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#### The aff’s reformation to the political economy can’t be separated from the narrative of neoliberal success. Unspoken, but ever present, is the appeal of the American Dream that entices and assimilates the most privileged Asian populations as junior partners to whiteness. As

Overall, in the pro-Liang mobilization, what might be read as a moment of acculturation, in which the Chinese American subject moves toward American cultural citizenship through civic participation and immersion in racial minority discourse, needs historical and transnational articulations. The American Dream is not just about crafting the American nation-state as an exceptional place upholding democracy and freedom; it is an imperialist ambition. These ideologies indeed travel across national borders as transnational capital moves through geopolitical spaces, demanding an open market and culturally equipped consumers, building a parasitic ideological relation between the two nations. The neoliberal form of the Asian American body politic is fused with the model minority ethics of hard work and deservingness, as well as anti-Blackness, and it treats any political outcry against racialized state violence as a performance of political correctness.**[[1]](#footnote-1)**

#### This parasitic citizenship required by appeals to economic freedom, competition, and the American Dream produces both inter and intramural violence for a taste of conditional freedom. The rampant nationalism spurred by Liang’s shooting of Gurley demonstrates how racial and political crises can be coopted for conservative means

Liu 18 (Wen, Assistant Professor of women’s gender and sexuality studies at the University of Albany, “Complicity and Resistance: Asian American Body Politics in Black Lives Matter,” October 2018, Journal of Asian American Studies, Volume 21, Number 3)

This racial antagonism between Asian and African American communities, which resulted in accumulated transnational geopolitical conflicts, reached a peak in the aforementioned incident of Liang’s shooting and killing of Gurley in November 2014. This incident, occurring during the height of the BLM protests in Ferguson, became a controversy in the movement. The controversy was raised and then became a division between African and Asian Americans but also within Asian American communities because Liang, a young Chinese American man, was the first among all police officers indicted, the others all white, who had abused police powers in the line of duty resulting in the deaths of many unarmed and innocent Black people. It became apparent to Asian Americans that the government was using Liang as a scapegoat to try to alleviate the national racial “crisis” highlighted by BLM activists and their demands to reform and abolish the police system built on the practices and ideology of white supremacy. This targeting of an inexperienced Asian American officer offended many Chinese Americans. Within a few months of the incident, two large-scale rallies and several press conferences were mobilized in support of Liang by Chinese American business leaders and local politicians, who accused the city’s indictment of officer Liang as racist. This seemingly defensive mobilization against Liang’s indictment was quickly appropriated by conservative elites and politicians and turned into an offensive, anti-Black critique of BLM’s racial justice vision. I identified four distinct discursive strategies that the pro-Liang groups adopted to turn BLM’s critique of the state’s racism via police violence into racism against Chinese Americans: racial victimology, ethnic empowerment and deservingness, the American Dream, and anti-Blackness. These discursive strategies allowed the proLiang groups to shift the attention away from BLM’s broader demand for racial justice and toward intergroup Asian-Black conflicts. Racial Victimology The pro-Liang coalition mobilized Chinese immigrant communities not only in New York City and its surrounding suburbs but also transnationally. An online petition for the White House opposing Liang’s indictment started by a Chinese American community member quickly reached almost 120,000 signatures.27 Within a day of the announcement of the court, tens of thousands of dollars were donated to the campaign to withdraw Liang’s indictment from Chinese people of all classes—restaurant workers, beauticians in hair salons, business managers, lawyers, and retired elders, and so on.28 Meanwhile overseas, the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) central propaganda newspaper, People’s Daily, not only reported the incident but also condemned the U.S. government as “unjust” and argued that “the US legal system still has a long way to go,”29 implicating that the unequal treatment of Chinese Americans crushed the fantasy of egalitarian multiculturalism in the United States. Due to the wide-scale response and interests in the case, a self-proclaimed “civil rights” organization called Coalition of Asian American for Civil Rights (CAACR) was quickly formed after the incident. The coalition organizers, mostly Chinese American businessmen, saw this as a chance to inject rarely visible Asian American agendas into mainstream politics and strengthen the community’s ties with the police and the state. Thousands of Chinese American protestors gathered on the lawn of Cadman Plaza in Brooklyn, waving American flags and bilingual signs in support of Liang on April 26, 2015. The crowd largely consisted of middle-aged, first-generation Chinese Americans and their young children. Many people wore red clothes as a symbol of Chinese national pride. Although the event was set as a protest against the “unjust treatment” of the state and many were chanting “No Scapegoats!” along with the organizers on the stage, the tone of the event was strangely celebratory. Some families brought picnics and speakers to play Chinese music in the park, as if it was an extension of the Lunar New Year celebration that had happened earlier in the month. Due to the sheer amount of people present in the crowded space, it was difficult to hear the speeches from the politicians and business leaders on the main stage. The political content of the rally was not clear to me in the first place. My conversation with a Chinese woman in her thirties from a New Jersey suburb confirmed at least one segment of ambiguous political motivation of the participants, as she admitted that she wasn’t familiar with the details of the Liang-Gurley case. The reason she had decided to come was because a message in her WeChat group encouraged people to show up to demonstrate “Chinese unity.” The themes of Chinese unity and pride seemed collectively shared among the participants, who expressed a sense of urgency to show up and to “not get looked down on by the Americans,” in other words, the mainstream society that they felt had silenced their political views for too long. The reason that the mobilization was successful and effective should not be attributed to the significance of the Liang-Gurley case alone but be examined in the context of a cumulative organizing effort within Chinese communities. Several precursor events contributed to the turnout at Liang’s rallies. First, in October 2013, on the Jimmy Kimmel Live segment “Kids Table Government Shutdown Show,” ABC aired an episode in which four children were discussing how the United States should solve the problem of its massive national debt to China. One child suggested that the government should build a big wall, and another six-year-old child laughed and said, “kill everyone in China.”30 The remarks infuriated Chinese American communities, a group of whom sent a petition to the White House’s “We the People” online initiative to demand that the U.S. government investigate ABC’s racial hatred.31 It reached a hundred thousand signatures in the three weeks following the show’s airing. Although the White House used the argument of free speech to deflect the demand, a new online network of Chinese Americans was built and carried a sense of political purpose to challenge racism against Chinese communities in the United States and abroad, unaffiliated with the existing nonprofit structure of Asian American network formed after the civil rights movements, galvanizing a new Chinese American collective identity of racial victimhood.32 Second, this insurgent political consciousness of middle-aged Chinese Americans, traditionally thought of as silent in American mainstream politics, was mobilized due to their desire to preserve their children’s educational privileges in higher education, as many institutions now do not consider Asian American a protected racial category. A coalition of Asian American groups filed suits against Harvard and several other Ivy League universities in 2015 and 2016 regarding their racial quotas in admission processes.33 While progressive affirmative action activists have been adapting the category of Asian American to argue that not all Asian Americans fit into the high-achieving stereotype, especially when Pacific Islanders and Southeast Asian Americans are considered, the complaints around higher education admission from Chinese American communities in recent years are primarily based on the ideology of meritocracy regardless of one’s race. This demand is about eliminating the Asian racial category as a protected class that is no longer needed. A color-blind racial rhetoric packaged in discourses of rights and justice has emerged in conservative Chinese American communities. These two political mobilizations together became the background driving forces for a solidified Chinese American subjectivity in the Liang Gurley case, built upon a form of racial victimology. The Chinese protestors, particularly the leadership, called out the state’s scapegoating tactic against Liang and labeled the incident “racial discrimination,” “unfair treatment,” and “selective treatment,” as many white officers have killed innocent people and have not been charged with manslaughter. Signs depicting Martin Luther King and speeches about the killing of Vincent Chin in the 1980s were highlighted in the rallies in March and April 2015, each drawing thousands of Chinese American participants. Ethnic Empowerment and Deservingness Whereas the deaths of Gurley and many other Black victims of police violence were not fairly addressed by the state or mainstream media, many Chinese publications in the United States portrayed the Chinese American mobilization in a unilateral celebratory tone. World Journal and Sing Tao Daily called the pro-Liang movement, which started in New York and spread across major U.S. cities, a “historical” phenomenon and the “largest” Chinese American gathering in the United States, showing an “unprecedented unity” and “solidarity” as well as a “mature and rational” image of the community.34 The Asian American rhetoric from the civil rights movement was largely appropriated to manufacture a united front of the Chinese American body politic as racial victim and, again, a legible racial minority deserving of institutional access and apology. This celebratory narrative of the newly emerged Chinese American “political unity” quickly became a political opportunity for Chinese elites to form a “rainbow coalition” with local Republican politicians, Asian and white, seizing the moment to condemn the current Democratic government and form stronger ties with the city’s police department. For instance, Joseph Concannon, a white retired NYPD captain, failed Senate and city council candidate, and president of the Tea Party–aligned Queens Village Republican Club, was a major force behind the pro-Liang rallies. Concannon, along with other Chinese American Republicans including Phil Grim and Doug Lee as well as qiaoling (僑領), overseas Chinese business leaders, worked together to push for their antipolice reform agendas as means to not only undermine the government of the more liberal-leaning mayor Bill de Blasio but also unite Asian American voters for the upcoming local elections, as voter registration forms passed through the rally crowd. In the March 9, 2015, “Support Your Local Police” rally to protest the indictment of Liang, Concannon implicitly condemned BLM activists as “racial arsonists” and “professional agitators” who were “turned loose” under de Blasio’s leadership.35 He and other Republican politicians addressed the Chinese American community as the “natural ally” for the pro-police and conservative agendas. A right-wing alliance developed between conservative Chinese and white Americans, who share a deep investment in preserving class privileges and status, in the name of “racial justice.” Far from being cross-racial solidarity, this alliance is white assimilation in disguise. Although securing Asian American voter blocks seemed to be the rainbow coalition’s primary motive in participating in the pro-Liang rally, for many of the Chinese American participants, it was a rare opportunity to express pride in their long-overlooked ethnic and national identity. This intensified sentiment of Chinese nationalism became salient to me in the rally on April 26. Whereas the coalition leadership was drawing from a more multicultural, pan-Asian discourse to put forth their demands to drop Liang’s charges, the conversations I had with the participants emphasized that Chinese people should stand up for themselves and not to get “harassed” or “put down by the Americans” anymore—meaning not only the white Americans who occupy a superior position in society but also other racial minorities, particular Blacks, whose demands seem to be taken more seriously by the state. The Liang incident becomes another classic example of how Asian Americanness is lifted up to perpetuate model minority success in order to deny the institutional access of other marginalized racial subjects such as in the affirmative action debate. It is ironic that the coalition leadership monopolized the representation of “Asian Americans” as a way to reappropriate the current racial crisis for ethnic-nationalist concerns, as the coalition was composed of only Chinese American and white leaders. The discourse of Asian racial victimology was mostly present in the official rhetoric of the Chinese American leaders, but to the participants, especially for the first-generation immigrants, it was more of an issue about Chineseness. Their urgency to stand up and join the rally was to express political power as a people to the American public after decades of being silenced as a racialized population. The American Dream The discourses of the American Dream were everywhere in the pro-Liang rallies. Chinese American families waved American flags while marching across the Brooklyn Bridge on April 26, 2015. The American anthem played before the speeches. Interestingly, the participants, who were largely native Chinese speakers, seemed uninterested in the American anthem, and hardly anyone sang along. Most of the participants, Chinese families with young children, gathered in small groups to take pictures with the American flags given to them by the coalition leaders. Any pedestrian who just happened to walk by that day would have had difficulty recognizing this gathering as a “political protest,” as many participants treated the event more like a social celebration. Some participants were waving heart-shaped signs with the Chinese letter “love” (愛) in red along with the American flags. A thick, impenetrable, and totalizing force of Chinese nationalism was forged during the event. The collective political narrative of Chinese ethnic empowerment superseded the more nuanced ways the participants understood the Liang-Gurley incident. At one point the redness of the American flags and the redness from the participants’ signs, clothes, and banners, which symbolized Chinese unity, merged in the scene. It became clearer and clearer to me, as I marched “ethnographically” with the crowd, that the American Dream was aligned with an equally powerful, affective Chinese Dream and a neoliberal transnational dream of class advancement that requires exclusion and stratification of the classed and racial Other. As a queer Taiwanese American observer in the march, my otherness was indeed quite apparent. Despite being ethnically Han, my queerness and nonconforming gender expressions drastically singled me out from the crowd of middle-aged parents and their young children. When I spoke to the march participants, my Taiwanese Mandarin accent was also quite distinct from that of the Chinese mainlanders. I felt as though I was a “race traitor” and consciously distanced myself from the crowd so that they would not recognize my ulterior emotions. At the same time, I recognized the very flexible capacity of my Asian Americanness that blended in the collective expression of Chinese American body politic to the non-Chinese spectators, yet my queerness continued to signify a stance of dissidence and protest—an opposition to the American and the Chinese ideal. However, without the presence of other dissidents, my race and ethnicity were quickly absorbed and territorialized by the collective body politic in the event—the ambiguous yet powerful signs of Chineseness, masking in total consensus by the bodies, the chants, the redness everywhere on participants’ signs, banners, and clothes. The collective political narrative of Chinese ethnic empowerment supersedes the more nuanced ways the participants understood the Liang-Gurley incident. The U.S. flag in the event symbolized not only allegiance to the state but an aspiration to become successful as Chinese people in the United States. During my fieldwork on the bridge, another middle-aged Chinese woman told me that she had brought her son to the rally because she wanted him to “learn democracy” in order to be “successful in this country.” As much of the Chinese press that covered the pro-Liang mobilization as a historical event has shown Chinese solidarity and Chinese people’s capacity to participate in civic actions in a “mature and rational” manner,36 the subjectivity that emerged in these events was less about a demonstration of American patriotism and more about Chinese modernity and desire for a new nation as a people. As the previous Asian American assimilationist politics in the post–civil rights period emphasized American national and cultural identity, that is, a liberal racial ideology of national belonging, the pro-Liang coalition expressed a qualitatively different kind of national belonging grounded in a moral and cultural ethic of economic advancement and civic respectability, as well as in a dream of Chinese modernity. Aihwa Ong has defined neoliberalism as a technology of governance that rearticulates the social criteria for citizenship for the purpose of optimizing the effects of the market and demoralizing economic activities.37 Citizenship is thus no longer strictly attached to national identification but defined by economic productivity. In short, the participants’ desire for U.S. nationalism is less about being seen as “Americans” and more about a longing for continual economic prosperity and political opportunities for their communities and their next generations. Similarly, the discourse around Liang’s “unfair” indictment focused not on his unequal treatment as an “American” but on how the promise of model minority advancement was temporarily shattered by a state-inflicted racial crisis.

#### Asian Americans are at a political crossroad. Historically apathetic, the new waves of Anti-Asian violence have created new waves of political hope and energy for Asian communities. BUT that political hope is not neutral – central to the appeal to assimilation is also the appeal to reinforce the systems of militarism and violence that have torn our communities apart. From Asian Americans donating nearly $100,000 to the Proud Boys after the capital riots[[2]](#footnote-2) to supporting affirmative action lawsuits,[[3]](#footnote-3) the chase for the “good Asian American Life” AND the fear of being the perpetual foreigner constitutes a wounded attachment that demands permanent hierarchies.

#### Retrofitting one’s subjecthood around economic competitiveness and proving economic value creates this nationalistic identification in hopes of assimilation. However, “Assimilation must not be mistaken for power, because once you have acquired power, you are exposed, and your model minority qualifications that helped you in the past can be used against you, since you are no longer invisible”[[4]](#footnote-4)

-Cathy Park Hong: Minor Feelings

Ironside 11 (Emily Rae Ironside, MA in Communication, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville,

(Re)Constituting the Immigrant Body through Policy: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Narratives within the Discourses of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act), A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication, <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1069&context=etd&httpsredir=1&referer=>)

Using exclusionary nationalist discourses of assimilationism to reframe marginalized immigrants as Americans rather than enemies of the state creates a rhetorical tension through which DREAM Act supporters must cautiously navigate. Although the familiar theme of assimilation creates ethos and closes the gaps privileging “Americans” over immigrant “Others,” it also reifies their own their subordination by preserving the dominance of exclusionary nationalism. Feminist scholar Audre Lorde speaks to marginalized black feminists attempting to eradicate racism within White feminist discourse, arguing that “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.”312 Lorde’s warning applies to all subordinated groups who use dominant, elitist discourse to bring about genuine social change. She argues its very usage reinforces “the master’s” position of power and prevents social transformation; therefore, subordinated immigrants who wish to challenge their position of powerlessness and encourage longterm social change should understand the rhetorical consequences of reenacting the discourses of exclusionary nationalism. Using assimilationist discourses to persuade policymakers to expand the definition of American to include immigrant “Others” ultimately fails to destroy the institutionalized dominance of the exclusive national narrative responsible for their exclusion. In order to challenge the state’s control over the American identity, undocumented immigrants and their allies must master the art of difference and redefine themselves outside of the dominant exclusionary nationalist discourses. In addition to employing exclusionary nationalist discourses of assimilation to persuade policymakers to pass the DREAM Act, the panelists speaking in the 2007 hearing upheld the classist rhetoric of economic competition, constructing themselves as valuable assets to the American economy. They took on the myth of American exceptionalism as their own, claiming that they are the key to maintaining the economic power of the United States as global competition increases. Although this rhetorical strategy challenges the notion that undocumented immigrants are potential terrorists, it ultimately constitutes them as economic pawns of the state, further reducing the possibility for long-term social change that liberates undocumented immigrants from their marginalized position. The following section investigates how class-driven testimonies reinforce the dominant narrative of exclusionary nationalism and perpetuate the economic subordination of undocumented immigrants. “We Are the American Dream”: The Conundrum of Classist Discourses The panelists speaking in support of the DREAM Act in the 2007 hearing strategically used classist discourses of exclusionary nationalism to construct undocumented immigrant youth as economic necessities. Historically, the notion of economic competition has been used to label unwanted immigrants as competitors who threaten the financial security of the nation and, therefore, endanger the livelihood of its citizens. Immigration policies such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the mass deportation of Mexican laborers in the 1930’s, and the seizure of property of interned Japanese in the 1940’s all were the result of widespread fears unwanted immigrants were stealing American jobs and threatening the national economy. In the case of the 2007 hearing on the DREAM Act, supporters utilized classist discourses of economic competition by constructing undocumented immigrant youth as valuable assets whose skills and determination will improve the economy, labeling those who deny legal access to these young workers are the new economic threat. Unfortunately, this rhetorical strategy did nothing to challenge exclusionary nationalism and, as a result, perpetuated the reduction of immigrants as laborers serving the state’s economic interests. Classist discourses of exclusionary nationalism constructed undocumented youth as a necessary investment in the nation’s economy. Diana Furchtgott-Roth, a panelist representing the Center for Employment Policy, stated of undocumented students, They are hardworking and talented, and produce streams of income taxes and Social Security payments that bolster our fiscal position. . . . This total of about 1 million potential workers represents .7 percent, less than 1 percent of our labor force . . . even though these undocumented young people are a small group, they have the potential to make an important contribution to our economy. . . . This makes the educational investment worth it both for the students, but more importantly for the rest of us. . . . because we have more productive citizens who fill needed job openings and who can pay taxes. . . . the United States needs these young workers.313 Contrary to the dominant classist discourses blaming the immigrant “invasion” for “[displacing] Americans from jobs” and “[placing]” heavy burdens” on the economy, Furchtgott-Roth constituted immigrant youth as outstanding entrepreneurs who will fill needed job openings and contribute to the strength of the American economy.314 Additionally, Furchtgott-Roth used statistics from a 2005 Harvard University study to argue that immigrants actually help raise average American wages by 0.1%, demonstrating how increasing access to employment for immigrants would not have the negative impact suggested by opponents of the DREAM Act. Although Furchtgott-Roth’s testimony challenged the conventional rhetoric that frames immigrant laborers as economic threats, it reinforced the classist construction of immigrants as token laborers needed for the economic prosperity of the White nation. Moreover, her “expert” testimony delegitimized the witnesses testifying before her. Rhetoricians Lorraine Higgins and Lisa Brush argue that marginalized “Others” “rarely constitute a public perceived as capable or ‘expert’ enough to contribute anything valuable to public debate.”315 By inviting “expert” witnesses representing the “master’s language” to speak after the immigrant “Others,” policymakers reduced the rhetorical power of the immigrant women and their personal narratives. Supporters of the DREAM Act perpetuated the myth of American exceptionalism, thereby maintaining the narrative dominance of exclusionary nationalism. The “expert” panelists in the 2007 hearing reinforced classist discourses when they portrayed immigrant youth as contributors to the myth of American exceptionalism. For example, Mr. Jamie Merisotis of the Institute for Higher Education Policy commented, If you consider what our national workforce needs are in the specific sense of human capital, it is clear we are looking at an enormous shortage of educated workers in the not-too-distant future. . . . Investing in those who are already here is our best hope for remaining competitive on a global scale. . . . The DREAM Act is a common-sense piece of bipartisan legislation that provides these talented and industrious future workers a pathway to citizenship.316 Additionally, Representative Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) argued, Our Nation is faced with ever increasing economic competition from developed and developing nations. To effectively compete in an ever expanding global market, we must ensure that we can continue to have the most educated workforce in the world. Whether in college or in the military, we must give all qualified young people the opportunity to contribute in ways that will keep America strong.317 Both Merisotis and Lofgren drew on the myth of maintaining American exceptionalism to support the passage of the DREAM Act. They legitimated the rhetorical constructs connecting economic status to national strength, claiming the key to keeping “America strong” is to invest in undocumented immigrant youth. By doing so, they objectified immigrants as being “human capital” only needed for the economic benefit of the state. Additionally, Merisotis and Lofgren preserved the notion that uneducated immigrants remain a danger to society when they suggested that only educated immigrants would benefit the U.S. economy. Just as policymakers excluded “unskilled” and “illiterate” immigrants from participating in the national narrative in 1917 through the implementation of illiteracy tests, Merisotis and Lofgren reserved access to the American identity for only educated, skilled undocumented immigrants.318 Using classist discourses of exclusionary nationalism, policymakers framed skilled undocumented immigrant youth as integral parts of the capitalist machine rather than as humans who deserve equal access to economic and social privilege. As Foucault reminds us, a primary way in which the state preserves its position of power is to render its people objects of its control. He argues that the state views the body as a “docile that may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved” for the purpose of stripping it of its individual force of power and transforming it into an “aptitude” or “capacity” of the state.319 Labeling immigrants as “human capital” reinforces their powerless position as docile and utilitarian objects, reducing immigrants to economic pawns needed to uphold the power of the state. Thus, the rhetorical strategy of framing undocumented immigrant youth as economic contributors fails to challenge the economic, racial, and social hierarchies of power and severely limits the passage of future policy benefiting the economic status of all marginalized immigrants, especially those immigrants furthest away from the status quo.320 Not only did the use of assimilationist and classist discourses fail to contest the narrative dominance of exclusionary nationalism, this strategy also restricted the ability for immigrants to resist mechanisms of state control. In the 2007 hearing, supporters of the DREAM Act utilized discourses of fear to highlight the injustices of detaining and deporting undocumented youth. They described the pain and anxiety resulting from the fear of deportation and family separation, making known the experiences of those living in the shadows cast by restrictive immigration policies. However, these panelists had previously stated their desire to become staunch members of the same society responsible for their fear; therefore, their testimonies lacked the rhetorical power needed to overturn centuries of state control. The following section investigates the strategic shortcomings of immigrant panelists who used discourses of fear to challenge mechanisms of internal enforcement.

