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#### Settler colonilaism is driven by the logic of elimination – the primal drive to expansion that materializes native land dispossession, displacement, and genocide – it cannot be contingent – settler societies establish the structure of invasion through the will-to-possession and structural occupation of indigenous land

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If nineteenth-century American literary studies tends to focus on the ways Indians enter the narrative frame and the kinds of meanings and associa- tions they bear, recent attempts to theorize settler colonialism have sought to shift attention from its effects on Indigenous subjects to its implications for nonnative political attachments, forms of inhabitance, and modes of being, illuminating and tracking the pervasive operation of settlement as a system. In Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology, Patrick Wolfe argues, “Settler colonies were (are) premised on the elimination of native societies. The split tensing reflects a determinate feature of settler colonization. The colonizers come to stay—invasion is a structure not an event” (2).6 He suggests that a “logic of elimination” drives settler governance and sociality, describing “the settler-colonial will” as “a historical force that ultimately derives from the primal drive to expansion that is generally glossed as capitalism” (167), and in “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” he observes that “elimination is an organizing principle of settler-colonial society rather than a one-off (and superceded) occurrence” (388). Rather than being superseded after an initial moment/ period of conquest, colonization persists since “the logic of elimination marks a return whereby the native repressed continues to structure settler- colonial society” (390). In Aileen Moreton-Robinson’s work, whiteness functions as the central way of understanding the domination and displacement of Indigenous peoples by nonnatives.7 In “Writing Off Indigenous Sover- eignty,” she argues, “As a regime of power, patriarchal white sovereignty operates ideologically, materially and discursively to reproduce and main- tain its investment in the nation as a white possession” (88), and in “Writ- ing Off Treaties,” she suggests, “At an ontological level the structure of subjective possession occurs through the imposition of one’s will-to-be on the thing which is perceived to lack will, thus it is open to being possessed,” such that “possession . . . forms part of the ontological structure of white subjectivity” (83–84). For Jodi Byrd, the deployment of Indianness as a mobile figure works as the principal mode of U.S. settler colonialism. She observes that “colonization and racialization . . . have often been conflated,” in ways that “tend to be sited along the axis of inclusion/exclusion” and that “misdirect and cloud attention from the underlying structures of settler colonialism” (xxiii, xvii). She argues that settlement works through the translation of indigeneity as Indianness, casting place-based political collectivities as (racialized) populations subject to U.S. jurisdiction and manage- ment: “the Indian is left nowhere and everywhere within the ontological premises through which U.S. empire orients, imagines, and critiques itself ”; “ideas of Indians and Indianness have served as the ontological ground through which U.S. settler colonialism enacts itself ” (xix).

#### The globalization of settler colonialism relies on debt to complete its project---that converges symbiotically with militarism.

Kim 18 [Jodi Kim Social Text 135 • Vol. 36, No. 2 • June 2018 Settler Modernity, Debt Imperialism, and the Necropolitics of the Promise] mads

This essay offers an investigation of US settler colonialism and military empire, a conjunction theorized as settler modernity, in the post–World War II era. It argues that settler modernity is an ensemble of relations significantly structured and continually reproduced through manifold regimes, relations, and forms of debt, and in particular through debt imperialism. Debt imperialism, as the essay elaborates, is a kind of temporal exception. It is a multiscalar process through which the United States imposes imperial power by rolling over its significant national debt indefinitely and not conforming to the homogeneous time of repayment that it imposes on others. This linking of debt and imperialism, indeed the ability to leverage great indebtedness into a form of imperialism, demonstrates how debt can function in such manifold and counterintuitive ways because it is not simply a financial economy. It is also crucially a figurative economy or narrative structure. The debt relation thus indexes something much broader than the sum of money owed. Indeed, it is a broader social relation, production of subjectivity, sleight of hand, and creation of a temporal exception through which US settler modernity functions and continually attempts to re-create itself. In this varied relation, debt curiously emerges in two seemingly antonymous forms: as a form of imperialism, on the one hand, and as a form of freedom, emancipation, or liberation, on the other. I focus on Asia and the Pacific as a crucial site where we witness a violent and specifically militarized convergence of these arrangements in the post–World War II conjuncture, when the US settler state also becomes a military empire. Transpacific connections within Asia, the Pacific, and the United States, the making of multiple Asian and Pacific Islander diasporas, subimperial dynamics and desires among Asian and Pacific regions and nations, and decolonial aspirations among the peoples of colonized territories are all animated by what might be called a colonial and gendered racial transpacific debt relation and militarism. I ask, moreover, how debt functions as a necropolitical regime for those impoverished, gendered racial, and colonized nations and subjects whose promissory notes must be fully repaid with interest. How has US settler modernity been constituted by this usurious necropolitics of the promise, even as it continually confers upon itself the temporal **exception of debt** imperialism, or the right not to keep its promises or even to evade the very need to promise? This analysis reveals that what is at stake in US settler modernity is not only the elision of conquest and genocide as the conditions of possibility for military empire, economic power, and the avowed defense of liberal democracy but also the attempt to possess metapolitical authority. Metapolitical authority, as distinct from mere political authority, is the ability to define and prescribe the very content and scope of “law” and “politics.”1 In invoking Asia and the Pacific as a site, it is not my intent to flatten the vast and complex heterogeneities and hierarchies within it, nor is it my intent to reproduce limitations in the frameworks of American studies, Asian American studies, Asian Pacific American studies, and Asian studies that are not sufficiently attentive to work in Native Pacific and Indigenous studies. Rather, my intent and hope are to interrogate the very production of the Asia-Pacific by the United States as a site of strategic interest. This geopolitical and geohistorical production calls for a relational analysis of distinct yet related forms of colonial domination — settler colonialism and military empire in particular — rather than a focus on one form that tends to elide the other. The United States as the literal testing ground for biopolitical tactics and technologies that are geopolitically and militarily projected abroad has produced and continues to produce Native displacement and dispossession, and that geopolitical and military projection abroad in Asia and the Pacific in turn produces Asian and Indigenous Pacific Islander migration. Indeed, as Jodi A. Byrd asks, “Given all these difficulties, how might we place the arrivals of peoples through choice and by force into historical relationship with indigenous peoples and theorize those arrivals in ways that are legible but still attuned to the conditions of settler colonialism?”2 In theorizing, then, the nexus of US settler colonialism and military empire in Asia and the Pacific as settler modernity, I also amplify Alyosha Goldstein’s contention that focusing exclusively on imperialism and empire can risk obscuring how territorial seizure, occupation, and expansion, differential modes of governance, and their attendant justifications remain the conditions of possibility for more indirect forms of rule, the vast network of military encampments, and global economies.3 Moreover, this essay understands settler colonialism and military empire as an ensemble of relations that continually need to re-create and renovate themselves, for they are incomplete and unexhausted projects.4 Indeed, the continual violence generated by settler colonialism and military empire is a mark or index of their very incompletion, as are the solidarities, oppositions, and continued survivals of communities and peoples against whom (and often ostensibly on behalf of whom) such violence is waged. I build on Patrick Wolfe’s important conceptualization of settler colonialism as a “logic of elimination” whose dominant feature is the acquisition of land (via the elimination of the Indigenous population and its replacement with the settler population) rather than the surplus value derived from mixing native labor with land. As such, for Wolfe, settler colonialism is a structure and not an event.5 Yet, insofar as settler colonialism is not a fait accompli but, rather, a process that requires continual renewal and renovation, I comprehend it as both a structure and an event. I link it, moreover, to military empire, observing how the United States is at once a settler state and an imperial power whose militarist logics condense in a particularly heightened form specifically in Asia and the Pacific. Yet still, as Iyko Day and others have importantly argued, we need to go beyond a binary theory of settler colonialism structured around a settler-Indigenous dialectic. Day maps out “the triangulation of Native, alien, and settler positions” in North America with an attentiveness to how divergent conditions of both forced and voluntary migration are significant features of US settler colonialism.6

