and boundary-crossing discourses: global historical sociology and intellectual history. From the tools offered by these disciplines we can fashion a historical-relational approach to empire and race in IR, which can provide a richer understanding of the power relations shaping contemporary world politics.

#### The political is a discursive assembly, not top-down power. Democratic dissensus exerts leverage over government policy.

Henrik Paul **BANG** University of Canberra · IGPA Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis **’15** *Foucault’s Political Challenge: From Hegemony to Truth* p. 27-31

Reconfiguring the topography of the common

Agamben is the one who best describes how the conversion of political authority into a superpower is brought about by those who see the problem of political power from the vantage point of an opposition between law and bare life. He makes use of Foucault’s early distinction between sovereignty and biopower, turning what Foucault describes – first as an opposition in Abnormal (A: 2003), and later on in Security, Territory, Population (STP: 2007) as a difference between sovereignty and security – into an identity, correlating the exceptionality of sovereignty with the exception of bare life. Hence, Agamben can translate the radical suspension of politics in the exception of bare life into the law of modern democracy, as defined by both Arendt and Kant. Biopolitics becomes democracy’s accomplice as a bare life between life and death. Hegemony becomes a mediation of Foucault’s notion of biopower as control over life and Schmitt’s notion of sovereignty as the power to decide on the state in which normal legality is suspended. The signature of hegemony shifts to one which positively intervenes between human and natural life as a new, more liberating form of domination for governing, neither the subject nor the enemy, but the sacred life of the people as a population. Or, as Rancière synthesizes Agamben’s attempt to overcome the opposition between absolute power and human rights (2010: 65–66), Democracy’s secret – the secret of modern power – can then emerge into full view. State power, now, is concretely concerned with bare life, itself no longer the life of the subject that the power wants to repress, nor the life of the enemy that it has to kill, but, Agamben says, a ‘sacred’ life – a life taken within a state of exception, a life ‘beyond oppression’. This signature of hegemony ‘beyond oppression’ presents itself as a command from above to show duty to otherness in political communities. Democracy as obedience to the rights of the Other in the res publica sweeps aside the heterogeneity of political dissensus in the name of a more radical heterogeneity. According to Rancière, this is to neglect how ‘dissensus is not a conflict of interests, opinions or values; it is a division inserted in “common sense” ’ (2010: 69). Dissensus is an ongoing dispute over what is given, and the frames in which we perceive and understand things as given. This is also how Foucault interprets politeia : democracy is not a matter of human rights; it is about the capability and knowledgeability of political subjects to place the scenes of dissensus in time and space. Rancière illustrates this point with the political struggles of women in Western history (2010: 69, emphasis in original): Women, as political subjects, set out to make a twofold statement. They demonstrated that they were deprived of the rights that theyhad thanks to the Declaration of Rights and that through their public action that they had the rights denied to them by the constitution, that they could enact those rights. They acted as subjects of the Rights of Man in the precise sense that I have mentioned. They acted as subjects that did not have the rights that they had and that had the rights they had not. This is what I call a dissensus: the putting of two worlds in one and the same world. Expressing political subjectivity in a political community is not a matter of being liberated from something or someone by something or someone. It is to reject, in one’s actual practice of freedom, being subjected to any political institution or human being. It is to deny that there is a superpower living in a sphere not only different from but also superior to the political community of free and equal subjects. It is to dismiss any categorizing of political actors by a Herrschaft making distinctions between superiors and subordinates, rulers and ruled, strong and weak, and so on. In a way, Foucault is pursuing exactly the same dual tactics as does Rancière above when he states that ‘nowadays, the struggles are against the forms of subjection – against the submission of subjectivity – is becoming more and more important’ (EW3: 351). He denies that mechanisms of subjection ‘merely constitute the “terminal” of more fundamental relations’ (EW3: 352), such as ideological or economic structures. Furthermore, like Rancière, Foucault is skeptical toward those who reduce subjectivation to a matter of ‘unfolding’ the program for a universal reason freed from domination in history, as if it were ‘possible to say that one thing is of the order of “deliberation” and another is of the order of “oppression” ’ (EW3: 354, emphasis in original): I do not think that there is anything that is functionally – by its very nature – absolutely liberating. Liberty is a practice . So there may, in fact, always be a certain number of projects whose aim is to modify some constraints, to loosen, or even to break them, but none of these projects can simply by its nature, assure that people will have freedom automatically, that it will be established by the project itself. Finally, like Rancière, Foucault denies that the exercise of hegemony in, and through, discursively structured and institutionalized asymmetries of power and signification is at the core of politics (FL: 444): It is within the field of the obligation of truth that it is possible to move about in one way or another, sometimes against effects of domination that may be linked to structures of truth or institutions entrusted with truth. It is a shame Rancière never sees this affinity between Foucault and himself when it comes to identifying how a political subject combines power, self-governance and knowledge as one who ‘can’, ‘will’ and ‘understands how to’ practice her freedoms inside a political community. Rather, he believes that ‘Foucault ... was never interested in this question, not at a theoretical level in any case. He was concerned with power’ (2010: 93). But he was interested. Unlike Mouffe and Rancière, Foucault does not analyze agonistic democracy in the shadow of antagonism and dissensus; nor does he reduce it to a manifestation of either hegemony or the popular will (EW3 1994c : 342): Rather than speaking of an essential antagonism, it would be better to speak of an ‘agonism’ – of a relationship that is at the same time mutual incitement and struggle; less of a face-to-face confrontation that paralyzes both sides than a permanent provocation. To Foucault, agonistic democracy does not derive from any exception but from the unceasing tension between freedom and truth, politeia and parrhesia in ongoing processes of authorization and normalization. Problematization is at the core of these processes as chronic two-way contestations of the discursive practices of authority and community inside political systems: the problematization of how people are governed (govermentality) depends on the ethical elaborations of the subject (knowledge) for making a difference (power), whether acting as an incumbent of political authority or as a lay member of a political community. Therefore, rather than speaking of authorization and normalization as opposed to practices of subjectivation and intersubjectivation in political communities, and vice versa, we should consider their mutual autonomy and dependence (EW3: 343): The analysis, elaboration, and bringing into question of power relations and the ‘agonism’ between power relations and the intransitivity of freedom is an increasingly political task – even, the political task that is inherent in all social existence. The relation of political authority as power-knowledge to governing, subjectivation and the practice of freedom is the basis of recurrently problematizing and criticizing any claim to political primacy in history. If Rancière had delved deeper into Foucault’s analyses of government by truth, he would surely have seen that Foucault’s critique of the sovereign state and the security state grows out of his conception of the political as an ensemble of discursive practices of power and freedom. 11 The state is not identical with the political, but one of its emergent properties. The duality of political authority and community It is easy to understand how Foucault could become identified with both the state of exception and the political community of exception. If one, for example, reads only Foucault’s early work on madness and discipline, the power/resistance dichotomy is the first that leaps out at one, as an indication of ‘the necessity of combat and the rules of strategy’ (DP: 308). The same holds good for his later lectures in STP (204), in which he speaks of ‘the coup d’Etat [as] the irruptive assertionof raison d’Etat ’. Statements like these cannot but leave the impression that Foucault’s politics is about sovereignty vs. law, power vs. resistance, hierarchy vs. anarchy, police vs. laypeople and so on. However, when Foucault focuses so much on statism and power/resistance in modernity, it is not because he thinks that hegemony and antagonism are at the core of the political, but precisely in order to problematize them both. To him, problematizing conflict means showing how things could be different (PK: 64): If one is interested in doing historical work that has political meaning, utility and effectiveness, then this is possible only if one has some kind of involvement with the struggles taking place in the area in question. I tried first to do a genealogy of psychiatry because I had had a certain amount of practical experience in psychiatric hospitals and was aware of the combats, the lines of force, tensions and points of collision which existed there. My historical work was undertaken only as a function of those conflicts. Foucault was from his young days actively engaged, practically as well as analytically, in problematizing how modern science and society continuously and systematically seek to cover up their exclusions behind a veil of rationality and legitimacy. To him, critique is not primarily to ‘scrutinise and restrain arbitrary power’ (Keane 2013: 245). It is, more than anything else, to problematize how, the more undistorted and thickly legitimated political decisions and actions appear and are believed to be, the better, more smoothly and unproblematically hierarchization, disciplinary subjection and policing function. In presupposing that political domination presents no special problems to democracy when first proved to be effective and legitimate for protecting and serving ‘We, the People’, modern reason turns a blind eye to its exclusions of otherness as ‘anomalies’ in or ‘deviations’ from the existing order. Authentic otherness is excluded from view a priori by reference to the necessity for removing any temporal or arbitrary disorder from society’s underlying general or necessary order. This is also Agamben’s and Rancière’s critique of modernity and the very reason why they both argue that the political is prior to law, just as dissensus is prior to consensus. But to Foucault it is the existence of the political authority relationship between political authorities and laypeople in their political communities that makes it all possible. It is not the state, whether as a sovereign state or as a security state, that identifies the political. Nor is it the democratic political community, which, as Rancière puts it (2010: 213, emphasis in original), breaks with consensus [in its] abolition of every form of arkhe , of every way of producing a correspondence between the places of governing and a ‘disposition’ to occupy these places. The politics of hegemony and dissensus are but two examples of the selftransforming capacity of political authority as a relationship involving freedom and power in both directions which could be balanced through the good parrhesia of freedom and truth. Foucault illustrates the fundamental duality of political authority and political community in his lectures from 1977 until he dies in 1984. He sets out by problematizing the conception of sovereignty as a unified entity, making up the space of the political as a coercive superpower over subjects within the prince’s or king’s territory. He shows how the original dilemma of sovereignty is its neglect of the facts that: ● one cannot govern a population as one governs a territory; ● g overning the construction of space is not the same as protecting and serving a home or place; ● t he functional delimitation of the political from all other necessary aspects of group life is a condition of demarcating the political territorially. The political is a general societal condition like those of the economic, the cultural and the religious; it is a constitutive aspect of all social and human relations, from the local to the global. Furthermore, its generality lies in its transformative capacity to do what could not be done without it: authorizing and normalizing the way policies are articulated, performed, delivered and evaluated**.** The fulfilment of these tasks does not depend on the maintenance of a centralized form of legitimate domination for acquiring effective control over subjects and society. It is necessary to accomplish them, however small the actual degree and extent of control the political authority may possess in relation to other political and nonpolitical forces, such as an informal ruling elite or an economic class. In this way, it is the notions of function, space, population and, most of all, the power-knowledge of subjectivation that show why Foucault wants to ‘decapitate the king’ and connect the politics of exception to the policy of cooperation for handling or solving common concerns. The analysis of political authority and democracy as revealing the identity of opposites does not only block a problematization of the juridical–statist identification of the political with an overarching norm that needs a hegemonic superpower to assert itself in the validation, rather than in the suspension, of this norm (Agamben 2005: 86). It also hinders the recoding of the political as a complex or ensemble of discursive practices for deciding on and doing policies in an acceptable manner, which is distinctly open to the possibility of self-governance and co-governance from below. Finally, to make the quest for social control within one’s territory the primary task of democratic government is not merely to reduce the common interest to a superpower’s national interest; it is also to disregard how a central political authority, in the long run, can only become stronger by enabling and empowering the population to get better at governing and taking care of itself as a community of equal subjects. Beyond opposition to difference Inside the political, democracy and parrhesia could be made to work together as the simultaneous manifestation of contingency and necessity; but only if we can transcend the mal adjustment of the democracy of equals and the ascendancy of parrhesia that the politics of exception expresses. This either turns the citizens into a superpower of dissensus and rupture or includes the parrhesiast as one more alterity in the community of equals ‘constituted through polemicizing over the common’ (Rancière 2010: 104). In any case, the result is that ‘the game of democracy and of truth-telling, do not manage to combine and suitably adjust to each other in a way which will enable this democracy to survive’ (GSO: 181). Rather, it insulates the political authorities from the political community with which they are endogenously connected as parties to a political authority relationship that requires the commons’ acceptance and recognition in order for it to continue in, and through, history. Political authority is constitutively open to exception made by political authorities or laypeople in their political communities. However, a minimal degree of cooperation between them is required for their continuous restructuring of their political regime and their relevant nonpolitical contexts – sometimes in the face of violent ruptures, difficult struggles and high-consequence risks (Bang 2009a, b, 2014). Obviously, if self-governance and co-governance are to become the basis of political community, then parrhesiast political authorities are required who can see the truth, are capable of telling it, are devoted to the pursuit of common concerns, and are generally reliable, honest and incorruptible. However, this is not the signature of hegemony, but the sign of a political authority with integrity that decides and acts (GSO: 178) on the basis of a democratic structure, a legitimate ascendancy exercised through a true discourse, and [as someone] with the courage to assert this true discourse. Thus, Foucault’s political analysis of government by truth is not founded on any claim to the primacy of either conflict or consensus, and does not give priority to either the political authority or the political community. In fact, the conception of the good political parrhesia moves political analysis beyond all rulers–ruled oppositions. It compels political researchers to conduct their analysis in light of the possibility that a good cooperative circle of political communication and interaction between political authorities and laypeople could be made to occur, if only both parties to the authority relationship would accept and recognize the real and necessary political difference between the interdependent logics of politeia and parrhesia . Hence, to critique modernity in Foucault’s manner is not equivalent to identifying the political with an extraordinary decision, which then is coercively imposed on people. Nor does it compel us to conclude that the circle of political authority and political community merely expresses the political construction of ‘a paradoxical world that puts together two separable worlds’ (Rancière 2010: 39). That only becomes the case if acceptance and recognition of political authority is equated with a forced compliance induced through disciplinary subjection and policing. Then, evidently, the ethical life among equals inside political communities will appear as always and intrinsically opposed to political authorities’ world of lived necessity. The virtue of being a political lay actor in a democratic political community is not just that one can act without a command, ‘ as if a command was not needed’ (Bauman 1995: 59, my italics). It is, rather, to know that a command/obedience relation is not necessary for cooperating with political authorities in the articulation and performance of common concerns. What is needed is merely the acceptance and recognition of the difference between being a political authority and a lay member of a political community. Placing political cooperation before consensus and dissensus The duality of political authority and political community comes out clearly in Foucault’s specification of the difference between parrhesia and democracy (GSO: 183–184): Not everybody can tell the truth just because everybody may speak. True discourse introduces a difference or rather is linked, both in its conditions and its effects, to a difference: only a few can tell the truth. And once only a few can tell the truth, once this truth-telling has emerged into the field of democracy, a difference is produced which is that of the ascendancy exercised by some over others. True discourse and the emergence of true discourse underpins the process of governmentality. If democracy can be governed, it is because there is a true discourse. Does this signify that Foucault, after all, is speaking of parrhesia as power over others? Well, some would probably say he is, but I think he is not, at least not in the normal sense of domination as class power or symbolic violence, manifesting a conflict of interest or meaning in which resistance is repressed and wills are subdued by the stronger class or superior will to knowledge (Bourdieu 1992, Devine and Savage 2005, Lukes 2005, Poulantzas 1975). We must remember that the good parrhesia grows out of democracy in the authority relationship, and, therefore, that the authority relationship between authorities and laypeople, in the ‘original position’, must be functional before it can, for example, take shape as a command/obedience relationship. To stress the importance of ascendancy for the good political parrhesia is not the same as claiming that politics will always be dominated by circulating power elites or classes. As distinct from elitists like Michels, Mosca and Pareto, Foucault does not classify people inside the political according to the power and control they actually hold. He merely wishes to point out the difference between those few who are the occupants of the political authority roles and the many ‘ordinary’ members who are not. This may also be why he himself, in the end, felt compelled to make an explicit distinction between power and domination, as in this interview from 1982 (FL 1996 : 417): Domination is a particular case within the different possibility of power relations. You can have a power relation without this type of domination. But what makes me uncomfortable with these analyses – at least those by Habermas – is the fact that when he speaks about power, he always understands it as domination. And he translates ‘power’ by ‘domination.’ To exercise political ascendancy is not the same as exercising command and control over others. Political authorities need not be coextensive with the politically relevant members; nor do they have to be driven by the goal of appropriating power above all else (cf. Easton 1965b: 214–215). Furthermore, however little actual control laypeople may possess under given circumstances, it is still necessary for them to systematically articulate and perform policies that most people will accept and recognize as binding, at least most of the time. However, the point is that some basic faculties are required to be in a position to exercise good political parrhesia . You cannot just walk in from the street and do so. Special political competences are required, developed from day-to-day experiences with the risks, problems and challenges that have to be dealt with in, and through, systematic political decision and action. Political authorities may sometimes function as puppets for certain dominant socioeconomic interests or identities. Yet, no matter how little actual control they possess, they are still directly and immediately responsible for how policies are authoritatively formulated, programmed, ‘packaged’ and carried out for society and the population in day-to-day political life. Likewise, laypeople in their political communities may be downtrodden by a totalitarian or authoritarian regime and hindered in all ways from exercising their creative political capacity to affect the production of political outcomes. Nevertheless, not even the most totalitarian regime can afford to ignore the political fact that it could not exist for a moment if laypeople suddenly refused to accept and recognize themselves as bound by authority, for whatever combination of reasons. The Eastern European and Chinese revolutions should at least have taught us that much. What we should emphasize much more today is the possibility of introducing the model of good parrhesia as an alternative to the models of the extraordinary decision-maker and the ordinary exception. What laypeople do in their political communities is not reducible to a matter of repoliticizing what has been depoliticized by the police. It is not merely this notion of democracy as dispute and struggle that is intrinsic to understanding what political community is all about. It is, more than anything else, the ability of laypeople to continuously problematize how policies are articulated and performed in time-space. Whereas politicization is tied to the logic of dissensus and consensus, problematization is connected with the logic of accepting and rejecting. Where problematization is continuous, politicization is discontinuous. Thus, problematization provides ‘ordinary people’ inside their political communities with a much more long-lasting and general political significance and relevance than is possible in politicization. It makes the never-ceasing spontaneity and creativity of ordinary citizens the ground for developing the politics of truth of the parrhesiast, by igniting and keeping the political authority responsive to conducting the circle of the good parrhesia.

#### Controls on markets extend the franchise of global democracy. Inside/outside binaries deny transnational solidarities and valorize authoritarian projects.

Christopher **MURRAY** PhD Candidate IR LSE **’20** *Anti-imperial world politics: race, class, and internationalism in the making of post-colonial order* p. 42-46

Hierarchy is obscured a third way through an analytical bias which privileges ethnic and cultural political leaders over forms of racial, class, and gender hierarchy internal to groups. The sole focus on elite representatives can reproduce a civilisationist ontology, and can lead to self-orientalism, or the appropriation and inversion of stereotypes about ‘non-Western’ civilisations in order to carve out autonomous space for ethnicised authority (Said, 1979). Against the claim that non-Western civilisations cannot order because of inferior values, comes the counter-claim that they can, and that those values will make them just as good ‘orderers’ – if not better – than the West. This can lead to the inclusion of non-Western values which are seen to be more amenable to hegemonic international order, and the marginalisation of other non-Western values deemed destabilising.86

Even recent scholarship which has attempted to nuance and pluralise the historiography of anticolonial nationalism remains stuck in this way. For example, Getachew (2019) presents a convincing and welcome argument that the anticolonial nationalisms of Caribbean and African thinkers were not inert and narrow, but should be judged as attempts at worldmaking. She correctly argues that activist theorists like Du Bois, Padmore, Nkrumah, and Eric Williams were not building nations as ends in themselves, but were initiating international projects meant to address the disparities within international society.

However, against her own intentions, Getachew ends up valorising the democracy-undermining projects of elite worldmakers by focussing entirely on the activities of racial – i.e. civilisational -- representatives. Instead of opening possibilities for a truly transnational approach to the problems of post-colonial politics, Getachew reinscribes R.B.J. Walker’s (1993) ‘inside/outside’ divide between ‘the international problem of hierarchy’ and ‘the internal question of pluralism and diversity.’87 Critiques of elite nationalism, such as those by Fanon, James, Lorde, Glissant, or even Du Bois in his later years, are mostly missing from Getachew’s analysis. These writers did not accept that hierarchy was simply an inter-governmental problem which was separate from ‘internal’ problems of pluralism and diversity. Getachew is correct that worldmakers like Kwame Nkrumah or Norman Manley were concerned with establishing an international norm of non-domination. However, her framing does not sufficiently address the problem that international non-domination built on ‘domestic’ domination of cultural minorities not only reproduced the logics of empire, but it also undermined the moral upper hand and strategic alliances between oppressed groups represented by the transnational solidarity of radical activists pushing for greater democratic controls on global capitalism. The democratic scale required to address problems of international hierarchy was, and is, transnational, making pluralism and diversity not just the province of national elites, but the concern of any group attempting to build solidarities and alliances to address global ills.

In agreement with the view that anti-imperialism is worldmaking, but against civilisational ordering, I argue that a major animating impetus of anti-imperialism was the desire to remake the world in order to enable the continual formation of pro-democratic alliances beyond national or civilisational boundaries. As a broader discourse, anti-imperialism was not just about negative right to freedom from alien rule, but about democratic access to the international realm of politics and the global economy.88 Within the anti-imperial discourses which began in the interwar period, there was a fundamental tension over where the authorisation of democratic right would come from: post-colonial states or the international proletariat. While worldmakers like Nkrumah or Manley wished to build the capacity of post-colonial nation-states, critics like Fanon or James also wished to radically extend the franchise of global democracy.

As C.L.R. James argued in a lecture series in August, 1960, the increasingly global penetration of capital gave rise to a need for new forms of political and economic unification beyond the national state. ‘National capitalistic states’ were already in the process of unification, with new states in the formerly colonised world in danger of simply replicating a political form which was quickly becoming subordinate to the demands of the world market.89 Presaging Quinn Slobodian’s (2018) recent argument about the symbiosis of free market ideologues and nation-states, James saw that

[A]t a certain stage capitalism begins to run to the government for salvation. Government also begins to enclose its production within the national boundaries because of war and tariffs. The capitalist, as soon as he gets into trouble, runs to the government and says, “Look how many people I am feeding, and look at the value of the production that I am producing for the benefit of the country. I am in a crisis. I am in difficulties owing to no fault of my own, but these miserable people in the other countries are under-selling me. They are paying their workers very little. Look how much I am paying mine. I would be glad if you could give me a subsidy of some kind.” And as he has helped to put the government into power, the government looks into the matter and appoints a commission and tells the commission to examine the industry rigorously and give him the subsidy he wants. He takes hold of the subsidy and, especially if an election is near, he goes to his political party, passes a little bit to them, and tells them to be careful to say how government interference is ruining capitalist production all over the world.90

For James, the unification of states into larger federations was a particular means to a more important end: the creation of radical democratic controls on the world market and the global promotion of egalitarianism as justice. The most important question of the post-colonial world was not which civilization should have the right to impose order, but ‘who’ – as in which class – ‘will control the world market?’91 Because the national state’s democratic accountability was compromised by capital, James believed that a progressive form of unification could only be achieved ‘by a social class which, from its very position in industry and the structure of society, can reach out to others of the same class in other countries.’ As I discuss further in Chapters 4 and 5, James was not of the opinion that states could be abandoned entirely, but it was a necessity that ‘[m]ankind… leave behind the outmoded bourgeois class and all the obstacles which the national state now places in the way of an international socialist order.’92

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#### Evaluate the plan in terms of political context, not abstract ethical demands. We cannot reduce political behavior to an ethical standpoint.