#### US Antitrust isn’t a domestic attitude, it’s an international structure that coerces and condemns other nations into a continual state structural adjustment. Competition bleeds outward and mutates developing nations into a deformed image of Empire that will never be cared for.

Waked 16 (Dina I. Waked, Assistant Professor of Law at Sciences Po Law School, “Adoption of Antitrust Laws in Developing Countries: Reasons and Challenges,” 2016, Journal of Law Economics and Policy, Vol. 12.2)

The unprecedented spread of antitrust laws in the 1990s raises the question of why did developing countries adopt competition laws in the 1990s and not before? Further, why did so many of them suddenly become interested in competition law adoption? There is no simple answer, except to say that competition laws were not considered an important addition to their arsenal of laws up until the 1990s. One reason was that many countries had provisions either in their penal codes, civil codes, or commercial legislations dealing with competition law issues before formally adopting legislation that is solely concerned with competition matters.8 This made them less interested in adopting particular laws dealing with competition, seeing that they had general provisions in other legislation dealing with the same issues. Then why did so many suddenly become interested in these kind of laws in the 1990s? It is simplistic to argue, yet probably true, that many countries were entering trade agreements in the 1990s that made the adoption of competition law a prerequisite to the implementation of the trade deals.9 These treaties were either trade agreements creating free trade zones or part of structural programs that intended to open up the developing world economies and facilitated the entry of foreign entities that considered a competition law a necessity and guarantee for their work abroad, in particularly in a developing country. More generally, the 1990s are considered the era where developing world countries started to put an end to their former protectionist policies that were either inspired by communist or socialist regimes or simply by efforts to industrialize and strengthen national champions and local producers. The 1990s introduced the new era of international trade, encouraging foreign direct investment, and membership in regional trade agreements or the World Trade Organization (WTO). With the emergence of many of these structural changes, open door policies and participation in world trade relations, competition laws were suddenly prescribed as necessities to fa-cilitate much of the impending changes.10 It is important to understand the role played by the WTO and other international organizations in encouraging and often requiring new members to adopt these laws in order to understand the surge in the developing world.11 Similarly, the role played by the EU in encouraging new members and trade partners to adopt competition law is even more straightforward.12 Adopting these laws seemed to many as the missing link to assure growth and development.13 Therefore, one could argue that one of the main factors that led to the widespread adoption of competition laws across developing countries is the push exercised by supranational bodies. Another factor is the overwhelming evidence these international bodies were presenting to developing countries illustrating a positive relationship between adopting a competition law and development. Competition laws appeared to be the missing link needed to usher in prosperity and growth. The pressure by international bodies and the development hopes that adopting competition laws carried are discussed in more detail next. A. The Push by International Bodies to Adopt Competition Laws International and supranational bodies have considered competition laws essential for economic reforms. Ever since competition laws were discussed as part of the agenda of the negotiations to establish an International Trade Organization (ITO) after World War II, competition laws were considered a vital requirement for needed reforms. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) upheld the rhetoric of the ITO and included competition issues and restrictive business practices in a “best endeavor” clause.14 However, the GATT did not require the adoption of specific provisions dealing with the treatment of private restrictive business practices (RBPs).15 Therefore, the members of the WTO could freely adopt their own national competition laws so long as they did not infringe the principle of nondiscrimination.16 The General Council of the WTO created a Working Group in April 1997 on the Interaction Between Trade and Competition Policy. This Working Group strongly called on developing countries to adopt competition rules in the face of the global merger wave underway and the structural changes taking place within the developing countries as a result of their liberalization and free trade policies.17 The WTO's focus on competition law adoption is due to the widely believed interaction between competition policies and the expansion of free trade.18 Effective free trade policies require, next to the withdrawal of trade barriers, the elimination of obstacles originating from private restraints resulting from abuse of dominance, monopolization, import and export cartels, horizontal and vertical restraints, and other issues considered to be competition law violations.19 To achieve these results, the WTO urged developing countries to adopt competition rules, often US or EC type competition policies, while encouraging for time lags in the introduction of these different aspects of competition rules to be able to efficiently implement them. One can explain the WTO’s continuous attempt to influence, encourage, and facilitate the adoption of competition legislation in developing countries by its aspirations towards harmonizing competition laws to one day usher in universal competition policies under its umbrella.20 The WTO is repeatedly encouraging agreements on core antitrust principles as a first step towards the achievement of this goal.21 When developing countries adopt rules similar to those in more developed countries, the attempt at harmonization seems more realistic and at the same time the effects of global anticompetitive conduct with relation to trade can be better tackled. If laws adopted in developing countries were fundamentally different from those in the advanced world, the ability of the developed countries to protect their interests from anti-competitive practices in developing countries would be limited. Thereby, not only would similar competition laws encourage more effective free trade, but would also give a sense of security for FDIs and MNCs working in developed countries. One can also argue that it would give the host developing country more teeth to prosecute prohibitive conduct emanating from local or foreign entities, and to challenge harmful global mergers. The WTO is not alone in encouraging competition law adoption across the developing world. Several international financial institutions consider a competition policy dimension when evaluating country risk necessary for lending purposes.22 For example, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Development Association (IDA) look at a country’s competition policy when assessing the situation of borrower countries before deciding to allocate the funds needed.23 A classic example is the case of Indonesia, where the country was required by the IMF to adopt a competition law in return for rescue money.24 It is worth noting that the first conditionality appeared in a World Bank industrial sector adjustment loan to Argentina in 1991.25Also, the United Nations and the OECD played a role in pushing for the adoption of competition laws across developing countries. Both institutions have adopted and promoted non-legally enforceable “codes of conduct” to prevent anticompetitive practices.26 The United Nations has also set up, under the rubric of the United Nations Commission for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United National Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA), several projects and initiatives that assist developing countries in the design and implementation of their competition policies.27 The increased interest of international and supranational bodies with regard to encouraging adoption of competition laws in the developing world originated in the wave of neoliberal reforms as part of the Washington consensus, which resulted in privatization and liberalization across developing countries. Some of the goals of these reforms were to put an end to government monopolies and governmental intervention in the economy through liberalizations and privatizations. However, the result of the wave of privatization was that government monopolies were simply replaced by private monopolies yielding the same anti-competitive effects.28 For the past two decades or more, the World Bank Group and other development organizations have encouraged developing and emerging market economies to adopt pro-competition measures such as trade and investment liberalization, privatization, and economic deregulation. These initiatives have been aimed primarily at reducing public sector policy-based barriers to entry, regulatory costs, and delays that unnecessarily constrain private sector economic activity . . . . They are, however, insufficient— they are complementary to but do not substitute for an effective competition law-policy. They do not address the private sector restrictive business practices that can significantly impede competition. Unchecked, anticompetitive practices by dominant and politically connected firms and vested interest groups can capture or significantly reduce the benefits that accrue from competition . . . . Competition does not arise or sustain itself automatically. The competitive process needs to be maintained, protected, and promoted to strengthen the development of a sound market economy. 29 Similar rhetoric was reproduced over and over, not only by these international organizations, but also by lawyers, economists, and policy makers. The result was that adopting competition rules became a priority on the agenda of economic growth in many less developed countries, who pushed forward with the help or pressure of various supranational institutions. Some countries, however, resisted the push to adopt competition laws and continued to prefer concentration to competition. They, thereby, had less of a drive to adopt competition laws based on their own initiatives. Others felt the need to adopt competition laws and to drive their markets towards the perfect competition ideal. Part of this desire was their belief in the rhetoric presented to them, but also due to the increased cross-border influences of anti-competitive practices,30 especially their import of cartel-affected goods.31 Trading partners have also requested the adoption of antitrust laws as a condition for signing free trade agreements.32 For example, the EU has been extremely active in the process of spreading its competition law to developing countries. This is to the extent where “some argue that today the EC competition law is the dominant model of competition law in the world.”33 Treaties, such as the Accession Agreements signed by Eastern European countries to join the EU34 or the Euro-Mediterranean partnership agreements signed by various non-European Mediterranean countries and the EU, oblige the signatories to adopt competition laws modeled on Article 101 (formally 81) and 102 (formally 82) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).35 One of the studies on the adoption competition laws across countries suggests that “the impetus for adopting antitrust laws appears related to the imposed guidelines of supranational bodies, in particular the requirements of the European Union.”36 One reason why the EU has been actively involved in shaping the competition laws of developing countries could be the fact that the EU is an important trading partner and, therefore, it is eager to trade with countries that have similar laws. Another reason could be its race with the US on issues relating to harmonization of competition rules, whereby its influence on the competition laws of developing countries is an attempt to diffuse its laws, which could push the balance in its favor when negotiations on harmonized rules are underway. It is also worth noting that the EU is not the sole entity to require the adoption of competition laws in its bilateral trade agreements with developing countries. Many Free Trade Agreements have endorsed similar requirements, where parties to these agreements are required to have a domestic antitrust regime in place as one of the main conditions before entering into the agreement.37 Other bilateral and regional free trade agreements have also included chapters on competition policy.38 Finally, several nongovernmental organizations have also advocated the adoption of these laws and promoted assistance to countries in their implementation phases.39B. Development Hopes Associated with Adopting Competition Laws Development hopes have been crucial in the spread of competition laws. The direct impact of adopting competition laws on prosperity, economic growth, and development is often the reason furnished by these international institutions for developing countries to adopt these laws. The heightened interest in competition law adoption “suggests competition law is widely seen as a desirable and worthwhile economic policy.”40 Competition policy has often been regarded as a building block of economic development. A paper of the WTO Working Group described that: The specific benefits that have been attributed to such policy include promoting an efficient allocation of resources, preventing/addressing excessive concentration levels and resulting structural rigidities, addressing anti-competitive practices of enterprises . . . enhancing an economy’s ability to attract foreign investment and to maximize the benefits of such investment, reinforcing the benefits of privatization and regulatory reform initiating and establishing a focal point for the advocacy of pro-competitive reforms and a competition culture.41 The United Nations has also advocated, on many instances, that competition policy is a key ingredient for growth and development of nations.42 The same position has been taken by the OECD. One of its publications based on a survey of OECD members and non-members asserts that: There are strong links between competition policy and numerous basic pillars of economic development. . . . There is persuasive evidence from all over the world confirming that rising levels of competition have been unambiguously associated with increased economic growth, productivity, investment and increased average living standards.43 These kinds of assumptions are often backed by empirical studies showing that adopting competition laws lead to higher competition intensi-ties,44 which is automatically read to mean higher growth levels. The microeconomic fields of industrial organization and endogenous growth present ample material to show how competition is positively associated with growth. For example, one study argued that competition rules help sustain two of the fundamental ingredients of “economic growth: namely competitive markets and a sound legal system.”45 Another study stressed the fact that the adoption of competition policy is “positively correlated with the intensity of competition.”46 A further empirical study using multi-country regression analysis to explore the correlation between competition and growth rates found a “strong correlation between the effectiveness of competition policy and growth.”47 This study also illustrated that the effect of competition on growth is more than that of “trade liberalisation, institutional quality, and a general favourable policy environment.”48 This, however, was found to be predominantly true for Far Eastern countries and less so for other developing countries.49 Other proponents of the relationship between adopting competition laws and development argue that competition rules are a precondition to the implementation of successful privatization, especially if the goal of privatization is not the substitution of government monopolies by private ones.50 Similarly, another study concluded that liberalization alone does not lead to development since “non-tariff barriers to trade will replace tariffs that trade liberalization removes because of the political power of rent-seeking special interest groups.”51 Some also suggest that having competition legislation will deter corruption in transition economies, where “government bodies have tremendous power to affect the competitive process when they issue licenses, permits, franchises, and subsidies.”52 When these economies adopt competition laws some of the powers of government officials might be curbed and their responsiveness to bribes in order to facilitate illicit economic privileges might be reduced. This is assuming that the enforcers of the competition laws will not themselves be susceptible to bribes to avoid antitrust enforcement. Moreover, competition policy is considered essential for developing countries as a tool to increase foreign direct investment (FDI), which is considered essential for growth.53 Adopting antitrust laws creates a more transparent framework that increases investors’ reliance on the economy and reduces transaction costs.54 These are only some of the studies testing the relationship between competition law and development. It is important to note that most of the above-mentioned studies either test the correlation between adopting competition laws and development or between a proxy called “effectiveness of anti-monopoly policy”55 and development. This is drastically different from studying the relationship between enforcing the competition laws and development. The latter should be the measure used to ascertain whether competition laws lead to development or not. Studying enforcement instead of adoption will not necessarily lead to the same conclusions. Regardless, developing countries have found the promises of development and growth associated with the adoption of competition laws too hard to ignore. International organizations and academic studies presenting the positive relationship between competition laws and development were made readily available to developing countries. The studies have shown persuasive conclusions that developing countries eagerly accepted. At the same time, these nations encountered numerous challenges, some structurally due their own positions as developing countries and some related to the discourse that competition laws lead to development and growth. Both of these challenges are discussed next. III. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN: CHALLENGES TO ANTITRUST ADOPTION This section addresses some of the recurrent challenges articulated in adopting a competition law. Some of these challenges are due to the idiosyncratic nature of developing countries, yet others are more general critiques to the merits of competition laws. A. Limited Resources Need Not Be Wasted on a Costly Competition Regime Developing countries face numerous challenges with regard to adopting and enforcing competition rules. At the outset, enacting competition legislation was not always considered a priority on their reform agendas. This is due to the high costs and low returns associated with adopting these rules compared to other reform-oriented policies, such as removing trade restrictions. One of the common arguments is that trade liberalization yields far greater prosperity than adopting laws that attack restraints of trade. The advocates of trade liberalization, as a substitute for antitrust, argue that the mere removal of trade obstacles, such as tariffs and barriers to entry, will effectively discipline domestic producers in transition economies.56 They support the notion that “[f]ree trade is, consequently, the best antitrust policy.”57 Also, the argument that “[f]ree trade stimulates wealth creation and development, and in a small country it makes antitrust concerns largely irrelevant,”58 has been made to caution against adoption competition laws. Another argument in favor of trade liberalization is that the limited public resources of transition economies would produce better outcomes if invested in initiatives improving the flow of goods. For example, improvement in infrastructure would give consumers access to an increased number of sellers.59 Similarly, it is argued that economic policy and competition law enforcement divert the scarce resources away from more important priorities on the path to reform and development. The famous quote from one of the fierce opponents to imposing competition laws on transition economies, Paul Godek, is worth noting: “[e]xporting antitrust to Eastern Europe is like giving a silk tie to a starving man. It is superfluous; a starving man has much more immediate needs. And if the tie is knotted too tightly, he will not be able to eat what little there is available to him.”60 B. Plenty of Reforms to Accommodate a Competition Enforcement Apparatus Are Needed Related to the criticism of spending scarce resources on adopting and enforcing competition laws is the claim that developing countries need also acquire, reform, or implement administrative apparatuses, effective judiciary and appeal systems, independent investigating authorities, and expertise.61 Most developing countries lack the aforementioned necessities to enforce antitrust laws. To improve the chances of effective antitrust implementation, developing countries need serious reforms in these areas. These are all costly endeavors that would deplete their resources further. In addition to these challenges, developing countries face further obstacles to competition enforcement due to the lack of data collection, which is especially necessary to define market shares. This is evident by the lack of effective “Statistics Offices” in public administrations that provide this information.62 The weakness of professional associations and consumer groups are also considered challenges that stand in the way of creating awareness and a competition culture that are essential to facilitate the smooth spread and implementation of these laws.63 Given these drawbacks in developing economies, what is ultimately feared is that the enforcement authority to be set up will not be able to apply the competition rules. It will lack the necessary funding, technical staff, and supporting environment to effectively enforce the law. It is also often argued, that in a developing country, an administrative body will often lack the necessary independence that is arguably critical for antitrust enforcement.64 C. Corruption, Government Intervention and Crony Capitalism Hamper Effective Competition Policy One of the critical challenges that face developing countries is the already high level of government interference in the economy, which is by default increased further when a competition law is adopted and enforced. The government intervention includes government-erected barriers to enter or exit the market,65 government monopolies, the various forms of subsidies granted by governments to loss-making enterprises,66 and government politicization of the administrative authorities in force of applying and enforcing the law. In most developing countries, governments play an active role in regulating and setting bureaucratic measures to be followed by firms to enter or exit the market, resulting in many instances in rigid barriers that cannot be surpassed. This in turn leads to rent-seeking behavior, cronyism, corruption, and favoritism.67 Adopting a competition law is arguably adding another layer of bureaucratic red tape that needs to be surpassed for firms to operate effectively. Similarly, this criticism amounts to the fear that competition policy will be a tool to provide disguised government control and hamper the growth of the often-fragile private sector. Developing countries also portray a unique political economy, where often government interests and those of the business elite are one and the same.68 This casts serious doubt on whether competition law enforcement will not be selectively used to create further obstacles to those players that are not part of this favored club. It may only entrench the powers of the incumbent firms and those that pay the highest rewards to the government apparatus.69 It is often argued that developing economies are enmeshed in a “Kafkaesque maze of control”70 where large family owners use their influence to limit competition and obtain finances from the government to alter the game in their favor.71 The poorly functioning capital markets in many developing countries furthers the concentrated ownership of the local elite even more. The fear is that incumbent firms use their rents to pay for such selective and biased enforcement, which can often not be matched by new entrants and small firms who want a piece of the pie.72 Incumbent firms want to maintain the status quo and resist any potential changes that might lower their influence and position in the market.73 Given this political economy “[a]ntitrust policies affected by political considerations may, however, come with a large price tag attached.”74 One of which is that “interest groups will follow their incentives and shift resources into monopolization through government protection. Lobbying the government for protection may be highly substitutable for organizing cartels.”75 In other words, producers and incumbents will now invest their rents in lobbying the government to continue their monopoly positions. Rodriguez and Williams argue that “the gain to interest groups of establishing cartels or price-fixing schemes are outweighed by simply soliciting preferential treatment from the state.”76 This implies that “antitrust may cause inefficiencies that are worse than the allocative losses that it is designed to defend against.”77 Such bureaucratic capture is assumed to make enforcers not able to serve the public interest.78 Nonetheless, arguments using interest group theory to qualify antitrust enforcement are not without their own critiques.79 Adding high levels of corruption to the mix, it is predictable that empowering the governments in developing countries with a competition law will lead to even more corruption spent to alter the game in the favor of the local elite and friends of the government at the expense of overall welfare. Such political and bureaucratic resistance is arguably among the main problems facing developing countries in terms of implementing their competition laws and creating a competition culture.8

#### Historic use of antitrust was signaled as the “cure-all” for an increasing racialized fear of communism in Asia and the Middle East. From Hayek’s preaching of the “competition ideal” to the amendment of the Clayton Act,[[5]](#footnote-5) antitrust was repurposed for combatting the growing Red and Yellow Scare. Even now, Biden preaches

Biden 21 https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/07/09/remarks-by-president-biden-at-signing-of-an-executive-order-promoting-competition-in-the-american-economy/

Let me close with this: Competition works. We know it works. We’ve seen it works when it exists. Fair competition is was what made America the wealthiest, most innovative nation in history. That’s why people come here to invent things and start new businesses. In the competition against China and other nations of the 21st century, let’s show that American democracy and the American people can truly outcompete anyone. Because I know that just given half a chance, the American people will never, ever, ever let their country down. Imagine if we give everyone a full and fair chance. That’s what this is all about. That’s what I’m about to do.