#### China threat construction is Western liberal paternalism that seeks to pin China as a neocolonial threat while maintaining the legacy of Western colonization by ignoring Western roles in foreign domination of territory and reinforcing Western dependence as the only option

Davis et al. 21 [Adam Grydehøj, Michael Lujan Bevacqua, Megumi Chibana, Yaso Nadarajah, Aká Simonsen, Ping Su, Renee Wright, Sasha Davis, Practicing decolonial political geography: Island perspectives on neocolonialism and the China threat discourse, Political Geography, Volume 85, 2021, 102330, ISSN 0962-6298, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2020.102330>.] mads

When China is discussed in relation to colonised islands, it is often as a monolithic state entity, with little or no distinction between individuals, private companies, state-owned enterprises, universities, and central and local government bodies. Furthermore, island perspectives on China tend to focus on triangular (Guåhan-USA-China or JamaicaUSA-China) or four-sided (Kalaallit Nunaat-USA-Denmark-China or Okinawa-USA-Japan-China) power relationships, with little reference to other colonised peoples and territories. Despite the bonds of transnational Indigenous activism, regional cultural and business bodies, regional governance institutions, etc., islanders largely remain within colonially structured understandings of their islands’ places in the world. Some islanders believe the USA is acting oppressively, but we find little evidence of islanders seeking to use the expansion of Chinese economic activity to challenge the USA. In Kalaallit Nunaat, however, engagement with China and the USA is seen as a means of challenging the coloniser, Denmark (Kwong & Wong, 2020). Colonised societies may be open to wielding whatever decolonial tools are at their disposal, even when this means navigating conflicting sources of and responses to colonial power (Harrison & Popke, 2018). The existential nature of the purported China threat—with its military conflict, violently extractive environmental devastation, and population replacement—is used to justify neocolonial entrenchment by the coloniser or metropolitan power. Traditional methods of maintaining influence in and reaping benefits from former colonies are coming under increasing critical scrutiny. As colonisers struggle to portray tied aid, immigration schemes, and modernisation programmes as purely beneficent, the China threat discourse presents an opening for continued privileged influence. Metropolitan essentialisations of Indigenous peoples as part of nature and thus as fundamentally irrational and nonmodern (Chandler & Reid, 2019) furthermore preclude Indigenous peoples from making their own decisions on matters within the realm of rationality and modernity, thereby justifying Western paternalistic policymaking. Optimistically, we may speak of places such as Niue, Barbados, the Maldives, and the Solomon Islands being able to weigh the options and choose the partners that best suit their strategic needs. Often though, this means using the China threat that has been deployed by the coloniser to extract further economic support from the coloniser, which may be what the coloniser wanted all along. Although the acquisition of funds to pay for islander priorities is positive, it remains in the interests of the colonial or metropolitan state to use such funds to maintain influence. For example, Kalaallit Nunaat certainly benefits from having Danish investment in its airports, but Denmark uses this investment to reinforce the idea that Kalaallit Nunaat cannot survive without Danish support. The Danish and USA governments are actively driving away potential Chinese investors and business partners and then offering to fill the subsequent funding gaps. This follows a wider pattern of Western and metropolitan governments simultaneously 1) affirming islanders’ rights to make their own decisions, 2) presenting island-metropole economic linkages as indicative of the former’s negative dependence on the latter, and 3) working to prevent islands from forming alternative or parallel dependencies (Grydehøj, 2020b). Western warnings that China engages in ‘debt trap diplomacy’ and that Chinese loans, grants, and investment should be avoided at all costs thus seem self-serving. For many islands, the choice may be between making deals with Chinese actors or making even worse deals with other actors. Jamaica’s indebtedness, for example, long predates its receipt of Chinese aid and investment, with the island state being placed under heavy financial and political obligations to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in particular. In fact, funds derived from Chinese investments in Jamaica have been crucial to repaying Jamaica’s IMF debt (Johnston, 2015). Across Oceania, openness toward engagement with China has partly been in response to the impacts of Western aid contingent upon neoliberal structural reforms and other burdens (Rodd, 2020; Szadziewski, 2020). Guåhan receives an increasing number of Chinese tourists, but the territory’s fortification and militarisation have been so thorough as to raise the question of what would become of the island without a Chinese or other existential threat. Alternative futures are difficult to envision when one’s whole island has been conceptualised as an “unsinkable aircraft carrier” (Perez Santos, 2019). Island dependence becomes self-reinforcing. One advantage to economic engagement with China is precisely that, although strings may be attached, these strings are not colonial. The governments and peoples of Guåhan, Kalaallit Nunaat, Okinawa, and Jamaica struggle with dependence on economic actors that gain and maintain leverage by insisting on the necessity of following Western or metropolitan practices and relying on Western or metropolitan expertise. Islands should always exercise caution when engaging with powerful external economic actors. However, Chinese corporate focus on profit and state focus on expanding trade and exercising soft power may be a relief for island societies with long histories of outsiders coming in, destroying Indigenous cultures and/or populations, devastating ecosystems, extracting resources for the benefit of the metropole (frequently through enslaved or coerced labour), and then blaming islanders for failing to more closely resemble their colonisers. Chinese business engagement (whether with positive or negative effects on island communities) simply lacks this emotional baggage in most parts of the world. One author of this paper has herself experienced this paternalism in Kalaallit Nunaat, where the Danish system and thought processes are presented as the only proper way of doing things: failure at adapting to these systems is regarded as ineptitude, while desire to try other methods is regarded as a wholesale rejection of Danish people, culture, and influence. In this context, warnings emanating from Denmark regarding both China and the USA and the purported incompatibility of their cultural and political systems with Kalaallit Nunaat reinforce the idea that Inuit are incapable of making their own reasoned decisions. Across our island narratives, it is warned that increased Chinese tourism and the entrance of Chinese business ventures risk overrunning, overwhelming, or outcompeting island populations. The spectre of Chinese political and economic domination looms large in the discourse of Western and metropolitan political actors. Yet for many colonised islanders, colonisation and domination by a foreign people is already a fact of life. The epistemic privilege through which the West takes for granted its own centrality has contributed to island engagement with China being conceptualised as a form of neocolonialism in the absence of prior colonialism. A concept that arose in the context of subaltern revolt against Western domination has been repurposed into a Western tool for buttressing its privilege—a privilege that is largely invisible to the West itself but is omnipresent in the eyes of the colonised.

