# 1AC

### 1AC---Advantage

#### Modifying the consumer welfare standard makes fossil fuel companies anticompetitive and promotes private sector climate action

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“The loftiest of purported motivations do not excuse anti-competitive collusion among rivals. That’s long-standing antitrust law.”[1] So begins a USA Today opinion piece by Makan Delrahim, Assistant Attorney General and head of the Antitrust Division. Delrahim was defending a Department of Justice (DOJ) investigation into four major automakers who had recently announced they would continue to meet California’s fuel efficiency standards even as the Trump Administration moved to roll back higher efficiency standards at the federal level.[2] The agreement between the automakers will likely lead to higher prices for consumers, which—regardless of other positive benefits—could be illegal under antitrust law. But should it be? This debate about the goals of our antitrust laws emerges at a critical inflection point in competition law and corporation law generally. Corporations have emerged as powerful voices for social and political change, flexing lobbying muscle and changing their own behaviors to create policy impact on issues like gun control, anti-discrimination protection, and climate change. This increased action has led to formal acknowledgement that shareholder profit need not be the driving force of corporate decision making, reversing decades of focus on shareholder primacy.[3] At the same time, a growing body of literature critiques antitrust enforcement as being limited to too narrow a lens.[4] By focusing primarily on consumer welfare—as measured by prices—antitrust regulators ignore both broader, less tangible harms to society and also potential societal benefits that might flow from anticompetitive behavior. Our antitrust laws must evolve to reflect the changing nature of corporate purpose and corporate social activism. Courts should not so quickly disregard the beneficial goals of business coordination, especially when those goals align with global commitments to address climate change. If our antitrust framework does not change, two types of conduct could be chilled. First, companies could be discouraged from coordinating with competitors to meet sustainability goals, like carbon emissions targets. This type of corporate collaboration on sustainability could be considered either an illegal agreement to fix prices or output. Second, a group of competitors refusing to work with a more polluting competitor could be considered an illegal group boycott. Further, and beyond the scope of this Article, companies with monopoly power could be discouraged from adopting “greener” practices if those commitments have the end result of raising consumer prices or increasing the costs of market entry for competitors. This Article proceeds as follows. Part I gives a brief overview of corporate social activism and the changing role of the corporation in society. Part II assesses why the changing role of the corporation matters for antitrust enforcement, explaining how corporate coordination has traditionally been scrutinized under competition laws and how corporations have responded to the threat of antitrust regulation. Part III returns to the DOJ investigation into the four automakers as an example of the disconnect between the more recent role of corporate collaboration in society and traditional antitrust enforcement. Part III also highlights the urgency of addressing this conflict in order to successfully respond to the growing and existential threat of climate change. Part IV concludes with a brief proposal for an antitrust framework that could incorporate broader societal effects—both harms and benefits—as part of antitrust enforcement. I. Corporations as Voices for Change When President Trump announced his intentions to formally withdraw the United States from the Paris Climate Accord, dozens of major companies stepped into the breach, promising to still work toward meeting the Paris emissions targets.[5] Such a position—business leaders joining concerted international action in rebuke of a sitting President—was once unprecedented. Milton Friedman, the influential architect of free market economic theory, warned that business leaders should not act as “unwitting puppets of the intellectual forces” that promote desirable social ends, such as pollution reduction.[6] Corporate executives were supposed to ignore “the catchwords of the contemporary crop of reformers” and instead focus on “mak[ing] as much money as possible.”[7] This shareholder profit paradigm persisted for decades, fueling the conditions that led to the Great Recession[8] and even making for-profit companies liable for not putting shareholder profits above all else.[9] But now that obligation is changing, and not a moment too soon. By the time the Business Roundtable, an association of major company executives, formally acknowledged that corporate purpose needed to consider benefits to communities and employees in addition to shareholders,[10] the writing had been on the wall for quite some time. Corporations were speaking up in previously unexpected ways and focusing on more than just profit, encouraged by major voices in the business community.[11] For example, major tech companies leapt into action when Indiana passed a 2015 bill widely seen as discriminatory against LGBT persons, denouncing the law and threatening boycotts of the state.[12] The cloud-computing giant Salesforce, which had between 2,000 and 3,000 employees in Indiana,[13] exerted significant leverage in forcing an amendment to the law by cancelling all company programs in and travel to Indiana.[14] More corporate boycotts greeted North Carolina and Georgia when they passed similar anti-LGBT legislation.[15] Additionally, in the wake of recent mass shootings, Dick’s Sporting Goods[16] and Walmart[17] cut back sales of certain firearms and ammunition, arguably doing more in a single decision to address the gun violence epidemic than Congress has been able to do in decades.[18] The growth of corporate activism can be traced to broader societal changes, such as the increased connectivity of people and markets in the Internet age.[19] At the same time, governmental gridlock and increasing political polarization have undermined the capacity of government institutions to function efficiently and greatly weakened public trust in government.[20] Corporations are filling this gap as traditional government services become increasingly privatized.[21] The growing corporate role in society has fed on itself, with increased stakes and visibility of corporate activism resulting in outsized political power and legal rights. Corporate-associated spending on politics has reached unprecedented, jaw-dropping levels.[22] It is increasingly clear that America cannot address the existential reality of climate change without corporate buy-in, if not corporate leadership. It is beyond the scope of this Article to discuss the extent of the climate crisis or the necessary corporate response; it is enough to say that each passing week brings bad news about the extent of already irreversible damage from climate change.[23] While the future costs of climate change will be immense, the costs of acting now to limit warming to habitable levels are also significant, on the measure of $3.5 trillion a year.[24] While governments around the world are expected to lead the necessary spending, a large portion of those costs will inevitably fall on companies, either through direct taxes like a carbon tax or increased costs of compliance, such as ending reliance on coal.[25] Even as global governmental efforts falter,[26] corporations are committing to act, both together[27] and independently.[28] The high costs of corporate climate engagement, both to the companies themselves and to our society,[29] have to be worth the last best chance to mitigate catastrophic climate change.

II. Antitrust Scrutiny of Corporate Collaboration

As corporations pursue socially responsible strategies—whether on climate change or other social causes—the threat of antitrust enforcement looms. This threat discourages collaboration among competitors, even to meet goals that are objectively positive for society.[30] Much of this chilling effect comes from the inconsistent and evolving nature of antitrust enforcement and a general lack of bright-line rules. Section 1 of the Sherman Act, the 1890 seminal antitrust law, prohibits “every contract, combination, . . . or conspiracy in restraint of trade or commerce.”[31] Although every competitive action, and certainly every contract and agreement, restrains trade in some manner, courts have enforced section 1 to prevent “unreasonably restrictive” contracts, combinations, and conspiracies.[32] Unreasonable restraints on trade, in turn, include those that “reduce output, raise price, or diminish competition with respect to quality, innovation, or consumer choice.”[33] But how those various bad outcomes interact, or when to prioritize lower prices over other antitrust goals, is unsettled and subject to frequent debate.[34] Courts apply two different levels of analysis to challenged contracts, combinations, or conspiracies that restrain trade. The first type of analysis categorically rejects certain types of restraint as “per se unlawful” without a more searching inquiry into the economic context of the challenged conduct.[35] The second analysis is under the “rule of reason,” a more detailed burden-shifting framework that considers procompetitive benefits of the conduct alongside an economic analysis of the restraint’s harmful effects in a given market.[36] Over time, courts have moved towards applying the rule of reason.[37] Nevertheless, uncertainty over whether courts will consider an agreement per se unlawful has significant consequences for corporate collaboration for social good. Both price-fixing and group boycotts are often considered per se illegal, regardless of ethical merit. While unlawful price-fixing can be as blatant as competitors setting the price of a common good to increase profits, unlawful price-fixing also encompasses “agreements to artificially reduce output,” which will in turn raise consumer prices. [38] Professor Inara Scott uses the example of the volatile and scantly regulated coffee market, where coffee farmers could conceivably agree on environmental, labor, and price standards in order to reduce volatility and reduce retail prices.[39] But such agreement, even to reduce prices, is likely to be considered per se illegal price-fixing.[40] Similarly, conservation agreements to harvest fewer fish from a shared area—artificially reducing output—could be considered per se unlawful price-fixing because of the outcome on consumer price, regardless of the conservation goals.[41] Likewise, the laudable policy goals of a group boycott had no impact on its per se illegality in Federal Trade Commission v. Superior Court Trial Lawyers Association, where a legal group’s refusal to represent indigent defendants until their compensation increased was held unlawful.[42] The protest succeeded in forcing the city government to increase compensation, but they still lost in court: the Supreme Court held that though the rates had been “unreasonably low” and the boycott’s cause was “worthwhile,” it was nonetheless a classic restraint of trade.[43] In Professor Scott’s coffee market example, a cooperative of coffee roasters likely could not refuse to work with a certain roaster in protest of objectionable practices, whether using child labor or wasteful techniques;[44] this kind of group boycott to encourage a competitor to adopt “greener” practices risks per se illegal classification. Because courts cannot even consider the obviously beneficial goals of those types of agreements, corporations would be wise to avoid them entirely. Even under the rule of reason, corporations face uncertainty over whether courts will consider procompetitive justifications rooted in social benefit. In general, courts applying the rule of reason “have rejected calls for consideration of the social value or purpose of a collective agreement.”[45] The Supreme Court has explicitly stated that “good intention” will not “save an otherwise objectionable regulation.”[46] For example, though the Court did not reject a mandatory National Collegiate Athletic Association price and broadcast agreement as per se illegal price-fixing, it still refused to consider arguments that the agreement was necessary to benefit society by maintaining the “revered tradition of amateurism in college sports.”[47] Courts have also cautioned that industry standards enforced by trade associations must be voluntary and noncoercive in order to survive scrutiny.[48] For example, binding industry standards that punish noncompliance with exclusion would likely be considered an illegal group boycott, especially if the exclusion was for the purpose of punishing the noncomplying member for its unsustainable conduct (consider a trade association removing a label certifying the product as “eco-friendly” after the company’s water uses fell out of compliance).[49] Assistant Attorney General Delrahim, Antitrust Division head, squarely reiterates that a redeeming intention cannot justify “collusive means” of enforcing cooperation.[50] Under either type of antitrust analysis, corporate agreements that have a probable net effect of raising consumer prices or the appearance of a group boycott are likely to be met with substantial antitrust scrutiny, regardless of intent or even positive outcomes. As a result, corporations will likely refrain from socially beneficial cooperation that could raise consumer prices or exclude another competitor.[51]

III. Antitrust Scrutiny Frustrates Corporate Action on Climate Change, from Detergent to Cars

The chilling effect of looming antitrust scrutiny is especially concerning when it comes to climate change. Climate change is a unique problem, not only in that it requires uniform, ideally coordinated action, but the positive effects of addressing climate change are uniquely abstract, intangible, and distant. While the costs of climate change to business are not easily predicted,[52] the benefits of slowing or stopping climate change are most easily understood as mitigating expected losses, not generating positive economic gains. For example, limiting carbon emissions does not directly result in cheaper goods, in general.[53] This lack of clear consumer benefits leads to several distinct problems for corporate climate action. A 2011 European Commission case demonstrates the challenges facing firms that try to raise sustainability standards while still making a profit.[54] Competitors Procter & Gamble (P&G) and Unilever were fined over €300 million for agreeing on price and market share for new, more environmentally sustainable laundry detergent products.[55] The firms had launched a voluntary effort to reduce environmental impacts by reducing packaging material, size, and washing machine energy use by creating a concentrated detergent that worked well in cold water.[56] Worried about a “first mover disadvantage” in a market where consumers did not necessarily understand the benefits of concentrated detergent, the companies coordinated on the new product launches and agreed on ideal pricing.[57] Though reduced energy use and reduced packaging waste are facially beneficial for society, P&G and Unilever ran afoul of competition laws by trying to mitigate—not exploit for profit—the effects of the new products on the market.[58] This example questions the exhaustive focus on consumer price. The P&G and Unilever judgment is an increasingly relevant example as companies make investments and commitments—often with competitors—that raise their own costs even as they help the world address climate change. Will those companies be scrutinized for passing on some of those costs to consumers? Should they be? In 2019, four automakers—Ford, Volkswagen North America, Honda, and BMW—announced an agreement with California to continue to meet stringent fuel efficiency standards in the future, even as the Trump Administration mulled plans to roll back nationwide standards.[59] California, which can set its own auto emissions standards, has eagerly used its position as a large consumer market with progressive values to advance climate change goals.[60] According to the July 2019 deal, the automakers will produce fleets with an average fuel efficiency of fifty miles per gallon by 2026—nearly the target agreed to during the Obama Administration.[61] The Trump Administration had previously announced plans to freeze fuel efficiency requirements at a thirty-seven miles per gallon fleet average in 2020,[62] setting up a direct conflict. In September 2019, DOJ trumpeted an antitrust investigation into those four automakers, alleging that the agreement among rivals could violate competition law.[63] Letters from the DOJ asked the four companies to meet with the Antitrust Division regarding the “formation” of the deal.[64] Delrahim doubled down on the probe in congressional testimony[65] and in a USA Today op-ed, insisted that the “moral aspirations” of an agreement among competitors do not matter if there are anticompetitive effects.[66] Delrahim warned of consumer harm, via higher prices, that would result from the deal.[67] And higher prices certainly seem like the necessary result of meeting the stricter efficiency standards, regardless of cost savings to the planet or even to the consumer over the long term.[68] President Trump also focused on consumer price, asserting that the new standards would raise the cost of a car by more than $3,000.[69] The DOJ probe was widely denounced as political retribution, with no legitimate antitrust case to be made. Nevertheless, the mere threat of antitrust scrutiny can have dangerous effects. Antitrust scholar Herbert Hovenkamp noted that the automaker deal could still constitute an “agreement” under the Sherman Act, even though DOJ would face “significant hurdles” in establishing an antitrust violation.[70] If the automakers “had discussed the [fuel efficiency] standards with one another and then voted to implement them,” that would satisfy the first element of an antitrust offense.[71] There are strong arguments that such an agreement among competitors should be legal either as form of political advocacy [72] or by virtue of the state action doctrine, which permits anticompetitive conduct that has been authorized and is supervised by a state.[73] Hovenkamp argued that the automaker agreement would likely be legal because compliance would increase the costs for the firms to manufacture cars, but not increase consumer prices.[74] But if the automakers were to instead pass that increased cost on to consumers, that could result in a finding of liability. It is all too easy to imagine that the four automakers would choose not to internalize the costs of compliance with the fuel efficiency standards, but instead would choose to raise car prices to commensurate with the increased manufacturing costs.[75] And any agreement on car price—even to keep prices the same, as P&G and Unilever did—could easily be considered collusive price-fixing and per se illegal. The Supreme Court has been clear that the “reasonableness” of set prices cannot cure their illegality.[76] Further, the agreement could have the result of deterring a “low-cost, high-emissions entrant from entering the market,”[77] which could be considered a per se illegal exclusionary group boycott, even though the agreeing automakers lack market power to enforce a boycott.[78] And even if analyzed under rule of reason, there is no guarantee that the agreement could be successfully defended on the grounds that reducing emissions are good for society. In fact, as explained above, such abstract and distant benefits are exactly the type of justifications courts reject as being too divorced from the goals of antitrust policy. Even though DOJ quietly dropped the investigation in February 2020,[79] the market results of the probe itself were almost immediate and significant. In October 2019, just weeks after the antitrust investigation began, other major automakers joined the Trump Administration as parties in litigation over California’s right to set its own vehicle emissions standards,[80] even though automakers had once stood united behind the Obama Administration’s higher fuel efficiency standards.[81] DOJ’s abandoned investigation had sent a clear message to automakers: do not collude on car standards that will raise prices for consumers, or you will be investigated. With the threat of antitrust enforcement off the table for now, the Trump Administration finalized its dramatically lower fuel efficiency rule in March 2020.[82] Despite the naked political motive and the arguably weak legal argument for antitrust enforcement against the four automakers in this case, the specter of antitrust liability will not be limited to the auto industry. At a time when companies are making serious commitments to address climate change, even the most progressive companies are likely to think twice about making commitments with competitors on any industry standard that could lead to higher consumer prices. Companies could be discouraged from moving forward on climate, at a time when bold action is needed most. IV. Conclusion: An Antitrust Framework for the Twenty-First Century Economy The threatened antitrust enforcement against the four automakers highlights the disconnect between corporate law and climate reality. An antitrust framework that never permits price increases resulting from coordinated action ignores both the possibility of consumer benefits beyond price as well as the changing nature of corporations. As corporations wrestle with potential legal duties to take environmental outcomes into consideration in corporate decisions,[83] they need to be able to consider a broader definition of consumer welfare. Antitrust law’s focus on short-term prices has helped mask long-term consumer harms and broader negative effects on society.[84] At the same time, corporations have been unable to successfully justify agreements that raise prices in order to achieve some societal benefit. Those two blind spots in competition law keep our legal framework stuck in a bygone era, prompting the need for change in at least three ways. First, and at a minimum, courts need to revisit a jurisprudence that prizes low prices and market “efficiencies” as procompetitive justifications, but rejects justifications of social benefits. Courts must at least allow coordinating firms to offer cognizable counterarguments when their conduct is considered under the rule of reason. This realignment should accompany judicial acknowledgment that “consumer welfare” encompasses more than current or readily predictable price in an isolated market, and instead can include the long-term effects on things like consumer choice, consumer privacy, and local economic vitality.[85] Second, Congress should pass legislation immunizing corporate cooperation that reduces energy consumption and curtails greenhouse gas emissions.[86] Congress has provided similar exemptions before, permitting specific industries like railroads, insurance companies, and agricultural cooperatives to coordinate on prices and terms of service where regulation was preferable to competition.[87] Allowing companies in the transportation sector—responsible for over 25 percent of U.S. emissions in 2018[88]—to coordinate on environmental efforts would be a common sense step in line with past practice. Finally, and more broadly, the Securities and Exchange Commission could, on its own[89] or with congressional backing,[90] require companies to disclose progress on environmental efforts and benchmarks that could be set internally or externally.[91] Mandatory environmental reporting, alongside other key metrics on governance and financial issues, would have three important benefits. First, corporate performance could be measured by more than just quarterly earnings, incentivizing longer-term decision making and reflecting the broadening of corporate purpose to include societal and environmental benefits. Second, a government-required environmental disclosure—ideally translated into a comprehensible number or rank—would allow antitrust regulators and consumers alike to track corporate progress on green initiatives, ensuring that any increases in consumer price or exclusionary conduct is more than offset by tangible gains on addressing climate change and replacing the voluntary, often one-sided corporate environmental reports often derided as “greenwashing.”[92] Third, greater transparency and real environmental metrics that can be weighed alongside price and other standards could help ensure that corporations are not able to skirt competition laws to their profit, under the guise of fighting climate change. There is widespread discussion and progress on this type of mandatory reporting;[93] any new framework could easily be tailored to enforce antitrust rules for environmental coordination. Updating antitrust and corporate law in these three ways would encourage much-needed corporate collaboration on climate change, reflect the changing nature of corporate activism, and acknowledge that consumer welfare can and must mean more than low prices. Saving the world may well depend on legalizing and incentivizing this kind of corporate collusion.