#### This is a new age of Yellow Peril. Paranoia has been sutured to the social and political that ignites Asian violence to fuel American exceptionalism. This establishes a positive feedback loop that proliferates orientalist tropes that conflates Yellow Peril as the pathological death knell to Whiteness.

Svetlicic 20 (Marjan Svetlitic, PhD Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, “From Red Scare to Yellow Peril; Reality and Fears of the Rise of China in a Historical Context,” Teorija in Praksa, Interdisciplinary Journal of Social Science, Vol. LVII, No. 1)

China appears to be the greatest challenge facing the world today. A strategic anxiety, the New China Scare, has surfaced. Such fears, almost rising to phobias, are not new. They have been seen regularly throughout history in various clothes whenever a power transition was underway. In more recent times, such fears started with the red scare, the fear of the rise of Bolshevism. This was followed by European fears of the USA becoming dominant in the period of reconstruction after WW2. Later, in the late 1950, following the spectacular technological rise of Japan, the Yellow Peril emerged in the USA for the second time. Today we are encountering the third Yellow Peril – even though it originally started already at the mid19th in the USA as a fear of Chinese immigrants. Following 9/11, the obsession with terrorism commenced similarly to earlier anti-communist hysteria in the country. The Trump Administration has now started a trade war with China as part of the inward-looking economic and nationalist policies of America First. An opportunity has been created to replace America’s presence in the global arena as a consequence. It is not by chance that a trade war is brewing at a time when China is celebrating 40 years of being open to the world and becoming a leader in certain technologies. What is really underway is a technology war. After China’s spectacular growth, it is now time for states to begin thinking about what this actually means to each of them, what it means to their region, and to the world generally. Trump’s trade war against China may be seen as a way of rectifying some of the deficiencies of the existing Pax Americana. It is thus high time to reflect on whether China’s growth threatens the world’s development and stability (system) or is benefiting the partner countries. The awareness that China is not only a country with a big economy, but also one that has growing military strength coupled with geo-strategic ambitions, is making a difference in both real life and theory2. World power is obviously going back to Asia. The winners will be those able to take advantage of this (Prestowitz, 2005). According to Porter, “the biggest risk is not that China will succeed in rising to become an economic superpower. The biggest risk is that it will fail” (Porter, 2005). It is hence no surprise that China is increasingly seen as a threat. Paranoia has been carved into mind-sets not only for the country’s size, but also for the different Chinese civilisation which for the Western world is a strange combination of culture, a particular type of state-controlled economy and state socialism/communism. The purpose of this article is therefore to answer two research questions. First, are these fears justifiable or overblown, with concerns being based on the differences in the roots of civilisation, on cultural fears? Second, what are these differences, if any at all, and can we detect any similarities among them? The article is structured as follows. We first look at the theoretical framework of such challenges/fears, then consider each fear in chronological order in sections 2 and 3. The fourth section seeks to identify differences/ similarities while the last sections outlines some policy-related conclusions. Theoretical Framework The article addresses the manner in which views/perceptions3 of different global challenges have evolved in recent history. Accordingly, the analysis concentrates more on qualitative data and attitudes along with the context in which they are created because, as implied by Kant’s “transcendental idealism”, it is appearances and perceptions, not the reality that truly matters. In such qualitative analysis, social psychology is becoming ever more important. It sees challenges as a positive reaction to perceived fear4, regarded as one of the basic emotions. “The culture of fear5 of the other seems to be a forceful mechanism of social and political indoctrination for human beings« (Skoll and Korstanje, 2013). It has played and continues to play a central role in driving popular fears to make the masses do, or not do, what the elite desires. Especially in the twenty-first century, described as uncertain and unpredictable, risky VUCA (vulnerability, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity), we seem to engage ever more frequently with various issues through a narrative of fear as a vital instrument of propaganda or, to borrow Bernays’ expression, engineering of consent (1969). People develop specific fears as a result of what they have learned, but the cause might also be an irrational, unconscious fear of the unknown6. Moreover, individual fears can grow into fears of a whole group or can as well arise from the fears held by a whole group usually manifested as stereotyping erroneously, of an entire nation. When problems mount in society, the specific cultural and historical context involved can fuel the stereotyping of entire nations as people look for the causes of such problems in others, in foreigners. They start to blame (scapegoat) them for job insecurity, problems with healthcare, low wages, the lack of safety nets etc. In a culture of fear, domestic frustrations are transferred to foreign enemies. A crisis is a typical example of when such prejudicial attitudes are created, although stereotypes can also be built to make it easier to process limited information and degrade others in order to magnify one’s own image. This phenomenon is more common when little is known about others or it is hard to learn about them due to being located far away (the distance factor). Such stereotypes impede our ability to objectively assess data/processes, assuming that stereotypes, presenting different picture, are believed to be true. Our readiness and ability to think critically and predict the behaviour of others is thereby weakened. All of these elements are visible in all the perils we analyse here, particularly in the yellow scares. People like to rely on stereotypes that validate their already held opinion more than trying to evaluate each situation on its own, by looking at data. They tend to select information sources that suit their ideological orientation and ignore other sources or contrary opinions. In a way, stereotypes are an instrument of excuses. After defining the role played by fear, we must examine more quantitative data to shed light on what creates such fears. Realism is the leading theory explaining sources of power as it mainly relies on material capabilities and relative economic and military power. Apart from neglecting the role of domestic beliefs, this may be its biggest shortcoming in view of the rising importance of soft power.. According to mainstream realism,7 countries compete with each other as they pursue their national interests in the struggle for power in anarchic international relations. The power of a state depends on what it is actually based on and the ways in which it is exercised. Seeking hegemony is therefore the result because the international system creates powerful incentives for states to look for opportunities to acquire power at the expense of rivals. States are concerned with the accumulation of relative power as they will not be content with relative security by relying on other states (see Snyder, 2002). Such offensive realism can thus explain the emerging role of China as it aspires to obtain a more prominent role in international relations. On the other hand, defensive realism can explain the USA as it struggles to retain its current dominance, which is proving more important than increasing its power. To properly understand the rise of China today, it is essential to look beyond realism, to also consider the soft power8 which is growing in importance in a VUCA world. However, the capacity to influence others means possessing resources like population, land, natural resources, economy, armed forces, and political stability (Nye and Welch, 2014). Soft and hard power are not alternatives, but complements. In the words of Melissen, “the wheels of hard power can only function smoothly with the lubricant of soft power” (Ham, 2005). Lacking in soft power, China has started to intensively use soft power to complement its hard power based on six pillars: cultural attractiveness, political values, development model, international institutions, international image, and economic temptation (Li and Worm, 2010). The whole story about attitudes to the leading or aspiring global players is about power and its transition. Power transition theory is in fact a version of the power balance theory, a very popular theory of international relations that interprets the causes of conflict (Haas, 1953; Sheehan, 1996; Waltz, 1979). It stems from the hierarchical nature of international relations in which the most powerful countries define the rules of the game. As rival countries acquire power, the chances of war increase (Hillebrand, 2010: 12).9 The old powers’ resistance to the erosion of their position leads us to the second group of theories, the theory of hegemon. Hegemonic stability theory (THS) argues that an asymmetric system10 is probably more stable; if one country dominates, it is a hegemon. The hegemon dominates the rules of the game and with the help of military dominance creates certain public goods in the form of security and economic stability. The erosion of this role can therefore stifle the world system and throw its stability off balance. The smaller the difference in power between the leading and rival states, the greater the likelihood of conflict (Kugler and Organski, 1989) with the upcoming forces because the incumbent power is unwilling to leave its prime position11; the so-called Thucydides trap12 (Allison, 2017). “But it doesn’t have to be« (ibid. 2017) Allison adds, although Kugler (2006) believes that China’s growing power over the USA is greatly increasing the chances of war in the next few decades. Emmott states “that the USA should not fear falling into a Thucydides trap because the historical analogy of England, Germany and WW2 is dissimilar to East Asia today. Germany overtook Britain in the 1900s, while China will not overtake the US for decades” (Emmott, 2009). According to China’s plans, this could happen upon the 100-year anniversary of their country in 2049. However, China is still far from closing the gap on all sources of power and thus the chances of war are lower. The power transition is not simply a political, geopolitical or economic problem, but a psychological one. The leading nations pride is hurt13 and it therefore attempts to block the emergence of any new power(s). The third group of relevant theories deals with different civilisation models since views are firmly embedded in the culture of the observer. Ethnocentrism is a worldview that regards Western culture and way of thinking as something extraordinary, placing it in the centre of the world14. Other cultures are viewed as different, backward, despotic-undemocratic, sometimes even barbaric or racist. It is assumed that the entire world should be modelled on Western values that are seen as universal, always correct, while others are uncivilised barbarians (see Plummer, 2010: 214). “It is about understanding the ideas and practices of another culture with the criteria of our own” (Giddens, 1997). Eurocentrism has been built on an ethnocentric ideological construct approach, locating Europe in the world’s epicentre. It interprets the history of the world as its own history. One’s identity develops on the basis of difference from others, difference in the degree of rationality; we are rational and others are irrational. The only possible conclusion is – European civilisation is superior. According to Amin, this is the ideology of the modern capitalist world (2009). Mastnak sees in Eurocentrism “a colonialist worldview, an inspiration for the European conquest and subjugation of the world and the justification of that conquest and rule” (Južnič, 2009: 183–184). The recently developed ethno-nationalism, manifested in populism and every country first policies has its roots in such theories. It also gives rise to orientalism as a view of the Middle East and, more broadly, of Eastern civilisations (Said, 1996). The mythology of enemies other than us is attributed to “sub- or inhuman ethnic and racial traits”. It is not about attitudes to individuals, but about a group of people who, as a last resort, have evil purposes attributed to them (conspiracy theory) in the sense of good versus bad. The responsibility for our own problems is shifted over to strangers (the ideology of economic nationalism), often expanding into overt populist-tinged chauvinism/racism and xenophobia. Refugees/migrants are increasingly the scapegoats for the ever worse position of those affected by technical progress and globalization (GLO), together with rising imports from China15. The populist revolt against the enormous upsurge in Chinese exports which, on top of the GLO, is seen as the biggest culprit for the lost jobs and deindustrialisation of the West. Inglehart and Norris contend this revolt is largely based on cultural, not economic factors (see Freund et al. 2017). Trump’s protectionism is also motivated by the incorrect assumption that China is to blame for the large US trade deficit.16 A chronology of fears The Red Scare The very first red scare in the USA came after the Paris Commune of 1871 while the second one followed the October Bolshevik revolution in Russia. It centred on the perceived threat of the American labour movement, anarchist revolution and political radicalism. The Third Red Scare came directly after WW2, fuelled at home by the perception of national or foreign communists infiltrating or subverting American society and, as the external factor, by the Soviet Union’s growing role in the world. A new bogeyman, ‘The Red Menace’, was portrayed as being everywhere. Communists were demonised. The Red Scare reached its peak between 1950 and 1954 during ‘McCarthyism’. The pursuit of allegedly communist infiltrators in American society had begun. Domestic communism was seen an enemy of apocalyptic proportions. When the Soviets developed an atomic bomb, fear levels intensified, just like during the Cuban crisis or when in 1957 the Soviets sent “Lajka” the dog into space on Sputnik 1. American pride was wounded then like it is now, faced with a decline in its global leadership. As a rule, such fears manifest as various conspiracy theories to make them become more tangible and more persuasive from the point of view of their generators. After the transition, Russia’s role in the world has been shrinking. Further, like all autocratic regimes, Russia should eventually transition to a marketdriven democracy (Ikenberry, 2014) meaning that it is less of a concern. Nevertheless, fear of Russia is again on the rise, mainly based on deep distrust and value-based concerns. Putin has spoken of the “offensive mistrust of the West about Russia” (Petrič, 2018: 471). American Challenge; Europe The demolished Europe, wrote J. J. Servain-Schreiber in his bestseller (1967/69), is under threat from the Americans. The USA was pictured as “enslaving” Europe, becoming an economic colony based on massive inflows of American investment funds. He believed that Europe, lagging behind the USA on all fronts (management, technology, research) was in a silent economic war. He spoke of “American attackers” in the form of US multinational companies, about the collapse of Europe. Yet Schreiber did not stop just with describing the situation. He helped revive French nationalism (similar to today’s populist movements). Later, he taught at Carnegie Mellon University (Pittsburgh, 1984–1995) and became chairman of Le Center Mondial in Paris that promoted the development of computer and information technologies. In 1985, he told President Mitterrand he was resigning because the French government had wanted to procure French equipment for France’s schools instead of buying the computers from an American corporation (see Rubner, 1990: 272). Schreiber’s intellectual honesty and consistency may thus be questioned. To conclude, these fears were also overblown. Yellow Peril I The Yellow Peril has seen two waves in the USA. The First Peril was directed against Chinese workers at the end of the 1880s. Rather than addressing the economic aspect of immigration, in 1882 anti-Asian propaganda encouraged the federal government to pass the Chinese Exclusion Act, making the immigration of Chinese labourers to the USA unlawful and preventing them from obtaining citizenship. Although this Act was repealed in 1943, anti-Asian sentiment/propaganda remained strong in the country. Later, following Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941, it was directed at Japanese-Americans, portrayed in ways very similar to the 19th century Chinese immigrants. Yellow Peril propaganda was based on the supposedly lower intelligence or subhuman qualities of Japanese people (see White, 2019). Yellow Peril II; Japan The second wave of the Yellow Peril came in 1960 during the Japanese miracle (10.5% average GDP growth in 1950–1973). Japan’s share of world GDP had risen from 2–3 percent to 10 percent. The Japanese miracle was largely due to the creative imitation of Western technology and introduction of new production methods (lean production). Schreiber (1980) was fascinated by Japan’s automotive industry and automation, robotisation and computer science. This miracle was initially facilitated by the possibility of directing all its resources for development (Japan was not allowed to spend on the army). Second, it was due to the inventiveness and working habits of the Japanese people and the systematic strategic trade and industrial policy. The Japanese began to buy property in Manhattan and acquired American ‘jewels’ (like Rockefeller Center in Manhattan, Firestone Tire and Rubber, Columbia Pictures or the Pebble Beach Golf Course). It was predicted that Japan might already overtake the USA by GDP pc in 1985. Not surprisingly, Vogel (1979) wrote the book: Japan as Number One. This fear indeed had both economic and cultural roots given that American pride and self-confidence had been dented. The Japanese had taken the lead in sectors previously the cause of American pride (automotive industry). Still, such fears again proved to be overblown since Japan’s yellow miracle was followed by very low growth and then by the lost century. Imitation can obviously be a double-edged sword; those imitated feel threatened, while simultaneously, by wanting to have what the imitated have, the imitators themselves begin to be troubled by doubts and lose their self-respect. The French philosopher Girard says this leads to hostilities and a feeling of being endangered. Yellow Peril III: China’s Contemporary Challenge Today’s yellow peril concerns the big challenge China brings to the whole international system after its spectacular rise in the last 40 years. In less than 30 years, China had become the world’s second-largest economy by 2001. The first signs of the modern fear of China emerged in December 2004, the last month in which The Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC) remained in force but was set to expire by the end of the year under a World Trade Organization (WTO) decision. Developed countries soon barricaded themselves off from China and the threat of becoming flooded with its textile products. The challenge with China is underpinned by the size of its economy and by it rivalling the USA as the dominant power. China is already the world’s largest economy in population and trade-volume terms. Nominally, in 2017 China’s GDP amounted to 64 percent of US GDP. In 2014, it overtook the USA in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) to become the world’s biggest economy (Bergsten, 2018, 2). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts that China will overtake the US (at 2017 market rates) in 2030 (IMF, 2018). Yet, according to the index of economic strength, China still lags 12.3 percent behind the USA. Still, as early as 2030 it may become the leading economic power, holding an 18% share while that of the USA is projected to fall (1973–2030) from 16.3 percent to 10.2 percent (Subramanian, 2011). These economic indicators should be stressed because there is a strong long-term correlation between economic capability, military power and a country’s position in the global power system. “Therefore, the hegemon (either US or China) will be in a weaker position than before /… /. It should be though remembered that, historically, China’s leading role is a natural position, since China lost its leading position by Britain only in the 19th century, and after the WW2, when US has taken over from the latter” (van Bergeijk, 2018: 15). One of the more controversial economic accusations and economic fears underlying the challenge posed by China is that it systematically imitates17 and ‘steals’ intellectual property (IP)18 and forces foreign companies to transfer their technology to Chinese companies. Imitation is partly the result of admiration and resistance to Western ideas following the Century of Humiliation, the “Opium war which marked the beginning of China’s collapse and dismemberment at the hands of foreign powers” (see Davis and Rašković, 2017: 8). A fundamental goal of contemporary Chinese politics is to do all that is needed to ensure this never happens again. It nevertheless seems that this accusation is overblown. Namely, in the latest US-China Business Council Member Survey, just 5 percent of respondents reported having been asked to transfer technology to China, and this concern was ranked 24 out of the top 27 challenges facing foreign companies (Huang and Smith, 2019). At the same time, certain problematic imitation activities (trade, foreign investment, licensing, international research collaboration, reverse engineering) are legitimate and voluntary. Moreover, the situation in the area of IP rights is now changing. Premier Li Keqiang stated that “strengthening IP protection is strategic and vital for strengthening the socialist market economy” (Reuters, 2017). In view of the ambitious plans to transform China from a “large manufacturing country” into a “powerful manufacturing country” by 2025 and a “leading global producer” by 2049 (“Made in China” and plans for the PRC’s 100th anniversary in 2049), it may be expected that China will become a leader in many technology-driven activities. Simultaneously, the country seeks to strengthen the protection of IP not so much due to external pressures but under the internal pressure of its own companies that desire greater protection for their patents. The more domestic firms become innovative, the more they are seeking to protect their IP rights19. China is a global leader in technologies such as e-commerce, artificial intelligence, fintech, high-speed trains, renewable energy, and electric cars. Companies like Alibaba, Didi Chuxing, Huawei and Tencent are operating at the global technology frontier (World Bank, 2019: xvii). The third economic fear relates to the huge rise of Chinese investments, especially their acquisition of technology-leading companies (Godement et al., 2017). This opens the door not only to economic but political influence and creates potential for the Chinese ‘divide and rule’ policy. Public opinion is becoming more hostile (Grant and Barysch, 2008) but oscillating between “China saving Europe” and “China taking over Europe” (Shambaugh, 2013). The world fears the transfer of Chinese management patterns or values wherever their companies make investments. Past experience shows evidence of both implications; strong adaptations to local cultures (particularly in industrial countries) but also the imposition of its own management style and working habits (Africa) or a combination of these two strategies, a kind of Yin-Yang cultural approach treating different countries/firms/people differently. The EU is encountering China’s ever more aggressive policy of influencing more flexible and less critical positions in China (market economy status, democracy). The 17+1 initiative is such a strategy that could create splits within the EU, making some members the ‘fifth column’ of China in the EU. It is thus little wonder that alarm bells have started ringing over China’s ability to translate its economic power into attempts to undermine Europe’s unified policy on China. Apart from hard economic data, soft power factors should also be considered. Here, China’s position is still weak despite all the efforts it has been making in public diplomacy recently. Chinese public diplomacy these days is replacing the previous “charm offensive” strategy (Kurlantzick, 2007: 6) aimed at neutralising the “theory of threats” and improving China’s global reputation (Tai-Ting Liu, Tony, 2019: 77). The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) may also be regarded as an instrument of soft power. Today’s paranoia, in the face of a rapidly growing and increasingly ambitious China, is obviously principally rooted in the enormity of the Chinese economy. Second, a fear of its difference, exotics, is entailed; third, of its leading role in the world and, finally, the fear of economic intelligence, of espionage, as a threat to security. “In the name of national security, America is treating Chinese students and scholars as a new ‘yellow peril’, in a witch-hunt worthy of Senator Joseph McCarthy” (The Economist, 2019, 13 July: 52). The fear of the difference is merging with the fear of potential political interference in the economy via the large share of state-controlled firms20. The biggest distinction is therefore that China is a different civilisation, a communist, centralised and authoritarian state. It has different values and religious beliefs. The challenge brought by Chinese is thus different. Three potential scenarios arise. First, that China’s position will start to be eroded if it becomes unable to cope with the accumulated problems of its own rapid growth and the fact it has not anticipated the accompanying problems21, including all the political challenges, the necessary democratisation of the political system, and providing more human rights in the long run22. China will encounter Rodrik’s trilemma (2011) regarding how to accommodate its three pillars: GLO, sovereignty and democracy23. This scenario entails considerable internal instability and negative implications for world stability, clearly not in the interest of any of us. An international implication of such a stagnant scenario might be China adopting a more aggressive foreign policy aimed at maintaining support at home while ratcheting up repression against any signs of dissent at home. A more likely scenario is that China will take on a leading role in many areas, especially the economy, thereby beginning to change the world’s structure in either the direction of Pax Sinica or a multilateral system with China as one of the leading powers (the third scenario) in a world of cooperation and competition among the great powers. The question is whether China wishes to abolish the capitalist world order or to simply form a nonhegemonic capitalist world order in which it will have more opportunities for development. According to Hočevar (2019, 15), it seems more that “China does not undermine the capitalist world order, but rather tries to challenge the US position in the existing capitalist world order in order to form a non-hegemonistic capitalist world order”. He may be right for now, but the situation could change when China achieves a more hegemonistic position. History shows that power corrupts and aspirations can, along the way, be broadened, such as to shape the world so as to better suit its own (ideological) design (albeit the changes will be gradual). Economic success is namely enhancing China’s self-confidence, courage and opportunities to exercise its interests. It appears obvious that the US hegemony will come to an end, thereby jeopardising the stability of the system in line with the theory of hegemonic stability. The erosion of this role could thus endanger the existing global system’s functioning, throwing its stability off balance. Differences and similarities in the above perils Is there a common denominator to these fears, eclipsing popular apocalyptic literature, about dangerous aliens threatening our world, or are they more idiosyncratic? Both are correct; there are similarities and differences. Four of the most obvious similarities are as follows. The first is the fear of the growing economic size of the challengers while the second is the fear of external threats, of dangerous aliens that endanger our white world mostly because they are different and not so much because they are economically or technologically threatening. Economic concerns have gradually turned into more ideological, cultural, religious, civilisational or even racist fears. They appear as mythology regarding an enemy, someone that threatens us because they are different, which is not ours. The third group relates to the second but is ideologically based (red and yellow scare III) and the last one relates to the changing international context. The first type of fear (growing economic power) primarily relates to the American challenge to Europe after WW2, and today’s China threat also manifested in Trump’s America First policy. The Japanese yellow peril in the 1960/1970s was also economically based, but dissimilar in that the Japanese are culturally different. Among the analysed economic challenges, the biggest quantitative difference is the size and geostrategic role/ambition. Japan’s challenge in the 1970s was confined to economic/technological power (Japan’s GDP was 9 times smaller than that of the USA, whereas China’s GDP today is already 70% of US GDP). The specifics of the Chinese challenge these days, compared to the one posed by Japan, is that such economic strength is ever more combined with military and geostrategic ambitions to become the leading country in the region and (more implicitly than explicitly) in the world. The challenge China provides today is quantitatively only comparable to that of the USA when challenging Europe in the aftermath of WW2. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union also competed with the USA chiefly in the ideological, military and space technology fields, but was never a serious global economic or commercial contender24. The challenge posed by China is unlike the American, red scare and Japanese challenge. China’s size is unrivalled by Russia or Japan. The Chinese shock has affected those who were already struggling to keep their jobs for other reasons while in Japan’s case US industry was better prepared (the context factor). It is also unlike them because China’s growth is extremely important for the global economy, whereas the relative consequences for the world brought by all other challengers would be significantly weaker. The challenge of China also has a geopolitical dimension in that it is becoming a military force and, in contrast to Japan, it is not an ally. China is the only military and economic rival of the USA and is hence creating a fundamental shift in the global distribution of power and influence (Geeraerts, 2013: 6). Based on detailed historical analysis, Subramanian notes that China’s dominance is more imminent than usually believed, will be more broadly based (covering wealth, trade, external finance, and currency), and could be as large in magnitude in the next 20 years as that of the UK in the halcyon days of the Empire or of the USA in the aftermath of World War II (2011: 4). Yet, the ‘China challenge’ has some similarities with the red one. They both used to have not only economic but also ideological roots, although the Soviet Union wanted to export socialism and China is expanding more through its economic and less through its ideological power. The second group refers to culturally-based, ideological fears, the threat of those who are exotic, because we do not know or understand them and they are ideologically different. We therefore feel threatened (USSR/Russia and China). In 1993, P. Kennedy stated that “Protectionism, anti-immigrant policies, blocking new technologies, and finding new enemies to replace Cold War foes are common reactions at a time of jolts and jars and smashes in the social life of humanity”, a view that can be applied to the current situation. Fear of this group can also be explained theoretically by the hegemonic stability and power transition theory, and eurocentrism. The third group of differences is political/ideological. While the USA, Japan and Europe share Western democratic values, China is an authoritarian socialist state, just like the Soviet Union was when it challenged the USA. However, China does not export its ideology as much as the Soviet Union did, but is first and foremost pursuing its global economic interests. By doing so, it can also indirectly pursue its ideology by spreading its soft power25 and ‘sharp power’26; for instance, by making the beneficiary states in the BRI financially dependent when they are unable to repay the large loans received for infrastructural projects within this framework (debt trap diplomacy)27. The fourth distinct factor is the changed circumstances in the world after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the Cold War and, up until recently, the strengthening of multilateralism, galloping globalisation (and de-globalisation of late), growing interdependencies and digitalisation. This is a special kind oligopolistic multilateralism, a blend of cooperation and competition between the major players that today are highly interconnected within a network of global cooperation. This power transition is occurring in a different environment, suggesting that a new cold war scenario is not very likely. Apart from the differences in all of the mentioned challenges, there are some similarities. Basically, all of the said fears: a. were based on quantitative/size factors, the rapid growth of the economies, their political and military power challenging the current system and the world hegemony, b. proved to be overblown, too dramatic, provoking paranoid panic overreactions. But nothing gets eaten as hot as it gets cooked, c. were based on ideological cultural roots, including racial, even racist prejudices28, on ethnocentrism, generating suspicions leading to eroded trust, d. were often misused for internal political battles (McCarthyism in the USA or today’s populism) and draw attention to the need to make changes in the global system’s structure and functioning and to adapt to such tectonic movements in advance, not after the event, to the transition of power underway in the global system. These fears have also caused a rethinking of certain theoretical postulates about international trade/ relations and development theories generally. This is the positive role of such fears. China is clearly the biggest challenge in the modern world. Yet, fears of a yellow peril are not new, although the forms and contexts are different, confirming Hegel when he said that history repeats itself the first time as a tragedy29 and the second time as a farce30 (Marx’s addition). These phenomena started with a red scare, the fear of the rise of Bolshevism and later the Soviet Union (now Russia) after World War II and European fears of the USA becoming dominant in the period of its post WW2 reconstruction and later the fear of Japan’s spectacular technological rise. The article has described the substantial differences and similarities that exist among the challengers due to their size, political systems, ideological basis, military strength and geopolitical ambitions, and the context. The explanatory power of the different theories varies according to individual challengers; somewhere along the line, the greatest weight was given to the realist school and power transition theory based on economic/quantitative factors as a basis for their power (Japan, USA, China), or ideological/ military factors (in the case of the Soviet Union/Russia), while elsewhere they are again more ethnocentric (Japan, China). This makes a multidisciplinary approach essential because a single discipline is unable to explain such tectonic changes and ensuing reactions. All of the mentioned fears were significantly overblown by linearly extrapolating tendencies into the future, without taking account of the historical context or other factors that hampered such linear forecasts. They were conceptualised within a ‘zero-sum’ game where the rise of one power leads to the decline of another, causing inevitable conflict with the leading one and amounting to a challenge and threat to the traditional Western-led international order. Kupchan also seems right when claiming, »that the ability of great powers to impose their preferences will only decline further in the future.… The twenty-first century will not be America’s, China’s, Asia’s, or anyone else’s. It will belong to no one«. The USA will no longer be the hegemon it once was. The transformed international system should, using Rodrik words, leave greater “policy space” for national policies and sovereignty. If the great powers act wisely, neither Pax China nor Chimerica or G2 will emerge, but a multilaterally governed world in the interest of all, not just a few. This is viable if China follows, as proposed by Colonel Liu Mingfu, the example of the USA after the experience of the UK which quietly left the lead role to the USA after WW2, and not the Soviet Union example which directly clashed with the USA during the Cold War. He advocates a tolerant, long-term strategy, a century marathon31 (see Miller, 2018). In this manner, war can be side-stepped and a new model of great-power relations developed, avoiding confrontation with the USA. It seems the Beijing Consensus is unlikely to substitute the Washington Consensus in the foreseeable future. However, it holds the potential to influence countries’ development strategies. The near future will not be the same as the last century with one country leading. There could be power sharing between China, the USA, Europe/EU32 and Russia (perhaps also India) within the spirit of a ‘collaborative autonomy’ logic. Europe is not militarily strong enough but has an advantage in terms of its soft power. According to B. Emmott (2006), while China is likely to emerge as the most powerful player, it will not be sufficiently powerful to dominate but strong enough to be significant shaper of the world order. He compares China with Britain in the early 19th century when despite being more powerful it was unable to dominate. It remains unclear whether China wants superpower status. It seems that China is aware of the danger of a strategic overstretch (paraphrasing Kennedy, 1987), as an imbalance between its strategic commitments and its economic base, although it is not immune from triumphalism after abandoning Deng Xiaoping’s low-profile approach of making China great again.