#### Cyberspace has become a site of territory whereby settler colonialism and surveillance capitalism attempt to replace identity with automation – cementing settler colonial power

Veracini 20 – Department of Social Science, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia [Lorenzo Veracini, Endogeneity and place-based identifications in the age of precarity and surveillance capitalism, Postcolonial Studies, DOI: 10.1080/13688790.2020.1745994] ku - mads

Neither workers nor consumers The new capitalist dispensation is premised on the coming and already partially implemented ‘internet of things’. While Olivetti was first to autonomously develop a commercial programmable desktop computer, and while Indigenous place-based resistance is also strategically located online, distinguished technology scholar Shoshana Zuboff defines the new dispensation as ‘surveillance capitalism’. 56 For endogenous collectives under attack, appraising the spatial implications of surveillance capitalism should be a priority. In her recent book, Zuboff points out that this new form of capitalism unilaterally claims human experience as free raw material for translation into behavioural data. Although some of these data are applied to service improvement, the rest are declared as a proprietary behavioural surplus, fed into advanced manufacturing processes known as ‘machine intelligence’, and fabricated into prediction products that anticipate what you will do now, soon, and later. Finally, these prediction products are traded in a new kind of marketplace that I call behavioural futures markets. Surveillance capitalists have grown immensely wealthy from these trading operations, for many companies are willing to lay bets on our future behavior.57 One of Zuboff’s insights is that this development replicates the dynamic of colonial conquest. Appropriation can happen with or without permission (in the context of this metaphor, there can be a ‘treaty’ ceding possession or not), but appropriation is equally premised on what could be understood as data nullius. 58 Not only data is appropriated in ways that resemble the appropriation of land that was deemed terra nullius, the development of this new capitalist formation is happening in a ‘lawless territory’, which is a good definition of what a frontier is.59 Pursuing this analogy, in a recent interview for The Guardian, Zuboff expands on the notion of ‘digital natives’, a ‘tragically ironic’ expression: I am fascinated by the structure of colonial conquest, especially the first Spaniards who stumbled into the Caribbean islands. Historians call it the ‘conquest pattern’, which unfolds in three phases: legalistic measures to provide the invasion with a gloss of justification, a declaration of territorial claims, and the founding of a town to legitimate the declaration. Back then Columbus simply declared the islands as the territory of the Spanish monarchy and the pope. The sailors could not have imagined that they were writing the first draft of a pattern that would echo across space and time to a digital 21st century. The first surveillance capitalists also conquered by declaration. They simply declared our private experience to be theirs for the taking, for translation into data for their private ownership and their proprietary knowledge. They relied on misdirection and rhetorical camouflage, with secret declarations that we could neither understand nor contest.60 The ‘conquest pattern’ proceeds by way of unilateral declarations and subsequent appropriations: Google began by unilaterally declaring that the world wide web was its to take for its search engine. Surveillance capitalism originated in a second declaration that claimed our private experience for its revenues that flow from telling and selling our fortunes to other businesses. In both cases, it took without asking. [Google co-founder Larry] Page foresaw that surplus operations would move beyond the online milieu to the real world, where data on human experience would be free for the taking. As it turns out his vision perfectly reflected the history of capitalism, marked by taking things that live outside the market sphere and declaring their new life as market commodities. We were caught off guard by surveillance capitalism because there was no way that we could have imagined its action, any more than the early peoples of the Caribbean could have foreseen the rivers of blood that would flow from their hospitality toward the sailors who appeared out of thin air waving the banner of the Spanish monarchs. Like the Caribbean people, we faced something truly unprecedented.61 Zuboff refers to colonial ‘conquest’ and patterns, but relies on another analogy as well. Our collective interaction with information technology, she observes, produces ‘territories’. These territories are ours before they can be appropriated by surveillance capitalism, even if we do not know they are (Indigenous people were similarly asked by appropriating colonisers to relinquish ownership claims to land they belonged to, a proposition they inevitably found perplexing). Just like terra nullius was never nobody’s (it was always terra alicuius – somebody’s land), and resulted from careful Indigenous management, data is never nobody’s. The digital natives are an endogenous lot online and in their territories; the surveillance capitalists emanate from outside these territories. Zuboff has explored for decades the ‘new knowledge territories’, their consolidation, and their successive appropriation (unlike the explorers of the ‘new’ lands of the past, however, she is warning against their appropriation): In my early fieldwork in the computerising offices and factories of the late 1970s and 80s, I discovered the duality of information technology: its capacity to automate but also to ‘informate’, which I use to mean to translate things, processes, behaviours, and so forth into information. This duality set information technology apart from earlier generations of technology: information technology produces new knowledge territories by virtue of its informating capability, always turning the world into information. The result is that these new knowledge territories become the subject of political conflict.62 ‘Territory’ here is crucial, because it is the territory of the digital natives we are talking about – territory that cannot exist without them, and because it is their activity, their very existence, that constitutes it in the first place. Zuboff continues: Larry Page grasped that human experience could be Google’s virgin wood, that it could be extracted at no extra cost online and at very low cost out in the real world. For today’s owners of surveillance capital the experiential realities of bodies, thoughts and feelings are as virgin and blameless as nature’s once-plentiful meadows, rivers, oceans and forests before they fell to the market dynamic. We have no formal control over these processes because we are not essential to the new market action. Instead we are exiles from our own behaviour, denied access to or control over knowledge derived from its dispossession by others for others. Knowledge, authority and power rest with surveillance capital, for which we are merely ‘human natural resources’. We are the native peoples now whose claims to self-determination have vanished from the maps of our own experience.63 ‘Vanished’ is a crucial term here: vanishing, after all, is what natives, the ‘evanescent races’ of the nineteenth century, are supposed to do under settler colonialism. But Zuboff’s analogy may be pushed further: the conquest pattern she highlights resembles specifically the dynamics of settler-colonial conquest (on the contrary, Zuboff refers to the Spanish Adelantados and their Requerimiento, a declaration of dominion that was inherently incomprehensible to the Indigenous peoples it was read to by ruthless conquistadores). Traditional colonialism, after all, needed the natives and their land; settler colonialism only needed the territories of Indigenous peoples, the Indigenous peoples were disposable. Indeed, the ‘evolution did not stop there’, Zuboff continues. The surveillance capitalists understood that the most predictive behavioural data comes from what I call ‘economies of action’, as systems are designed to intervene in the state of play and actually modify behaviour, shaping it toward desired commercial outcomes. We saw the experimental development of this new ‘means of behavioural modification’ in Facebook’s contagion experiments and the Google-incubated augmented reality game Pokémon Go. It is no longer enough to automate information flows about us; the goal now is to automate us. These processes are meticulously designed to produce ignorance by circumventing individual awareness and thus eliminate any possibility of self-determination.64 Under surveillance capitalism, like under settler colonialism, the logic of exploitation turns into something else, and the digital natives are now progressively being subjected to a logic of elimination. The ‘territory’ we collectively constitute is appropriated, we do not know about it, and exchange it for very little in a transaction that is what Zuboff refers to as an ‘uncontract’, like Manhattan supposedly was, for 24 dollars-worth of trinkets.65 The territories of Indigenous peoples facing settler colonialism were also constituted by them: the settlers would or could not see that the territories they were appropriating were actually carefully managed by Indigenous stewardship and valuable as a result. ‘We are the sources of surveillance’s capitalism’s crucial surplus: the objects of a technologically advanced and increasingly inescapable raw-material-extraction operation’, Zuboff remarks.66 Likewise, the territories of Indigenous collectives were also the object of a technologically advanced and progressively more and more inescapable mode of domination: settler colonialism.67 It is a denial of self-determination that is also a denial of the constitutive ability to organise and inhabit ‘territory’ – what defined us as digital natives in the first place. After dispossession, we are no longer needed – the aim is to ‘automate us’. 68 Uber, for example, relies on its uber-exploited drivers but aims to make them disposable, in competition with Google, through self-driving cars robo-cars. But elimination is manifested in many ways beyond the disposability of precarious workers, and Zuboff concludes that ‘this decade-and-a-half trajectory has taken us from automating information flows about you to automating you’. 69 In the longer term, the data arising from users subject to behaviour modification is irrelevant, and surveillance capitalism is not interested in the reproduction of digital natives (indeed, the surveillance capitalists have lately focused on natives’ need to sleep, an eminently reproductive activity, and Netflix chief executive Reed Hastings is on record saying that his company is ‘competing with sleep’).70 Zuboff concludes that surveillance capitalism and its ‘mechanisms of extraction, commodification, and control’, effectively ‘exile persons from their own behavior’, a form of elimination.71 This ‘exile’ is something that the Indigenous survivors of settler colonialism globally would immediately recognise and a type of super-alienation that would have horrified Adriano Olivetti. Behaviour modification is in many ways the end of self, who becomes an automaton, but also the end of community (Zuboff, however, focuses on the ‘death of individuality’ implied by surveillance capitalism).72 For her, the surveillance capitalists express a type of ‘radical indifference’ – they do not aim to convince; they are content with modified behaviour.73 Radical indifference, a mode Zuboff powerfully outlines, is ultimately a nonrelation, the nonrelationship that followed Google’s late 2000 annulment of the ‘reciprocal relationship that between Google and its users’. 74 Predicated on a logic of elimination, settler colonialism as a mode of domination also aims to ultimately constitute a nonrelation.