#### Antitrust prohibitions destroy the fossil fuel industry

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The oil giants ExxonMobil and Chevron each have assets valued in the hundreds of billions of dollars. Last year, The Wall Street Journal recently revealed, the two companies considered what would have been among the largest corporate mergers in history—a deal that would have reunited parts of the Standard Oil empire that federal trustbusters broke apart in 1911. In the end, ExxonMobil and Chevron didn’t attempt the transaction. But had the companies insisted on it, today’s antitrust authorities probably would have permitted the tie-up. Mergers among the very largest corporations are rarely stopped. Our research found that, out of the 78 proposed mergers from 2015 to 2019 in which the smaller firm was valued at more than $10 billion, the federal government attempted to block a grand total of only five on antitrust grounds and successfully stopped just three of them. In February 2020, a district judge allowed T-Mobile (with a premerger equity valuation of more than $50 billion) to acquire Sprint for $30 billion and gave control of the national wireless market to just three carriers. As evidence mounts that corporate consolidation and concentration raise prices to consumers, eliminate jobs, depress wages, marginalize independent businesses, and breed economic and political inequality, Democrats in Congress, possibly in collaboration with some Republican colleagues, appear poised to crack down on monopoly and prevent further consolidation. At the top of this agenda should be a law that simply and unambiguously prevents all megamergers—which we would define as transactions in which the acquirer and the target each has more than $10 billion in assets. Such a rule would have stopped dozens of mergers that were completed in the second half of the 2010s, including the acquisitions of SABMiller by Anheuser-Busch InBev, Aetna by CVS, and Monsanto by Bayer. In general, corporate consolidation does not improve business productivity. Melissa Schilling, a business professor at New York University, has concluded that “most mergers do not create value for anyone, except perhaps the investment bankers who negotiated the deal.” Those findings make the government’s willingness to rubber-stamp so many recent mergers all the more remarkable. The Congresses that enacted the nation’s antitrust laws understood that unchecked corporate power makes a mockery of democratic norms. In 1890, Senator John Sherman, an Ohio Republican, helped develop the nation’s first federal antitrust act in response to the rise of corporate and financial titans such as J.P. Morgan. Sherman insisted that the country’s economic life should not be dominated by “a few men sitting at their council board in the city of New York.” In a 1958 decision, the Supreme Court echoed this theme, stating that “the Sherman Act was designed to be a comprehensive charter of economic liberty” that aimed to provide “an environment conducive to the preservation of our democratic political and social institutions.” Sadly, that tradition gave way in the 1970s and ’80s, as federal judges, the Justice Department’s antitrust division, and the Federal Trade Commission all came under the spell of dubious interpretations of history and economic theories strikingly tolerant of mergers and monopolistic practices. Without strong evidence that mergers will raise consumer prices and reduce economic output, federal antitrust agencies and courts hesitate to act even against companies that dominate their market. For the Justice Department, the FTC, and courts reviewing merger matters, considerations of political power, including the absolute size of the corporations involved, are irrelevant. The history of consolidation in the oil industry is revealing and suggests that an ExxonMobil-Chevron merger is not far-fetched. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the FTC permitted very large oil and gas corporations to merge on the condition that they sold off gas stations, refineries, and other assets to “preserve competition” in markets where they were head-to-head competitors or in a position to exclude rivals. The tolerance of mergers has spread corporate concentration and its attendant inequality into virtually every corner of the economy: health care, airlines, cable TV, and now the internet, where Amazon, Facebook, and other sprawling new monopolists reign. A small clique of executives and financiers makes key decisions in our economy. Many figures across the political spectrum are now urging a return to the kind of antitrust enforcement that once helped preserve a variety of independent businesses in every community. Among these voices, for example, is Senator Elizabeth Warren, who called for tight merger restrictions for companies that have more than $40 billion in annual revenues. In a fall 2019 presidential-candidate debate, she said: “We need to enforce our antitrust laws, break up these giant companies that are dominating Big Tech, Big Pharma, Big Oil, all of them.” Earlier this month, Senator Amy Klobuchar, together with four co-sponsors, proposed including a corporation’s absolute size in merger analysis. In October 2018, Senator Bernie Sanders introduced a bill that would break up the largest financial institutions in the United States and establish a cap on size going forward. Although conservatives in the United States have generally supported Big Business interests, more voices on the right are grafting concerns about corporate power, particularly in digital markets, onto an otherwise standard right-wing agenda. Although former President Donald Trump’s administration had a poor antitrust record against large corporations and supported pro-monopoly reinterpretations of the law, it did file landmark suits against Google and Facebook in the closing months of 2020. Embracing some forms of economic populism, media outlets such as The American Conservative have also become supporters of renewed antitrust enforcement. Building on ideologically diverse opposition to corporate consolidation, Congress should pass legislation that strikes at mergers, a major contributor to the curse of corporate bigness. A ban on mergers involving companies that have more than $10 billion in assets might be a somewhat arbitrary line to draw—Congress could reasonably choose a higher or lower threshold—but the formulation and administration of law, which establishes the rules of a market, requires a degree of line-drawing. Anyway, the status quo, in which virtually every merger goes forward, almost regardless of the potential damage to customers, suppliers, rivals, workers, and even democracy, is arbitrary in its own way and runs contrary to the public interest. Under the legislation we propose, a future merger between Chevron and ExxonMobil would be plainly illegal. Even if they agreed to sell some assets to a third party—as many merging companies do—the two oil titans would not be able to get their transaction past the antitrust authorities. The companies probably would not even contemplate such a combination in the boardroom. By establishing a bright line, an outright ban on the largest mergers would reduce the role of contending lobbyists, lawyers, and rented economists in merger cases, thereby making the whole process clearer, faster, more predictable, less expensive, and less subjective, as we explain at greater length in a recent law-review article. A ban on megamergers would reduce the amount of money and human energy currently wasted in putting together unproductive consolidations. It would help end the arms race of consolidation, in which mergers beget mergers as firms try to keep up with ever larger and more powerful corporate rivals, suppliers, and customers. By potentially channeling these resources into new productive capacity and technologies, the law could result in a real increase in society’s overall wealth and pace of progress.

#### 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.

#### Climate action solves---deficits don’t assume structural reform

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In order to avert the most extreme harms of climate change, the world must reduce net carbon dioxide (CO2 ) emissions from all sources — especially fossil fuels — to zero by mid-century. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has explored this challenge in extraordinary detail (IPCC 2018; IPCC 2014), and the world’s countries have set zero net emissions as their collective goal in the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC 2015). As energy modelers have made clear, this transition must be led by a rapid and near-immediate decline in the use and production of fossil fuels (Rogelj et al. 2018; Riahi et al. 2017; IPCC 2018). As one of the world’s top fossil fuel producers, the United States is heavily implicated in this transition. And thankfully, some policy-makers in the U.S. have already anticipated the eventual wind-down of fossil fuels. Though the current Trump administration is not so inclined, its predecessor — the Obama administration — clearly signaled a move away from fossil fuels. In the name of meeting national and global climate goals, it not only developed a comprehensive plan for moving away from fossil fuel consumption (The White House 2016a) but also took preliminary steps toward an eventual transition away from fossil fuel extraction (DOI 2016; BLM 2017). In particular, the U.S. Department of the Interior initiated efforts to incorporate the realities of climate change into policies surrounding fossil fuel production on public lands, which account for nearly one-quarter of U.S. CO2 emissions (Merrill et al. 2018). Now, policy-makers in the 116th Congress are beginning to grapple with how a phase-out of fossil fuels might fit within a Green New Deal or other climate legislation (Barbier 2019; Natter and Dmitrieva 2019). How should the U.S. align fossil fuel production with climate limits? This paper articulates three principles that lend structure to this challenging, but vital, task. These are, in brief, to: (1) reduce fossil fuel production at a pace consistent with climate protection; (2) accelerate the phase-out in economies that are the most resilient; and (3) safeguard human rights, cultural resources and the local environment in the process. Together, these principles can inform debate on an equitable phase-out of U.S. fossil fuel extraction. The principles reflect not only the science and economics of how quickly global fossil fuels must be phased out, but also equity and other critical social dimensions. The phase-out of fossil fuel production will inevitably have substantial impacts on fossil-fuel-dependent local economies. Building a sufficiently robust political consensus demands that policy-makers take into account justice, equity and distributional fairness. A carefully planned phase-out of fossil fuel production that is grounded in equity not only helps ensure that the transition does not exacerbate inequality (Piggot et al. 2019); it may also stand a better chance of winning broad buy-in and, therefore, end up being more effective than a non-equitable approach (Fleurbaey et al. 2014; Green 2018). Federal policy-makers could use these principles to help fulfil a goal, much like former President Obama’s, of bringing the management of coal, oil and gas extraction in line with the U.S. government’s stated climate objectives as committed under the Paris Agreement. The federal government has substantial jurisdiction over fossil fuel extraction (Ratledge et al. 2019). In addition to overseeing fossil fuel production on public lands, it also influences extraction through fossil fuel subsidies and infrastructure permitting decisions. Subnational governments within the U.S. also shape patterns of fossil fuel extraction through land use and permitting; they can apply these principles immediately. In fact, there is already an active network of states and cities committed to climate action, and several states, including California and Colorado, that are debating how their oil and gas extraction futures may evolve under climate constraints. To begin, we provide a short primer on why climate limits imply a global decline of fossil fuel production and what this means for the overall pace of winding down U.S. fossil fuel extraction. Next, we articulate the three guiding principles we have developed for winding down fossil fuel production. After introducing the principles, we use the examples of U.S. coal and oil extraction to broadly illustrate how resource managers could operationalize the principles. Finally, we close with a call for leadership and an outline of the next steps.

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

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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.

#### Indicators demonstrate that catastrophic climate change can be averted. The momentum exists, but capitalizing on it is key.

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The change is much bigger than the turnover of American leadership. By the time the Biden presidency finds its footing in a vaccinated world, the bounds of climate possibility will have been remade. Just a half-decade ago, it was widely believed that a “business as usual” emissions path would bring the planet four or five degrees of warming — enough to make large parts of Earth effectively uninhabitable. Now, thanks to the rapid death of coal, the revolution in the price of renewable energy, and a global climate politics forged by a generational awakening, the [expectation](https://climateactiontracker.org/global/temperatures/) is for about three degrees. Recent pledges [could bring us closer to two](https://climateactiontracker.org/publications/global-update-paris-agreement-turning-point/). All of these projections sketch a hazardous and unequal future, and all are clouded with uncertainties — about the climate system, about technology, about the dexterity and intensity of human response, about how inequitably the most punishing impacts will be distributed. Yet if each half-degree of warming marks an entirely different level of suffering, we appear to have shaved a few of them off our likeliest end stage in not much time at all. The next half-degrees will be harder to shave off, and the most crucial increment — getting from two degrees to 1.5 — perhaps impossible, dashing the dream of avoiding what was long described as “catastrophic” change. But for a climate alarmist like me, seeing clearly the state of the planet’s future now requires a conspicuous kind of double vision, in which a guarded optimism seems perhaps as reasonable as panic. Given how long we’ve waited to move, what counts now as a best-case outcome remains grim. It also appears, miraculously, within reach. In December, a month after Biden was elected promising to return the U.S. to the Paris agreement, the U.N. celebrated five years since the signing of those accords. They were five of the six hottest on record. (The sixth was 2015, the year the agreement was signed.) They were also the years with the highest levels of carbon output in the history of humanity — with emissions equivalent to what was produced by all human and industrial activity from the speciation of Homo sapiens to the start of World War II. They have also been the five years in which the nations of the world — and cities and regions, individuals and institutions, corporations and central banks — have made the most ambitious pledges of future climate action. Most of them were made in the past 12 months, in the face of the pandemic. Or, perhaps, to some degree, because of it — because the pandemic demanded a full-body jolt to the global political economy, provoking much more aggressive government spending, a much more accommodating perspective on debt, and a much greater openness to large-scale actions and investments of the kind that might plausibly reshape the world. And because decarbonization has come to seem, even to those economists and policy-makers blinded for decades to the moral and humanitarian cases for reform, a rational investment. “When I think about climate change,” Biden is fond of saying, “the word I think of is jobs.” There are two ways of looking at these seemingly contradictory sets of facts. The first is that the distance between what is being done and what needs to be done is only growing. This is the finding of, among others, the U.N.’s comprehensive [“Emissions Gap” report](https://www.unenvironment.org/emissions-gap-report-2020), issued in December, which found that staying below two degrees of warming would require a tripling of stated ambitions. To bring the planet in reach of the 1.5-degree target — favored by activists, most scientists, and really anyone reading their work with open eyes — would require a quintupling. It is also the perspective of Greta Thunberg, who has spent the pandemic year castigating global leaders for paying mere lip service to far-off decarbonization targets and who called the E.U.’s new net-zero emissions law “surrender.” The second is that all of the relevant curves are bending — too slowly but nevertheless in the right direction. The International Energy Agency, a notoriously conservative forecaster, recently [called](https://www.carbonbrief.org/solar-is-now-cheapest-electricity-in-history-confirms-iea#:~:text=Source%3A%20IEA%20World%20Energy%20Outlook%202020.&text=Together%2C%20low%2Dcarbon%20sources%20would,up%20from%2019%25%20in%202019.) solar power “the cheapest electricity in history” and projected that India will build 86 percent less new coal power capacity than it thought just one year ago. Today, business as usual no longer means a fivefold increase of coal use this century, as was once expected. It means pretty rapid decarbonization, at least by the standards of history, in which hardly any has ever taken place before. Both of these perspectives are true. The gap is real, and the world risks tumbling into it, subjecting much of the global South to unconscionable punishments all the way down. But in the months since the pandemic wiped climate strikers off the streets, their concerns have seeped into not just public-opinion surveys but parliaments and presidencies, trade deals and the advertising business, finance and insurance — in short, all the citadels presiding over the ancien régime of fossil capital. This is not exactly a climate revolution; the strikers and their allies didn’t win in the way they wanted to, at least not yet. But they did win something. Environmental anxieties haven’t toppled neoliberalism. Instead, to an unprecedented degree, they infiltrated it. (Or perhaps they were appropriated by it. It’s an open question.) Climate change isn’t an issue just for die-hards anymore — it’s for normies, sellouts, and anyone with their finger in the wind. It will take time, of course, for voters to see empty rhetoric for what it is, and for consumers to learn to distinguish, say, between the claims of guiltless airline tickets, or between carbon-free foods in the supermarket aisle. Harder still will be sorting through the differences between real corporate commitments like Microsoft’s and more evasive ones, like BP’s. Already, there is considerable consternation among climate activists that the public doesn’t understand the tricky math of “net-zero” on which so many of these commitments have been made—it is not a promise of ending emissions, but of offsetting some amount of them, in the future, with “negative emissions,” sometimes called “carbon dioxide removal,” though no approach of that kind is ready to go at anything like the necessary scale. And while some amount of skepticism about those commitments is surely warranted, it is also the case that, according to [a recent Bloomberg review](https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2020-company-emissions-pledges/), of 187 corporate climate pledges made for 2020 in 2015, 138 will be met. (Many of those promises were quite modest, but it is a much better performance than has been managed by the 189 parties to the Paris agreement, of which only two — Morocco and Gambia — are today [judged](https://climateactiontracker.org/countries/) fully “compatible” with the 1.5-degree goal, and only six more with the 2-degree target). In the political sphere, the uneasy alliance between activists and those in power will be tested, producing new conflicts, or new equilibria, or both. Consider, though, that Varshini Prakash, whose [Sunrise Movement](https://www.sunrisemovement.org/) gave Biden’s primary candidacy an F, later helped write his climate plan along with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Climate expertise has been distributed throughout the incoming administration, as was promised during a campaign that closed, remarkably, with a climate-focused advertising blitz. During the transition, Biden’s pick for director of the National Economic Council, Brian Deese, was targeted by the environmental left for his time with BlackRock, but even this purported stooge had been married by Bill McKibben, one of the godfathers of modern climate activism. Elsewhere in the world, where 85 percent of global emissions are produced, the great infiltration of climate concerns represents what the British environmental [writer](https://www.businessgreen.com/blog-post/4025199/2020-crisis-crossroads-alternative-histories) James Murray has called “an alternative history to 2020” and what the scientist turned journalist Akshat Rathi [has declared](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-01-05/climate-action-is-embedding-into-how-the-world-works) “a strong sign that climate action is starting to be ‘institutionalized’ — that is, getting deeply embedded into how the world works.” This is not about coronavirus lockdowns producing emissions drops or “nature healing.” It is instead about long-standing trajectories passing obvious tipping points in coal use and political salience; promises and posturing by powerful if compromised institutions; and policy progress almost smuggled into place, all over the world, under cover of pandemic night. In the U.S., in the second coronavirus stimulus, [$35 billion in clean-energy spending](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2020/12/what-is-in-covid-stimulus-omnibus-climate-pell-grants-medical-billing.html) passed in the Senate 92-6 — an effective down payment, energy researcher Varun Sivaram has estimated, on the innovation spending needed for a full electrification of the country. Did you even notice? Biden’s climate plan now faces the challenge of a filibuster, a skeptical Supreme Court, and the mood of Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia, which means American climate action over the next four years is probably more likely to be delivered piecemeal — through appropriations and stimulus, executive action, and regulation — than through a landmark Green New Deal–style piece of legislation. That does limit what can be achieved, but it also means avoiding a protracted battle over climate as a referendum on the identity of the nation. And at least nominally, having been pressured by activists to do so, Biden is promising to multiply the green spending in that recent stimulus by a factor of 60. The numbers are numbingly large — reminders that in the midst of pandemic turmoil, the rules of state spending have been dramatically revised and perhaps even suspended. Is this global free-spending binge the beginning of a new era or merely a crisis interregnum to be followed by a new new austerity? “We don’t know what the recovery packages of COVID are going to be,” Christiana Figueres, one of the central architects of the Paris accords, told me this summer. “And honestly, the depth of decarbonization is going to largely depend on the characteristics of those recovery packages more than on anything else, because of their scale. We’re already at $12 trillion; we could go up to $20 trillion over the next 18 months. We have never seen — the world has never seen — $20 trillion go into the economy over such a short period of time. That is going to determine the logic, the structures, and certainly the carbon intensity of the global economy at least for a decade, if not more.” For those dreaming of a climate recovery, the first round of spending was not so encouraging. The E.U. was the gold standard, promising that 30 percent of its stimulus would be earmarked for climate. The U.S. and China each pledged only a fraction of that (and in each case, there was fossil stimulus, too). But in October, a team of researchers including Joeri Rogelj of the Imperial College of London [calculated](https://www.reuters.com/article/climate-change-stimulus/tenth-of-pandemic-stimulus-spend-could-help-world-reach-climate-goals-study-idUSKBN271098) that just one-tenth of the COVID-19 stimulus spending already committed around the world, directed toward decarbonization during each of the next five years, would be sufficient to deliver the goals of the Paris agreement and stop global warming well below two degrees. That analysis may be a touch optimistic, but the level of spending seems, now, doable. When Donald Trump was elected, trashing Paris, climate hawks were left hoping that the world would hang on for the length of his administration — insisting that, in the long term, the crisis couldn’t be solved without America at the helm. But the past four years of missing leadership have produced astonishing gains. The price of solar energy has fallen ninefold over the past decade, as has the price of lithium batteries, critical to the growth of electric cars. The costs of utility-scale batteries, which could solve the “intermittency” (i.e., cloudy day) problem of renewables and help power whole cities in relatively short order, have fallen 70 percent since just 2015. Wind power is 40 percent cheaper than it was a decade ago, with offshore wind experiencing an even steeper decline. Overall, renewable energy is less expensive than dirty energy almost everywhere on the planet, and in many places it is simply cheaper to build new renewable capacity than to continue running the old fossil-fuel infrastructure. Oil demand and carbon emissions may both have peaked this year. Eighty percent of coal plants planned in Asia’s developing countries have been shelved. This summer, I heard the Australian scientist and entrepreneur Saul Griffith talk about what it would take to get the U.S. within range of a 1.5 degree world. He said it would mean that beginning in 2021, this year, every single person buying a new car would have to be buying an electric one. That seems unrealistic, I thought, making a note of it as a useful benchmark illustrating just how far we have to go. Then, in the fall, the U.K. pledged to ban nonelectrics by 2030—a once-unthinkable law coming both too slow and much more quickly than seemed possible not very long ago. Similar plans are now in place in 16 other countries, plus Massachusetts and California. Canada recently raised its tax on carbon sixfold. Italy cut its power-sector emissions 65 percent between 2012 and 2019, and Denmark is now aiming to reduce its overall emissions 70 percent by 2030. “We set ourselves challenges that on paper looked almost impossible,” the country’s minister for the environment, Dan Jørgensen, told me recently. “And I think experts in many countries said, when looking at Denmark, ‘This is going to be too expensive, this is going to lower their living standards, this is going to hurt their ability to compete.’ But actually I’m proud to say that the opposite has happened. Now, of course, we have set even higher standards.” In the midst of the pandemic, new net-zero pledges, far more ambitious than those offered at Paris, were independently made by Japan, South Korea, the E.U., and, most significant, China, the world’s biggest emitter, which promised to reach an emissions peak by 2030 and get all the way to zero by 2060. China’s promise is so ambitious it has inspired one wave of debate among experts about whether it is even feasible — given that it would require, for instance, roughly twice as much renewable power to be installed every year for the next decade as Germany has operating nationwide today — and another debate about whether it has revived the possibility of that 1.5-degree target, with economic historian Adam Tooze writing, just after Xi Jinping’s surprise announcement in September, that it single-handedly “redefined the future prospects for humanity.” Together, the new net-zero pledges may have subtracted a full half-degree from ultimate warming. Add Biden’s campaign pledge of net zero by 2050, and you’ve got about two-thirds of global emissions at least nominally committed to firm, aggressive timelines to zero. These are all just paper promises, of course, and the history of climate action is littered with the receipts of similar ones uncashed. Plot the growth of carbon concentration in the atmosphere against the sequence of climate-action conferences and a distressing pattern emerges: the World Meteorological Conference of 1979, the U.N. framework of 1992, the Kyoto protocol of 1997, the Copenhagen accord of 2009, and the 2015 Paris accords, all tracking an uninterrupted trajectory upward for carbon from a “safe” level under 350 parts per million, past 400, to 414 today, and pointing upward from there. Before the industrial revolution, humans had never known an atmosphere with even 300 parts per million. Inevitably now, within a few years, the concentration will reach levels not seen since 3.3 million years ago, when sea levels were 60 feet higher. For all their momentum, renewables still only make up 10 percent of global electricity production. But alarmists have to take the good news where they find it. And while mood affiliation is not always the best guide to the state of the world, in 2020, for me, there were three main sources of hope. The first is the fact that the age of climate denial is over thanks to extreme weather and the march of science and the historic labor of activists — climate strikers, Sunrise, Extinction Rebellion — whose success in raising alarm may have been so sudden that they brought an end to the age of climate Jeremiahs as well. Their voices now echo in some unlikely places. Exxon was booted from the S&P 500 within months of Tesla making Elon Musk the world’s richest man. The cultural cachet of oil companies is quickly approaching that of tobacco companies. Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil aside, practically every leader of every country and every major figure in every corporate and industrial sector now feels obligated — because of protest and social pressure, economic realities, and cultural expectation — to at least make a show of support for climate action. It would be nice not to have to count that as progress, but it is. The questions are: How much does it matter? And what will follow? Disinformation and human disregard are not the only instruments of delay, and the age of climate denial is likely to yield first not to an age of straightforward climate deliverance but to one characterized by climate hypocrisy, greenwashing, and gaslighting. But those things, ugly and maddening and even criminal as they are, have always been with us. It is the other thing that is new. The second source of good news is the arrival on the global stage of climate self-interest. By this I don’t mean the profiteering logic of BlackRock, which opportunistically announced some half-hearted climate commitments last year, but rather the growing consensus in almost every part of the globe, and at almost every level of society and governance, that the world will be made better through decarbonization. A decade ago, many of the more ruthless capitalists to analyze that project deemed it too expensive to undertake. Today, it suddenly appears almost too good a deal to pass up. (A recent McKinsey [report](https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/sustainability/our-insights/how-the-european-union-could-achieve-net-zero-emissions-at-net-zero-cost): “Net-Zero Emissions at Net-Zero Cost.”) The logic may be clearest in considering the effects of air pollution, which kills an estimated 9 million people per year. In India, where more than 8 percent of GDP is lost to pollution, poor air quality is also responsible for 350,000 miscarriages and stillbirths every year. Globally, coal kills one person for every thousand people it provides power to, and even in the U.S., with its enviably clean air, total decarbonization would be entirely paid for, Duke’s Drew Shindell [recently testified](https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2020/8/12/21361498/climate-change-air-pollution-us-india-china-deaths) before Congress, just through the public-health benefits of cutting out fossil fuels. You don’t even have to calculate any of the other returns — more jobs, cheaper energy, new infrastructure. Of course, countries all around the world are incorporating those considerations too, turning the page on a generation of economic analysis that said decarbonization was too costly and its benefits too small to sell to the public as upside. A decade ago, capitalists deemed decarbonization too expensive. Suddenly, it appears too good a deal to pass up. What is perhaps most striking about all the new climate pledges is not just that they were made in the absence of American leadership but that they were made outside the boundaries of the Paris framework. They are not the result of geopolitical strong-arming or “Kumbaya” consensus. They are, instead, plans arrived at internally, in some cases secretly. This has been eye-opening for the many skeptics who worried for decades about climate’s collective-action problem — who warned that because the benefits of decarbonization were distributed globally while the costs were concentrated locally, nations would move only if all of their peers did too. But a [recent paper](https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/full/10.1162/glep_a_00578) by Matto Mildenberger and Michaël Alkin suggests this shouldn’t be a surprise. In their retrospective analysis, they found that, despite much consternation about designing climate policy to prevent countries from “cheating,” there was basically no evidence of any country ever pulling back from mitigation efforts to take a free ride on the good-faith efforts of others. There was, in other words, no collective-action problem on climate after all. For a generation, the argument for climate action was made on a moral basis. That case has only grown stronger. And now there are other powerful, more mercenary arguments to offer. The third cause for optimism is that, while the timelines to tolerably disruptive climate outcomes have already evaporated, the timelines to the next set of benchmarks is much more forgiving. This is why Glen Peters, the research director at the Cicero Center for International Climate Research, often jokes that while keeping warming below two degrees is very hard, perhaps even impossible, keeping it below 2.5 degrees now looks like a walk in the park. This isn’t to say we’re on a glide path to safety. At current emissions levels, the planet will entirely exhaust the carbon budget for 1.5 degrees in just seven years — stay merely level, in other words, and we’ll burn through the possibility of a relatively comfortable endgame within the decade. We could buy ourselves a little more time by starting to move quickly, but not that much more. To decarbonize fast enough to give the planet a decent chance of hitting that 1.5-degree target without any negative emissions would require getting all the way to net-zero emissions by around 2035. Simply running the cars and furnaces and fossil-fuel infrastructure that already exists to its expected retirement date would push the world past 1.5 degrees—without a single new gasoline SUV hitting the road, or a single new oil-heated home being built, or a single new coal plant opened. A two-degree target, by contrast, yields a much longer timeline, requiring the world to achieve net-zero by 2070 or 2080 — without even the help of negative emissions. We’d have to cut carbon production in half in about three decades, rather than one. That pathway will almost certainly prove harder than it looks. The good news is that we seem to be beginning, at least, to try.