#### Politics isn’t sanitary and spills down – Sinophobia is a monopoly that you should overcorrect for

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The 2020 COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan triggered a wave of discrimination, abuse and violence towards ESEA (East and Southeast Asian) communities in the West, with thousands of hate crimes being reported a week: from old ladies in New York being set on fire, to a Singaporean man being viciously assaulted in broad daylight on Oxford Street. Popular Asian-American media outlet NextShark has practically become a rolling newsreel for attacks like this, and there is no doubt that our communities are currently violently under attack. This has only been exacerbated by former US President Donald Trump's continued insistence on referring to COVID-19 as 'The Chinese Virus', or even 'Kung-Flu', emboldening racists across the world to enact public hatred towards people of ESEA descent. This is, of course, nothing new. Racism against ESEAs has long been considered a joke or non-existent, which has led to the widespread normalization of racism towards our communities. From personal experience, growing up I was casually called a chink, subject to jokes about penis size, eating dogs, being a Communist (in the case of the more geopolitically aware white kids), being good at maths, not being good at maths... you know, the usual. I'm sure most ESEAs who grew up in the UK or US can relate to these experiences. However, this insidious level of normalized racism is precisely why racists have felt emboldened enough to attack us in broad daylight: they know they will face little in the way of repercussions, since ESEA communities have historically been considered meek, subservient and compliant, a stereotype we often live up to, leading to a lack of activism and advocacy within our own communities, let alone society at large. Since COVID, ESEA communities across the diaspora have begun speaking up en masse, and progress has been made. In the UK, BESEA individuals like Viv Yau, Daniel York Loh and MP Sarah Owen, as well as organisations like besea.n (who I believe coined the term 'ESEA', a term I hope goes down in history as the UK's first major contribution to global Asian diaspora discourse) and End The Virus of Racism, have made enormous strides in combating racism against our community, with the very first parliamentary debate on systemic anti-ESEA racism, discussing news articles relating to COVID-19 disproportionately featuring people of ESEA descent, being held thanks to their efforts. However, there is one peculiar blind spot in anti-ESEA racism discourse, especially given the COVID-related nature of the racism currently facing our community: the glaring avoidance of the word Sinophobia. Sinophobia, or Anti-Chinese sentiment, is defined as hatred or fear against China, its people, its diaspora, and culture. The fact that I even have to define this word is symptomatic of why it's become such an insidious problem in the first place. Sinophobia is everywhere. It is undeniable that the actions of the CCP have earned it a few friends on the global stage, and people are understandably worried about its encroaching authoritarianism and apparent lack of concern for human rights. It is also undeniable that the CCP and China are demonised by Western media to an absurd degree, with editorials, news articles, videos and more, fixating on almost every single thing China does, being churned out by the hour. To use just one example - British puppet show Spitting Image recently made an excruciatingly cringe-worthy sketch parodying Chinese premier Xi Jinping. The sketch features Xi performing an asinine hip-hop parody called 'the Jinping shuffle' on his TikTok account, lampooning mainstream discourse over TikTok datamining, which I presume the writers felt was the absolute height of cutting-edge social commentary. To call this shitty little ditty ‘satire’ would be an overstatement; not only does it manage to be as painfully, offensively unfunny as the majority of Spitting Image non sequitur-based 'humour', but its depiction of Xi - complete with a mock Chinese accent and a pangolin puppet running around - is troublingly racist. Of course, the show's target audience clearly doesn’t feel this way. The comment section is almost entirely populated with people calling them brave for daring to make fun of the Chinese premier: 'Forget satirising Trump or Biden - THIS takes balls.' 'Well, you can't say Spitting Image doesn't have any balls. It was nice knowing you guys.' One person in the comments even went as far as to say this video made them feel 'proud to be [British]'. Ironic, given that it made me want to revoke my citizenship. 2 - uo8lQbR.png Either way, the comments on that video are telling. It takes an impressive amount of mass cognitive dissonance, social engineering, propaganda and media brainwashing to convince millions of people across the West that you cannot say or do anything that criticises the Chinese government... by constantly pumping out media that criticises the Chinese government. In the grand scheme of things, something tells me that between governing a nation of 1.4 billion people and navigating increasingly fraught international relations, the CCP may have bigger fish to fry than an obscure British puppet show with about as much satirical edge as Balamory. Whether or not the Chinese government deserves this criticism is another question entirely, but I cannot think of another nation in recent history that receives such aggressively frequent, biased and one-sided coverage as China. Many will respond to the above with 'I don't hate the Chinese people, just the government!', a platitude containing about as much self-awareness as classics like 'I'm not racist, I have Black friends', or perhaps more fittingly, 'I'm not racist, I have an Asian wife!' When anti-China reporting and discourse is mired in racist language deliberately manufactured to conjure up Orientalist Yellow Peril tropes ('How sickening that the dragon is roaring back' in the Daily Mail and 'China is the real sick man of Asia' in the Wall Street Journal, to name just two examples), or conflated with nebulous reports of 'Chinese netizens' (i.e. a few cherry-picked comments on Weibo) voicing reactionary beliefs, it becomes far more difficult to believe that the media is just concerned with criticising China's government. This isn't helped by the fact that the majority of English-language information about China doesn't even come from Chinese people. White men hold a terrifying monopoly over both mainstream English-language China journalism and academic discourse (just look at who wrote the last two articles I linked) with prominent, influential figures like Foreign Policy Deputy Editor James Palmer free to peddle thinly veiled xenophobia and open disdain for China and its culture under the guise of academic language and cultural expertise. When mediocre white men visit China for a month or two and are subsequently granted the clout and legitimacy to publish books that look like this and read like this, it becomes clear that there might just be a teensy-weensy bit of a racism problem when it comes to English-language China discourse. It becomes particularly ugly on the rare occasion when public figures are called out for Sinophobia, as these 'China Watchers' bend over backwards to defend each other. Recently, US Senator Marsha Blackburn tweeted that 'China has a 5,000 year history of cheating and stealing. Some things will never change...' in a tweet that anyone would consider horrifying, especially coming from a well-known politician. China Daily commentator Chen Weihua shot back, simply calling her a 'bitch', later clarifying his position that she is, in fact, a 'lifetime bitch', which drew the predictably hand-wringing ire of white liberals everywhere, far more concerned with Chen's usage of profanity than Blackburn insulting the culture, history and diaspora of billions across the world. 7+-+YwhxtIu.jpg Like clockwork, figures such as self-professed 'China Historian' James Millward came out of the woodwork to defend her, making the wildly delusional claim that rather than just being racist, Blackburn's tweet was in fact 'adopting the 5000 years of history trope to criticize the PRC', with Millward proceeding to snidely weaponize stereotypes about Chinese people with his remark that 'Chen Weihua's Twitter Team is not English-savvy enough to know what is too much even on Twitter'. Millward is undeniably giving Blackburn too much credit, and this tweet is enough of a reach that I wonder whether Millward would be better suited as a yoga instructor, but this exchange is nonetheless highly representative of how China is talked about in the English language. When the Anglophone narrative around China is almost entirely dominated by a self-congratulatory circle-jerk of white men who are given free rein to say almost anything they want with impunity, and only held accountable for their brazen prejudice by people with comparatively tiny platforms (like me!! hi x), it's little wonder that open Sinophobia has become such a virulent issue. 6 - cvhJZ99.png The woke consensus on China hasn't been established yet, which means that most white liberal 'progressives' will fall back into old habits when talking about China, those habits of course being Orientalism, xenophobia and racism. The fact that we have seen such a huge rise in hate crimes towards ESEA people as a result of COVID is only proof that the media's extensive Sinophobia campaign is working - after all, if people really only 'hate the Chinese government, not the people', this would not be happening at all. When discussing the recent hate crimes, Minister for Safeguarding Victoria Atkins literally used the exact words 'racist abuse on the basis of perceived Chinese ethnicity'. Japanese musician Tadataka Unno was recently attacked by a gang of youths in New York who thought he was Chinese. Trump has been widely criticised for his repeated usage of the phrase 'China Virus' feeding into anti-Asian racism. Chinese people have been referred to as 'evil bastards' by the very people running our country in House of Commons debates. Do I need to go on? In his excellent article 'The Politics of Being Chinese' for besea.n, Vy-liam Ng has become one of the few BESEA writers to directly engage with Sinophobia itself, listing many examples of how China and Chinese identity are viewed as 2020's biggest 'political bogeyman'. He lists many of the ways China has been demonised by the media in just this year alone, and it's clear that this coverage encompasses far more than just the CCP's actions - these are direct, brazen attacks on Chinese people being pumped out by the institutions most people rely on as sources of information. As he eloquently puts it, 'there’s no pause button as the world creates these narratives with or without us'. At this point it isn't just people of Chinese descent who are being affected: the constant, violent and indiscriminate propagandisation of Chinese identity affects East and Southeast Asians everywhere. Sinophobia is rampant, systemic, insidious, constant and all-encompassing, and it is abundantly clear that the recent wave of Coronaracism towards East and Southeast Asian communities stems largely from Sinophobia - so why do we keep skirting around using the word? Why are we so afraid of calling a spade a spade? Where does this habitual aversion stem from?