Simon **HAILWOOD** Philosophy @ University of Liverpool **’19** in *Rethinking the Environment for the Anthropocene* eds. Manuel Arias-Maldonado & Zev Trachtenberg p. 123-126

Over recent decades a critique of the allegedly excessive moralism of much Anglophone political philosophy has developed under the heading of ‘political realism’. This comes in different forms with different points of emphasis. It is useful to distinguish four interrelated components of the critique.1 Firstly, much political philosophy distorts our understanding of politics by focusing on specific moral values (often justice) to the detriment of a range of ‘political’ values, such as legitimacy, order and stability. Secondly, moralistic political philosophy under-appreciates the extent to which the values it asserts as fundamental may be ideological. Thirdly, it under-appreciates the importance of strongly contextual forms of political judgement sensitive to concrete political conditions. This is badly served by abstract ‘grand theories’ apparently supposed to generate prescriptions for all political situations.

I will be touching on each of these issues, and especially, towards the end of the chapter, the matter of ideology. But I take the central charge to be this fourth one: much political philosophy proceeds with little or no regard to the concerns of politics as a realm more or less autonomous from morality. It presents itself as applied moral philosophy, adopting a moral standpoint prior to politics that is then expected simply to conform to that standpoint. Bernard Williams, for example, criticises ‘political moralism’ for either regarding the political as a mere instrument of the moral, or for taking morality to constrain what politics ‘...can rightfully do. In both cases, political theory is something like applied morality’ (Williams 2005, p.2). In full moralist mode, then, political philosophy proceeds ‘unrealistically’ by ignoring features internal to ‘the political’ that aren’t a matter simply of ‘doing the right thing’ as defined by an independent moral standard.

The dichotomy here between morality and politics can be drawn more or less strictly, depending on the degree of autonomy the political is given from the moral or ethical2 (Rossi & Sleat 2014, pp.690–93). Thus we can think of a ‘realism’ dimension at one end of which the logically strongest political realism (hereafter SPR) asserts full autonomy: moral normativity is unsuitable to politics, where specifically political forms of normativity hold sway. At the opposite end is pure political moralism, which regards politics as ideally a domain entirely of moral enactment or constraint. Lying between these two extremes weaker forms of realism don’t deny a place for morality in politics, but claim that political philosophy should give greater weight than it often does to the autonomy of distinctively political concerns and constraints. This is probably Williams’ view. I think weaker versions are the most defensible and their definitive central claim plausible: morality is hardly unimportant in politics, but political philosophy shouldn’t proceed simply as applied moral philosophy without regard to distinctively political concerns. I will shortly offer some reasons in favour of weaker political realism and argue that the figure of the political moralist is at least often a strawman. I will then go on to discuss parallels with analogously strong forms of Anthropocene advocacy; analogous that is to SPR. Firstly though, it might be thought that I am myself setting up a strawman in talking about the strongest form of political realism as if it was actually held by anyone. Surely no one thinks that politics ought to be thought a completely autonomous domain where morality is altogether out of place? Maybe not. I am not committed to claiming that anyone does hold SPR in a fully unqualified form;3 I am taking it as an ideal limit defining the end of a spectrum of views.

There are clearly strong and familiar reasons for preferring weaker forms of rea- lism over SPR. One is motivated by sensitivity to our historical context as one of value pluralism and disagreement. The fact of pluralism and disagreement is a definitive problem of modernity and this is a reason for us not to identify political philosophy with a comprehensive ethical standpoint. Many are bound to disagree, and it is pointless to posit a merely theoretical consensus and derive normative political conclusions from that. On the other hand, although political thought is needed to consider how to accommodate pervasive disagreement and secure the legitimacy of coercive institutions despite it, it is difficult not to see this as a moral question as well as a political question.

#### Alternative causes backlash, fails to resolve environmental challenges, and causes transition wars – growth solves.

Karlsson 21 – (Rasmus, "Learning in the Anthropocene" Soc. Sci. 10, no. 6: 233. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10060233> 18 June 2021)// gcd

Unpacking this argument, it is perhaps useful to first recognize that, stable as the Holocene may have seemed from a human perspective, life was always vulnerable to a number of cosmic risks, such as bolide collisions, risks that only advanced technologies can mitigate. Similarly, the Black Death of the 14th century should serve as a powerful reminder of the extreme vulnerability of pre-industrial societies at a microbiological level. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to think of the Holocene as providing a relatively stable baseline against which the ecological effects of technological interventions could hypothetically be evaluated. With most human activities being distinctively local, nature would for the most part “bounce back” (even if the deforestation of the Mediterranean basin during the Roman period is an example of that not always being the case) while larger geophysical processes, such as the carbon cycle, remained entirely beyond human intentional control. Even if there has been some debate about what influence human activities had on the preindustrial climate (Ruddiman 2007), anthropogenic forcing was in any case both marginal and gradual. All this changed with the onset of the Great Acceleration by which humans came to overwhelm the great forces of nature, causing untold damage to fragile ecosystems and habitats everywhere, forever altering the trajectory of life on the planet (Steffen et al. 2011b). In a grander perspective, humanity may one day become an interplanetary species and thus instrumental in safeguarding the long-term existence of biological life, but for the moment, its impact is ethically dubious at best as the glaciers melt, the oceans fill up with plastics, and vast number of species are driven to extinction. Faced with these grim realities, it is of course not surprising that the first impulse is to seek to restore some kind primordial harmony and restrain human activities. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that, even if their aggregate impact may have been within the pattern of Holocene variability, pre-modern Western agricultural societies were hardly “sustainable” in any meaningful sense. Experiencing permanent scarcity, violent conflict was endemic (Gat 2013), and as much as some contemporary academics like to attribute all evils to “capitalism” (Malm 2016), pre-capitalist societies exhibited no shortage of religious intolerance and other forms of social domination. It is thus not surprising that some have argued the need to reverse the civilizational arc further yet and return to a preliterate hunter-gather existence (Zerzan 2008) even if this, obviously, has very little to do with existing political realities and social formations. Under Holocene conditions, the short-term human tragedy may have been the same, but it did not undermine the long-term ability of the planet to support life. In a world of eight billion people, already accumulated emissions in the atmosphere have committed the planet to significant warming under the coming centuries, with an increasing probability that committed warming already exceeds the 1.5-degree target of the Paris Agreement even if all fossil-fuel emissions were to stop today (Mauritsen and Pincus 2017). This means that sustained negative emissions, presumably in combination with SRM, will most likely be needed just to stabilize global temperatures, not to mentioning countering the flow of future emissions. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), assuming that all the pledges submitted under the Paris Agreement are fulfilled, limiting warming to 1.5 degrees will still require negative emissions in the range of 100—1000 gigatons of CO2 (Hilaire et al. 2019, p. 190). The removal of carbon dioxide at gigaton scales from the atmosphere will presumably require the existence of an advanced industrial society since low-tech options, such as afforestation, will be of limited use (Gundersen et al. 2021; Seddon et al. 2020), especially in a future of competing land-uses. It is against this backdrop of worsening climate harms that the limits of “precaution”, at least as conventionally understood, become apparent. While degrowth advocates tend to insist that behavioral change, even explicitly betting on a “social miracle” (Kallis 2019, p. 195), is always preferable to any technological risk-taking (Heikkurinen 2018), that overlooks both the scope of the sustainability challenge and the lack of public consent to any sufficiently radical political project (Buch-Hansen 2018). While there may be growing willingness to pay for, say, an electric vehicle (Hulshof and Mulder 2020), giving up private automobile use altogether is obviously a different animal, to say nothing about a more fundamental rematerialization of the economy (Hausknost 2020). Again, the problem is one in which change either (a) remains marginal yet ecologically insufficient or (b) becomes sufficiently radical yet provokes a strong political counterreaction. A similar dynamic can be expected to play out at the international level where countries that remain committed to growth would quickly gain a military advantage. To make matters worse, there is also a temporal element to this dynamic since any regime of frugality and localism would have to be policed indefinitely in order to prevent new unsustainable patterns of development from re-emerging later on. All this begs the obvious question, if the political and economic enforcement of the planetary boundaries are fraught with such political and social difficulties, would it not be better to instead try to transcend them through technological innovation? Surprisingly, any high-energy future would most likely be subject to many of the same motivational and psychological constraints that hinder a low-energy future. While history shows that existing nuclear technologies could in theory displace all fossil fuels and meet the most stringent climate targets (Qvist and Brook 2015), it seems extremely unlikely, to put it mildly, that thousands of new reactors will be built over the course of the coming decades in response to climate change. Outside the world of abstract computer modelling, real world psychological and cultural inertia tends to ensure that political decision-making, at least for the most part, gravitates to what is considered “reasonable” and “common sense”—such as medium emissions electricity grids in which wind and solar are backed by biomass and gas—rather than what any utilitarian optimization scenario may suggest. Even if the global benefits of climate stabilization would be immense, the standards by which local nuclear risks are assessed, as clearly illustrated by the Fukushima accident which led to a worldwide retreat from nuclear energy despite only causing one confirmed death (which, though obviously regrettable, has to be put in relation to the hundred and thousands of people dying every year from the use of fossil fuels), underscores the uneven distribution of perceived local risks versus global benefits and the associated problem of socio-political learning across spatial scales. Almost two decades ago, Ingolfur Blühdorn identified “simulative eco-politics” as a key strategy by which liberal democracies reconcile an ever-heightened rhetoric of environmental crisis with their simultaneous defense of the core principles of consumer capitalism (Blühdorn 2007). Since then, declarations that we only have “ten years to save the planet” have proliferated, and so have seemingly bold investments in renewable energy, most recently in the form of US President Joseph Biden’s USD 2.25 trillion climate and infrastructure plan. Still, without a meaningful commitment to either radical innovation or effective degrowth, it is difficult to see how the deployment of yet more wind turbines or the building of new highways will in any way be qualitatively different from what Blühdorn pertinently described as sustaining “what is known to be unsustainable” (Blühdorn 2007, p. 253). However, all is not lost in lieu of more authentic forms of eco-politics. Independent of political interventions, accelerating technological change, in particular with regard to computing and intelligent machine labor, may one day make large-scale precision manipulation of the physical world possible in ways that may solve many problems that today seem intractable (Dorr 2016). Similarly, breakthroughs in synthetic biology may hold the key to environmentally benign biofuels and carbon utilization technologies. Yet, all such progress remains hypothetical and uncertain for now. Given what is at stake, there is an obvious danger in submitting to naïve technological optimism. What is less commonly recognized is that naïve optimism with regard to the prospects of behavioral change may be equally dangerous. While late-capitalist affluence has enabled many postmaterial identities and behaviors, such as bicycling, hobby farming, and other forms of emancipatory self-expression, a collapsing economy could quickly lead to a reversal back to survivalist values, traditional hierarchical forms of domination, and violence (Quilley 2011, p. 77). As such, it is far from obvious what actions would actually take the world as a whole closer to long-term sustainability. If sustainability could be achieved by a relatively modest reduction in consumption rates or behavioral changes, such as a ban on all leisure flights, then there would be a strong moral case for embracing degrowth. Yet, recognizing how farreaching measures in terms of population control and consumption restrictions that would be needed, the case quickly becomes more ambiguous. While traditional environmentalism may suggest that retreating from the global economy and adopting a low-tech lifestyle would increase resilience (Alexander and Yacoumis 2018), it may do very much the opposite by further fragmenting global efforts and slowing the pace of technological innovation. Without an orderly and functioning world trade system, local resources scarcities would be exacerbated, as seen most recently with the different disruptions to vaccine supply chains. In essence, given the lack of a stable Holocene baseline to revert to, it becomes more difficult to distinguish proactionary “risk-taking” from “precaution”, especially as many ecosystems have already been damaged beyond natural recovery. In this context, it is noteworthy that many of the technologies that can be expected to be most crucial for managing a period of prolonged overshoot (such as next-generation nuclear, engineering biology, large-scale carbon capture and SRM) are also ones that traditional environmentalism is most strongly opposed to. 3. Finding Indicators From the vantage point of the far-future, at least the kind depicted in the fictional universe of Star Trek, human evolution is a fairly straightforward affair along an Enlightenment trajectory by which ever greater instrumental capacity is matched by similar leaps in psychological maturity and expanding circles of moral concern. With the risk of sounding Panglossian, one may argue that the waning of interstate war in general and the fact that there has not been any major nuclear exchange in particular, does vindicate such an optimistic reading of history. While there will always be ups and downs, as long as the most disastrous outcomes are avoided, there will still be room for learning and gradual political accommodation. Taking such a longer view, it would nevertheless be strange if development was simply linear, that former oppressors would just accept moral responsibility or that calls for gender or racial justice would not lead to self-reinforcing cycles of conservative backlash and increasingly polarizing claims. Still, over the last couple of centuries, there is little doubt that human civilization has advanced significantly, both technologically and ethically (Pinker 2011), at least from a liberal and secular perspective. However, unless one subscribes to teleology, there is nothing inexorable with this development and, it may be that the ecological, social, and political obstacles are simply too great to ever allow for the creation of a Wellsian borderless world (Pedersen 2015) that would allow everyone to live a life free from material want and political domination. On the other hand, much environmental discourse tends to rush ahead in the opposite direction and treat the c limate crisis as ultimate evidence of humanity’s fallen nature when the counter-factual case, that it would be possible for a technological civilization to emerge without at some point endangering its biophysical foundations, would presumably be much less plausible. From an astrobiological perspective, it is easy to imagine how the atmospheric chemistry of a different planet would be more volatile and thus more vulnerable to the effects of industrial processes (Haqq-Misra and Baum 2009), leaving a shorter time window for mitigation. Nick Bostrom has explored this possibility of greater climate sensitivity further in his “vulnerable world hypothesis” (Bostrom 2019) and it begs to reason that mitigation efforts would be more focused in such a world. However, since climate response times are longer and sensitivity less pronounced, climate mitigation policies have become mired in culture and media politics (Newman et al. 2018) but also a statist logic (Karlsson 2018) by which it has become more important for states to focus on their own marginal emission reductions in the present rather than asking what technologies would be needed to stabilize the climate in a future where all people can live a modern life.

#### Peak growth and absolute decoupling are coming – only crisis causes overconsumption.

Nordhaus 20 – founder and executive director of the Breakthrough Institute. (Ted, “Must Growth Doom the Planet?,” The New Atlantis, Number 61, Winter 2020, pp. 76-86)//gcd

But the solution, such as it is, turns out to be right in front of us. Mainstream economic theory may posit that endless economic growth is desirable and possible, but what most macroeconomists actually fret about today is stagnation. The growth rate of developed economies has been [falling for decades](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2018&locations=XD&start=1961&type=shaded&view=chart). This is due not to biophysical limits to consumption, but rather to the simple mathematical reality that the richer an economy becomes, the more wealth it needs to gain each year to maintain the same growth rate. Economic growth in wealthy post-industrial economies, in other words, appears to be inexorably slowing without the need for eco-austerity.

Each additional increment of growth in advanced economies also typically becomes less material-intensive, as sectors like manufacturing, mining, and refining account for a smaller share of total economic output, and knowledge and service sectors account for a larger share.

Population growth is slowing even faster than economic growth, as fertility rates typically fall as incomes and education rise — a dynamic that has been as robust a feature of global modernity as rising consumption. Japan, now 126 million people, could see its population fall by as much as half, to less than [60 million by 2100](http://www.ipss.go.jp/pp-newest/e/ppfj02/Rf_1_e.html). The European Union, currently about 500 million, could shrink to as low as [300 million by 2100.](https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/indicators/total-population-outlook-from-unstat-3/assessment-1) Projections vary about when exactly global population will peak and begin to decline, but all major demographic forecasts project population growth trending in the same direction. Absent a radical change in the demography of a rapidly modernizing and urbanizing planet, global population [is likely to peak](https://population.un.org/wpp/Graphs/DemographicProfiles/Line/900) and begin to decline late in this century or early in the next.

Taken together, declining fertility, slowing per capita economic growth, the changing composition of economic activity, and continuing improvements in technology and resource productivity are likely, toward the end of this century, to bring a peak and decline in the consumption of most important resources, and in impacts upon the environment. In fact, for absolute material demands upon the natural environment not to decline over the long term, one of these three robust trends would need to reverse itself. Global fertility trends would need to start rising again. Long-term slowing of growth rates in industrialized economies would need to reverse. Or a broad swath of food, energy, and resource technologies would need to start to become less resource-efficient.

Smil, like a number of other environmental scholars, contests this notion. Instead, he argues that increases in resource productivity will not be put toward lower resource demands but toward more consumption and faster economic growth. Increasingly efficient steam engines in the nineteenth century famously did not result in a reduction in the use of coal but the opposite. One hundred fifty years of improving lighting efficiency hasn’t resulted in lower use of energy for lighting but rather has inspired us to light up many more things. Much of the long-term improvement in the efficiency of internal combustion engines, Smil notes, has gone toward creating larger and more powerful vehicles. As long as there is pent up demand for more consumption, some portion of productivity gains will be put toward more consumption rather than less resource use.

But the claim that these “rebound” effects assure the endless growth of material consumption assumes that demand for them will never saturate. For that to be true, it must also be the case that the wealthier we get, the more material consumption we will demand, forever. Thirty-six-ounce steaks must become 72-ounce steaks, SUVs must become eighteen-wheelers, 2,000-square-foot split-level ranch homes must become 4,000-square-foot McMansions, and so on.

There is really not much evidence for that proposition. Despite our affinity for supersizing our homes, our automobiles, and our portions, the U.S. economy has nonetheless been following the same basic trajectory as all other developed economies: toward slower national and per capita income growth and consumption of material goods and services. Rockefeller University’s [Jesse Ausubel has studied one hundred key resources](https://thebreakthrough.org/journal/issue-5/the-return-of-nature) in the United States over the past century, such as cropland, water, electricity, nickel, and petroleum. Over a third of them are past peak consumption. Similarly, the [United States](https://www.c2es.org/content/u-s-emissions/) and much of the [European Union](https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/indicators/greenhouse-gas-emission-trends-6/assessment-3) have seen falling greenhouse gas emissions over the last decade or more, even [accounting for the outsourcing](https://twitter.com/MaxCRoser/status/1205057947103092741) of industrial production to places like China.

Globally, by contrast, resource use and carbon emissions continue to rise, despite long-term and ongoing improvements in resource productivity. This is the reason that Smil characterizes claims that economic growth might decouple from material and energy inputs as “highly misleading.” But the fact that overall demand for material goods and services has risen during the postwar period, when the global population has tripled and billions of people have moved from deep agrarian poverty to urban and industrial living arrangements provides no strong basis for Smil’s argument.

As both population and economic growth rates flatten out over the course of this century, it is likely that resource-productivity gains will overtake global economic growth rates, resulting in falling global demand for material resources over the long term. As [a 2019 Breakthrough Institute report](https://thebreakthrough.org/issues/food/livestock-revolution) showed, global pasture land, the largest single human use of land, peaked in 2000 and continues to decline even as global beef production continues to rise. In [a 2013 paper](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2013.00561.x), Ausubel and colleagues argued that global cropland too appears close to peaking, even as global crop production continues to rise.

As with all growth curves, peak consumption of various material resources is not guaranteed to last. These trends could represent the top of a bell curve, the bottom of a new S-curve, or just a long plateau. But what they do demonstrate is that absolute decoupling of resources from economic growth is possible, even given a global economy today that still features robust population and income growth.

Smil’s case for establishing limits to growth depends upon a further claim: that preserving economic growth while reducing environmental impacts can’t happen soon enough to avoid surpassing key biophysical boundaries, which would lead to catastrophe for human societies. But Smil is too aware of the many failed proclamations of environmental scientists to make any strong or specific claim about what those biophysical limits might be. “Forecasting the state of modern civilization for generations or centuries to come remains an impossible exercise,” he acknowledges.

Elsewhere — for example in his 2010 book [Energy Myths and Realities](https://www.aei.org/research-products/book/energy-myths-and-realities/) — Smil has been less than catastrophic about global warming, the environmental risk most commonly thought to threaten the long-term survival of human societies. Nor does he worry that we will run out of resources. Instead, he invokes poorly defined challenges having to do with arable land, soil erosion, depleted aquifers, and crop productivity, combined with a changing climate. He is quite certain, though, that none of it can be sustained. “Pursuit of the highest possible economic growth rates, extending the culture of excessive consumption to additional billions of people, and treating the biosphere as a mere assembly of goods and services to be exploited (and used as a dumping ground) with impunity,” he argues, “must change in radical ways.”

In the end, Smil does offer a prediction of sorts, if not a very strong one. By the end of this century, he argues, human societies will need to impose limits upon economic growth in order to sustain human wellbeing for the long term. But as prophecy, Smil’s prediction is less provocative than it might first appear. By the end of this century, global population will likely be approaching zero growth anyway and a much more industrialized global economy will likely be struggling with the same headwinds to sustained rates of per capita growth that developed economies have been struggling with for decades.

In this regard, Smil’s prognostication, should it come to pass, would follow a similar pattern to many other environmental laws and regulations. Environmental restrictions have often lagged, not led, the peaking of pollution and other environmental impacts. We “saved” the whales only after we had hunted many global populations to extirpation, and developed better substitutes for most of the resources we depended upon them for. Forests have returned across many parts of the United States, Europe, and Latin America after we no longer needed those lands to grow food. [One 2005 study found](http://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.energy.30.050504.164507) that 76 percent of protected areas across Latin America and the Caribbean was under little threat of human development without protection, a dynamic that [appears to be the case globally as well](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0008273). We reached a global agreement to protect the ozone only after [DuPont](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-0836(199711)6:5%3C276::AID-BSE123%3E3.0.CO;2-A) had developed a cheap substitute for chlorofluorocarbons.

In answer to modern environmentalism’s tautology, Smil offers redundancy. Human societies will need to impose global limits to growth, he suggests, around the time that growth, or at least growing demands upon resources, will likely be coming to an end anyway.

Given how much damage two centuries of unprecedented growth and economic development have done to the biosphere, many imagine, understandably, that the end of growth might be a panacea for the natural world. But we should not be so quick to assume that a smaller and less affluent human population will necessarily bring lower demands upon natural resources.

History is replete with episodes where much smaller human populations accounted for environmental destruction at large scales. Early North Americans in the paleolithic era cleared most of the continent’s forests and hunted mammoths and other megafauna into extinction. Across human history, roughly [three-quarters](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3010e.pdf#page=21) of deforestation in temperate forests occurred before the Industrial Revolution, when the human population was less than a billion people, almost all of whom lived in deep poverty compared to today’s industrial standards.

More recently, economic crises in relatively developed regions, such as [Southeast Asia](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.1999.mp30003005.x), the [former Soviet Union](https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.12450), and [Greece](https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2013.799731) have led to serious environmental consequences, as economically struggling populations turned to forests for firewood and to illegal hunting and fishing for food, to devastating effect.

For this reason, degrowth offers no guarantee that environmental impacts will decline. This is all the more so as calls for degrowth are frequently coupled with demands for a return to simpler, less technological, and non-synthetic systems for the provision of food and energy and for production of material goods and services. Less affluent economies more dependent upon production systems that use less technology would substantially increase the resource demands associated with consumption, and would erode or even entirely offset the benefits of lower levels of consumption.