#### Saying “warming inevitable” is wrong

Golden 14, is policy director of Climate Solutions, which promotes clean and efficient energy sources. He’s former director of energy policy for the State of Washington. Foreword by Paul Loeb contributor to the Huff Post. (K.C. 5-6-2017, “Global Warming: The Inevitability Trap,” Huffington Post, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/global-warming-the-inevit\_b\_5274788)

Is the biggest hurdle on climate change outright denial? Or is it the sense that of being overwhelmed and too late, that there’s nothing we can do? As K.C. Golden writes in an excerpt from my newly updated political hope anthology The Impossible Will Take a Little While, defeat is certain only if we accept it as such. What we often call preordained only becomes so through our resignation. So the only way to discover what’s achievable is by taking action, trying new approaches, expanding the bounds of the possible. Golden’s group, Climate Solutions, does exactly that, mixing environmental advocacy on issues like coal exports with climate-change consulting for Pacific Northwest corporations, small businesses, and local governments. In a hopeful sign, sponsors of the group’s annual breakfast recently included Boeing and Alaska Airlines, with which Climate Solutions is working to develop algae-based and other sustainable bio-fuels — a partnership that would have been nearly unimaginable a short while ago. It’s time to rally around an embattled concept: free will. Having aligned myself against a battalion of seemingly irresistible forces over the years, I’ve become a student of “inevitability.” How do environmentally destructive choices become inevitable? Near as I can tell, it starts when the people who will benefit from these choices simply begin to assert their inevitability. We’re especially receptive to inevitability right now. We’re comforted by the notion that amid all the uncertainty and confusion, from the economy to climate disruption — some larger forces are at work toward pre-determined outcomes. We’re sort of relieved to hear that something’s inevitable, even if it’s not necessarily something we like. It clarifies things. It’s more pragmatic to be resigned to the inevitable than to chart a new course through the chaos. Plus, it spares us the disappointment of pinning false hopes on dysfunctional democratic institutions—or working to change them. So the myth of inevitability spreads and the prophecy fulfills itself. If the proponents of a particular course can get a critical mass of folks to believe that it’s a foregone conclusion, pretty soon it will be. Those who assert that conservation and renewables will never replace fossil fuels are using the only strategy available to them. They propound the myth of inevitability because they know that few of us would actually choose more waste, and eternal dependence on coal, oil, and gas extracted in ever-more risky and destructive ways. Having little chance of convincing people that these outcomes are desirable, they tell us we have no choice in the matter. Think about the arguments that have blocked serious U.S. action on climate change. First, it wasn’t happening. Then it was happening but it wasn’t human-caused. (Damn those sun spots.) Now maybe it is human-caused but there’s nothing we can do because China and India’s emissions will swamp us anyway—never mind the American corporations whose manufacturing facilities get counted in their carbon impact. So we might as well shovel and ship their coal because otherwise they’ll just burn someone else’s. Responsibility is no one’s. Resistance is futile. But inevitably we do have choices to make. Failing to make them consciously isn’t failing to make them at all; it’s just falling for the inevitability trap. It’s just giving ourselves an excuse for allowing the wrong choices to be made, and a feeble excuse at that. Among all the reasons for continuing to choose the path of evading responsibility for climate disruption, I think the least satisfying, the least noble, the hardest one to forgive ourselves for is: “It wasn’t up to me.” Well, it’s up to somebody. Who’s it gonna be?

#### Using economics is key to challenge warming

Polasky et al. 19, The Beijer Institute of Ecological Economics, Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Stockholm, Sweden; Department of Applied Economics, University of Minnesota; Resources for the Future, Washington; Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell University; Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Princeton University; Center for Limnology, University of Wisconsin–Madison, Madison; Department of Biology, Stanford University; Woods Institute, Stanford University; Natural Capital Project, Stanford University; Graduate School of Business, Columbia University; Department of Integrative Biology, Oregon State University. (Stephen, 3-19-2019, “Role of economics in analyzing the environment and sustainable development,” PNAS, https://www.pnas.org/content/116/12/5233)

The environmental sciences have documented large and worrisome changes in earth systems, from climate change and loss of biodiversity, to changes in hydrological and nutrient cycles and depletion of natural resources (12). These global environmental changes have potentially large negative consequences for future human well-being, and raise questions about whether global civilization is on a sustainable path or is “consuming too much” by depleting vital natural capital (13). The increased scale of economic activity and the consequent increasing impacts on a finite Earth arises from both major demographic changes—including population growth, shifts in age structure, urbanization, and spatial redistributions through migration (14-18)—and rising per capita income and shifts in consumption patterns, such as increases in meat consumption with rising income (19, 20). At the same time, many people are consuming too little. In 2015, ∼10% of the world’s population (736 million) lived in extreme poverty with incomes of less than $1.90 per day (21). In 2017, 821 million people were malnourished, an increase in the number reported malnourished compared with 2016 (22). There is an urgent need for further economic development to lift people out of poverty. In addition, rising inequality resulting in increasing polarization of society is itself a threat to achieving sustainable development. Eliminating poverty (goal 1) and hunger (goal 2), achieving gender equality (goal 6), and reducing inequality (goal 10) feature prominently in the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (23). A recent special issue in PNAS on natural capital framed the challenge of sustainable development as one of developing “economic, social, and governance systems capable of ending poverty and achieving sustainable levels of population and consumption while securing the life-support systems underpinning current and future human well-being” (24). The discipline of economics arguably should play a central role in meeting the sustainable development challenge. The core question at the heart of sustainable development is how to allocate the finite resources of the planet to meet “the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (25). A central focus of economics is how to allocate scarce resources to meet desired goals; indeed, a standard definition of economics is the study of allocation under scarcity. More specifically, economics studies the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services, which are both a key driver of development (increasing standards of living through providing food, housing, and other basic human requirements) and a main cause of current changes in earth systems. Economics, combined with earth system sciences, is crucial for understanding both positive and negative impacts of alternatives and the trade-offs involved. Economics, combined with other social and behavioral sciences, is crucial for understanding how it might be possible to shift human behavior toward achieving sustainable development. Economics has well-developed fields in development economics, ecological economics, environmental economics, and natural resource economics, with large bodies of research relevant to the sustainable development challenge. The application of economic principles and empirical findings should be a central component in the quest to meet the aspirations of humanity for a good life given the finite resources of the earth. Indeed, an extensive body of work by economists provides key insights into aspects of sustainable development. At its best, this work integrates work by other natural and social sciences into a policy-relevant framework and demonstrates the rich potential for collaborations among economists, natural scientists, and other social scientists on sustainable development challenges. For example, economists have developed integrated economic and climate models to address important climate change policy questions, such as how much and how fast greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced (26-31). In 2018, William Nordhaus shared the Nobel Prize in economics, in large part for his seminal work on such models. These models have sparked large debates within economics over fundamental issues such as the proper discount rate (32–35), and with the natural sciences over the likely scale of damages from climate change (36, 37). Another Nobel Prize winner in economics, Elinor Ostrom, used economic models to highlight the importance of governance and institutions for sustainable use of common property resources (38–40). Another important area of work by economists directly relevant to sustainable development defines and measures inclusive wealth (13, 41–49). Ken Arrow, yet another Nobel Prize winner in economics, was a leader in this field. It is also notable that the intellectual roots of inclusive wealth trace to work in the 1970s of two Nobel Prize winners in economics, William Nordhaus and James Tobin (50). Inclusive wealth is a measure of the aggregate wealth of society, including the value of natural capital along with the values of human capital, manufactured capital, and social capital. Inclusive wealth is a sufficient statistic for showing whether or not global society is on a sustainable trajectory. For the past two decades, the Beijer Institute of Ecological Economics, part of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, has held annual meetings bringing together leading economists and ecologists to discuss issues at the intersection of ecology and economics, which have resulted in a number of high-impact papers (51). The idea for a forum to highlight work in economics on environment and sustainable development originated at one of these meetings. Despite these examples and many others, the center of gravity in the analysis of sustainable development remains in the natural sciences, and the center of gravity in economics remains far removed from the challenge of sustainable development. The natural sciences that form the core of earth systems science, including ecology, geology, climatology, hydrology, and oceanography, are a logical place to start to build understanding of the current state and the evolution of earth systems. Natural scientists have taken the lead in prominent analyses of pathways to achieve sustainable development. For example, Pacala and Socolow (52) outline feasible methods using existing technology to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to secure a livable climate. Foley et al. (53) analyze how to meet growing food demand without expanding the footprint of agriculture. Costello et al. (54) suggest how extensive fishery reform could result in improved productivity and ecosystem health. Tallis et al. (55) analyze how to improve material standard of living for a growing population in ways that simultaneously sustain biodiversity, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce water use and air pollution. These works show that it is feasible to achieve multiple sustainable development goals with existing technology. The harder challenge is combining what is feasible in a biophysical sense with the difficult economic, political, and social hurdles that prevent society from getting to sustainable outcomes (55). In other words, natural science understanding is necessary but not sufficient to achieve sustainable development. While natural science understanding is insufficient on its own to achieve sustainable development, the same is true of economics. Economists alone do not have the knowledge base supplied by the natural sciences necessary to understand the complex ecological systems within which the economic system operates and on which economic activity causes impacts. Progress in sustainable development requires collaboration between social scientists, including economists and natural scientists. Of course, achieving sustainable development requires institutions and political alignment that go well beyond assembling the science knowledge arising from integrated scientific knowledge. Numerous examples show the incomplete nature of collaboration between economists and other disciplines engaged in the analysis of sustainable development. To take one recent example, there were no economists involved in a special section on “Ecosystem Earth” published in Science in April 2017 that contained discussions of population, consumption, agricultural production, land use, human behavior, collective action, and policy (56). The lack of involvement by economists in ongoing discussions of sustainable development leads to gaps in understanding production and consumption decisions, the resulting market outcomes that drive global environmental change, and how to regulate or reduce negative environmental impacts from economic activities. The incomplete engagement of economists mirrors the structure of the economics discipline. The fields of ecological, environmental, and resource economics are not core fields within economics. There are few ecological, environmental, or resource economics publications in flagship journals within economics. For example, in 2018 only two papers published in the American Economic Review listed classification codes for renewable resources and conservation, nonrenewable resources and conservation, energy economics, or environmental economics (57, 58). Only a small minority of the top economics departments have fields in ecological, environmental, or resource economics. In contrast, virtually every top economics program offers fields in labor economics, industrial organization, and international trade. Ecological, environmental, and resource economics programs often are in schools of the environment or natural resources, schools of public policy, or in departments of agricultural economics. In addition, economics is notable among academic disciplines for its relative isolation: “Though all disciplines are in some way insular…this trait peculiarly characterizes economics” (59). Compared with other social scientists, economists have far lower citation rates for work in other disciplines. Jacobs (60) found that the percentage of within-field citations in economics was 81%, versus 59% for political science, 53% for anthropology, and 52% for sociology. In addition, the core of the economics discipline is relatively isolated from the natural sciences that have played a large role in sustainability science to date, ecology, geology, climatology, hydrology, and marine biology. Network maps of disciplines using citations patterns often show economics and fields, such as ecology and geosciences, at opposite ends of the spectrum (figure 3 in ref. 61). Given the large role of economic activity in causing rapid change in earth systems, and the scale of the sustainable development challenge, there is an urgent need for more rapid integration of economics into the core of sustainable development, and for more rapid integration of sustainable development into the core of economics.

#### Text: The United States federal government should substantially increase prohibitions on anticompetitive business practices by the private sector by modifying the consumer welfare standard to prioritize environmental effects on society.

#### 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.

#### Rejoining the aff is key to clash, education, and bridging scholarship gaps between debate and global movements

Rahman 20, American legal scholar, author, and policy advisor who currently serves as Senior Counselor in the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) in the Biden administration (Sabel Rahman, September 2020, “Structuralist Regulation,” Prepared for NYU Law School Public Law Colloquium)