#### The debate community avoids discussing Anti-Asian racism like the plague…

#### Asian debaters are expected to assume a restrained and calm ethos in round because their emotions are pathologized. When docility is expected, deviant behavior gets marked as too aggressive or unprofessional.

#### China has been a major part of each college resolution for the past three years, but people still can’t pronounce President Xi. Those are the same people who are the first to dock speaker points from Asian debaters for vocal inflections, tonal shifts, and accents that dance past white ears. Furthermore, every core neg argument the past four years outlined in topic papers have included iterations of Chinese deterrence that demonstrate a consistent and desired effort to make Sinophobia a stable and predictable research item.

#### As a communicative activity, debate must be held accountable for implicit, and asymmetric rhetorical protocols that maintain orientalist logics that predetermine what conversations are noted as valuable.

#### Thus, vote neg for the affirmation of transnational Asian praxis. Movements are growing and connecting at a greater rate than ever for anticolonial futures. The conglomeration of COVID, accelerating racial violence, and economic inequality put us in a unique position to break away from norms that have brought us to this present crisis. The only question is if you’re willing to not fear contamination by reaching out and grasping for a new and better future in this round.

Liu 20 (Wen, Assistant Professor of women’s gender and sexuality studies at the University of Albany, “Internationalism Beyond the ‘Yellow Peril’: On the Possibility of Transnational Asian American Solidarity,” 2020, UC Santa Barbara Journal of Transnational American Studies)

In the midst of a global pandemic and social upheavals, how will transnational Asian–Black solidarity take shape? Currently living in Taipei, Taiwan, I am involved in an emergent circle of diasporic Asian radicals who write and organize around the vibrant left-leaning movements in Taiwan and Hong Kong and seek to build international solidarity based on a critique of both US and Chinese imperialism. This new activist milieu that has been described as “transnationally Asian”5 not only rejects Asian American assimilationist politics and the narrow focus of liberal international politics around democracy and human rights, but also actively seeks cross-national and cross-racial points of racial encounters and challenges the orthodox Western leftist takes on social movements that often defer to a reductionist binarism of “capitalism versus communism.” For example, a Hong Kong activist was excluded from participating in a BLM solidarity event hosted by the Sunrise Movement, an American youth–led climate organization, due to some US leftists’ Twitter commentaries that misrepresented Hong Kong’s protests against Beijing’s increasingly harsh conditions of authoritarian control as being funded by the US military. Writers from Lausan, a leftist Hong Kong press, have condemned such mischaracterization of Hong Kong’s ongoing mass movement as merely manipulated by US imperialism and, instead, insisted on the importance of building alliances between Hong Kong’s struggle against authoritarianism and BLM’s vision of police abolition.6 From this single case, one can understand that building transnational solidarity is complex and arduous work, both conceptually and practically. It requires us to maneuver from one ideological trap to another across geopolitical contexts and locally specific historical conditions. While transnational iteration is emancipatory and necessary to achieve a genuine form of Asian–Black solidarity, it must be built on a bidirectional and bifocal analysis instead of merely relying on the US-centric epistemology of what constitutes leftist politics. By seeking transnationalism from the West toward the non-West and not vice versa, it’s easy to fall into the logic of Western “China apologists” or neo-Cold War logic, dismissing the interasian conflicts that also have global ramifications. To put it in another way, as China criminalizes Hong Kong’s fight for fundamental democratic rights and implements mass arrests of young activists under the National Security Laws,7 a progressive Asian American politics must not only be focused on racial relations domestically but challenge multiple forms of Empire beyond the borders of the US. Only through this multidimensional transnational praxis can we begin to see the underlying mechanisms that allow BLM activists from Minneapolis to Seattle to adopt Hong Kong protesters’ strategies against the police. 8 These possibilities for alliance among “transnationally Asian” activists include protesters in Hong Kong and the US using umbrellas and tennis rackets to protect themselves from tear gas, the joint coalition between Taiwanese indigenous organizations and Black Lives Matter Taiwan calling out racism,9 and Singaporeans debating whether to topple their colonial monuments.10 Our current shared struggles against the rapid right-wing turn of global hegemonies do not draw lines between the simple binaries of “East vs. West,” “white vs. Black,” or “authoritarianism vs. democracy,” but underscore the interconnected fights against the militarized police state, neoliberal capitalist order, Han supremacy, and the continued impacts of Euro-American coloniality. The “yellow peril” may have been a useful metaphor describing the shared racialization of the Asian body against white supremacy and US imperialism; the politics of internationalism in the present conditions requires a much more nuanced analysis of interregional geopolitics across the transpacific. The possibility of transnational Asian American solidarity must be situated beyond the framework of “one united race against one empire.” Indeed, the fast growing infection and mortality rates of Covid-19 show that the virus cannot be simply contained by national borders, and our racial critique must also be extended transnationally. When a disease is racialized, it not only exposes the racial inequalities built in the global public health infrastructures but also how mechanisms of national security require the domination of subjects who are deemed to be “outsiders.” Rather than falling into a nationalistic blame game based on the Cold War logic—choosing sides between one empire (the US) and another (China)—the pandemic requires us to engage in the racial justice and antinativist struggles in our different localities as well as hold one another’s movements accountable to an internationalist vision of collective survival.

### 2

#### CP Text: Jach’a marka mink’ai echay qanqa di istadus unidus.

#### It solves.

Belcourt 17 (Billy-Ray Belcourt is from Driftpile Cree First Nation. He is a PhD student in the Department of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta. “The Optics of the Language: How Joi T. Arcand Looks with Words.” 8-29-17. <https://canadianart.ca/features/optics-language-joi-t-arcand-looks-words/> //shree)

What did Bushby see? In his formulation, “one” brings into focus a sinister optic, where “optic” is the lens or filter by which one looks and from this looking ropes what is seen into an encounter humming with all sorts of potential. Bushby’s is an optic that mediates the interpellative call “one” seeks to enact—it is a part of the grammar of settler horror. “One” is thus a modality by which we, the ante-Canada, those of us who bear that which is prior to and beneath Canada, are racialized and roped into a representational field where all things, like trailer hitches, can be put to violent use. We cannot survive in the visual register of “one.” Words are worldly; not just in the sense that they proliferate and float up into the sky and become cloud-like. Words world too. Words like “one” incubate death-worlds (see Achille Mbembe’s 2003 essay “Necropolitics”) inside which those of us who look like Kentner are made to inhabit modes of enfleshment that fix the stares of the grim reapers of the present. On the other hand, some of us recruit words in the name of something like freedom. We might call this duality the double-bind of enunciation. How do we refuse a savage call to being with a more spacious one? Joi T. Arcand is a photo-based artist and industrial sculptor from Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, and she knows that words, that letter forms, shapes and glyphs, “change the visual landscape,” that they are how we go about practicing new ways of looking. Words are emotional architectures, and Arcand calls hers “Future Earth.” In her 2015 book The Argonauts, Maggie Nelson tends to a debate about whether words do or do not potentiate. She takes up a claim of a partner’s that words do nothing but nominalize, and what is left unnamed is subject to a host of horrors. Nelson, however, holds out more hope for words; she contends that they are “good enough,” that how one speaks makes all of the difference and that words can, following Deleuze, incite “the outline of a becoming.” Bushby’s angered vocalization of a genre of non-being—where “one” is the refusal of a name and the humanity that comes with it—is evidence of the terrible mechanics of language. But, it is in opposition to this linguistic state of killability, this metaphysics and rhetoric of coloniality, that Arcand articulates a grammar of subjectivity vis-à-vis the time and space of a native future. Here on Future Earth is a series of photographs that Arcand produced in 2010. In a phone interview, Arcand explained to me that this is where her photo-based practice and her interest in textuality synched. Arcand wants us to think about these photographs as documents of “an alternative present,” of a future that is within arm’s reach. For this series, Arcand manipulated signs and replaced their slogans and names with Cree syllabics. By doing this, Arcand images something of a present beside itself and therefore loops us into a new mode of perception, one that enables us to attune to the rogue possibilities bubbling up in the thick ordinariness of everyday life. Arcand wanted to see things “where they weren’t.” Hers is not a utopian elsewhere we need to map out via an ethos of discovery. Rather, Arcand straddles the threshold of radical hope. She asks us to orient ourselves to the world as if we were out to document or to think back on a future past. That is, Arcand rendered these photographs with a pink hue and a thick, round border, tapping into what she calls “the signifiers of nostalgia.” Importantly, these signifiers are inextricably bound to the charisma of words, to the emotional life of the syllabics. The syllabics are what enunciate; they potentiate a performance of world-making that does not belong to the mise-en-scene of settlement. It is this mise-en-scene of settlement that Arcand conjures to then obliterate, which is to say that her photographs evince a prairie world that is crowded with meaning, meaning that belongs differently to the logic of terra nullius (that a place exists without history or politics prior to European settlement) and to myths of Indian savagery and degeneracy. It is against this system of signs that Arcand opens the prairies up to radical resignification. It is where we build a future atop the decayed remains of coloniality. Perhaps Here on Future Earth visually captures the tempos of “Indian time,” which is always a scene of errant temporality. Indian time is less about the absence of rhythm and more about an inability to fix or to analytically hold up the rhythmic as a mode of feral movement itself. Words like “one” are spun such that they stomp us into the rut of social death. But: Indian time evinces an otherwise kinetics. In Here on Future Earth, this kinetics is energized by the textual, by the stories that they tell, and their visual culture. The modified signs exploit our ability to look; that we see them and conceptualize them as out of place or untimely is how we transport ourselves to a different time, to a place governed by Indian time. The syllabics themselves map a visual field. This is what Arcand calls “the optics of the language.” It is around these words that sociality orbits. This thematic persists in Arcand’s latest project, a set of large neon signs that light up Cree words like keyam. For Arcand, all of her engagements with the Cree language are partly elegiac. She is mourning language loss, but puts this negative affect to rebellious use to signify a world-to-come. Like the syllabics in Here on Future Earth, the bright signs prop up affective structures for a time and place where our relations to Cree are not always-already bound up in performances of grief. In one sign, Arcand translates the English phrase “I don’t have the words” into Cree. “I don’t have the words” is a paradoxical speech act; it uses words to announce their absence. These signs are installed in gallery spaces where Arcand’s work is commissioned; one was recently installed at the second gesture of the Wood Land School at the SBC Gallery of Contemporary Art in Montreal, another outside the Walter Phillips Gallery in Banff. These signs interrupt the visual terrain of the gallery, as if welcoming onlookers to a new world, to a new geographic form. The signs something like kinship around a common wordlessness in the service of a new world-making praxis. These photographs and signs, then, are all relics of a future past. They emerge from something of an anthropological interest in a future-in-the-present, in the affects of Indian time. Arcand thus writes the world wrong so that she can write it anew.

### Case

#### Data from 1AC Cites Pinker – he is a rape apologist who attributes sexual violence to human nature----not only means their studies are tainted, but that they are proliferating scholarship detrimental to survivors—drop them to set a precedent.

Flaherty 19 (Colleen Flaherty, Reporter, covers faculty issues for Inside Higher Ed, Steven Pinker's aid in Jeffrey Epstein's legal defense renews criticism of an increasingly divisive public intellectual, 7-17, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/07/17/steven-pinkers-aid-jeffrey-epsteins-legal-defense-renews-criticism-increasingly>, y2k)

A picture containing text, person, indoor, people

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From left: Jeffrey Epstein, Lawrence Krauss and Steven Pinker in 2014

That convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein had help in avoiding federal or state prison is unsurprising: money and power often buy what they shouldn’t. But the recent revelation that Epstein found aid from star psychologist Steven Pinker in the form of a 2007 legal document surprised both Pinker’s fans and critics. At least at first. Then came the analysis: to supporters of Pinker, Johnstone Family Professor of Psychology at Harvard University, his ties to Epstein are an aberration in an otherwise commendable life as a public intellectual -- one based on reason and truth, even when that’s unpopular. Increasingly, Pinker’s work centers on the notion that life is good -- better than it’s ever been -- and that we don’t appreciate it enough. As Pinker wrote in 2018’s Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism and Progress, “People seem to bitch, moan, whine, carp and kvetch as much as ever,” despite reams of data on how humans’ quality of life continues to improve. Pinker’s detractors, meanwhile, take the revelation that he knew Epstein and contributed to his legal defense as proof that the professor is a fraud, has lost his way, or both. Just as critics have accused Pinker of glossing over inequality and the continued suffering of individuals in praising progress, they’ve asked how he could have patinated a predator’s defense. “At a certain point, if you’re playing Dr. Pangloss to people who administer a monstrous social order, then at some point you’re going to rub shoulders with and do favors for actual monsters,” said Patrick Blanchfield, a scholar of politics and violence and an affiliate faculty member at the Brooklyn Institute for Social Research. Joel Christensen, chair of classical studies at Brandeis University, said that “however forced, or tepid or merely transactive” Pinker's interaction with Epstein was, it “confirms for many what has been clear for years.” Pinker, he said, “is a reactionary who is moving from the center to the right because he refuses to engage critically with new voices or to entertain honestly the criticisms his work has produced.” Pinker, who has said publicly that he regrets helping Epstein, told Inside Higher Ed this week that he's used to being “criticized and attacked, and I have a long paper trail of debates, replies and letters.” “I don’t always enjoy it but have always accepted that it’s the way things have to be,” he said. “If I take a strong position, I can’t expect people to bow down and agree with it, but they’ll take [their] best shot at me, and I’ll defend it as best I can.” ‘According to Dr. Pinker’ Epstein was previously convicted on just one count of prostitution, in 2008. But what he was accused of before he brokered a most unlikely plea deal was monstrous: trafficking dozens of underage girls in a scheme whereby they recruited each other for sexual abuse. And Pinker did rub shoulders with him, before and after Epstein’s first indictment, in 2006. (He's facing similar charges today.) Pinker was included in the flight log for Epstein’s plane, which was dubbed the “Lolita Express,” for example, in 2002. He was photographed with him at a gathering in 2014. And he shared an affidavit from the case via Twitter in 2015. But it’s the favor that Pinker did for Epstein that’s caused him the most trouble of late: in 2007, Epstein’s attorneys -- including Harvard legal scholar Alan Dershowitz -- submitted a letter to federal prosecutors arguing that their client hadn’t violated a law against using the internet to lure minors across state lines for sexual abuse. “To confirm our view of the ‘plain meaning’ of the words, we asked" Pinker, "a noted linguist, to analyze the statute to determine the natural and linguistically logical reading or readings of the section,” the letter said. “We asked whether the statute contemplates necessarily that the means of communication must be the vehicle through which the persuading or enticing directly occurs. According to Dr. Pinker, that is the sole rational reading.” It’s impossible to know how much that analysis helped Epstein land his deal, if at all. But it clearly didn’t hurt him. In any event, with Epstein now facing new federal charges, everyone in his orbit has come under new scrutiny. And Pinker has tried to defend himself against those who find his involvement with Epstein indefensible and part of a larger pattern of problematic statements. Questioning Pinker's Record Kate Manne, an associate professor of philosophy at Cornell University, for example, has posed her own outstanding questions about Pinker’s discussions of feminism, gender-based violence and the nature of rape. In particular, she’s noted that Pinker on Twitter called the idea that the 2014 murders near the University of California, Santa Barbara, were about a larger pattern of hatred against women “statistically obtuse.” She also took issue with arguments in his 2011 book, The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined. In it, Pinker wrote that rape is "not exactly a normal part of male sexuality," but that "the theory that rape has nothing to do with sex may be more plausible to a gender to whom a desire for impersonal sex with an unwilling stranger is too bizarre to contemplate."

#### \*Insert this card\* The data they cite for violence down cites Pinker

Wealth, life expectancy, energy use, poverty, democracy, literacy, education,

Nuke war is 1 million times more likely than expected and 500 trillion times worse than any existing impact

Todd 17 [Ben has a 1st from Oxford in Physics and Philosophy, has published in Climate Physics, once kick-boxed for Oxford, and speaks Chinese, badly. "The case for reducing extinction risk." https://80000hours.org/articles/extinction-risk/]

In this new age, what should be our biggest priority as a civilisation? Improving technology? Helping the poor? Changing the political system? Here’s a suggestion that’s not so often discussed: our first priority should be to survive. So long as civilisation continues to exist, we’ll have the chance to solve all our other problems, and have a far better future. But if we go extinct, that’s it. Why isn’t this priority more discussed? Here’s one reason: many people don’t yet appreciate the change in situation, and so don’t think our future is at risk. Social science researcher Spencer Greenberg surveyed Americans on their estimate of the chances of human extinction within 50 years. The results found that many think the chances are extremely low, with over 30% guessing they’re under one in ten million.2 We used to think the risks were extremely low as well, but when we looked into it, we changed our minds. As we’ll see, researchers who study these issues think the risks are over one thousand times higher, and are probably increasing. These concerns have started a new movement working to safeguard civilisation, which has been joined by Stephen Hawking, Elon Musk, and new institutes founded by researchers at Cambridge, MIT, Oxford, and elsewhere. In the rest of this article, we cover the greatest risks to civilisation, including some that might be bigger than nuclear war and climate change. We then make the case that reducing these risks could be the most important thing you do with your life, and explain exactly what you can do to help. If you would like to use your career to work on these issues, we can also give one-on-one support. How likely are you to be killed by an asteroid? An overview of naturally occurring extinction risks An overview of naturally occurring extinction risks A one in ten million chance of extinction in the next 50 years — what many people think the risk is — must be an underestimate. Naturally occurring extinction risks can be estimated pretty accurately from history, and are much higher. If Earth was hit by a 1km-wide asteroid, there’s a chance that civilisation would be destroyed. By looking at the historical record, and tracking the objects in the sky, astronomers can estimate the risk of an asteroid this size hitting Earth as about 1 in 5000 per century.3 That’s higher than most people’s chances of being in a plane crash (about one in five million per flight), and already about 1000-times higher than the one in ten million risk that some people estimated.4 Some argue that although a 1km-sized object would be a disaster, it wouldn’t be enough to cause extinction, so this is a high estimate of the risk. But on the other hand, there are other naturally occurring risks, such as supervolcanoes.5 All this said, natural risks are still quite small in absolute terms. An upcoming paper by Dr. Toby Ord estimated that if we sum all the natural risks together, they’re very unlikely to add up to more than a 1 in 300 chance of extinction per century.6 Unfortunately, as we’ll now show, the natural risks are dwarfed by the human-caused ones. And this is why the risk of extinction has become an especially urgent issue. A history of progress, leading to the start of the most dangerous epoch in human history If you look at history over millennia, the basic message is that for a long-time almost everyone was poor, and then in the 18th century, that changed.7

