# 1AC

### 1AC---Climate Denialism

#### Vote affirmative to reject climate denialism

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Abstract The way fossil fuel companies frame climate change in their annual sustainability reports shines light how the fossil fuel industry is addressing pressure from stockholders, investors, and the public to become less environmentally harmful. Through a qualitative frame analysis and critical discourse analysis of fossil fuel company sustainability reports, four major frames emerged: (1) techno-optimism, or, the belief that innovative technologies and fuels, without social change, can help solve the issue of climate change; (2) necessitarianism, or, the notion that the fossil fuel industry provides a necessary service; (3) compliance, or, adherence to established regulations and standards; and (4) countermeasures, or, strategies that indirectly counteract harms done. Two frames central to discourses surrounding fossil fuels and climate change are notably absent: (5) potential environmental and societal risks of fossil fuels (risk minimization) and (6) potential future scenarios that are significantly different from the growing economy powered by increased energy output (possibility blindness). Together, the frames are a subtle form of climate change denialism that acknowledges climate change as a problem without diagnosing the root cause of the problem (ideological denial), conceals environmentally harmful actions with the rhetoric of environmental friendliness (greenwashing), and justifies the status quo as necessary (reification). 1. Introduction The fossil fuel industry has a tenuous history with the public regarding information about climate change (for summary, see [1]: 310f). Major players in the industry, most notably ExxonMobil, actively sought to cover up and deny the reality of climate change despite knowing about the contribution of fossil fuels to global warming long before the public [2]. In addition to secrecy and denial, the fossil fuel industry worked to discredit climate scientists in the eyes of the public [3], [4], [5]. With growth in the public’s belief in anthropogenic climate change, and the increasing difficulty of denying climate change given the reality of climate change-related impacts, stockholders in the fossil fuel industry, other stakeholders, and members of the public, are increasingly demanding change from fossil fuel companies. These demands range from completely phasing-out fossil fuels to transitioning to greener sources of energy [6]. The industry is reacting to these demands in diverse and sometimes contradictory ways. For example, most fossil fuel companies now acknowledge that climate change is real and should be addressed, yet some are simultaneously members or leaders in organizations that spread disinformation about climate science or seek to block climate action [1], [3], [7], [8]. There is a wealth of literature on strategies the fossil fuel industry employs to actively undermine climate change policy (e.g., [5], [9]). However, there is not an extensive body of research, save the exceptions reviewed in Section 2, regarding how the industry frames, beyond outright denial, the causes, moral dimensions of, and solutions to climate change. This is a large gap in the literature considering the industry’s recent attempts to become, at least in appearance, more environmentally conscious by, for example, publishing sustainability reports. The way fossil fuel companies frame climate change in their sustainability reports opens a window into how the fossil fuel industry is managing the pressure from stockholders, investors, and the public to become more sustainable. The goal of this analysis is to identify the most coherent and polished framing strategies used by the fossil fuel industry to reconcile the demand to “go green” with the reality of extracting and distributing the commodity most responsible for carbon emissions [10], [11]. Through a qualitative frame analysis of fossil fuel company sustainability reports, four major frames emerged: (1) techno-optimism, or, the belief that innovative technologies, without fundamental social changes, can help solve the issue of climate change, as well as invoking the future potential of renewable and cleaner nonrenewable sources; (2) necessitarianism, or, the notion that the fossil fuel industry provides a necessary service that improves the quality of life of many people; (3) compliance, or, adherence to established regulations and standards; and (4) countermeasures, or, strategies that indirectly counteract harms done, especially through participation in other organizations that do work to benefit the environment and investing in other environmental projects. Furthermore, two frames central to discourses surrounding fossil fuels and climate change are notably absent in the annual sustainability reports: (5) potential environmental and societal risks of purely technological solutions and continued fossil fuel use (risk minimization) and (6) potential future scenarios that are significantly different from the growing economy powered by increased energy output (possibility blindness). Both omissions help overcome the paradox between the demand to “go green” with the reality of extracting fossil fuels by implicitly disregarding the existence of the contradiction. Below, we review of the concepts of frames and framing, as well as pertinent existing information regarding how fossil fuel companies framed climate change in the past (Section 2). Section 3 reviews the methods used to analyze fossil fuel industry sustainability reports. We then discuss the major frames that emerged during the analysis (Section 4), followed by a critical analysis of these framing strategies (Section 5). We conclude by examining the implications of the findings for climate change mitigation and the future of the fossil fuel industry in climate action (Section 6). 2. Research approach The concept of “frame” draws attention to the way experience is conditioned by the selection and salience of information [12]. The use of frames is prevalent in society, and perhaps an inherent feature of all perception [13], though we may not always be cognizant of their use and existence. Individuals and organizations can explicitly adopt framing strategies that select aspects of perceived reality that the individual or organization wants to make more salient. By enhancing salience, we mean that the piece of information selected is made more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable. Frames can be used as tools by organizations to control how they represent themselves to the public. Successfully employed frames can define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements, and suggest treatments or remedies [12]. Frames can shape the perception of information. By controlling what information is conveyed, and how salient that information is, the audience can be swayed, find other facts or perspectives irrelevant, etc. Furthermore, frames can provide insight into the ideals and priorities of the people or organizations using the frames. Frames are employed by the fossil fuel industry, a powerful actor in mainstreaming specific framings of climate change [14]. In an analysis of 38 previous studies on industry actors’ communications on climate change between 1990 and 2010, three overarching and evolving frames were used by industrial actors: scientific uncertainty, socioeconomic consequences of mandatory emissions reductions, and, most recently, industrial leadership in climate protection [15]. The latter frame, which took hold globally and is still prevalent today, refers to “industrial actors acknowledg[ing] responsibility for the climate. However, they portray technological innovations as the primary assets to combat climate change” ([15]: 505). The industrial leadership frame was pioneered by European oil and gas companies. The initial pushback towards carbon emission regulation was much more aggressive among US corporations than European corporations [16]. US corporations formed industry associations, lobbied politicians, cast doubt on climate science, and emphasized the high economic cost of forced emission reductions. In contrast, industries in Europe expressed a willingness to invest in technologies that would reduce emissions. Earlier, Le Menestrel et al. [17] also found that oil and gas actors emphasized technological investments (e.g., in green energy) to address a dilemma: that constraining emissions would lead to lower profits. However, these companies simultaneously invested substantially more money in fossil fuels and lent support to anti-climate action lobby groups. Green marketing and strategic framing help address this contradiction, and similar paradoxes. For example, in their Helios Power campaign, BP used background images of wind turbines, environmental buzzwords (reduce waste, conserve energy, etc.), green color schemes, a conservation advocacy section of the campaign, and a new green logo [18]. BP appears to align itself with green ideals and advocate for the pro-environmental movement. However, closer analysis shows that this behavior primarily serves to maintain company profits while appeasing environmentally friendly stakeholders and climate activists. The use of green images and rhetoric despite, or to mask, environmental harms and manipulate consumers is sometimes termed “greenwashing” [19]. A common form of greenwashing among fossil fuel companies is the hidden trade-off, where a product is framed as green or environmentally friendly based on a single attribute while other attributes are ignored [20]. Companies also often enhance these greenwashed frames by highlighting and amplifying science and technology, and the expertise of authorities. Pulling these historical trends together, Brulle [3] examined how the fossil fuel industry initially engaged in explicit denialism, despite knowing about climate science and the role of fossil fuels in climate change. More recently, the industry has shifted toward a more subtle framing that feigns positive change or provides minimal support towards a pro-environment agenda while continuing to harm the environment and prioritize profit outside of the public eye. This strategy includes the use of frames to shape public opinion, industrial leadership, community involvement, and focused campaigns to control the company’s public image. In summary, previous studies on fossil fuel framings of climate change focused on overarching frames or the evolution of frames and industry behaviors over long periods of time, such as Levy [16], Schlichting [17], and Brulle [3]. The goal of this project is to examine the most coherent and polished climate change-related framing strategies officially employed by the fossil fuel industry to date via an analysis of their annual sustainability reports to answer one overarching question: What framing strategies do fossil fuel companies employ to reconcile the demand for addressing the climate crisis with the reality that their product is the most significant immediate cause of climate change? This research question provides insight into the industry’s views on the interesting ethical dilemma they face, as described by Le Menestrel et al. [17], where the industry is trying to address a problem in which they are the primary contributor. This dilemma has snowballed due to growing pressure from stockholders, investors, and the public to become environmentally friendly. Answering this overarching question will require an examination of the four dimensions of frames identified in Entman’s [12] classic conceptualization: (1) How do fossil fuel companies define the problem of climate change?; (2) How do fossil fuel companies diagnose the problem of climate change? (i.e., Who or what is causing the problem of climate change, according to fossil fuel companies?); (3) How do fossil fuel companies evaluate the problem of climate change (i.e., What moral judgements do they make)?; (4) What solutions to climate change do fossil fuel companies propose? Addressing these questions will illuminate how the industry balances its role in driving climate change with its need to stay profitable, as well as how it works to shape the perceptions and opinions of its stakeholders and critics. 3. Methodology and materials 3.1. Qualitative frame analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA) Typically, frames are identified via content analysis [21]. A distinct frame can be categorized as the definition of a problem or an issue, causal attribution, a moral evaluation, and a treatment [12]. Frames can be analyzed quantitatively and/or qualitatively. Qualitative content analysis identifies and categorizes the central themes or frames of interview transcripts, reports, or other forms of text [22], [23]. As the data was collected and analyzed, any recurrent concepts (such as faith in technology or an emphasis on adherence to regulation) were identified and, over time, categorized into specific frames (see Section 3.3). We adopt a qualitative approach here, which emphasizes focusing on, and understanding, frames as they relate to conceptual issues and societal contexts as opposed to solely the prevalence of the frames [24]. In addition to qualitative content analysis, the methodological approach also overlaps with critical discourse analysis (CDA), specifically a form of CDA that examines how language can be used to reproduce existing social conditions and contextualizes discourse with the sometimes-obscured social forces that influence it (for overview, see [25]: 8ff). Like CDA, we think the social context in which language is employed is of critical importance because discourse is shaped or “constituted” by this context. CDA has proven to be a valuable method in studying frames used in environmental and energy discourse [26], [27], [28], [29]. Our normative aim is to “demystify” frames employed by fossil fuel companies and analyze them as strategies to reproduce the status quo via minor reforms. This critical spotlight is based on the premise that to effectively reduce emissions at the pace and scale needed to avoid catastrophic climate change, fossil fuel companies must “end exploration, wind down extraction, [and] invest in low-carbon energy” ([30]: 3). Anything less than explicit plans to phase out nearly all fossil fuel extraction—for example, proposals to merely increase miniscule investments in renewables [31] or co-fund another carbon capture and storage facility—are inadequate for staying within internationally recognized climate targets [30]. For those who argue that this standard is unrealistic, we think our counterfactual is more realistic than meeting climate targets while simultaneously maintaining or expanding fossil fuel extraction – even if the companies extracting fossil fuels allocate a bit more than 0.22% (ExxonMobil) to 2.3% (BP) of total capital expenditures in low-carbon investments [31]. Following others, we make the case that minor reforms in lieu of phase-out are strategies of greenwashing, or even a new form of climate change denial (see Section 5). 3.2. Data The data was collected from the following eight companies: Chevron, ExxonMobil, BP, Royal Dutch Shell (hereafter Shell), ConocoPhillips, Peabody Energy (hereafter Peabody), CONSOL Energy (hereafter CONSOL), and Arch Coal. These eight companies were chosen because they are responsible for 15% of carbon emissions since 1850 [11], [32]. There are significant differences between these companies in terms of market focus and climate strategy. Most glaringly, Peabody, CONSOL, and Arch Coal are primarily coal companies, whereas Chevron, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil, BP, and Shell derive most of their profits from oil and gas. This difference not only impacts the viability of future markets—for example, some investor-owned coal companies are on their last leg ([30]: 8)—, but also climate strategy. For example, in “planning for a world free from carbon pollution,” all three coal companies were ranked as “egregious” by the Union of Concern Scientists [8], whereas the oil and gas companies were ranked as “poor” (BP, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil) to “fair” (Shell). Despite these differences, we found that all eight companies employed the same four frames: techno-optimism, necessitarianism, compliance, and countermeasures. (These frames are discussed in detail below.) The only exception is Peabody’s sustainability report, which employs two of the frames (techno-optimism and necessitarianism), rather than all four. The consistency in framing across all eight companies is notable. As pressure from stockholders and investors may have more immediate financial consequences for companies when compared to public pressure, sustainability reports are a perfect data source to examine how fossil fuel companies reconcile the demand to address climate change with the fact that they are fossil fuel companies. Further, as explained above, our goal is to examine the most polished climate change-related frames produced by fossil fuel companies. Sustainability reports are fitting for this research goal as well. To use an analogy, sustainability reports show “the ideal self” of fossil fuel companies’ green self-presentation, one that conforms with the expectations of environmentally minded investors and other stakeholders. Fossil fuel companies can use sustainability reports to construct an ideal green self-image because, in contrast to financial statements, there are no established legal or regulatory risks in being excessively optimistic in sustainability reports.1 Thus, corporate sustainability reports, as a PR exercise, are a window into this ideal green self-image. A web search and a search of company websites uncovered sustainability reports for most of the companies listed above. A second, more directed search uncovered sustainability reports for every company except Arch Coal. The most recent sustainability report for each company available at the time (July 2020) was used as data. The reports analyzed are as follows: (1) Chevron’s “Climate Change Resilience: A Framework for Decision Making” [34], (2) ExxonMobil’s “2018 Sustainability Report Highlights” [35], (3) BP’s “Energy with Purpose: BP Sustainability Report 2019” [36], (4) Shell’s “Sustainability Report 2019: Delivering Energy Responsibly” [37], (5) ConocoPhillips’ “2018 Sustainability Report” [38], (6) Peabody’s “Delivering Results, Generating Value: Environmental, Social, and Governance Report 2019” [39], and (7) CONSOL’s “Forward Progress: 2019 Corporate Sustainability Report” [40]. We could not locate a sustainability report for Arch Coal, as mentioned above. Instead of using data from their annual report, data for Arch Coal was collected from the company’s website. The website has an “Our Approach” page with nine links to other sections (pages) that all deal with various sustainability and environmental issues [41]. Each of these nine other sections, as well as the original page, were examined for relevant data. 3.3. Analysis The data were analyzed by the first author in accordance with the qualitative content analysis of frames as described above in Section 3.1. The second author was consulted throughout the analysis to help conceptualize emergent codes. Relatively open coding was used when analyzing the data, which ensured that any prominent frames would emerge during analysis. Although open coding was used, the analysis was guided by the research questions and purpose (see Section 2), which was to identify what framing strategies fossil fuel companies use to reconcile the demand for action to address the climate crisis with the fact that their products are the most immediate cause of this crisis. Identifying these frames required attention to how fossil fuel companies define the problem of climate change; how fossil fuel companies diagnose the problem of climate change; how fossil fuel companies evaluate the problem of climate change; and what solutions fossil fuel companies propose to solve climate change. Further, past literature informed the “naming” of codes in cases of clear overlaps (e.g., “techno-optimism”). Finally, the analysis purposefully recorded what potentially relevant climate change information (e.g., risks of continuing fossil fuel extraction) was not discussed in sustainability reports. Drawing attention to what is “unsaid,” “backgrounded,” or “omitted,” despite being potentially relevant, is consistent with CDA (e.g., [27]) and frame analysis in general [12]. 4. Results All the reports analyzed discussed the fossil fuel industry’s relationship to environmental health and climate change. The extent and breadth of this discussion varied between reports. As discussed above, the analysis was guided by Entman’s [12] classic conceptualization of framing as the definition, diagnosis, evaluation, and prescription of a given issue or problem. One notable finding is that the sustainability reports did not diagnose or evaluate the problem of climate change. Instead, frames are almost entirely prescriptive. The problem itself, and its causes, are taken for granted. The absence of diagnosis is especially notable because diagnosing climate change requires an analysis of the primary immediate driver of climate change: fossil fuels. The only frame that can be interpreted as an evaluation of climate change is “necessitarianism,” which frames fossil fuels as a prerequisite for a decent standard of living (see 4.2 Necessitarianism, 4.5 Omissions). Four prescriptive frames emerged from the data: (1) techno-optimism, (2) necessitarianism, (3) compliance, and (4) countermeasures. Each frame is described with examples below, followed by a section on key omissions from the reports (Section 4.5). Table 1 below provides a summary of the prescriptive frames identified.

#### Advertising and big oil collude to “greenwash” fossil fuels

Cunningham 22, an independent journalist covering the oil and gas industry, (Nick, Over 450 Climate Scientists Say Advertising Industry Must End ‘Complicity’ in Climate Crisis, <https://www.desmog.com/2022/01/21/450-climate-scientists-advertising-climate-crisis/>)

As DeSmog has reported, a peer-reviewed study published late last year looked at the role that the PR industry has played in promoting climate denial and delay over three decades. The Brown University study uncovered that a relatively small group of the top ad agencies loomed large as the creative minds behind climate misinformation. “This study adds a new cast of characters to our understanding of the key actors in climate change politics,” Robert J. Brulle and Carter Werthman of Brown University wrote in their study. “Along with ExxonMobil, Koch Enterprises, Greenpeace, the Heartland Institute, and the Competitive Enterprise Institute, we need to add in PR firms such as Edelman, Glover Park, Cerrell, and Ogilvy.” PR and ad firms rake in substantial sums of money for this work. A 2019 study by the Climate Investigations Center found that the lobbyists and trade associations affiliated with the fossil fuel industry spent an estimated $1.4 billion on advertising and PR between 2008 and 2017. The American Petroleum Institute accounted for nearly half of that total, with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce ranked second. The PR firms on the receiving end of that spending included Edelman, DDC Advocacy, FleishmanHillard, and Blue Advertising (once part of Edelman). “We climate scientists have been trying to raise the climate crisis alarm for decades, but we’ve been drowned out by these fossil fuel industry-funded PR campaigns,” said climate scientist Michael Mann. “Greenwashing is a primary tactic in what I call the ‘New War’ on climate action and it must be called out for what it is — denial under another name.”