Introduction

In the summer of 2020, the murder of George Floyd by police officers in Minneapolis sparked a new wave of Black Lives Matter protests, escalating into what would become the largest protest movement of modern American history.1 The protests put at the forefront of reform debates long-standing demands to “defund the police” and calls for abolition of the prison industrial complex.2 While many policy commentators recoiled at the demand to defund the police, offering more modest and less disruptive alternatives to mitigate the problem of police violence,3 longtime advocates for abolition responded by asserting that the demand was in fact intended to be taken literally and seriously: that police departments and prisons should be defunded and abolished, and that those resources be reallocated to different institutions committed to securing public safety and well-being. The central insight, for abolitionists, is that the problem of police violence against Black residents is a structural problem, a product of the institutionalized biases, cultures, and profit motives embedded in policing as an institution. Given the structural roots of the problem, many well-intentioned reformist proposals for more transparency, stricter rules of police conduct, or other anti-bias measures would simply not succeed4 in reducing the incidence of violence against Black and brown Americans.5 A similar dynamic played out the same summer in a very different policy domain. In July, Congress convened a historic first: a hearing featuring a tough grilling of the CEOs of the big four tech companies, Apple, Google, Amazon, and Facebook.6 After years of increasing public scrutiny over the business practices of these firms and concerns about their market power, 7 policymakers are now for the first time in decades seriously entertaining questions about amped up antitrust enforcement and policy. But at the same time, some have raised cautionary notes, warning that greater antitrust efforts might be problematic, misleading, or ill-conceived.8 Even as concern over “fake news,” disinformation, and media polarization on online platforms like Facebook and YouTube proliferate,9 and as the COVID-19 pandemic accentuates the market dominance of these platform firms, 10 a similar clash is emerging among policymakers, between those seeking structural constraints on the platform business models of information platforms, and those who see such interventions as too draconian, preferring instead case-by-case management of conduct and content on these platforms.11 Or take one more example of this tension between structural and case-by-case regulation in the ongoing debates over the problem of financial malfeasance, too-big-to-fail financial firms, and the risk of financial crises. After the 2008 financial crisis, one set of policy responses has emphasized largely entity-by-entity and case-by-case responses: macroprudential regulation by federal officials overseeing the risk profiles and approaches of systemically risky financial firms, or greater corporate compliance mechanisms promoting “ethical” financial conduct.12 Another set of policy proposals are more structural, seeking to alter the very business models and market dynamics of finance more broadly, whether by converting financial firms into de facto public utilities13 or by breaking up systemically risky banks to prevent the risk of financial collapse in the first place.14 These debates, most prevalent a decade ago, have started to reemerge as the country enters another historic economic collapse, and commentators raise questions about how to structurally remake the financial sector in response. 15 This paper is not about abolition or antitrust or financial reform per se. But it is about an underlying conceptual and analytical debate that lies beneath each of these policy fights—and a wide range of other similar battles playing out in legal and policy circles. Whether it is in context of policing, tech, finance, or in other areas, we can see a similar pattern to the policy debate. Structuralist solutions are proposed in each of these debates, each time provoking a similar set of counterclaims and anxieties. Often, structuralist claims—like defunding the police, breaking up tech platforms, or the sharp restriction of too-big-to-fail banks—are seen as overly costly, dangerous, or simply naïve and ill-informed. Alternatives are proposed that seek to manage or mitigate the problematic conduct of firms or state actors; but these counter proposals are in turn critiqued for being too minimalist or incremental. The problem, however, is that for many policymakers the unease with structural solutions can be habitual and under-explained. When structuralist policies are offered, they are read in terms of a simple spectrum of “more” versus “less” regulation, with more regulation facing a higher burden of justification against default market and private orderings. The problem with this response is that, while structuralist proposals do have their limitations and risks, they are also often apt and well-tailored to the problems they seek to address. That value, however, is easily overlooked insofar as structuralist proposals are too-readily caricatured as naïve or overly costly. This paper attempts to fill this gap, providing a first cut at articulating and theorizing structuralist regulation as a distinct regulatory strategy.16 This paper is an attempt to theorize the concept of structuralist regulation, what makes it unique, what assumptions and under what conditions it should be preferred to more conventional solutions. While structuralist proposals like “breaking up the banks” are often criticized in the frame of being “too much” regulation in contrast to minimalist alternatives, as I will suggest in this paper, structuralist regulation is not necessarily “more”; but it is different, and those differences are sometimes warranted. The idea of structuralist regulation is related to but distinct from other familiar regulatory strategy distinctions: rules versus standards;17 adjudication versus rulemaking;18 command-and-control regulation versus decentralized and “new governance” models of regulation.19 In this paper, I define structuralist regulation as a regulatory approach that attempts to mitigate problematic conduct not through direct enforcement on individual actors, but rather by altering the background social, economic, political structures to prophylactically prevent or reduce the incentives for and likelihood of those incidents. Readers should note that I use the term “regulation” in this paper loosely to refer to various kinds of policymaking; as we shall see, structuralist policies can be effectuated through legislative or administrative means, often both. Structuralist regulation contrasts with more individualized, entity- or conduct-based regulations that depend on case-by-case enforcement, and instead focuses on limiting or altering the capacities and powers of those actors in the first place. Another way to understand structuralist policy is that it operates “upstream” of conventional policy debates: rather than attempting to manage particular instances of problematic conduct by firms or state actors, structuralist solutions preemptively seek to shape the powers and capacities of those actors as a way to prophylactically limit the likelihood of problematic conduct in the first place. Structuralist policy is not a sharp binary contrast with non-structural approaches. But it is a different, distinctive way of thinking about public policy and regulation, resting on different assumptions about the likelihood of harms, about administrative capacities, and also on different causal understandings of the problems it seeks to solve. Structuralist regulations may in some sense be costly: it is likely that some relatively benign conduct will also be swept up or eliminated in a structuralist regime. But these costs come with accompanying benefits: reduced costs of detection and enforcement for regulators; a better economizing of scarce regulatory capacity and autonomy; a precautionary limiting of potentially devastating outcomes; and a more direct addressing of problematic patterns that might otherwise defy remedial efforts. This conceptual clarification generates a number of useful payoffs. First, it offers a language and framework to understand structuralist regulation as a distinct way of thinking about public policy. This is critical to disentangle some of the fuzziness around policy debates in areas like finance, tech, and racial justice. It is also a necessary precondition to having more productive policy debates and opening up more room for research. As I will argue below, often there are good reasons to prefer some kind of structuralist regulation, but plenty of disagreement or lack of clarity on what specific structuralist tool to deploy. Should we break up Facebook via antitrust, or impose public utility / common carriage regulations on the platform, or both? These are arguably both structuralist tools, and there is a debate to be had between them. But that debate can be obscured by unease with structuralist approaches to begin with, making it harder to have an apples-to-apples comparison and analysis of what policy lever to deploy. Second, this concept of structuralist regulation helps provide a policy framework for understanding and engaging some of the structuralist claims made by grassroots reform movements especially in this moment. We are in a unique moment of resurgent grassroots activism, and as scholars of social movements have argued, many of these movements are advancing structural, transformative visions of public policy and legal-institutional change.20 But these claims are often seen as outside the scope of more traditional modes of policy debate and analysis. Building a conceptual framework of what we mean by ‘structural’ reform can help bridge the reform ideas being generated by grassroots movements on the one hand, and those arising from policymakers and academics on the other. More broadly, we might even say we are on the cusp of a revival of interest in structuralist policy solutions in response to the deeper problems of economic inequality,21 racial subordination,22 power in public law,23 and political economy approaches to law and public policy.24 A clearer understanding of structuralist policy design will be important to inform the kind of inclusionary policy agenda needed to remedy these inequities. The rest of the paper proceeds as follows. Part I provides a conceptualization of ‘structuralist’ policymaking, identifying the underlying assumptions that animate structuralism as a regulatory strategy. This Part also notes that this concept of regulatory strategy (or what I call “regulatory logic”, as defined below) should be understood as a distinct way of unpacking and analyzing the patterns of policymaking judgment distinct from other modes of analysis like cost-benefit analysis or the rules-versus-standards debate. Part II then looks at examples of structuralist policy proposals in recent economic policy debates: the debate over tech platforms, the debate over too-big-to-fail financial firms and systemic risk, and the renewed interest in anti-trust and anti-monopoly law. These examples help illustrate structuralist regulatory logics in action, and their distinctive assumptions and potential benefits over more conventional regulatory approaches. The purpose of this Part is not to offer a full-throated defense of structuralist policies in each of these sectors (although I am perhaps unsurprisingly sympathetic to the arguments on the merits); rather the purpose here is simply to illustrate structuralism as a distinct mode of thinking about policymaking. Part III articulates some broader implications for how to implement and institutionalize structuralist policies. Part IV concludes with some closing thoughts on how structuralism as a way of thinking about regulation connects to this broader moment of intense political and scholarly interest in inequality and racial (in)justice.

#### 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.

#### The plan’s structuralist approach avoids critiques of reform

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C. The anti-monopoly revival as a structuralist turn

Both the platforms and financial regulation debates are manifestations of a broader shift in policy thought: the growing and renewed interest in antitrust and anti-monopoly regulatory approaches. 100 For these scholars antitrust law encompasses a broad toolkit of regulatory strategies to deal with concentrated corporate power and market dominance in sectors ranging from agriculture to pharmaceuticals to ‘big tech’ firms to finance. The toolkit involves not just the familiar strategies of limiting mergers and breaking up large firms, but also ‘functional’ separations, public utility regulations, and more. While there many design questions and intramural debates among these different tools and which tools apply best to which sectors, what this antitrust revival shares is an underlying orientation towards structuralist solutions. First, these antitrust scholars generally offer an empirical analysis of contemporary markets that shift the focus away from individual firm conduct to the linkages between conduct of firms and the larger structure of the market, its relative concentration, and the ways in which the market setting enables or incentivizes problematic firm behavior.101 While some critics have framed this renewed interest as naïve, it is very much rooted in empirical assessments of the current state of particular markets and sectors, which in turn motivates a return to structural solutions like breakup or common carriage obligations.102 Second, these antitrust proposals reflect a reassessment of conventional views of the costs and benefits of structural solutions like breakup. Since the 1970s, antitrust enforcement came under fire, as breakups were viewed as net harmful for the economy, and the goals of antitrust shifted to emphasize consumer welfare as the dominant focal point. But as more recent studies suggest, the fears of the costs of breakup may be overstated—and the assessment of the social and economic benefits of market concentration also overstated in ways that tip the scales back in favor of structural solutions.103 Finally, the new antitrust moment also reflects a different assessment of administrative capacities. As Rory Van Loo suggests in a recent paper, breakups are, despite their conventional image, administrable and effective, and where there are challenging details to be worked out, those particulars are no more difficult to manage than many familiar thorny problems in complex regulatory policy.104 Nonstructural alternatives, meanwhile, are more complex in practice than these critiques suggest.105 III. Applications and Implications The examples of structuralist policymaking in Part II above are illustrative of a broader pattern of structuralist policymaking and structuralist regulatory strategy. The underlying assumptions—focusing on structure and system as the target of regulation rather than individual instances of conduct; the reassessing of costs and benefits of these interventions, especially to prevent especially problematic risks or outcomes; and the reimagining of administrability and efficacy questions—can shape how we approach a range of other policy debates as well. This Part identifies some examples of how this approach to conceptualizing policymaking might apply in other cases, as well as some general implications of structuralist approaches.

A. Structuralism: other potential applications

The distinction between structuralist and non-structuralist regulatory logics helps explain and inform a range of other policy debates beyond the ones profiled in Part II above. As suggested in the Introduction, one way to read the debates over criminal justice reform and policing reform right now is in terms of this same distinction between structural and nonstructural logics. There are a range of proposals for combating the problem of police brutality and police violence, particularly as it affects Black and brown communities in the United States. Many of these proposals revolve around attempts to improve police officer conduct: through anti-bias training, changes to use-of-force principles, body cameras to provide ex post accountability and surveillance of police officer conduct, and the like. But for abolitionists and racial justice movements, these proposals have largely been met with skepticism. For these movement activists, the problem of police violence is endemic to a system of policing where racial bias and where the ethic of violent disciplining of communities of color is baked in so deeply that these kinds of conduct-focused measures will not be sufficient to address the problem of police violence. Alternative proposals of abolition, “defunding the police” or “invest-divest” rest on a different logic: that the problem of police violence can be better addressed by intervening upstream from individual instances of police conduct, and instead redirecting resources away from police departments, into alternative institutions focused on community stability and security. This shift is animated by the structuralist presumptions explored above. First, there is an empirical and causal claim about the systemic origins of police violence. Second, there is a different assessment of the social value of current policing institutions as net-negative, and worth restructuring rather than preserving. Third, there is an implicit view about administrability: the resources and level of information and efficacy needed for technocratic solutions to have impact reflect an overly-rosy view of what training or body cameras can accomplish; by contrast the simple redirecting of public funds would create such a sea change in the nature of public authority that it is in many ways more efficacious an intervention. Or take antidiscrimination law as another example. From employment to housing, legal scholars have suggested a range of structural solutions to endemic problems of discrimination in employment and housing contexts, as a way to remedy the deeper root drivers of discrimination and move beyond individualized, case-by-case modes of enforcement. In the employment context, for example, Susan Sturm has suggested that the problem of systemic biases requires a move beyond individualized enforcement measures to “structural” ones that seek to alter the underlying culture and organizational structure of firms, in particular by embedding systems within firms to monitor and respond to transgressions, and affirmatively prevent more subtle forms of bias in the workplace. 106 On this approach, employers could be held liable for institutional practices and systems that conduce to instances of discrimination.107 Sam Bagenstos has similarly argued for more systemic approaches to antidiscrimination laws, such as the reasonable accommodation standard established in the Americans with Disabilities Act as offering a way to affirmatively promote systemic inclusion and combat patterns of subordination.108 In the housing context, Olati Johnson has argued for a move away from private enforcement of individual claims to instead using affirmative “equality directives” that through administrative measures like the “Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing” rule, prods local governments to pro-actively design different approaches to zoning, housing policy, and urban infrastructure to promote desegregation.109 These approaches to antidiscrimination share a few common features that echo the structuralist moves identified above. They all shift focus from individualized instances or conduct to underlying firm or geographic systems, designing regulatory interventions to alter those background systems as a way of changing the incidences and patterns of discrimination. Second, these alternative approaches reflect a very different set of presumptions, a greater willingness to exert more dramatic costs and changes on private ordering, in service of public values of non-discrimination. And third, they reflect a boldness and faith in regulatory capacity to induce these changes to the system—and in some ways also reflect a humility, a realization that individualized private enforcement is unlikely to diagnose and respond to the number of instances of problems that will arise.

B. Conceptual implications of structuralist approaches

Stepping back from particular applications of structuralist approaches, there are a number of broader implications of deploying structuralist strategies that are worth naming explicitly. First, structuralism as a way of thinking about public policy operates in some ways as a flipping of presumptions, from a default orientation to market and private ordering in which policy interventions are to be judicious, minimalist, and face higher burdens of justification, to a focus on public goals and needs, where the presumption operates in favor of state action designed to constitute the terrain of economic or social activity. Consider for example proposals for regulating financial activities and money-like products along the lines proposed by Ricks. As Ricks suggests, a range of modern financial firms create moneylike financial instruments, from money market mutual funds to repo markets. These activities, to Ricks, should be regulated strictly in ways analogous to the strict restrictions imposed on cash depositories.110 Money, for Ricks, is a kind of economic infrastructure that should be subjected to public utility style regulations on market entry, rate regulations, and obligations to serve all comers.111 This infrastructural approach is rooted in a conceptual shift: “rather than seeing bank money creation as a legitimate private activity that is regulated, it sees money creation as an intrinsically public activity that is outsourced.”112 By shifting the “institutional baseline” to “public provisioning,” this alters in a fundamental way how risks and costs are assessed. Ricks’ example is indicative of a common feature across applications of structuralist policymaking. Other structural-oriented financial regulation proposals share a similar burdenshifting quality. Yesha Yadav has proposed stricter liability on exchanges for failing to prevent instances of fraud, for example, placing the burden on the exchanges, not on regulators, to be pro-active.113 Saule Omarova proposes a financial product approval process, which would place the burden of justification and safety design on firms, not on regulators.114 These examples show a shifting of baseline presumptions away from markets and private ordering as a default. This in turn places structuralist regulation in the company of policy strategies and concepts that may be of particular value in overcoming market fundamentalist and market-oriented presumptions that for many scholars and critics have characterized the last few decades of “neoliberal” and market-oriented policy imagination.115 Like the precautionary principle, this burden-shifting can also manifest in the other direction, as a greater willingness to deploy strict regulatory restrictions in the face of uncertainty, rather than requiring a greater burden of proof for regulators seeking to intervene. 116 Second, this flipping of the baseline is partly a result of an empirical and sociological understanding. Structural regulation depends partially on analysis that can diagnose the “upstream” causes and identifying levers to change the background socioeconomic conditions that would lower the incidence of problematic conduct “downstream.” The idea that breakups could prevent problematic conduct by market dominant actors turns in part on new empirical findings about how firms have achieved concentration and how that shapes their business models and day-to-day practices. Similarly, the turn to structuralist financial regulations rests on the causal and empirical analyses that identified the structural dimensions of the 2008 financial collapse. This idea of “upstream” causes is not without controversies of its own. There are likely to be significant empirical, causal, and sociological disagreements about whether and which structural features lie at the “root” of the goods or practices that regulation targets. In the financial regulation or antitrust contexts, empirical study has been key to highlighting the underlying features of market structure that conduces to problematic conduct or systemic risks. In the antidiscrimination context, we could understand familiar legal concepts like disparate impact as offering legal justification for shifting from a focus on individualized intent or proof of harm to longer causal chains less tethered to discrete individual actors.117 We may disagree about these causal claims in ways that make aligning on structural solutions difficult. But it is also worth distinguishing where there are genuine factual or causal disagreements about which structural causes are central, from instances where instead we have an anti-structural skepticism of regulatory intervention as noted in Part I above. Third, it is worth noting that structuralist interventions themselves can operate at different levels. For some scholars who have explicitly employed structuralist frames in their work, the structural turn is about shifting the organizational culture and norms within a firm, as a way of institutionalizing more systemic changes in conduct rather than focusing on individual transgressions. Coates frames the Volcker rule in this way.118 As noted earlier, Sturm similarly defines “structural” approaches to anti-discrimination as a way to shift the culture of the workplace itself to prevent or blunt more hidden and implicit forms of bias. 119 Similarly, some corporate law and financial regulation scholars emphasize compliance culture.120 Other structuralist interventions operate even further upstream from the culture of the firm: antitrust concepts or limits on financial firm size or GDPR-style restrictions on the use of data in Facebook’s business model for example alter the very nature of the market and system in which these firms operate, above and beyond any impact on firm cultures of compliance. This suggests a fourth implication: while this paper has largely treated ‘structural’ interventions as distinct from non-structural ones, one could imagine circumstances where structural and non-structural solutions might coexist and even complement one another. Some structuralist strategies might operate by targeting specific firms in ways designed to induce a broader change in business models, practices, and conduct in the sector more broadly. In the financial regulation context, one way to read the impact of the FSOC’s power to designate firms as ‘systemically risky’ is as a highly costly threat that forces firms to alter their business models and cultures to avoid running afoul of the designation authority—what some scholars have called “regulation by threat”.121 Although this intervention in a sense targets individual firms, it does so in a way that induces wider shifts in the sector writ large. Similarly, Rory Van Loo has highlighted the role of “gatekeeper” firms who themselves can be deputized as enforcers and regulators of whole sectors, by well-designed regulatory interventions that leverage the oversight and systemic power of key firms like platforms or infrastructural firms like banks.122 In the policing context, we might consider the revocation of qualified immunity in a similar light: while this shift would operate by imposing costs on individual state actors, it could shift incentives so dramatically as to induce a wider shift in policing culture and practice.

C. Institutionalizing structural policies

A structuralist lens on regulation and public policy raises a number of further implications for the structure of policymaking bodies themselves. First, structuralism can apply just as readily in context of legislation as it can in context of administrative policymaking. This paper has used the term “regulation” loosely, at times referring to statutory interventions, at other points highlighting administrative rules. The point is that when we look at the underlying strategy informing a policy intervention, we can see important differences in how policymakers conceptualize the problem and their tools that shapes the content of those policy interventions—independent of the institutional setting through which the policy is implemented. Second, insofar as structural regulations do involve administrative actions, it is likely that some of our prevailing conceptions about regulatory policymaking will also have to shift to better align with these strategies. In particular, as scholars in the financial regulation arena have noted, structuralist approaches to financial regulation seem to require a more expansive view of conventional understandings of cost-benefit analysis. When rules are themselves constitutive of markets, and upstream of individual firm or entity actions, any cost-benefit analysis is likely to be highly speculative—and easily misapplied. In this context, cost-benefit requirements whether doctrinal (as in the case of arbitrary and capricious review) or administrative could be misapplied, or even weaponized by industry to oppose structural solutions.123 Third, structuralist regulations will still require administrative agencies to be implemented and enforced—and this type of regulatory strategy might require different types of agency structures, capacities, or designs. The implementation and then quick dismantling of structural financial regulations like the Volcker Rule and the systemic risk designations by the Financial Stability Oversight Council for example suggests that precisely because of their significant impacts on industry, structuralist rules might be more likely to generate tougher pushback and lobbying from industry—which in turn suggests the need for greater attention to agency designs that prevent capture, empower other stakeholder groups, and promote democratic accountability.124 Structuralist anti-discrimination law, as Bagenstos notes, depends on alert, active, and engaged enforcement agencies to get off the ground.125 In the tech platforms and big data debate, some scholars have proposed various administrative law mechanisms to promote greater regulation, from review boards to disparate impact statements to the creation of dedicated regulatory bodies focused on the problems of big data.126 The efficacy of these administrative structures, however, depend on the degree to which they are deployed in service of more structurally transformative policies.

IV. Conclusion: Structuralism and the inequality crisis

Across a range of debates in economic policy, racial justice, and public law, we see a renewed interest among scholars and policymakers in what this paper has called “structuralist” policymaking strategies. Structural strategies are animated by three underlying conceptual shifts: first a focus on the structure and system as the target of regulation rather than individualized conduct or entities; second, a reassessment of costs and benefits that favors more prophylactic and “upstream” interventions; and third, a reassessment of the relative administrability and efficacy of structural approaches in contrast with more conventional regulatory models such as direct conduct supervision or disclosure regimes. This focus on structuralist strategies arises particularly in context of the broader current crisis of economic, social, and political inequality affecting American democracy. The renewed interest in more structural, transformative, and durable policy interventions in these different policy domains from finance to tech to antitrust to racial justice reflects in part a broader political moment of deeper concern in and attention to structural inequities. In recent years, the problem of economic inequality has taken center stage in law and policy discussions, and in the last few years we have also seen a greater public attention to questions of racial justice and structural questions of power.127 Structural regulations seem especially critical for overcoming deeply entrenched inequities of wealth, power, influence, and control over the economic and social realities of American democracy. The urgency of these inequities is reflected in the surge of social movement organizing in recent years, and it is telling that many of these movements for economic and racial justice themselves deploy a specifically structural language and frame for diagnosing the root causes of inequality and in the solutions they are offering.128 The stakes of this structuralist turn in policymaking strategy, then, is about more than simply rediscovering a different way to approach public policy; it is also fundamentally about developing the kind of policy language and a legal architecture needed to meet the urgent needs of egalitarian and democratic social change in this moment.

#### Anti-state politics prevent 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. 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.