#### Non–market societies reproduce violence.

Julie **NELSON** Global Development and Environment @ Tufts **‘6** *Economics for Humans* p. 37-40

Problems with the Market-Critic Prescriptions

At the end of the last chapter, I brought up evidence of poverty and corporate abuses that raise questions about the adequacy of the probusiness, free-market prescription for curing social ills. Do the prescriptions of the market critics for “small is beautiful/’“government to the rescue,” or “separate spheres” solutions give us grounds for more hope?

The “small is beautiful” prescription contains, of course, some truth. It is true that acting ethically is a more complicated process the larger and more complex the level of organization involved. Likewise, the “government to the rescue” advocates make some good points. It is easier for any one company to do the right thing if there is public pressure on all companies to do the right thing, and a government regulation can be a good tool for applying such pressure. On an even larger scale, international public agreements may be the only hope for addressing global climate change issues. These are far too big for any one nation, let alone one company, to take on. And there is some truth in the “separate spheres” view. There are some social welfare problems for which private, market solutions don’t work. Care for people who are poor and ill or otherwise needy cannot be provided on a purely market basis. The funds have to come from somewhere other than the “consumers” of the services. Public or private nonprofit allocations of money are necessary.

But while the values held in high regard by market critics are praiseworthy, and the prescriptions contain partial truths, I find the prescribed solutions lacking when held up to criteria of realism and effectiveness. Sometimes the proposed solutions could cause real damage.

A first problem is that these views tend to assume not only that the market sphere is driven exclusively by self-interest, but that self-interest is exclusive to the market sphere. They often seem to assume that if an organization is small, or nonprofit, or governmental, then non-self-interested motivations can be trusted to take over. We should consider the evidence on this.

Families, for example, are very small nonprofit organizations, presumably governed by interests of love and intimacy (as in the Victorian image).The newspaper reminds us daily, however, that families can also be characterized by domination and abuse, even violence. Sometimes being in a small-scale organization just means being under the thumb of a small-scale oppressor.

Community organizing is a great way to bring a group together to work on issues of social concern and to create opportunities for activism. Community organizing was very effective in South Boston in the 1970s, for instance, when big community demonstrations were organized to fight racial integration of the local public schools. Sometimes community groups carry out agendas of racism. And it is not uncommon for community activists motivated by not-in-my-backyard sentiments to try to push undesirable projects off on some other community. Communities, like individuals, can act in purely self-interested ways.

Nonprofit and religious organizations can bring people together to work for goals other than profit.The Boston diocese of the Catholic Church, for example, is legally not allowed to be motivated by profit. It was the maintenance of its own institutional hierarchies and reputation that motivated it to quietly move priests who sexually abused children from one parish to another, thereby supplying the abusers with fresh victims. Nonprofit institutions—even those ostensibly concerned with maintaining moral and spiritual values—are not immune to evil.

In an era of suspicious elections, campaign finance fiascos, and powerful lobbyists, one has to be naive in the extreme to believe that governments can be trusted to automatically or naturally work for the common good.

Appeals to small communities, nonprofits, or governments to take over economic activities “in the public interest” seem to me to bring in a deus ex machina solution.Yes, it would be nice if it worked. But how do we know that those selfish motivations critics assume drive the market are not also going to show up in families, community organizations, nonprofits, and the state?

A second problem with these views is that they largely pull the rug out from under their own noble drives. Because money and power are associated with greed and oppression, money and power are treated as inherently morally suspect. People who possess these, such as corporate executives who might be willing to engage in ethical discussion (if given the chance), are labeled as the evil “them,” separated by a large gulf from the moral “us.” Thus, potential allies and power bases are eliminated. This aversion to money and power has, I believe, been especially damaging to the sectors of the economy in which hands-on care is provided to children, the sick, and the elderly. Remember this poster: “It will be a great day when the schools have all the money they need and the air force has to hold a bake sale to buy a bomber”? How true. But the antimoney ideology reinforces exactly the bake-sale, nickel-and-dime mentality for human services that that poster decried. The damage this attitude has inflicted on caring work will be taken up further when I look at issues of money and motivations in chapter 4. A third problem is that, even if the prescriptions given by market critics were viable once put in place, there would still remain the problem of getting there. The massive promarket tide now flooding the United States and global institutions presents an intimidating reality check. The “small is beautiful” view tells us that we must have a massive economic restructuring— the thorough destruction of large corporations as a form of economic organization—before we can really be human in our economic lives. This would require a gargantuan change— larger, perhaps, than the Industrial Revolution and the rise and fall of Communism combined. If, on the other hand, we hope to be rescued by the rise of powerful, purely public-spirited interventionist governments, the current political climate makes it look like we may be waiting a very long time. Every step toward wresting control away from those with money and power will, market critics correctly perceive, be resisted by those with money and power.

Some people enjoy tilting at the economic machine—or at windmills, like Don Quixote in his hopeless crusades. In fact, I admire the spirit of people who keep to their praiseworthy, treasured values against all odds. But what if the futures envisioned by market critics, visions that tend to seesaw between the utopian and apocalyptic, are not the only options? What if the proposed solutions are unsatisfactory because the market critics have, unfortunately, combined good values with erroneous “facts” about what an economy is?

#### No environment impact.

Hance ’18 [Jeremy, “Could biodiversity destruction lead to a global tipping point?” Environment Analyst at *The Guardian*. Internally cites scientific researchers, including experts from Paul Sabatier Univeristy. Trinity College, and Duke University who are global experts on biodiversity loss and extinction. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/radical-conservation/2018/jan/16/biodiversity-extinction-tipping-point-planetary-boundary]

But what’s arguably most fascinating about this event – known as the Permian-Triassic extinction or more poetically, the Great Dying – is the fact that anything survived at all. Life, it seems, is so ridiculously adaptable that not only did thousands of species make it through whatever killed off nearly everything (no one knows for certain though theories abound) but, somehow, after millions of years life even recovered and went on to write new tales.

Even as the Permian-Triassic extinction event shows the fragility of life, it also proves its resilience in the long-term. The lessons of such mass extinctions – five to date and arguably a sixth happening as I write – inform science today. Given that extinction levels are currently 1,000 (some even say 10,000) times the background rate, researchers have long worried about our current destruction of biodiversity – and what that may mean for our future Earth and ourselves.

In 2009, a group of researchers identified nine global boundaries for the planet that if passed could theoretically push the Earth into an uninhabitable state for our species. These global boundaries include climate change, freshwater use, ocean acidification and, yes, biodiversity loss (among others). The group has since updated the terminology surrounding biodiversity, now calling it “biosphere integrity,” but that hasn’t spared it from critique.

A paper last year in Trends in Ecology & Evolution scathingly attacked the idea of any global biodiversity boundary.

“It makes no sense that there exists a tipping point of biodiversity loss beyond which the Earth will collapse,” said co-author and ecologist, José Montoya, with Paul Sabatier Univeristy in France. **“**There is no rationale for this.”

Montoya wrote the paper along with Ian Donohue, an ecologist at Trinity College in Ireland and Stuart Pimm, one of the world’s leading experts on extinctions, with Duke University in the US.

Montoya, Donohue and Pimm argue that there isn’t evidence of a point at which loss of species leads to ecosystem collapse, globally or even locally. If the planet didn’t collapse after the Permian-Triassic extinction event, it won’t collapse now – though our descendants may well curse us for the damage we’ve done.

#### Conflating capitalism and competitive markets buys into neoliberal ideology that markets are intrinsically self-regulating. Markets are important tools for a democratic political economy. The neoliberals turned debates about hierarchy versus democracy into a debate about the market versus the state.

Johanna **BOCKMAN** Sociology @ George Mason **’11** *Markets in the name of socialism: the left-wing origins of neoliberalism* p. 2-6

In general, scholars have presented three accounts of how economists developed and spread neoliberalism. Each assumes that economists have always taken a side either for the state or for the market and thus that every economist can be located on a state–market axis. The first account focuses on individual right-wing economists, most significantly Milton Friedman and Friedrich von Hayek, who developed radical free market ideas that form the core of neoliberalism. A strategic network of right-wing think tanks, associations like the Mont Pelerin Society, and foundations like that of the Scaife family packaged these neoliberal ideas and used them worldwide to attack any state role in the economy, from regulation to Keynesianism to central planning (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1999; Campbell 1998; Centeno 1998; Cockett 1995; Hartwell 1995; Har- vey 2005; Kelly 1997; Klein 2007; Mirowski and Plehwe 2009; Smith 1993; Valdés 1995; Yergin and Stanislaw 1998).3 In her Shock Doctrine, Naomi Klein (2007) argues that Milton Friedman and other neoclassical economists took advantage of economic crises to realize this radical free market package as shock therapy, which produced “disaster capitalism” worldwide.

A second type of account suggests that neoclassical economics, with its free market models, acts as a kind of neoliberal Trojan horse (Aligica and Evans 2009; Biglaiser 2002; Kogut and Macpherson 2007).4 In his A Brief History of Neoliberalism, David Harvey (2005) brilliantly describes neoliberalism as a political project to restore the power of economic elites after the successes of the left in 1960s, but he conflates neoliberalism and neoclassical economics.5 Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher came to power with a mandate to realize this political project, bringing it together with a separate “utopian project” to realize right-wing economists’ vision of free market capitalism that masked the political project. According to many authors, this neoliberal vision is based on neoclassical economics, in opposition to Marxism. Harvey writes:

The neoliberal label signaled their [these economists’] adherence to those free market principles of neoclassical economics that had emerged in the second half of the nine- teenth century (thanks to the work of Alfred Marshall, William Stanley Jevons, and Leon Walras) to displace the classical theories of Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and, of course, Karl Marx. (2005: 20)

Harvey finds the core of neoliberalism in neoclassical economics with its “free market principles.” Sociologists Campbell and Pedersen similarly argue that “a deep, taken-for-granted belief in neoclassical economics” forms the core of neoliberalism (2001: 5). Scott Sernau represents a more generally held view:

Many nations around the world were discovering the ideas of free trade and free markets. The intellectual basis for this approach comes from neoclassical economics. This approach is sometimes termed neoliberalism . . . Thus neoliberalism is the eco- nomic philosophy of American political conservatives . . . On the international level, the IMF and the World Bank champion their own form of neoclassical economics. (2010: 39–40)

Neoclassical economics, many observers agree, has played a fundamental role in the rise of neoliberalism worldwide. The conversion of much of the world to neoclassical economic thinking, according to these accounts, led to support for neoliberalism and thus undermined socialism, which did indeed suffer a cataclysmic decline from the late 1980s.

The third type of account points to economists with American neo- classical training who gained powerful positions in international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF, which impose neo- liberal ideas on countries around the globe and support the formation of neoliberal advocates worldwide (Babb 2001; Dezalay and Garth 2002; Henisz, Zelner, and Guillén 2005; Orenstein 2008).6 Economists within these institutions and their worldwide network of advocates successfully replaced state-led development with neoliberal free market policies. These three arguments work nicely together to demonstrate how economists’ ideological project worked in parallel with business elites’ political project to reorganize capitalism and reestablish their own power (Blyth 2002; Harvey 2005; Klein 2007).

This manuscript builds on, but also criticizes, these three types of ac- counts by revealing the socialist origins of neoliberalism. The right-wing, capitalist origins of neoliberalism have been clearly demonstrated. Observers have noted that not only right-wing leaders, such as Pinochet in Chile and Fujimori in Peru, but also socialists, such as those in Western Eu- rope and Latin America, implemented neoliberal policies (Bourdieu and Grass 2002; Mudge 2008; Sader 2008). To understand this, I argue that we should not conflate neoliberalism and neoclassical economics, we should not assume that neoclassical economics is a capitalist science or ideology, and, most importantly, we should go beyond the state–market axis.

I define neoliberalism as a set of ideas about how to organize markets, states, enterprises, and populations, which shape government policies.7 These policies include deregulation, liberalization of trade and capital flows, anti-inflationary stabilization, and privatization of state enterprises. My understanding of the debates in Eastern Europe and about Eastern Europe in the early 1990s informs this definition.8 The most striking characteristic of neoliberalism has been its advocacy of free, unfettered competitive markets, or in the words of Joseph Stiglitz its “market fun- damentalism” (2003: 74).9 According to neoliberal ideology, competitive markets and prices, free from political intervention or bureaucratic in- terests, could and should take over state functions. Competitive market prices could guide governance more effectively and more justly than the state could. At the same time, neoliberals call for a strong or even au- thoritarian state to protect private property, as well as to create private property and markets.10 Neoliberalism also privileges the power of man- agers and owners and attacks the rights or potential rights of employees (Harvey 2005). There is a distinct lack of concern among neoliberals about the inefficiencies and concentrations of power within large corporations (Mirowski 2009: 438). Finally, Milton Friedman, Friedrich von Hayek, and other neoliberals also had a commitment to capitalism, a kind of capitalism with the qualities listed above: free markets, authoritarian yet small states, and hierarchical firms controlled by managers and owners, rather than by workers. In sum, neoliberalism avidly supports all of the following:

1. competitive markets

2. smaller, authoritarian states

3. hierarchical firms, management, and owners

4. capitalism

Someone who supports only one of these elements, even competitive markets but not the others, is not necessarily neoliberal.

This fourfold definition avoids the common assumption that economists are either pro-state or promarket. As Timothy Mitchell (1990) argues, elites “enframe” the world into dichotomies, constructing a seemingly dualistic world—Soviet socialism versus Western free market capitalism, for instance—to bolster their own authority. The state–market dichotomy obscures the nature of economics and elite power. This dichotomy easily blurs into other dichotomies: between socialism and capitalism, between central planning and the market, between Keynesianism and monetarism, between Latin American structuralist economics and American neoliberalism, and between Marxism and neoclassical economics. As a result, arguments about the state almost effortlessly become a mishmash of arguments about socialism, central planning, Keynesianism, Latin American economic structuralism, and neoclassical economics. In contrast, I have found that neoclassical economists, in their professional writing, do not focus on whether they are for or against the competitive market; rather, they use markets, central planning, socialism, and neoclassical econom- ics simultaneously as analytical tools and sometimes as normative models. They have also been more concerned about another axis altogether: hierarchy and democracy. For example, some neoclassical economists advocated markets and rejected state planning in the name of economic democracy and communism. Thus, these economists criticized state socialism and state capitalism, as well as corporations, with the goal of ending worker exploitation and creating a new form of socialism. Another set of neoclas- sical economists also advocated markets but assumed hierarchical firms and an authoritarian state. The state–market axis used in public discourse hides a very different conversation going on within professional economics.

My approach complements, but also deviates from, Foucauldian studies of neoliberalism. In his lectures at the Collège de France in 1978 and 1979, Michel Foucault (2008) discussed neoliberalism as a form of governmentality. Those following Foucault understand neoliberal gov- ernmentality as seeking to manage populations by shaping individuals as governable, self-disciplined, enterprising subjectivities—thus engineering their souls—and by governing them from a distance, not though direct intervention by state agents, but by calculation, guidance, and incentives (Ong 2006; Rose 1996: 1999). Using this approach in his study of Czecho- slovak technocrats, Gil Eyal (2003) has demonstrated that neoliberalism also emerged independently from capitalism and out of Eastern European socialism. Eyal has suggested that neoliberalism is not necessarily capitalist but rather is an art of governance possible under a variety of economic systems. By highlighting the ways that state, market, and expert power were fused in a new neoliberal configuration during socialism, Eyal pro- ductively avoids assuming that economists have always taken a side ei- ther for the state or for the market. Yet, while the Foucauldian approach has produced many insights into neoliberalism, it collapses alternatives to neoliberalism, including socialisms, into neoliberalism as simply other examples of engineering the soul. To understand the views of neoclassical economists more generally, **one must move beyond the state–market axis** to recognize the variety of socialisms that neoclassical economists have explored since the nineteenth century.

In the United States and now around the world, neoclassical eco- nomics represents the mainstream of the economics discipline. Neoclas- sical economics differs from heterodox economics, including Marxism, evolutionary economics, and the Austrian School after the Second World War, which this book only briefly discusses. Keynesians, libertarian and monetarist Chicago School economists like Milton Friedman, and many Eastern European socialists all practiced this neoclassical economics, while Friedrich von Hayek and the Austrian School abandoned this practice after the Second World War. Neoclassical pioneer and Keynesian Paul Samuel- son acknowledged this view: “Economists do agree on much in any situ- ation” (1983: 5). For example, in regards to Milton Friedman, Samuelson continued, “I could disagree 180o with his policy conclusion and yet con- cur in diagnosis of the empirical observations and inferred probabilities” (1983: 5–6).11 Therefore, to understand neoliberalism, we must separate neoliberalism and neoclassical economics and leave behind the common assumption that neoclassical economics is a science of capitalism.

#### Permutation do both. Reformist democratic discourse more successful than revolutionary withdrawal. Successful American leftist movements appealed to different constituencies.

Michael **KAZIN** History @ Georgetown **’11** “Has the US Left Made a Difference” *Dissent* Spring p. 52-54

But when political radicals made a big difference, they generally did so as decidedly junior partners in a coalition driven by establishment reformers. Abolitionists did not achieve their goal until midway through the Civil War, when Abraham Lincoln and his fellow Republicans realized that the promise of emancipation could speed victory for the North. Militant unionists were not able to gain a measure of power in mines, factories, and on the waterfront until Franklin Roosevelt needed labor votes during the New Deal. Only when Lyndon Johnson and other liberal Democrats conquered their fears of disorder and gave up on the white South could the black freedom movement celebrate passage of the civil rights and voting rights acts. For a political movement to gain any major goal, it needs to win over a section of the governing elite (it doesn’t hurt to gain support from some wealthy philanthropists as well). Only on a handful of occasions has the Left achieved such a victory, and never under its own name. The divergence between political marginality and cultural influence stems, in part, from the kinds of people who have been the mainstays of the American Left. During just one period of about four decades—from the late 1870s to the end of the First World War— could radicals authentically claim to represent more than a tiny number of Americans who belonged to what was, and remains, the majority of the population: white Christians from the working and lower-middle class. At the time, this group included Americans from various trades and regions who condemned growing corporations for controlling the marketplace, corrupting politicians, and degrading civic morality. But this period ended after the First World War—due partly to the epochal split in the international socialist movement. Radicals lost most of the constituency they had gained among ordinary white Christians and have never been able to regain it. Thus, the wageearning masses who voted for Socialist, Communist, and Labor parties elsewhere in the industrial world were almost entirely lost to the American Left—and deeply skeptical about the vision of solidarity that inspired the great welfare states of Europe. Both before and after this period, the public face and voice of the Left emanated from an uneasy alliance: between men and women from elite backgrounds and those from such groups as Jewish immigrant workers and plebeian blacks whom most Americans viewed as dangerous outsiders. This was true in the abolitionist movement—when such New England brahmins as Wendell Phillips and Maria Weston Chapman fought alongside Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth. And it was also the case in the New Left of the 1960s, an unsustainable alliance of white students from elite colleges and black people like Fannie Lou Hamer and Huey Newton from the ranks of the working poor. It has always been difficult for these top and- bottom insurgencies to present themselves as plausible alternatives to the major parties, to convince more than a small minority of voters to embrace their program for sweeping change. Radicals did help to catalyze mass movements. But furious internal conflicts, a penchant for dogmatism, and hostility toward both nationalism and organized religion helped make the political Left a taste few Americans cared to acquire. However, some of the same qualities that alienated leftists from the electorate made them pioneers in generating an alluringly rebellious culture. Talented orators, writers, artists, and academics associated with the Left put forth new ideas and lifestyles that stirred the imagination of many Americans, particularly young ones, who felt stifled by orthodox values and social hierarchies. These ideological pioneers also influenced forces around the world that adapted the culture of the U.S. Left to their own purposes—from the early sprouts of socialism and feminism in the1830s to the subcultures of black power, radical feminism, and gay liberation in the 1960s and 1970s. Radical ideas about race, gender, sexuality, and social justice did not need to win votes to become popular. They just required an audience. And leftists who were able to articulate or represent their views in creative ways often found one. Arts created to serve political ends are always vulnerable to criticism. Indeed, some radicals deliberately gave up their search for the sublime to concentrate on the merely persuasive. But as George Orwell, no aesthetic slouch, observed, “the opinion that art should have nothing to do with politics is itself a political attitude.” In a sense, the radicals who made the most difference in U.S. history were not that radical at all. What most demanded, in essence, was the fulfillment of two ideals their fellow Americans already cherished: individual freedom and communal responsibility. In 1875, Robert Schilling, a German immigrant who was an official in the coopers, or caskmakers, union, reflected on why socialists were making so little headway among the hard-working citizenry: ….everything that smacks in the least of a curtailment of personal or individual liberty is most obnoxious to [Americans]. They believe that every individual should be permitted to do what and how it pleases, as long as the rights and liberties of others are not injured or infringed upon. [But] this personal liberty must be surrendered and placed under the control of the State, under a government such as proposed by the social Democracy. Most American radicals grasped this simple truth. They demanded that the promise of individual rights be realized in everyday life and encouraged suspicion of the words and power of all manner of authorities—political, economic, and religious. Abolitionists, feminists, savvy Marxists all quoted the words of the Declaration of Independence, the most popular document in the national canon. Of course, leftists did not champion self-reliance, the notion that an individual is entirely responsible for his or her own fortunes. But they did uphold the modernist vision that Americans should be free to pursue happiness unfettered by inherited hierarchies and identities. At the same time, the U.S. Left—like its counterparts around the world—struggled to establish a new order animated by a desire for social fraternity. The labor motto “An injury to one is an injury to all” rippled far beyond picket lines and marches of the unemployed. But American leftists who articulated this credo successfully did so in a patriotic and often religious key, rather than by preaching the grim inevitability of class struggle. Such radical social gospelers as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Edward Bellamy, and Martin Luther King, Jr., gained more influence than did those organizers who espoused secular, Marxian views. Particularly during times of economic hardship and war, radicals promoted collectivist ends by appealing to the wisdom of “the people” at large. To gain a sympathetic hearing, the Left always had to demand that the national faith apply equally to everyone and oppose those who wanted to reserve its use for privileged groups and undemocratic causes. But it was not always possible to wrap a movement’s destiny in the flag. “America is a trap,” writes the critic Greil Marcus, “its promises and dreams…are too much to live up to and too much to escape.” In a political culture that valued liberty above all, the Left had more difficulty arguing for the collective good than for an expansion of individual rights. Advocates of the former could slide into apologizing for totalitarian rule in the Soviet Union and elsewhere. But to give primacy to individual freedom could deprive the Left of its very reason to exist. In trying to advance both ideals, radicals confronted a yawning contradiction: in life as opposed to rhetoric, the desire for individual liberty routinely conflicts with the yearning for social equality and altruistic justice. The right of property holders and corporations to do what they wish with their assets clashes with environmentalists’ desire to preserve the natural habitat, with the desire of labor unionists to restrict an employer’s right to hire and fire, and with the freedom of consumers of any race to buy any house they can affordLeftists who claimed to favor both liberty and equality could not resolve such conflicts. Neither could major-party politicians. But Whigs, Republicans, and Democrats basked in the glow of legitimacy, which often shielded them from charges of hypocrisy that bedeviled the Left.