#### Disinformation campaigns are rampant and dangerous

Greenpeace 21, (WORDS VS ACTIONS The truth behind fossil fuel advertising, <https://www.greenpeace.org/static/planet4-netherlands-stateless/2021/10/3b500e9b-words-vs-actions-the-truth-behind-fossil-fuel-advertising.pdf>)

Fossil fuel companies use advertising and sponsorships to promote false solutions which are a dangerous distraction from the real renewable solutions we need. A recent investigation by Influence Map found that over $9.5 million was spent on over 25,000 adverts and promotions by oil and gas companies on Facebook adverts and promotions that promoted fossil gas as a clean alternative to younger target audiences16. These attempts from companies such as Exxon Mobil to promote the climate benefits of fossil gas (which is a fossil fuel) are a clear demonstration of the fossil fuel industry’s tendency to actively deny climate science or manipulate facts via their advertising in order to serve business interests. It can be considered likely that we will see an increase of false solutions promoted by fossil fuel companies as we get closer to the COP26 negotiations in November 2021 as fossil fuel companies continue to attempt to ‘green’ their brands. False solutions are often presented, even sometimes alongside renewable energies as a constructive solution and a legitimate part of decarbonisation plans which misleads the public, as well as decision makers as to which ‘solutions’ are safest for the planet.

#### Climate disinformation undermines climate solutions

Pals 21, J.D. NYU Law School and Editor-in-Chief, New York University Environmental Law Journal. (Bridget, TAXES V. TORTS: WHICH WILL MAKE FOSSIL FUEL PRODUCERS SHARE CLIMATE CHANGE BURDENS?, <https://www.nyuelj.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Pals-Taxes-v.-Torts.pdf>)

Fossil fuel producers have known for decades that the use of fossil fuels would cause irreparable harm to the environment and, in response to that knowledge, led a massive misinformation campaign to prevent the public from understanding the full expected scope of damages.27 Prior to 1988, Exxon and other fossil fuel producers contributed to climate change research, however, when Congress began taking testimony and considering policy solutions to climate change, “oil-and-gas executives beg[an] to consider the issue’s potential to hurt their profits.”28 Indeed, within six weeks of important congressional testimony, Exxon passed around an internal memo encouraging the company to “emphasize the uncertainty in scientific conclusions,” a strategy that has continued to the present day.29 Between 2000 and 2016, over $2 billion was spent on climate change lobbying, with fossil fuel producers, electric utilities, and the transportation industry outspending pro-environmental lobbying groups by a factor of ten.30 This misinformation campaign has been wildly successful. While the American public increasingly understands the risks of climate change,31 even today, climate denialism percolates through the highest levels of government. In 2015, a U.S. Senator famously threw a snowball on the Senate floor to demonstrate that, given the presence of snow in Washington, D.C. in February, climate change was a hoax.32 This misinformation campaign by fossil fuel producers, perpetrated to secure their own future financial stability with little to no regard for the immense costs imposed on the rest of the world, is morally repugnant. To quote one of the climate change tort litigation complaints, “[a]ccounting for their wrongful promotion and marketing activities, Defendants bear a dominant responsibility for global warming generally.”33 Arguably, if fossil fuel producers had not fought, tooth and nail, to cloud society’s understanding of the damages associated with carbon emissions, a policy response may have been developed earlier.

#### Warming causes suffering, violence, and eventual uninhabitability---emissions, ocean acidification, extreme weather, and food shortages

Ripple and Wolf 20, are affiliated with the Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society at Oregon State University, in Corvallis and contributed equally to the work. Thomas M. Newsome is affiliated with the School of Life and Environmental Sciences at The University of Sydney, in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Phoebe Barnard is affiliated with the Conservation Biology Institute, in Corvallis, Oregon, and with the African Climate and Development Initiative, at the University of Cape Town, in Cape Town, South Africa. William R. Moomaw is affiliated with The Fletcher School and the Global Development and Environment Institute, at Tufts University, in Medford, Massachusetts. (William & Christopher, 11-5-2019, “World Scientists’ Warning of a Climate Emergency,” American Institute of Biological Science, https://academic.oup.com/bioscience/article/70/1/8/5610806)

Scientists have a moral obligation to clearly warn humanity of any catastrophic threat and to “tell it like it is.” On the basis of this obligation and the graphical indicators presented below, we declare, with more than 11,000 scientist signatories from around the world, clearly and unequivocally that planet Earth is facing a climate emergency. Exactly 40 years ago, scientists from 50 nations met at the First World Climate Conference (in Geneva 1979) and agreed that alarming trends for climate change made it urgently necessary to act. Since then, similar alarms have been made through the 1992 Rio Summit, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, and the 2015 Paris Agreement, as well as scores of other global assemblies and scientists’ explicit warnings of insufficient progress (Ripple et al. 2017). Yet greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are still rapidly rising, with increasingly damaging effects on the Earth's climate. An immense increase of scale in endeavors to conserve our biosphere is needed to avoid untold suffering due to the climate crisis (IPCC 2018). Most public discussions on climate change are based on global surface temperature only, an inadequate measure to capture the breadth of human activities and the real dangers stemming from a warming planet (Briggs et al. 2015). Policymakers and the public now urgently need access to a set of indicators that convey the effects of human activities on GHG emissions and the consequent impacts on climate, our environment, and society. Building on prior work (see supplemental file S2), we present a suite of graphical vital signs of climate change over the last 40 years for human activities that can affect GHG emissions and change the climate (figure 1), as well as actual climatic impacts (figure 2). We use only relevant data sets that are clear, understandable, systematically collected for at least the last 5 years, and updated at least annually.

[Graphs Excluded]

The climate crisis is closely linked to excessive consumption of the wealthy lifestyle. The most affluent countries are mainly responsible for the historical GHG emissions and generally have the greatest per capita emissions (table S1). In the present article, we show general patterns, mostly at the global scale, because there are many climate efforts that involve individual regions and countries. Our vital signs are designed to be useful to the public, policymakers, the business community, and those working to implement the Paris climate agreement, the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Profoundly troubling signs from human activities include sustained increases in both human and ruminant livestock populations, per capita meat production, world gross domestic product, global tree cover loss, fossil fuel consumption, the number of air passengers carried, carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions, and per capita CO2 emissions since 2000 (figure 1, supplemental file S2). Encouraging signs include decreases in global fertility (birth) rates (figure 1b), decelerated forest loss in the Brazilian Amazon (figure 1g), increases in the consumption of solar and wind power (figure 1h), institutional fossil fuel divestment of more than US$7 trillion (figure 1j), and the proportion of GHG emissions covered by carbon pricing (figure 1m). However, the decline in human fertility rates has substantially slowed during the last 20 years (figure 1b), and the pace of forest loss in Brazil's Amazon has now started to increase again (figure 1g). Consumption of solar and wind energy has increased 373% per decade, but in 2018, it was still 28 times smaller than fossil fuel consumption (combined gas, coal, oil; figure 1h). As of 2018, approximately 14.0% of global GHG emissions were covered by carbon pricing (figure 1m), but the global emissions-weighted average price per tonne of carbon dioxide was only around US$15.25 (figure 1n). A much higher carbon fee price is needed (IPCC 2018, section 2.5.2.1). Annual fossil fuel subsidies to energy companies have been fluctuating, and because of a recent spike, they were greater than US$400 billion in 2018 (figure 1o). Especially disturbing are concurrent trends in the vital signs of climatic impacts (figure 2, supplemental file S2). Three abundant atmospheric GHGs (CO2, methane, and nitrous oxide) continue to increase (see figure S1 for ominous 2019 spike in CO2), as does global surface temperature (figure 2a–2d). Globally, ice has been rapidly disappearing, evidenced by declining trends in minimum summer Arctic sea ice, Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets, and glacier thickness worldwide (figure 2e–2h). Ocean heat content, ocean acidity, sea level, area burned in the United States, and extreme weather and associated damage costs have all been trending upward (figure 2i–2n). Climate change is predicted to greatly affect marine, freshwater, and terrestrial life, from plankton and corals to fishes and forests (IPCC 2018, 2019). These issues highlight the urgent need for action. Despite 40 years of global climate negotiations, with few exceptions, we have generally conducted business as usual and have largely failed to address this predicament (figure 1). The climate crisis has arrived and is accelerating faster than most scientists expected (figure 2, IPCC 2018). It is more severe than anticipated, threatening natural ecosystems and the fate of humanity (IPCC 2019). Especially worrisome are potential irreversible climate tipping points and nature's reinforcing feedbacks (atmospheric, marine, and terrestrial) that could lead to a catastrophic “hothouse Earth,” well beyond the control of humans (Steffen et al. 2018). These climate chain reactions could cause significant disruptions to ecosystems, society, and economies, potentially making large areas of Earth uninhabitable. To secure a sustainable future, we must change how we live, in ways that improve the vital signs summarized by our graphs. Economic and population growth are among the most important drivers of increases in CO2 emissions from fossil fuel combustion (Pachauri et al. 2014, Bongaarts and O’Neill 2018); therefore, we need bold and drastic transformations regarding economic and population policies. We suggest six critical and interrelated steps (in no particular order) that governments, businesses, and the rest of humanity can take to lessen the worst effects of climate change. These are important steps but are not the only actions needed or possible (Pachauri et al. 2014, IPCC 2018, 2019). Energy The world must quickly implement massive energy efficiency and conservation practices and must replace fossil fuels with low-carbon renewables (figure 1h) and other cleaner sources of energy if safe for people and the environment (figure S2). We should leave remaining stocks of fossil fuels in the ground (see the timelines in IPCC 2018) and should carefully pursue effective negative emissions using technology such as carbon extraction from the source and capture from the air and especially by enhancing natural systems (see “Nature” section). Wealthier countries need to support poorer nations in transitioning away from fossil fuels. We must swiftly eliminate subsidies for fossil fuels (figure 1o) and use effective and fair policies for steadily escalating carbon prices to restrain their use. Short-lived pollutants We need to promptly reduce the emissions of short-lived climate pollutants, including methane (figure 2b), black carbon (soot), and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). Doing this could slow climate feedback loops and potentially reduce the short-term warming trend by more than 50% over the next few decades while saving millions of lives and increasing crop yields due to reduced air pollution (Shindell et al. 2017). The 2016 Kigali amendment to phase down HFCs is welcomed. Nature We must protect and restore Earth's ecosystems. Phytoplankton, coral reefs, forests, savannas, grasslands, wetlands, peatlands, soils, mangroves, and sea grasses contribute greatly to sequestration of atmospheric CO2. Marine and terrestrial plants, animals, and microorganisms play significant roles in carbon and nutrient cycling and storage. We need to quickly curtail habitat and biodiversity loss (figure 1f–1g), protecting the remaining primary and intact forests, especially those with high carbon stores and other forests with the capacity to rapidly sequester carbon (proforestation), while increasing reforestation and afforestation where appropriate at enormous scales. Although available land may be limiting in places, up to a third of emissions reductions needed by 2030 for the Paris agreement (less than 2°C) could be obtained with these natural climate solutions (Griscom et al. 2017). Food Eating mostly plant-based foods while reducing the global consumption of animal products (figure 1c–d), especially ruminant livestock (Ripple et al. 2014), can improve human health and significantly lower GHG emissions (including methane in the “Short-lived pollutants” step). Moreover, this will free up croplands for growing much-needed human plant food instead of livestock feed, while releasing some grazing land to support natural climate solutions (see “Nature” section). Cropping practices such as minimum tillage that increase soil carbon are vitally important. We need to drastically reduce the enormous amount of food waste around the world. Economy Excessive extraction of materials and overexploitation of ecosystems, driven by economic growth, must be quickly curtailed to maintain long-term sustainability of the biosphere. We need a carbon-free economy that explicitly addresses human dependence on the biosphere and policies that guide economic decisions accordingly. Our goals need to shift from GDP growth and the pursuit of affluence toward sustaining ecosystems and improving human well-being by prioritizing basic needs and reducing inequality. Population Still increasing by roughly 80 million people per year, or more than 200,000 per day (figure 1a–b), the world population must be stabilized—and, ideally, gradually reduced—within a framework that ensures social integrity. There are proven and effective policies that strengthen human rights while lowering fertility rates and lessening the impacts of population growth on GHG emissions and biodiversity loss. These policies make family-planning services available to all people, remove barriers to their access and achieve full gender equity, including primary and secondary education as a global norm for all, especially girls and young women (Bongaarts and O’Neill 2018). Conclusions Mitigating and adapting to climate change while honoring the diversity of humans entails major transformations in the ways our global society functions and interacts with natural ecosystems. We are encouraged by a recent surge of concern. Governmental bodies are making climate emergency declarations. Schoolchildren are striking. Ecocide lawsuits are proceeding in the courts. Grassroots citizen movements are demanding change, and many countries, states and provinces, cities, and businesses are responding. As the Alliance of World Scientists, we stand ready to assist decision-makers in a just transition to a sustainable and equitable future. We urge widespread use of vital signs, which will better allow policymakers, the private sector, and the public to understand the magnitude of this crisis, track progress, and realign priorities for alleviating climate change. The good news is that such transformative change, with social and economic justice for all, promises far greater human well-being than does business as usual. We believe that the prospects will be greatest if decision-makers and all of humanity promptly respond to this warning and declaration of a climate emergency and act to sustain life on planet Earth, our only home.

#### Fossil fuel giants promote climate denial, disparately affect minority communities, and crush activist climate movements

Funes 21, is a New Yok based journalist focusing on the intersection of race and the environment. (Yessenia, 8-11-2021, “’Abolish these companies, get ride of the’: what would it take to break up big oil?” The Guardian, https://bit.ly/3ArW0yh)

Ayisha Siddiqa doesn’t want fossil fuel companies to determine her future anymore. The industry has promoted climate denial for longer than the 22-year-old has been alive. Rather than watch companies pad their profits as the world burns, Siddiqa has a radical solution in mind. “Abolish these oil companies, finish them, get rid of them, no more,” she said. Siddiqa’s words echo a rallying cry for climate and environmental advocates who see limited options in finding justice for the low-income and communities of color whose lives the industry have ravaged – and will continue to as the climate crisis unfolds. Siddiqa is the founder of Polluters Out, a youth-led coalition dedicated to removing the oil and gas industry’s influence from international climate negotiations. She created the group in response to the failed COP25 climate talks in 2019, which made little progress toward curbing carbon emissions. In her mind, the major petroleum giants don’t deserve to be involved in the clean energy revolution. “The next stop cannot be for us to let the people who previously harmed us have a seat in the new world,” she said. For many frontline communities, the industry’s climate crimes aren’t matters of the future. They’re here. The climate denial propaganda machine, funded by big oil and gas, has left humanity with the earth spiraling into chaos: homes crushed by wildfires, loved ones dying from heat and crops withering from drought. In the past five years, extreme weather disasters have cost the US more than $525bn, with taxpayers footing the bill, not major carbon polluters. In 2020 alone, the global price tag tied to climate change adaptation towered at $150bn. Throughout all the damage, human lives were harmed, too. Now they’re asking: when will their voices matter? The push to hold the industry accountable for the climate emergency by breaking up powerful companies follows a string of similar movements that have bubbled up in recent years. Ideas that were once considered fringe – like defunding police departments or busting big tech – are now filtering into mainstream discourse. And as the climate crisis increases in urgency, activists are taking aim at oil and gas companies. Communities bearing the brunt of harm caused by climate change say that for too long the fossil fuel industry has prioritized profits over the public good. During the Texas winter storm in February, for example, gas and oil giants raked in billions by selling assets for exaggerated prices as the state struggled to provide consumers with power and heat. The state knew 10 years ago that cold temperatures could threaten the grid, but it left the decision on upgrading infrastructure up to private companies. As a result of the storm and subsequent power outages, some 700 people died, according to a BuzzFeed investigation. Carla Skandier, manager of the climate and energy program at the Democracy Collaborative, says groups like hers are now researching ways to end the cycle of harm through nationalizing segments of the fossil fuel industry. In the simplest terms, the process would involve the federal government buying out entire oil and gas companies to take ownership of their infrastructure and assets. “When we talk about abolishing the fossil fuel industry, we are really talking about the urgent need for an endgame to manage the industry’s fast decline,” Skandier said. Pro-abolition groups say this process would entail putting elected officials – not corporate executives – in charge of fossil fuel assets. The US government would slowly stop drilling or buying leases as it prioritizes lowering emissions and investing in clean energy. Nationalized ownership would allow the US to leave oil and gas reserves in the ground while simultaneously shrinking the fossil fuel company’s grip on the nation. Such public intervention would also prevent oil companies from simply shutting down operations, laying off their workers and leaving behind devastated towns and counties, as coal companies have done, Skandier said. “We need to consider that a lot of these communities are highly dependent on fossil fuel revenues, so we need to plan how we’re going to build community wealth and diversify their economies to make sure they’re not only economically stable but resilient to climate impacts in the future.” The US could take the land or reserves currently owned by the fossil fuel industry via eminent domain, the legal right governments have to seize land or infrastructure for the public interest. The federal government has done this before to create national parks and even to convert a private energy company in Tennessee into the now publicly owned Tennessee Valley Authority during the Great Depression. Any movement to break up big oil, however, will inevitably face enormous headwinds. The industry benefits from being deeply ingrained within American society, and it’s expected that oil and gas interests would push back hard in courts. Nationalizing profitable industries would also take an unprecedented amount of political will, which has yet to materialize. Law expert Sean Hecht warns that breaking up energy companies may lead to unintended ripple effects. History suggests that simply erasing a company’s existence may make it easier for them to ignore their financial responsibilities when they’ve caused harm. Hecht, the co-executive director of UCLA Law’s Emmett Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, saw this firsthand in Los Angeles, where he lives. When the Department of Justice shut down Exide Technologies in 2015 for illegally poisoning neighborhoods with lead for decades, the company filed for bankruptcy and left taxpayers to foot the cleanup bill. “An industry disappearing doesn’t mean that that industry is going to necessarily be accountable, and sometimes it’s the opposite of that,” Hecht said. “It creates a sense of justice but doesn’t materially help the conditions in communities.” A company simply signing a check may not help either, said Kyle Whyte, a professor of environment and sustainability at the University of Michigan, who also Environmental Justice Advisory Council. That won’t eliminate the root cause of the issue: companies responsible for driving the climate crisis are also stripping communities of the social, cultural and political capital to decide what happens to their homes and bodies. “Justice would mean a world where, for example, Native people and tribes are no longer in a dependency relationship with industries,” Whyte said. “There’s no dollar amount that could be spent in a community right now that would actually replace decades and generations of violations against self-determination.” There’s no cookie-cutter approach to rectifying what communities have inherited from big oil. And even if calls to break up the fossil fuel industry sound improbable in the current political climate, activists hope the conversation will expand the realm of possibilities for leaders to take action on climate change. For Siddiqa, any solution must also incorporate international players as well. “We vote for our world leaders,” Siddiqa said. “They represent us. If they are actively refusing to represent us, then their position is in question.” Siddiqa wants to see a cultural shift – a moment of political reimagination. She knows business as usual won’t stop the climate crisis – perhaps neither will the end of oil and gas – but she says it’s a good start.