#### Governmental politics facilitates and compliments movements ⁠— outright rejection only works for the privileged

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Lastly, the state remains a site of struggle, and political parties will have a role in any ecology of organisations – particularly if the traditional social democratic parties continue to collapse and enable a new generation of parties to emerge. Ensuring a post-work society for all will require more than just individual workplaces; it demands success at the level of the state as well. 57 While parties are frequently denounced for their cynical consent to electoralism and the limits posed by international capital, this changes within an ecology of organisations. Rather than making them the impossible vehicle of revolutionary desires – associated with the hopeless prospect of ‘voting in’ postcapitalism – they can instead take on the more realistic task of forming the ‘tip of the iceberg’ in terms of political pressure, as well as developing the ability to bring together a widely varied constituency. 58 The state can complement politics on the street and in the workplace, just as the latter two can broaden the options for parties. The avoidance of the state – common to so many folk-political approaches – is a mistake. Mass movements and parties should be seen as tools of the same populist movement, each capable of achieving different things. At their most general level, parties can integrate various tendencies within a social movement – from reformist to revolutionary – into a common project. While international capital and the inter-state system make radical change virtually impossible from within the state, there are still basic and important policy choices to be made about austerity, housing support, climate change, childcare, demilitarisation of the police and abortion rights. Simply to reject parliamentary politics is to ignore the real advances these policies can make. It takes quite a privileged position to not care about minimum wage regulations, immigration laws, changes to legal support or rulings on abortion. At their best, electoral entities can act as a disruptive force (stalling, publicising controversies, articulating popular outrage), and even act as a progressive force in some situations. This does not imply that social movements should simply be turned into the vote-mobilising wings of political parties. The relationship between parties and social movements should extend far beyond this, into a process of two-way communication. On the one hand, financial support can be given from the party to community initiatives, and various policies – such as laws on public protest – can be amended to facilitate the activities of social movements. In Venezuela, for instance, the state supported the creation of neighbourhood communes as a way to embed socialism in everyday practices. 59 On the other hand, resources for new parties can be mobilised collectively – Podemos, for example, got started through crowd-funding € 150,000 – and the vitality of the party can be maintained through constant institutionalised negotiations between local movements, party members and central party structures. 60 Podemos, for instance, has aimed to build mechanisms for popular governance while also seeking a way into established institutions. 61 It is a multi-pronged approach to social change and offers greater potential for real transformation than either option on its own. 62 Meanwhile, Brazil’s Partido dos Trabalhadores has maintained openness to multiple groups (liberation theology groups, peasant movements) while still organising around an essentially union-based core. In the words of one researcher, ‘this combination of grassroots and vanguard constituted a Leninism that was not very Leninist’. 63 What all these experiences show, however, is the mass mobilisation of the people is necessary in order to transform the state into a meaningful tool of their interests, and to overcome the blunt division between the power of movements and the power of the state. The aim must be to avoid both ‘the tendency to fetishise the state, official power, and its institutions and the opposing tendency to fetishise antipower’. 64 In a context of widespread discontent with the political system, this remains possible – though, again, the importance of having a discursive framework in place to channel this discontent is obvious. In the end, parties still hold significant political power, and the struggle over their future should certainly not be abandoned to reactionary forces. It should be clear how far away we now are from the folk-political fetishism of localism, horizontalism and direct democracy. An ecology of organisations does not deny that such organisational forms may have a role, but it rejects the idea that they are sufficient. This is doubly true for a counter-hegemonic project that requires the toppling of neoliberal common sense. What we are calling for, therefore, is a functional complementarity between organisations, rather than the fetishising of specific organisations or organisational forms.

#### Our political strategy is important for interim gains ⁠— those are valuable because they culminate in revolutionary politics ⁠— seeking complete revolution without state-centric goals leads to inevitable failure

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We begin by noting a dilemma haunting electoral politics in several countries. (1) It is tempting for critics to forgo electoral politics because it is so dysfunctional. But to do so cedes too much independent power to corporate action and the radical right with respect to state power. The right loves to make politics dysfunctional to make people lose confidence in it and to transfer their confidence to the private sector. (2) Yet the logic of the media-electoral-corporate system does spawn a confined grid of electoral intelligibility that makes it difficult to think, experiment, and act outside its parameters. Think of the market initiating/state veto power of corporations, of media talking heads concentrating on differences between candidates, of the primacy of electoral strategists, of focus groups, of the role of scandal in the media and electoral politics, of the strategic location in elections of inattentive “undecided voters,” of billionaire super PACs, and so on. The electoral grid cannot be ignored or ceded to the right, but it also sucks experimental pursuits and bold ventures out of politics. How can we renegotiate this dilemma of electoral politics? That is the problematic within which I am working. I do not purport to have a perfect response to it. Perfect answers are suspect. It may be wise to start with the positive possibilities of micro-experimentation on several fronts. One thing that connects individuals, constituencies, and institutions is the roles that constitute an institutional matrix. The word connection is actually too weak. We are partly constituted by the array of roles we perform, and those performances resonate with the larger institutions in which they are set. You are, say, a teacher, an athlete, a lover, a parent, a middle-aged child of an aging parent, a student, a worker, a voter, a churchgoer, a film addict, a citizen, a consumer, a member of a political party, an investor, a blogger, a musician, an artist, and so on endlessly. You are, in part, a composite of the roles in which you participate, even though you overflow that composite. Subcategories, of course, multiply within each abstract category. A “worker” may repair computers, cook hamburgers, serve tables, advise clients on investments, sell furniture, teach elementary school kids, give Sunday sermons, be a TV producer, be a film director, and so on. As a devotee, you may be an evangelical Christian, a Catholic, a reform Jew, an orthodox Jew, a Unitarian, a devotee of nontheistic reverence, a Muslim, a Hindu, or a follower of the kind of Buddhism that eschews a personal God. The degree of intensity within each of these modes of identification will also vary. Many role performances are tacit, as when you follow accepted rules of eye contact on an urban street, stop automatically at a red light on the way to work, chew your food a set number of times before swallowing, unconsciously participate in a settled practice of consumption, watch and listen quietly to a film at the theater, glance at an attractive gym partner through the mirror rather than staring directly, close the door when you are in the bathroom, adopt a distinctive stride during casual walks, or never pick your nose in public. To break that last restraint would be disgusting, reminding us how tacit role performances are infused with affective judgments. Such practices have become habitual, often in ways that condense previous relations of overt power. Other role performances are more clearly laden with degrees of power, as when you obey an order from a boss, pay your taxes on time, arrive at work punctually, bow your head during prayer to minimize family tensions, avoid eye contact with a cop, give your earnings to the pimp who oppresses you, obey the terms of your probation, buy a car because no other mode of transportation is available, conform to the pace of work on an assembly line, or conceal drugs from prison officials. Erving Goffman is brilliant at disclosing the tacit character of many shared role performances, as Judith Butler is in thinking about how they help to constitute a culture of gender practices. Here is one statement from Goffman, as he collects examples from multiple sources, exposing a series of tacit role performances that define and secure the modern sense of bodily integrity: How very intimate the bodily sense is can be seen by performing a little experiment in your imagination. Think first of swallowing the saliva in your mouth, or do so. Then imagine expectorating it into a tumbler and drinking it! What seemed natural and “mine” suddenly becomes disgusting and alien. Or picture yourself sucking blood from a prick in your finger; then imagine sucking blood from a bandage around your finger! What I perceive as separate from my body becomes, in the twinkling of an eye, cold and foreign. 2 “In the twinkling of an eye.” Butler, in Gender Trouble, focuses on how experimental performances bring out tacit practices that constitute the dominant experience of gender. Here is what she says in an early book about the ambiguity of drag: “In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself—as well as its contingency. Indeed, part of the pleasure, the giddiness of the performance is in the recognition of a radical contingency in the relation between sex and gender in the face of cultural configurations of causal unities that are regularly assumed to be natural and necessary…; we see sex and gender denaturalized by means of a performance.” It is of course debatable how far such denaturalization proceeds, and drag does not guarantee, as Butler knows, which responses will be made to its strategy of denaturalization. But denaturalizing performances do open the door to new possibilities of enactment, as they disclose inner, nuanced relations between cultural performance and gender constitution. As another quote from Butler in a later edition of the same book reveals, the culturally infused sense of bodily integrity and disgust in Goffman's example carries implications for the unconscious norms of sexual experience historically built into this culture: “Those sexual practices in both heterosexual and homosexual contexts that open surfaces and orifices to erotic signification or close down others effectively reinscribe the boundaries of the body along new cultural lines. Anal sex among them.” 3 To reinscribe the cultural play of disgust and pleasure with respect to bodily fluids and orifices is to participate in the micropolitics of gender and sexual practice. As these two thinkers reveal, there are significant relays between role performance, self-identity, and the formation of larger political constellations. Not in the sense that minor shifts in a series of role performances could by itself transform an entire political regime but in the sense that large-scale cultural investments in a set of role expectations tend to express and support the priorities of an established regime, while large-scale role experimentations can both make a difference on their own and help to set preconditions for constituency participation in more robust political movements. The domains of gender and sexuality are important on their own, and recent success in these domains carries suggestions of how to act in others as well. The creative politics of gender and sexuality during the past forty years displays how potent the play back and forth can be among role experimentations, occupational practices, local assemblies, teaching routines, church struggles, state policies, judicial decisions, and legislative enactments. Here I focus on protean connections between role experimentation, self-identity, economic performance, and macropolitical actions. To condense the flow chart, an institution is an organized hierarchy of roles in relation to energies and activities that overflow them, such as gossip, backdoor deals, confusion, whistle-blowing, care, revenge, and secrecy; roles mediate between identities and institutions; there is often a degree of slack within institutions as to how a role is to be performed; an accumulation of role experimentations in several venues can make a direct difference in politics; role experimentations by some can also set examples for others; and such experiments can filter into the sensibilities, beliefs, identities, and larger political activities of those who initiate and respond to them. 4 A series of shifts on this register, for instance, may dispose you to listen attentively to new proposals for large-scale political action. Powerful subterranean currents thus flow back and forth between role performance, existential orientation, belief, and larger political actions. Indeed as such oscillations proceed, moments of stuttering, unfocused shame, laughter, and hesitation periodically arise, drawn from the element of noise that inhabits the spaces between roles and role bearers. There is no zone of complete neutrality in a world of role performances. Obedient performances in cumulative effect tend to support the existing regime as they insinuate its dictates into our collective habits of perception, judgment, and action. Unless a dissident group of workers meticulously “works according to rule” to disrupt production through excruciating obedience in a way that discloses how tangled formal rules can become. Or a group creatively improvises on the performance of Bartleby the Scrivener, posing endless questions about the orders given to it until the machine overflows itself or is jammed. These indeed are creative role experimentations. So was the practice in Eastern Europe during the late stages of Soviet rule to clap endlessly when a Soviet stooge spoke, until the bewildered speaker was moved to sit down amid the roar around him. I recently attended a faculty meeting with the president of my university at which the entire faculty remained silent after his CEOstyle talk ended and he departed slowly up the aisle. Sometimes silence sends a message to power. Our lives are messages. 5 Role experimentation can disrupt and redirect the flow of authority, habit, institutional regularity, and future projection. It can also encourage others to look more closely at their own performances in this or that domain. Such experiments can also set the stage for more adventurous and larger scale actions. My examples will be limited to constituencies who are the most apt to read this book, though they could easily be adjusted to a broader array. Suppose a constellation of students, studying to enter professional life, forms study groups to explore more closely how those professions presuppose and enforce a set of practices that contribute to the fragility of things as they simultaneously draw attention away from that contribution. The students may pose untimely questions in their political science, economics, engineering, medical, business, legal, and biology classes. If in a secular institution, they may seek out courses that complicate the assumptions of secularism. If in a religious school, they may organize a group to explore the history of atheism or of minority faiths that eschew the theme of a personal God. They can engage experimental artistic work that stretches their habitual patterns of perception and judgment. The nature- and soundscape compositions of John Luther Adams have salutary effects on many in this respect. Such activities can also prime you to experiment with other role performances once you enter professional life. If a lawyer, you may organize to rethink your connections to the ugly prison system and to adjust your practice to protest its ugliness. Or you may give a portion of your time to challenge corporations, localities, and states that defile the environment. If a doctor, you may organize voluntary medical care for the poor and publicize what you are doing. In both cases these experimentations make a modest difference on their own, prime our capacities for more sensitive perception in other domains of life, and may prepare us to participate with others in yet more adventurous activities. These are minor moments, but an accumulation of minor moments can jostle settled habits of perception; they can encourage a readiness to become more exploratory; and they can extend the time horizon within which we think and act. Suppose, now, you are middle- or upper-middle-class citizens in a polity that has competitive elections. You have become increasingly dissatisfied with the course your society is taking. Voting, while pertinent, seems radically insufficient to the issues involved. Its time horizon is too short and the strategic place of ill-informed undecided voters in electoral politics skews campaigns too sharply. Inequality has been extended. The lower reaches of society are left out in the cold and often blamed for the suffering they undergo. The news media are organized around scandal and a brief time horizon. Racial differences are exploited to break up potential coalitions on the left. A large slice of the population is periodically susceptible to war fever. Climate change is widely subjected to deferral, denial, or formal acceptance disconnected from action. And the right wing actively promotes filibusters and legislative stalemates to encourage more and more people to withdraw from citizenship and to tolerate the privatization of more and more of life. The sciences and professions with which you are familiar are often too narrowly defined. Too many churches either provide refuges from the world or serve as sites of aggressive attack on ecological concerns, homosexuality, carriers of alternative faiths, or poor minorities. You know what political party you support; you vote regularly; and you give time and money to your party. But you also find it difficult to connect the sentiments you profess to the role expectations sedimented into your practices of work, church, consumption, neighborhood association, investment portfolio, children's school, artistic pursuits, and local news reporting. Now is the time to join others in becoming role experimentalists. You may actively support the farm-to-table movement in the restaurants you visit; you may support the slow food movement; you may frequent stores that offer food based on sustainable processes; you may buy a hybrid or, if feasible, join an urban zip-car collective, explaining to friends, family, and neighbors what effect such choices could have on late modern ecology if a majority of the populace did one or the other; you may press your neighborhood association and workplace to buy solar panels and install them yourself; you may use writing and media skills developed in school to write for a blog; you may shift a large portion of your retirement account into investments that support sustainable energy; you may withdraw from aggressive investments that presuppose an unsustainable growth pattern, threaten economic collapse, and/or undermine the collective future; you may bring new issues and visitors to your church, temple, or mosque to support rethinking about interdenominational issues and the contemporary fragility of things; you may found, join, or frequent a repair club, at which volunteers collect and repair old appliances, furniture, and vehicles to cut back on urban waste and increase the longevity of these items; you may probe and publicize the multimodal tactics by which twenty-four-hour news stations work on the visceral register of their viewers, as you explore ways to counter those techniques; you may travel to places where unconscious American assumptions about world entitlement are challenged on a regular basis; you may augment your pattern of films and artistic exhibits attended to stretch your habitual powers of perception and to challenge some affectimbued prejudgments embedded in them; you may seek out new friends who are also moving in these directions. You may regularly relay pregnant essays you encounter to friends, colleagues, and relatives. A series of minor role experiments As we proceed our aspirational selves may now begin to exceed our operational selves, and the shame we feel about the discrepancy between these two aspects of the self may generate energy to enter into yet new modes of role experimentation. 6 We thus begin to make ourselves and our engagements more experimental rather than simply falling into a ready-made set of role expectations. We have begun to become what Nietzsche calls “our own guinea pigs” rather than merely being the guinea pigs of those in charge of these institutions. As such experiments accumulate, the ice in and around us begins to crack. First, the shaky perceptions, feelings, and beliefs with which we started these experimentations now become more refined and more entrenched. Second, we are now better situated to forge connections with yet larger constituencies engaging in similar experiments. Third, as these connections accumulate we may be more inspired to join macropolitical movements that speak to the issues. Fourth, as we now join protests, slowdowns, and confrontational meetings with corporate managers, church leaders, union officials, university officials, and neighborhood leaders, we may now become more alert to the institutional pressures that propel these constituencies forward too. They are also both enmeshed in a web of roles that enable and constrain them and often more than mere role bearers. These roles too exhibit varying degrees of pressure and slack as they link the details of daily conduct to the strategic practices of the larger political economy. One advantage of role experimentation by several constituencies at multiple sites is that it speaks to a time in which the drive to significant change must today be mobilized by a large, pluralist assemblage rather than by a single class or other core constituency. Such an assemblage must be primed and loaded by several constituencies at many sites. Role experimentations and the shape of a pluralist assemblage thus inflect one another. We must condense some of the steps involved. But perhaps the multidimensional pluralist assemblage in which you have now begun to participate approaches a tipping point—crystallized, say, by movement back and forth between role experiments, shifts in the priorities of some strategic institutions, and a change in the contours of electoral politics. Now a surprising event may occur, allowing these emergent energies to be crystallized. At this point some will enter the scene to say that no kind of “reformism,” no matter how extensive, is acceptable. We must wait for a bigger, more total transformation, they will say. Such an account will be offered at precisely this tipping point as the only sophisticated reading of the world. But it is not. Yes, roles, institutions, events, constitutive acts, and larger structures are interinvolved, with each enabling and limiting others. Yes, we do inhabit a world of multiple entanglements and interconnections. Yes, the primacy of capitalist markets and private ownership does give owners and high-rolling investors key advantages in setting the agenda of the state. Yes, states subject to public elections are also limited by systemic relations to corporate structures and the threat of capital strikes. Yes, extreme inequality, combined with legislative and court decisions inspired by neoliberal ideology, do disenfranchise many as they release billions of dollars to right-wing electoral campaigns. Yes, private ownership of the media does give great advantages to the corporate establishment. Yes, dependent workers do face uphill battles in limiting capital through labor organization. Yes, the limited reach of semisovereign states in the global economy exerts corporate pressure on them, just as, inside the United States at least, the right-wing Supreme Court's devolution of authority to states in a federal system forces states to compete with each other for corporate favors. Yes, elected representatives are dependent on campaign money and their desires to find jobs as lobbyists after they leave office. Yes, there are pressures on many in the lower middle class to identify with the vision of the future publicized by those above them. It may therefore appear that there are no cracks and fissures in these interconnected processes. It may seem that you must either embrace the system with fervor, withdraw as much as possible from it, or wait for an explosion that changes everything rapidly. The hegemony of neoliberal ideology reinforces such a reading of the alternatives, in its way, even as it otherwise emphasizes our inability to have a bird's-eye view of the system. It offers a bird's-eye view of the whole whenever it insists that market self-organization means impersonal market rationality. But repeated experience belies such an equation. There are numerous examples of surprising economic meltdowns, often ushered into being by submission to that very ideology. And periodically critical movements emerge, as if from nowhere, to challenge existing priorities at vulnerable sites. There is, for starters, the surprise of the Arab Spring, with its ambivalent possibilities; the emergence of a New Left in Euro-American countries in the 1960s and 1970s; the birth of feminist and gay rights movements in those same countries that have probed soft spots in churches, the media, corporate benefit packages, universities, state policy, and families; there is the “slut walk” by which young women challenged the idea that how they dress determines whether they deserve sexual assault; there is Tiananmen Square, which revealed currents of energy and protest in China that are still festering; there is the Occupy movement, springing as if from nowhere, to galvanize previously isolated pockets of dissatisfaction and unrest; there is the civil rights movement, which has reenergized itself several times; there are several ecological movements, mobilizing diffuse dissatisfactions with the direction neoliberal regimes have taken. Each of these events and movements exposes soft spots, cracks, uneven edges, and leakages in “the system,” through which new lines of creative activity can form and pass.