#### China is a revisionist power. Their goal is to expand and overturn the international order.

Jagannath P. Panda, Research Fellow and Coordinator of the East Asia Centre at MP-IDSA, New Delhi, 5-19-20, ‘“China as a Revisionist Power in Indo-Pacific and India’s Perception: A Power-Partner Contention” JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY CHINA2020, AHEAD-OF-PRINT, 1-17https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epub/10.1080/10670564.2020.1766906?needAccess=true

The evolving international order has mostly been divided into two categories of powers: status quo and revisionist. The latter, as the term signifies, are powers who aim to revise the existing global systems or order by altering it gradually or overthrowing it completely through new measures or initiatives. A gradual change would indicate the rise of an evolutionary revisionist power, while a sudden or rapid change indicates a revolutionary revisionist power. Essentially, a revisionist power aims to enhance its power, status and authority in global decision-making process, seeking to remodel the international system, and eventually the order, in its favor. A revolutionary revisionist power views such an endeavor through the lenses of realism. 13 Alternatively, an evolutionary revisionist power follows the idealist school of thought, or a gradualist path: it would not necessarily confront the established great powers in seeking to change the existing international systems and order. 14

Scholars, such as John Mearsheimer and Suisheng Zhao, argue that rising powers such as China and India, with the potential to emerge as major (or great) powers, would continue to pose challenges for the existing international system and order. 15 The intensity to compete, perhaps to challenge the existing system or order, is more noticeable in China than in other powers, highlighting that China is more ‘revisionist’ than a normal ‘status quo’ power. 16 The reasons behind China’s perception as a revisionist power in Indo-Pacific are appositely clear. These include authoritarian and unilateral initiatives to bring out fast-track infrastructure development along with connectivity through the flagship Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and assertive claims in the maritime domains, such as the South China Sea and East China Sea disputes. Further, mounting claims over land territories and attempts to create a distinct order through the creation of international institutions or forums that are evidently linked to China’s national interests are also important factors. 17 On account of this, the tag of revisionism on Beijing appears today to be justified. 18

Defining a status quo power is fairly simple: they are powers that are primarily content with the fundamental characteristics of the prevailing global order and power distribution. 19 Accepting globalization and international organizations by willingly participating or being a part of them is a key trait of a status quo power. Despite the reservations that it holds on a range of subjects pertaining to the established institutions or organizations, Beijing has been an active member, participant and beneficiary of the international liberal order or the Bretton Woods institutions and other existing international or regional multilateral organizations. Long has China reaped the benefits of the Bretton Woods institutions, even though it has always expressed its displeasure, stating that these institutions are not developing society friendly mannerisms and are primarily dominated by the Western influence. Equally, China established the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO); has been an active partner of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); is a founding member of the United Nations (UN); and holds a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), to enhance its international interest. 20

In contrast, a revisionist power is one that is dissatisfied with the global order and wants to change the existing norms that have been created by the status quo powers. As explained by political scientist Randall Schweller, a revisionist state wants to ‘undermine’ the existing order so as to increase its own power in the system. 21 In the case of China, an article by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the creation of ‘two China’s’ in the United Nations highlights the country’s dissatisfaction with the established order, and mainly the US. 22 Such dissatisfaction is no more a secret phenomenon in the Chinese public discourse. Most domestic debates in China are centered around the dialogue on how Beijing’s rise must bring revisions to the existing international systems or create new systems. Nevertheless, the emerging ‘great’ power does not seem to fall clearly under either category. It has recently started advocating for a far more active role in the UN; and since assuming a permanent seat in the UNSC in 1971, used its veto power only 14 times, the lowest of the permanent five. 23 At the same time, it has become an increasingly assertive regional power that has, since the launch of its BRI in 2013, factored greatly on the US watch as a ‘threat that is greater than terrorism’. 24

Revisionism also draws greatly from the power transition theory of international relations. 25 It was A.F.K. Organski who in his book World Politics first propagated the power transition theory while simultaneously predicting the possible rise of China and the effect it would have on international power politics. 26 Power transition theory has two major premises: (1) internal growth or development is the source of power for a country and (2) the existing international order during the time of another power’s ‘rise’ is shaped by a hegemon. 27 China’s economic growth in the past decade has been nothing short of a miracle; from a primarily agrarian economy, China has developed into an industrial dynamo, more importantly emerging as a donor country. 28 It is this very remarkable growth that has marked China, in the eyes of the US, as a revisionist power—in 2014, China overtook, although briefly, the US as the largest economy of the world, in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP). 29

It is important to note that efforts by the reigning dominant power to allay the concerns of the challenging powers can lower the possibility of a power transition conflict. However, that did not happen in the case of the US vis-à-vis China. The election of Donald Trump as president in 2016 marked a major turning point in the US approach towards China. 30 Unlike the previous US administration, Trump’s hostility to Chinese advances, from bilateral to regional dealings, has been vocal, direct and critical. 31 Fortunately, until the time China’s military strength is able to match that of the US, major war between the two competing powers in not really foreseen. As Schweller argues, a key characteristic of a revisionist power is that it will ‘employ military force’ in order to disrupt the status quo; this has not been the case with China in respect to the US. 32 While Chinese military assertiveness in the South China Sea and within its own borders has been open, it has not engaged in a military conflict with the US, the dominant power. The trade war between the US and China, however, represented a geo-economic conflict between both the powers. The trade war intensified in 2019, although the finalizing of a ‘phase one’ deal at the beginning of 2020 marks an optimistic sign. 33 The inking of the deal allayed fears that the US–China relations were deteriorating faster than they could be mended.

#### Totalizing capitalism K:

#### Representing capitalism as a global totality relies on essentialist and phallocentric thinking. Capitalism becomes the force that explains everything but can only be explained in a way that entrenches its power.

J.K. **GIBSON-GRAHAM** (Julie Graham Geography @ Amherst & Katherine Gibson Inst. of Culture & Society Western Sydney) **‘6** *The End of Capitalism As We Knew It 10th Anniversary Edition* 1-5

Given the avowed servitude of left theory to left political action it is ironic (though not surprising) that understandings and images of capitalism can quite readily be viewed as contributing to a crisis in left politics. Indeed, and this is the argument we wish to make in this book, the project of understanding the beast has itself produced a beast, or even a bestiary; and the process of producing knowledge in service to politics has estranged rather than united understanding and action. Bringing these together again, or allowing them to touch in different ways, is one of our motivating aspirations.

"Capitalism" occupies a special and privileged place in the language of social representation. References to "capitalist society" are a commonplace of left and even mainstream social description, as are references - to the market, to the global economy, to postindustrial society - in which an unnamed capitalism is implicitly invoked as the defining and unifying moment of a complex economic and social formation. Just as the economic system in eastern Europe used confidently to be described as communist or socialist, so a general confidence in economic classification characterizes representations of an increasingly capitalist world system. But what might be seen as the grounds of this confidence, if we put aside notions of "reality" as the authentic origin of its representations?

Why might it seem problematic to say that the United States is a Christian nation, or a heterosexual one, despite the widespread belief that Christianity and heterosexuality are dominant or majority practices in their respective domains, while at the same time it seems legitimate and indeed "accurate" to say that the US is a capitalist country?1 What is it about the former expressions, and their critical history, that makes them visible as "regulatory fictions,"2 ways of erasing or obscuring difference, while the latter is seen as accurate representation? Why, moreover, have embracing and holistic expressions for social structure like patriarchy fallen into relative disuse among feminist theorists (see Pringle 1995; Barrett and Phillips 1992) while similar conceptions of capitalism as a system or "structure of power" are still prevalent and resilient? These sorts of questions, by virtue of their scarcity and scant claims to legitimacy, have provided us a motive for this book.3

The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It) problematizes "capitalism" as an economic and social descriptor.4

[Insert footnote 4]

Though we refer on almost every page of this book to capitalism, we find ourselves loath to define it, since this would involve choosing among a wide variety of existing definitions (any one of which could be seen as our "target") or specifying out of context a formation that we wish to understand as contextually defined. One familiar Marxist definition, however, involves a vision of capitalism as a system of generalized commodity production structured by (industrial) forces of production and exploitative production relations between capital and labor. Workers, bereft of means of production, sell their labor power for wages and participate in the labor process under capitalist control. Their surplus labor is appropriated by capitalists as surplus value. The capitalist mode of production is animated by the twin imperatives of enterprise competition and capital accumulation which together account for the dynamic tendencies of capitalism to expand and to undergo recurring episodes of crisis.

[End footnote 4]

Scrutinizing what might be seen as throwaway uses of the term - passing references, for example, to the capitalist system or to global capitalism - as well as systematic and deliberate attempts to represent capitalism as a central and organizing feature of modern social experience, the book selectively traces the discursive origins of a widespread understanding: that capitalism is the hegemonic, or even the only, present form of economy and that it will continue to be so in the proximate future. It follows from this prevalent though not ubiquitous view that noncapitalist economic sites, if they exist at all, must inhabit the social margins; and, as a corollary, that deliberate attempts to develop noncapitalist economic practices and institutions must take place in the social interstices, in the realm of experiment, or in a visionary space of revolutionary social replacement.

Representations of capitalism are a potent constituent of the anticapitalist imagination, providing images of what is to be resisted and changed as well as intimations of the strategies, techniques, and possibilities of changing it. For this reason, depictions of "capitalist hegemony**"** deserve a particularly skeptical reading. For in the vicinity of these representations, the very idea of a noncapitalist economy takes the shape of an unlikelihood or even an impossibility. It becomes difficult to entertain a vision of the prevalence and vitality of noncapitalist economic forms, or of daily or partial replacements of capitalism by noncapitalist economic practices, or of capitalist retreats and reversals. In this sense, "capitalist hegemony" operates not only as a constituent of, but also as a brake upon, the anticapitalist imagination.5 What difference might it make to release that brake and allow an anticapitalist economic imaginary to develop unrestricted?6 If we were to dissolve the image that looms in the economic foreground, what shadowy economic forms might come forward? In these questions we can identify the broad outlines of our project: to discover or create a world of economic difference, and to populate that world with exotic creatures that become, upon inspection, quite local and familiar (not to mention familiar beings that are not what they seem).

The discursive artifact we call "capitalist hegemony" is a complex effect of a wide variety of discursive and nondiscursive conditions.7 In this book we focus on the practices and preoccupations of discourse, tracing some of the different, even incompatible, representations of capitalism that can be collated within this fictive summary representation. These depictions have their origins in the diverse traditions of Marxism, classical and contemporary political economy, academic social science, modern historiography, popular economic and social thought, western philosophy and metaphysics, indeed, in an endless array of texts, traditions and infrastructures of meaning. In the chapters that follow, only a few of these are examined for the ways in which they have sustained a vision of capitalism as the dominant form of economy, or have contributed to the possibility or durability of such a vision. But the point should emerge none the less clearly: the virtually unquestioned dominance of capitalism can be seen as a complex product of a variety of discursive commitments, including but not limited to organicist social conceptions, heroic historical narratives, evolutionary scenarios of social development, and essentialist, phallocentric, or binary patterns of thinking. It is through these discursive figurings and alignments that capitalism is constituted as large, powerful, persistent, active, expansive, progressive, dynamic, transformative; embracing, penetrating, disciplining, colonizing, constraining; systemic, self-reproducing, rational, lawful, self-rectifying; organized and organizing, centered and centering; originating, creative, protean; victorious and ascendant; selfidentical, self-expressive, full, definite, real, positive, and capable of conferring identity and meaning.8

The argument revisited: it is the way capitalism has been "thought" that has made it so difficult for people to imagine its supersession.9 It is therefore the ways in which capitalism is known that we wish to delegitimize and displace. The process is one of unearthing, of bringing to light images and habits of understanding that constitute "hegemonic capitalism" at the intersection of a set of representations. This we see as a first step toward theorizing capitalism without representing dominance as a natural and inevitable feature of its being. At the same time, we hope to foster conditions under which the economy might become less subject to definitional closure. If it were possible to inhabit a heterogeneous and open-ended economic space whose identity was not fixed or singular (the space potentially to be vacated by a capitalism that is necessarily and naturally hegemonic) then a vision of noncapitalist economic practices as existing and widespread might be able to be born; and in the context of such a vision, a new anticapitalist politics might emerge, a noncapitalist politics of class (whatever that may mean) might take root and flourish. A long shot perhaps but one worth pursuing.

#### Treating capitalism as unified and singular economic system makes economic transformation impossible.

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Singularity

If the unity of Capitalism confronts us with the mammoth task of systemic transformation, it is the singularity and totality of Capitalism that make the task so hopeless. Capitalism presents itself as a singularity in the sense of having no peer or equivalent, of existing in a category by itself; and also in the sense that when it appears fully realized within a particular social formation, it tends to be dominant or alone.

As a sui generis economic form, Capitalism has no true analogues. Slavery, independent commodity production, feudalism, socialism, primitive communism and other forms of economy all lack the systemic properties of Capitalism and the ability to reproduce and expand themselves according to internal laws.12 Unlike socialism, for example, which is always struggling to be born, which needs the protection and fostering of the state, which is fragile and easily deformed, Capitalism takes on its full form as a natural outcome of an internally driven growth process. Its organic unity gives capitalism the peculiar power to regenerate itself, and even to subsume its moments of crisis as requirements of its continued growth and development. Socialism has never been endowed with that mythic capability of feeding on its own crises; its reproduction was never driven from within by a life force but always from without; it could never reproduce itself but always had to be reproduced, often an arduous if not impossible process.13

Other modes of production that lack the organic unity of Capitalism are more capable of being instituted or replaced incrementally and more likely to coexist with other economic forms. Capitalism, by contrast, tends to appear by itself. Thus, in the United States, if feudal or ancient classes exist, they exist as residual forms; if slavery exists, it exists as a marginal form; if socialism or communism exists, it exists as a prefigurative form. None of these forms truly and fully coexists with Capitalism. Where Capitalism does coexist with other forms, those places (the so-called Third World, for example, or backward regions in what are known as the "advanced capitalist" nations) are seen as not fully "developed." Rather than signaling the real possibility of Capitalism coexisting with noncapitalist economic forms, the coexistence of capitalism with noncapitalism marks the Third World as insufficient and incomplete. Subsumed to the hegemonic discourse of Development, it identifies a diverse array of countries as the shadowy Other of the advanced capitalist nations.

One effect of the notion of capitalist exclusivity is a monolithic conception of class, at least in the context of "advanced capitalist" countries. The term "class" usually refers to a social cleavage along the axis of capital and labor since capitalism cannot coexist with any but residual or prefigurative noncapitalist relations. The presence and fullness of the capitalist monolith not only denies the possibility of economic or class diversity in the present but prefigures a monolithic and modernist socialism - one in which everyone is a comrade and class diversity does not exist.

Capitalism's singularity operates to discourage projects to create alternative economic institutions and class relations, since these will neces- sarily be marginal in the context of Capitalism's exclusivity. The inability of Capitalism to coexist thus produces not only the present impossibility of alternatives but their future unlikelihood - pushing socialist projects to the distant and unrealizable future.14

#### Authoritarian revolutionary politics creates atrocities, economic and ecological disaster.

Fred **HALLIDAY** IR @ London School of Economics **‘3** “Finding the Revolutionary in Revolution” in *The Future of Revolutions* ed. John Foran p 306-309

A second issue central to discussion of revolution today is that of the historic legacy of revolutions. Writers on revolution like to invoke Marx's observation about the weight of past generations lying on the minds of the present; it has been often stated that all revolutions invoke symbols and claims derived from the past, real or imagined. The revolutionaries of the twentieth century all looked, in some degree, backwards: Lenin and Trotsky to 1789, Mao and Ho to I9I7, Castro to the 1890s, Khomeini to the seventh century. The present discussion of revolution seems, at first sight, not to do this. Political sociologists do look at earlier revolutions, but this is without practical import. Discussion of the possibility of change, particularly that linked to the anti-globalization movement, seems to be curiously ahistorical. The price of this is, however, that not only is inspiration from the past muted but, equally, lessons are not learnt. Here something curious seems to have happened since the collapse of communism: the amnesia of neoliberal discussion, which consigns all that was associated with the communist experiment to the dustbin, seems to be replicated in the case of the radical movements of today. But to do this is questionable. In this latter respect, there are dangers, of an amnesia that is long on enthusiasm but short on responsibility and realism. For the fact is that the history of revolution in modern times is one not only of resistance, heroism and idealism, but also of terrible suffering and human disaster, of chaos and incompetence under the guise of revolutionary transformation, of the distortion of the finest ideals by corrupt and murderous leaders, and of the creation of societies that are far more oppressive and inefficient than those they seek to overthrow. The anti-globalization movement makes much of revolutionary internationalism: tills is not some benign panacea, but a complex, often abused, transnational practice (Halliday I999). All of this entails confronting something that revolutionaries have always assumed but too often failed to discuss: the ethics of revolution. Denunciation of the given and invocations of an ideal other are not enough (Geras 1989). To grasp this involves a shift beyond the political sociology of revolutions, an academic pursuit that focuses in large measure on the incidence of revolutions, to an analysis of the consequences and longerterm records of revolutionary states. In the course of recent years, in writing my own work on revolutions, I have had reason to visit a number of cities that had served as the centers of world revolution and, if not revolution, anti-imperialist radicalism: Beijing, Havana, Tripoli, Tehran. These were the culminations of upheavals that had produced revolutionary regimes by some strange numerical consistency in, respectively, I949, I959, I969, I979· In every case, one could still discern the outlines of the original revolutionary project: a rejection of exploitation, foreign and domestic, a comnlitment to the transformation of society, internationalist support in rhetoric and deed for those resisting oppression elsewhere. But in the 1990S this had all faded: these were not the wave of the future. Whatever else, it could not be said that the initial revolutionary project was in good shape: few in these countries now believed in the ideological project that had initiated the revolution; corruption and inefficiency were widespread; there was a pervasive desire for change, towards a more open, liberal, society; the initial internationalist appeals had faded. Revolution had, in effect, become tired. It was indeed capitalism, not revolutionary socialism and third-worldism, which in the 1990S formed the global vision of the future. This haphazard and impressionistic response has, however, to be compounded by a reflection on the overall legacy of the century of revolutions: neither form of amnesia - counterrevolutionary or revolutionary - is acceptable. Indeed, amnesia invites the repetition of another common saying with regard to revolutions, that those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it. Here perhaps is one of the most worrying aspects of the contemporary radical movement, be it in its national or internationalist forms: the failure to reflect, critically, on the past record of revolutionary movements. This pertains to models of alternative political and social orders. It pertains to the dangers inherent in any utopian, radicalized, mass movement that lacks clear forms of authority and decision-making. It also involves the espousal, spirited but onlinous, of alternative social orders that could work only if imposed by an authoritarian state**.** A pertinent contemporary example is that of radical environmentalism: the program of de-industrialization, and restricted consumption and travel, entailed by such ideas could only be established, and maintained, by a coercive state. In the international sphere, the simple invocation of solidarity may too often conceal interests of power, and manipulation. In the days of authoritarian Communist Parties, but equally in that of national and communal movements today, unconditional solidarity with repressive organizations may be at odds with any commitment to emancipatory values. Such a critical reflection has to apply, too, to the individuals often invoked for contemporary purposes: Lenin was a visionary, but also a cruel, pompous bigot; Che was a man of heroism and solidarity, but his econonlic programs were a disaster and his austere romanticism at times led to cruelty; Mao freed a quarter of mankind from imperialism, but also repeatedly plunged his society into barbarous conflict and socialexperimentation; Khomeini overthrew the Shah, but his social and political program was reactionary and repressive. A similar pause in romanticization might be applicable to some of the supposed components of the anti-globalization front today: few might defend Saddam Hussein, Kim Jong-il or Ayatollah Khamenei, but there is perhaps too little questioning of the commitment to emancipatory values of the PKK in Turkey, Sendero Luminoso, the FARC in Colombia, the Chechen rebels, to name but some. The Zapatista movement has become for many an icon of hope: but, as contributors to this volume make clear, it is not always itself a model of democratic practice. More importantly, one has to ask if this is the most important experience in the Latin America of the I990S to study: it is part of, but only one part of, a broader crisis of the authoritarian PRI regime that beset Mexico and resulted in the rise on the one hand of the PRD and on the other of the election of Fox in 2000. An open assessment of challenges to authoritarian, and neoliberal, policies in Latin America in the I990S would also examine democratization in Brazil and Chile, and the experience of social movements, be they of women, workers or indigenous peoples, who engaged with reformist states. This need for a critical retrospective on the historical legacy of revolutions is, however, linked to another, perhaps even more pressing, issue, one that pervades the pages of this book, namely the relation of revolution to liberal democracy as a whole. Several contributors point out that where liberal democracy is established revolution is off the agenda. But this reflection may be taken further to ask the question of whether, faced with the alternative, one or other outcome is preferable. The implication of much 'revolutionary' writing over the past century has been that liberal democracy is to be denounced, and those who engage with and in it are reformists, dupes, or, in older language, 'class traitors'. Such a view lives on, in some of the contributions to this book, as in parts of the left. Yet this contrast of reform with revolution is not some eternal polarity. It too needs to be set in historical context, and seen for what it is, a product of the particular context of the twentieth century, starting with the split between the moderate and revolutionary factions of the socialist movement in I9I4. The costs of this division are evident enough, and it would be desirable, in the aftermath of the collapse of the revolutionary socialist models, to re-examine it (Therborn I989). Part of this re-examination would involve a questioning of the automatic antinomy of reform and revolution present in much contemporary and recent writing, and of the assumed contradictory relation of revolutionary ideas to those of another critical, and internationalist, trend produced by modernity: liberalism. This has immediate implications for the discussion in this book. In particular, it relates to an issue that is widely present in contemporary academic and political discussion, but that writers on revolution tend to avoid, namely the question of rights. The language of rights was long denounced by the left, and its revolutionary part, as a bourgeois myth, except where it was for tactical reasons deemed pertinent to use it, as with regard to workers' rights, or the right of nations to selfdetermination. The record of the revolutionary tradition, once it came to power, is a very mixed one: a strong commitment to certain social and economic rights, whose abolition by neoliberal policies many in the former Communist states regret; and a sustained, cruel and dogmatic denial of political rights, collective and individual. Yet the program of rights embodied in national, regional and international codes is, as much as any flamboyant radicalism, both a critique and a program that confronts the contemporary world. Faced with the record of the Communist tradition on rights on the one hand, and the aspirations of liberalism on the other, this disdain for rights, and the related adherence to a denunciation of reformism and liberalism, should be questioned. Invocations of a romanticized I968, of the nicer cases of armed struggle, or of Seattle may be fine for mobilization: they are not a serious answer to the problems of the contemporary world.

#### a. It is a fake play written by a blogger allegedly citing an anonymous “accomplished econ professor at a banquet dinner.” No peer review, no datasets, nothing. Inserting this excerpt….

Murphy 12 – Thomas Murphy is a PhD in General Relativity from Caltech, Professor in Physics at University of California San Diego, April 10th (“Exponential Economist Meets Finite Physicist”, Do The Math, Available online at https://dothemath.ucsd.edu/2012/04/economist-meets-physicist/, Accessed 01-18-2021, \*\*Excerpt from Chapter 2 of the Energy and Human Ambitions on a Finite Planet)

Some while back, I found myself sitting next to an accomplished economics professor at a dinner event. Shortly after pleasantries, I said to him, “economic growth cannot continue indefinitely,” just to see where things would go. It was a lively and informative conversation. I was somewhat alarmed by the disconnect between economic theory and physical constraints—not for the first time, but here it was up-close and personal. Though my memory is not keen enough to recount our conversation verbatim, I thought I would at least try to capture the key points and convey the essence of the tennis match—with some entertainment value thrown in.