#### The alternative is a pedagogy of the land that reverses the settler tactic of deterritorialization as a direct hit to the exoskeleton of colonial power. Scholarship guides settler violence – each disruption destroys the fulcrum that upholds settler society.

Ballantyne 14 – Dechinta Bush U, Dechinta Bush University: Mobilizing a knowledge economy of reciprocity, resurgence and decolonization [Erin Freeland; *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* Vol. 3, No. 3; 2014; pg 67-85] mp \*pronoun change denoted by brackets

\*non-indigenous educational focus on territory was for the purpose of training people for industry

As the conversation of Dechinta grew, the ugly politics of education on a broad political scale quickly surfaced. It became clear that education is a domain of power and privilege that is fiercely protected. Questions relating to control over its content, production and process were, apparently, not open for discussion. Curricula were deeply homogenized, deterritorialized and standardized. Post-secondary in the territory was overtly geared toward training people for industry and the endless promise of mining, pipeline and oil and gas booms (and busts). People were either emphatically supportive of the notion of ‘Elders as professors’ being recognized as equals and collaborating with university professors, or incensed by its disruption of typical academic power. The creation of Dechinta was polarizing, and reactions were telling of the deeply embedded sense of entitlement and power that the state, and existing institutions, had over determining what did and did not count as ‘education’. Rather than support spaces where academic and Indigenous knowledge would overlap, Indigenous knowledge was viewed as curriculum that should be relegated to ‘culture camps’. That processes like hunting and moose-hide tanning could draw parallels, or even inform governance, consensus building and self-determination, continue to elude most mainstream reporters, critics and institutions. Coming back to the land is a battle. ‘Education’ on the land is a direct hit to the exoskeleton of continued colonial power. By specifically disrupting education as a domain of settler colonial control to be deconstructed and re-imagined, Dechinta has challenged the most comprehensive, yet skilfully cloaked machine of settler colonial capitalism - the prescriptive education process, which produces more settler colonial bodies, thinkers, and believers. Building strong relationships of reciprocity with the land results in the crumbling of settler capitalism because it fundamentally shifts the relationships people experience and what they believe about who they [people] are, how they are in relation to and with land, and what they believe to be true. Being together on the land, learning with the land, and having a strong relationship with the land is antithetical to settler capitalism itself. The power of settler colonization relies on the total deterritorialization of people’s relationship with land. Deleuze and Guattari’s (1972) work on deterritorialization, ‘the process whereby colonization leads not just to the loss of territory but also to the destruction of the ontological conditions of the colonized culture’s territoriality,’ is a fitting philosophical conjecture to Dene expressions of how they are dislocated from their relationships with land due to process of nation-building and capitalism, and how this deterritorialization separates people from practices with the land that keeps them healthy, even if they still live on the land (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 192; Hipwell, 2004, p. 304). As Said (1993) has stated: land, in the final instance, is what empire is about. In this way, our relationships with land are central to the great unsettling. Reconnection, and the exchange of skills, knowledge and practice with land, thus directly threaten the settler colonial project. It removes bodies from the forces designed to encode the body as capital. The foremost space of enclosure, of encoding, is the ‘school’. The ongoing trend in Indigenous and Northern settler education since its earliest colonial intrusion has been to train Indigenous bodies to serve the needs of industry. Education has happened in Denendeh since time immemorial. It has been the settler prerogative to dismantle Indigenous ways of knowing and being, of education. Returning learning to an intergenerational exchange, on the land - which has at its very core the fundamental teachings that, if we take care of the land, the land takes care of us - will shake the foundation of settler colonization by breaking the dependency that has been created on capitalism through deterritorialization. Transformational learning supports intergenerational learners and teachers to think critically and re-imagine what the purpose of learning is. Learning on the land is healing and being in community on the land is challenging, pulling our attention to the hard work of decolonization. The year after our initial gathering, Dechinta launched a pilot semester with three courses nested within an interdisciplinary approach. Student evaluations of the program indicated it was profoundly ‘transformative’, and was for some the first ‘safe space’ of education that they had encountered (Luig et al, 2011). Interdisciplinary and collaborative, the pilot set the stage for the following four years. Dechinta now has 8 original courses, and a two semester-long program growing into a full degree that operates from -50 winters to the steamy height of summer. The challenges have been substantial. Conflict between academics and Indigenous students have made real the tensions of working on decolonization in concert, even with those who identify, or who are identified as allies. Solving conflict and difficulties through shared governance circles, while combating ingrained reactions of lateral violence and other social expressions codified in settler colonization are truly challenging, but deeply rewarding. Through the building of relationships we have a growing cohort of faculty dedicated to not just teaching but sharing in the creation of safe spaces, where the hard mental work of decolonizing in theory is met with the even harder work of decolonizing as practice. When students and faculty create a community where their relationships are ordered through their relationships with land, the work of decolonization move from a discussion in theory to practice of being and becoming a source of decolonial power. At Dechinta we debate this, and experiment with its meaning in tangible ways. Here, skills categorized as ‘subsistence’ or ‘arts and crafts’ are fundamental in forming and understanding theory. Such practices are themselves theory in action.