Chart, line chart

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This was caused by the industrial revolution — perhaps the most important event in history. It wasn’t just wealth that grew. The following chart shows that over the long-term, life expectancy, energy use and democracy have all grown rapidly, while the percentage living in poverty has dramatically decreased.8

Timeline

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Literacy and education levels have also dramatically increased:

Chart

Description automatically generated

People also seem to become happier as they get wealthier. In The Better Angels of Our Nature, Steven Pinker argues that violence is going down.9 Individual freedom has increased, while racism, sexism and homophobia have decreased. Many people think the world is getting worse,10 and it’s true that modern civilisation does some terrible things, such as factory farming. But as you can see in the data, many important measures of progress have improved dramatically. More to the point, no matter what you think has happened in the past, if we look forward, improving technology, political organisation and freedom gives our descendants the potential to solve our current problems, and have vastly better lives.11 It is possible to end poverty, prevent climate change, alleviate suffering, and more. But also notice the purple line on the second chart: war-making capacity. It’s based on estimates of global military power by the historian Ian Morris, and it has also increased dramatically. Here’s the issue: improving technology holds the possibility of enormous gains, but also enormous risks. Each time we discover a new technology, most of the time it yields huge benefits. But there’s also a chance we discover a technology with more destructive power than we have the ability to wisely use. And so, although the present generation lives in the most prosperous period in human history, it’s plausibly also the most dangerous. The first destructive technology of this kind was nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons: a history of near-misses Today we all have North Korea’s nuclear programme on our minds, but current events are just one chapter in a long saga of near misses. We came near to nuclear war several times during the Cuban Missile crisis alone.12 In one incident, the Americans resolved that if one of their spy planes were shot down, they would immediately invade Cuba without a further War Council meeting. The next day, a spy plane was shot down. JFK called the council anyway, and decided against invading. An invasion of Cuba might well have triggered nuclear war; it later emerged that Castro was in favour of nuclear retaliation even if “it would’ve led to the complete annihilation of Cuba”. Some of the launch commanders in Cuba also had independent authority to target American forces with tactical nuclear weapons in the event of an invasion. In another incident, a Russian nuclear submarine was trying to smuggle materials into Cuba when they were discovered by the American fleet. The fleet began to drop dummy depth charges to force the submarine to surface. The Russian captain thought they were real depth charges and that, while out of radio communication, the third world war had started. He ordered a nuclear strike on the American fleet with one of their nuclear torpedoes. Fortunately, he needed the approval of other senior officers. One, Vasili Arkhipov, disagreed, preventing war. Putting all these events together, JFK later estimated that the chances of nuclear war were “between one in three and even”.13 There have been plenty of other close calls with Russia, even after the Cold War, as listed on this nice Wikipedia page. And those are just the ones we know about. Nuclear experts today are just as concerned about tensions between India and Pakistan, which both possess nuclear weapons, as North Korea.14 The key problem is that several countries maintain large nuclear arsenals that are ready to be deployed in minutes. This means that a false alarm or accident can rapidly escalate into a full-blown nuclear war, especially in times of tense foreign relations. Would a nuclear war end civilisation? It was initially thought that a nuclear blast might be so hot that it would ignite the atmosphere and make the Earth uninhabitable. Scientists estimated this was sufficiently unlikely that the weapons could be “safely” tested, and we now know this won’t happen. In the 1980s, the concern was that ash from burning buildings would plunge the Earth into a long-term winter that would make it impossible to grow crops for decades.15 Modern climate models suggest that a nuclear winter severe enough to kill everyone is very unlikely, though it’s hard to be confident due to model uncertainty.16 Even a “mild” nuclear winter, however, could still cause mass starvation.17 For this and other reasons, a nuclear war would be extremely destabilising, and it’s unclear whether civilisation could recover. How likely is a nuclear war to permanently end civilisation? It’s very hard to estimate, but it seems hard to conclude that the chance of a civilisation-ending nuclear war in the next century isn’t over 0.3%. That would mean the risks from nuclear weapons are greater than all the natural risks put together. (Read more about nuclear risks.) This is why the 1950s marked the start of a new age for humanity. For the first time in history, it became possible for a small number of decision-makers to wreak havoc on the whole world. We now pose the greatest threat to our own survival — that makes today the most dangerous point in human history. And nuclear weapons aren’t the only way we could end civilisation. How big is the risk of run-away climate change? In 2015, President Obama said in his State of the Union address that:18 “No challenge  poses a greater threat to future generations than climate change” Climate change is certainly a major risk to civilisation. The graph below shows estimates of climate sensitivity. Climate sensitivity is how much warming to expect in the long-term if CO2 concentrations double, which is roughly what’s expected within the century. The most likely outcome is 2-4 degrees of warming, which would be bad, but survivable. However, these estimates give a 10% chance of warming over 6 degrees, and perhaps a 1% chance of warming of 9 degrees. That would render large fractions of the Earth functionally uninhabitable, requiring at least a massive reorganisation of society. It would also probably increase conflict, and make us more vulnerable to other risks. (If you’re sceptical of climate models, then you should increase your uncertainty, which makes the situation more worrying.) So, it seems like the chance of a massive climate disaster created by CO2 is perhaps similar to the chance of a nuclear war. Researchers who study these issues think nuclear war seems more likely to result in outright extinction, due to the possibility of nuclear winter, which is why we think nuclear weapons pose an even greater risk than climate change. That said, climate change is certainly a major problem, which should raise our estimate of the risks even higher. (Read more about run-away climate change.) What new technologies might be as dangerous as nuclear weapons? The invention of nuclear weapons led to the anti-nuclear movement just a decade later in the 1960s, and the environmentalist movement soon adopted the cause of fighting climate change. What’s less appreciated is that new technologies will present further catastrophic risks. This is why we need a movement that is concerned with safeguarding civilisation in general. Predicting the future of technology is difficult, but because we only have one civilisation, we need to try our best. Here are some candidates for the next technology that’s as dangerous as nuclear weapons. In 1918-1919, over 3% of the world’s population died of the Spanish Flu.19 If such a pandemic arose today, it might be even harder to contain due to rapid global transport. What’s more concerning, though, is that it may soon be possible to genetically engineer a virus that’s as contagious as the Spanish Flu, but also deadlier, and which could spread for years undetected. That would be a weapon with the destructive power of nuclear weapons, but far harder to prevent from being used. Nuclear weapons require huge factories and rare materials to make, which makes them relatively easy to control. Designer viruses might be possible to create in a lab with a couple of biology PhDs. In fact, in 2006, The Guardian was able to order segments of the extinct smallpox virus by mail order.20 Some terrorist groups have expressed interest in using indiscriminate weapons like these. (Read more about pandemic risks.) Another new technology with huge potential power is artificial intelligence. The reason that humans are in charge and not chimps is purely a matter of intelligence. Our large and powerful brains give us incredible control of the world, despite the fact that we are so much physically weaker than chimpanzees. So then what would happen if one day we created something much more intelligent than ourselves? In 2017, 350 researchers who have published peer-reviewed research into artificial intelligence at top conferences were polled about when they believe that we will develop computers with human-level intelligence: that is, a machine that is capable of carrying out all work tasks better than humans. The median estimate was that there is a 50% chance we will develop high-level machine intelligence in 45 years, and 75% by the end of the century.21 These probabilities are hard to estimate, and the researchers gave very different figures depending on precisely how you ask the question.22 Nevertheless, it seems there is at least a reasonable chance that some kind of transformative machine intelligence is invented in the next century. Moreover, greater uncertainty means means that it might come sooner than people think rather than later. What risks might this development pose? The original pioneers in computing, like Alan Turing and Marvin Minsky, raised concerns about the risks of powerful computer systems,23 and these risks are still around today. We’re not talking about computers “turning evil”. Rather, one concern is that a powerful AI system could be used by one group to gain control of the world, or otherwise be mis-used. If the USSR had developed nuclear weapons 10 years before the USA, the USSR might have become the dominant global power. Powerful computer technology might pose similar risks. Another concern is that deploying the system could have unintended consequences, since it would be difficult to predict what something smarter than us would do. A sufficiently powerful system might also be difficult to control, and so be hard to reverse once implemented. These concerns have been documented by Oxford Professor Nick Bostrom in Superintelligence and by AI pioneer Stuart Russell. Most experts think that better AI will be a hugely positive development, but they also agree there are risks. In the survey we just mentioned, AI experts estimated that the development of high-level machine intelligence has a 10% chance of a “bad outcome” and a 5% chance of an “extremely bad” outcome, such as human extinction.21 And we should probably expect this group to be positively biased, since, after all, they make their living from the technology. Putting the estimates together, if there’s a 75% chance that high-level machine intelligence is developed in the next century, then this means that the chance of a major AI disaster is 5% of 75%, which is about 4%. (Read more about risks from artificial intelligence.) People have raised concern about other new technologies, such as other forms of geo-engineering and atomic manufacturing, but they seem significantly less imminent, so are widely seen as less dangerous than the other technologies we’ve covered. You can see a longer list of extinction risks here. What’s probably more concerning is the risks we haven’t thought of yet. If you had asked people in 1900 what the greatest risks to civilisation were, they probably wouldn’t have suggested nuclear weapons, genetic engineering or artificial intelligence, since none of these were yet invented. It’s possible we’re in the same situation looking forward to the next century. Future “unknown unknowns” might pose a greater risk than the risks we know today. Each time we discover a new technology, it’s a little like betting against a single number on a roulette wheel. Most of the time we win, and the technology is overall good. But each time there’s also a small chance the technology gives us more destructive power than we can handle, and we lose everything. If we add everything together, what’s the total risk? Many experts who study these issues estimate that the total chance of human extinction in the next century is between 1 and 20%. For instance, an informal poll in 2008 at a conference on catastrophic risks found they believe it’s pretty likely we’ll face a catastrophe that kills over a billion people, and estimate a 19% chance of extinction before 2100.24

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Risk | At least 1 billion T dead | Human  extinction T |
| Number killed by molecular nanotech weapons. | 10% | 5% |
| Total killed by superintelligent Al. | 5% | 5% |
| Total killed in all wars (including civil wars). | 30% | 4% |
| Number killed in the single biggest engineered pandemic. | 10% | 2% |
| Total killed in all nuclear wars. | 10% | 1% |
| Number killed in the single biggest nanotech accident. | 1% | 0.5% |
| Number killed in the single biggest natural pandemic. | 5% | 0.05% |
| Total killed in all acts of nuclear terrorism. | 1% | 0.03% |
| Overall risk of extinction prior to 2100 | n/a | 19% |