Cast of characters: Physicist, played by me; Economist, played by an established economics professor from a prestigious institution. Scene: banquet dinner, played in four acts (courses).

Note: because I have a better retention of my own thoughts than those of my conversational companion, this recreation is lopsided to represent my own points/words. So while it may look like a physicist-dominated conversation, this is more an artifact of my own recall capabilities. I also should say that the other people at our table were not paying attention to our conversation, so I don’t know what makes me think this will be interesting to readers if it wasn’t even interesting enough to others at the table! But here goes…

#### The flow of energy is not fixed. The earth is an open system.

Michael Liebreich ‘18, Visiting Professor at Imperial College’s Energy Future Lab, “The Secret of Eternal Growth,” 10/29/18, http://ifreetrade.org/article/the\_secret\_of\_eternal\_growth\_the\_physics\_behind\_pro\_growth\_environmentalism

The earth, however, is not an isolated system. It may be nearly closed, exchanging limited matter across the planetary boundary, but it is far from isolated, as it receives a huge daily flux of energy from the sun and radiates almost as much away to space. In his book, Georgescu-Roegen even acknowledged the existence of huge solar energy fluxes, but that didn’t stop him from basing his seminal work on a scientific error. Later in his career, after ruefully acknowledging his mistake, he invented a Fourth Law of Thermodynamics, claiming that “material entropy” would forever prevent materials from being perfectly recycled. Pure fake science.

Around the same time as Georgescu-Roegen was making up thermodynamic laws, a group of concerned environmentalists calling themselves the Club of Rome invited one of the doyens of the new field of computer modelling, Jay Forrester, to create a simulation of the world economy and its interaction with the environment. In 1972 his marvellous black box produced another best-seller, Limits to Growth (iv), which purported to prove that almost every combination of economic parameters ended up not just with growth slowing, but with an overshoot and collapse. This finding, so congenial to the model’s commissioners, stemmed entirely from errors in its structure, as pointed out by a then fresh-faced young economics professor at Yale, William Nordhaus.

A third foundational work in the degrowth canon is Steady State Economics (v) by Herman Daly, later Senior Economist in the Environment Department of the World Bank. In it he explains that “the economy is an open subsystem of a finite and nongrowing ecosystem. Any subsystem of a finite nongrowing system must itself at some point also become nongrowing.” It’s a repeat of Georgescu-Roegen’s error. Daly must have known it too, since he noted that six days’ worth of radiation from the sun contained more useful energy (or exergy, to give it its correct name) than that embodied in all the fossil fuel reserves known at the time.

The point here is not that solar power is the key to endless growth, though it could well be - nuclear fission and fusion are other strong contenders. The point is that when you scratch the surface of any of the seminal tracts of the degrowth movement, you find they are based on the same fake science, right through to the present day.

Jeremy Rifkin’s 1980 Entropy: a New World View (vi) states that “here on earth material entropy is continually increasing and must ultimately reach a maximum”. In 2009, Professor Tim Jackson, the favourite anti-capitalist of the TED generation, published Prosperity Without Growth (vii). In it he pays homage to Daly’s “pioneering case for a ‘steady state economy’” and cheerfully recommends it to students hungering for alternative wisdom – either not understanding or not caring that it is based on a fallacy.

This matters because, for all that the neo-liberal world economy has delivered extraordinary improvements in living standards – in life span, levels of education, infant survival, maternal health, poverty reduction, leisure, and so on (viii) – it is currently failing to address severe, systemic environmental challenges, first and foremost among them climate change. Unless the free-trade, pro-growth, pro-trade right offers a coherent plan, it is ceding the argument to the degrowth, anti-capitalist, anti-trade left.

Climate change is real, serious, and urgent. That recent IPCC 1.5°C report is based on rigorous research. Of course climate change is being co-opted by the “Academic Grievance Studies” brigade (ix), but that doesn’t make the underlying physical science less real. As the world continues to burn through its remaining carbon budget, as temperatures continue to rise, as the ‘signal’ of climate damage becomes clearer against the background ‘noise’ of weather, the demand for dramatic action will only increase.

Limiting the impact of climate change will require the application of technology, both new and yet-to-be-developed, on a heroic scale. Destroying the ability of the world economy to deliver these solutions is the very opposite of what we should be doing. And that is where Nordhaus and Romer come in.

Romer’s great contribution was to identify the contribution of knowledge to economic growth. Before his Endogenous Growth Theory, no one could explain differences in growth rates of as much as 10 percent between countries at a similar stage of development. Romer’s work is the perfect riposte to those who think that economic growth is the same thing as ever-increasing physical material use and pollution; it is also the perfect riposte to those who believe that extractive industries can ever deliver long-term wealth and those who believe the same of agricultural subsidies and import tariffs.

Nordhaus, for his part, was the creator of the first Integrated Assessment Models, bringing together the physics of climate change, its economic impact, and the functioning of the economy. He was also the first person to suggest that attaching a cost to emissions – low at first but rising – would squeeze greenhouse gases out of the economy. Nordhaus is no climate fundamentalist, famously diverging from the view propounded in the Stern Review, that the world needs super-high carbon taxes immediately. Nordhaus accepted that environmental challenges and climate change will act as a drag on the economy but, unlike others before him, he quantified the drag and showed that it is highly unlikely to reverse economic growth.

Nordhaus and Romer are not the only Nobel Prize-winners whose work suggests that an open, liberal, trade-friendly economy – though one pricing in externalities – will do a better job of addressing climate change and other environmental problems than stalling or reversing economic growth.

Simon Kuznets, who won the 1971 Nobel Prize for Economics (x), described how a variable can get worse in the early phases of a country’s development, and then improve as growth continues. He focused mainly on inequality, but the Environmental Kuznets Curves has been shown to govern most forms of local pollution.

Ilya Prigogine won the 1977 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his research into non-equilibrium “dissipative” structures – how a flow of energy across closed system can drive the creation of “order out of chaos” (xi). This is a real scientific expert on entropy proving that the economy can grow for as long as there is still a sun in the sky (which would give us about another five billion years).

#### Scenario planning good – playing the game of government activates agency.

David **OWEN** Politics & IR @ Southampton **’14** in *On Global Citizenship* ed. Tully p. iix-x

For Tully, political theory is to be understood as the methodical extension of the self-reflective character of historically situated practices of practical reasoning and not as a distinct higher-order activity of theoretical reflection on these situated practices of practical reasoning. As such political theory is not oriented to legislating the nature and limits of practical reason (e.g. by trying to provide a general theory of justice) but to the reflective elucidation and negotiation of the contents and bounds of practical reason. The authority of the reasons offered by political theory are not to be seen as modelled on the commands of a rational legislator specifying, for example, the form of the just society but rather as more akin to invitations to consider looking at our political relationship in a different way. We can distinguish three steps in Tully’s ‘public philosophy’ that comprise its critical activity.

The first is that, following Wittgenstein, Skinner and Foucault, it grants a primacy to practice, that is, it focuses on the practices of governance and the exercise of freedom within and over the norms of these practices that shapes the forms of thought, conduct and subjectivity characteristic of the present**.** From Wittgenstein, Tully draws out the point that Arendt’s understanding of the practice of freedom – of speaking and acting differently in the course of a language game and so modifying or transforming the game – is not a special feature of politics or a form of freedom restricted to certain modes of human interaction but, rather, is a general feature of human practices and relationships. Tully takes Skinner and Foucault to be the primary inheritors of this outlook. In the case of Skinner, this involves tracing the intersubjective conventions that govern political reflection in a given context in order to show how political actors in that context have exercised their freedom in modifying those conventions. In the case of Foucault, it involves providing a genealogy of the problematizations in terms of which we understand ourselves as bound by certain limits; a genealogy which is, at the same time, a redescription of those limits. Foucault’s approach shares both Arendt’s understanding of the activity of freedom as modification or transformation of games of governance and the view of Wittgenstein and Skinner that such freedom is a feature of any and all human practices, but Foucault also develops Nietzsche’s point that this activity of freedom is an agonistic relationship and, thereby, links the following elements together: the practice of freedom, the modification of the rules governing the relationships among players in the course of a game and agonistic activity. Public philosophy in Tully’s sense begins with the calling into question, and concern to modify, a game of government on the part of those subject to it.In this respect, it is best construed as an expression and an enabling of the agonistic activity of freedom.

The second step is that Tully does not attempt to develop a normative theory as a way of adjudicating or evaluating the calling into question of the game of government. Rather public philosophy engages in what might be termed ‘redescription with critical intent’. First, public philosophy focuses on disclosing the historically contingent conditions of possibility for the practices of governance in question and the form of problematization that it exhibits before, second, offering a redescription that alters the self-understanding of those subject to it, and struggling within it, in ways that enable them to perceive the arbitrary constraints in what is given as universal, necessary and obligatory. Public philosophy achieves this objective through two elements. The first, adopting Wittgenstein’s practice of perspicuous representation, is designed to bring to light the unexamined conventions of the language games within which the problem and proposed solutions to it arise. The second, combining Foucault with the Cambridge School, is a genealogical account of these language games designed to free us from the hold of these unexamined conventions.

The third and final step in Tully’s critical activity is that this historical and critical relation to the present does not stop at calling a limit into question and engaging in a dialogue over its possible transformation, but also attempts to establish an ongoing mutual relation with the concrete struggles, negotiations and implementations of citizens who experiment with modifying the practices on the ground. Public philosophy does not aim to speak for those subject to government, but rather aims to provide them with resources for speaking for themselves.

#### Their kritik of political economy and production goes too far. They render material production invisible. Constructing less oppressive economic systems requires making production more visible.

Roy **DILLEY** Social Anthropology @ St. Andrews (Scotland) **‘5** in *Commodification: Things, Agency, and Identities* eds. Van Binsbergen & Geschiere p. 240-241

My argument is that the potential to create a hyper-real world of consumption is predicated upon making production invisible, and not on the complex vagaries of postmodernism. Baudrillard has done precisely this - **making production invisible** - when he presents a critique of Marxist theories of modes of production ( 1981, 1985). The idea of production, Baudrillard argues, as the key to history, as the central concept of social theory, is no longer appropriate for comprehending contemporary social relations. In its place should be substituted the **primacy** of **consumption** not production. Consumption is thus the 'prime mover' of history.1 By making production invisible and by considering only consumer desire, Baudrillard is thus able to argue for a hyper-real world of the free-floating · commodity sign.

This argument could, I suggest, be applicable to the situation of the vendor of 'traditional' African art and 'antiques' who is able to put the case for the sign-value of an object, -its 'authenticity'- that is divorced from its point of production. He creates something of a hyper-real world of sign-values that are used to distinguish one set of objects from another. This is arguably, however, the result of a particular 'regime of value' in which the political relations connecting production, distribution and consumption have been manipulated for a specific end, and not the necessary result of living in a post-modem condition. But I have a more general point to make about the relationship between production and consumption, both in the West and elsewhere. My case is that production has become invisible not because of the fact that production in itself has become unimportant or theoretically obsolete in the late 20th/early 21"1 century. Consumer society cannot simply be. read as a post-modem society in which a theory of consumption inevitably supplants an older theory of production, where the means of consumption overtake the means of production. Miller argues convincingly for more attention to be given to consumption, which has now 'become the main arena in which people have to struggle towards control over the definitions of themselves and their values' (1995c: 277). This is perhaps true for large ' numbers of people in the West who now define the major lineaments of their cultural identities through consumption activities rather than with reference to their occupations.

That is, this is perhaps true with reference to the structures and processes of the creation of meanings and cultural identities for certain sectors of the population. Yet, the processes of globalization have marginalized and peripheralized production to locations beyond the boundaries of Europe and the U.S. There is an obscuring of production processes whereby multinational companies have the ability to shift production around the globe to utilise sources of cheap labour in their search to reduce production costs. The Marxist adage that capital is more mobile than labour still seems to hold. 1 A reaction to this obscuring of production can be seen in the move by alternative trading companies, referred to in the U.K. as the **'fair trade' movement**, that now attempts to represent the producers of commodities that are consumed in the West. Whether marketing coffee, tea or South American craft goods, the publicity of 'fair traders' points out who the producers are and to whom the extra money goes when one buys the product.

The point of this digression is to highlight again the argument that it is the exercise of political control over production and consumption either within the global economy or within local economies of Senegal that constitutes regimes of value. The separation of production from consumption, and the triumph of the latter over the former, are **not inevitable movements** of history, but part of the **political exercise** of **power** by specific agents within contexts of greater or lesser size. The exercise of this political control within the global economy has meant that production has been, for Western Europe at least, marginalized to the peripheries of the world system, to areas beyond our gaze and beyond our ken. I have attempted to show by means of my Senegalese examples that the relationship between production and consumption can similarly be altered, manipulated and framed in such a way as to create the foundation for **different regimes of value.** These regimes of value, I argue, involve not simply the control of the flow of commodities, but the exercise of power in casting the relationship between the activities of craftsmen as producers of objects, on the one hand, and the activities of those people who are involved in the exchange and sale of these objects, on the other. Regimes of value involve political control over non-things as well as things. What is shown to be an aspect of political control in the local regimes of value in Senegal may also be true for the workings of multinationals within the global economy.

#### Double materiality has no ability to respond to collective problems.

Mark **BAILEY** Int’l Studies @ Nottingham ’**20** in *Pessimism in International Relations* eds. Stevens and Michelsen p. 61-64

Political Myth, Philosophy and Pessimism in the Present

As when Cassirer was composing his later works, our contemporary period sees a liberal world order threatening to collapse under the weight of its own contradictions. A combination of near-continuous economic and financial crisis, technological alienation, ecological destruction, cultural and demographic shifts, disillusionment with and distrust of the institutions of liberal democracy especially, and soaring rates of wealth and income inequality have contributed to the irruption of highly anti-rationalist, reactionary populist movements across the world. Accompanying the rise of these movements has been the emergence of a form of ‘post-truth’ political discourse that shows complete indifference to questions of truth or falsity and exhibits many of the characteristics of the technique of the modern political myth Cassirer articulated in 1945. None of these movements exhibit anything like the ambitions for global conquest and genocide of the Nazis, but nevertheless they reflect a profound, increasingly global, culture of pessimism and political disenchantment that portends great uncertainty with respect to the future. Of particular concern to this chapter is one of the fundamental questions that Cassirer posed in The Myth of the State with respect to Heidegger and Spengler especially: what has been the role of scholarship in precipitating this state of affairs? This is a question that brings the problem of ‘if not this, then what?’ to the very centre of critical analysis.

This question is of specific interest when considering the increasing ubiquity of post-structuralist forms of critical inquiry in the social science s. Is perhaps the cultural legacy of post-structuralism the exact opposite of what post-structuralists themselves actually intended? In short, to what extent has the post-structuralist determination to problematise all forms of ontological certainty, of fixed identity and secure foundations to knowledge, together with its often aggressively anti-rationalist rejection of both liberalism and the Enlightenment (for all the considerable flaws of both), actually become part of the problem, as opposed to part of the solution?29

For example, the post-structuralist claim that there are no authoritative ontological claims as to what is ‘real’, only a multiplicity of interpenetrating and competing interpretations of the nature of existence, historical events and the social world is seriously problematic. Rather than being a source of political emancipation, the bleak post-structuralist assessment of modern political communities contributes to a profound sense of ontological disorientation, not least in its linkage of the absence of truth to the operations of political violence in the form of power and the sovereign state.30 Moreover, it leads to the question as to whether such positions fuel the quest for ontological certainty that often fuel the discourses of reactionary populist political myths, not least in the form of some notion of the ‘true’ or ‘authentic’ community of ‘the nation’. Questions remain, therefore, as to whether post-structuralism, for all the undoubtedly valuable work it has done in identifying cultural, political, ethnic, racial, socioeconomic and other forms of (often hidden) exclusions and acts of oppression and violence, might not have ended up doing more harm than good in terms of presenting new forms of political possibility (which in the case of Foucault are deemed impossible, anyway).31

Rather than the radical, liberatory and emancipatory rethinking of contemporary life and history its adherents have often claimed, this line of argument posits that post-structuralism has instead been profoundly debilitating to the remaking of political life in a manner that might address the many issues of the relationship between power and knowledge (especially in contemporary capitalism). Instead of leading to a revolution in thinking and a rejuvenation of political communities, therefore, post-structuralism has served to inculcate a deep current of solipsism, pessimism, confusion and nihilistic cynicism in both popular and intellectual life that has served to open a considerable political space in which the political myths of post-truth have been able to thrive in the absence of any firm counterweight.32

These problems serve to bring us back to one of the fundamental questions in Cassirer’s philosophy that post-structuralism lacks an ahswer to: how can a ‘crisis in self-knowledge’ and ‘what counts as truth’ be addressed in an intellectual climate in which the possibility of either has been obliterated? In denying any ethical foundation to knowledge, post-structuralism denies any ethical foundation to politics and, in the process, negates the possibility of holding to account even the most ludicrously fantastical, outright fictional and frighteningly totalising accounts of political and historical events. This has proven profoundly destructive to the ability to maintain the kind of pluralistic and respectful dialogue necessary to the maintenance of functional, accountable, transparent and deliberative democratic politics advocated by Cassirer. Such a politics remains the starting point for any kind of emancipatory process focused on the delivery of social justice, not least to those amongst the silenced, oppressed and marginalised. However, it is difficult to see how such a politics is possible if it is not conceivable to at least agree dialog- ically on a set of processes through which claims to truth and knowledge can be verified, validated and accepted. This ontological dislocation begs the question as to how, and on what grounds, individuals may make rational and morally autonomous judgements in a polity in which the emotionally centred narrative s of political myths have become dominant. Faced with this problem, the question of ‘if not this, then what?’ assumes a degree of importance that has arguably never been more acute since the time of Cassirer himself.

#### Alternatives must have a blueprint – no details dooms transition.

Andrew **SAYER** Reader in Political Economy @ Lancaster **’95** *Radical Political Economy: A Critique* p. 7-8

Radical political economy is of course a critical social science, both explaining and criticizing the practices it studies, with the explicit aim of reducing illusion and freeing people from domination and unwanted forces. But it can only hope to have an emancipatory effect if it considers its own critical standpoints and the alternative social arrangements they imply. Unfortunately it rarely does this, with the result that its stand- points and implicit alternatives are often contradictory, infeasible, or undesirable even if they are feasible. Marxist-influenced work still bears the traces of the tension between the standpoints of a socialist or communist society which has pre-industrial communitarian qualities and one in which the forces of production are developed beyond current levels of industrialization. More generally, there is a strong modernist tendency in which it is assumed that problems can be progressively unravelled without creating new ones at the same time, as if eventually all trade-offs or dilemmas could be overcome through a triumph of reason. We shall argue through substantive examples that such optimism is not only misplaced but likely to be counterproductive, limiting progress. There are always likely to be 'dilemmas of development' (Toye, 1987. The problem of critical standpoints has become more acute in recent years, indeed it is central to the crisis of the Left. There is no longer asingle standpoint or alternative (socialism/communism) counterposed to a single, overarching target (capitalism). Now there are many targets -patriarchy, racism, homophobia, militarism, industrialism - and corre- spondingly many critical standpoints with complex relations between them. That critical social science is no longer seen as synonymous with a socialist perspective is a sign of considerable progress, and cause for optimism too, as failure on the traditional front of class politics is compensated by progress on other, newer fronts such as the politics of gender. But it is also a source of heightened uncertainty. While there was always a problem of inconsistencies between critical standpoints, it has deepened and widened with the rise of 'green' concerns, for they bring into question the feasibility and desirability of non-capitalist as well as capitalist industrial societies. Is the problem capitalism, industrial society in general, or modernity?; and what are the alterna- tives? Equally, increasing awareness of problems of ethnocentrism and value pluralism throws doubt over the familiar, implicit critical stand- points of Western radical social science. How do we decide what is a problem? What if we cannot reach a consensus on this? Until recently, it seemed that the problems or targets of critical social science could be relied upon to emerge from the investigation of existing practices, where one would encounter the felt needs, frustrations and suffering of actors, and in discovering the sources of these problems, work out what changes would lead towards emancipation (e.g. Fay, 1975, 1987; Collier, 1994h(. This was coupled with an implicit view that emancipation was a form of escape from domination, illusion and unwanted constraints, with little or no acknowledgement that it depended on the construction of superior, alternative, progressive frameworks which could replace the old ones. But it is now increasingly apparent that normative questions of possible alternatives and what is good or bad about them cannot be evaded. How, without addressing such questions, could one decide what constitutes a superior alternative? Should there be a presumption in favour of community as a basis of social organiz- ation over other forms? Does liberalism provide the best framework for multicultural societies? What should be people's rights and responsibili- ties? What are our responsibilities to distant others, future generations, and to other species? There is little hope of achieving the goal of an emancipatory social science if it shuns normative discussions of issues such as these.

#### No impact and Urbanization turn – “planetary boundraries” is alarmism – we are in the bottleneck of growth but pushing through allows for urbanist breakthrough.