#### Place-based resistance informed by critical consciousness and pedagogy actively work to reconstruct geographical spaces through interconnectivity

Davis 17 [Sasha Davis (2017): Sharing the struggle: constructing transnational solidarity in global social movements, Space and Polity, DOI: 10.1080/13562576.2017.1324255] mads

The new base on Jeju Island is but one base in the often-shifting military alignment of the United States and its allies. While the new base in Jeju is relatively small, other islands in the Asia-Pacific region like Okinawa, Guåhan, O’ahu (Hawai’i), as well as sites on the mainlands of South Korea and Japan host US ‘Main Operating Bases’ which contain large and permanent concentrations of US military units. Despite continued US military interventions in the Middle East and Central Asia – and the unsettled relations between the US and Russia over the Ukraine – the Obama administration maintained a doctrine known as the ‘Pivot-to-Asia’ which involved the repositioning of US military force toward the periphery of East Asia to face a resurgent China (Clinton, 2011; Davis, 2015; Kajihiro, 2013). This has resulted in the construction of new bases (such as on Jeju and in Henoko, Okinawa), the expansion of existing bases on Guåhan and O’ahu, as well as more US use of Australian, Philippine and Singaporean bases (see regional map in Figure 3). Due to political concerns, and the negative consequences of living day-to-day next to bases, these new military arrangements have sparked protests at sites across the region (Davis, 2015; Kirk, 2008; Lutz, 2009; McCormack & Norimatsu, 2012; Natividad & Kirk, 2010; Shigematsu & Camacho, 2010). These military bases are ostensibly constructed to provide ‘national security’ for the US and their allies as well as for supply-chain security for the movement of trade throughout the Asia-Pacific region (Cowen, 2014). They are, however, also sites of practices that undermine the everyday feelings of security in the communities that host them (Ireland, 2010; Kirk, 2008; Lutz, 2006, 2009; McCaffrey, 2002; Vine, 2009; Warf, 1997). As scholars of feminist geopolitics and critical security studies have pointed out, military bases promote a ‘security’ that appeals to so-called ‘realist’ military and state-centric conceptualizations of security, while undermining the daily security of bodies that must endure the violences these bases project into distant warzones as well as release locally in the form of environmental contamination, noise, violations of local sovereignties and increased incidence of sexual assaults (Booth, 2005; Brown & Staeheli, 2003; Dowler & Sharp, 2001; Enloe, 2007; Jones & Sage, 2010). More personcentric views of security have informed social movements that reject the imposition of bases within communities on two fronts: as violent instruments of war and power projection, as well as institutions that locally create contamination, raise risk of sexual assault, and commandeer land that could be used for development, recreation, housing or other purposes. It would therefore be inaccurate to portray these social movements near bases as either movements with local grievances (environmental, sovereignty, sexual violence) reaching out for external solidarity, or as local manifestations of reactions against global grievances (war, imperialism). These movements are simultaneously both (Loyd, 2012). There are two important points that follow from this. The first is that it demonstrates the utility of using geographic approaches which characterize social movements as ‘translocal assemblages’ which recognize the simultaneity of place-based protests and the spatially stretched networks and circulations of people, ideas and resources in which they are embedded (McFarlane, 2009). Furthermore, this approach is useful because it also recognizes the discursive-material nature of these translocal activist connections (Baird, 2015; Davies, 2012; Legg, 2009; McFarlane, 2009). The second point, discussed below, is that this ontological view of the inseparability of the global and local, as well as the inseparability of the material and discursive, supports the epistemological position that people in these far-flung places ought to develop a shared critical consciousness (conscientização). Put more simply, the fact that researchers and activists consider the global and local as intrinsically tied together means that oppression is produced at all scales, and therefore activists must simultaneously organize across space as well as in place. Before getting to this important second point, however, it is first worth expanding the discussion here on the geographic approach of examining social movements as translocal assemblages. Trans-national social movements have long been portrayed as networks of individuals and civil society organizations, but more recent scholarship stresses that social movements can productively be analyzed using the logic of assemblages as theorized by Gilles Deleuze (Baird, 2015; Davies, 2012; Legg, 2009; McFarlane, 2009). While the distinction between a network and an assemblage may appear to be a fine point, there are important implications for how scholars and activists understand these movements and their potential. The first insight of the assemblage approach is that rather than looking at the connections between activists or places as mere conduits between active ‘nodes,’ viewing social movements as assemblages stresses that the ‘nodes’ (activists, places, and the movements themselves) are constructed relationally through the performance of their translocal dialogues, relations and actions. It is not a question of how movements ‘scale-up’ (or down) to accomplish goals. Rather, as McFarlane emphasizes, these movements are, in an essential way, already translocal and are constructed from spatially stretched inter-relationships from their beginnings (2009). This view is supported by one Hawai’i activist who said of organizing within Hawai’i, ‘We need to learn about each other’s struggles and be transnational and transcultural within place.’ (personal communication, 2014, emphasis added). As several scholars have pointed out, it is not so much that solidarities and transnational movements for decolonization, peace and justice are constructed by merely connecting separated individuals that already hold similar values, but rather that solidarity actively emerges from translocal performances of care and shared experience (Brown & Yaffe, 2014; Featherstone, 2012). In this way, the interview respondents in this study support the findings in the academic literature that emphasize that ‘collective identity’ in social movements is not something which is pre-exiting between communities in similar circumstances. Instead, collective identity, critical consciousness, and solidarity are the outcomes of interaction (Davis, 2017; Fominaya, 2010; Melucci, 1995; Routledge, 1996). Another key insight of the assemblage approach to social movements is that the connections between activists are theorized to be not merely ideational, but material, emotional and visceral as well (Bosco, 2007; Hayes-Conroy & Hayes-Conroy, 2013; Hayes-Conroy & Martin, 2010). As can be gleaned from the above discussion of protests on Jeju Island, the activism there is not just about dialogue and ideas. It is an intensely physical, emotional and spiritual experience. The one hundred prostrations in the morning, the performance of the Catholic mass while being carried off by police, the dancing in the streets, the eating together afterwards: these are not just the results of solidarity, the solidarity arises through these bodily performances. This is something that organizers are very aware of and that they attempt to promote. As is more fully discussed in the following section, several activists articulated that translocal social movements are built (as a discursive-material assemblage) through these shared experiences that are at once informational, emotional and visceral. This brings the discussion to the other important aspect of the ‘translocal assemblage’ approach: namely that the ontological view of a translocally-connected world promotes an associated epistemic and pedagogical approach to the conduct of the activism itself. The contention that the world is ontologically ‘assemblage-like’ encourages activist approaches that focus on the transnational connections and circulations of these movements. Activist attempts to cultivate a Freirean critical consciousness of shared oppression arise out of the ontological position that processes of both oppression and liberation are simultaneously and inseparably operating at local and global scales. In other words, activists drawing on the principles of assemblage theory (sometimes quite explicitly referencing the academic work on these perspectives) hold that whether people are in South Korea, Okinawa or the US, they are all enmeshed and entangled in pervasive shared processes of oppression. Furthermore, this view encourages activists to not just emphasize the larger socio-political contexts of local grievances to bring about critical consciousness, but also to direct their organizing on proactively and explicitly changing those larger contexts that affect local grievances. A good example of these tendencies can be seen in the activities of the ‘Inter-Island Solidarity for Peace’ group that formed in 2014 with members from Jeju, Okinawa and Taiwan. The objectives of the group extend beyond blocking the construction of specific military projects in the region to the promotion of other modalities of security in Asia and the Pacific. The group’s vision is that the most effective long-term strategy to contest the construction of bases in the region is to promote the development of a different system of international relations in East Asia. While the group focuses on supporting opponents of militarization on the three islands, it also has a broader aim of cultivating more transnational connections and creating more peaceful relationships between the islands on the edge of East Asia. The ‘Inter-Island Solidarity for Peace’ group optimistically and explicitly articulates the principle that non-state actors on small islands, when linked in solidarity, can create ‘another kind of geography’ for the whole region. At the group’s second annual ‘Peace for the Sea’ camp in 2015 in Okinawa (the first was in Jeju in 2014, the third in Taiwan in 2016) they issued the following communiqué that demonstrates their view of the recent US shift of more military resources to the area, but also addresses their vision for more peaceful geographies in the region based on the construction of a different kind of social assemblage: We fully understand that this shift [the US military pivot-to-Asia] will not bring about greater human security but will instead yield the conditions for a far greater risk of war and tremendous environmental destruction. We further recognize that these changes have been fueled by the global weapons industry, which reaps enormous profits from increased military tension and conflict, while ordinary people and the wider ecosystem suffer the inevitable consequences. We cannot leave this work to political leaders and governments, which largely answer to corporate interests and the military-industrial complex. We challenge the prevailing assumptions behind the current configuration of geopolitics that takes for granted the precedence of nation-states, military interests, and capitalist accumulation. We will instead create another kind of geography. Through our Peace for the Sea Camp and similar projects, we are already creating alternative political communities based on a sustainable economy, the ethics of coexistence, and our shared responsibility to preserve peace. (quoted in Paik, 2015) While this communiqué describes the vision the activists on these islands have for more peaceful geographies in the region, in the following sections this article will delve more deeply into how these activist groups attempt to construct regional and global relationships of solidarity to accomplish these goals. By examining the spatiality of contemporary social movements, such as the ones seen in Jeju and Okinawa, I contend that both researchers and activists can gain a better understanding of how solidarity is constructed and performed both in place and across space.