# 2AC

## ADV---Warming

### 2AC---!---Warming

### **AT: Extinction**

### AT: Fiat Double Bind

## AT: T---God Procedural

### 2AC---AT: Procedural

#### Reality exists and is knowably---denying it is ethical relativism that endorses mass violence---no ev verifies their claims

Every 7, Principal Lecturer and an Associate Head of Department for Computing at Coventry University, graduated with a first class honours degree in Communication Studies in 1995 and obtained an MA with distinction in Media and Cultural theory (Peter Every, post 1968 European philosophy, initially written in 1996, edited in 2007, “The Fascination Payload: Cultural Studies and the first Gulf Warhttp://www.academia.edu/6175231/The\_Fascination\_Payload\_Cultural\_Studies\_and\_the\_First\_Gulf\_War)

Jean Baudrillard chose the occasion of the Gulf Conflict to extend his thesis that global society is so caught in the grip of media simulation that its connection with reality has, once and for all, been severed: "Just a couple of days before war broke out in the Gulf, one could find Baudrillard regaling readers of the Guardian newspaper with an article which declared that this war would never happen, existing as it did only as a figment of mass media simulation, war-games rhetoric or imaginary scenarios beyond all limits of real-world, factual possibility" (Norris: 11) In choosing to concentrate on the undeniably manifest talk of war and foregrounding the role of strategic simulation whilst, simultaneously, refusing to engage in an account of events beyond the media, Jean Baudrillard was able to construct the case that a war conducted at a distance would be, of necessity, a matter of pure speculation and simulation: "Exchanging war for the signs of war" (Baudrillard 1994: 62). Written in to this article, almost as a fail-safe device against the collapse of his contention, was an interdiction against the ability of anyone to make a claim to know the truth of the situation. For, in Baudrillard's eyes, such a claim would be "banking on a realist ontology that clung to some variant of the truth/falsehood or fact/fiction dichotomy" (Norris: 13). A claim that would be forever stuck in nostalgia for some ultimate truth telling discourse (or metalanguage) - offering a delusory refuge from the "knowledge that we are nowadays utterly without resources in the matter of distinguishing truth from falsehood" (ibid: 13). This is akin to Richard Rorty's position in "Contingency, Irony and Solidarity" in which: "To say that truth is not out there is simply to say that where there are no sentences there is no truth, that sentences are elements of human language, and that human languages are human creations. Truth cannot be out there - cannot exist independently of the human mind - because sentences cannot so exist, or be out there", (q.v. Sprinkler: 125) The ethical consequences of such linguistic relativism can be seen when one compares Baudrillard or Rorty's position to that of revisionist historian Robert Faurrison. Faurrison claimed that as there were no surviving 'eye witnesses' to Nazi gas chambers there would, ultimately, be no way of confirming those chamber's existence. These consequences became more evident as events unfolded in the Gulf. Outbreaks of the real -Virilio's 'interruptions' - such as the bombing of the El Almiriyah air raid shelter (no matter how mediated or explained away by military spokespeople) could not disguise the fact that people, civilians, actually died. There were eye-witness survivors. Baudrillard's take on the fact/fiction dichotomy began to look decidedly sickening: "There will be nobody in a position to know what they are seeing, reading or hearing is not some fictive 'simulacrum' of the real, conjured up by the ubiquitous propaganda machine or the various techniques of media disinformation" (Norris: 12) To go down the road, like Baudrillard, of a fictive conspiracy theory in which images of death at El Almiriyah were nothing more than the a highly competent, cinematically constructed, simulation is surely stretching the limits of credibility. If contemporary truth is, according to this post-modern critical line, only a matter of rhetorical or suasive force then El Almiriya was the point at which Baudrillard's "(un)truth claim" lost its own persuasive appeal - breaking the bounds of virtually ever)' consensual notion of reality. Despite this, following the conflict, Baudrillard was minded to publish an article entitled "La Guerre du Golfe n'a pas en lieu" (The Gulf War did not take place) in Liberation - An extract of which was published in The Guardian. In the article he conceded that "this 'simulated' war has not been entirely a product of mass-media illusionist techniques; that large numbers of Iraqi conscripts and civilians had been killed by the Allied aerial bombardment; that massive damage had been inflicted on the country's infrastructure" (Norris: 192). Nevertheless, none of the 'facts' had persuaded him to drop his original contention that the war had predominantly existed as a virtual construct: "If we have no practical knowledge of this war - and such knowledge is out of the question - then let us at least have the sceptical intelligence to reject the probability of all information, of all images whatever their source. To be more 'virtual' than the events themselves, not to re-establish some criterion of truth - for this we lack the means" (q.v. Norris 194). With this Baudrillard maintains a strict adherence to the notion of the impossibility of veridical knowledge. And herein lays his paradox - that in the same article he can admit the 'facts' as regards casualties whilst denying any means of ascertaining their truth. Admitting knowledge and the impossibility of knowledge, in the same breath, is a logical error - both cannot be true.

#### Truth exists — we should examine truth claims by using reason evidence and logic — other methods devolve into relativism and cause prejudices

Sokal 96 — Alan Sokal, Professor of Physics at New York University, 1996 (“A Plea for Reason, Evidence and Logic,” Talk Presented at a Forum at New York University, October 26th, Available Online at http://www.physics.nyu.edu/faculty/sokal/nyu\_forum.html, Accessed 07-31-2010)

I didn't write the parody for the reasons you might at first think. My aim wasn't to defend science from the barbarian hordes of lit crit or sociology. I know perfectly well that the main threats to science nowadays come from budget-cutting politicians and corporate executives, not from a handful of postmodernist academics. Rather, my goal is to defend what one might call a scientific worldview -- defined broadly as a respect for evidence and logic, and for the incessant confrontation of theories with the real world; in short, for reasoned argument over wishful thinking, superstition and demagoguery. And my motives for trying to defend these old-fashioned ideas are basically political. I'm worried about trends in the American Left -- particularly here in academia -- that at a minimum divert us from the task of formulating a progressive social critique, by leading smart and committed people into trendy but ultimately empty intellectual fashions, and that can in fact undermine the prospects for such a critique, by promoting subjectivist and relativist philosophies that in my view are inconsistent with producing a realistic analysis of society that we and our fellow citizens will find compelling. David Whiteis, in a recent article, said it well: Too many academics, secure in their ivory towers and insulated from the real-world consequences of the ideas they espouse, seem blind to the fact that non-rationality has historically been among the most powerful weapons in the ideological arsenals of oppressors. The hypersubjectivity that characterizes postmodernism is a perfect case in point: far from being a legacy of leftist iconoclasm, as some of its advocates so disingenuously claim, it in fact ... plays perfectly into the anti-rationalist -- really, anti-thinking -- bias that currently infects "mainstream" U.S. culture. Along similar lines, the philosopher of science Larry Laudan observed caustically that the displacement of the idea that facts and evidence matter by the idea that everything boils down to subjective interests and perspectives is -- second only to American political campaigns -- the most prominent and pernicious manifestation of anti-intellectualism in our time. (And these days, being nearly as anti-intellectual as American political campaigns is really quite a feat.) Now of course, no one will admit to being against reason, evidence and logic – that's like being against Motherhood and Apple Pie. Rather, our postmodernist and poststructuralist friends will claim to be in favor of some new and deeper kind of reason, such as the celebration of "local knowledges" and "alternative ways of knowing" as an antidote tothe so-called "Eurocentric scientific methodology" (you know, things like systematic experiment, controls, replication, and so forth). You find this magic phrase "local knowledges" in, for example, the articles of Andrew Ross and Sandra Harding in the "Science Wars" issue of Social Text. But are "local knowledges" all that great? And when local knowledges conflict, which local knowledges should we believe? In many parts of the Midwest, the "local knowledges" say that you should spray more herbicides to get bigger crops. It's old-fashioned objective science that can tell us which herbicides are poisonous to farm workers and to people downstream. Here in New York City, lots of "local knowledges" hold that there's a wave of teenage motherhood that's destroying our moral fiber. It's those boring data that show that the birth rate to teenage mothers has been essentially constant since 1975, and is about half of what it was in the good old 1950's. Another word for "local knowledges" is prejudice. I'm sorry to say it, but under the influence of postmodernism some very smart people can fall into some incredibly sloppy thinking, and I want to give two examples. The first comes from a front-page article in last Tuesday's New York Times (10/22/96) about the conflict between archaeologists and some Native American creationists. I don't want to address here the ethical and legal aspects of this controversy -- who should control the use of 10,000-year-old human remains -- but only the epistemic issue. There are at least two competing views on where Native American populations come from. The scientific consensus, based on extensive archaeological evidence, is that humans first entered the Americas from Asia about 10-20,000 years ago, crossing the Bering Strait. Many Native American creation accounts hold, on the other hand, that native peoples have always lived in the Americas, ever since their ancestors emerged onto the surface of the earth from a subterranean world of spirits. And the Times article observed that many archaeologists, "pulled between their scientific temperaments and their appreciation for native culture, ... have been driven close to a postmodern relativism in which science is just one more belief system." For example, Roger Anyon, a British archaeologist who has worked for the Zuni people, was quoted as saying that "Science is just one of many ways of knowing the world. ... [The Zunis' world view is] just as valid as the archeological viewpoint of what prehistory is about." Now, perhaps Dr. Anyon was misquoted, but we all have repeatedly heard assertions of this kind, and I'd like to ask what such assertions could possibly mean. We have here two mutually incompatible theories. They can't both be right; they can't both even be approximately right. They could, of course, both be wrong, but I don't imagine that that's what Dr. Anyon means by "just as valid". It seems to me that Anyon has quite simply allowed his political and cultural sympathies to cloud his reasoning. And there's no justification for that: We can perfectly well remember the victims of a horrible genocide, and support their descendants' valid political goals, without endorsing uncritically (or hypocritically) their societies' traditional creation myths. Moreover, the relativists' stance is extremely condescending: it treats a complex society as a monolith, obscures the conflicts within it, and takes its most obscurantist factions as spokespeople for the whole. My second example of sloppy thinking comes from Social Text co-editor Bruce Robbins' article in the September/October 1996 Tikkun magazine, in which he tries to defend -- albeit half-heartedly -- the postmodernist/poststructuralist subversion of conventional notions of truth. "Is it in the interests of women, African Americans, and other super-exploited people," Robbins asks, "to insist that truth and identity are social constructions? Yes and no," he asserts. "No, you can't talk about exploitation without respect for empirical evidence" -- exactly my point. "But yes," Robbins continues, "truth can be another source of oppression." Huh??? How can truth oppress anyone? Well, Robbins' very next sentence explains what he means: "It was not so long ago," he says, "that scientists gave their full authority to explanations of why women and African Americans ... were inherently inferior." But is Robbins claiming that that is truth? I should hope not! Sure, lots of people say things about women and African-Americans that are not true; and yes, those falsehoods have sometimes been asserted in the name of "science", "reason" and all the rest. But claiming something doesn't make it true, and the fact that people – including scientists – sometimes make false claims doesn't mean that we should reject or revise the concept of truth. Quite the contrary: it means that we should examine with the utmost care the evidence underlying people's truth claims, and we should reject assertionsthat in our best rational judgment are false.

## AT: T---Presumption

### 2AC---Framework

### 2AC---AT: Schlag

#### Schlag’s wrong — legal arguments do matter

West 9, Frederick J. Haas Professor of Law and Philosophy at Georgetown University, holds a J.S.M. from Stanford University, J.D. from the University of Maryland (Robin West, March 2009, “A Reply to Pierre,” Georgetown Law Journal, 97 Geo. L.J, pages 865-875)

I'll start with a relatively small descriptive point I think Pierre has wrong. Pierre has argued elsewhere and repeats the claim here, n7 that mainstream legal scholarship is not only uninteresting, but that it is also inconsequential. Sometimes, maybe most of the time, the aim of legal "scholarship" is not to answer the question "what is the law of so-and-so" in the abstract or for the sheer fun of it, but to answer the question so as to influence judges who may be grappling with the same question, or who may soon do so. But if that's the case, Pierre suggests, it's most assuredly a failure, by its own lights, and regardless of whether or not it "gets the law right." Judges don't even read this stuff anymore. They're certainly not swayed by it. n8 If the point of legal "scholarship" is to be efficacious rather than merely enlightening, the ship is surely sunk. Legal scholarship simply has no effect. But this isn't completely true, as Pierre himself notes toward the end of his piece. Legal scholarship affects the way law professors think, the way our students think, the way legal bloggers and their readers think, the way the [\*869] judges' clerks think, and ultimately the way clients and their lawyers think. n9 And sometimes, Pierre's charge notwithstanding, it affects the way judges think, and occasionally that effect is clearly observable in judicial opinions. From Georgetown faculty's scholarship alone and just over the last few years—and I'm sure the same claim could be made of most law schools—quite conventional legal scholarship has affected the arguments that have convinced the Supreme Court and lower courts on the unconstitutionality of the terms under which detainees are held in Guantanamo, on the constitutionality of the Family and Medical Leave Act, and on the applicability of the Clean Air Act to greenhouse gases. It has affected the content and wording of statutes, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Violence Against Women Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, the proposed Anti-Discrimination Act, and god knows how many others. It has influenced the way the Washington, D.C. courts are configured to deal with domestic violence claims. Contrary to Pierre's charge, mainstream legal scholarship does have an impact on both judicial decisions and substantive law. It doesn't do so routinely. But it does enough of the time to justify the effort, if that is the scholar's goal.

### 2AC---AT: Cane

#### Crane is a non-starter---durable fiat solves---it ensures the plan gets enforced as intended, any other interpretation means being aff is impossible because politicians don’t like antitrust. Decks aff innovation, because affs would have to be politically palpable.

## AT: K---Capitalism

### 2AC---Permutations

### 2AC---AT: 1NC 1 & 2

#### Innovation dematerializes growth---capitalism is sustainable

McAfee 19, \*Andrew Paul McAfee, a principal research scientist at MIT, is cofounder and codirector of the MIT Initiative on the Digital Economy at the MIT Sloan School of Management; (2019, “More from Less: The Surprising Story of How We Learned to Prosper Using Fewer Resources and What Happens Next”, https://b-ok.cc/book/5327561/8acdbe)

There is no shortage of examples of dematerialization. I chose the ones in this chapter because they illustrate a set of fundamental principles at the intersection of business, economics, innovation, and our impact on our planet. They are: We do want more all the time, but not more resources. Alfred Marshall was right, but William Jevons was wrong. Our wants and desires keep growing, evidently without end, and therefore so do our economies. But our use of the earth’s resources does not. We do want more beverage options, but we don’t want to keep using more aluminum in drink cans. We want to communicate and compute and listen to music, but we don’t want an arsenal of gadgets; we’re happy with a single smartphone. As our population increases, we want more food, but we don’t have any desire to consume more fertilizer or use more land for crops. Jevons was correct at the time he wrote that total British demand for coal was increasing even though steam engines were becoming much more efficient. He was right, in other words, that the price elasticity of demand for coal-supplied power was greater than one in the 1860s. But he was wrong to conclude that this would be permanent. Elasticities of demand can change over time for several reasons, the most fundamental of which is technological change. Coal provides a clear example of this. When fracking made natural gas much cheaper, total demand for coal in the United States went down even though its price decreased. With the help of innovation and new technologies, economic growth in America and other rich countries—growth in all of the wants and needs that we spend money on—has become decoupled from resource consumption. This is a recent development and a profound one. Materials cost money that companies locked in competition would rather not spend. The root of Jevons’s mistake is simple and boring: resources cost money. He realized this, of course. What he didn’t sufficiently realize was how strong the incentive is for a company in a contested market to reduce its spending on resources (or anything else) and so eke out a bit more profit. After all, a penny saved is a penny earned. Monopolists can just pass costs on to their customers, but companies with a lot of competitors can’t. So American farmers who battle with each other (and increasingly with tough rivals in other countries) are eager to cut their spending on land, water, and fertilizer. Beer and soda companies want to minimize their aluminum purchases. Producers of magnets and high-tech gear run away from REE as soon as prices start to spike. In the United States, the 1980 Staggers Act removed government subsidies for freight-hauling railroads, forcing them into competition and cost cutting and making them all the more eager to not have expensive railcars sit idle. Again and again, we see that competition spurs dematerialization. There are multiple paths to dematerialization. As profit-hungry companies seek to use fewer resources, they can go down four main paths. First, they can simply find ways to use less of a given material. This is what happened as beverage companies and the companies that supply them with cans teamed up to use less aluminum. It’s also the story with American farmers, who keep getting bigger harvests while using less land, water, and fertilizer. Magnet makers found ways to use fewer rare earth metals when it looked as if China might cut off their supply. Second, it often becomes possible to substitute one resource for another. Total US coal consumption started to decrease after 2007 because fracking made natural gas more attractive to electricity generators. If nuclear power becomes more popular in the United States (a topic we’ll take up in chapter 15), we could use both less coal and less gas and generate our electricity from a small amount of material indeed. A kilogram of uranium-235 fuel contains approximately 2–3 million times as much energy as the same mass of coal or oil. According to one estimate, the total amount of energy that humans consume each year could be supplied by just seven thousand tons of uranium fuel. Third, companies can use fewer molecules overall by making better use of the materials they already own. Improving CNW’s railcar utilization from 5 percent to 10 percent would mean that the company could cut its stock of these thirty-ton behemoths in half. Companies that own expensive physical assets tend to be fanatics about getting as much use as possible out of them, for clear and compelling financial reasons. For example, the world’s commercial airlines have improved their load factors—essentially the percentage of seats occupied on flights—from 56 percent in 1971 to more than 81 percent in 2018. Finally, some materials get replaced by nothing at all. When a telephone, camcorder, and tape recorder are separate devices, three total microphones are needed. When they all collapse into a smartphone, only one microphone is necessary. That smartphone also uses no audiotapes, videotapes, compact discs, or camera film. The iPhone and its descendants are among the world champions of dematerialization. They use vastly less metal, plastic, glass, and silicon than did the devices they have replaced and don’t need media such as paper, discs, tape, or film. If we use more renewable energy, we’ll be replacing coal, gas, oil, and uranium with photons from the sun (solar power) and the movement of air (wind power) and water (hydroelectric power) on the earth. All three of these types of power are also among dematerialization’s champions, since they use up essentially no resources once they’re up and running. I call these four paths to dematerialization slim, swap, optimize, and evaporate. They’re not mutually exclusive. Companies can and do pursue all four at the same time, and all four are going on all the time in ways both obvious and subtle. Innovation is hard to foresee. Neither the fracking revolution nor the world-changing impact of the iPhone’s introduction were well understood in advance. Both continued to be underestimated even after they occurred. The iPhone was introduced in June of 2007, with no shortage of fanfare from Apple and Steve Jobs. Yet several months later the cover of Forbes was still asking if anyone could catch Nokia. Innovation is not steady and predictable like the orbit of the Moon or the accumulation of interest on a certificate of deposit. It’s instead inherently jumpy, uneven, and random. It’s also combinatorial, as Erik Brynjolfsson and I discussed in our book The Second Machine Age. Most new technologies and other innovations, we argued, are combinations or recombinations of preexisting elements. The iPhone was “just” a cellular telephone plus a bunch of sensors plus a touch screen plus an operating system and population of programs, or apps. All these elements had been around for a while before 2007. It took the vision of Steve Jobs to see what they could become when combined. Fracking was the combination of multiple abilities: to “see” where hydrocarbons were to be found in rock formations deep underground; to pump down pressurized liquid to fracture the rock; to pump up the oil and gas once they were released by the fracturing; and so on. Again, none of these was new. Their effective combination was what changed the world’s energy situation. Erik and I described the set of innovations and technologies available at any time as building blocks that ingenious people could combine and recombine into useful new configurations. These new configurations then serve as more blocks that later innovators can use. Combinatorial innovation is exciting because it’s unpredictable. It’s not easy to foresee when or where powerful new combinations are going to appear, or who’s going to come up with them. But as the number of both building blocks and innovators increases, we should have confidence that more breakthroughs such as fracking and smartphones are ahead. Innovation is highly decentralized and largely uncoordinated, occurring as the result of interactions among complex and interlocking social, technological, and economic systems. So it’s going to keep surprising us. As the Second Machine Age progresses, dematerialization accelerates. Erik and I coined the phrase Second Machine Age to draw a contrast with the Industrial Era, which as we’ve seen transformed the planet by allowing us to overcome the limitations of muscle power. Our current time of great progress with all things related to computing is allowing us to overcome the limitations of our mental power and is transformative in a different way: it’s allowing us to reverse the Industrial Era’s bad habit of taking more and more from the earth every year.

#### Anti-state politics prevent 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. 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.