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At the core of our argument is the seemingly contradictory statement that the mechanisms that are destroying nature are laying the foundation for its long-term recovery. Passing through the bottleneck is necessary to reach the breakthrough. The conservationist’s paradox is that the same forces that are destroying nature now are also creating the circumstances for long-term success. The conservationist’s challenge is to keep the bottleneck open wide enough so that nature can survive to a breakthrough. Achieving a stable human population will require a net increase in total consumption as all people move out of poverty and follow the common trajectory of investing more in smaller families, for which they have greater security. Reaching a world with 6 billion people and vast natural expanses necessitates investing to make cities healthy, safe, and amenable for people, not just because they concentrate people into a smaller space, but also because of the ways in which urbanization influences social mobility, wealth creation, female empowerment, and ultimately, fertility. Developing a broadly shared environmental consciousness about nature is predicated on an unimpoverished, largely urbanized world that shares the positive externalities of education, technology, and, indeed, nature conservation. The profound danger is that by the time the foundations of recovery are in place, little of wildlife and wild places will be left. If society focuses only on economic development and technological innovation as a mechanism to pass through the bottleneck as fast as possible (sensu Brand 2010), then what remains of nature could well be sacrificed. If society were to focus only on limiting economic growth to protect nature (sensu Meadows et  al. 2004), then terrible poverty and population growth could overwhelm what remains. Either extreme risks narrowing the bottleneck to such an extent that our world passes through without its tigers, elephants, rainforests, coral reefs, or a life-sustaining climate. Therefore, the only sensible path for conservation is to continue its efforts to protect biodiversity while engaging in cities to build the foundations for a lasting recovery of nature. To illustrate some of implications of this theory, we contrast conservation during the bottleneck to conservation after a breakthrough (table 3). A country or a region can be said to be caught in the bottleneck for as long as its population is growing and rates of total natural-resource extraction and pollution are increasing. Analogously, a country or region begins the breakthrough when populations stabilize and natural-resource extraction and pollution rates begin to decline in absolute terms. During bottleneck periods, conservation needs to continue to identify and protect threatened elements of biodiversity (Soulé 2013). The most effective tool in our toolkit remains well-funded, socially inclusive, competently managed protected areas, which place legal limits on destructive activities. Breakthrough conservation suggests over time adjusting the management of protected areas, conceiving of these areas less as bastions against ever-mounting threats and more as source sites (sensu Walston et  al. 2010) for restoring and rewilding continents and oceans. The expansion of large wildlife in Europe provides a trenchant example (Chapron et al. 2014). Rural-to-urban migration presents a dilemma for conservation. Because many protected areas are in less-populated, low-governance areas that are important for conservation, rural residents and indigenous groups are often the only bulwark against destructive actors (e.g., industrial logging, large-scale agriculture, and criminal activity). But for many rural people, a route out of poverty may be to move to nearby towns or distant cities and away from remote parks and reserves. Where local people are the best stewards of nature, conservationists should continue to rely on community-based approaches to deliver benefits for nature and people (Naughton-Treves et al. 2005). In other circumstances, recognizing that people living in remote regions dependent on natural resources are often among the world’s poorest, most politically marginalized, and most market isolated, conservation organizations may need to assist with voluntary relocations (Karanth 2007) that in the long run are better for people and nature and employ other forms of pragmatic conservation management (Robinson 2011). Cities must be central to any global conservation strategy, because urbanization is the only lever that that simultaneously shifts populations, alleviates poverty, and spurs innovation, which individually and in combination have the potential to alter resource extraction and pollution, as we discussed above. The tremendous demographic and economic effects of urbanization have been demonstrated in all regions of the world except sub-Saharan Africa, which may be the exception that proves the rule. Improving the governance and functioning of African urban areas while simultaneously protecting Africa’s unique wildlife is arguably the most urgent need in conservation today, because it is the fastest path to global population stabilization. Moreover, well-governed, inclusive, livable cities in Africa and elsewhere give conservationists the potent platform we need to activate new, broad-based conservation movements (e.g., Asafu-Adjaye et al. 2015)—what Nordhaus and Shellenberger (2007) have called a politics of possibilities. Conservation needs cities to work for nature. But nature also needs to work for cities. Highlighting the role of cities in biodiversity conservation may seem counterintuitive, even ironic, because the expansion of built-up areas itself is a significant ecological concern (McDonald RI et al. 2008, Güneralp and Seto 2013). Urban development disrupts hydrological and nutrient cycles, destroys and fragments habitat, concentrates pollution, and provides portals for the introduction of invasive species (Grimm et al. 2008). Recognizing these impacts, many efforts are underway to mitigate them through green infrastructure, land-use planning, restoration, and place-based education. Increasingly, these activities are informed by new developments in urban ecology, conservation biology, and resilience science (Pickett et al. 2011). Urban conservation activities make towns and cities not only less destructive to nature locally but also more attractive to immigrants and residents, who will appreciate the benefits of local nature and whose lifestyle choices can provide benefits to nature elsewhere. Because urbanization creates and relies on a global market economy, the best way to influence urban consumption and innovation is through economic decision-making (i.e., prices). Directly costing in negative environmental externalities (sensu Pigou 1920) will force markets to address them in all phases of production, from resource extraction through transport and production of finished goods to release of pollution and wastes back into the environment. Because nature does not charge for the ecosystem services it provides, pricing these externalities is a matter of public policy, which can be addressed through a wide variety of financial as well as regulatory mechanisms, such as carbon taxes, land-value assessments, and/or various forms of ecological-use fees (Sanderson 2013). Finally, our theory suggests a new way to articulate the future of conservation and attract more of society to the cause. The immediacy of the threats encapsulated by “planetary boundaries” and related lines of catastrophic thinking are not only devastating to contemplate but may also be shortsighted. The world does not end in 2050, as too many data graphs do. Nor is environmentalism dead, despite claims to the contrary. Rather, if the demographic and economic phenomena that we discuss here do come to pass, it means that conservation faces another 30–50 years of extreme difficulty, when more losses can be expected. However, if we can sustain enough nature through the bottleneck—despite climate change, growth in the population and economy, and urban expansion—then we can see the future of nature in a dramatically more positive light. Much as the eighteenth-century Enlightenment created the conditions for our world, we need a twenty-first-century Renaissance of wisdom, founded on the belief that our role as human beings is to restore, steward, and celebrate the Earth’s unique and immanent nature. Conclusions Thinking about the future of conservation is both humbling and challenging, especially as it has been formulated in the Anthropocene. The underlying demographic processes, although massive, are slow moving compared with the cycles of government, funding, and careers in conservation. To be seen clearly, these trends require a historical perspective that is difficult to adopt if one is focused on immediate threats and captivated by apocalyptic futures. But there is hope. Like in London during the Blitz, vigilance and exertion are required, but we need not panic or despair because the weight of history is on our side.

#### Cap good for global quality of life and reducing structural violence.

Lacono 16 (Corey, A student at the University of Rhode Island studying Pharmaceutical Science and Economics, “How Capitalism and Globalization Have Made the World a Better Place,” Quillette, January 16, 2016, http://quillette.com/2016/01/16/how-capitalism-and-globalization-have-made-the-world-a-better-place)

Just kidding, that’s not what happened at all. In fact, as the world has become more capitalist and more globalized, the quality of life for the average person, and especially for the average poor person, has increased substantially. In 1990, 37% of the global population lived on less than $1.90 per day. By 2012, that number had been reduced to 12.8%, and in 2015 it was under 10%. The source of this progress isn’t a massive wealth redistribution program; it’s massive wealth creation — that is, economic growth. Economists David Dollar and Aart Kraay found that, in a global sample of over 100 countries, changes in the income growth of the bottom 40% of the world’s income earners are highly correlated with economic growth rates. On the other hand, changes in inequality contributed relatively little to changes in social welfare of the poor over the last few decades. There is good reason to believe that the expansion of free trade, facilitated by international organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and its predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), have had a considerable impact in accelerating the economic development of developing countries. In the 1990s GATT facilitated reforms which moved 125 countries towards freer trade by reducing the burden of government imposed trade barriers like tariffs. This was the first serious attempt at trade reform for most developing countries at the time, and arguably presents a unique natural experiment on the economic effects of trade reform. In fact, a paper published by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), specifically examined how trade reforms facilitated by GATT affected the economic development of the reforming countries. In the paper, the authors compared the trends in economic growth before and after trade reform in the reforming countries. Then they compared those results to trends in economic growth of a control group of countries which didn’t undergo trade reform. What they found was very encouraging for proponents of free trade. Prior to reform, the economic development of reformers and non-reformers was practically identical, but after reform, the economic development of reforming countries accelerated while non-reforming countries saw their economies stagnate and decline. The results suggest that the reforms towards freer trade lead to an increase in income per capita of around 20% in the long-run, an effect so large that it almost certainly had a positive and non-trivial impact on poverty reduction. Similarly, other research has shown that more free market trade policies result in lower rates of extreme poverty and child mortality in developing countries. There are other benefits as well. One study on trade reform in Indonesia found that reductions of import tariffs led to an increase in disposable income among poor households, which allowed them to pull their children out of the labor force, leading to “a strong decline” in the incidence of child labor. Unfortunately, many activists have reflexively taken up the cause of opposing the expansion of global capitalism, for a number of reasons. Western anti-sweatshop activists, for example, will often argue in favor of government imposed barriers to trade with poor countries because their working conditions are terrible in comparison to those in developed Western nations. In their view, western consumers should not be promoting a cycle of capitalist exploitation by buying products made in Vietnamese sweat-shops. But satisfactory working conditions aren’t the natural state of mankind; they are a consequence of decades of economic development. Erecting barriers to trade with poor countries is surely a large impediment to their development, in fact, research suggests that existing developed world tariffs depress economic growth rates in the developing world by 0.6 to 1.6 percent per person, a considerably large effect. Moreover, the sweat-shops which produce clothing for Westerners are often much better than alternative forms of domestic employment. In poor countries like Bangladesh, China, and Vietnam, the apparel industry consistently pays more than most other domestic industries. According to research by economist Ben Powell, in poor countries “most sweatshop jobs provide an above average standard of living for their workers.” Notably, a paper published in the Journal of Development Economics found that the expansion of the garments industry in Bangladesh lead to an increase in employment and income among young women, giving them the means to finance their own education. Remarkably the authors found that, “the demand for education generated through manufacturing growth appears to have a much larger effect on female educational attainment compared to a large-scale government conditional cash transfer program to encourage female schooling.” Foreign investment is also more desirable than opponents of capitalism and globalization give it credit for. The conventional wisdom among activists in wealthy countries is that multinational corporations exploit poor workers in third world countries for cheap labor, profiting off people working in sweatshop conditions. It should come as a surprise to the individuals who hold this view to learn that 85% of people in developing countries believe that foreign companies building factories in their countries is a good thing, according to Pew Research. In fact, for all the talk of exploitative multinational corporations, research shows that, in general, these corporations provide higher wages and better working conditions than domestic employers in developing countries. Additionally, when multinational corporations build factories in poor countries, it raises the demand for low-skilled workers, resulting in higher wages for local workers. Consistent with this fact, recent empirical evidence demonstrates that investment by foreign companies in developing countries reduces both poverty and income inequality by raising the incomes of low-skilled workers. Foreign investment can also make people in relatively low-income countries better off by providing better or more inexpensive products. A recent analysis published by the NBER found that foreign retailers like Wal-Mart greatly reduce the cost of living for both the rich and poor in Mexico, making everyone along the income distribution better off. Global capitalism is by no means a perfect phenomenon. Many businesses do have questionable labor practices that are worthy of contempt. And free market policies may in many instances lead to socially undesirable outcomes, sometimes on a large scale. However, the one-dimensional, automatic denunciation of capitalism and the accompanying refusal to give it any credit for its successes — as social media activists have done — reflects an uncompromising, and quite frankly ignorant worldview. It is one in which capitalism is always bad, no matter what the evidence tells us.

#### No political will.

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Now degrowers are not irrational people. The reason why they are pushed in this magical corner is because when they try to “do the numbers” they are led to an impasse. They do not want to allow for significant increase in world GDP because it will, even if decoupling (of which they are skeptical) happens, drive energy emissions too high. If one wants to keep world GDP more or less as now one must (A) “freeze” today’s global income distributions so that some 10-15% of the world population continue to live below the absolute poverty line, and one-half of the world population below $PPP 7 dollars per day (which is, by the way, significantly below Western poverty lines). This is however unacceptable to the poor people, to the poor countries, and even to degrowers themselves.

Thus they must try something else: introduce a different distribution (B) where everybody who is above the current mean world income ($PPP 16  per day) is driven down to this mean, and the poor countries and people are,  at least for a while, allowed to continue growing until they too achieve the level of $PPP 16 per day. But the problem with that approach is that one would have to engage in a massive reduction of incomes for all those who make more than $PPP 16 which is practically all of the Western population. Only 14% of the population in Western countries live at the level of income less than the global mean. This is probably the most important statistic that one should keep in mind. Degrowers thus need to convince 86% of the population living in rich countries that their incomes are too high and need to be reduced. They would have to preside over economic depressions for about a decade, and then let the new real income stay at that level indefinitely. (Even that would not quite solve the problem because in the meantime, many poor countries would have reached the level of $PPP 16 per day and they too would  have to be prevented from growing further.) It is quite obvious that such a proposition is a political suicide. Thus degrowers do not wish to spell it out.

They are  brought to an impasse. They cannot condemn to perpetual poverty people in developing countries who are just seeing the glimpses of a better life, nor can they reasonably argue that incomes of 9 out of 10 Westerners ought to be reduced.

The way out of the impasse is to engage in semi-magical and then outright magical thinking.

Semi-magical thinking (that is, thinking where the objective—however laudable- is not linked with any tools of achieving it) is to argue that GDP is not a correct measure of welfare, or that better outcomes in certain dimensions can be achieved by countries or peoples with a lower GDP (or lower incomes). Both propositions are correct.

GDP does leave out non-commercialized activities that are welfare-enhancing. It is,  like every other measure, imperfect and one-dimensional.  But if it is imperfect at the edges while fairly accurate overall. Richer countries are countries that are generally better-off in almost all metrics, from education, life expectancy, child mortality to women’s employment etc. Not only that: richer people are also on average healthier, better educated, and happier. Income indeed buys you health and happiness. (It does not guarantee that you are a better person; but that’s a different topic.)  The metric of income or GDP is strongly associated with positive outcomes, whether we compare countries to each other, or people (within a country) to each other. This is something so obvious that it is bizarre that one needs to restate it: people migrate from Morocco to France  because France is a richer country and they will be better-off there. American Blacks are worse off than American Whites in all dimensions, not least in terms of their income. This is the background to the Black Lives Matter movement that wants to make Blacks better off and equal in income and health to Whites.

Since this fails, the next approach taken by degrowers consists in pulling out individual cases of countries the have performed exceptionally well on some metrics (like Cuba on health) and those that have performed exceptionally badly (like US on life expectancy) and to argue that a certain desirable outcome can be achieved with much less money. It is indeed true that some countries or some people, despite their lack of income, have achieved excellent things while others have used their income inefficiently or wastefully. But it does not follow from such individual examples that they overturn the regularities described In the previous paragraph. What degrowers do is to first metaphorically run a regression of a desirable outcome on GDP or income, and when they observe that the two are closely correlated, forget about the regression, pull out an outlier, and claim that the outlier shows that the relationship does not exist.

That is clearly wrong too. So the next stage in semi-magical thinking consists in trying to convince people that they are wrongly pursing the Golden Calf of wealth and that much more modest lives would be better, or at least are feasible. To that effect they use baskets of goods and services that allow “modest” standard of living and satisfy all basic needs. But they fail to show us how such “modest needs” are to be implemented: how will people be obliged to consume only so much and not more? In war situations, this is done through rationing. Indeed, one could ration the number of square meters of textile that each household may be able to buy, introduce meat and gasoline coupons and so forth. It has been done many times. But degrowers know that a wartime economy in the peacetime would not be politically acceptable, so they just do the basket calculation, show that it is compatible with “planetary boundaries”, and leave it at that. How we are going to have that basket accepted by people, or implemented despite their will, is not something they desire to be disturbed with.

#### Profit motive.

Andreoni 20 – (Valeria, "The Trap of Success: A Paradox of Scale for Sharing Economy and Degrowth" Sustainability 12, no. 8: 3153. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12083153> 2020)//gcd

From a theoretical perspective, if large similarities exist between sharing economy and degrowth, then extensive discrepancies occur in the way in which these two concepts are applied. As reported above, the sharing economy is a worldwide phenomenon rapidly growing across sectors and activities. Degrowth, on the contrary, has been developed through a model of living and academic debate and, up to now, a limited number of applications have taken place [50]. One of the inhibiting factors can be related to the difficulties in applying an alternative model in a system when the profit-oriented logic drives the main socio-economic dynamics. For this reason, a consistent overview of the possible implications generated by large-scale applications of degrowth is still missing. Given the fact that degrowth ideas could generate effective transformations only when adopted by the largest part of consumers, a specific analysis would be needed to investigate the impacts and feasibility of large-scale applications. Within this context, the main objective of the next sections is to hypothesize and discuss a paradox of scale, potentially able to drive the failure of alternative economic models. Given the fact that, from a theoretical perspective, many similarities exist between sharing economy and degrowth, the next approximate is the sharing economy as a large-scale application of degrowth. In particular, the main contradictions existing between the promises of the sharing economy and degrowth, are compared to the outcomes generated by practices. The discrepancies are then used to discuss the feasibility of large-scale applications of alternative economic models, such as degrowth. Being aware that the approximations used in this paper inevitably lead to simplifications, the objective of this analysis aligns with the idea previously discussed in other publications [50,69,70]. Testing the degrowth hypothesis through modeling and empirical assessments can contribute to develop the debate around sustainable transitions to build the bridge between academic discourse, socio-political initiatives, and business environment. 3.2. Promises versus Outcomes of Practices: Analysis of the Socio-Economic and Environmental Impacts Following the approach previously used by other papers [3,30], the main frames used to define the sharing economy are compared, in this section, with the socio-economic and environmental impacts generated by practices. The main objective is to identify existing tensions and to discuss the sustainability challenges of sharing. Starting from the analytical framework reported in Table 2, the main discrepancies existing between promises and practices are reported below. In Table 3, the main elements of discussion are summarized. 3.3. Economic Dimension: Promises versus Impacts of Practices A. Disrupt centralized institutions and large corporations versus creation of oligopolies: According to previous studies [26,28,30,71], the network externalities and economies of scale generated using Internet platforms, has facilitated the development of oligopolies and has reduced the market for small and local enterprises. In line with the examples reported in Table 1, most of the sharing economy’s submarkets tend to be dominated by a small number of companies that earned the dominating status by designing a specific business model or through an early market entry. The large quantity of transactions, needed to compensate the costs of technological investments, has converged the successful platform toward oligopolistic structures, clearly in contrast with the idea of “disrupt centralized institutions and large corporations” included as one of the promises of sharing [72,73]. B. Encourage small and local enterprise versus small-business competition: Instead of promoting small and local enterprises, the sharing economy has resulted in increased competition [74]. The development of sharing accommodation practices, such as Airbnb or Couchsurfing, for example, has provided a substitute for hotel nights in the cheaper segment of the market and has radically changed consumers’ preferences and behavior. According to [75], the users of the sharing economy (generally looking for cheaper solutions, local authenticity, and more unique experiences) have shifted the demand from the traditional hotel industry toward the sharing hospitality. Therefore, the market share of the small and family-run accommodations has been reduced. In addition, the possibility to supply accommodation without the need to be compliant with the regulations affecting the hospitality sector (such as fire, health and safety standards, and taxation) represents an element of unfair competition affecting the small businesses operating in the market. The lower costs associated with a lack of standards and regulations, has contributed to drive a reduction in the average hospitality price. According to data provided by [76], the increased competition among small accommodation providers has generated 8–10% revenue loss in the hotel sector in Austin, Texas. In a similar way, the estimation provided by [77] calculated that the 416,000 guests staying in Airbnb in July 2013 has generated around one million lost room nights for city hotels in New York. On the contrary, large corporations, offering hospitality solutions for business travelers, medium-high income consumers, and package holidays do not seem to be significantly affected [76,77]. C. Empowering individuals by promoting flexible employment opportunities and additional sources of income versus working-related uncertainties: The sharing economy has framed itself as a provider of flexible employment opportunities, where traditional employment contracts are substituted by short-term and freelance work [78]. The main implications of this working structure, however, seem to benefit businesses more than workers. Classifying workers as independent contractors, allow businesses to reduce the costs and to remove the legal liability for accidents arising at work. The lack of pension and insurance, together with income instability and insecurities is, on the contrary, one of the main downsides affecting the workers involved in the sharing economy’s markets [79,80]. In addition, the rapid expansion of this underregulated and underpaid working logic, is also affecting the traditional working markets. When an increasing number of agents get involved in the logic of less security and more flexibility, the overall working conditions can decline [81–83]. As reported by De Stefano [81] (p. 6), “extreme flexibility, shifting of risks to workers and income instability have long become a reality for a portion of the workforce in current labor markets that goes far beyond the persons employed in the gig-economy.” It can indeed be argued that working on collaborative platforms is part of a much vaster trend toward the casualization of labor [84,85]. D. Promote cheaper and easiest access to goods and services and provide opportunities for income redistribution, revenue, and savings versus prices increase, income disparities, and tax avoidance: As reported above, the easiest and cheapest access to goods and services has been described as an opportunity to increase consumption possibilities, particularly for the lowest-income categories. When considering the supply side of the sharing practices, however, the sharing economy can contribute to amplifying the income disparities existing in society [86]. As reported by [87], for example, the additional revenue generated by sharing accommodation benefits people with a middle or upper-income level. That is because, the lower-income categories, characterized by a limited availability of goods to share, are typically excluded from the supply side of the market. Sharing accommodation, has also been criticized for the negative impacts generated on the price of the long-term renting accommodation. The increase in profitability of short-term renting has driven a reduction of long-term renting supply, with consequent impacts for the lower-income categories living in rented accommodation. According to data provided by [88], the average renting price in New York has increased by 11% between 2005 and 2012, with an average income rise of just 2%. The redistributive factors of the sharing activities have also been largely criticized in relation to taxation. According to data provided by [89], the sharing economy was estimated to be worth about $15 billion in 2015 with the potential to grow to £$335 billion in 2025. The amount of tax collected, however, is limited and controversial. Airbnb, for example, is financially located in Ireland, where the money made from transactions taking place all over the world are collected. The lack of clear accountability and the related difficulties to track income, make tax avoidance an element of unfair market competition and a major social issue. The unclear international regulation and the difficulties in public surveillance, creates a clear opportunity for fiscal avoidance, with consequent implications for social disparities and redistribution [28,72]. In addition, as reported by [10], the fact that platforms do not give governments the access to transactions and user data does not facilitate the enforcement of regulations and the design of clear and consistent taxation systems. The creation of institutional boundaries, such as the cap in the number of nights offered in sharing accommodation is, for example, difficult to apply without a clear track of users and suppliers. A. Increase social bonding and collaboration versus social drivers’ reduction: As reported above, the sharing economy has often been described as a tool to generate a new form of collaborations, solidarity, and social bonding [34,90–93]. Researches have, however, highlighted that most of the sharing economy users have no desire to increase community bonds or to share communal links with other members [29]. The ability of platforms to create social connections seems also to have decreased over scale and time. According to studies published by [94,95], when a market expands, economic reasons prevail, and interpersonal connections became more casual and less durable. In a similar way, an analysis investigating the main car sharing motivations highlight that opportunistic and self-interest behaviors play a much more significant role than socio-environmental motivations [79]. Price convenience, savings, and accessibility seem to be the main factors driving most of the consumers’ choices toward sharing economy options [96–98]. B. Increase conviviality and community trust versus discrimination: Instead of increasing social equality and community trust, the sharing economy seems to be characterized by some degree of exclusionary and discriminatory behaviors [40]. Based on studies published [99–102], prejudicial discriminations in ratings and reviews have been found for Afro-American guests and Afro-American Airbnb owners and Uber drivers have reported to be discriminated in terms of longer average waiting times and more frequent cancellations. C. Networking increases versus reduction of face-to-face interactions: When the market expands and more profit-oriented actors enter in the sharing economy’s businesses, the social contacts and face-to-face interactions seem to reduce. The increasing use of online quality ratings, for example, contributes to the declining importance of personal relationships. In addition, the introduction of technological innovations, such as the smart locks on sharing accommodation, provides users with a digital service of check-in and key handover that allow for a complete avoidance of social interactions [10]. According to [103], 75% of Airbnb’s overall revenue come from rentals where the owners do not share the space with users. The initial idea of social connections, interactions, and trust have been taken over by activities operating with a small degree of social and face-to-face interactions. D. Promote the use of participative online resources such as open access, open sources, and collaborative platform versus income, cultural, and aging constraints: The development of information and communication technologies has been considered as an opportunity to facilitate the use of participative online resources and to democratize the access to information. However, the difficulties that a relevant percentage of the world population are experiencing in catching-up with technological development is de facto an element of exclusion for a large amount of people with income, cultural, and ageing constraints [104]. When applied to the context of the sharing activities, this general downside of information and communication technologies, can then exclude a specific group of people from participating in sharing exchanges. According to [75], for example 53% of the users are under 40 years old and across all the sharing economy industries the usage seems to decrease with an increasing age. 3.5. Environmental Dimension: Promises versus Impacts of Practices A. Reduce consumption versus consumption increase: As highlighted by [105], a relative cost reduction can increase the overall market demand. In the sharing economy, different elements can contribute to generate a “rebound effect” detrimental for resources: • The development of the sharing economy platforms and the creation of new markets expand the volume of commerce and inject additional purchasing power into the economy. In addition, the development of “on demand” economy (e.g., Uber), where the consumer creates new capacity by arranging a service that would not have been made in the first place, is in contrast with the idea of reducing the overall level of demand. The reduction of prices generated by (i) increasing competition, (ii) reduced dependency on ownership, and (iii)reduction of searching costs, can contribute to the rise of consumption [10, 40,106]. • The easiest and cheapest access to goods and services can stimulate unsustainable and indulgent consumption [107,108]. The cost reduction and the accessible increase related to car sharing practices, for example, can generate additional journeys and reduce the public transport demand. The possibility to cover a part of the travelling cost, offered for example by Blablacar and Kangaride, can change the individual decision on the travelling mode and, as reported above, increase the demand for less sustainable practices [4,109]. • The large amount of information made available by the use of the Internet, provides an extensive source of evidence about past usage patterns and consumers’ preferences. The online companies, with an easy access to consumer’s information, can use targeted advertising and tailored promotions to increase sales and market share. In addition, a tension also exists in relation to the fact that city cycle schemes are usually financed through advertising of large and multinational corporations, as Santander in London or Coca-Cola in Belfast. B. Reduction of energy and material demand versus increased use of energy and resources: A lack of clear data investigating the environmental impacts of the sharing practices make it difficult to analyze the transition toward a more sustainable economy. At the present, no clear evidence exists around the reduction of energy and material demand [10]. On the contrary, a study published by [110] shows that the ecological footprint of e-business is greater than conventional shopping. C. Promote reuse and responsible consumption versus lack of care: The short-term social relationships characterizing most of the sharing economy activities and the fact that consumers are paying for a temporary service, generally lead to a lack of caring attitude and reduce the incentives to treat products gently [4]. In line with the idea of moral hazard and information asymmetries, involved with shared resources [111], the deterioration rate of goods can be higher than in the case of a private ownership. In addition, recent studies suggest that users’ environmental motivations are often less important than the economic ones [112,113]. 4. Discussion: Paradox of Scale and Future Research Directions Based on the analysis reported above, the main findings of this paper can be summarized by the fact that the recent developments of the sharing practices seem to be in contrast with the theoretical frameworks used to define the socio-economic and environmental characteristics of sharing. When the scale expands, a profit-oriented logic seems to prevail and the idea of a more sustainable and socially connected economic system fails to be delivered. In particular, the profit opportunities are attracting an increasing number of for-profit businesses that use the socio-environmental and egalitarian statements as a way to increase the market share. In addition, the use of information and communication technologies, the related reduction of interpersonal connections, and the exclusion of people unable to catch up with technological development, impose constraints on social interactions and participation. As a result, the impacts and goals of the sharing economy seem to converge toward those of the traditional economic practices, where profit opportunities prevail on socio-environmental motivations. As previously highlighted by other authors [26,28], the theoretical pathway to equity and sustainability has been successfully reframed as a new form of neoliberal capitalism. Within this context, the findings of this paper highlight the risk of a paradox of scale, where the sharing economy fails to deliver as a consequence of success. If from one side, the more sustainable behaviors can generate effective changes only when applied by the majority of actors, on the other side, large-scale applications and expansion risk converging toward the traditional economic practices. This sort of trap is also highlighted by the recent path taken by the development of some local currencies. Initially organized as a way to sustain local business and promote a more responsible consumption, some of the local currencies have today expanded to include franchising and corporation activities. An example is provided by Colu, the Liverpool Local Pound, where franchising accounts for more than 10% of the businesses listed in the website. In addition, the percentage discount offered to consumers that purchase products by using the local currency is a stimulus for consumption increase, clearly in contrast with the idea of responsible consumption and sustainability. The use of virtual coins and the necessity to have mobile phones and internet connection also represent a factor of exclusion for the oldest and the less wealthy categories of society that in contrast would be those that could benefit the most from the development of a local and fairer economy.