## 1NC – Case

### 1NC – Util

#### Util is a false form of white neutrality that posits them as the hero of modernity which actively effaces the structural violence of settlement and racial slavery.

Mitchell and Chaudhury 20 – Basille School of International Affairs; York Universite – Keele Campus [Mitchell, A. and Chaudhury, A., 2020. Worlding beyond ‘the’ ‘end’ of ‘the world’: white apocalyptic visions and BIPOC futurisms. International Relations, 34(3), pp.309-332.] mads

Discourses that predict the imminent ‘end of the world’ are not as universal as they often claim to be. The futures they fear for, seek to protect and work to construct are rooted in a particular set of global social structures and subjectivities: whiteness. Whiteness is not reducible to skin pigmentation, genetics or genealogy. It is a set of cultural, political, economic, normative, and subjective structures derived from Eurocentric societies and propagated through global formations such as colonization and capitalism. These multi-scalar structures work by segregating bodies through the inscription of racial difference, privileging those they recognize or construct as ‘white’4 and unequally distributing harms to those that they do not.5 Whiteness is also a form of property6 that accrues benefits – including material, physical, and other forms of security – and pervasive forms of power, across space, time, and social structures. Due in part to its trans-formation through long-duration, global patterns of violence and conquest, whiteness takes unique forms wherever and whenever it coalesces, so it should not be treated as universal – despite its own internal claims to this status. Most of the leading contributors to mainstream ‘end of the world’ discourses discussed in this article are rooted in Euro-American cultural contexts, and in particular in settler colonial and/or imperial states such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom. As such, the forms of whiteness they embody are linked to particular histories of settlement, frontier cultures, resource-based imperialisms, genocides of Indigenous communities, histories of slavery, and modes of anti-Blackness. Whiteness is remarkable in its ability to render itself invisible to those who possess and benefit from it. Many, if not most, of the (often liberal humanitarian) authors of ‘end of the world’ discourses seem unaware of its integral influence on their thinking, and would almost certainly be horrified at the thought of their work entrenching racialized injustices. We are not suggesting that these authors espouse explicit, intentional and/or extreme racist ideals, on which much public discussion by white people of racism tends to focus.7 Nor do we wish to homogenize or present as equivalent all of the viewpoints discussed in this paper, which display a range of expressions of whiteness and levels of awareness thereof.8 On the contrary, we work to center broad, everyday, structural ways in which underlying logics of whiteness and white supremacy frame and permeate mainstream paradigms and discourses, including those identified as liberal, humanitarian, or progressive. Even amongst white people who consciously and explicitly disavow racism, unconscious, habitual, normalized, structurally-embedded assumptions circulate, and are reproduced in ways that perpetuate race9 as a global power structure. This includes one of the authors of this paper (Mitchell), who, as a white settler,10 continues to benefit from and participate – and thus ‘invest’11 – in structures of whiteness, and therefore has a continual responsibility to confront them (although total divestment is not possible).12 The ‘habits’ of racism13 are reflected strongly in the way that contemporary ‘end of the world’ narratives frame their protagonists: those attributed with meaningful agency and ethical status in the face of global threats; those whose survival or flourishing is prioritized or treated as a bottom line when tradeoffs are imagined and planned; and, crucially, those deemed capable of and entitled to ‘save the world’ and determine its future. This is expressed in several key features of the genre, including its domination by white thinkers; the forms of subjectivity and agency it embraces; and the ways it contrasts its subjects against BIPOC communities. First, contributors to fast-growing fields like the study of ‘existential risk’ or ‘global catastrophic risk’ are overwhelmingly white. As we will see, almost all of the authors identified by the literature review on which this paper is based, and certainly the most influential thinkers in the field, are white. For example, the seminal collection Global Existential Risk, 14 which claims to offer a comprehensive snapshot of this field, is edited by two white male Europeans (Nick Bostrom and Milan Circovic) and authored by an almost entirely white (and all-male) group of scholars. Likewise, the most senior positions within influential think tanks promoting the study of ‘existential risk’, such as the Future of Humanity Institute, the Cambridge Center for the Study of Existential Risk and Humanprogress.org, are dominated by white men, with few exceptions.15 Another expression of this tendency toward epistemic whiteness is found in the habit, prominent amongst white academics, of citing all or mostly-white scholars, which entrenches a politics of citation16 that privileges whiteness and acknowledges only some intersectionalities as relevant.17 As mentioned above, Mitchell’s (2017)18 work offers an example of this tendency: while it engages critical, feminist, and queer postapocalyptic visions written by white authors, it does not center BIPOC perspectives or knowledge systems. These examples do not simply raise issues of numerical representation, nor can whiteness necessarily be dismantled simply by altering these ratios. More importantly, all-white or majority white spaces create epistemes in which most contributors share cultural backgrounds, assumptions, and biases that are rarely challenged by alternative worldviews, knowledge systems or registers of experience. In such epistemes the perceived boundaries of ‘human thought’ are often elided