Dr. Toby Ord, who is writing a book on this topic, puts the risk in the next century at 1 in 6 — the roll of a dice. These figures are about one million times higher than what people normally think. What should we make of these estimates? Presumably, the researchers only work on these issues because they think they’re so important, so we should expect their estimates to be high (“selection bias”). But does that mean we can dismiss their concerns entirely? Given this, what’s our personal best guess? It’s very hard to say, but we find it hard to confidently ignore the risks. Overall, we think the risk is likely over 3%. Why helping to safeguard the future could be the most important thing you can do with your life How much should we prioritise working to reduce these risks compared to other issues, like global poverty, ending cancer or political change? At 80,000 Hours, we do research to help people find careers with positive social impact. As part of this, we try to find the most urgent problems in the world to work on. We evaluate different global problems using our problem framework, which compares problems in terms of: Scale – how many are affected by the problem Neglectedness -how many people are working on it already Solvability – how easy it is to make progress If you apply this framework, we think that safeguarding the future comes out as the world’s biggest priority. And so, if you want to have a big positive impact with your career, this is the top area to focus on. In the next few sections, we’ll evaluate this issue on scale, neglectedness and solvability, drawing heavily on Existential Risk Prevention as a Global Priority by Nick Bostrom and unpublished work by Toby Ord, as well as our own research. First, let’s start with the scale of the issue. We’ve argued there’s likely over a 3% chance of extinction in the next century. How big an issue is this? One figure we can look at is how many people might die in such a catastrophe. The population of the Earth in the middle of the century will be about 10 billion, so a 3% chance of everyone dying means the expected number of deaths is about 300 million. This is probably more deaths than we can expect over the next century due to the diseases of poverty, like malaria.25 Many of the risks we’ve covered could also cause a “medium” catastrophe rather than one that ends civilisation, and this is presumably significantly more likely. The survey we covered earlier suggested over a 10% chance of a catastrophe that kills over 1 billion people in the next century, which would be at least another 100 million deaths in expectation, along with far more suffering among those who survive. So, even if we only focus on the impact on the present generation, these catastrophic risks are one of the most serious issues facing humanity. But this is a huge underestimate of the scale of the problem, because if civilisation ends, then we give up our entire future too. Most people want to leave a better world for their grandchildren, and most also think we should have some concern for future generations more broadly. There could be many more people having great lives in the future than there are people alive today, and we should have some concern for their interests. There’s a possibility the human civilization could last for millions of years, so when we consider the impact of the risks on future generations, the stakes are millions of times higher – for good or evil. As Carl Sagan wrote on the costs of nuclear war in Foreign Affairs: A nuclear war imperils all of our descendants, for as long as there will be humans. Even if the population remains static, with an average lifetime of the order of 100 years, over a typical time period for the biological evolution of a successful species (roughly ten million years), we are talking about some 500 trillion people yet to come. By this criterion, the stakes are one million times greater for extinction than for the more modest nuclear wars that kill “only” hundreds of millions of people. There are many other possible measures of the potential loss–including culture and science, the evolutionary history of the planet, and the significance of the lives of all of our ancestors who contributed to the future of their descendants. Extinction is the undoing of the human enterprise. We’re glad the Romans didn’t let humanity go extinct, since it means that all of modern civilisation has been able to exist. We think we owe a similar responsibility to the people who will come after us, assuming (as we believe) that they are likely to lead fulfilling lives. It would be reckless and unjust to endanger their existence just to make ourselves better off in the short-term. It’s not just that there might be more people in the future. As Sagan also pointed out, no matter what you think is of value, there is potentially a lot more of it in the future. Future civilisation could create a world without need or want, and make mindblowing intellectual and artistic achievements. We could build a far more just and virtuous society. And there’s no in-principle reason why civilisation couldn’t reach other planets, of which there are some 100 billion in our galaxy.26 If we let civilisation end, then none of this can ever happen. We’re unsure whether this great future will really happen, but that’s all the more reason to keep civilisation going so we have a chance to find out. Failing to pass on the torch to the next generation might be the worst thing we could ever do. So, a couple of percent risk that civilisation ends seems likely to be the biggest issue facing the world today. What’s also striking is just how neglected these risks are. Why these risks are some of the most neglected global issues Here is how much money per year goes into some important causes:27 As you can see, we spend a vast amount of resources on R&D to develop even more powerful technology. We also expend a lot in a (possibly misguided) attempt to improve our lives by buying luxury goods. Far less is spent mitigating catastrophic risks from climate change. Welfare spending in the US alone dwarfs global spending on climate change. But climate change still receives enormous amounts of money compared to some of these other risks we’ve covered. We roughly estimate that the prevention of extreme global pandemics receives under 300 times less, even though the size of the risk seems about the same. Research to avoid accidents from AI systems is the most neglected of all, perhaps receiving 100-times fewer resources again, at around only $10m per year. You’d find a similar picture if you looked at the number of people working on these risks rather than money spent, but it’s easier to get figures for money. If we look at scientific attention instead, we see a similar picture of neglect (though, some of the individual risks receive significant attention, such as climate change): Our impression is that if you look at political attention, you’d find a similar picture to the funding figures. An overwhelming amount of political attention goes on concrete issues that help the present generation in the short-term, since that’s what gets votes. Catastrophic risks are far more neglected. Then, among the catastrophic risks, climate change gets the most attention, while issues like pandemics and AI are the most neglected. This neglect in resources, scientific study and political attention is exactly what you’d expect to happen from the underlying economics, and are why the area presents an opportunity for people who want to make the world a better place. First, these risks aren’t the responsibility of any single nation. Suppose the US invested heavily to prevent climate change. This benefits everyone in the world, but only about 5% of the world’s population lives in the US, so US citizens would only receive 5% of the benefits of this spending. This means the US will dramatically underinvest in these efforts compared to how much they’re worth to the world. And the same is true of every other country. This could be solved if we could all coordinate — if every nation agreed to contribute its fair share to reducing climate change, then all nations would benefit by avoiding its worst effects. Unfortunately, from the perspective of each individual nation, it’s better if every other country reduces their emissions, while leaving their own economy unhampered. So, there’s an incentive for each nation to defect from climate agreements, and this is why so little progress gets made (it’s a prisoner’s dilemma). And in fact, this dramatically understates the problem. The greatest beneficiaries of efforts to reduce catastrophic risks are future generations. They have no way to stand up for their interests, whether economically or politically. If future generations could vote in our elections, then they’d vote overwhelmingly in favour of safer policies. Likewise, if future generations could send money back in time, they’d be willing to pay us huge amounts of money to reduce these risks. (Technically, reducing these risks creates a trans-generational, global public good, which should make them among the most neglected ways to do good.) Our current system does a poor job of protecting future generations. We know people who have spoken to top government officials in the UK, and many want to do something about these risks, but they say the pressures of the news and election cycle make it hard to focus on them. In most countries, there is no government agency that naturally has mitigation of these risks in its remit. This is a depressing situation, but it’s also an opportunity. For people who do want to make the world a better place, this lack of attention means there are lots high-impact ways to help. What can be done about these risks? We’ve covered the scale and neglectedness of these issues, but what about the third element of our framework, solvability? It’s less certain that we can make progress on these issues than more conventional areas like global health. It’s much easier to measure our impact on health (at least in the short-run) and we have decades of evidence on what works. This means working to reduce catastrophic risks looks worse on solvability. However, there is still much we can do, and given the huge scale and neglectedness of these risks, they still seem like the most urgent issues. We’ll sketch out some ways to reduce these risks, divided into three broad categories: 1. Targeted efforts to reduce specific risks One approach is to address each risk directly. There are many concrete proposals for dealing with each, such as the following: Many experts agree that better disease surveillance would reduce the risk of pandemics. This could involve improved technology or better collection and aggregation of existing data, to help us spot new pandemics faster. And the faster you can spot a new pandemic, the easier it is to manage. There are many ways to reduce climate change, such as helping to develop better solar panels, or introducing a carbon tax. With AI, we can do research into the “control problem” within computer science, to reduce the chance of unintended damage from powerful AI systems. A recent paper, Concrete problems in AI safety, outlines some specific topics, but only about 20 people work full-time on similar research today. In nuclear security, many experts think that the deterrence benefits of nuclear weapons could be maintained with far smaller stockpiles. But, lower stockpiles would also reduce the risks of accidents, as well as the chance that a nuclear war, if it occurred, would end civilisation. We go into more depth on what you can do to tackle each risk within our problem profiles: AI safety Pandemic prevention Nuclear security Run-away climate change We don’t focus on naturally caused risks in this section, because they’re much less likely and we’re already doing a lot to deal with some of them. Improved wealth and technology makes us more resilient to natural risks, and a huge amount of effort already goes into getting more of these. 2. Broad efforts to reduce risks Rather than try to reduce each risk individually, we can try to make civilisation generally better at managing them. The “broad” efforts help to reduce all the threats at once, even those we haven’t thought of yet. For instance, there are key decision-makers, often in government, who will need to manage these risks as they arise. If we could improve the decision-making ability of these people and institutions, then it would help to make society in general more resilient, and solve many other problems. Recent research has uncovered lots of ways to improve decision-making, but most of it hasn’t yet been implemented. At the same time, few people are working on the issue. We go into more depth in our write-up of improving institutional decision-making. Another example is that we could try to make it easier for civilisation to rebound from a catastrophe. The Global Seed Vault is a frozen vault in the Arctic, which contains the seeds of many important crop varieties, reducing the chance we lose an important species. Melting water recently entered the tunnel leading to the vault due, ironically, to climate change, so could probably use more funding. There are lots of other projects like this we could do to preserve knowledge. Similarly, we could create better disaster shelters, which would reduce the chance of extinction from pandemics, nuclear winter and asteroids (though not AI), while also increasing the chance of a recovery after a disaster. Right now, these measures don’t seem as effective as reducing the risks in the first place, but they still help. A more neglected, and perhaps much cheaper option is to create alternative food sources, such as those that be produced without light, and could be quickly scaled up in a prolonged winter. Since broad efforts help even if we’re not sure about the details of the risks, they’re more attractive the more uncertain you are. As you get closer to the risks, you should gradually reallocate resources from broad to targeted efforts (read more). We expect there are many more promising broad interventions, but it’s an area where little research has been done. For instance, another approach could involve improving international coordination. Since these risks are caused by humanity, they can be prevented by humanity, but what stops us is the difficulty of coordination. For instance, Russia doesn’t want to disarm because it would put it at a disadvantage compared to the US, and vice versa, even though both countries would be better off if there were no possibility of nuclear war. However, it might be possible to improve our ability to coordinate as a civilisation, such as by improving foreign relations or developing better international institutions. We’re keen to see more research into these kinds of proposals. Mainstream efforts to do good like improving education and international development can also help to make society more resilient and wise, and so also contribute to reducing catastrophic risks. For instance, a better educated population would probably elect more enlightened leaders (cough). Richer countries are better able to prevent pandemics — it’s no accident that Ebola took hold in some of the poorest parts of West Africa. But, we don’t see education and health as the best areas to focus on for two reasons. First, these areas are far less neglected than the more unconventional approaches we’ve covered. In fact, improving education is perhaps the most popular cause for people who want to do good, and in the US alone, receives 800 billion dollars of government funding, and another trillion dollars of private funding. Second, these approaches have much more diffuse effects on reducing these risks — you’d have to improve education on a very large scale to have any noticeable effect. We prefer to focus on more targeted and neglected solutions. 3. Learning more and building capacity We’re highly uncertain about which risks are biggest, what is best to do about them, and whether our whole picture of global priorities might be totally wrong. This means that another key goal is to learn more about all of these issues. We can learn more by simply trying to reduce these risks and seeing what progress can be made. However, we think the most neglected and important way to learn more right now is to do “global priorities research”. This is a combination of economics and moral philosophy, which aims to answer high-level questions about the most important issues for humanity. There are only a handful of researchers working full-time on these issues. Another way to handle uncertainty is to build up resources that can be deployed in the future when you have more information. One way of doing this is to earn and save money. You can also invest in your career capital, especially your transferable skills and influential connections, so that you can achieve more in the future. However, we think that a potentially better approach than either of these is to build a high-quality community that’s focused on reducing these risks, whatever they turn out to be. The reason this can be better is that it’s possible to grow the capacity of a community faster than you can grow your individual wealth or career capital. For instance, if you spent a year doing targeted one-on-one outreach, it’s not out of the question to find one other person with relevant expertise to join you. This would be an annual return to the cause of about 100%. Right now, we are focused on building the effective altruism community, which contains many people who want to reduce these risks. Moreover, the recent rate of growth, and studies of specific efforts to grow the community, suggest that high rates of return are possible. However, we expect that other community building efforts will also be valuable. It would be great to see a community of scientists trying to promote a culture of safety in academia. It would be great to see a community of policymakers who want to try to reduce these risks, and make government have more concern for future generations. Given how few people actively work on reducing these risks, we expect that there’s a lot that could be done to build a movement around them. In total, how effective is it to reduce these risks? Considering all the approaches to reducing these risks, and how few resources are devoted to some of them, it seems like substantial progress is possible. In fact, even if we only consider the impact of these risks on the present generation (ignoring any benefits to future generations), they’re plausibly the top priority. Here are some very rough and simplified figures to show how this could be possible. It seems plausible to us that $100 billion spent on reducing extinction risk could reduce it by over 1% over the next century. A one percentage point reduction in the risk would be expected to save about 100 million lives among the present generation (1% of about 10 billion people alive today). This would mean the investment would save lives for only $1000 per person. Greg Lewis has made a more detailed estimate, arriving at a mean of $9200 per life saved in the present generation.28 There are also more estimates in the thread. We think Greg is likely too conservative, because he assumes the risk of extinction is only 1% over the next century, when our estimate is that it’s several times higher. We also think the next billion dollars spent on reducing extinction risk could cause a larger reduction in the risk than Greg assumes (note that this is only true if the billion were spent on the most neglected issues like AI safety and biorisk, rather than climate change which already receives hundreds of billions of dollars of investment). We wouldn’t be surprised if the cost per present lives saved for the next one billion dollars invested in reducing extinction risk were under $100. GiveWell’s top recommended charity, Against Malaria Foundation (AMF), is often presented as one of the best ways to help the present generation and saves lives for around $7500 (2017 figures).29 So these estimates would put extinction risk reduction as better or in the same ballpark cost-effectiveness as AMF for saving lives in the present generation — a charity that was specifically selected for being outstanding on that dimension. Likewise, we think that if 10,000 talented young people focused their careers on these risks, they could achieve something like a 1% reduction in the risks. That would mean that each person would save 1000 lives over their careers in the present generation, which is probably better than what they could save by earning to give and donating to The Against Malaria Foundation.30 In one sense, these are unfair comparisons, because GiveWell’s estimate is far more solid and well-researched, whereas our estimate is more of an informed guess. There may also be better ways to help the present generation than AMF (e.g. policy advocacy). However, we’ve also dramatically understated the benefits of reducing extinction risks. The main reason to safeguard civilisation is not to benefit the present generation, but to benefit future generations. We ignored them in this estimate. If we also consider future generations, then the effectiveness of reducing extinction risks is orders of magnitude higher, and it’s hard to imagine a more urgent priority right now. Now you can either read some responses to these arguments, or skip ahead to practical ways to contribute. Who shouldn’t prioritise safeguarding the future? The arguments presented rest on some assumptions that not everyone will accept. Here we present some of the better responses to these arguments. You need to focus more on your friends and family We’re only talking about what the priority should be if you are trying to help people in general, treating everyone’s interests as equal (what philosophers sometimes call “impartial altruism”). Most people care about helping others to some degree: if you can help a stranger with little cost, that’s a good thing to do. People also care about making their own lives go well, and looking after their friends and family, and we’re the same. How to balance these priorities is a difficult question. If you’re in the fortunate position to be able to contribute to helping the world, then we think safeguarding the future should be where to focus. We list concrete ways to get involved in the next section. Otherwise, you might need to focus on your personal life right now, contributing on the side, or in the future. You think the risks are much lower than we’ve argued We don’t have robust estimates of many of the human-caused risks, so you could try to make your own estimates and conclude that they’re much lower than we’ve made out. If they were sufficiently low, then reducing them would cease to be the top priority. We don’t find this plausible for the reasons covered. If you consider all the potential risks, it seems hard to be confident they’re under 1% over the century, and even a 1% risk probably warrants much more action than we currently see. You think there’s almost nothing more we can do about the risks We rate these risks as less “solvable” than issues like global health, so expect progress to be harder per dollar. That said, we think their scale and neglectedness more than makes up for this, and so they end up more effective in expectation. Many people think effective altruism is about only supporting “proven” interventions, but that’s a myth. It’s worth taking interventions that only have a small chance of paying off, if the upside is high enough. The leading funder in the community now advocates an approach of “hits-based giving”. However, if you were much more pessimistic about the chances of progress than us, then it might be better to work on more conventional issues, such as global health. Personally, we might switch to a different issue if there were two orders of magnitude more resources invested in reducing these risks. But that’s a long way off from today. A related response is that we’re already taking the best interventions to reduce these risks. This would mean that the risks don’t warrant a change in practical priorities. For instance, we mentioned earlier that education probably helps to reduce the risks. If you thought education was the best response (perhaps because you’re very uncertain which risks will be most urgent), then because we already invest a huge amount in education, you might think the situation is already handled. We don’t find this plausible because, as listed, there are lots of untaken opportunities to reduce these risks that seem more targeted and neglected. Another example like this is that economists sometimes claim that we should just focus on economic growth, since that will put us in the best possible position to handle the risks in the future. We don’t find this plausible because some types of economic growth increase the risks (e.g. the discovery of new weapons), so it’s unclear that economic growth is a top way to reduce the risks. Instead, we’d at least focus on differential technological development, or the other more targeted efforts listed above. You think there’s a better way of helping the future Although reducing these risks is worth it for the present generation, much of their importance comes from their long-term effects — once civilisation ends, we give up the entire future. You might think there are other actions the present generation could take that would have very long-term effects, and these could be similarly important to reducing the risk of extinction. In particular, we might be able to improve the quality of the future by preventing our civilization from getting locked into bad outcomes permanently. This is going to get a bit sci-fi, but bear with us. One possibility that has been floated is that new technology, like extreme surveillance or psychological conditioning, could make it possible to create a totalitarian government that could never be ended. This would be the 1984 and Brave New World scenario respectively. If this government were bad, then civilisation might have a fate worse than extinction by causing us to suffer for millennia. Others have raised the concern that the development of advanced AI systems could cause terrible harm if it is done irresponsibly, perhaps because there is a conflict between several groups raising to develop the technology. In particular, if at some point in the future, developing these systems involves the creation of sentient digital minds, their wellbeing could become incredibly important. Risks of a future that contains an astronomical amount of suffering have been called “s-risks”.31 If there is something we can do today to prevent an s-risk from happening (for instance, through targeted research in technical AI safety and AI governance), it could be even more important. Another area to look is major technological transitions. We’ve mentioned the dangers of genetic engineering and artificial intelligence in this piece, but these technologies could also create a second industrial revolution and do a huge amount of good once deployed. There might be things we can do to increase the likelihood of a good transition, rather than decrease the risk of a bad transition. This has been called trying to increase “existential hope” rather than decrease “existential risk”.32 We agree that there might be other ways that we can have very long-term effects, and these might be more pressing than reducing the risk of extinction. However, most of these proposals are not yet as well worked out, and we’re not sure about what to do about them. The main practical upshot of considering these other ways to impact the future, is that we think it’s even more important to positively manage the transition to new transformative technologies, like AI. It also makes us keener to see more global priorities research looking into these issues. Overall, we still think it makes sense to first focus on reducing extinction risks, and then after that, we can turn our attention to other ways to help the future. One way to help the future we don’t think is a contender is speeding it up. Some people who want to help the future focus on bringing about technological progress, like developing new vaccines, and it’s true that these create long-term benefits. However, we think what most matters from a long-term perspective is where we end up, rather than how fast we get there. Discovering a new vaccine probably means we get it earlier, rather than making it happen at all. Moreover, since technology is also the cause of many of these risks, it’s not clear how much speeding it up helps in the short-term. Speeding up progress is also far less neglected, since it benefits the present generation too. As we covered, over 1 trillion dollars is spent each year on R&D to develop new technology. So, speed-ups are both less important and less neglected. To read more about other ways of helping future generations, see Chapter 3 of On the Overwhelming Importance of Shaping the Far Future by Dr. Nick Beckstead You’re confident the future will be short or bad If you think it’s virtually guaranteed that civilisation won’t last a long time, then the value of reducing these risks is significantly reduced (though perhaps still worth taking to help the present generation). We agree there’s a significant chance civilisation ends soon (which is why this issue is so important), but we also think there’s a large enough chance that it could last a very long time, which makes the future worth fighting for. Similarly, if you think it’s likely the future will be more bad than good, then the value of reducing these risks goes down (or if we have much more obligation to reduce suffering than increase wellbeing). We don’t think this is likely, however, because people want the future to be good, so we’ll try to make it more good than bad. We also think that there has been significant moral progress over the last few centuries (due to the trends noted earlier), and we’re optimistic this will continue. See more discussion in footnote 11.11 What’s more, even if you’re not sure how good the future will be, or suspect it will be bad in ways we may be able to prevent in the future, you may want civilisation to survive and keep its options open. People in the future will have much more time to study whether it’s desirable for civilisation to expand, stay the same size, or shrink. If you think there’s a good chance we will be able to act on those moral concerns, that’s a good reason to leave any final decisions to the wisdom of future generations. Overall, we’re highly uncertain about these big-picture questions, but that generally makes us more concerned to avoid making any irreversible commitments.33 Beyond that, you should likely put your attention into ways to decrease the chance that the future will be bad, such as avoiding s-risks. You’re confident we have much stronger moral obligations to help the present generation If you think we have much stronger obligations to the present generation than future generations (such as person-affecting views of ethics), then the importance of reducing these risks would go down. Personally, we don’t think these views are particularly compelling. That said, we’ve argued that even if you ignore future generations, these risks seem worth addressing. The efforts suggested could still save the lives of the present generation relatively cheaply, and they could avoid lots of suffering from medium-sized disasters. What’s more, if you’re uncertain about whether we have moral obligations to future generations, then you should again try to keep your options open, and that means safeguarding civilisation. Nevertheless, if you combined the view that we don’t have large obligations to future generations with the position that the risks are also relatively unsolvable, or that there is no useful research to be done, then another way to help present generations could come out on top. This might mean working on global health, mental health or speeding up technology. Alternatively, you might think there’s another moral issue that’s more important, such as factory farming. What can you do to help? Some areas to focus on Our best evidence suggests that we’re the only intelligent life in the observable universe.34 Might we be the generation that extinguishes this life, and leaves the universe barren for the rest of eternity? Let’s see how you can help avoid that.

#### China realist theories are stem from a fundamentally confused and Eurocentric model that fails to explain East Asian security and makes great power conflict inevitable. Wholistic data sets point to *peace*, not war.

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Are power transitions between a rising power and a declining hegemon particularly volatile? Is a war between China and the United States possible or even likely as a power transition draws near? Scholars and policymakers are increasingly worried about such a possibility. Richard Ned Lebow and Ben Valentino, specialists in international relations, point out that power transition “theory has become an accepted framework for many scholars and policymakers who focus on Asia,”1 while Susan Shirk, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for China during the Clinton administration, has written that, “History teaches us that rising powers are likely to provoke war.”2 More recently, political scientist Graham Allison wrote that “war between the United States and China in the decades ahead is not just possible, but much more likely than recognized at the moment. Indeed, judging by the historical record, war is more likely than not.”3

But what historical record are Shirk and Allison referring to? By far, the most commonly examined case studies of power transition in the scholarly literature are the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BCE) and the rise of Germany under Bismarck and Anglo-German rivalry of the twentieth century.4 In arguing that contemporary U.S.-China relations are potentially dangerous, Allison claims that 12 out of 16 historical power transitions ended in war; but every single one of his cases before the mid-nineteenth century involves only European powers (e.g. Habsburgs, Dutch Republic, Sweden, France). Only two cases involve Japan (the Russo-Japanese War and World War II), while China appears just once (First Sino-Japanese War). Allison may be the most recent scholar to use Greek and European history to explain the entire world’s future, but he is neither the first nor the only scholar to do so. The link has been made for decades.5 Scholars also regularly use the rise of nineteenth century Germany as an analogy for Asia today.6 Even when scholars argue that China’s rise might not cause the same instability that Germany’s did, they are still operating within a framework that uses European examples as case studies to make sense of Asia, and often the entire globe.

It is troubling, however, that the empirical examples that international relations scholars use to derive their theories are almost all European. This European selection bias has led to an overexpectation that power transitions and the rise and decline of great powers relative to each other are a prime factor for war. The rise and fall of Chinese dynasties, however, are all potential examples of power transitions, not to mention those in Vietnam, Korea, Japan, and elsewhere. If we widen the selection of cases, particularly to examine important cases from East Asian history, we would find very different implications for how widely applicable and universal the theory actually is, and to what extent it explains security relations today. Specifically, examining two pre-modern East Asian cases—the Imjin War (1592-1598) and the Ming-Qing transition (1644-1683)—as we will below, lead to three new insights about power transitions: First, power vacuums are often as dangerous as power transitions. Second, internal decline is often more damaging to hegemons than are external challengers. Third, challenges often came from the smallest powers, not the largest powers.

Not only does this focus on selection bias have fundamental implications for power transition theory, it also has implications for contemporary East Asian regional security dynamics. Most clearly, self-inflicted wounds may weaken the U.S. position in Asia as much as any challenge from China. A voluntary retreat from leadership and an unwillingness to embrace the region and its issues are as likely to weaken the U.S. position in East Asia—and indeed around the globe—as is any Chinese challenge. Furthermore, some of the most pressing security issues are being driven by the smallest countries in the region—such as North Korea—and not the largest, such as China itself. Power transitions may or may not lead to war, but given the selective and partial (European) way in which conventional international relations scholars have examined the historical record, it is difficult to draw any systematic conclusions about exactly how dangerous power transitions truly are. If scholars and policymakers want a meaningful discussion of a way out of U.S.-China conflict, rather than just threat inflation, they would need a more careful analysis of the East Asian historical record itself.

More attention to East Asia itself, both modern and historical, is in fact critical if the United States is going to deal capably with the complexity of contemporary East Asia. For example, almost all international relations scholars know the lessons of the Peloponnesian War, but almost no American scholars or policymakers know the lessons of the Imjin War (1592-1598)—a war larger in scale than anything experienced in Europe and the only war between China, Japan, and Korea in six hundred years. The Ming Dynasty of China (1368-1644) was at the height of its power, yet Japan, under its hegemon Toyotomi Hideyoshi, invaded Korea in an attempt to conquer China, failing miserably. Fifty years later, the Ming dynasty crumbled, but not because of Hideyoshi’s invasion. The Manchus eventually succeeded the Ming, declaring themselves the Qing dynasty in 1644, but it is not at all clear that the Manchus ever intended to conquer China. Rather than a power transition, it was a power vacuum that drew the Manchus to China.

Examining not only why the Ming fell, and why Hideyoshi failed, but also why the Qing eventually succeed the Ming dynasty is of critical importance to both theories of power transition and contemporary East Asian security issues. The massive scale of the Imjin War and the Ming-Qing transition are consequential, as they affected the fate of what was unquestionably the most powerful and advanced country in the world at the time. Analyzing these cases could prompt scholars to ask more questions about power transition theory, and whether it applies today.

The End of the Ming Dynasty

Power transitions theories often begin with Thucydides, who wrote over 2,000 years ago that “What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian Power and the fear which this caused in Sparta.”7 The logic of the theory is straightforward: rising powers may have rising ambition; a dissatisfied challenger, whose preferences of international order differ substantially from the dominant one, seeks to alter the status quo. Consequently, war is mostly likely between a dissatisfied great power and the dominant power.

In 1600, Ming China was the most powerful and sophisticated country on the planet. In 1600, China had a population of 160 million and a GDP of $96 billion. The size of China dwarfed any other political unit in either Asia or Europe. By comparison, Japan in 1600 had a population of 18.5 million and a GDP of $9.6 billion. France had a population of 18.5 million, Italy 13.1 million, and Spain 8.2 million with correspondingly small economies compared to China.8 On China’s periphery were smaller political units, such as the unified Chosŏn Korean dynasty (1392-1910), Vietnam, Tibet, Siam, Burma, and various tribes, clans, and political units on the vast Central Asian steppe that runs from the Pacific Ocean across Russia to Turkey.

Princeton historian Frederick Mote writes that in the early seventeenth century, China was “the largest, richest, and most populous society in the world at that time … .it ensured local social order, collected revenues, and reinforced the normative system … how could any enemy challenge a structure of such weight and stability?”9 It was a hegemon, a source of “civilization” for the entire region. Chinese language, legal codes, political institutions, religious and philosophical ideas were borrowed throughout the known world, especially in Japan, Korea, and Vietnam.

Ming China was also a military behemoth. Military historian Kenneth Swope notes that in the fifty years between 1570 and 1620:

the Ming managed to make peace with the Mongols, intervened in border disputes in Burma on multiple occasions, launched destabilizing strikes into Jurchen and Mongol territories, suppressed a major troop mutiny in Ningxia, sent tens of thousands of troops on two occasions to oust the Japanese from Korea, mobilized another 200,000 troops to crush an aboriginal uprising in Sichuan, and conducted numerous smaller military actions … in the process the Ming retained its political, military, and economic primacy in East Asia.10

Yet by 1650, the Ming dynasty had crumbled and the Qing had replaced it. How this happened is perhaps a clue that there is more to wars than simply who is bigger.