# 1AR

### XT 2AC: Markets = Democracy

#### Competitive markets are a potential tool of socialism. Focus on the structure of firms supports decentralization and more democratic control.

Johanna **BOCKMAN** Sociology @ George Mason **’11** *Markets in the name of socialis: the left-wing origins of neoliberalism* p. 6-9

William Stanley Jevons in England, Carl Menger in Austria, and Léon Walras in Switzerland are generally credited with simultaneously discovering neoclassical economics in the 1870s.12 Neoclassical economists moved beyond the classical view that the value of goods is based on the objective costs of their production (the labor theory of value) to the neoclassical view that value is subjective or perceived, that the individual agent—an individual or a firm—judges the utility or usefulness of certain goods or services. This shift to a subjective understanding of value and prices in the 1870s created what became known as the Marginalist Revolution be- cause neoclassical economists began to study individual agents’ behavior at the margins, such as the additional satisfaction a consumer gains from each extra (or marginal) unit of consumption. This is why neoclassical economics is often referred to as “marginalism.”13 While not all neoclassical economists used mathematics, such marginalist understandings of economic behavior allowed economists to apply calculus, theorems, and metaphors from physics to the field of economics, which seemed to promise a new scientific foundation based on the regularities of the mechani- cal world (Mirowski 1989).14 Neoclassical economists also studied how markets coordinate agents in some regular way, thus allowing economists to describe and predict collective action. These economists assumed that markets (individually and collectively) have at least one equilibrium state in which prices encourage the most efficient production, distribution, and consumption. Neoclassical economics was not immediately popular among economists but became the mainstream by the Second World War (Bernstein 2001; Howey 1989; Yonay 1998). In sum, neoclassical economics is characterized by the study of individual agents, subjective values and prices, marginal calculation, collective action through markets, and market equilibrium.15

Neoliberalism can be said to have socialist origins for three reasons: Economists use socialist models to create new knowledge; these socialist models allowed for a professional dialogue among neoclassical economists in the socialist East and the capitalist West; and neoliberalism incorpo- rates the knowledge created in this transnational dialogue about social- ism. I explain each of these points in the following paragraphs.

First, while the language of individuals, markets, and prices suggests a capitalist perspective on the economy, socialism in fact plays a foundational role in neoclassical economics. Because some neoclassical economists have played a central role in promoting and implementing neoliberal polices, this suggests that neoliberalism has socialist origins. Neoclassical founders created mathematical models of the entire economy and showed that freely competitive markets produced optimal results in production, distribution, and consumption. Unexpectedly, by the 1890s, neoclassical economists also discovered that the competitive market economy was mathematically identical to the centrally planning economy. An economist could, therefore, take the mathematical models of the market and, rather than predicting how a free market might act, the economist could solve the equations and figure out the best prices and quantities without a market. Economists developed models of a “socialist state” with a central planner and state ownership of the means of production to develop new neoclassical theories and tools. As a result, both the pure competitive market and centrally planned socialism sit together at the center of neoclassical economics, no matter the politics of an economist. The methodological centrality of socialism to neoclassical economics informs neoliberalism. Today, neoclassical economists still regularly use models of a social- ist state to develop their theories. Former head of the China division at the International Monetary Fund and current advisor to the Indian govern- ment Eswar Prasad recently stated, “We economists think that a benevo- lent dictator—a benevolent dictator with a heart in the right place—could actually do a lot of good” (Kestenbaum 2010). Prasad does not voice some eccentric view. A benevolent dictator, more usually called “the social plan- ner,” appears throughout mainstream economic writing. The Chicago School (for example, Becker, Murphy, and Grossman 2006) and the ratio- nal expectations school (Hansen and Sargent [1994] 1996; Kydland and Prescott 1982; Lucas 1972; Lucas and Prescott 1971),16 as well as the more left-leaning market failure school (Dasgupta and Stiglitz 1980a,b), base their models on a hypothesized social planner.17 According to economists, the social planner is an imaginary benevolent representative for all of soci- ety. This planner has complete information about costs and preferences.18 With perfect knowledge and certainty, the social planner chooses, for ex- ample, production activities to maximize consumption. In this way, the social planner seeks to maximize social welfare for all members of society. The economist then evaluates the results of a new policy or institution in comparison with the results obtained by the social planner, which serve as a benchmark. As this book shows, the social planner is the socialist state as imagined in the 1890s. Mainstream economists, no matter their political persuasion, mobilized state socialist models to study all economic systems and policies.

Neoliberalism appears as disembedded liberalism, as a commitment to unfettered markets (Blyth 2002), when, in fact, institutions are always the object of debate. If we understand institutions as taken for granted social patterns, then markets and planning should also be considered institutions, but I have found that neoclassical economists think about markets and planning differently from other institutions. On the surface, some economists present a narrow interpretation of neoclassical economics that markets and any necessary institutions would spring up like mushrooms when the state retreated from the economy. Alternatively, Eastern Euro- pean conservatives also offered a narrow view of neoclassical economics, which instead argued that central planning and any necessary institutions would spring up like mushrooms when markets disappeared. Markets and a centrally planned socialist state exist at the core of neoclassical econom- ics and thus embody these narrow views. However, narrow interpretations merely take the existing institutions as given (Horvat 1961, 2). Neoclassical economists continually talk about institutions required for the successful functioning of these core elements, the market or the centrally planned socialist state.

Neoclassical economists claim that both competitive markets and central planning require either (1) hierarchical, authoritarian institutions or (2) decentralized, egalitarian, democratic institutions. For example, economists David Lipton and Jeffrey Sachs argued for the necessity of hierarchical institutions, such as large (often foreign) corporations that have the funds to buy state-owned firms, for the eradication of worker self-management and ownership due to their supposed inefficiencies, and for a strong state to enforce massive redistribution of resources. In con- trast, some socialist economists in Germany and England in the early part of the twentieth century optimistically thought that socialist institutions would make the economy actually resemble the ideal neoclassical models of the free market. These institutions included state or social ownership of certain parts of the economy, worker ownership of firms, workers’ self- management, cooperative ownership, and various forms of democracy, as well as antimonopoly laws and company autonomy, that would make free markets, as well as efficient and just socialism, possible. Thus, an economist like Joseph Stiglitz has been equally committed to competitive markets and to economic democracy. In the eyes of neoclassical economists, this was not a mix of systems, a little bit of socialism mixed with a little bit of capitalism, like some image of Keynesianism. Rather, these economists sought a fully competitive market and socialism. The fact that neoclassical economists speak so positively about markets confuses outsiders into thinking that they are necessarily neoliberal.

#### Purely anti-market politics abandons billions to the neoliberal version of economics. Being left outside of exchange is even worse than exploitation.

Alessandro **FERRARA** History, Humanity, and Society @ University of Rome Tor Vergata ‘**17** in *Feminism, Capitalism, and Critique* eds. Bottici & Bargu p. 177-178

Distinctive of Fraser’s triple movement is the fact that, while the Polanyian picture presupposed a zero-sum opposition between disembedment and social protection, now each polarity of the triad relates to each of the other two, thereby affecting also the relation of each of the Polanyian antagonist elements to one another. As the trajectory of feminism illustrates, movements that oppose patriarchal domination inscribed in the patterns of social protection may end up undermining forms of ethical solidarity, “thereby clearing a path for marketization” (ibid, p. 129) More generally, movements that target traditional structures of domination buttressed by thick ethical conceptions may either erode or transform such ethical background, thereby either jeopardizing or emancipating the forms of social protection.

Here is the crucial point of Fraser’s Zeitdiagnose: a “dangerous liaison” has been forming in recent years between social movements which, in their struggle against patriarchal, generational, colonial, racial structures of authority, considered certain “difference-friendly,” “creativity- encouraging” forms of neoliberal capitalism, along with the kind of neoliberal enterprises that, “styling themselves as an insurrection, . .. adopt the accents of emancipation to excoriate social protection as a fetter on freedom,” as a natural ally (ibid, p. 130). Fraser’s account of this dangerous liaison is not meant to replace entirely the three previous explanations for the blocked dynamic of protection, but rather to help us understand “the grammars of claims-making and social imaginaries that mediate the responses of political actors to their situation” (ibid, p. 131), the reason for the current demoralization of the social-democratic elites and the enduring aura of innovativeness that surrounds neoliberal capitalism despite the 2008 debacle. Her account also alerts us to the complications inherent in the new tripolar dynamics set forth by disembedded financialized capitalism. Neither protection nor emancipation have remained the same, according to Fraser:

An emancipatory project coloured by naive faith in contract, meritocracy and individual advancement will easily be twisted to other ends - as has been the case in the present era. However, an emancipatory project wedded to the wholesale rejection of markets effectively cedes indispensable liberal ideals to free marketeers, while abandoning the billions across the globe who rightly understand that there is something worse than being exploited - namely, being counted as not worth exploiting. In general, then, no emancipation without some new synthesis of marketization and social protection, (ibid, p. 131-2)

In positive terms, according to Fraser, a suitable project for emancipation would not reject Polanyi’s insights but build on them, would sever the liaison with neoliberalism, and would encourage “forging a principled new alliance with social protection,” while at the same time rescuing an “equally valid interest in solidarity” and reclaiming “the indispensable interest in negative liberty from the neoliberal uses to which it has been bent” (ibid., p. 132).

### XT 2AC 3-4: Sust

#### Studies across countries prove decoupling works.

Kampas et al 20 – Athanasios Kampas is Assistant Professor at the Agricultural University of Athens. He teaches environmental economics. Stelios Rozakis is an Associate Professor, Operations Research in Agriculture and Energy at the Technical University of Crete. Antoni Faber. Instytute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation - State Research Institute, Pulawy, POLAND. Łukasz Mamica - an associate professor and the Head of Department of Public Economics, Cracow University of Economics. (Assessing the Green Growth Trajectory through Resource and Impact Decoupling Indices: The Case of Poland, Pol. J. Environ. Stud. Vol. 30, No. 3 (2021), 2573-2587 DOI: 10.15244/pjoes/128585 2021-02-10)//gcd

Prior to comment on the results, their consistency has to be examined. This can be done by checking whether the sum of correlations and the average correlation have the same sign in Table 8. This is true for both lags and leads in both correlations, which means that the overall changes in the per capita income induce a consistent pattern of changes in the ecological deficit and in the GHG emissions. Concerning the association GDPpc&EDF, Table 8 shows that the average lag cross-correlations, CCEtGt (k0 is positive and the average lead crosscorrelations, CCEtGt (k>0) >0 is positive and the average lead crosscorrelations, CCEtGt (k>0)>0 is negative. The latter implies that while an increase in the per capita income has increased the ecological deficit in past, this will change in the future. The incidence of growth will reduce the pressure on the natural resources. The latter may be the joint product attributed to two distinct processes. First, such an event could be the result of a rise in the “eco-efficiency” which means that a unit of GDP is produced now with less environmental resources York et al. [30]. Beyond that, there might be a change in the consumption patterns, which involve substitution of environmentally harmful with less harmful goods and services. Very often, eco-efficiency and substitution are mentioned as requirements for the economy’s dematerialization [84]. Some advocate that the link between dematerialization and the resulting decoupling is a matter of society’s choice since it depends on the “appropriate” policy measures that mobilize technology and put forward incentives to reduce human pressure on the environment [85]. Notwithstanding, the whole issue is far from settled, see Bithas and Kalimeris [86] and Fletcher and Rammelt [87] for a critique. Gómez-Baggethun [88] refers to the resource efficiency and the policy induced substitution as technological and political utopias that cannot be sustained ad infinitum. By contrast, Table 8 shows that both the average lag and lead cross-correlations for the link GDPpc&GHG are negative. That means that the past reduction of GHG emissions as a result of growth will continue to exist in the future. Put it in the EKC jargon, Poland has reached a position, where the composition and technological effects dominates the scale effect. Hence, growth reduces the environmental impacts. Narayan et al. [82] have identified similar pattern for Poland’s CO2 emissions as well as for Germany, Czech Republic, Iraq, Slovak Republic and Sweden among others. The positive role of the eco-efficiency and substitution, discussed above, applies here as well. To recapitulate, the likely policy implications of the decoupling indices are examined by the cross correlation analysis. The analysis tried to investigate whether economic growth determines the changes in the ecological deficit and in the level of GHG emissions. The results provide evidence that economic growth in Poland will bring about a decline in the ecological deficit. Likewise, economic growth has reduced GHG emissions and will continue to do so in the future. The previous argument seems to echo a Parsonian modernization postulate, in the sense that economic growth is treated as a crucial determinant (“evolutionary universal”) of society’s change (implicitly through its impact on democracy, institutions and organizational capacity) [89]. This line of argument is not new, and the criticism raised is sound and fair [90, 91]. Notwithstanding, such a hypothesis prevails the EKC literature [92]. To cut a long story short, it seems that modernization theory, albeit severely criticized, is not dead. Various revivals and modifications have been put forward in the scholarly literature. Just to name a few: ecological modernization [93], reflexive modernization [94], re-modernization [95], global modernity [96]. Conclusions The paper applied the most appropriate decoupling indices in order to map the development trajectory of Polish economy. In the period between 1990 and 2016, Poland has achieved remarkable things. Primarily, growth seems that did not deteriorate the quality of the environment, since the human pressure on the environment, as captured by the resource and impact decoupling indices, was not associated with growth. Furthermore, from the cross-correlation analysis has emerged some rather interesting observations with profound policy implications. Poland has been a successful paradigm in terms of the ecological modernization theory. Growth seems to unfold without imposing significant pressure on the natural resources (a captured by the ecological deficit) and without causing environmental degradation (as captured by the GHG emissions).

#### Affluence ensures sustainability

McAfee 20 – a principal research scientist at MIT, is cofounder and codirector of the MIT Initiative on the Digital Economy at the MIT Sloan School of Management. (Andrew, "Why Degrowth Is the Worst Idea on the Planet," Wired, <https://www.wired.com/story/opinion-why-degrowth-is-the-worst-idea-on-the-planet/> 10.06.2020)//gcd

Over that same span, an unexpected and encouraging pattern has emerged: The world's richest countries have learned how to reduce their footprint on Earth. They're polluting less, using less land and water, consuming smaller amounts of important natural resources, and doing better in many other ways. Some of these trends are also now visible in less affluent countries.

However, many in the degrowth movement seem to have trouble taking yes for an answer. The claims I just made are widely resisted or ignored. Some say they’ve been debunked. Of course, debate over empirical claims like these is normal and healthy. Our impact on our planet is hugely important. But something less healthy is at work here. As Upton Sinclair put it, “It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it.” Some voices in the conversation about the environment seem wedded to the idea that degrowth is necessary, and they are unwilling or unable to walk away from it, no matter the evidence.

But evidence remains a powerful way to persuade the persuadable. The one thing everyone agrees on is that the last 50 years have been a period of growth, not degrowth. In fact, growth has never been faster, except for the 25-year rebuilding period after World War II. The population and economic growth rates of the past half-century are remarkably fast by historical standards. Between 1800 and 1945, for example, the world’s economy grew less than 1.5 percent per year, on average. Between 1970 and 2019, that average increased to almost 3.5 percent.

It's natural to assume that, as this growth continued, every nation’s planetary footprint would only increase. After all, as people become more numerous and prosperous they consume more, and producing all the goods and services they consume uses up resources, takes over ecosystems, and generates pollution. The logic seems ironclad that our gains have to be the environment’s losses.

Easing Pollution, Not Exporting It

In some important areas, however, a very different pattern emerged after 1970: Growth continued, but environmental harm decreased. This decoupling occurred first with pollution, and first in the rich world. In the US, for example, [aggregate levels of six common air pollutants](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-05/2019_baby_graphic_1970.png) have declined by 77 percent, even as gross domestic product increased by 285 percent and population by 60 percent. In the UK, [annual tonnage of particulate emissions](https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/emissions-of-particulate-matter?time=1970..2016) dropped by more than 75 percent between 1970 and 2016, and of the [main polluting chemicals](https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/air-pollutant-emissions?time=1970..2016) by about 85 percent. Similar gains are common across the highest-income countries.

How were these reductions achieved? The two possibilities are cleanup and offshoring. Either rich countries figured out how to reduce their “air pollution per dollar” so much that overall pollution went down even as their economies grew, or they sent so much of their dirty production overseas that the air at home got cleaner. The first of these paths reduces the total burden of human-caused pollution; the second just rearranges it.

The evidence is overwhelming that rich countries cleaned up their air pollution much more than they outsourced it. For one, a great deal of air pollution comes from highway vehicles and power plants, and rich countries haven’t outsourced driving and generating electricity to low-income ones. In fact, high-income countries haven't even offshored most of their industry. The [US](https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/INDPRO) and [UK](https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/GBRPROMANMISMEI) both manufacture more than they did 50 years ago (at least until the Covid-19 pandemic sharply reduced output), and Germany has been [a net exporter](https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/DEU/germany/trade-balance-deficit#:~:text=Germany%20trade%20balance%20for%202019,a%200.45%25%20increase%20from%202015.) since 2000 while continuing to [drive down air pollution](https://iir-de-2014.wikidot.com/explanation-of-key-trends) The rest of the world has been exporting its manufacturing pollution to Germany (to use degrowthers’ phrasing), yet Germans are breathing cleaner air than they were 20 years ago..

Rich countries have reduced their air pollution not by embracing degrowth or offshoring, but instead by enacting and enforcing smart regulation. As economists Joseph Shapiro and Reed Walker concluded in a [2018 study](https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.20151272) about the US, “changes in environmental regulation, rather than changes in productivity and trade, account for most of the emissions reductions.” Research about the [cleanup of US waters](https://academic.oup.com/qje/article/134/1/349/5092609) also concludes that well-designed and enforced regulations have successfully reduced pollution.

It is true that the US and other rich countries now import lots of products from China and other nations with higher pollution levels. But if there were no international trade at all, and rich countries had to rely exclusively on their domestic industries to make everything they consume, they’d still have much cleaner air and water than they did 50 years ago. As a [2004 Advances in Economic Analysis and Policy study](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/4748469_Trade_Liberalization_and_Pollution_Havens) summarized: “We find no evidence that domestic production of pollution-intensive goods in the US is being replaced by imports from overseas.”

The rich world’s success at decoupling growth from pollution is an inconvenient fact for degrowthers. Even more inconvenient is China's recent success at doing the same. China’s export-led, manufacturing-heavy economy has been growing at meteoric rates, but between 2013 and 2017 [air pollution in densely populated areas declined by more than 30 percent](https://news.uchicago.edu/story/chinas-war-against-pollution-shows-promising-results-study-finds). Here again the government mandated and monitored pollution declines and so decoupled growth from an important category of environmental harm.

Prosperity Bends the Curve

China's progress with air pollution is heartening, but it's not surprising to most economists. It's a clear example of the environmental Kuznets curve (EKC) in action. Named for the economist Simon Kuznets, EKC posits a relationship between a country's affluence and the condition of its environment. As GDP per capita rises from an initial low level, so too does environmental damage; but as affluence continues to increase, the harms level off and then start to decline. The EKC is clearly visible in the pollution histories of today's rich countries, and it's now taking shape in China and elsewhere.

Also consider air pollution death rates around the world. As the invaluable website Our World in Data [puts it](https://ourworldindata.org/outdoor-air-pollution), “Rates have typically fallen across high-income countries: almost everywhere in Europe, but also in Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Israel and South Korea and other countries. But rates have also fallen across upper-middle income countries too, including China and Brazil. In low and lower-middle income countries, rates have increased over this period.”