### 1AC---Plan

#### Text: The United States federal government should substantially increase prohibitions on anticompetitive business practices by the private sector by establishing corporate climate disinformation as anticompetitive.

### 1AC---Solvency

#### Antitrust is best for challenging corporate deception

Carrier and Tushnet 21, Distinguished Professor, Rutgers Law School, and Professor of the First Amendment, Harvard Law School, (Michael & Rebecca, An Antitrust Framework for False Advertising, https://ilr.law.uiowa.edu/print/volume-106-issue-4/an-antitrust-framework-for-false-advertising/)

An antitrust-based framework for false advertising claims is necessary because of the unique role that the discipline can play. When companies engaging in false advertising have monopoly power, they possess the ability to harm not only an individual competitor but also the market as a whole. The consequences can be significant, especially for nascent competitors not able to enter the market, as the deception of consumers deprives them of the opportunity to obtain lower prices, more options, or enhanced quality. One way to understand the harms of false advertising to the market as a whole is revealed by George Akerlof’s classic explanation of the market for lemons. As Akerlof explains, in the absence of some way to guarantee the truth of claims about products, such as a used car’s quality, consumers reasonably respond by discounting all such claims. This distrust means that producers with actually superior products cannot charge the amount consumers would pay if they believed the superiority claim, which pushes superior (but more expensive to produce) products out of the market. If truthful advertisers are not able to guarantee their claims, producers unable to compete on their product characteristics suffer. And consumers are harmed by an unattractive (and perhaps even harmful, in the case of false health or safety claims) mix of products. Meanwhile, many false advertising techniques can be readily repurposed for new uses, meaning that a false advertiser can go from success to success in the absence of false advertising liability. Regulation that suppresses false claims—especially where such claims are most likely to have an effect—thus does more than protect individual consumers from fraud. It allows truthful producers to compete on a level playing field. In other words, addressing false advertising protects competition, not just competitors. The Supreme Court relied on Akerlof’s insights when it endorsed the pro-competitive effects of restrictions on false advertising. In California Dental Ass’n v. FTC, the Court addressed a dental association’s attempts to restrict “false or misleading” advertising that imposed significant limits on advertising “low prices” or other general price claims. The Court rejected the idea that such limits were inherently anticompetitive. Especially where information is hard to evaluate, even broad restrictions with the aim of preventing false advertising can be procompetitive. When false advertising threatens harms to the market as a whole, antitrust liability offers advantages over false advertising law. For starters, antitrust offers a more powerful toolkit deterring this conduct. Although false advertising law allows recovery of damages (albeit not as a penalty) and disgorgement of the profits from false advertising, courts impose high barriers to disgorgement, including requiring a showing of willfulness. In addition, courts have required plaintiffs to show a robust connection to the harm suffered to receive damages or disgorgement of profits. As a result, courts have denied awards in precisely the cases of concern: where there are a small number of potential competitors and where some of the monopolist’s gains from false advertising likely came at the expense of the overall market rather than a single plaintiff, making it difficult to allocate false advertising-based damage awards. There are two key ways in which antitrust offers more powerful protection against monopolists’ false advertising than federal false advertising law: remedies and eligible plaintiffs. First, antitrust offers the more powerful remedies of treble damages and automatic (as opposed to the Lanham Act’s exceptional) attorneys’ fees that promise to provide robust deterrence against companies considering this behavior. Antitrust also offers injunctive relief preventing the continuation of the conduct. While a Lanham Act false advertising injunction generally is limited to the specific false claims that have been proven, an antitrust injunction could more generally target false advertising and marketwide harm to competition. Antitrust offers a more expansive territorial jurisdiction. Second, unlike the federal Lanham Act, which denies consumers standing to sue despite the direct harm they suffer from false advertising, antitrust law, importantly, allows customers to challenge the harms they experience from false advertising. State consumer protection laws are limited in important ways, including state-law variation that makes multistate consumer class actions all but impossible and restrictions in many states that preclude businesses from bringing claims in their roles as consumers even though businesses are often important customers for the subset of false advertising cases involving monopolists and would-be monopolists. Thus, antitrust provides remedies that would otherwise be unavailable to plaintiffs who were themselves deceived by a monopolist or threatened monopolist’s false advertising. A separate and independently compelling reason to use antitrust where appropriate is that, in antitrust law, it would be possible to consider false advertising as part of an overarching scheme used to harm a competitor, something false advertising law by definition can’t do. In fact, the inclusion of this behavior could push the range of conduct over the threshold of antitrust liability. For example, in In re Suboxone Antitrust Litigation, the court found that the plaintiff could not demonstrate that its claim that the defendant had refused to participate in a safety program required by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (“FDA”) individually made out a violation of antitrust law. But it found that “a plaintiff can allege a series of actions that when taken together make out antitrust liability even though some of the individual actions, when viewed independently, are not all actionable.” Such global assessment can allow consideration of a monopolist software provider’s practices of promising “vaporware” that it couldn’t deliver to prevent customers from turning to competing software alternatives and of creating fear, uncertainty, and doubt about the competition as part of a larger constellation of anticompetitive activities. As the Third Circuit noted in LePage’s Inc. v. 3M, “courts must look to the monopolist’s conduct taken as a whole rather than considering each aspect in isolation.”

#### Specifically, the oil industry gets dismantled by litigation

Bennett 19, Postgraduate research fellow at the University of Southampton. (Briony, 'Big Oil, Big Liability: Fossil Fuel Companies and Liability for Climate Change Harm' (2019) 23 New Zealand Journal of Environmental Law 153, KU Library)

Litigation against fossil fuel companies ultimately serves more than one purpose. 8 ' It helps separate facts from fiction and disseminate information regarding climate change to the public and political leaders. Also, even if claimants lose their case, it may serve to increase local, national and global awareness of the plight of victims suffering losses and damages resulting from climate change. Courts provide a forum for public debate, especially if a case attracts significant media attention.181 This may influence public and political opinion and eventually lead to a legislative response for victims. If cases continue to be dismissed on the grounds that political leaders ought to address losses and damages, both globally and within the US, then litigation is a means to draw attention to the failure of international and domestic legislation and regulation, and the need to lobby for reform. And, of course, some claimants may eventually win significant settlements, as happened with the tobacco suits. 182

#### Litigation will transform public understanding of climate change and lead to effective solutions

Benjamin 20, Assistant Professor, Lewis & Clark Law School. (Lisa, THE ROAD TO PARIS RUNS THROUGH DELAWARE: CLIMATE LITIGATION AND DIRECTORS’ DUTIES, <https://www.cssn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/16741-the-road-to-paris-runs-through-delaware-climate-litigation-and-directors-duties.pdf>)

Courtrooms have become key battlegrounds in the public debate over climate change.326 As Blumm and Wood note, courts offer a deliberative fact-finding forum that can balance both scientific and political climate-related concerns.327 Corporatizing climate litigation, therefore, has expository value. It lays bare the previously secreted role of carbon-major corporations and relates it to the human pain and suffering, as well as financial costs caused by climate-induced extreme events. It also exposes the persistent refusal by the most regressive corporations to act in a societally responsible manner. Many of these corporations have pursued a self-fulfilling prophecy; the absence of regulation would ensure that fossil fuels would be a good investment and that corporations would, therefore, maximize their profits to the detriment of the world.328 As Fromhoff, Heede, and Oreskes note, many carbon-major corporations “are actively creating the future that they claim to accept the need to avoid.”329 The public narrative told in these cases is important, and provides a public forum for “an understanding of social and factual issues [to be] co-produced and settled.”330 The corollary of this understanding is the proposition that these corporations are also well placed in terms of their capacities in access to political power, wealth, technological advancement, and expertise to lead the transition to clean, safer energy.331 Having shed their previous reluctance to engage with climate science, judicial actors now recognize the important role that new scientific disciplines play in the arena of tort law. New scientific processes could also provide progressive judges with the opportunity to rethink older interpretations of legal and evidentiary thresholds around tort, burdens of proof and causation, as well as obligations under corporate law.332 This second wave of climate litigation demonstrates an evolving global conversation between courts, government actors, private victims, tortfeasors, directors, and investors in the context of climate change.333 As the negative impacts of climate change increase, the global responses are likely to increase in a corresponding fashion. While political will in the United States may still be lacking at the federal level, state-based actions have gained traction.334 Federal resistance may also wane as the impacts of climate change become more severe and apparent, more information is forthcoming due to improved climate science and corporate disclosures, and carbonmajors begin to spend less money opposing the science on climate change. State and local actions can also increase the costs of operating for carbon-majors through increased regulation and permitting processes and enhanced incentives for clean energy. New scientific processes give climate-focused political groups new tools to target these companies and increase public pressure. As a result, anti-carbon-major movements may grow, implicating directors and requiring that they respond to social media and other public campaigns. As a public forum to highlight the importance of climate science, courts can also act as drivers of public and private sector action on climate change, even if the cases themselves are unsuccessful.335 As Ganguly et al. note, these cases could be “sublime failures,” achieving the aims of the litigants without achieving judicial success.336 The simple act of adjudicating climate change can help to shape the norms and beliefs of the broader public about the importance of climate change, and the contributory role and responsibilities of carbon-major companies.337 These cases highlight the importance of the evolving nature of climate risk, even if no damages or liability awards are ever made. The public attention these cases garner should capture the attention of responsible directors, as these litigation trends may lead to shifting social norms and political contexts. While it is unclear what the causal relationship is between litigation and strengthened climate governance, enhanced regulatory obligations are certainly emerging.338 Common standards on disclosure are likely to become global industry norms, and therefore will affect the nature of what information directors should both consider and disclose to their shareholders.339 Disclosure obligations will put the issue of climate change directly on the agendas of AGMs, becoming an increasing concern for shareholders and, therefore, directors. The impacts of climate change are costly to corporations, and the bidirectional risk metrics of climate change should now necessarily inform directorial duties, significantly boosting the potential contribution of private law to resolving the climate crisis.

#### Academic debate is required to build a social consensus on the validity of climate science

Hoffman 12, is the Holcim (US) Professor of Sustainable Enterprise at the University of Michigan; a position that holds joint appointments in the Stephen M. Ross School of Business and the School for Environment & Sustainability. (Andrew, Fall 2012, “Climate Science as Culture War,” Stanford Social Innovation Review, https://ssir.org/books/reviews/entry/climate\_science\_as\_culture\_war)