#### Capitalism solves climate change

Smith 19 – (Noah Smith, assistant professor of finance at Stony Brook University; “Dumping Capitalism Won’t Save the Planet”; Bloomberg; D.A. August 25th 2020, [Published April 5th 2019]; <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-04-05/capitalism-is-more-likely-to-limit-climate-change-than-socialism>) //LFS—JCM

The climate threat is certainly dire, and carbon taxes [are unlikely](http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/10/a-carbon-tax-cant-solve-climate-change-but-we-should-do-it.html) to be enough to solve the problem. But eco-socialism is probably not going to be an effective method of addressing that threat. Dismantling an entire economic system is never easy, and probably would touch off armed conflict and major political upheaval. In the scramble to win those battles, even the socialists would almost certainly abandon their limitation on fossil-fuel use — either to support military efforts, or to keep the population from turning against them. The precedent here is the Soviet Union, whose multidecade effort to reshape its economy by force amid confrontation with the West led to profound environmental degradation. The world's climate does not have several decades to spare. Even without international conflict, there’s little guarantee that moving away from capitalism would mitigate our impact on the environment. Since socialist leader Evo Morales took power in Bolivia, living standards [have improved](https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-02-22/bolivia-s-problem-is-macroeconomics-not-socialism) substantially for the average Bolivian, which is great. But this has come at the cost of higher emissions. Meanwhile, the capitalist U.S managed to decrease its per capita emissions a bit during this same period (though since the U.S. is a rich country, its absolute level of emissions is much higher). In other words, in terms of economic growth and carbon emissions, Bolivia looks similar to more capitalist developing countries. That suggests that faced with a choice of enriching their people or helping to save the climate, even socialist leaders will often choose the former. And that same political calculus will probably hold in China and the U.S., the world’s top carbon emitters — leaders who demand draconian cuts in living standards in pursuit of environmental goals will have trouble staying in power. The best hope for the climate therefore lies in reducing the tradeoff between material prosperity and carbon emissions. That requires technology — solar, wind and nuclear power, energy storage, electric cars and other vehicles, carbon-free [cement](https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy/news/worlds-first-zero-emission-cement-plant-takes-shape-in-norway/) production and so on. The best [climate](https://techcrunch.com/2019/02/15/how-to-decarbonize-america-and-the-world/) policy [plans](https://www.dataforprogress.org/green-new-deal) all involve technological improvement as a key feature. Recent developments show that the technology-centered approach can work. A [recent report](https://about.bnef.com/blog/battery-powers-latest-plunge-costs-threatens-coal-gas/) by Bloomberg New Energy Finance analyzed about 7000 projects in 46 countries, and found that large drops in the cost of solar power from photovoltaic systems, wind power and lithium-ion batteries have made utility-scale renewable electricity competitive with fossil fuels. A 76 percent decline in the cost of energy for short-term battery storage since 2012 is especially important. In a blog post, futurist and energy writer Ramez Naam [underscores](http://rameznaam.com/2019/04/02/the-third-phase-of-clean-energy-will-be-the-most-disruptive-yet/) the significance of these developments. Naam notes the important difference between renewables being cheap enough to outprice new fossil-fuel plants, and being inexpensive enough to undercut existing plants. The former is already the case across much of the world, which is among the reasons for an 84 percent [decrease](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/mar/28/global-collapse-in-number-of-new-coal-fired-power-plants) in the number of new coal-fired plants worldwide since 2015. But when it becomes cheaper to scrap existing fossil-fuel plants and build renewables in their place, it will allow renewables to start replacing coal and gas much more quickly. Naam cites examples from Florida and [Indiana](https://www.utilitydive.com/news/even-in-indiana-new-renewables-are-cheaper-than-existing-coal-plants/540242/) where this is already being done. He cites industry predictions that replacing existing fossil-fuel plants with renewables will be economically efficient almost everywhere at some point in the next decade. Electricity is far from the only source of carbon emissions — there’s also transportation, manufacturing (especially of steel and cement), home and office heating, and agriculture to worry about. But the rapid advance of solar technology is a huge victory in the struggle against climate change, because it will allow people all over the world to have electricity without cooking the planet. And how was this victory achieved? A combination of smart government policy and private industry. Massachusetts Institute of Technology researchers Goksin Kavlak, James McNerney and Jessika Trancik in a [recent paper](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301421518305196?via%253Dihub) evaluated the factors behind the solar-price decline from 1980 to 2012. They concluded that from 1980 to 2001, government-funded research and development was the main factor in bringing down costs, but from 2001 to 2012, the biggest factor was economies of scale. These economies of scale were driven by private industry increasing output, but with government subsidies helping to increase the incentive to ramp up production. It’s apparent, therefore, that both government and profit-seeking enterprises have their roles to play. Government funds the development of early-stage technology and then helps push the private sector toward adopting those technologies, while private companies compete to find ever-cheaper methods of implementation. Instead of eco-socialism, it’s eco-industrialism. If there’s any system that can beat climate change, this looks like it.

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#### Antitrust is key to sustainability.

Rebecca M. Henderson 20, Harvard’s John and Natty McArthur University Professor, based at Harvard Business School, and a research fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research, “Reimagining Capitalism in the Shadow of the Pandemic,” Harvard Business Review, 7/28/2020, https://hbr.org/2020/07/reimagining-capitalism-in-the-shadow-of-the-pandemic, kyujin

The Pandemic’s Challenges — and Opportunities Capitalism is one of the great inventions of the human race — an unparalleled source of prosperity, opportunity and innovation. We won’t solve the problems that we face without it. To solve inequality, we need good jobs — and lots of them. To solve climate change, we need (among other things) to transform the world’s energy, transportation, and agricultural systems. Only the relentless pressure of the free market can drive this kind of transformative innovation at scale. In this context, the pandemic is both a massive challenge and an opportunity. A challenge because more than a half a million people have died, the global economy has been massively disrupted, and tens of millions of people have lost their jobs. A challenge because the combination of deep economic disadvantage — at the beginning of May nearly 61% percent of Hispanic and 44% of Black households had experienced a job or wage loss due to the corona virus, for example, compared with 38% percent of whites — and the killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breona Taylor and countless others have brought anger and calls for justice to our streets. The world will almost certainly be poorer, more divided, and more fearful in 2021 than it was in 2019. It’s an opportunity because it has also shown us so vividly what is wrong. Inequality is no longer simply an abstract idea. It’s a reality that many “essential” workers must show up even when they’re sick because they have no savings and no paid leave. That racism is not something that was solved by the civil rights movement. As the skies clear and early research suggests that the reduction in fossil fuel pollution is saving lives, the costs of continuing to rely on dirty energy have become much more tangible. Watching states bid against each other for vital medical equipment while the federal government fumbles its response to the virus has made the reality of our broken politics very clear. The pandemic has reminded us that we stand and fall as a society and that the welfare of the poorest among us is integral to everyone’s welfare. It has shown us that planning for the future is essential and that, when the chips are down, a capable, responsive government is a necessity, not a dirty word. We’ve learned that when we must do something, we can: Fundamental change no longer seems impossibly out of the reach. We can do better. We already have the resources and the knowledge we need to build a more equitable, sustainable capitalism. But to get there, business will have to change how it understands its role in the world (and in the U.S. in particular) — and how it thinks about government. A New Path Forward While free markets are an unparalleled source of prosperity and freedom, the free market can only take us where we need to go if externalities such as carbon pollution are properly priced, if there is genuine freedom of opportunity, and if the rules of the game are such that competition is free and fair. Markets do not police themselves; they must be balanced by transparent, capable, democratically accountable governments. Today — in large part due to the rise of shareholder primacy, the increasing role of money in politics, and the systematic attack on government as a necessary or effective institution — that balance is largely absent. As a result, one of the fastest routes to profitability is often to persuade politicians to write the rules in your favor. Firms feel free to dump greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, for example, while spending hundreds of millions of dollars to lobby against carbon regulation. We’re even seeing this dynamic in the U.S. government’s response to the pandemic: It’s increasingly clear that an uncomfortably large share of the benefits from the recent stimulus has gone to very large firms and to very wealthy individuals. I’m not suggesting that firms neglect their duty to their shareholders. Focusing on profitability is essential if a company is to thrive in today’s brutally competitive market. But profit maximization has always been a means to an end, justified by the idea that when markets are genuinely free and fair, there’s good reason to believe they lead to both prosperity and freedom. But when markets are no longer held in check by governments that can police the rules of the game, appropriately control externalities, or provide the public goods necessary to support real opportunity, they become too powerful for their own good. The chaotic and uneven pandemic response we are experiencing today flows directly from 30 years of treating government as something that should be “drowned in the bathtub.” Now more than ever, I believe firms have not just a moral duty to contribute to the health of the institutions that keep our society strong and our capitalism genuinely free and genuinely fair, but also an economic interest in doing so. We need to rebuild our democracy, strengthen our public conversation so that it’s firmly based on facts and mutual respect, commit with everything we have to building an inclusive society for everyone, and yes, find ways to rediscover the importance of democratically accountable, capable, responsive government. Why? We cannot decarbonize the world’s energy supply without government regulating fossil fuel emissions and providing positive incentives to embrace low carbon solutions. Yes, individual firms can provide better jobs — paying employees a decent wage and providing ongoing training, among other necessary steps — but we’ll only successfully address inequality and racism at scale through structural reform, if we can do things like: provide quality education and health care to everyone, no matter their parents’ income; raise the minimum wage; and find ways to give employees more power as they negotiate with increasingly powerful firms. Most fundamentally, we’ll only rebuild trust in the political system, and with it a government that is genuinely responsive to ordinary people, if we can get money out of politics and stop tolerating business’s attacks on government. These attacks are often framed in terms of defending the free market, but too often are simply attempts to block the action we need to build a more equitable society. Collective action — a sustained effort by coalitions of firms — could make a huge difference in helping to drive this kind of institutional change. Firms are already working together to solve some of the world’s toughest problems. A third of the world’s invested capital is already committed to insisting that the firms in their portfolios plan for the challenge of climate change. Businesses across the world are increasingly coming to realize that democratically accountable, freely elected, capable governments are critical to long term economic health — and are willing to say so in public. But they need to do more. A “Kodak Moment” for the World I can feel your skepticism as I write. Can business really change — and help government change along with it? Can it embrace a version of capitalism that focuses on the longer term and the common good? Can it help to rebuild the power of the very institutions that are needed to keep it in check? I believe it can. We already know that it is possible to make money by addressing the world’s social and environmental problems. Walmart saved a billion dollars in fuel costs by increasing the efficiency of their trucking fleet. Elon Musk has revolutionized the automotive business and built a company worth more than GM and Ford combined in the process. The most successful $200M+ IPO of the last 20 years was a company that promised to replace beef with a burger made largely from soy. At Unilever, so called “purpose-driven” brands are growing 69% faster than the rest of the portfolio as consumers increasingly vote with their wallets. Change on a broader scale will be much harder. But not impossible. Think of this as a “Kodak moment” for the world. I spent the first 20 years of my career at MIT as a professor of innovation and strategy. For much of it I was quite literally the Eastman Kodak professor of management. My title was a coincidence — but a deeply ironic one, since I spent most of my time trying to understand why large, successful firms like Kodak had so much trouble responding effectively when the world around them changed. By now the company’s story is well-known: Kodak was once one of the world’s most successful firms. The firm invented classic film-based commercial photography and used it to build one of the world’s most iconic brands. As one senior vice president and director of Kodak research noted in a 1985 Wall Street Journal article, “We’re moving into an information-based company…[but] it’s very hard to find anything [with profit margins] like color photography that is legal.” But Kodak went bankrupt in 2012, having failed to master the transition to digital photography. The business community now faces a similar transition. As the Business Roundtable’s historic decision last year to “lead their companies for the benefits of all stakeholders” suggested, the vast majority of the world’s leading firms know that we must tackle the challenge of climate change, that we must find a way to ensure that everyone has a chance to share in the world’s wealth, and that it’s vital that we not let democracy lose out to either oligarchy or tyranny. We know that we need to change. But too often it’s tempting to emulate Kodak, claiming that change will come — but not now. Insisting that it’s more profitable to stick with the old ways, that if it’s really important we’ll get around to doing something new — later. Change is hard. It’s not surprising that we’re struggling to adopt new ways of thinking about the world and business’s role in it. But I am hopeful. Not optimistic, in the sense that I’m sure everything will work out just fine — I’m not sure of that at all. But hopeful. As a species, we have a gift for problem solving. Kodak failed to manage the digital transition, but Nikon, Canon and Fujifilm continue to be billion-dollar companies. Thousands of firms and millions of people are even now exploring ways to solve our common problems — for example, firms are partnering with each other and with governments to search for vaccines and to bring people back to work safely. This kind of cooperation must continue beyond the pandemic. As recent data shows, trust in business has fallen during the pandemic, but trust in government has risen dramatically. There is no better time for business to see government as a partner, not an adversary, in helping to make society work everyone — not just the lucky few. We can learn from the horrors of the pandemic. We must. We don’t need to go back to “normal” — we need to reimagine capitalism instead. We need to find a way to balance the energy of the free market with the power of competent, responsive government. Together, they can help us build a more just and sustainable world.

#### Myopic focus on capitalism’s pitfalls is dangerous---singular instances of failure can’t overcome the vast material, empirical benefits capitalism has over any alternative.

Norberg 03, MA in History of Ideas with focus on economics and philosophy (Jonah, “In Defense of Global Capitalism,” pg. 290)

Capitalism is not a perfect system, and it is not good for everyone all the time. Critics of globalization are good at pointing out individual harms—a factory that has closed down, a wage that has been reduced. Such things do happen, but by concentrating solely on individual instances, one may miss the larger reality of how a political or economic system generally works and what fantastic values it confers on the great majority compared with other alternatives. Problems are found in every political and economic system, but rejecting all systems is not an option. Hunting down negative examples of what can happen in a market economy is easy enough. By that method water or fire can be proved to be bad things, because some people drown and some get burned to death, but this isn’t the full picture.

A myopic focus on capitalism’s imperfections ignores the freedom and independence that it confers on people who have never experienced anything but oppression. It also disregards the calm and steady progress that is the basic rule of a society with a market economy. There is nothing wrong with identifying problems and mishaps in a predominantly successful system if one does so with the constructive intent of rectifying or alleviating them. But someone who condemns the system as such is obligated to answer this question: What political and economic system could manage things better? Never before in human history has prosperity grown so rapidly and poverty declined so heavily. Is there any evidence, either in history or in the world around us, to suggest that another system could do as well?

#### Economic data restricts biases, promotes critical thinking, and prevents flawed decision-making errors---rejecting economists plagues public discourse with innumeracy that results in worse outcomes.

Ip 17, \*Greg Ip is a Canadian-American journalist, currently the chief economics commentator for The Wall Street Journal. A native of Canada, Ip received a bachelor's degree in economics and journalism from Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario; (August 25th, 2017, “In Defense of the Dismal Science”, https://www.wsj.com/articles/in-defense-of-the-dismal-science-1503679118)

Thus, when economists preach the virtues of globalization, market solutions or cost-benefit analysis, they sound to critics on the left like corporate shills lacking any moral anchor. To critics on the right, they sound like globalist elites who despise patriotism. Yet it is precisely their love of numbers that makes economists invaluable. By stripping the emotions from pressing problems, economists can often illuminate the most practical ways to tackle them—but only if ordinary people and their representatives are prepared to listen. Economics emerged in the 1700s as an offshoot of moral philosophy. Known then as political economy, its pioneering practitioners—such as David Hume and Adam Smith —believed that liberating individual self-interest, rather than following religious or political authority, maximized society’s well-being. Smith made this case most memorably in “The Wealth of Nations” (1776), in which he famously invoked the benevolent “invisible hand” of the free market. But for today’s economists, David Ricardo’s “The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation,” published in 1817, was even more of a breakthrough. Most people aren’t surprised if a doctor, who could be a better caregiver to her children than a nanny, chooses instead to spend that time seeing patients and pays a nanny out of what she earns. Thanks to Ricardo, economists know that the same principle applies to countries. The average American worker can probably make more tires than a foreign worker, but his edge at producing grain is even greater—and thus the U.S. should export grain and import tires. This theory, known as “comparative advantage,” is both counterintuitive and powerful. Ricardo went further, extolling the pacifying power of free trade: It “binds together, by one common tie of interest and intercourse, the universal society of nations throughout the civilized world,” he wrote. Most economists still agree that globalization fosters political stability and cooperation. Non-economists have always found this emphasis on material interests and motives somewhat distasteful. In 1790, Edmund Burke, who was friends with Hume and Smith, wrote in “Reflections on the Revolution in France,” “The age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished forever.” The influence of economists truly blossomed in the 20th century. The Great Depression gave birth to macroeconomics, the study of how consumption, investment, income and interest rates interact in the aggregate. In search of better tools to manage the economy, the federal government commissioned economists in the 1930s to calculate gross national product. Convinced that the economy could no longer be left to its own devices, Congress passed the Employment Act in 1946, which established, among other things, a Council of Economic Advisers to provide the president with the necessary expert guidance. The next year, Paul Samuelson’s seminal book, “Foundations of Economic Analysis,” used mathematics to formalize the key axioms of economics. He touched off a revolution that equipped economists with ever more powerful methods for explaining and analyzing economic behavior. They increasingly adopted the trappings of the physical sciences, hoping to achieve a similar degree of objective truth and predictive power. Math did clarify economic thinking, but it didn’t improve its forecasting accuracy, which remains dreadful. Virtually no economists predicted the financial crisis of 2007-08 and the recession that followed. Nor has economics rid itself of bias. Economists who advise presidents and prime ministers routinely shape their analyses to validate particular political views. In recent decades, the stature of economists has taken a beating from two critiques in particular. The first, popular especially on the left, argues that economists are slaves to the assumption that individuals act rationally and in their own best interests. These critics point to psychological and experimental evidence that shows how often people violate the axioms of Econ 101: Our spending and investment habits are often driven by emotions, rules of thumb, ignorance and shortsightedness. The financial crisis seemed to be the ultimate proof, as highly paid bankers and traders, armed with state-of-the-art economic techniques, took on so much risk that they nearly destroyed the global financial system. Economists consider national borders and sovereignty annoying obstacles to the free flow of goods, capital and people. The second critique originates from populist, nativist and nationalist movements in the world’s more prosperous countries. Economists consider national borders and sovereignty annoying obstacles to the free flow of goods, capital and people. The new movements of the right see them as essential preconditions for national identity and cohesion. Many Britons voted for Brexit because control over immigration and their laws mattered more to them than the pecuniary advantages of the European common market. These trends have fed a broader mistrust of experts and elites. During last year’s election campaign, Mike Pence, Mr. Trump’s vice-presidential running mate, dismissed statistical evidence of the U.S. economy’s health by saying, “People in Fort Wayne, Indiana, know different.” In the months after Mr. Trump’s victory, his team wondered whether it should even appoint a chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers. (The administration eventually nominated Kevin Hassett, a highly regarded economist from the conservative American Enterprise Institute.) In Greece, economists aren’t simply mistrusted; they’re prosecuted. During the 2000s, Eurostat, the EU’s statistical arm, had repeatedly questioned the accuracy and political independence of Greek statistics. Soaring deficits in 2009 triggered a crisis and forced Greece to seek a bailout in 2010. Mr. Georgiou, a Greek native who received his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan and spent 21 years at the International Monetary Fund, took over Greece’s statistical agency that August. Officials had already shown previous debt and deficit figures to be understated. He revised them further upward and earned for his agency a clean bill of health from Eurostat. Politicians of the left and right accused him of inflating Greece’s debts to justify its creditors’ demands for austerity. Prosecutors charged him with making false statements and improperly disseminating statistics without his board’s approval. Courts acquitted him, but the second set of charges was reinstated, resulting in this month’s conviction. Mr. Georgiou, who now lives in a suburb of Washington, D.C., plans to ask Greece’s supreme court for a retrial. Mr. Georgiou says that his real offense, in the politicians’ eyes, was breaking from the past practice of “resisting” and “negotiating” with outsiders, such as the EU, over what official Greek data would show. The politicians needed a scapegoat to preserve their own “political narratives,” he says. He calls the implications of his case “terrifying” for other professionals responsible for economic statistics. Economists bear some blame for the public and political backlash. Their disagreement with populist policies has often colored their predictions. British economists, including Mr. Carney, thought that Brexit would unleash so much uncertainty that markets and the economy would tank. American economists foresaw similar swoons if Mr. Trump became president. Both were wrong, at least thus far: Economies in both countries have chugged along, and stock markets in particular have soared. There may be long-term costs, of course, but those may be hard to detect. Economists didn’t predict the financial crisis, but they did help to arrest it. But such misjudgments don’t justify the charges leveled at economists. Take, for example, their inability to predict financial meltdowns. Crises almost by definition are unpredictable. In a recent essay, Ricardo Reis, an economist at the London School of Economics, argues that failing to foretell a financial crash is no more an indictment of economics than failing to predict when a patient will die is an indictment of medicine. Economists didn’t predict the financial crisis, Prof. Reis notes, but they did help to arrest it by applying theory and experience: “The economy did not die, and a Great Depression was avoided, in no small part due to the advances of economics over many decades.” Another caricature of economists is that they try to emulate physicists, fetishizing elegant, abstract mathematical models disconnected from economic reality. Paul Romer, the chief economist at the World Bank, derisively calls this approach “mathiness.” The critique is certainly fair in some corners of academia, but it is increasingly untrue of the profession as a whole. In 1963, roughly half the papers published in the top three American economics journals were theoretical, according to a tally by Daniel Hamermesh, now at Royal Holloway, University of London. By 2011, that figure had shrunk to 28%; the remainder were empirical papers based on public data, on data gathered by the authors or on experiments. Economic debates these days are won not by the best theory but by the best data: Statistics are more important than calculus. Economists are far more obsessed with measurement than with math. When public discourse is plagued by innumeracy, this capacity to count is no small thing. Economists are also instinctively skeptical of simple explanations. They are trained to look for equilibrium, which is another way of saying, “When you change one thing, how do other things respond? Where do things settle once all interactions have occurred?” Advocates for a higher minimum wage extol the benefits to workers. Economists ask: Will it change employers’ demand for workers who earn the minimum wage? Or what they pay workers who earn just above the minimum? Or the prices they charge, or how much market share they lose to companies that don’t face the higher minimum or how much they invest in automation? Does it reduce turnover and thus make workers more productive? Advocates of tariffs on imported steel focus on the benefit to domestic steelmakers and their workers. But economists ask: What happens to steel-consuming companies that now face higher prices, as well as to their workers and customers? Does penalizing imports boost the dollar and hurt U.S. exports? The more data economists collect, the better they can map such complex interactions. Seemingly simple questions seldom have simple answers. A higher minimum wage helps workers in some circumstances but hurts them in others. Tariffs help some workers but hurt many others. Global warming will do some economic harm, but not enough to justify banning fossil fuels. Sometimes, this attachment to numbers conveys a false precision. Critics say that the Congressional Budget Office overestimated how many people would get insurance under Obamacare and must therefore be overestimating how many will lose it if the law were to be replaced. But the CBO always warned that its estimates were highly uncertain; what no economists doubted, including those working in Mr. Trump’s administration, is that the number would be large. Economists could confidently predict that price controls would lead to shortages in Venezuela, though not how severe they would be. Non-economists see all this as hopeless equivocation, but it is actually the way that evidence drives science. Economists still have their ideological leanings, but data has helped to restrict these biases. Surveys of top academic economists by the University of Chicago show considerable agreement, even among liberals and conservatives. For example, the scholars almost all agree that fiscal stimulus reduced unemployment after the last recession and that trade with China benefits Americans by providing them with cheap goods. A study by Gordon Dahl and Roger Gordon of the University of California, San Diego, found that disagreement among economists was greatest where the empirical research was most sparse, as with the issue of whether natural-gas fracking helps U.S. exports. Though economics remains an imperfect science, it has come a long way in 200 years. Its greatest challenge today isn’t the quality of the analysis it supplies, but whether there is still sufficient demand for it.