The EKC is a direct refutation of a core idea of degrowth: that environmental harms must always rise as populations and economies do. It's not surprising that today's degrowth advocates rarely discuss the large reductions in air and water pollution that have accompanied higher prosperity in so many places around the world. Instead, degrowthers now focus heavily on one kind of pollution: greenhouse gas emissions.

The claims made are familiar ones: that any apparent reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in rich countries are due to offshoring rather than actual decarbonization. Thanks to the [Global Carbon Project](https://www.globalcarbonproject.org/), we can see if this is the case. GCP has calculated “consumption-based emissions” for many countries going back to 1990, taking into account imports and exports, yielding the greenhouse gas emissions embodied in all the goods and services consumed in each country each year.

For several of the world's richest countries, including Germany, Italy, France, the UK, and the US, graphs of consumption-based carbon emissions follow the familiar EKC. The US, for example, has 22[reduced its total (not per capita) consumption-based CO2 emissions](https://ourworldindata.org/consumption-based-co2) by more than 13 percent since 2007.

These reductions are not mainly due to enhanced regulation. Instead, they've come about because of a combination of tech progress and market forces. Solar and wind power have become much cheaper in recent years and have displaced coal for electricity generation. Natural gas, which when burned emits fewer greenhouse gases per unit of energy than does coal (even after [taking methane leakage into account](https://thebreakthrough.org/issues/energy/howarth-natural-gas)), has also become much cheaper and more abundant in the US as a result of the fracking revolution.

To ensure that these greenhouse gas declines continue to spread and accelerate, we should apply the lessons we've learned from previous pollution reduction success. In particular, we should make it expensive to emit carbon, then watch the emitters work hard to reduce this expense. The best way to do this is with a carbon dividend, which is a tax on carbon emissions where the revenues are not kept by the government but instead are rebated to people as a dividend. William Nordhaus won the 2018 Nobel Prize in economics in part for his work on the carbon dividend, and [an open letter](https://clcouncil.org/economists-statement/) advocating its implementation in the US has been signed by more than 3,500 economists. It's an idea whose time has come.

How We Learned to Lighten Up

Tech progress and price pressure aren't just leading to the demise of coal. They're also causing us to exploit the planet less in many other important ways, even as growth continues. In other words, EKCs are not just about pollution any more.

A good place to start examining this broad phenomenon of getting more from less is US agriculture, where we have decades of [data](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1K2hDd1jGxznxIWJXvtkW0vVyxLDBkVZSlZmtDMVFvHQ/edit#gid=1111912651) on both outputs—crop tonnage—and the key inputs of cropland, water, and fertilizer. Domestic crop tonnage has risen steadily over the years and in 2015 was more than 55 percent higher than in 1980. Over that same period, though, total water used for irrigation declined by 18 percent, total cropland by more than 7 percent. That is, over that 35-year period, US crop agriculture increased its output by more than half while giving an area of land larger than Indiana back to nature and eventually using a Lake Champlain less water each year. This was not accomplished by increasing fertilizer use; total US fertilizer consumption in 2014 (the most recent year for which data are available) was within 2 percent of its 1980 level.

The three main fertilizers of nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus (NKP) are an interesting case study. Their [total US consumption](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1NXenB6ngIrezPVHypZcP8e-D7-gvEBix3maurDZGRX0/edit#gid=1409598042) (once other uses in addition to agriculture are taken into account) has declined by 23 percent since 1980, according to the United States Geological Survey. Yet some within the degrowth movement find ways to argue that these declines are also an illusion. These materials thus serve to clearly illustrate the differences in methodology, evidence, and worldview between ecomodernists like myself and degrowthers.

The USGS tracks annual domestic production, imports, and exports of NKP and uses these figures to calculate “apparent consumption” each year. Consumption of each of the three resources has declined by 16 percent or more from their peaks, which occurred no later than 1998. This seems like a clear and convincing example of dematerialization—getting more output from fewer material inputs.

As I argue in my book More From Less, dematerialization doesn’t happen for any complicated or idiosyncratic reason. It happens because resources cost money that companies would rather not spend, and tech progress keeps opening up new ways to produce more output (like crops) while spending less on material inputs (like fertilizers). Modern digital technologies are so good at helping producers get more from less that they're now allowing the US and other technologically sophisticated countries to use less in total of important materials like NKP.

### XT 2AC: Disinformation

#### Platform-based disinformation spread cements right-wing authoritarianism and global democratic decline. They can be right about underlying factors – racism, etc. – but platforms give them an audience. Addressing that proximate cause key.

Pascale 19 – (Celine-Marie. “The Weaponization of Language: Discourses of Rising Right-Wing Authoritarianism.” Current Sociology, vol. 67, no. 6, Oct. 2019, pp. 898–917, doi:10.1177/0011392119869963)//gcd note: language modified in brackets

Disinformation and fake news Disinformation can be understood as a subset of propaganda. Stalin coined the word ‘dezinformatsiya’ in 1923 to describe false information spread systematically through media and public announcements to intentionally confuse or mislead publics. In an information-based world, Science and Technology Studies (STS) take up the politics of disordered information through analyses of internet technology and networks (Benkler et al., 2018; Marshall et al., 2015; Mohammed, 2012). In addition, STS address the complicated strategic and moral problems of regulating the flows, access, and ownership of information. The 2016 US presidential election has given rise to concerns with disinformation and its effects on both historical records and critical thinking (Cheyfitz, 2017). Perhaps the clearest indication that disinformation is a pervasive problem that will extend long into the future is a new field of literature dedicated to educating children about the presence of disinformation and how to identify it (Mara, 2019; Schmermund, 2019). Practices of disinformation are systematic productions and disseminations of false and misleading information. These are not haphazard or unintentional errors. As such, disinformation might seem easy to identify. However, identifying disinformation has become complicated by the strategically misleading charges of ‘fake news’ leveled by leaders who decry reality as fake. For example: • Amnesty International gave Syrian President Bashar Assad a report in February that 13,000 people had been killed at one of his military prisons. Assad’s response: ‘You can forge anything these days. . . . We are living in a fake news era’ (Rahim, 2017). • A state official in Myanmar recently told media, ‘There is no such thing as Rohingya. It is fake news’ (Samuels, 2017). • Spain’s Foreign Minister, when presented with photos documenting police violence against Catalonians, responded: ‘fake news’ (Schwartz, 2017). • In the midst of economic devastation, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro characterized media reports as ‘spreading lies’ about Venezuela, adding: ‘This is what we call “fake news” today, isn’t it?’ (Schwartz, 2017). In these examples, the charge of ‘fake news’ is a form of disinformation in itself. Governments are using the charge of ‘fake news’ to reshape reality as they attack information and people that they want to discredit. Sherine, one of Egypt’s most famous singers, jokingly implied it was not safe to drink from the Nile and was arrested and sentenced to six months in jail for insulting the country by ‘spreading fake news’ (BBC, 2018). As is evident in these examples, the charge of ‘fake news’ is levied by government leaders to dismiss or to attack people and ideas that are verifiably true. Consequently, the charge of ‘fake news’ functions as a very specific signifier – one most closely associated with Joseph Stalin’s efforts to consolidate power by denying specific realities (such as massacres) and to attack people who spoke of realities that he did not want to acknowledge. Today, world leaders use the charge of ‘fake news’ to discredit challenges to power, to attack free speech, and to undermine human rights (Martin, 2017; Schwartz, 2017). Just weeks after taking office, US President Trump aligned himself with the strategies of Stalin, Hitler, and Mao when he told his then chief strategist, Steve Bannon, ‘The fake media is the opposition party. The fake media is the enemy of the American people’ (Vick, 2018). The unfolding crisis is not just that people may believe false things to be true. A study by Pew Research demonstrates that a fake news panic in the United States is accelerating polarization and causing people to become resistant to new information (Mitchell et al., 2019). According to the Pew study, as many as 70% of respondents reported having lost confidence in government institutions. The fake news panic combined with genuine disinformation campaigns are affecting the core functions of democratic systems. Disinformation campaigns are designed to consolidate power by provoking reactionary responses that sustain epidemics of social unrest. For example, the US intelligence community pummeled Chile with disinformation in order to unseat the democratically elected President Salvador Allende and install Augosto Pinochet (Carter, 2014) . Recently, researchers have documented that Russia targeted specific racial groups in the United States with more than 80,000 posts and thousands of ads that mimicked the style of Black Lives Matter activists in order to stoke racialized conflict and unrest (Associated Press, 2018). Each of these postings proliferated through social media re-postings. Disinformation might contain complete falsehoods or partial truths, or it might distort reality by representing an unusual circumstance as a common one. Disinformation campaigns also often incorporate conspiracy theories which delegitimize mainstream media and are used to target people and ideas. For example, Nazi ideology, rife with conspiracies theories regarding Jews, is one of many examples of a disinformation campaign. Jewish conspiracy theories remain today. In 2018 Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán forced the closing of the Central European University (CEU), a private university funded by George Soros, an American of Hungarian and Jewish origin. Orbán, who has promised to defend his Christian homeland, claimed the CEU was part of a plan by Soros to flood Hungary with non-Christian immigrants (Stanley, 2018). Conspiracy theories generated by disinformation campaigns often break the boundaries of rational thought and commonsense. In 2016, a young man carrying an assault rifle wandered into a pizzeria in northwest Washington, DC, to investigate reports that Hillary Clinton and her campaign chief were running a pedophilia ring from the basement. Conspiracy theories are a vibrant part of right-wing media ecosystems. Indeed, a week later, a poll found that the potential shooter was not alone in believing this conspiracy theory: ‘nearly half of Trump voters polled “gave some credence” to the rumors’ (Benkler et al., 2018: 3). Disinformation strikes at the very foundations of democratic society as publics increasingly lose their capacity to tell truth from fiction. To paraphrase Voltaire, those who can make you believe absurdities, can make you commit atrocities. Disinformation campaigns have been waged for a very long time; today the internet and the proliferation of mobile devices have accelerated and intensified disinformation campaigns by providing speed, reach, and the capacity to target individual groups through social media platforms. Vosoughi et al. (2018) studied news stories on Twitter from 2006 to 2017 and tracked 126,000 rumors that were spread more than 4.5 million times. Bots can set off even more viral rumor cascades. For example, Twitter was able to identify 5.7 million follows from a single source in one week (Twitter Public Policy, 2017). Generally, when someone follows us online, we tend to follow them back. When we are followed by a bot and we follow them back, we embed the disinformation bot in our own networks. It is impossible for readers to recognize when articles and reposts can be traced back to a single bot source (Westneat, 2017). In 2017, Twitter’s automated systems caught on average ‘more than 3.2 million suspicious accounts globally per week’ – more than double the number identified in 2016 (Twitter Public Policy, 2017). Facebook reported removing 2.2 billion fake accounts in the first quarter of 2019 (Siddiqui, 2019). However, sensational content is central to the Facebook business model and as a result, it has done little to identify and dismantle online disinformation campaigns. Commonsense tells us that if we learn the same information from three or four different sources, it must be true. Publics are persuaded not by facts so much as by the consistency of the system that generates facts (Arendt, 1967). Consequently, disinformation fueled by the internet can be deadly. In India at least 30 people were murdered in a single year after being identified on WhatsApp as ‘child-lifters’ (Safi, 2018); five people in India who were accused of being sex traffickers on WhatsApp were murdered by vigilante lynch mobs (Gowen, 2018; Kessler, 2018). WhatsApp, owned by Facebook, is an encrypted instant messaging and phone service with 1.5 billion users. While the size of user groups is limited to 262 addresses, encryption makes it possible to share messages with no indication of their origin. Disinformation overlaps with mundane discourse as leaders craft bold and obvious lies. Through these lies, they tell the world that they are beyond accountability – that they wield raw power with impunity. Given his prolific use of blatant lies, I will turn to Donald Trump as a kind of case study. The US president is now on record as having made over 10,111 publicly documented false statements in 828 days (Kessler et al., 2019). The velocity of the lies and chaos created by the Trump presidency is often overwhelming and unmanageable for mainstream media as well as for individuals. Even fact checkers who professionally follow Trump have trouble keeping up. This is precisely why recommendations to confront lies by verifying truthful information, like those made by the European Commission (2018), are both important and bound to fail. ‘If falsehood, like truth, had but one face, we should know better where we are, for we should then take for certain the opposite of what the liar tells us. But the reverse of truth has a thousand shapes and a boundless field’ (Montaigne, 1927). Indeed, liars have seemingly unlimited options. Systematic deceit functions as a form of violence that leverages reasonable expectations of truthfulness to coerce or compel people to act in ways that are quite different than they would choose – if they had correct information. Trump is known to have made the same false claim more than 120 times (Kessler et al., 2018). Donald Trump seems to be drawing from Lenin’s old aphorism that a lie told often enough becomes the truth. However, in the internet age Lenin’s aphorism could be updated to ‘If you make it trend, you make it true’ (DiResta, 2018). Truth and politics have never been on the best of terms (Arendt, 1967) but we have entered new territory. It isn’t only the numbers of lies that pose a threat. Consider that Trump’s lies are different in kind, not just in quantity, from typical people. When ordinary people lie, we orient toward the truth in order to make our lies seem plausible (Carson, 2016; Frankfurt, 2005). We want our lies to been seen as being true; this is the nature of deceit. Ordinary people craft lies with an eye to preventing ourselves from being exposed for having lied. This has not been the case for Trump, whose lies are not masked. Indeed, he openly bragged about lying to the Canadian Prime Minister about trade deficits. Trump is not attempting to get away with a lie. Rather, Trump’s lies convey an impression that he wields unconstrained power: he can say whatever he wants to say, and the world just has to take it. Perhaps it is even a little sweeter for him, when people know he is lying but can do nothing about it. To the extent that he seems to have impunity it is because he does not stand alone; he is part of a comprehensive system that brought him to power and ensures his survival. Even when media identify lies, a significant part of the population does not care – indeed he is part of a cohort of world leaders who adopt a very similar approach. Trump’s communication has been successful – even while those of us wedded to facts may think otherwise. Efforts to demonstrate the falsity of his claims are important yet never adequate. This is precisely why we, as sociologists, must pay attention to the use of language – not just matters of fact. Disinformation campaigns online are a powerful, effective, and inexpensive means to generate political and social chaos. Disinformation and propaganda working together do more than create factions and tensions between them. They place factual reality itself at risk. The greatest danger is not that lies will be accepted as truth and truth defamed as lies, but that ‘the sense by which we take our bearings in the real world – and the category of truth vs. falsehood is among the mental means to this end – is being destroyed’ (Arendt, 1967: 50). Reality itself becomes more contingent and less objectively real. Reasoned debate is replaced by emotional spectacles. Mundane discourses In mundane discourse, media and publics are enlisted to routinize and disseminate disinformation even where outlandish claims and conspiracy theories are repeated, even when they are not plausible. In this section, I examine how these discourses enter the language of ordinary people and make us unwitting tools of right-wing movements. The term ‘mundane discourse’ is a more contemporary concept that characterizes ordinary systems of signification. The term often is attributed to Harold Garfinkel (1967), who used it to refer to situated talk. It is now common parlance among those who study systems of signification in culture as well as interaction (cf. Reisigl and Wodak, 2001; Van Dijk, 1997; Wodak and Meyer, 2009). Mundane discourse might be best understood as the linguistic delivery device through which weaponized language enters the mainstream. Public discourse can be like tiny doses of arsenic which appear to have no effect when initially swallowed but which are highly toxic over time (Klemperer, 2013). In postindustrial societies material violence is not the first choice, but it is always a justifiable option. Indeed, it is an option made plausible through weaponized language in mundane discourses. Weaponized language is a powerful form of symbolic violence that tills the soil for physical violence. Following the Christchurch massacre, the Institute for Strategic Dialogue identified 10 Twitter accounts that were most influential in propagating the idea that white people are under attack; eight of these were in France, one belonged to the extreme right site Defend Europa, and the other belonged to Donald Trump (Iqbal and Townsend, 2019). Weaponized language has preceded and accompanied every act of collective violence. In mundane discourses weaponized language normalizes hate and hate groups through purportedly ordinary language. In the United States, for example, the term ‘illegal alien’ is often used to dehumanize those seeking asylum. Political and media discourses often refer to ‘chain migration,’ when in fact they are talking about family reunification. Many in the United States use the term ‘chain migration’ simply because they are repeating the only phrasing that they have ever heard. However, we come to see the world as we learn to name and describe it. Metaphors and linguistic frames seep into everyday discourse and gradually become part of a worldview. In every country, the racialized citizen is an illegitimate citizen whose welfare is precarious. Trump’s anti-Muslim and anti-Latino hate speech is directly correlated with increased hate crimes against Muslims and Latinos in the United States (Beutel, 2018). The United States has gone so far as to create a denaturalization task force to revoke the citizenship of naturalized citizens (Vega, 2018). As I write this, tens of thousands of children from Central America are being warehoused in the United States without access to parents or guardians; many children are lost in a bureaucratic system of detention. Over 49,000 unaccompanied children, most of them from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, have been apprehended and jailed in horrible conditions by the United States at the Mexico border (Kinosian and Holpuch, 2018). Such attacks on children have been made possible by the very intentional linguist practices that preceded these actions. Trump’s Twitter account has been identified by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue as one of the 10 most influential accounts in the world for propagating the extreme right-wing paranoia that white people are being eliminated through migration and violence (Iqbal and Townsend, 2019). As sociologists, we are familiar with the practices of ‘othering’ that devalues people and excludes them from deserving empathetic consideration. A lack of empathy is easily leveraged into a willingness to disregard harm done to those who are ‘othered,’ and then escalated into a willingness to inflict harm upon them, which is often rationalized as selfprotection. Ultimately, ‘othering’ blames victims for the suffering inflicted upon them. Right-wing nativist groups around the globe have launched both linguistic and physical attacks against immigrants. These attacks are evident in countries across Europe, in the United States, in South Africa, Australia, South Korea, and Thailand. In Japan, the Japan First Party launched a nationwide ‘Anti Immigrant Day’ in 28 locations across the country. Myanmar’s genocidal purge of Muslims to create a so-called Buddhist nation began with the use of racial slurs to describe darker-skinned Muslims. Nationalism depends upon slurs that are used to construct groups of people as being less than human, as being potentially violent predators, and as deserving any harsh treatment they might receive. Slurs have been used to create dehumanized enemies throughout time. It is the essential first step that justifies physical violence. In addition to slurs, hate is being mainstreamed through euphemisms and rebranding. Through much of the world, white supremacists now call themselves the ‘alt right’ as if they are a legitimate party with a platform beyond white supremacy. This ‘accommodatingly imprecise’ rebranding enables ‘a range of conspiracy theorists, techno-libertarians, white nationalists, Men’s Rights advocates, trolls, anti-feminists, anti-immigration activists, and bored young people’ to join an organization that has an unchanged core of white nationalism (Phillips, 2018: 4). It is similar to Marine Le Pen’s rebranding of the National Front in France. We can see mainstreaming language in public discourses among groups who call themselves ‘conservatives’ or ‘religious fundamentalists’ to justify hatred toward other religious groups, racialized groups, as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. Of course, all of these practices are contested. To date, far-right groups have responded by attempting to subvert and redeploy discourses of resistance. For example, the creation of the Black Lives Matter movement began in the United States in response to deadly attacks by police and armed citizens against black people. In response, white supremacists have sought to subvert the movement slogan ‘Black Lives Matter’ by shouting back that ‘all lives matter.’ Similarly, white nationalists attempt to undermine and subvert the language of legislation designed to protect children brought to the US by their parents (known as Dreamers) by asserting that ‘we are all dreamers.’ Language is weaponized whenever the politics of hate find expression in the mundane discourse of everyday life. It is most dangerously weaponized when ordinary people can think of no other ways – beyond these framings – to talk about social phenomena. Indeed, the politics of hate are most effective when rendered mundane, ordinary matters that require no special thought. Media and publics routinize the politics of hate through the everyday discourses in which it is embedded. If we adopt weaponized language, regardless of our intent, we become complicit in normalizing hate. It is critical that we confront this language and refuse to incorporate it into our own lives. Public discourse is always significant. It is always strategic. Even if we do not fully understand it. Discussion The weaponization of language is not new – yet we now face a dangerous acceleration and intensification of those processes. To paraphrase Chinese artist and dissident Ai Wei Wei, we do not face an information crisis, a refugee crisis or a climate crisis – much more fundamentally, we face a human crisis. A global human crisis. We, as scholars, have the opportunity to step into this moment. We have the opportunity to help shape a different future. This is precisely why the academy is under attack. Scholars in critical disciplines including gender studies, critical race studies, and more generally the social sciences are facing increased attacks by governments. Most recently, in Brazil and Hungary national governments closed entire departments while defunding others. Open attacks on disciplines that teach critical thinking is part of the right-wing turn around the world. There is no single path forward in these times. Global circumstances would seem to invite social sciences in general, and sociologists in particular, to fight back by entrenching ourselves in the world of objective facts. This path is important and perhaps irresistible when politicians and media openly make statements that are certifiably false. However, a retrenchment of empiricism will not deliver us from this historical moment, just as it did not prevent it from arriving. Indeed, it is often government efforts to elide facts that lead to the preposterous logic they present to the public. As Montaigne reminds us, falsehood is not the opposite of truth. Unbound by logic and fact, those willing to weaponize language have boundless possibilities. The four-fold strategy of right-wing authoritarianism leveraged through censorship, propaganda, disinformation, and mundane discourse can itself ~~debilitate~~ [hinder] resistance, as it is intended. Many scholars have been invested in combating the rise of authoritarian right-wing movements. For example, Sari Hanafi’s 2018 ISA Presidential Address, and subsequent forthcoming article in Current Sociology, argues that in response to rising authoritarianism, global sociology should become more normative – that is to say sociology must be not only ‘of the global but also for the global.’ Important work is being done but these strategies are not enough. Sociological studies of systems of signification are essential. Critical analyses of authoritarian discourses will give us a road map of where these movements intend to take us and how they intend to do it. As scholars who study language and society know too well, the discipline of sociology has had, at best, an uneven relationship to studies of signification. The ISA has enabled scholars in this field to flourish with the creation of Research Committee 25, Language and Society. Yet in our home countries, sociological studies of language do not flourish in our departments or our professional associations. Often sociological analyses of language are rejected as something other than social science; at best they are tolerated as a marginalized niche. As scholars consider weaponized language and the social conditions in which it emerges, it is important to also reconsider the epistemic limitations of our discipline and what sociological studies of language have to contribute. Systems of signification are not epiphenomenal to culture – these are the processes through which culture is created, maintained, and transformed. As Klemperer’s selfstyled analysis of weaponized language during the Third Reich demonstrates, systems of signification are the processes through which conditions for peace and for violence are created and made meaningful. Critical sociological engagement with systems of signification offers us a way to decode and interrupt rising far-right movements before they become fully entrenched and to deconstruct them when they are entrenched. Sociological analyses of systems of signification will provide insight into how these movements seek to create and normalize specific forms of violence. They will lessen the likelihood that right-wing discursive strategies will be naively recirculated in media and in mundane discourse. They will provide insights into effective ways to reframe issues (e.g., family reunification vs. chain migration) that could prove to be effective forms of resistance. And it is through systems of signification that we create, locate, or abdicate, our responsibilities for action. Our work as scholars is more important than ever.