In May 2009, a development officer at the University of Michigan asked me to meet with a potential donor—a former football player and now successful businessman who had an interest in environmental issues and business, my interdisciplinary area of expertise. The meeting began at 7 a.m., and while I was still nursing my first cup of coffee, the potential donor began the conversation with “I think the scientific review process is corrupt.” I asked what he thought of a university based on that system, and he said that he thought that the university was then corrupt, too. He went on to describe the science of climate change as a hoax, using all the familiar lines of attack—sunspots and solar flares, the unscientific and politically flawed consensus model, and the environmental benefits of carbon dioxide. As we debated each point, he turned his attack on me, asking why I hated capitalism and why I wanted to destroy the economy by teaching environmental issues in a business school. Eventually, he asked if I knew why Earth Day was on April 22. I sighed as he explained, “Because it is Karl Marx’s birthday.” (I suspect he meant to say Vladimir Lenin, whose birthday is April 22, also Earth Day. This linkage has been made by some on the far right who believe that Earth Day is a communist plot, even though Lenin never promoted environmentalism and communism does not have a strong environmental legacy.) I turned to the development officer and asked, “What’s our agenda here this morning?” The donor interrupted to say that he wanted to buy me a ticket to the Heartland Institute’s Fourth Annual Conference on Climate Change, the leading climate skeptics conference. I checked my calendar and, citing prior commitments, politely declined. The meeting soon ended. I spent the morning trying to make sense of the encounter. At first, all I could see was a bait and switch; the donor had no interest in funding research in business and the environment, but instead wanted to criticize the effort. I dismissed him as an irrational zealot, but the meeting lingered in my mind. The more I thought about it, the more I began to see that he was speaking from a coherent and consistent worldview—one I did not agree with, but which was a coherent viewpoint nonetheless. Plus, he had come to evangelize me. The more I thought about it, the more I became eager to learn about where he was coming from, where I was coming from, and why our two worldviews clashed so strongly in the present social debate over climate science. Ironically, in his desire to challenge my research, he stimulated a new research stream, one that fit perfectly with my broader research agenda on social, institutional, and cultural change. Scientific vs. Social Consensus Today, there is no doubt that a scientific consensus exists on the issue of climate change. Scientists have documented that anthropogenic sources of greenhouse gases are leading to a buildup in the atmosphere, which leads to a general warming of the global climate and an alteration in the statistical distribution of localized weather patterns over long periods of time. This assessment is endorsed by a large body of scientific agencies—including every one of the national scientific agencies of the G8 + 5 countries—and by the vast majority of climatologists. The majority of research articles published in refereed scientific journals also support this scientific assessment. Both the US National Academy of Sciences and the American Association for the Advancement of Science use the word “consensus” when describing the state of climate science. And yet a social consensus on climate change does not exist. Surveys show that the American public’s belief in the science of climate change has mostly declined over the past five years, with large percentages of the population remaining skeptical of the science. Belief declined from 71 percent to 57 percent between April 2008 and October 2009, according to an October 2009 Pew Research Center poll; more recently, belief rose to 62 percent, according to a February 2012 report by the National Survey of American Public Opinion on Climate Change. Such a significant number of dissenters tells us that we do not have a set of socially accepted beliefs on climate change—beliefs that emerge, not from individual preferences, but from societal norms; beliefs that represent those on the political left, right, and center as well as those whose cultural identifications are urban, rural, religious, agnostic, young, old, ethnic, or racial. Why is this so? Why do such large numbers of Americans reject the consensus of the scientific community? With upwards of two-thirds of Americans not clearly understanding science or the scientific process and fewer able to pass even a basic scientific literacy test, according to a 2009 California Academy of Sciences survey, we are left to wonder: How do people interpret and validate the opinions of the scientific community? The answers to this question can be found, not from the physical sciences, but from the social science disciplines of psychology, sociology, anthropology, and others. To understand the processes by which a social consensus can emerge on climate change, we must understand that people’s opinions on this and other complex scientific issues are based on their prior ideological preferences, personal experience, and values—all of which are heavily influenced by their referent groups and their individual psychology. Physical scientists may set the parameters for understanding the technical aspects of the climate debate, but they do not have the final word on whether society accepts or even understands their conclusions. The constituency that is relevant in the social debate goes beyond scientific experts. And the processes by which this constituency understands and assesses the science of climate change go far beyond its technical merits. We must acknowledge that the debate over climate change, like almost all environmental issues, is a debate over culture, worldviews, and ideology. This fact can be seen most vividly in the growing partisan divide over the issue. Political affiliation is one of the strongest correlates with individual uncertainty about climate change, not scientific knowledge.1 The percentage of conservatives and Republicans who believe that the effects of global warming have already begun declined from roughly 50 percent in 2001 to about 30 percent in 2010, while the corresponding percentage for liberals and Democrats increased from roughly 60 percent in 2001 to about 70 percent in 2010.2 (See “The Growing Partisan Divide over Climate Change,” below.) Climate change has become enmeshed in the so-called culture wars. Acceptance of the scientific consensus is now seen as an alignment with liberal views consistent with other “cultural” issues that divide the country (abortion, gun control, health care, and evolution). This partisan divide on climate change was not the case in the 1990s. It is a recent phenomenon, following in the wake of the 1997 Kyoto Treaty that threatened the material interests of powerful economic and political interests, particularly members of the fossil fuel industry.3 The great danger of a protracted partisan divide is that the debate will take the form of what I call a “logic schism,” a breakdown in debate in which opposing sides are talking about completely different cultural issues.4 This article seeks to delve into the climate change debate through the lens of the social sciences. I take this approach not because the physical sciences have become less relevant, but because we need to understand the social and psychological processes by which people receive and understand the science of global warming. I explain the cultural dimensions of the climate debate as it is currently configured, outline three possible paths by which the debate can progress, and describe specific techniques that can drive that debate toward broader consensus. This goal is imperative, for without a broader consensus on climate change in the United States, Americans and people around the globe will be unable to formulate effective social, political, and economic solutions to the changing circumstances of our planet. Cultural Processing of Climate Science When analyzing complex scientific information, people are “boundedly rational,” to use Nobel Memorial Prize economist Herbert Simon’s phrase; we are “cognitive misers,” according to UCLA psychologist Susan Fiske and Princeton University psychologist Shelley Taylor, with limited cognitive ability to fully investigate every issue we face. People everywhere employ ideological filters that reflect their identity, worldview, and belief systems. These filters are strongly influenced by group values, and we generally endorse the position that most directly reinforces the connection we have with others in our referent group—what Yale Law School professor Dan Kahan refers to as “cultural cognition.” In so doing, we cement our connection with our cultural groups and strengthen our definition of self. This tendency is driven by an innate desire to maintain a consistency in beliefs by giving greater weight to evidence and arguments that support preexisting beliefs, and by expending disproportionate energy trying to refute views or arguments that are contrary to those beliefs. Instead of investigating a complex issue, we often simply learn what our referent group believes and seek to integrate those beliefs with our own views. Over time, these ideological filters become increasingly stable and resistant to change through multiple reinforcing mechanisms. First, we’ll consider evidence when it is accepted or, ideally, presented by a knowledgeable source from our cultural community; and we’ll dismiss information that is advocated by sources that represent groups whose values we reject. Second, we will selectively choose information sources that support our ideological position. For example, frequent viewers of Fox News are more likely to say that the Earth’s temperature has not been rising, that any temperature increase is not due to human activities, and that addressing climate change would have deleterious effects on the economy.5 One might expect the converse to be true of National Public Radio listeners. The result of this cultural processing and group cohesion dynamics leads to two overriding conclusions about the climate change debate. First, climate change is not a “pollution” issue. Although the US Supreme Court decided in 2007 that greenhouse gases were legally an air pollutant, in a cultural sense, they are something far different. The reduction of greenhouse gases is not the same as the reduction of sulfur oxides, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, or particulates. These forms of pollution are man-made, they are harmful, and they are the unintended waste products of industrial production. Ideally, we would like to eliminate their production through the mobilization of economic and technical resources. But the chief greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, is both man-made and natural. It is not inherently harmful; it is a natural part of the natural systems; and we do not desire to eliminate its production. It is not a toxic waste or a strictly technical problem to be solved. Rather, it is an endemic part of our society and who we are. To a large degree, it is a highly desirable output, as it correlates with our standard of living. Greenhouse gas emissions rise with a rise in a nation’s wealth, something all people want. To reduce carbon dioxide requires an alteration in nearly every facet of the economy, and therefore nearly every facet of our culture. To recognize greenhouse gases as a problem requires us to change a great deal about how we view the world and ourselves within it. And that leads to the second distinction. Climate change is an existential challenge to our contemporary worldviews. The cultural challenge of climate change is enormous and threefold, each facet leading to the next. The first facet is that we have to think of a formerly benign, even beneficial, material in a new way—as a relative, not absolute, hazard. Only in an imbalanced concentration does it become problematic. But to understand and accept this, we need to conceive of the global ecosystem in a new way. This challenge leads us to the second facet: Not only do we have to change our view of the ecosystem, but we also have to change our view of our place within it. Have we as a species grown to such numbers, and has our technology grown to such power, that we can alter and manage the ecosystem on a planetary scale? This is an enormous cultural question that alters our worldviews. As a result, some see the question and subsequent answer as intellectual and spiritual hubris, but others see it as self-evident. If we answer this question in the affirmative, the third facet challenges us to consider new and perhaps unprecedented forms of global ethics and governance to address it. Climate change is the ultimate “commons problem,” as ecologist Garrett Hardin defined it, where every individual has an incentive to emit greenhouse gases to improve her standard of living, but the costs of this activity are borne by all. Unfortunately, the distribution of costs in this global issue is asymmetrical, with vulnerable populations in poor countries bearing the larger burden. So we need to rethink our ethics to keep pace with our technological abilities. Does mowing the lawn or driving a fuel-inefficient car in Ann Arbor, Mich., have ethical implications for the people living in low-lying areas of Bangladesh? If you accept anthropogenic climate change, then the answer to this question is yes, and we must develop global institutions to reflect that recognition. This is an issue of global ethics and governance on a scale that we have never seen, affecting virtually every economic activity on the globe and requiring the most complicated and intrusive global agreement ever negotiated. Taken together, these three facets of our existential challenge illustrate the magnitude of the cultural debate that climate change provokes. Climate change challenges us to examine previously unexamined beliefs and worldviews. It acts as a flash point (albeit a massive one) for deeper cultural and ideological conflicts that lie at the root of many of our environmental problems, and it includes differing conceptions of science, economics, religion, psychology, media, development, and governance. It is a proxy for “deeper conflicts over alternative visions of the future and competing centers of authority in society,” as University of East Anglia climatologist Mike Hulme underscores in Why We Disagree About Climate Change. And, as such, it provokes a violent debate among cultural communities on one side who perceive their values to be threatened by change, and cultural communities on the other side who perceive their values to be threatened by the status quo. Three Ways Forward If the public debate over climate change is no longer about greenhouse gases and climate models, but about values, worldviews, and ideology, what form will this clash of ideologies take? I see three possible forms. The Optimistic Form is where people do not have to change their values at all. In other words, the easiest way to eliminate the common problems of climate change is to develop technological solutions that do not require major alterations to our values, worldviews, or behavior: carbon-free renewable energy, carbon capture and sequestration technologies, geo-engineering, and others. Some see this as an unrealistic future. Others see it as the only way forward, because people become attached to their level of prosperity, feel entitled to keep it, and will not accept restraints or support government efforts to impose restraints.6 Government-led investment in alternative energy sources, therefore, becomes more acceptable than the enactment of regulations and taxes to reduce fossil fuel use. The Pessimistic Form is where people fight to protect their values. This most dire outcome results in a logic schism, where opposing sides debate different issues, seek only information that supports their position and disconfirms the others’, and even go so far as to demonize the other. University of Colorado, Boulder, environmental scientist Roger Pielke in The Honest Broker: Making Sense of Science in Policy and Politics describes the extreme of such schisms as “abortion politics,” where the two sides are debating completely different issues and “no amount of scientific information … can reconcile the different values.” Consider, for example, the recent decision by the Heartland Institute to post a billboard in Chicago comparing those who believe in climate change with the Unabomber. In reply, climate activist groups posted billboards attacking Heartland and its financial supporters. This attack-counterattack strategy is symptomatic of a broken public discourse over climate change. The Consensus-Based Form involves a reasoned societal debate, focused on the full scope of technical and social dimensions of the problem and the feasibility and desirability of multiple solutions. It is this form to which scientists have the most to offer, playing the role of what Pielke calls the “honest broker”—a person who can “integrate scientific knowledge with stakeholder concerns to explore alternative possible courses of action.” Here, resolution is found through a focus on its underlying elements, moving away from positions (for example, climate change is or is not happening), and toward the underlying interests and values at play. How do we get there? Research in negotiation and dispute resolution can offer techniques for moving forward. Techniques for a Consensus-Based Discussion In seeking a social consensus on climate change, discussion must move beyond a strict focus on the technical aspects of the science to include its cultural underpinnings. Below are eight techniques for overcoming the ideological filters that underpin the social debate about climate change. Know your audience | Any message on climate change must be framed in a way that fits with the cultural norms of the target audience. The 2011 study Climate Change in the American Mind segments the American public into six groups based on their views on climate change science. (See “Six Americas,” below.) On the two extremes are the climate change “alarmed” and “dismissive.” Consensus-based discussion is not likely open to these groups, as they are already employing logic schism tactics that are closed to debate or engagement. The polarity of these groups is well known: On the one side, climate change is a hoax, humans have no impact on the climate, and nothing is happening; on the other side, climate change is an imminent crisis that will devastate the Earth, and human activity explains all climate changes. The challenge is to move the debate away from the loud minorities at the extremes and to engage the majority in the middle—the “concerned,” the “cautious,” the “disengaged,” and the “doubtful.” People in these groups are more open to consensus-based debate, and through direct engagement can be separated from the ideological extremes of their cultural community. Ask the right scientific questions | For a consensus-based discussion, climate change science should be presented not as a binary yes or no question,7 but as a series of six questions. Some are scientific in nature, with associated levels of uncertainty and probability; others are matters of scientific judgment. Are greenhouse gas concentrations increasing in the atmosphere? Yes. This is a scientific question, based on rigorous data and measurements of atmospheric chemistry and science. Does this increase lead to a general warming of the planet? Yes. This is also a scientific question; the chemical mechanics of the greenhouse effect and “negative radiative forcing” are well established. Has climate changed over the past century? Yes. Global temperature increases have been rigorously measured through multiple techniques and strongly supported by multiple scientific analyses.In fact, as Yale University economist William Nordhaus wrote in the March 12, 2012, New York Times, “The finding that global temperatures are rising over the last century-plus is one of the most robust findings in climate science and statistics.” Are humans partially responsible for this increase? The answer to this question is a matter of scientific judgment. Increases in global mean temperatures have a very strong correlation with increases in man-made greenhouse gases since the Industrial Revolution. Although science cannot confirm causation, fingerprint analysis of multiple possible causes has been examined, and the only plausible explanation is that of human-induced temperature changes. Until a plausible alternative hypothesis is presented, this explanation prevails for the scientific community. Will the climate continue to change over the next century? Again, this question is a matter of scientific judgment. But given the answers to the previous four questions, it is reasonable to believe that continued increases in greenhouse gases will lead to continued changes in the climate. What will be the environmental and social impact of such change? This is the scientific question with the greatest uncertainty. The answer comprises a bell curve of possible outcomes and varying associated probabilities, from low to extreme impact. Uncertainty in this variation is due to limited current data on the Earth’s climate system, imperfect modeling of these physical processes, and the unpredictability of human actions that can both exacerbate or moderate the climate shifts. These uncertainties make predictions difficult and are an area in which much debate can take place. And yet the physical impacts of climate change are already becoming visible in ways that are consistent with scientific modeling, particularly in Greenland, the Arctic, the Antarctic, and low-lying islands. In asking these questions, a central consideration is whether people recognize the level of scientific consensus associated with each one. In fact, studies have shown that people’s support for climate policies and action are linked to their perceptions about scientific agreement. Still, the belief that “most scientists think global warming is happening” declined from 47 percent to 39 percent among Americans between 2008 and 2011.8 Move beyond data and models | Climate skepticism is not a knowledge deficit issue. Michigan State University sociologist Aaron McCright and Oklahoma State University sociologist Riley Dunlap have observed that increased education and self-reported understanding of climate science have been shown to correlate with lower concern among conservatives and Republicans and greater concern among liberals and Democrats. Research also has found that once people have made up their minds on the science of the climate issue, providing continued scientific evidence actually makes them more resolute in resisting conclusions that are at variance with their cultural beliefs.9 One needs to recognize that reasoning is suffused with emotion and people often use reasoning to reach a predetermined end that fits their cultural worldviews. When people hear about climate change, they may, for example, hear an implicit criticism that their lifestyle is the cause of the issue or that they are morally deficient for not recognizing it. But emotion can be a useful ally; it can create the abiding commitments needed to sustain action on the difficult issue of climate change. To do this, people must be convinced that something can be done to address it; that the challenge is not too great nor are its impacts preordained. The key to engaging people in a consensus-driven debate about climate change is to confront the emotionality of the issue and then address the deeper ideological values that may be threatened to create this emotionality. Focus on broker frames | People interpret information by fitting it to preexisting narratives or issue categories that mesh with their worldview. Therefore information must be presented in a form that fits those templates, using carefully researched metaphors, allusions, and examples that trigger a new way of thinking about the personal relevance of climate change. To be effective, climate communicators must use the language of the cultural community they are engaging. For a business audience, for example, one must use business terminology, such as net present value, return on investment, increased consumer demand, and rising raw material costs. More generally, one can seek possible broker frames that move away from a pessimistic appeal to fear and instead focus on optimistic appeals that trigger the emotionality of a desired future. In addressing climate change, we are asking who we strive to be as a people, and what kind of world we want to leave our children. To gain buy-in, one can stress American know-how and our capacity to innovate, focusing on activities already under way by cities, citizens, and businesses.10 This approach frames climate change mitigation as a gain rather than a loss to specific cultural groups. Research has shown that climate skepticism can be caused by a motivational tendency to defend the status quo based on the prior assumption that any change will be painful. But by encouraging people to regard pro-environmental change as patriotic and consistent with protecting the status quo, it can be framed as a continuation rather than a departure from the past. Specific broker frames can be used that engage the interests of both sides of the debate. For example, when US Secretary of Energy Steven Chu referred in November 2010 to advances in renewable energy technology in China as the United States’ “Sputnik moment,” he was framing climate change as a common threat to US scientific and economic competitiveness. When Pope Benedict XVI linked the threat of climate change with threats to life and dignity on New Year’s Day 2010, he was painting it as an issue of religious morality. When CNA’s Military Advisory Board, a group of elite retired US military officers, called climate change a “threat multiplier” in its 2006 report, it was using a national security frame. When the Lancet Commission pronounced climate change to be the biggest global health threat of the 21st century in a 2009 article, the organization was using a quality of life frame. And when the Center for American Progress, a progressive Washington, D.C., think tank, connected climate change to the conservation ideals of Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Richard Nixon, they were framing the issue as consistent with Republican values. One broker frame that deserves particular attention is the replacement of uncertainty or probability of climate change with the risk of climate change.11 People understand low probability, high consequence events and the need to address them. For example, they buy fire insurance for their homes even though the probability of a fire is low, because they understand that the financial consequence is too great. In the same way, climate change for some may be perceived as a low risk, high consequence event, so the prudent course of action is to obtain insurance in the form of both behavioral and technological change. Recognize the power of language and terminology | Words have multiple meanings in different communities, and terms can trigger unintended reactions in a target audience. For example, one study has shown that Republicans were less likely to think that the phenomenon is real when it is referred to as “global warming” (44 percent) rather than “climate change” (60 percent), but Democrats were unaffected by the term (87 percent vs. 86 percent). So language matters: The partisan divide dropped from 43 percent under a “global warming” frame to 26 percent under a “climate change” frame.12 Other terms with multiple meanings include “climate denier,” which some use to refer to those who are not open to discussion on the issue, and others see as a thinly veiled and highly insulting reference to “Holocaust denier”; “uncertainty,” which is a scientific concept to convey variance or deviation from a specific value, but is interpreted by a lay audience to mean that scientists do not know the answer; and “consensus,” which is the process by which the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) forms its position, but leads some in the public to believe that climate science is a matter of “opinion” rather than data and modeling. Overall, the challenge becomes one of framing complex scientific issues in a language that a lay and highly politicized audience can hear. This becomes increasingly challenging when we address some inherently nonintuitive and complex aspects of climate modeling that are hard to explain, such as the importance of feedback loops, time delays, accumulations, and nonlinearities in dynamic systems.13 Unless scientists can accurately convey the nature of climate modeling, others in the social debate will alter their claims to fit their cultural or cognitive perceptions or satisfy their political interests. Employ climate brokers | People are more likely to feel open to consider evidence when a recognized member of their cultural community presents it.14 Certainly, statements by former Vice President Al Gore and Sen. James Inhofe evoke visceral responses from individuals on either side of the partisan divide. But individuals with credibility on both sides of the debate can act as what I call climate brokers. Because a majority of Republicans do not believe the science of climate change, whereas a majority of Democrats do, the most effective broker would come from the political right. Climate brokers can include representatives from business, the religious community, the entertainment industry, the military, talk show hosts, and politicians who can frame climate change in language that will engage the audience to whom they most directly connect. When people hear about the need to address climate change from their church, synagogue, mosque, or temple, for example, they w ill connect the issue to their moral values. When they hear it from their business leaders and investment managers, they will connect it to their economic interests. And when they hear it from their military leaders, they will connect it to their interest in a safe and secure nation. Recognize multiple referent groups | The presentation of information can be designed in a fashion that recognizes that individuals are members of multiple referent groups. The underlying frames employed in one cultural community may be at variance with the values dominant within the communities engaged in climate change debate. For example, although some may reject the science of climate change by perceiving the scientific review process to be corrupt as part of one cultural community, they also may recognize the legitimacy of the scientific process as members of other cultural communities (such as users of the modern health care system). Although someone may see the costs of fossil fuel reductions as too great and potentially damaging to the economy as members of one community, they also may see the value in reducing dependence on foreign oil as members of another community who value strong national defense. This frame incongruence emerged in the 2011 US Republican primary as candidate Jon Huntsman warned that Republicans risk becoming the “antiscience party” if they continue to reject the science on climate change. What Huntsman alluded to is that most Americans actually do trust the scientific process, even if they don’t fully understand it. (A 2004 National Science Foundation report found that two thirds of Americans do not clearly understand the scientific process.) Employ events as leverage for change | Studies have found that most Americans believe that climate change will affect geographically and temporally distant people and places. But studies also have shown that people are more likely to believe in the science when they have an experience with extreme weather phenomena. This has led climate communicators to link climate change to major events, such as Hurricane Katrina, or to more recent floods in the American Midwest and Asia, as well as to droughts in Texas and Africa, to hurricanes along the East Coast and Gulf of Mexico, and to snowstorms in Western states and New England. The cumulative body of weather evidence, reported by media outlets and linked to climate change, will increase the number of people who are concerned about the issue, see it as less uncertain, and feel more confident that we must take actions to mitigate its effects. For example, in explaining the recent increase in belief in climate change among Americans, the 2012 National Survey of American Public Opinion on Climate Change noted that “about half of Americans now point to observations of temperature changes and weather as the main reasons they believe global warming is taking place.”15 Ending Climate Science Wars Will we see a social consensus on climate change? If beliefs about the existence of global warming are becoming more ideologically entrenched and gaps between conservatives and liberals are widening, the solution space for resolving the issue will collapse and the debate will be based on power and coercion. In such a scenario, domination by the science-based forces looks less likely than domination by the forces of skepticism, because the former has to “prove” its case while the latter merely needs to cast doubt. But such a polarized outcome is not a predetermined outcome. And if it were to form, it can be reversed. Is there a reason to be hopeful? When looking for reasons to be hopeful about a social consensus on climate change, I look to public opinion changes around cigarette smoking and cancer. For years, the scientific community recognized that the preponderance of epidemiological and mechanistic data pointed to a link between the habit and the disease. And for years, the public rejected that conclusion. But through a process of political, economic, social, and legal debate over values and beliefs, a social consensus emerged. The general public now accepts that cigarettes cause cancer and governments have set policy to address this. Interestingly, two powerful forces that many see as obstacles to a comparable social consensus on climate change were overcome in the cigarette debate. The first obstacle is the powerful lobby of industrial forces that can resist a social and political consensus. In the case of the cigarette debate, powerful economic interests mounted a campaign to obfuscate the scientific evidence and to block a social and political consensus. Tobacco companies created their own pro-tobacco science, but eventually the public health community overcame pro-tobacco scientists. The second obstacle to convincing a skeptical public is the lack of a definitive statement by the scientific community about the future implications of climate change. The 2007 IPCC report states that “Human activities … are modifying the concentration of atmospheric constituents … that absorb or scatter radiant energy. … [M]ost of the observed warming over the last 50 years is very likely to have been due to the increase in greenhouse gas emissions.” Some point to the word “likely” to argue that scientists still don’t know and action in unwarranted. But science is not designed to provide a definitive smoking gun. Remember that the 1964 surgeon general’s report about the dangers of smoking was equally conditional. And even today, we cannot state with scientific certainty that smoking causes lung cancer. Like the global climate, the human body is too complex a system for absolute certainty. We can explain epidemiologically why a person could get cancer from cigarette smoking and statistically how that person will likely get cancer, but, as the surgeon general report explains, “statistical methods cannot establish proof of a causal relationship in an association [between cigarette smoking and lung cancer]. The causal significance of an association is a matter of judgment, which goes beyond any statement of statistical probability.” Yet the general public now accepts this causal linkage. What will get us there? Although climate brokers are needed from all areas of society—from business, religion, military, and politics—one field in particular needs to become more engaged: the academic scientist and particularly the social scientist. Too much of the debate is dominated by the physical sciences in defining the problem and by economics in defining the solutions. Both fields focus heavily on the rational and quantitative treatments of the issue and fail to capture the behavioral and cultural aspects that explain why people accept or reject scientific evidence, analysis, and conclusions. But science is never socially or politically inert, and scientists have a duty to recognize its effect on society and to communicate that effect to society. Social scientists can help in this endeavor. But the relative absence of the social sciences in the climate debate is driven by specific structural and institutional controls that channel research work away from empirical relevance. Social scientists limit involvement in such “outside” activities, because the underlying norms of what is considered legitimate and valuable research, as well as the overt incentives and reward structures within the academy, lead away from such endeavors. Tenure and promotion are based primarily on the publication of top-tier academic journal articles. This is the signal of merit and success. Any effort on any other endeavor is decidedly discouraged. The role of the public intellectual has become an arcane and elusive option in today’s social sciences. Moreover, it is a difficult role to play. The academic rules are not clear and the public backlash can be uncomfortable; many of my colleagues and I are regular recipients of hostile e-mail messages and web-based attacks. But the lack of academic scientists in the public debate harms society by leaving out critical voices for informing and resolving the climate debate. There are signs, however, that this model of scholarly isolation is changing. Some leaders within the field have begun to call for more engagement within the public arena as a way to invigorate the discipline and underscore its investment in the defense of civil society. As members of society, all scientists have a responsibility to bring their expertise to the decision-making process. It is time for social scientists to accept this responsibility.