The Imjin War (1592-1598)

In 1592, Japanese general Hideyoshi invaded Chosŏn Korea with over 160,000 troops on approximately 700 ships, intending to conquer China after first subduing Korea.11 Over 60,000 Korean soldiers, eventually supported by almost 100,000 Ming Chinese forces, defended the peninsula.12 The Imjin War “easily dwarfed those of their European contemporaries,” involving men and material ten times the scale of the Spanish Armada of 1588.13 The Armada, described as the “greatest and strongest combination that was ever gathered in Christendom” in Renaissance Europe, consisted of 30,000 troops on 130 ships, and was defeated by 20,000 English troops.14 The staggering scale of the Imjin War in itself should be sufficient cause for international relations scholars to explore its causes and consequences. Yet even more important for the study of international relations, Hideyoshi’s invasion of Korea marked the only military conflict between Japan, Korea, and China for over three centuries either before or after the war. In fact, although the war had a massive and lasting impact on Korea and Japan, it is viewed in China as just one of many border maintenance campaigns that the Ming engaged in.

Initially, the Japanese routed sparse Korean forces and drove north past Pyongyang. As the Japanese stormed up the peninsula, they were met with greater Korean resistance as Korean admiral Yi Sunsin attacked their ships mercilessly and cut their supply lines repeatedly. The Chinese joined the war in 1593, meeting and defeating the Japanese at Pyongyang, and pushing them back to Seoul. It soon became clear to both sides that Japan could not hope to conquer Korea, much less China.15 Japanese soldiers began to defect in large numbers, with reports of over ten thousand having joined the Korean side. Hideyoshi was now forced to negotiate, and he demanded that Korea cede to Japan four southern provinces, and that the Ming send a daughter to the Japanese court to remain as hostage.16

After years of fruitless negotiations, in which Hideyoshi’s demands were summarily rejected, Japan launched a second invasion in 1597, which was much less effective than the first. By this time, the Korean and Ming forces were more prepared and stronger, and the Japanese forces had been weakened. Hideyoshi then suddenly died in 1598, and the disorganized remnants of his forces retreated in chaos back to Japan.

Thus, Japan’s sole revisionist attempt to upset the hierarchy of the premodern tributary system ended in a disaster. For three hundred years both before and after the Imjin War, Japan was a somewhat reluctant part of the Chinese world. That the three major powers in East Asia—and indeed, much of the rest of the system—could peacefully coexist for such an extended time span, despite having the military and technological capability to wage war on a massive scale, raises the question of why stability was the norm in East Asian international relations.

The Chinese Ming-Qing Transition (1644-1683)

Although Hideyoshi could not topple the Ming, and indeed could not even conquer Korea, a few decades later, the Manchus succeeded where Japan failed. The consensus among historians is that the early Manchus had no intention of trying to conquer China, but as the Ming fell into greater internal disarray, and as eventually the Ming dynasty was toppled from within by rebels, the Manchus pushed on an open door.

The Ming dynasty in the early seventeenth century faced increasing internal rebellions, roving bands of regional bandits, and a general decline in economic conditions, especially in the northwest region. The Ming dynasty collapsed in April 1644, when rebels from Shaanxi led by Li Zicheng took the capital without a fight—the gates having been opened from within—and the last Ming emperor hanged himself. As Mote writes, “the circumstances of Ming collapse – the capital’s finding itself suddenly defenseless against a foreseeable and far from invincible military attack – were not brought about by any general disintegration of government and society … .those circumstances were brought about carelessly … .the fall of the Ming was, in short, caused by an accumulation of political errors.”17

When Li Zicheng captured Beijing, Manchu forces were still months of travel away from the capital, in the northeast frontier region of Liaodong. Indeed, the Manchus showed no signs at that time of contemplating an attack on the Ming themselves. But with the suicide of the emperor, the Ming administration throughout the empire began to collapse. A Ming general on the northern border, Wu Sangui, had actually been negotiating for years with the Manchus, as Wu's uncle and some other relatives had already joined them. Wu eventually invited the Manchu forces to join him, and together they routed the rebels and jointly entered Beijing in June 1644. The Manchus proclaimed a new dynasty, renaming themselves the Qing. Although the Qing date the founding of the dynasty from June 1644, the subsequent transitional warfare lasted until 1683 on Taiwan and 1664 on the mainland. The last Ming claimant was actually killed by Wu Sangui in 1662 in Yunnan.

The Manchus had arisen in the frontier regions to the northeast of China in the late sixteenth century. Manchuria at the time was home to many disparate peoples, languages, and cultures. Qing specialist Pamela Crossley notes that, “the result was not the refinement of a homogenous people and culture from heterogeneous sources, but the settlement of the uneven terrain of the region by culturally diverse groups who on occasion wove their lineages and federations together.”18 In the late sixteenth century, a local warlord, Nurhaci (1559-1626), began to unite a number of disparate tribes under his banner. In the late 1500s, Nurhaci had accepted a Ming military appointment, and had even offered to help Korea during the Imjin Wars. Using diplomacy, marriage, and coercion, Nurhaci quickly expanded his power base. In 1616, he declared himself “Khan” of the “latter Jin” dynasty.

Yet even the founding or expansion of the Qing Empire was not clearly about conquest, nor was it a rejection of the prevailing international order. Peter Perdue, Yale historian of East Asia, notes “As he [Nurhaci] defeated rival clan leaders … he incurred responsibilities for provisioning these troops … the urgent need for grain supplies became a major factor in the expansion of the state.”19 One of Nurhaci’s first attacks on Ming frontier outposts, at Fushun in 1618, was prompted by heavy rains, ruined harvests and the starvation that Nurhaci’s people were facing.20 As Crossley writes of the creation of the Manchu state and declaration of war against the Ming in the early seventeenth century, “It is probable that Nurhaci’s declaration of war against the Ming was motivated less by the prospect of a dramatic increase in distributable wealth than by fears that the current levels would be constricted.”21

Lessons from Asia: Power Vacuum, Not Transition

The Imjin War was an obvious moment of potential power transition involving a massive conflict that dwarfed most of the ones in Europe. This case might even be used to buttress the likelihood of violence in contemporary power transitions, but the fact that it does not come up suggests that, once again, scholars are using European examples to explain the world. If mainstream international relations scholars were to include the Imjin War, they would be obligated to think much more broadly and deeply about East Asian history, not only because it might have something useful to say about China today (certainly at least as much as Greece/Athens) but because it might affect our understanding of international relations more broadly.

The lessons of the Imjin War speak to the heart of power transition theory. Most strikingly, this was an example of a relatively tiny country deciding to make an unprovoked attack on the unipolar hegemon. This works totally against the way most realist, balance of power theories would predict. As Thucydides famously wrote of the Melian dialogue, “the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.”22 Yet even a unified Japan in 1592 was no possible military or economic equal of China. In 1600, China’s economy was almost ten times that of Japan, and far more sophisticated. Japan may have started a war, but there is no possible way it was motivated by a power transition between a rising and declining power.

Hideyoshi’s rationale for invading Korea remains unclear, although almost all evidence points to either status, economic, or domestic political considerations. There is almost no evidence that supports factors that power transition theorists cite, such as a changing balance of power. Elizabeth Berry, historian and author of the definitive biography of Hideyoshi, sees a desire for greater status: “He [Hideyoshi] was clearly less interested in military dominion abroad than in fame,”23 while Swope notes that Hideyoshi demanded a dynastic marriage with one of the Chinese emperor’s daughters along with the resumption of tribute trade. Historian Gang Deng sees a Japanese desire to reenter into tribute status with China, writing that, “Hideyoshi invaded Korea, a Ming vassal state, to force China to allow Japan to resume a tributary relationship, and threatened that a refusal would lead to invasion of China itself.”24 Historian Samuel Hawley emphasizes continual war as a way for Hideyoshi to quell internal dissension among his followers.25 As Ki-baek Lee, historian of premodern Korea, noted, “Having succeeded in unifying the country, Hideyoshi sought to direct the energies of his commanders outward, thereby to enhance the solidarity and tranquility of Japan itself.”26

Notably absent is the evidence from either the Chinese or Japanese archives of any assessment of the relative military capabilities or balance of power between the two sides. There is no archival evidence that Hideyoshi or any of his advisors made any assessment of the balance of power, nor any judgment that China was in decline and that Japan was rising. China evaluated the Japanese threat within the broader framework of its commitments and defense needs around Asia, but there was virtually no discussion of the Japanese as a strategic threat at the time. As for Hideyoshi, one potential reference point was the success of pirate raids (wokou) in the 1550s and the 1560s, a threat that Ming effectively curtailed by the mid-1560s. It was also evident that the most damaging raids were decidedly headed by Ming Chinese, rather than Japanese.27 Thus, it is true that real knowledge, and assessments based on that knowledge, were sorely lacking. And this makes little sense given how Hideyoshi had waged war in Japan prior to this, with careful preparation. As Berry observes, “there is no evidence that he [Hideyoshi] systematically researched either the geographical problem or the problem of Chinese military organization.”28 In short, the central causal argument about power transitions, that rising and declining powers fear and focus on each other, finds no support in the case of Japan’s invasion of Korea in 1592.

Furthermore, the dynamics between the countries involved at the time worked the opposite of the way balance of power theories would predict. Japan and Korea—the two small powers—certainly never allied together to balance China, even if at the beginning of the Imjin War, China deeply suspected that very possibility. It took three months of intense Korean diplomacy to convince Ming China that Korea was not conniving with Japan against them.29 It is doubtful a balancing strategy would ever have occurred to the smaller states, because each had their own separate relationship (tributary or not) with China, and China was the only pole in the East Asian state system.

Like Hideyoshi’s invasion of Korea, the Manchu conquest of China appears to have been undertaken and accomplished with almost no attention to the change in power distribution. Although the Ming were aware of the new Manchu force, it is not clear they did a whole lot about it. Manchus were not even the cause of the toppling of the dynasty, as we have seen. Ming officials were certainly concerned about the Manchus, but peasant rebels generally took precedence from the 1630s onwards (at least for most of Ming officials, although the emperors tended to vacillate on this point). The peasant rebels were the “disease of the heart” whereas the Manchus were the “disease of the skin."30 The most consequential dynastic transition in Asia over a period of half a millennium had almost nothing to do with the causal processes any of our power transition models envisage. It looked nothing like Thucydides would predict.

Just as significantly, after Hideyoshi’s defeat, Japan under the Tokugawa had no interest in taking advantage of the turmoil on the Asian mainland in the early seventeenth century. Rather than seizing a window of opportunity to attack China again, the Japanese—and Koreans—in the early seventeenth century remained almost completely out of the disorder that gripped China. Tokugawa Japan did nothing when the Ming began to crumble. The Tokugawa at the time, as Japan before Hideyoshi, were not an expansionist regime. It appears that Hideyoshi was the exception, not the norm, in how Japanese leaders viewed themselves and their relations with the rest of East Asia. After all, Japan, Korea, and China clearly had the military, logistical, organizational, and economic capabilities to conduct war across oceans on a massive scale. It was a political choice not to do so, not a material limitation.

#### Be skeptical of the truth claim of the aff---the military seizure of academic knowledge skews the debate towards propping up dangerous US hegemony

Turse 4 [Nicholas, Doctoral Candidate @ Columbia University, “The Military-Academic Complex”]

The military-academic complex is merely one of many readily perceptible, but largely ignored, examples of the increasing militarization of American society. While the Pentagon has long sought to exploit and exert influence over civilian cultural institutions, from academia to the entertainment industry, today's massive budgets make its power increasingly irresistible. The Pentagon now has both the money and the muscle to alter the landscape of higher education, to manipulate research agendas, to change the course of curricula and to force schools to play by its rules. ¶ Moreover, the military research underway on college campuses across America has very real and dangerous implications for the future. It will enable or enhance imperial adventures in decades to come; it will lead to new lethal technologies to be wielded against peoples across the globe; it will feed a superpower arms race of one, only increasing the already vast military asymmetry between the United States and everyone else; it will make ever-more heavily armed, technologically-equipped, and "up-armored" U.S. war-fighters ever less attractive adversaries and American and allied civilians much more appealing soft targets for America's enemies. None of this, however, enters the realm of debate. Instead, the Pentagon rolls along, doling out money to colleges large and small, expanding and strengthening the military-academic complex, and remaking civilian institutions to suit military desires as if this were but the natural way of the world.

#### Refusing to license is virtually non-existent

Kappos 18. David J Kappos. Partner at Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP and is the former Under Secretary of Commerce and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office. "The Antitrust Assault on Intellectual Property" <https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/hjlt31&div=26&id=&page=>

Such behavior might indeed be problematic- if it actually occurred. But although the hold-up scenario may sound plausible in theory, **history has demonstrated that it is not a problem**. There are more than a thousand SSOs worldwide, and even more individual standards. 48 Despite this large number of opportunities for SEP holdup, there are virtually no documented instances of such hold-up. 49 **To the contrary, major SSOs have reported that hold-up is not an issue.** 50 The Federal Circuit upheld a district court's refusal to instruct a jury about the dangers of patent hold-up, finding that the defendant had provided no evidence of hold-up. 51 In a 2015 decision in an ITC proceeding, Judge Essex found "no evidence of holdup" in the case, noted that the testifying experts could not identify any examples of hold-up generally, and characterized DOJ and FTC positions on holdup as entirely "speculative and unproven. "52 Indeed, when pressed for evidence of hold-up at a 2015 symposium, **DOJ and FTC officials present were unable to provide any concrete examples.** 53 And standards-intensive areas of technology such as smart phones that, according to the hold-up theory, should have been experiencing rising prices, are instead seeing falling prices and other characteristics of healthy competition. 54

#### Patent holdup narrative is wrong – it’s the product of big tech and superstar celebrity academia

Sidak 18 (Gregory Sidak, studied law and economics at Stanford University, previously held academic positions at Yale University, Georgetown University, *Is Patent Holdup a Hoax?*, Criterion Economics, Vol. 3, 2018)

Many economists—and perhaps even a fair number of judges and lawyers— would agree that a sound economic theory can usefully inform the legal analysis of a complex commercial dispute. But how likely is it that knowledge accrues in the opposite direction? Can the expediency of legal advocacy serendipitously inspire a breakthrough in economic understanding? Can a client’s desired outcome in a consequential legal dispute plausibly motivate a novel economic theory that genuinely advances science? Perhaps so, if one embraces a new interpretation of Oscar Wilde’s notion of “the triumph of hope over experience.”1 But only perhaps. In 2007, two law review articles debuted the patent-holdup conjecture, which has since become de rigueur for any implementer of an industry standard to allege against a holder of standard-essential patents (SEPs) when the parties dispute whether the SEP holder has offered to license those patents on legitimately fair, reasonable, and nondiscriminatory (FRAND) terms. The patent-holdup conjecture quickly became a big business. The first article2 was written by Mark Lemley, a distinguished law professor at Stanford and (at the time) of counsel to the San Francisco litigation boutique Keker & Van Nest, and by Carl Shapiro, an equally distinguished economics professor at Berkeley and a senior consultant to Charles River Associates (a publiclytraded company formally named CRA International).3 The second article was written by Shapiro, along with economists Joseph Farrell of Berkeley and (at the time) CRA, and John Hayes and Theresa Sullivan, both of CRA.4 From its inception, the patent-holdup conjecture, though ostensibly economic in character and predominantly articulated by economists, was not a theory to be debated by academic economists, as confirmed by the fact that the authors chose to place these two seminal articles in law reviews rather than economics journals. Instead, its creators seemed to cultivate the patent-holdup conjecture for consumption by lawyers, judges, and antitrust enforcers. The two seminal articles were co-authored by eminent scholars at Berkeley and Stanford whose professional reputations and experience, as legal counsel or as consulting or testifying economic experts, had enabled them over time to speak with authority on consequential legal disputes concerning intellectual property. It is therefore not surprising that four west-coast technology titans— Apple, Cisco, Intel, and Microsoft—considered it meritorious to fund the article by Lemley and Shapiro.5 Since 2007, those four firms have publicly advocated policies and interpretations of legal doctrines that would lower FRAND royalties for SEPs.6 Similarly, since 2007, CRA and its affiliated academics have continued to champion the patent-holdup conjecture, both in the United States and abroad.7 By itself, the fact that the article by Lemley and Shapiro elicited the interest and financial support of Apple, Cisco, Intel, and Microsoft surely does not invalidate the patent-holdup conjecture. If anything, one should construe that corporate support as a market signal of quality and of the real-world relevance of the topic that Lemley and Shapiro committed to address. The corporate sponsorship indicates that leading technology companies perceived these two professors not to be stuck in an ivory tower, preoccupied with theories that would never be noticed by, much less influence, the real world below.8 At the same time, even if this corporate approbation comes from the most influential, the most profitable, and the most powerful of tech companies, that fact surely does not establish the epistemological merit of the patent-holdup conjecture. That corporations subvent research elucidating an economic conjecture on patent holdup is not evidence that the conjecture is true and advances the frontiers of objective knowledge. An economic conjecture on patent holdup can be useful for the corporations funding and applauding it even if it turns out to be false, as long as the conjecture successfully persuades its target audience—whether it consists of judges, jurors, arbitrators, legislators, antitrust enforcers, equity analysts, or journalists.9 In contrast, to be validated in a scientific sense, the patent-holdup conjecture must survive attempts at falsification, just as the scientific method demands of any theory. This process of conjecture and refutation is, Karl Popper explained, how we recognize a genuine contribution to objective knowledge.10 It is not some pedantic proposition to debate over drinks at the faculty club; it is the Supreme Court’s stated epistemological foundation for deciding whether ostensibly “expert testimony” is admissible evidence under Federal Rule of Evidence 702.11Given the symbiotic relationships between large technology companies, celebrity scholars at prestigious research universities in or near Silicon Valley, the respected economic consulting firms and law firms that advise these major tech companies on strategic and contentious matters, and the antitrust enforcers who address the technology sector, it not difficult to understand why, soon after Lemley, Shapiro, and Farrell unveiled their patent-holdup conjecture in 2007, the conjecture commanded such immediate and widespread attention and controversy. Nor does it require much imagination to understand why the patent-holdup conjecture soon grew to become a standard tool of legal and political advocacy for tech companies and antitrust enforcement agencies around the world. I focus in this article on how the patent-holdup narrative has evolved since 2007, given the inroads made by skeptics who have sought to refute the conjecture. The tenor of the patent-holdup debate fundamentally changed in 2015, when one of the conjecture’s creators seemed to demand that his theory simply be excused from scientific scrutiny and its skeptics be discredited because they were “patent-holdup deniers.”12 As I will show, this kind of resort to a rhetorical crutch is repeatedly observed in the patent-holdup narrative, and each time it is should be recognized as a red flag that the proponent of the patent-holdup conjecture in question lacks substantive, scientific arguments with which to answer those who doubt the conjecture. Of course, if the proponents of the patent-holdup conjecture themselves indeed lack any persuasive scientific evidence with which to establish the verisimilitude of their narrative, it would be more intellectually honest for them simply to drop the pretense of rationality and call for patent-holdup crusaders to wage holy war on patent-holdup infidels. It is therefore delicious irony that in 2015 Lemley—verily the John the Baptist of patent holdup— decried what he called “faith-based intellectual property,” which, he said, “is at its base a religion and not a science because it does not admit the prospect of being proven wrong.”13

1. Wen Liu, ““Complicity and Resistance: Asian American Body Politics in Black Lives Matter,” October 2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Will Carless, “Proud Boys Saw Wave of Contributions from Chinese Diaspora Before Capital Attack,” January 4, 2021, https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2021/05/04/proud-boys-chinese-americans-community-support-donations/7343111002/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Claire Jean Kim, “For Chinese American Conservatives, Race is a Weapon”, October 8 2019, https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/asian-conservatives-affirmative-action/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Cathy Park Hong, “Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Maurice Stucke and Ariel Ezrachi, “The Rise, Fall, and Rebirth of the U.S. Antitrust Movement,” December 15, 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)