with those of Euro-centric knowledge. For example, influential American settler journalist David Wallace-Wells19 contends that there exists no framework for grasping climate change besides ‘mythology and theology’. In so doing, he ignores centuries of ongoing, systematic observation and explicit articulations of concern by BIPOC knowledge keepers about climactic change. The bracketing of BIPOC knowledges not only severely limits the rigor of discourses on global crises, but also, as bi-racial organizer and thinker adrienne maree brown20 argues, it produces distorted outcomes. For instance, it smuggles normative judgments that ‘turn Brown bombers into terrorists and white bombers into mentally ill victims’ into apparently ‘objective’ claims. Similarly, the influential work of Black American criminologist Ruth Wilson Gilmore21 demonstrates how white imaginaries of the threat posed by BIPOC bodies has produced the massive global penal complex and the radically unequal distribution of life chances. In short, imaginaries create worlds, so it matters greatly whose are privileged, and whose are excluded. Further, emerging narratives of the ‘end of the world’ explicitly center figures of whiteness as their protagonists – as the survivors of apocalypse, the subjects capable of saving the world from it, and as those most threatened. In these discourses, ‘survivors’ are framed as saviors able to protect and/or regenerate and even improve Western forms of governance and social order by leveraging resilience, scientific prowess, and technological genius. For example, the cover of American settler scientists Tony Barnosky and Elizabeth Hadley’s book Tipping Points for Planet Earth features a stylized male ‘human’ whom they identify as former California governor Jerry Brown (a powerful white settler politician) holding the earth back from rolling over a cliff.22 Similarly, presenting a thought experiment about the planet’s future, Homer-Dixon23 asks his readers to imagine ‘an average male – call him John’ (in fact, the most popular male name globally at the time of writing was Mohammed). This is followed by images of a Caucasian male dressed in safari or hiking gear – both emblematic of symbols colonial conquest24 – tasked with choosing from two forks on a path, as imagined by white American poet Robert Frost. This image of rugged masculine whiteness, embodied in physical strength, colonial prowess, and the ability to dominate difficult landscapes is mirrored in his framing of his former co-workers on oil rigs in the Canadian prairies25 as models of resilience. Similarly, American settler science writer Annalee Newitz26 proposes the Canadian province of Saskatchewan as a ‘model for human survival’, based on her perceptions of the resilience, persistence and collaborative frontier attitudes of its people. Saskatchewan is a notoriously racist part of Canada, in which violence against Indigenous people continues to be integral to its white-dominated culture27 – yet this polity and its culture are held up by Newitz as a model of ‘human’ resilience. By imagining subjects in whom whiteness is elided with resilience and survival, these discourses not only normalize and obscure the modes of violence and oppression through which perceived ‘resilience’ – or, in blunt terms, preferential access to survival – is achieved. They also work to displace the threat of total destruction ‘onto others who are seen as lacking the resourcefulness of the survivor’.28

### 1NC – Revisionism

#### Allegations of Chinese revisionism are false and rooted in American hypocrisy.

McKinney 19, \*Jared Morgan; PhD candidate at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University (Singapore); \*\*Nicholas Butts; Center for Strategic and International Studies Pacific Forum Young Leader. He holds an LL.M. from Peking University, an MSc from The London School of Economics and an MPA from Harvard University where he was also a Crown Prince Frederik Scholar and a Cheng Fellow. (Winter 2019, “Bringing Balance to the Strategic Discourse on China’s Rise”, *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, pg. 75-76, https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/JIPA/journals/Volume-02\_Issue-4/McKinney.pdf)

In the abstract, such claims are alarming—in context, and in balance, rather humdrum. In fact, the evidence of any Chinese intention to destroy, or even merely undermine and exploit, the current order is slight. China is certainly using its growing military power to defend its claims in the SCS and even—on occasion— to coerce its neighbors. It uses protectionist economic policies to boost the prospects of Chinese companies and reduce competition. It employs economic statecraft to serve its interests abroad. And it certainly is opposed to America’s policy of global democracy promotion. However, none of these positions fundamentally challenge the existing order, none of them radically depart from America’s own actions when it was a rising power in the nineteenth century, and none of them obviously surpass America’s own contemporary record of order subversion.

When the United States was a rising power, it took half of Mexico and considered taking the rest, it colonized the Philippines and Hawaii, and it unilaterally seized the maritime choke points of the Caribbean (Puerto Rico and Cuba).21 The United States used tariffs—which by 1857 averaged 20 percent22 and by the end of the nineteenth century were “the highest import duties in the industrial world”23—to protect its industries. It stole intellectual property,24 and it ideologically challenged the governments of the “Old World.” Today, despite no longer being a rising power, the United States has launched two disastrous invasions, tortured prisoners, and dispatches drone strikes at a whim with little international legal authority.25 The point is not that two wrongs make a right; it is that international order is much more resilient than critics seem to realize,26 and it is utopian to expect any rising Great Power to act in a way that uniformly satisfies one’s moral scruples, evolving, in Friedberg’s words, “into a mellow, satisfied, ‘responsible’ status quo power.”27