#### Lack of meaningful government policy creates the perception that climate change is real but not a substantive problem.

**Shirazi & Johnson 20**, Nima Shirazi: Editor at Muftah, a digital foreign affairs magazine, and co-host of the media criticism podcast, Citations Needed. Adam Johnson: Host, The Appeal podcast. Media analyst at FAIR.org and host of the Citations Needed podcast (October 21st, “[Episode 121: Climate Chaos (Part I) — How the Gap Between Liberal Rhetoric and Policy Promotes Denialism](https://citationsneeded.medium.com/episode-122-climate-change-part-i-how-the-gap-between-liberal-rhetoric-and-policy-promotes-8493a2d0fec1?source=user_profile---------47-------------------------------),” *Citations Needed*, <https://citationsneeded.medium.com/episode-117-the-sl-lagging-u-s-war-machine-52b8960aedc3>, Accessed 11/15/2021)

Nima: That’s right. It’s how we do.

“Climate change is real.” “[Three words — science, science, and science](https://news.yahoo.com/science-science-science-pelosi-attacks-154459672.html).” “[From coastal towns to rural farms to urban centers, climate change poses an existential threat](https://joebiden.com/climate-plan/).” “[Now it is time to put our coalition to work and pass bold climate solutions](https://www.democrats.senate.gov/climate).” These are just some of the many statements — all of them true — that the U.S. public routinely hears from its Democratic Party leaders, expressing their unbridled commitment to acting on the ever-urgent issue of climate change.

Adam: But unfortunately, there is a tremendous gulf between Democratic leaders’ claims to believe climate change is an existential threat and their actual actions, which are the actions of people who do not believe climate change must be urgently and robustly tackled. Since climate change has ascended from thoroughly ignored to occasionally acknowledged issue in US political discourse and elections, Democratic leaders have for the most part only been willing to push for small-scale policy solutions — a carbon-capture tax credit here, a fossil-fuel subsidy cut there.

Nima: These solutions are almost always incremental and market-based, and these same Democrats refuse to embrace what’s actually needed: keep fossil fuels in the ground, and mobilize public resources so that we can make the broad social changes we need to address the climate crisis. The most powerful Democrats, people like Nancy Pelosi, have not only steered clear of more far-reaching policies, but have actively undermined them, as seen most clearly with her opposition to the Green New Deal — often under the guise of debt scolding.

Adam: By way of a crude pop culture analogy, it’s as if we’re watching the 1990s disaster flick Deep Impact about a comet hurtling toward Earth and President Morgan Freeman spends the first half of the film debating with Congress about how best to make the rockets sent to intercept the deadly comet more cost effective.

Nima: When Democratic Party claims about the dire consequences of climate change are not matched by robust and necessary policy proposals, one can only assume one of three realities is true: (1) they do not care about the disastrous inevitably of environmental collapse, (2) they don’t truly believe the science on climate change in general, or (3) they’re simply hopeless and spineless. In any case, the resultant inertia amounts to an insidious form of climate denialism in its own right.

Adam: On this week’s episode, part one of two tackling climate change, we’ll be discussing the net effect of this chasm, what we’re calling “the Climate Rhetoric-Policy Gap” and how, from a messaging standpoint, it reads false and leads many to believe that climate change may be real in some abstract sense, but mostly not a matter of urgent moral importance.

#### Antitrust can be used for socially beneficial purposes

**Paul 20**, Assistant Professor of Law, Wayne State University. (Sanjukta, 2020, “Antitrust as Allocator of Coordination Rights”, *UCLA Law Review*, Vol. 67, University of Kansas Libraries, Hein Online)

The central function of antitrust law is to allocate economic coordination rights. This means that private decisions to engage in economic coordination are always subject to public approval, which antitrust law grants either expressly or tacitly. Currently, its methods for accomplishing this function have the effect of anointing control and concentrated power as the preferred form of economic coordination, and to frown upon forms of economic coordination in which power and decision making are more broadly dispersed. Antitrust law's current methods for allocating coordination rights include what I call its firm exemption, as well as its preference for vertical over horizontal coordination beyond firm boundaries. Antitrust's methods of allocating coordination rights are ultimately indigenous and cannot be explained away by external referents: neither by other areas of law, nor by putatively neutral conclusions of social science. They are also historically contingent and have shifted over time.

Practically speaking, the reigning antitrust paradigm authorizes large, powerful firms as the primary mechanisms of economic and market coordination, while largely undermining others: from workers' organizations to small business cooperation to democratic regulation of markets. While deploying the legal concept of competition to undermine disfavored forms of economic coordination, antitrust law also quietly underwrites certain major exceptions to principles of competition, notably, the business firm itself. In surfacing the firm exemption, this Article also isolates the underlying, largely unexamined decision criteria for allocating coordination rights that it employs.

The current paradigm for thinking and decision making within antitrust law has a professed commitment to implementing the insights of neoclassical economic theory in legal decisionmaking.1 According to that framework, the aggregate of individual market transactions, rather than direct coordination, will result in an optimal allocation of society's resources. But this process of market allocation, which the law is supposed to facilitate but not displace, itself has no existence independent of prior legal allocations of economic coordination rights. Those coordination rights are shaped by numerous areas of law-from property to corporate to labor to antitrust, among others. This Article focuses on antitrust law, where this function is rarely acknowledged. Although the law and economics paradigm has enormous institutional sticking power in current antitrust law, the basic purposes and methods of antitrust law are also up for debate today in a way that they have not been in decades. Recent contributions to the antitrust revival have emphasized the law's traditional concerns with corporate power and fairness, which were largely written out of antitrust law in the Chicago School revolution? Dissenting voices asserted these as legitimate antitrust concerns even prior to the current challenge. 3 Mirroring the reformist call to put some limits upon the broad coordination rights of the powerful, a growing chorus of scholarship has emphasized the need to expand the coordination rights of small players to some extent or another, beginning with the question of workers and microenterprises caught between labor and antitrust regulation.4

However, proposals to reform antitrust, or to reconceptualize it, have thus far generally stopped short of questioning the basic premise that its primary function is to promote competition. At least officially, if increasingly uneasily, competition is still king. To be sure, many posit that antitrust performs this stated function badly, or does not perform it at all in certain markets.' Even when reintroducing values such as fairness and deconcentrating power, for the most part the reform camp has characterized those values as flowing from-or at least coextensive with-promoting or protecting competition. Thus, the political debate over antitrust has been characterized by all sides claiming the idea of competition and defining what it means to promote competition in different ways.

#### \*\*Antitrust debates are valuable

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IV. Antitrust in Civil Society

Competition issues are also part of the general civic discourse separate from the campaign rhetoric and legislative proposals offered by politicians. This is also a significant sign that antitrust has begun to be an important source of small “p” politics that engages substantial segments of the public at large. One example is the increased number of non-technical books intended for a lay audience that deal with the role of antitrust in a healthy economy and democracy. Recent and forthcoming books dealing with these themes include Tim Wu’s “The Curse of Bigness,”109 Matt Stoller’s “Goliath,”110 Maurice Stucke and Ariel Ezrachi’s “Competition Overdose,”111 Zephyr Teachout’s “Break ‘em Up,”112 and David Dayan’s “Monopolized.”113 On the academic side, there are a plethora of government and NGO studies of competition policy on digital competition114 and new works are flourishing which explore the broader ramifications of antitrust and competition in society.115 Long form and more mass-market journalism have also taken up the mantle of exploring the role of antitrust and competition policy. Such diverse magazines as The Atlantic,116 Time, 117 New Republic,118 American Prospect,119 Rolling Stone,120 New York Times magazine,121 Variety,122 National Review, 123 Foreign Policy,124 and other policy and opinion magazines have all run recent stories or profiles of individuals involved in antitrust issues. Before the COVID-19 pandemic effectively monopolized press coverage in the United States, there were thirty-three antitrust related stories on the front page of the New York Times or the front page of its business section over a three-month period in late 2019. 125 A majority of the stories focused on tech giants such as Apple, Microsoft, Google, Amazon, and Facebook.126 In addition, the New York Times also covered stories about mergers, merger policy, local issues such as the Chicago taxi market, and various smaller industries.127 This is separate from coverage during the same period of campaign issues and candidate statements relating to the field. A similar increase in coverage during this same period can be observed anecdotally in more business-oriented publications like Forbes, Barron’s, Wired, and the Wall Street Journal; general newspapers like USA Today, Washington Post, and Huffington Post; more local newspapers; as well as radio and television.128 Web pages and social media accounts on these issues have similarly proliferated on all ideological perspectives.129 Lobbying and public policy groups are growing in number and influence. Beyond the traditional trade associations and general think tanks there are now a number of active groups with antitrust as a large part of their focus. These include the Open Markets Institute, 130 American Antitrust Institute, 131 Anti-Monopoly Fund,132 Institute for Self-Reliance,133 Public Citizen,134 Public Knowledge,135 Demos, 136 and the International Center for Law and Economics.137 At the more technical legal end of the debate, antitrust is similarly flourishing as a field. One sees increased law school hiring in the field for the first time in decades. Academic institutes and centers abound with a wide variety of perspectives ranging from libertarian to enforcement oriented.138 Most major antitrust cases now feature multiple amicus briefs from legal and economic experts on both sides of an issue both in the Supreme Court or the Courts of Appeals.139 Conclusion Antitrust has always been political in nature. Antitrust law provides broad legal commands dealing with how governments and private individuals can challenge different types of market behavior. In this way, antitrust has not changed. Antitrust will never take the place of sports, the Dow Jones index, or the weather for conversation at the breakfast table, but it has become a meaningful part of the political and policy debate for candidates, the legislature, and important segments of civil society. What has changed, however, is the degree that antitrust has reentered the political arena. Once mostly the domain of technocrats, antitrust issues have been proposed and debated by Presidential candidates, political parties, legislators, pundits, journalists, lobby groups, and voters alike. There are also a flurry of serious proposals and investigations that would make significant changes to the current system if adopted. This is all to the good. Even if none of the current proposals come to fruition, the antitrust debate is part of a broader engagement with political economy issues dealing with fundamental concerns such as economic concentration, globalization, income inequality, social and racial justice, and even recently the proper response to the COVID-19 emergency. The many proposals, initiatives, and pressure groups represent at a minimum the return of antitrust as part of the progressive agenda.

#### \*\*Default to consequentialism

Sikkink 8, Professor of political science at the University of Minnesota (Kathryn Sikkink, 2008, “The Role of Consequences, Comparison, and Counterfactuals in Constructivist Ethical Thought,” <http://www.polisci.umn.edu/centers/theory/pdf/sikkink.pdf)>

Ethical arguments of these different types are ubiquitous and necessary. But because they are also slippery and open to manipulation and misuse, we also need to be very careful and precise about how we go about using them. I would recommend that first we distinguish very carefully between the comparison to ideals and historical empirical comparison. I believe that many critical constructivist accounts rely on the comparison to the ideal or to the conditions of possibility counterfactual argument. In almost every critical constructivist work there is an implicit ideal ethical argument. This argument is implicit because it is rarely clearly stated, but it is found in the nature of the 36 critique. So, for example, in her discussion of U.S. human rights policy, Roxanne Doty critiques a human rights policy carried out by actors who sometimes use it for their own self aggrandizement and to denigrate others. 42 The implicit ideal this presents is a human rights policy that is not used for denigration or surveillance or othering those it criticizes or conversely, of elevating those who advocate it. What would be examples of such a policy? The book does not provide examples. We do not know if examples exist in the world. So the implicit comparison is a comparison to an ideal – a never fully stated ideal, but one present in the critique of what is wrong with the policies discussed. Nicolas Guilhot makes a similar argument in his recent book. The promotion of democracy and human rights, he argues, are increasingly used in order to extend the power they were meant to limit. “The promotion of democracy and human rights defines new forms of administration on a global scale and generates a new political science.” He historically examines how progressive movements for democracy and human rights have become hegemonic because they “systematically managed to integrate emancipatory and progressive forces in the construction of imperial policies.” But once again, the book offers no alternative political scenario. In the final sentence of the book, the author clarifies that “this book has no other ambition than to contribute to the democratic critique of democracy.” 43 In the introduction, he clarifies, “This book does not provide answers to these dilemmas. At most, its only ambition is to highlight them, in the hope that a proper understanding constitutes a first step toward the invention of new courses of action.”44 Ethically, I believe this is a cop-out. Politically and intellectually, I find it too comfortable and too easy. This critique has a crucial role to play in pointing to hypocrisy (as Price highlights in the introduction). It could also serve as a catalyst for policy change in the direction of policy that would include less surveillance or less cooptation of human rights discourse. But it is unlikely to serve as a catalyst for new action or policy change unless it ventures something more than pure critique, unless it risks a political or ethical proposal. Without that, it has the impact of delegitimizing any human rights policy without suggesting any alternative. Any policy to promote human rights of democracy policy is shown to be deeply flawed or even pernicious. It is portrayed as part of the problem, certainly not as offering any kind of solution. Human rights policy appears to make the situation worse, not better. The critique has the effect of telling us clearly what we do not want, what we can not support—human rights policies by imperfect and hypocritical actors like the U.S. In its historical comparisons, it also lumps human rights policy together with colonialism and does not provide any elements to distinguish between one policy of surveillance and other. All are equally flawed. The ethical effect is to remove normative support from existing policies without producing any alternatives. This is similar to what Price means when he says that “critical accounts which do not in fact offer constructive normative theorizing to follow critique ironically lend themselves to being complicit with the conservative agenda opposing erstwhile progressive change in world politics.” Neither Doty nor Guilhot, for example, contrast two human rights policies to give examples of policies that are more of less hypocritical or where there has been more or 44 Guilhot, p. 14. 38 less surveillance. They don’t contrast human rights policies or democracy promotion policies to previous policies that were also hypocritical and self aggrandizing, but more pernicious – e.g. national security ideology and support for authoritarian regimes in the third world. By presenting no contrasts, the critique would appear to say that there is no ethical or political difference between a policy that supports coups and funds repressive military regimes and a policy that critiques coups and cuts military aid to repressive regimes. These policies would appear to be ethically indistinguishable. Indeed, by these standards, a realist policy (a la Kissinger) might be preferable. Kissinger didn’t denigrate his authoritarianism allies. He took regimes as they were. He treated them as valuable allies. He didn’t lecture them on how they should change. He also, in doing so, encouraged, in some cases, coups and mass murder. But at least he didn’t “Other”. Doty and Guilhot give me no ethical criteria to distinguish between the policies of the Kissinger administration, the Carter administration, and current Bush administration policy. Because the comparison is an implicit ideal, never an empirical real world example, the critique is very telling and can delegitimize the critiqued policy. But nothing is put in its place. So, it demobilizes any support we might have for any human rights policy. It puts the analyst in an ethically comfortable position, but by not proposing any explicit comparison, it demobilizes the reader. We learn what to oppose, to critique, but we don’t learn explicitly what to support in its stead. The result can be political paralysis. One finds it difficult to act.

# 2AC

## ADV---Denialism

#### Anti-state politics prevents action against climate crises

Parenti & Emanuele 15, is former visiting fellow at CUNY's Center for Place, Culture and Politics, Soros Senior Justice Fellow, teaches in the Liberal Studies program at New York University; interview with Vincent Emanuele writer, activist and radio journalist who lives and works in the Rust Belt. (Christian, 5-17-2015, “Climate Change, Militarism, Neoliberalism and the State,” http://ouleft.sp-mesolite.tilted.net/?p=1980)

You mention mutual aid and how it was overhyped by the left in the aftermath of Katrina. I’m thinking of the same thing in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. You’ve been critical of the left in the US for not approaching and using the state apparatus when dealing with climate change and other ecological issues. Can you talk about your critique of the US left and why you think the state can, and should, be used in a positive manner? Just to be clear, I think it is absolutely heroic and noble what activists have done. My critique is not of peoples’ actions, or of people; it’s of a lack of sophistication, and I hold myself partly accountable, as part of the US left, for our deficiencies. With Hurricane Sandy, the Occupy folks did some amazing stuff. Yet, at a certain level, their actions became charity. People were talking about how many meals they distributed. That’s charity. That is, in many ways, a neoliberal solution. That’s exactly what the capitalist system in the US would like: US citizens not demanding their government redistribute wealth from the 1% to the 99%. The capitalists love to see people turn to each other for money and aid. Unwittingly, that’s what the anarcho-liberal left fell into. This is partly due a very American style of anti-state rhetoric that transcends left and right. The state is not just prisons or the military. It’s also Head Start, quality public education, the library, clean water, the EPA, the City University of New York system – a superb, affordable set of schools that turns out top-notch, working-class students with the lowest debt burdens in the country. There’s a reason the right is attacking these institutions. Why does the right hate the EPA and public education? Because they don’t want to pay to educate the working class, and they don’t want the working class educated. They don’t want to pay to clean up industry, and that’s what the EPA forces them to do. When the left embraces anarcho-liberal notions of self-help and fantasies of being outside of both government and the market, it cuts itself off from important democratic resources. The state should be seen as an arena of class struggle. When the left turns its back on the social democratic features of government, stops making demands of the state, and fails to reshape government by using the government for progressive ends, it risks playing into the hands of the right. The central message of the American right is that government is bad and must be limited. This message is used to justify austerity. However, in most cases, neoliberal austerity does not actually involve a reduction of government. Typically, restructuring in the name of austerity is really just a transformation of government, not a reduction of it. Over the last 35 years, the state has been profoundly transformed, but it has not been reduced. The size of the government in the economy has not gone down. The state has become less redistributive, more punitive. Instead of a robust program of government-subsidized and public housing, we have the prison system. Instead of well-funded public hospitals, we have profiteering private hospitals funded by enormous amounts of public money. Instead of large numbers of well-paid public workers, we have large budgets for private firms that now subcontract tasks formerly conducted by the government. We need to defend the progressive work of government, which, for me, means immediately defending public education. To be clear, I do not mean merely vote or ask nicely, I mean movements should attack government and government officials, target them with protests, make their lives impossible until they comply. This was done very well with the FCC. And my hat goes off to the activists who saved the internet for us. The left should be thinking about the ways in which it can leverage government. The utility of government was very apparent in Vermont during the aftermath of Hurricane Irene. The rains from that storm destroyed or damaged over a hundred bridges, many miles of road and rail, and swept away houses. Thirteen towns were totally stranded. There was a lot of incredible mutual aid; people just started clearing debris and helping each other out. But within all this, town government was a crucial connective tissue. Due to the tradition of New England town meeting, people are quite involved with their local government. Anarchists should love town meetings. It is no coincidence that Murray Bookchin spent much of his life in Vermont. Town meetings are a form of participatory budgeting without the lefty rigmarole. More importantly, the state government managed to get a huge amount of support from the federal government. The state in turn pushed this down to the town level. Without that federal aid, Vermont would still be in ruins. Vermont is not a big enough political entity to shake down General Electric, a huge employer in Vermont. The Vermont government can’t pressure GE to pay for the rebuilding of local infrastructure, but the federal government can. Vermont would still be a disaster if it didn’t get a transfer of funds and materials from the federal government. Similarly in New York City, the public sector does not get enough praise for the many things it did well after super storm Sandy. Huge parts of the subway system were flooded, yet it was all up and running within the month. As an aside, one of the dirty little secrets about the Vermont economy is that it’s heavily tied-up with the military industrial complex. People think Vermont is all about farming and boutique food processing. Vermont has a pretty diverse economy, but agriculture plays a much smaller role than you might think, about 2 percent of employment. Meanwhile, the state’s industrial sector, along with the government, is one of the top employers, at about 13 percent of all employment. Most of this work is in what’s called precision manufacturing, making stuff like: high performance nozzles, switches, calibrators, and stuff like the lenses used in satellites, or handcrafting the blades that go in GE jet engines. But I digress … As we enter the crisis of climate change, it’s important to be aware of the actually existing legal and institutional mechanisms with which we can contain and control capital. I often joke with my anarchist and libertarian friends and ask if their mutual-aid collectives can run Chicago’s sanitation system or operate satellites. Of course, on one level, I’m joking, but on another level, I’m being quite serious. I don’t think activists on the left properly understand the complexity of modern society. A simple example would be how much sewage is produced in a single day in a country with 330 million people. How do people expect to manage these day-to-day issues? In your opinion, is there a lack of sophistication on the left in terms of what, exactly, the state does and how it functions in our day-to-day lives? It’s sobering to reflect on just how complex the physical systems of modern society are. And though it is very unpopular to say among most American activists, it is important to think about the hierarchies and bureaucracies that are necessarily part of technologically complex systems.

[marked]

A friend of mine is a water engineer in Detroit, and he was talking to me about exactly what you’re mentioning. The sewer system in Detroit is mind-bogglingly enormous and also very dilapidated and very expensive. To not have infrastructure publicly maintained, even though the capitalist class might not admit this, would ultimately undermine capital accumulation.¶ You asked if there is a lack of sophistication. Look, I’m trying to make helpful criticisms to my comrades on the left, particularly to activists who work so hard and valiantly. I’ve criticized divestment as a strategy, yet I support it. I criticized the false claims that divesting fossil fuels stocks would hurt fossil fuel companies. The fossil fuel divestment movement started out making that claim. To its credit, the movement has stopped making such claims. Now, they say that it will remove the industries "social license," which is a problematic concept that comes from the odious world of "corporate social responsibility." However, now, students are becoming politicized, and that’s always great news. For several years, some of us have been trying to get climate activists, the climate left, to take the EPA and the Clean Air Act seriously. The EPA has the power to actually de-carbonize the economy. The divestment logic is: Schools will divest, then fossil fuel companies will be held in greater contempt than they are now? Honestly, they’re already hated by everybody. That does what? That creates the political pressure to stop polluting? We already have those regulations: the Clean Air Act. There was a Supreme Court Case, Massachusetts v. EPA, that was ruled on in 2007. It said the EPA must regulate greenhouse gas emissions. Lots of professional activists in the climate movement, at least up until very recently, have been totally unaware of this. Consequently, they are not making demands of the EPA. They are not making demands of their various local, state and federal environmental agencies. These entities should be enforcing the laws. They have the power. It’s not because the people in the climate movement are bad people or unintelligent. They’re dedicated and extremely smart. It’s because there’s an anti-state ethos within the environmental movement and a romanticization of the local. On a side note, I don’t think all of this stuff about local economies is helpful. Sometimes I think this sort of thinking doesn’t recognize how the global political economy works. The comrades at Jacobin magazine have called this anarcho-liberalism. I think that is a great way to describe the dominant ideology of US left, which is both anarchist and liberal in its sensibilities. This ideology is fundamentally about ignoring government, and instead, being obsessed with scale, size, and, by extension, authenticity. Big things are bad. Small things are good. Planning is bad. Spontaneity is good. It is as insidious as it is ridiculous. But it is the dominant worldview among the US left. Do you really think that this is the best way to approach the industry, through mobilizing state resources? Look, the fossil fuel industry is the most powerful force the world has ever seen. Be honest, what institution could possibly ~~stand up to~~ rebuff them? The state. That doesn’t mean it will. Right now, government is captured by these corporate entities. But, it has, at least in theory, an obligation to the people. And it also has the laws that we need to wipe out the fossil fuel industrial complex. This sounds fantastical and nuts, but I don’t think it is. I’ve been harping on this in articles and a little bit at the end of Tropic of Chaos. According to the Center for Biological Diversity, Nixon-era laws can be used to sue developers, polluters, etc. You might not be able to stop them, but you can slow them down. The Clean Air Act basically says that if science can show that smoke-stack pollution is harmful to human health, it has to be regulated.¶ If there was a movement really pushing the government, and making the argument that the only safe level of CO2 emissions is essentially zero … We have the laws in place. We have the enabling legislation to shut down the fossil fuel industry. We should use the government to levy astronomical fines on the fossil fuel companies for pollution. And we should impose them at such a level that it would undermine their ability to remain competitive and profitable. Part Two: Vincent Emanuele: Much of the green washing, or capitalism’s attempt to brand itself as green, focuses on localism and anti-government, market-driven programs. Do you think this phobia of the state among the US left is a result of previous failed political experiments? How much of this ideology is imposed from outside forces? Christian Parenti: Some state phobia comes from the American political mythology of rugged individualism; some comes from the fundamentally Southern, Jeffersonian tradition of states’ rights. Fear of the federal government by Southern elites goes back to the founding of the country. The Hamiltonian versus Jeffersonian positions on government are fundamental to understanding American politics. I wrote about this for Jacobin magazine in a piece called "Reading Hamilton from the Left." Lurking just beneath the surface of states’ rights is, of course, plantation rights. Those plantations, places like Monticello, were America’s equivalent of feudal manors where, in a de facto sense, economic, legal and military power were all bound up together and located in the private household of the planter. Those Virginian planters were the original localistas. Nor did that project end with the fall of slavery, or the end of de jure segregation in the 1960s. Southern elites didn’t want Yankees telling them what to do; how to treat their slaves, how to organize their towns, how to run their elections, how to treat the environment – none of that! The South is a resource colony and its regional elites, some of them now running multinational corporations and holding important posts in the US government, believe they have a right to do what they wish with the people and landscape. Historically, that’s a large part of what localism and local democracy meant in the South. It meant that White local elites were "free" – free to push Black people around, free to feed racist fantasies to the White working class. They didn’t want interference from the outside. So, some of that anti-statist ideology comes from that plantation tradition. Another part of it comes from the real failures and crimes of state socialism, though state socialism also had, and in Cuba still has, many successes. The social welfare record of what we used to call "actually existing socialism" was pretty impressive. But there were also the problems of repression, surveillance and bureaucratization, which were partly the result of capitalist encirclement, partly the result of the ideological hubris rooted in ideological overconfidence in the allegedly scientific power of Marxism, partly the result of simple corruption among socialism’s political class. These real problems were central themes in the Cold War West’s educational and ideological apparatus of (generally right-wing) messaging from the press and the political class. In this discourse, communism was the state, while freedom was the private sector. Thus, the United States and freedom became embodied in popular notions of the private sector and individualism. Of course, the great, unmentioned contradiction in this self-fantasy is the fact that American capitalism has always been heavily, heavily dependent on the state. Modern society, despite its fantasies about itself, is intensely cooperative and collective. Look at how complex its physical systems are; that cannot be achieved without massive levels of coordination and collective cooperation, much of it provided by the rules and regulations of government. The knee-jerk anti-statism, what the folks at Jacobin call "anarcho-liberalism," is also rooted in experience. The less social power you have, the more the state is experienced as an invasive, demeaning, oppressive and potentially, very violent bureaucracy. Neoliberalism would not have gotten this far if there wasn’t an element of truth to this critique of its bureaucracy and regulation. It has also used ideas that have old cultural tractions, like freedom.¶ Such are the contradictions of the modern democratic state in capitalist society. Government is rational, supportive, humane, [and offers] redistribution in the form of Social Security, high-quality public schools, environmental regulation, the Voting Rights Act and other federal civil rights laws that have helped break hegemonic power of local and regional bigots. But government is also militarized policing, the bloated prison system, spying on a vast scale; it is child protective services taking children from loving mothers on the basis of bureaucratic traps, corrupt corporate welfare at every level from town government to federal military contracting. The racist, sexist, plutocratic and techno-bureaucratic features of the state create fertile ground for people to turn their backs on the whole idea of government. What has been the impact of the right’s ability to effectively propagandize the White working class in the US? Rightist intellectuals, academics, journalists, media tycoons, university presidents and loudmouth politicians work diligently to capture and form the raw experience of everyday oppression into an ideological common sense. To be clear, I use that term in the Gramscian sense, in which common sense refers to ruling class ideology that is so hegemonic as to be absorbed and naturalized by the people. The constant libertarian assault on the radio, in newspapers, on the television, this drumbeat of anti-government discourse is an old story – but still very important for understanding the anarcho-liberal sensibility. Just tune in to AM radio late on a weekday evening and listen to the anti-government vitriol. It’s sort of wild. Someone could do an interesting study, Ph.D., in unpacking the cultural history of all this. It is tempting to speculate that deindustrialization, having disempowered and made anxious many huge sections of the working class, opens the way for fantasies of empowerment. The anti-statist, rugged individualist common sense is also always simultaneously a fantasy of empowerment. White men are particularly vulnerable to these fantasies. The classic guy who calls into the batshit crazy, late night, right-wing talk radio show is a middle-aged White man. Listen closely to the rage and you hear fantasies of independence. In this rhetoric, guns and gun rights become an obviously phallic symbol of individual empowerment, agency, self worth, responsibility etc. But most importantly, we have to think about how all of this anti-state ideology is being stirred up with investments from elites. The neoliberal project is to transform the state through anti-statist rhetoric and narratives. They sell the idea that people need to be liberated from the state. But then push policies that imprison people while liberating and pampering capital. It is hard for the left to see itself in this sketch – the angry, beaten-down, middle-aged White guy calling in from his basement or garage. But I think these much-documented corporate efforts to build neoliberal consent permeate the entire culture and infect us all, if even just a little bit. This is the intellectually toxic environment in which young activists are approaching the question of the climate emergency. Young activists should be approaching the climate crisis the way the left approached the economic crisis during the Great Depression. We need to drastically restructure the state. We need it mobilized and able to transform the economy. The New Deal was imperfect, of course. It left domestic workers and farm workers out of the Fair Labor Standards Act. It was inherently racist. It dammed rivers and was environmentally destructive. However, the New Deal was radical in its general empowerment of labor; its distributional outcomes were progressive and it achieved a modernizing transformation of American capitalism. Not to overstate the case, but the New Deal could be a reference point for thinking about the beginning of a green transformation that seeks to euthanize the fossil fuel industry. We have to precipitously reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build a new power sector. That much is very clear. However, let me be clear: Shutting down the fossil fuel industry – mitigating the climate crisis – is not a solution for the environmental crisis. Climate change is only one part of the multifaceted environmental crisis. Shutting down the fossil fuel industry would not automatically end overfishing, deforestation, soil erosion, habitat loss, toxification of the environment etc. But carbon mitigation is the most immediately pressing issue we face. The science is very clear on this. Climate change is the portion of the overall crisis that must be solved immediately so as to buy time to deal with all the other aspects of the crisis. Because I take the political implications of climate science very seriously, I am something of a carbon fundamentalist.

## AT: Bandits

## AT: ONION

## AT: FIT CHECK

## AT: INTRINSICNESS

## AT: CP---Father Sky

## AT: K---Nihilism

### Permutations---2AC

#### Prefer the permutation --- Bataille’s criticism is an attempt to point towards life’s fullness not break with usefulness and teleology which he saw as inevitable.