Friedberg or Harris might object that America’s rise took place in the context of a different order. This is perfectly true, but the more important point is that the long nineteenth century (1815–1914)—the era of America’s rise—was the first iteration of the New Peace.28 The implication is that relative peace can and has coexisted with limited wars, property and territorial thefts, acts of coercion, and aggressive assertions of status. This does not mean any of these are desirable— they are not—but it shows that they need not be fatal to the system. Insofar as there is a lesson from that first period of relative peace, it is that Great Power confrontation is the one thing that is fatal. Accepting this does not mean capitulating in every instance, as implied by some,29 but it does mean rediscovering the rules of Great Power competition30 alongside the art of strategy.31

Focusing only on areas that China’s rise violates the scruples of the established powers, moreover, downplays the extent to which China, has, in fact, conformed to the existing order. As a RAND Corporation report published in 2018 concludes, China has been a supporter—albeit a conditional one—of the international order: “Since China undertook a policy of international engagement in the 1980s … the level and quality of its participation in the order rivals that of most other states.”32 The way in which Xi Jinping, following his 2017 Davos speech in defense of globalization, has been heralded as the most prominent champion of international order and defender of globalization underscores the fact that there are different elements of this order, and that China supports many, if not most, of them. Even in places where China is supposedly “altering” the current order, Beijing tends to simultaneously affirm that order. China’s Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, for instance, actually mirrors existing structures, and China has intentionally copied elements and “best practices” of the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. China is playing the same game, even if it is seeking a bigger role within it.33

### 1NC – Heg

#### The end of hegemony is inevitable—the aff maps out America’s post-hegemonic future by aiding the settler state in escaping the hegemony trap with the current governing order and borders intact

D'Amato, 20 – Eric, Europe expert who is head of his own corporate intelligence and research firm specializing in emerging and frontier markets whose clients include some of the world’s top international political and business risk management agencies. “Who Killed American Global Power?” July 11, LA Review of Books, <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/who-killed-american-global-power/> -- Iowa

The authors come to the unsurprising conclusion that Trump has callously undermined an already-weakened liberal international order. At the core of their analysis is the notion of the United States’s hegemonic order being built on an architecture of rules, values, and norms; and an infrastructure of relationships and practices — and being challenged from above (by large rivals) and below (by smaller actors). The academic-crossover approach has some baked-in tradeoffs, and at times I was thinking longingly about veteran Harvard scholar Graham Allison’s more approachable Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides’s Trap? Allison’s 2017 book, which looked at the Sino-American relationship in the context of 16 similar cases of “rising powers” confronting “ruling powers” — 12 of which ended in war — was largely shorn of international relations lingo, and otherwise tailored for general audiences. Perhaps this is why, according to Cooley and Nexon, that analysis ended up becoming a “a minor obsession in foreign-policy circles.” Still, it is refreshing in 2020 to see any discussion involving Donald Trump largely designed in a way to exchange heat for light. Unfortunately, the trappings of scientific exactness tend to highlight the inevitable stumbles, including a few stray factual errors. The book claims that in 2004 “NATO and the EU both admitted ten new members each, mostly post-Communist states” when in reality NATO grew by seven members that year, and also says that Trump bashed American allies for relying on US military protection while running up trade deficits, when in reality he complains most about surpluses. The authors also indulge in acrimonious digressions on relatively immaterial topics, such as Republican efforts at electoral gerrymandering. Their choice of language also seems designed to turn off anyone who doesn’t bleed blue. Putting phrases like “traditional values” and “religious freedom” into scare quotes but not the center-left equivalents is a statement, witting or not, and reinforces the image of a foreign policy elite increasingly trapped in political monoculture. More substantively, I question what seems to be a disproportionate focus on Russia and populist nationalism in the West, as opposed to China and other, potentially more powerful “counter-order” forces, though given the lead author’s background, this is understandable (Cooley is a well-known scholar on ex-Soviet Central Asia, and has provided me with insights on the region for an unrelated project). Likewise, I think the authors significantly overstate the importance of some of the “infrastructure” of the liberal international order, such as the World Bank and other international financial institutions, which I spent several years covering closely as a journalist. Most jarringly, the authors take as a given that the United States would be more likely to maintain its global position if it adopted a more European-style social market economy, which would seem to be falsified by Europe’s ongoing geopolitical marginalization, as well as the vast “soft power” the United States derives from Silicon Valley, Hollywood, and America’s other furnaces of murderously effective late capitalism. The notion of a “progressive hegemony” is also challenged by the fact that China’s meteoric rise has involved, or resulted from, the breaking of every rule of contemporary Western progressivism. The authors cheerfully decline to use their laboriously constructed rubrics and models to make any specific predictions about the ultimate disposition of the American-led hegemonic order. “What happens once we pass through the exit?” they write. “We tend to be wary of predictions. They usually make the prognosticators look foolish.” As the son of a laboratory scientist who spent a long career sweating reproducible experiments into minute predictions, I am tempted to respond to this by forever putting “political science” into scare quotes. But in making this admission, Cooley and Nexon are helpfully reminding the reader that, no matter how ordered or dispassionate our examination of politics, futures are often subject to the most uncontrollable of variables: a lone gunman; a few tens of thousand of votes spread across a handful of states; a sudden commodity price war; a slight mutation in a microscopic virus particle halfway around the world. Moreover, it’s often hard to tell what the political futures are likely to look like even after they have begun to play out. Many highly credentialed folks assumed that Trump’s flailing performance in facing novel coronavirus would lead to a further diminution of Washington’s influence, yet one of the most visible real-world consequences has been an unprecedented rush around the world to the US dollar, and pledges to explore “reshoring” of production from China. And historians still argue over whether the most famous of hegemonic exits concluded in Rome in 476, or a millennium later in Constantinople. At the same time, we shouldn’t need any charts or graphs to remind us that there is one iron law of politics: all empires and great powers eventually retreat or collapse, and usually in ways that are unkind to their inheritors. Yet clearly we do need to be constantly reminded of this immutable rule of history, and given the tools to better understand and prepare for the reckoning it makes inevitable. America may survive Thucydides’s Trap — we may become the rare ruling power that learns to peacefully coexist with a rising power — but there is no escape from a larger Hegemony Trap. And judging from history, we will be lucky to extricate ourselves from it with our current governing order and borders intact. Exit from Hegemony should therefore be seen as a companion to what by all rights should be a constant stream of general interest and academic books and long-form essays addressing the various questions associated with the twilight of America’s “unipolar” moment. Is it possible that, just as the New Deal saved capitalism from socialism, a spell of “America First” might save liberal internationalism from its own excesses? Does the durability of the US dollar as the world’s preeminent reserve currency suggest a larger resilience in American global power? Without the kind of financial backstop the United States provided after the unwinding of the British, French, and even Soviet empires, how would a collapse of the global economic order look? Political science or economics may have limited or no predictive value, and an inherent bias toward the status quo. But especially given today’s environment, there is an urgent need for analytical guardrails that can help restrain priors and passions when trying to better understand, and plan for, the new world of America’s post-hegemonic future. To paraphrase Trotsky’s maxim about war, we may not be interested in hegemony, but hegemony is interested in us. Especially when it’s ours, and it looks like it’s about to end.