**Goldhammer** 200**7**

Jesse, Dare to know, Dare to sacrifice, Reading Bataille Now, pg 19

The absurdity of Bataille’s position on the Marshall Plan notwithstanding, it does illustrate two key points that also serve as an excellent frame for Bataille’s prewar theories. First, in seeking an alternative to nuclear war, Bataille clearly indicates his aversion to nihilism. The value that Bataille places on wasteful sacri¤ce, violence, or death is not absolute and should not be considered a renunciation of all values. That Bataille relishes the experience of life up until the point of death, that he calls for a life unfettered by abstractions such as humanism, progress, justice, or democracy, is not a denial of existence so much as an affirmation of its potential fullness. Second, as Bataille explains at the end of the Preface to The Accursed Share, one intent of the book is to “solve political problems” (1991a, 14). Despite Bataille’s theoretical aversion to usefulness and teleology, he imbues his postwar work with a modicum of practicality, direction, and purpose. And though obviously a performative contradiction, Bataille’s interest in usefully solving political problems in the postwar period refracts the spirit of his prewar work, which ultimately sought to challenge and reconfigure enervated left-wing ideas.

#### Their fascinated morbid intellectual transgression abandons the compassion necessary to engage the world responsibly – only the perm is capable of reading Bataille’s philosophy without falling into this trap.

Tauchert in 2008 Ashley, Head of the English Department in the School of Arts, Languages and Literatures at the University of Exeter, *Critical Quarterly*, vol. 50, no. 1, April, pp. 17-18 (online at Wiley InterScience journal collection)

**The intellectual engagement with questions of the final truth of human consciousness initiated by Bataille has been subsequently reified into** a commodified critical desire **to identify with the anguished and transgressive itself; a desire that has come to operate an unconscious** fascination **for academic thought, all the more compulsive as it is unconscious. By making the conditions of this thought conscious we can face it and decide what is to be done with it. Unconsciously motivated thought cannot be socially responsible thought, and we would do well to remember our responsibilities to each other and to the younger generation of thinkers.** So this is also a book about power, the power of thought, and the power to generate and direct thought. The final concern of this work is to begin a process of understanding how it is that academic theorists can be so excited by transgressive thoughts, but dismayed by the effects of transgression in the social world.33 **It is all very well and good to celebrate Bataille’s condensed image of the exorbitated eye: quite another thing to have one’s own eyes exorbitated. If this sounds naîve I am happy for it to be so, since to turn away from the fascinated, morbid play of critical transgression is finally to turn towards** a conscious innocence **that might just be more powerful in the end.**

#### Bataille concedes that we should evaluate consequences

Kenneth **Itzkowitz**, associate professor of philosophy at Marietta College, “To witness spectacles of pain: The hypermorality of Georges Bataille” 19**99** <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3709/is_199901/ai_n8846380/pg_4>

Yet self-preservation is also a fundamental value for Bataille; there is also ample motive to resist the violence that denies the value of the well being of life itself. As he says in the second of the above passages, we must condemn what threatens to destroy us; our sovereign aspirations can be taken too far. In another passage he speaks of our need "to become aware of . . . [ourselves] and to know clearly what . . . [our] sovereign aspirations are in order to limit their possibly disastrous consequences" (1962, 181). It is when we are ignorant of these aspirations that we are most vulnerable to them, enacting them anyway, albeit inattentively.

### AT: K---2AC

#### Climate change as a security threat is key to motivate action — that solves their offense because its viewed as a challenge not an inevitability.

**Munger ’19** — Sean Munger, Online Historical and Communications Consultant, Kerkoporta LLC, previous Centric Law Senior Consultant, and attorney, Rose Law PC, Ph.D., Environmental History, University of Oregon, J.D., University of Tulane Law School; (2019; “Addressing the Challenges in Communicating Climate Change Across Various Audiences”; Research Gate; *Springer*, Climate Change Management, ISBN 978-3-319-98293-9, Article 8: Avoiding Dispatches from Hell: Communicating Extreme Events in a Persuasive, Proactive Context; //LFS—JCM)

Whether one accepts this pessimistic view—“Game over!” as it is sometimes expressed in popular colloquialism1 —it is clear that climate change meshes awkwardly with human psychological response. The human brain is characterized by two different systems of processing stimuli: experiental processing, which is linked to emotions and survival instincts; and analytical processing, which controls rational evaluation of information. “Despite evidence from the social sciences that the experiental processing system is the stronger motivator for action,” argued the Center for Research on Environmental Decisions, “most climate change communication remains geared toward the analytical processing system” (CRED 2009). Essentially, analytical and scientific data on climate change—which is the departure point for many climate change messaging efforts—is processed in the same part of the brain that would be engaged by solving a mathematical equation.

To add another layer of difficulty to the climate change communication problem, even messages designed at engaging the experiental processing system often backfire. Many climate change communicators assume that an audience either doesn’t have sufficient awareness of climate change threats (low information), or is not sufficiently outraged about them (high apathy). Perhaps more often, however, audiences are aware of the problem, and they are too moved by it—to the point where it is psychologically unbearable to think about it. In these cases, risk communication expert Peter Sandman argues that distressed audiences retreat into “psychological denial” to avoid having to think about the terrible consequences of climate change: [I]f people are in or near denial about climate change, their failure to act is more deeply psychological. It’s not that they are giving priority to other issues; it’s more that they can’t bear to think about this issue. The most crucial risk communication task, then, is to make it more bearable to focus on global warming—to diagnose the reasons why people are so powerfully motivated to avoid the issue, and to change our messaging to reduce their avoidance and make it easier for them to face the issue and take action. (Sandman 2009) Climate change messaging involving extreme weather events presents special dangers in this area. Another, similar psychological effect called “emotional numbing” occurs when people are exposed repeatedly to emotionally draining situations; the effect has been noted both in people who live near war zones, and, relevant to climate change, people in areas exposed to repeated hurricane threats in a short period of time. The danger of emotional numbing is magnified by a media environment with the capacity to deliver the emotional shocks of extreme weather events over and over again, whether or not in the form of news being reported, climate change warnings, or even movies—like the aforementioned example of the bursting cabin doors in Titanic. Numbing and worry are easily-reached thresholds of fatigue when talking about climate change (CRED 2009). In addition to the problems of psychological denial and emotional numbing, some particular audiences may actually be attracted, rather than repelled or horrified, by images of apocalyptic disaster. The prevalence of disaster in popular culture seems to reveal a deep societal attraction to large-scale destruction. In his seminal environmental history of Los Angeles, historian Mike Davis devoted 80 pages to a survey of the history of “the literary destruction of Los Angeles,” which is “often depicted as, or at least secretly experienced as, a victory for civilization.” Audiences packing theaters for the 1996 film Independence Day literally cheered as the laser beams of fictional aliens annihilated California’s largest city; this is but one example of a lengthy tradition in novels, movies and television in which Los Angeles is incinerated by nuclear explosions, leveled by earthquakes or fires, suffers direct hits from comets and asteroids, or is invaded by Japanese, Communists, the Viet Cong, Nazis, terrorists and extraterrestrials (Davis 2006). Given that Los Angeles is but one city that features in a worldwide culture of disaster fiction, it seems clear that we find something thrilling and beautiful in images of apocalypse. While no sane person would actively wish for the kind of world that climate change may give us, neither can we assume that everyone will recoil instinctively from envisioning its features. For all these reasons, visions of Hell, in Futerra’s terminology, “doesn’t sell.” It is not the “sizzle” in the climate change message, to employ a term from advertising (“Don’t sell the sausage, sell the sizzle!”), and, so long as climate change messaging appeals to the analytical rather than experiential mode of processing information, such messaging is probably doomed to failure (Futerra 2009). In the context of communicating about extreme weather events, avoiding Hell is especially difficult, because such messages inherently evoke the same images of disaster—flooded streets, refugees huddled on rooftops, hospital emergency rooms swamped with heat stroke victims—that have the potential to spark psychological denial, emotional numbing or unconscious attraction. When woven into climate change narratives, extreme weather events often follow three patterns. The first is what might be termed the “I told you so” narrative: extreme weather events as validations of previous predictions or warnings given in the past regarding climate change (e.g., Klein 2017; Snider 2017). A second common narrative might be termed “This is the future”: a narrative that extreme events, such as this or that recent specific example, are destined to become more common as the effects of climate change continue to unfold. In popular media, these narratives often employ the phraseology “the new normal” (e.g., Karnad 2017, referencing South Asia floods; Berwyn 2017, referencing simultaneous heat waves in various parts of the globe). Each of these narratives are constructed for differing purposes and sometimes for specific audiences. Drawing lessons, whether broad or narrow, from extreme weather events in the context of climate change is a necessary action. But in doing so, climate change communicators must be mindful of how—and to what ends— they deploy narratives of extreme weather. All too often they can devolve into “dispatches from Hell.” 3 What’s Better Than Hell: A More Positive Context The problem with traditional messages surrounding climate change is fundamentally a simple one: they’re almost always negative. The dominance of negative messaging reflects the reasons why the messengers—who are usually much more deeply committed to climate change issues than members of the general public— care about climate change in the first place: they wish to prevent the damages and disasters they anticipate as a result of a warming world. While laudable, this approach ignores a central truth of human behavior: working for positive outcomes generally feels better, and is more sustainable over the long term, than working to prevent negative ones. Some analysts of climate change communication have drawn a parallel with the civil rights movement in the United States from the 1940s to the 1960s. The iconic phrase to emerge from this movement is “I have a dream,” the title of Dr. Martin Luther King’s August 1963 address that depicted a hopeful and morally compelling future of racial equality. Traditional messaging on climate change, however, is more like, “I have a nightmare,” and messengers deploy their nightmares in the hope stakeholders will be motivated to avoid them (Rich 2016). A fairly simple psychological experiment involving climate change imaging demonstrates that positive and forward-thinking imagery is generally more motivating and appealing than images of disaster. An international study by the UK-based Climate Outreach foundation tested 49 pictures pertaining to climate change and asked participants to rank their reactions based on how the image made them feel, how motivated they would be to change their personal behavior, and other factors. Of the 49 images tested, most were negative, depicting scenes of pollution, disasters and traffic jams. Only five pictures made participants collectively feel more positive than negative. Yet one of these five—a photograph of two children, apparently in the developing world, playing on a rooftop with solar panels —was the only picture that scored higher in the aggregate than the control photograph, classified as a “cliché,” of desperate-looking polar bears on a melting iceberg, which had a much lower positive/negative score. Furthermore, the polar bear cliché scored just barely higher in the aggregate than another of the positive photos, showing a group of smiling children holding up solar panels and a flag identifying them as participants in the “Solar Schools” program in the UK.2 Photographs of extreme weather events in this survey tended to focus on floods, and more often than not depicted street signs being consumed by rushing waters, with no humans visible in the frame. One photo showing a man apparently drowning in a flood polled especially poorly, placing significantly behind the positive children photographs in the category of whether the viewer felt motivated to change his or her own behavior. One survey participant commented, “In choosing photos to test it’s a good idea to have an idea of what emotions you want to evoke” (Climate Outreach 2016). If it seems elementary that people would rather look at pictures of smiling children than desperate polar bears or drowning men, it follows that they would rather think about—and work toward—a positive future than dwell upon the fears of a negative one. Futerra’s argument on positive messaging is both simple and intuitive: if the vision of the future that climate change communicators want people to work toward isn’t more desirable than the present, why bother working toward it? (Futerra 2009). Yet a future of climate-changed Earth that is less desirable than the present is exactly what most climate change messaging asks its audiences to embrace, at significant cost. Even fully achieving the optimistic goal of the Paris Accords of holding warming to 1.5 °C by 2100 comes with considerable negatives, for example, “committed sea level rise” that is projected to occur regardless of whatever CO2 mitigation actions are taken now (Rhodium 2014). While this is undeniably a reality of the climate change situation, it creates a difficult selling dilemma: let’s sacrifice today to live in a world that’s significantly worse than the one we have now, but one that is less bad than the one we’ll have if we do not sacrifice. This is like asking a child who does not like vegetables to give up a favorite toy today for the privilege of eating Brussels sprouts for dinner tomorrow, in order to avoid being forced to eat mud. The choice between Brussels sprouts and mud is a rational one but commands no emotional cachet—the whole transaction is a net negative. When viewed this way, it is unsurprising that messaging attempts that try to motivate behavior change by “turning up the dial” on depicting apocalyptic futures make no real difference to audiences, and sometimes even backfire (Futerra 2009). The alternative is to communicate climate change in a context that motivates stakeholders to make a choice to embrace a positive future, and to coalesce behind making it happen. In our analogy with the child who dislikes vegetables, the transaction flips completely if you convince the child to give up his favorite toy in favor of a new and different toy that’s better, shinier and more gratifying. Will the child eat Brussels sprouts tomorrow night as the price of receiving the new, better toy today? Even a selfish child could be easily persuaded to accept this bargain, especially when the even more negative consequence of refusing—eating mud— can be avoided. In this iteration, the rational choice is merely an additional finger on the scale for an emotionally-invested choice with a positive outcome. The “selling” job that needs to be done here is also much easier and can be done with much more enthusiasm: sell the child on the positives of the shiny new toy she’s going to get in exchange for the dirty old one, instead of trying to convince her how much worse mud is than Brussels sprouts.

A groundswell of literature on climate change communication bears out this simple analysis. “When communicators help people envision solutions to climate change,” counseled the Center for Research on Environmental Decisions, “they provide a positive vision of what the future could be like.” Leading with positive solutions—rather than another description of the problem—even helps with what might otherwise be considered threshold questions, such as whether climate change exists in the first place (CRED 2014). Psychologists and social scientists have argued that climate change communications should propose individual behavior change as part of a coordinated global strategy to transition the world’s economy away from fossil fuel dependence: in other words, a grand plan for constructing a better and cleaner world (Corner and Groves 2014). They have also argued that, because of the psychological nature of how human beings evaluate potential loss versus potential gain, “shifting the policy conversation from the potentially negative future consequences of not acting (losses) on climate change to the positive benefits (gains) of immediate action is likely to increase public support.” Furthermore, comparisons of negatively-framed scenarios versus positively-framed ones have shown that positive messages increase support for mitigation and adaptation efforts (Van der Linden et al. 2015).

Two interlocking issues should be considered next: first, which specific audiences should climate change communicators target with a proactive and positive message, and second, exactly which messages should they use? This paper seeks to raise the conceptual issue of positive messaging, but actually “market-testing” specific messages for discrete audiences is a task that is beyond the scope of my research, which has principally been to recognize general trends in developing literature. Nevertheless, “market-testing” and specific message campaigns could be considered by organizations, preferably with an international reach, interested in climate change communication. Climate Outreach (UK) and the Center for Research on Environmental Decisions (Columbia University, USA) have laid the groundwork for this sort of research. It should be broadened and applied on a larger scale, across national boundaries and involving international media, perhaps by NGOs or other organizations whose traditional focus has been on communicating climate change facts and science—in other words, the messengers whose messages could benefit most from a shift. Much more work needs to be done in this area.

4 Communicating Extreme Events: How Do You Make a Disaster “Positive”?

It is one thing to recognize the benefits of a positive messaging strategy on climate change in the abstract. It is quite another to fit extreme weather events into a more positive context. How does one “spin” events like the South Asia floods of 2017, or Hurricane Maria, into a forward-looking strategy to induce stakeholders to coalesce behind the efforts needed to build a better and cleaner world?

One suggestion is to deploy extreme events strategically to support other communication objectives. Many people feel that climate change is something distant, that’s happening somewhere else and affecting someone else—like the polar bears in the ubiquitous photo—and is not a local and immediate threat. Effective climate change communication should seek to narrow this gap by making people see local and personal impacts of climate change (CRED 2014). Extreme weather events offer the advantage of providing many opportunities for personal stories of how climate change is affecting real people.

One example is the story of Jayden F., a 13-year-old girl from Rayne, Louisiana, who filed a declaration with a U.S. federal district court in the groundbreaking climate change case of Juliana v. U.S. Jayden described the storms of August 2016 that caused rising floodwaters in her hometown. Awakened by her siblings at 5:00 AM, Jayden testified: “I noticed there was water coming from under the door to my room…When I stepped out of my bed, I stepped in water that came up to my ankles. I stepped right in the middle of climate change.…All day, floodwater continued to pour into our home…Our toilets, sinks, and bathtubs began to overflow with awful smelling sewage because our town’s sewer system also flooded. Soon the sewage was everywhere. We had a stream of sewage and water running through our house.” (Declaration of Jayden F. 2016)

Though certainly a “dispatch from Hell,” Jayden’s declaration also contains a statement of steadfast hope for the future: “I am scared. But I will not back down. We will conquer climate change.” To hear these words from a 13-year-old girl— who will likely be alive to experience the better world that climate change communicators should be describing to their audiences—injects a positive emotional note into what otherwise could be a relentlessly depressing story. This message certainly resonates more than the typical “I told you so” or “This is the future” narratives.

Though extreme weather events are by definition negative, people are magnetically drawn to the positive stories they generate. Stories focusing on kindness or altruism have a tendency to “go viral,” especially on social media platforms. For example, after Hurricane Sandy in 2012, numerous photos circulated on the Internet depicting random people in the New York area hanging power strips from fences and gates for strangers to charge their cell phones, homemade signs advertising free food (“Free Tacos @ Tacombi, 267 Elizabeth, today”), or messages thanking first responders posted at Union Square in Manhattan. One such collection was shared tens of thousands of times (Haberman 2012). Such displays invariably follow disasters with high media presence; Hurricane Irma’s version was the tale of Ramon Santiago, an Orlando resident who gave a total stranger he met at a Lowe’s home improvement store a power generator in advance of the hurricane (Fantozzi 2017). This kind of behavior is not as random or unusual as it might seem given the special attention often paid to such acts. While popular conception holds that the default reaction to a disaster situation is irrationality, selfish behavior and panic, scientific study has shown that these responses are comparatively rare (Cocking and Drury 2014). Indeed, witnessing a major disaster, especially one with an environmental component, seems to increase the psychological tendency toward altruism and cooperative behavior (Li et al. 2013).

Extreme weather events, therefore, clearly have the potential to motivate positive, cooperative and determined responses. Climate change communicators focused on positive messaging should always try to generate support for the choice to build a better world—a cleaner economy, with more (and better) jobs, enhanced national security, greater economic opportunity, technological responsibility and environmental justice—in response to climate change. Extreme weather events are incongruous with this vision, but they should be framed as challenges that must be overcome, rather than, as is so often depicted, punishments that must be endured for failing to heed prior warnings. Extreme weather events can also be used to enhance understanding of the enormous human capacity for cooperation, altruism and positive response. “Look how people came together during this event. Can’t we all do that, on a societal level, in response to climate change?” In any event, communicators discussing extreme weather events should, above all else, avoid making the problems of climate change communication worse by reinforcing uniformly destructive, dystopian and depressing narratives that are clearly counterproductive.

#### Death bad – non-experience is a negative evil – their evidence doesn’t assume premature death which they cause

**Preston and Dixon 7** [Ted, Rio Hondo College, Scott, Minnesota State Community and Technical College, “Who wants to live forever? Immortality, authenticity, and living forever in the present”, Int J Philos Relig (2007) 61:99–117]

Death might be very bad for the one who is dead. If death deprives ~~him~~ of a lot of pleasure—the pleasure he would have enjoyed if he had not died—the death might be a huge misfortune for someone. More explicitly, death might be extrinsically bad for the one who is dead even though nothing intrinsically bad happens to ~~him~~ as a result. In my view, death would be extrinsically bad for ~~him~~ if ~~his~~ life would have contained more intrinsic value if ~~he~~ had not died then (Ibid, p. 140).¶ This is a tricky issue. On the one hand, someone might claim that even a negative evil has to happen to someone, and the dead person who no longer exists is no longer a “somebody” to experience the evil, so there shouldn’t be any subjective harm. On the other hand, it is a powerful intuition that death deprives the dead of something, somehow. Nagel tries to resolve this problem by claiming that the person who used to exist can be beneﬁted or harmed by death, and tries to show that our intuitions are in harmony with this idea. For instance, he claims we could and would say of someone trapped in a burning building who died instantly from being hit on the head rather than burning to death, that the person was lucky, or better off, for having died quickly.¶ Of course, after dying from the head trauma, there was no one in existence who was spared the pain of burning to death, but Nagel claims that the “him” we refer to in such an example refers to the person who was alive and who would have suffered (Nagel, 1987). Nagel believes the person subjectively beneﬁted, although no subject was there to receive the beneﬁt. It would be easier to understand this objectively in terms of the qualitative assessment of Feldman; however, that is not Nagel’s position. ¶ Similarly, if someone dies before seeing the birth of a grandchild, and there is no life after death, there is no person in existence who is presently being deprived of anything at all, including, of course, births of grandchildren. But the person who was alive and who would have seen it, if not for death, has counterfactually and subjectively missed out on something.¶ The same kind of thing could be said about death as a negative evil. When you die, all the good things in your life come to a stop: no more meals, movies, travel, conversation, love, work, books, music, or anything else. If those things would be good, their absence is bad. Of course, you won’t miss them: death is not like being locked up in solitary conﬁnement. But the ending of everything good in life, because of the stopping of life itself, seems clearly to be a negative evil for the person who was alive and is now dead. When someone we know dies, we feel sorry not only for ourselves but for him, because he cannot see the sun shine today, or smell the bread in the toaster (Ibid, p. 93).¶ This is admittedly a confusing concept: the idea that one can be negatively harmed or beneﬁted even when one does not exist, but it is a concept Nagel claims is intuitively powerful for us, and which Feldman supports. It is confusing because of its counterfactual base; that a subject experiences harm or good even though there is no subject. It is intuitive because we do talk and think in terms of what it would have been for someone to experience. What these two articulations may show is that counterfactuals are being used in different ways, with the intuitive version masking a lot of the work of the counterfactual harm version.¶ In response to the problem of locating when death is a problem for someone, Feldman claims that a state of affairs can be bad for someone regardless of when it occurs: “The only requirement is that the value of the life he leads if it occurs is lower than the value of the life he leads if it does not occur” (Feldman, 1992, p. 152). The comparison is between the respective values of two possible lives. The state of affairs pertaining to someone dying at some particular time, is bad for that person, if “the value-for-her of the life she leads where [that state of affairs] occurs is lower than the value-for-her of the life she would have led if [that state of affairs] had not taken place” (Ibid, p. 155). When is it the case that the value-for-her of her life would be comparatively lower? Eternally. Eternally, as opposed to at any particular moment, because “when we say that her death is a bad for her, we are really expressing a complex fact about the relative values of two possible lives” (Ibid, p. 154). Lives taken as a whole, that is. It seems that Feldman is offering an objective qualitative analysis here, which may be addressing a different component than Nagel’s subjective argument does. If we take the two arguments together, they may offer a rather compelling account of why deprivation is a bad thing in an abstracted sense. We should not forget, however, that a possible life is not a life that is lived or being lived. In that way, they both lose a bit of their intuitive force.¶ In another attempt to undermine the Epicurean argument that death is not a bad thing but one that focuses upon one’s actual desires and interests, we may turn to Nussbaum’s work. Adding to an argument already developed by David Furley, Nussbaum argues that death is bad for the one who dies because it renders “empty and vain the plans, hopes, and desires that this person had during life” (Nussbaum, 1994). As an example, consider someone dying of a terminal disease. Subjectively, the terminally ill person is unaware of this fact, though some friends and family do know. This person plans for a future that, unbeknownst to him, will be denied him, and, to the friends and relatives who objectively know, “~~his~~ hopes and projects for the future seem, right now, particularly vain, futile, and pathetic, since they are doomed to incompleteness” (Ibid). Moreover, the futility is not removed by removing the knowing spectators. “Any death that frustrates hopes and plans is bad for the life it terminates, because it reﬂects retrospectively on that life, showing its hopes and projects to have been, at the very time the agent was forming them, empty and meaningless” (Ibid).¶ Nussbaum is making an interesting move here. She is collapsing the subjective and objective views, such that if the agent were aware, ~~his~~ projects would change and mirror reality. ~~He~~ would realize that ~~his~~ interests cannot be realized, and would change ~~his~~ interests, and live out his days with an accurate assessment of his interests and mortality.¶ Nussbaum appreciates this argument because it shows how death reﬂects back on an actual life, and our intuitions do not depend on “the irrational ﬁction of a surviving subject” (Ibid, p. 208). This argument is in harmony with Nagel’s claim that death can be bad for someone—even if that someone no longer exists. And, because it is rooted in the feared futility of our current projects, it is not vulnerable to the “asymmetry problem” (i.e., the alleged irrationality of lamenting the loss of possible experience in the future due to “premature” death, but not lamenting the loss of possible experience in the past due to not having been born sooner) since the unborn do not yet have any projects subject to futility. Nussbaum adds, to this argument, however, by appealing to the temporally extended structure of the relationships and activities we tend to cherish.¶ A parent’s love for a child, a child’s for a parent, a teacher’s for a student, a citizen’s for a city: these involve interaction over time, and much planning and hoping. Even the love or friendship of two mature adults has a structure that evolves and deepens over time; and it will centrally involve sharing futuredirected projects. This orientation to the future seems to be inseparable from the value we attach to these relationships; we cannot imagine them taking place in an instant without imagining them stripped of much of the human value they actually have. . . . Much the same, too, can be said of individual forms of virtuous activity. To act justly or courageously, one must undertake complex projects that develop over time; so too for intellectual and creative work; so too for athletic achievement. . . . So death, when it comes, does not only frustrate projects and desires that just happen to be there. It intrudes upon the value and beauty of temporally evolving activities and relations. And the fear of death is not only the fear that present projects are right now empty, it is the fear that present value and wonder is right now diminished (Ibid, p. 208–209).¶ This argument also helps to explain our intuition that death is especially tragic when it comes prematurely. While we might grieve the death of someone at any age, it seems especially bad when it is a child, or a young adult, that died. We sometimes explicitly state this in terms of the deceased having “so much left to do,” or having their “whole lives ahead of them.” It is not that death is unimportant when it is the elderly who die, but that, in many cases, the elderly have already had a chance to accomplish goals they have set for themselves. Indeed, many times those who face impending death with tranquility are those who can say, of themselves, that they have already lived a long, full life—while the elderly who most lament death are those who regret what they have failed to do in the time they had.

#### Affirming survival doesn’t devalue life – life is complex and malleable and can be celebrated even when it seems oppressive

**Fassin 10** [Didier, James D. Wolfensohn Professor in the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, as well as directeur d’études at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, Fall 2010, “Ethics of Survival: A Democratic Approach to the Politics of Life,” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, Vol 1 No 1, Project Muse]

Conclusion

Survival, in the sense Jacques Derrida attributed to the concept in his last interview, not only shifts lines that are too often hardened between biological and political lives: it **opens an ethical space for** reflection **and** action. Critical thinking in the past decade has often taken biopolitics and the politics of life as its objects. It has thus unveiled the way in which individuals and groups, even entire nations, have been treated by powers, the market, or the state, during the colonial period as well as in the contemporary era.

However, through indiscriminate extension, this powerful instrument has lost some of its analytical sharpness and heuristic potentiality. On the one hand, the binary reduction of life to the opposition between nature and history, bare life and qualified life, when systematically applied from philosophical inquiry in sociological or anthropological study, erases much of the complexity and richness of life in society as it is in fact observed. On the other hand, the normative prejudices which underlie the evaluation of the forms of life and of the politics of life, when generalized to an undifferentiated collection of social facts, end up by depriving social agents of legitimacy, voice, and action. The risk is therefore both scholarly and political. It calls for ethical attention.

In fact, the genealogy of this intellectual lineage reminds us that the main founders of these theories expressed tensions and hesitations in their work, which was often more complex, if even sometimes more obscure, than in its reduced and translated form in the humanities and social sciences today. And also biographies, here limited to fragments from South African lives that I have described and analyzed in more detail elsewhere, suggest the necessity of complicating the dualistic models that oppose biological and political lives. Certainly, powers like the market and the state do act sometimes as if human beings could be reduced to “mere life,” but democratic forces, including from within the structure of power, tend to produce alternative strategies that escape this reduction. And people themselves, even under conditions of domination, [End Page 93] manage subtle tactics that transform their physical life into a political instrument or a moral resource or an affective expression.

But let us go one step further: ethnography invites us to reconsider what life is or rather what human beings make of their lives, and reciprocally how their lives permanently question what it is to be human. “The blurring between what is human and what is not human shades into the blurring over what is life and what is not life,” writes Veena Das. In the tracks of Wittgenstein and Cavell, she underscores that the usual manner in which we think of forms of life “not only obscures the mutual absorption of the natural and the social but also emphasizes form at the expense of life.”22 It should be the incessant effort of social scientists to return to this inquiry about life in its multiple forms but also in its everyday expression of the human.

#### Inevitability doesn’t matter.

Smuts, 14—Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Temple University (Aaron, “To Be or Never to Have Been: Anti-Natalism and a Life Worth Living”, Ethical Theory and Moral Practice August 2014, Volume 17, Issue 4, pp 711-729, dml)

Benatar, Taylor, and Russell give us good reason to think that the meaning of life cannot come from enduring accomplishments, since nothing we do will endure for long at all. But this does not give us any reason to think that all projects are of equal worth. Why would it? The argument contains a false premise. There is no reason to think that the value of an activity is entirely determined by its ultimate outcome. Certainly there is value in making someone laugh, even if they do not laugh forever. Surely there is value in providing a hot meal for the hungry, even if they are not satiated for all eternity. And surely it is good to cure cancer, even if humanity does not endure until the end of time. Something need not be permanent in order to be valuable while it exists. As Paul Edwards notes, to think otherwise is to exhibit an irrational, arbitrary preference for the distant future.75 If we recognize that there is value in doing good, certainly we should think that this enhances the meaning of one's life. Hence, I see no reason to accept Benatar's claim that human lives are meaningless from the perspective of the universe.

Moving step back further in the argument, I think that we have good reason to doubt Benatar's claim that the OLT optimist must adopt the perspective of humanity. His example is that of a tragic death at a relatively early age. Perhaps this is best described as a misfortune. It might be that we evaluate some kinds of misfortunes via such comparisons. We do not think it a misfortune that we cannot fly through the air or leap tall buildings in a single bound.76 But this does not show that according to an OLT assessment, a life of only 40 years is not worth living. Isn't that what we are concerned with? If so, we stick to the subject. Would a life of a mere 40 years be worth starting? If such a life is filled with objective goods, it sure seems to be a LWL. Benatar gives no reason to think otherwise.

About our cognitive capacities, he argues that they make our lives richer than those of primates, but "we must concede that it would still be better if we were better equipped cognitively."77 But what is this concession supposed to imply? It does not imply that our lives are bad. It does not give us reason to think that our lives are not worth living. No, it merely tells us what we already know: things could be better. We could be smarter. We could live richer lives. Indeed. But this does not provide any support for pessimism.

Benatar argues that from the perspective of the universe "the quality of human life is [. . .] found wanting." This statement is ambiguous. By "wanting" he might mean "could be better." Alternatively, he might mean "bad," or "not good."78 Surely, compared with the lives of gods, human life could be better.79 There is no denying that. But this does not mean that human life is bad. If happiness is good, it is good. If helping others is good, it is good. If making something of beauty is good, it is good. If falling in love is good, it is good. Who cares if we can conceive of an even greater state of happiness, better forms of care, more fantastically beautiful creations, or richer forms of love? The fact that things could be better does not make them bad. This is not a case of seeing the glass half empty, but of calling a half full glass completely empty. That is wrong, not just pessimistic. To be worth living a life need not be the best conceivable life. No, it merely needs to be better than never to have been.

Once again Benatar fails to see that the opposite of better is not always bad; sometimes it is just less good. This mistake is fatal to his argument against OLT optimism, just as it undermines the asymmetry argument.

#### The alt collapses inward into sadistic celebration of suffering—external metrics for meaning-giving are comparatively better

Bush, 15—Manning Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Brown University (Stephen, “Sharing in What Death Reveals: Breaking the Waves with Bataille”, Theory & Event Volume 18, Issue 2, 2015, dml)

That said, Bataille has his own limitations. Bataille, like Sade, teaches us important truths about the capacity for violence and cruelty that subsists in the heart of most of us. But does he have anything constructive to say? He wants to put us in situations that arouse our cruel tendencies. But then what? Once we have seen the cruelty that is in us, how does Bataille help us respond to it? He puts forth the inner experience elicited by another’s suffering as something that is without any external authority, and at the same time he asks us to acknowledge our own attraction to violence and death. He thus courts the very real danger that such an experience would foster sadism, leaving the viewing subject with an even greater taste for cruelty.43 By contrast, external authorities, whether persons, texts, or narratives, instruct us how to respond to our experiences: they provides standards of judgment to distinguish appropriate attitudes from inappropriate ones, and they provide guidelines to tell us what sort of moral subject we are supposed to be and become. The Christian narrative, for example, is just such an authority. Christian teaching instructs the person considering the suffering of Christ on the cross that the appropriate response is compassion, not sadism, and Christian rituals surrounding the crucifixion story discipline the subject into conformity with the narrative.44 The Christian structure of Breaking the Waves performs similar work. In the goodness interpretation, the proper response to Bess’s death, in addition to sympathy, is admiration of the power of sacrificial love and what it accomplishes. By the end of the film, this message has overshadowed the Bataillean apprehension of one’s own fascination with and attraction to cruelty and violence. Without some sort of narrative structure serving as the authority as to how to interpret suffering, Bataille leaves us with an acknowledgment of our own cruel impulses, but with no guidelines with which to condemn, as opposed to endorse, these cruel impulses.

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The response to this objection might be that the experience of commonality with the suffering other is what conditions our cruel impulses so that they do not take deeper root in our psychological dispositions. But what besides participation in a larger, meaning-giving narrative could engender an experience of commonality in the face of suffering, rather than mere cruelty? If Bataille cannot answer this question, then his account has a severe defect. We are left with a dilemma: narrative detracts from our apprehension of the value of the victim and from our recognition of our own ambiguous relation to that value, whereas without narrative, we are left with no resources to limit or guard against the sadism that the suffering elicits.

Considering Bataille and von Trier together, then, illuminates not just the important features of their respective uses of violence, it highlights potential shortcomings in each of their projects. Von Trier in Breaking the Waves is attempting to portray suffering in a Bataillean manner, eliciting both sympathy and awareness of our cruelty, but his commitment to an overarching redemptive narrative undermines that aspect of his work by instrumentalizing the victim and giving her suffering a meaningful end. Like Jan, von Trier tells Bess what to do and then tells us what it means. Bataille wants the immediate encounter with suffering that can only be had without meaningful narratives, but his anti-instrumental requirements seem to leave us without any firm way to condemn the sadistic cruelty reflected in our fascination with violence. Von Trier and Bataille both teach us the importance of acknowledging our own vice. Bataille teaches us the importance of viewing suffering as an end in itself. And, in contrast, von Trier teaches us the message of the importance of viewing suffering in the context of a meaning-giving narrative. Both give us important resources for moral reflection, but neither alone seems to be able to answer decisively the questions they put before us.