### 2AC---AT: 1NC 4

#### Growth is responsible for improvements in global living standards, and is the only path for future improvements

Cowen 18, \*Tyler Cowen is a Holbert L. Harris Professor at George Mason University and Director of the Mercatus Center; (October 16th, 2018, “Stubborn Attachments: A vision for a society of free, prosperous, and responsible individuals”, <https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/31283667-stubborn-attachments>)

How good is growth, anyway ? The history of economic growth indicates that, with some qualifications, growth alleviates misery, improves happiness and opportunity, and lengthens lives. Wealthier societies have better living standards, better medicines, and offer greater personal autonomy, greater fulfillment, and more sources of fun. While measured wealth does not exactly correspond to Wealth Plus, these two concepts have come pretty close to one another in the past, especially across the range of outcomes we have observed (as opposed to hypothetical thought experiments and counterfactuals). We often forget how overwhelmingly positive the effects of economic growth have been. Economist Russ Roberts reports that he frequently polls journalists about how much economic growth there has been since the year 1900. According to Russ, the typical response is that the standard of living has gone up by around fifty percent. In reality, the U.S. standard of living has increased by a factor of five to seven, estimated conservatively, and possibly much more, depending on how we measure prices and the values of outputs over time, a highly inexact science. The data show just how much living standards have gone up. In 1900, for instance, almost half of all U.S. households (forty-nine percent) had more than one occupant per room and almost one quarter (twenty-three percent) had over 3.5 persons per sleeping room. Slightly less than one quarter (twenty-four percent) of all U.S. households had running water, eighteen percent had refrigerators, and twelve percent had gas or electric lighting. Today, the figures for all of these stand at ninety-nine percent or higher. Back then, only five percent of households had telephones, and none of them had radio or TV. The high school graduation rate was only about six percent, and most jobs were physically arduous and had high rates of disability or even death. In the mid-nineteenth century, a typical worker might have put in somewhere between 2,800 and 3,300 hours of work a year; that estimate is now closer to 1,400 to 2,000 hours a year. 6 Until recently, polio, tuberculosis, and typhoid were common ailments, even among the rich. U.S. presidents George Washington, James Monroe, Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, and James A. Garfield all caught malaria during their lives. Antibiotics and vaccines have existed for only a tiny fraction of human history, and it is no coincidence that they emerged in the wealthiest time period humanity has ever seen. There is also a strong and consistent relationship between wealth and rates of infant mortality; small children do best when they are born into wealthier countries, and that is because wealth supplies the resources to take better care of them. As recently as the end of the nineteenth century, life expectancy in Western Europe was roughly forty years of age, and food took up fifty to seventy-five percent of a typical family budget. The typical diet in eighteenth-century France had about the same energy value as that of Rwanda in 1965, the most malnourished nation for that year. One effect of this deprivation was that most people simply did not have much energy for life. In earlier time periods, most individuals performed hard physical labor, and a college or university education—or even a high school education—was a luxury. Leisure time has risen with economic growth. In 1880, about four-fifths of individuals’ discretionary time was spent working, according to economist Robert Fogel. Today we spend about fifty-nine percent of our time doing what we like, and that may rise to seventy-five percent by 2040. 8 The splendors of the modern world are not just frivolous baubles; they are important sources of human comfort and well-being. Imagine that a time traveler from the eighteenth century were to pay a visit to Bill Gates today. He would find televisions, automobiles, refrigerators, central heating, antibiotics, plentiful food, flush toilets, cell phones, personal computers, and affordable air travel, among other remarkable benefits. The most impressive features of Gates’s life, seen from the point of view of a person from the eighteenth century, are those shared by most citizens of wealthy countries today. My smartphone is as good as his. The very existence of an advanced civilization—the product of cumulative economic growth—confers immense benefits to ordinary citizens, including their ability to educate and entertain themselves and choose one life path over another. For further arguments along these lines, I recommend Steven Pinker’s recent book, Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress . 9 The economic growth of the wealthier countries benefits the very poor as well, though sometimes with considerable lags. The distribution of wealth changes over time, and not all growth trickles down, but as an overall historical average, the bottom quintile of an economy shares in growth. 10 You can see this by comparing the bottom quintile in, say, the United States to the bottom quintile in India or Mexico. The richer economy can also do more to elevate the living standards of immigrants. Poor people who move to rich countries usually receive higher incomes and have better living conditions, and their children do better still. The richer the receiving country, the more new immigrants tend to benefit. Central American immigrants to the United States do better than Central American immigrants to Mexico or Nepalese immigrants to India. Immigrants also send remittances back home at a rate that far exceeds governmental foreign aid. Actual upward mobility in the United States far exceeds what the usual numbers indicate, because published statistics on upward mobility do not typically include a comparison with pre-immigration outcomes. But the chain of benefits does not stop there. Migrants will often return to their home countries, bringing new skills and new business connections. Both India and Israel have developed vibrant technology and software scenes precisely because of their close ties with the start-up scene of the United States. English-language universities in English-speaking countries have trained many thousands of Asian students in science and engineering, again leading to new businesses and, eventually, higher economic growth in their home countries. New medicines and technologies developed in wealthy nations also make their way to the rest of the world, as illustrated most conspicuously by the rapid spread of the cell phone and now the smartphone. One study predicts that if the leading twenty-one industrial countries were to boost their R&D by half a percentage point of GDP, U.S. output alone would grow by fifteen percent. But it doesn’t end there: output in Canada and Italy would grow by about twenty-five percent, and the output of all industrial nations would increase by 17.5 percent, on average. In the less economically developed countries, output would increase by about 10.6 percent on average. 11 Although these historical processes have often embodied unfairness and long lags of decades or more, economic growth has nonetheless brought wealth to the poor and elevated their status. The Greek city-states and the Roman Empire benefited from maritime trade across the Mediterranean; those regions in turn spread growth-enhancing institutions around Europe, Northern Africa, and the Middle East. The commercial revolution of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance reopened many of the trade routes of antiquity, and eventually human beings started to climb out of the Malthusian trap of very low per capita incomes at subsistence. The wealth of the West helped to enable the export miracles of the East Asian economies. Today, most poor countries seek greater access to wealthier Western and Asian markets, and flourish if they can achieve it. 12 For all the recent increases in inequality within individual nations, global inequality has declined over the last few decades, in large part because of growth in China and India. And the growth in these emerging nations was largely driven by earlier growth in the West and in East Asia. China, for instance, engaged in “catch-up” growth by adopting Western technologies and exporting to the wealthier nations. China has gone from being a quite poor nation to a “middle-income” nation with a sizable middle and upper class. Although recent media coverage has focused almost exclusively on within-nation magnitudes, recent world history has been an extraordinarily egalitarian time. It is above all else a story about how global economic growth helps the poor. There has been a squeezing of the middle class in the wealthier nations, in part because of increasing global competition. Still, we have seen economic growth, aggregate wealth, and global income equality all rising together over the last twenty-five years. Many citizens in East Asia, South Asia, and Latin America have seen significant gains in their standard of living, and much of this has been a trickle-down effect from the earlier growth of the wealthier countries. Much of Africa is now following suit, bolstered in part by China’s demand for raw materials, and also by the spread of modern technologies such as affordable cell phones. 13 Sometimes extended periods of growth do not confer full or fair benefits to the poor or lower classes, for instance during the early phase of the British Industrial Revolution in the late eighteenth century. Still, the historical record suggests that it was better for Britain to push ahead with economic growth, as this eventually drove the greatest boost in living standards the world has ever seen. To be sure, there were probably better policies which, had they been adopted, would have distributed the benefits of growth more widely (e.g., fewer wars and Poor Law reform and free trade for the British). But even taking misguided policies into account, Britain fared better by pursuing economic growth rather than turning its back on the idea, even though significant real wage gains for the working class often did not arrive until the 1840s. Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen has promoted the idea of “capabilities” as, if not quite a substitute for economic growth, then an alternative focus. Sen points out that our positive opportunities in life often matter more than the amount of cash in our bank accounts. He also notes that some parts of the world, such as the state of Kerala in India, have relatively good health and education indicators, even though their per capita incomes are relatively low. Sen’s points are well taken, but they do not put a fundamental dent in the relevance of wealth, or, as I am calling it here, Wealth Plus. The significant benefits accrued from capabilities, such as health benefits, are accounted for in Wealth Plus, even if they are not properly represented in current GDP measures. In other words, Kerala is wealthier than some limited statistical measures imply. Wealth and good social outcomes are still strongly correlated on average, and this correlation is stronger over longer time horizons. For instance, if Kerala does not grow much in more narrow economic terms, it is unlikely to look so impressive in its social indicators fifty or one hundred years from now. Even today, Kerala manages as well as it does in large part because so many Keralans take jobs in wealthier countries, especially in the Gulf States, and send money back home. And compared to other Indian states, Kerala has an above-average measure of wealth, as well as above-average consumption expenditures, both of which are accounted for in traditional statistics. 14 The truth is that economic growth is the only permanent path out of squalor. Economic growth is how the Western world climbed out of the poverty of the year 1000 A.D. or 5000 B.C. It is how much of East Asia became remarkably prosperous. And it is how our living standards will improve in the future. Just as the present appears remarkable from the vantage point of the past, the future, at least provided growth continues, will offer comparable advances, including, perhaps, greater life expectancies, cures for debilitating diseases, and cognitive enhancements. Billions of people will have much better and longer lives. Many features of modern life might someday seem as backward as we now regard the large number of women in earlier centuries who died in childbirth for lack of proper care.

### 2AC---AT: 1NC 5

#### Socialism is magnitudes times worse for the environment.

Regan 19, vice president of research at the[PROPERTY AND ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH CENTER](https://www.perc.org/) (PERC) in Bozeman, Mont, (Shawn, May 16th, 2019, “Socialism Is Bad for the Environment”, https://www.nationalreview.com/magazine/2019/06/03/socialism-is-bad-for-the-environment/)

One explanation for the disparity is that central planners, unlike markets, grossly misallocate resources, as a matter of routine. Energy prices, for example, were highly subsidized in the socialist economies of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. As a result, industrial production was far more energy-intensive throughout the socialist world than in Western European economies — five to ten times higher, according to one estimate — leading to more pollution. A 1992 World Bank study found that more than half of the air pollution in the former Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe could be attributed to subsidized energy pricing during this period. A related problem was the fixation of socialist planners on heavy industry at the expense of the environment. “The singular dominant fact of the Soviet economic strategy,” Jeffrey Sachs has noted, “was the subordination of all human and economic goals to the development of heavy industry.” Industrial pollution from factories in Eastern Europe was so bad that Time described it as the region “where the sky stays dark.” Acid rain in Krakow severely damaged the city’s historic structures and buildings, some of which required renovations, and even corroded the faces of many centuries-old statues. Of course, industry behind the Iron Curtain was anything but efficient, and central planning caused excessive use of natural resources. A 1991 study by Mikhail Bernstam found that market economies used about one-third as much energy and steel per unit of GDP as did socialist countries. Likewise, Polish economist Tomasz Zylicz found that the non-market economies of Central and Eastern Europe required two to three times more inputs to produce a given output than did Western European economies. (The former Soviet world, as well as China, also emitted several times more carbon per unit of GDP than the United States did — a trend that continues today.) Simply put, market economies make more with less and are therefore better for the environment. Socialist planners, on the other hand, lack the knowledge necessary to rationally coordinate economic activity. Moreover, bureaucratic constraints make accurate price-setting impossible. In their 1989 book The Turning Point, Soviet economists Nikolai Shmelev and Vladimir Popov offered an illustrative example. To bolster the production of gloves, the Soviet government more than doubled the price it paid for moleskin. Warehouses soon filled with mole pelts, but glovemakers were unable to use them all, so many rotted. As the economists explained: The Ministry of Light Industry has already requested Goskomtsen [the State Committee on Prices] twice to lower the purchasing prices, but “the question has not been decided” yet. And this is not surprising. Its members are too busy to decide. They have no time: besides setting prices on these pelts, they have to keep track of another 24 million prices. And how can they possibly know how much to lower the price today, so they won’t have to raise it tomorrow? Therein lies a crucial flaw in socialist economic logic, and one that has real environmental consequences: Whereas a capitalist firm has ample incentive to act on such information to economize on the use of natural resources, socialist planners have no such motivation — Soviet bureaucracies, Shmelev and Popov noted, were “able only to correct the most obvious price disproportions several years after” they appeared — nor do they have the knowledge needed to accurately set millions of prices at once. And if there are no market prices to convey accurate information about the value of scarce natural resources, there is little chance of conserving them. Finally, there is the issue of property rights. In a socialist society without them, it is impossible to hold individuals or governments accountable for environmental damages: Planners can increase industrial output without compensating those who bear its costs in the form of pollution. In a capitalist society, property rights offer protection against environmental harms and give resource owners incentives to conserve.

#### *Even if* revolutionary movements are successful, the utter chaos of the transition causes mass violence and repression that repeats the pitfalls of capitalism.

Wright 17, \*Erik Olin Wright, Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA. Director of A. E. Havens Center for Social Justice, University of Wisconsin-Madison, (2017, “How to be an Anti-capitalist for the 21st Century”, https://www.redalyc.org/journal/124/12452111002/html/)

Smashing

This is the classic strategic logic of revolutionaries. The rationale goes something like this:

The system is rotten. All efforts to make life tolerable within capitalism will eventually fail. From time to time small reforms that improve the lives of people may be possible when popular forces are strong, but such improvements will always be fragile, vulnerable to attack and reversible. Ultimately it is an illusion that capitalism can be rendered a benign social order in which ordinary people can live flourishing, meaningful lives. At its core, capitalism is unreformable. The only hope is to destroy it, sweep away the rubble and then build an alternative. As the closing words of the early twentieth century song Solidarity Forever proclaim, “We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old.” The full realization of the emancipatory alternative may be gradual, but the necessary condition for such a gradual transition is a ruptural break in the existing system of power.

But how to do this? How is it possible for anti-capitalist forces to amass sufficient power to destroy capitalism and replace it with a better alternative? This is indeed a daunting task, for the power of dominant classes that makes reform an illusion also blocks the revolutionary goal of a rupture in the system. Anti-capitalist revolutionary theory, informed by the writings of Marx and extended by Lenin, Gramsci and others, offered an attractive argument about how this could take place:

While it is true that much of the time capitalism seems unassailable, it is also a deeply contradictory system, prone to disruptions and crises. Sometimes those crises reach an intensity which makes the system as a whole fragile, vulnerable to challenge. In the strongest versions of the theory, there are even underlying tendencies in the “laws of motion” of capitalism for the intensity of such system-weakening crises to increase over time, so that in the long-term capitalism becomes unsustainable; it destroys its own conditions of existence. But even if there is no systematic tendency for crises to become ever-worse, what can be predicted is that periodically there will be intense capitalist economic crises in which the system becomes vulnerable and ruptures become possible. The problem for a revolutionary party, therefore, is to be in a position to take advantage of the opportunity created by such system-level crises to lead a mass mobilization to seize state power, either through elections or through an insurrectionary overthrow of the existing regime. Once in control of the state, the first task is to rapidly refashion the state itself to make it a suitable weapon of ruptural transformation, and then use that power to repress the opposition of the dominant classes and their allies, dismantle the pivotal power structures of capitalism, and build the necessary institutions for the long-term development of an alternative economic system.

In the 20th century, various versions of this general line of reasoning animated the imagination of revolutionaries around the world. Revolutionary Marxism infused struggles with hope and optimism, for it not only provided a potent indictment of the world as it existed, but also provided a plausible scenario for how an emancipatory alternative could be realized. This gave people courage, sustaining the belief that they were on the side of history and that the enormous commitment and sacrifices they were called on to make in their struggles against capitalism had real prospects of eventually succeeding. And sometimes, if rarely, such struggles did culminate in the revolutionary seizure of state power.

The results of such revolutionary seizures of power, however, were never the creation of a democratic, egalitarian, emancipatory alternative to capitalism. While revolutions in the name of socialism and communism did demonstrate that it was possible “to build a new world from the ashes of the old,” and in certain specific ways they may have improved the material conditions of life of most people for a period of time, the evidence of the heroic attempts at rupture in the 20th century is that they do not produce the kind of new world envisioned in revolutionary ideology. It is one thing to burn down old institutions and social structures; it is quite another to build emancipatory new institutions from the ashes.

Why the revolutions of the 20th century never resulted in robust, sustainable human emancipation is, of course, a hotly debated matter. Some people argue that this was just because of the historically specific, unfavorable circumstances of the attempts at system-wide ruptures. Revolutions occurred in economically backward societies, surrounded by powerful enemies. Some argue it was because of strategic errors of the leadership of those revolutions. Others indict the motives of leadership: the leaders that triumphed in the course of these revolutions were motivated by desires for status and power rather than the empowerment and wellbeing of the masses. And still others argue that failure is intrinsic to any attempt at radical rupture in a social system. There are too many moving parts, too much complexity and too many unintended consequences. As a result, attempts at system-rupture will inevitably tend to unravel into such chaos that revolutionary elites, regardless of their motives, will be compelled to resort to pervasive violence and repression to sustain social order. Such violence, in turn, destroys the possibility for a genuinely democratic, participatory process of building a new society.

### 2AC---!---War

#### War with Russia and China is unlikely, but the alternative causes conflict

Mousseau 19, Professor in the School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs at the University of Central Florida. (Michael, “The End of War,” International Security 44:1, 2019, https://sciences.ucf.edu/politics/wp-content/uploads/sites/29/2019/07/IS\_End-of-War.pdf)

Is war becoming obsolete? There is wide agreement among scholars that war has been in sharp decline since the defeat of the Axis powers in 1945, even as there is little agreement as to its cause.1 Realists reject the idea that this trend will continue, citing states’ concerns with the “security dilemma”: that is, in anarchy states must assume that any state that can attack will; therefore, power equals threat, and changes in relative power result in conflict and war.2 Discussing the rise of China, Graham Allison calls this condition “Thucydides’s Trap,” a reference to the ancient Greek’s claim that Sparta’s fear of Athens’ growing power led to the Peloponnesian War.3 This article argues that there is no Thucydides Trap in international politics. Rather, the world is moving rapidly toward permanent peace, possibly in our lifetime. Drawing on economic norms theory,4 I show that what sometimes appears to be a Thucydides Trap may instead be a function of factors strictly internal to states and that these factors vary among them. In brief, leaders of states with advanced market-oriented economies have foremost interests in the principle of self-determination for all states, large and small, as the foundation for a robust global marketplace. War among these states, even making preparations for war, is not possible, because they are in a natural alliance to preserve and protect the global order. In contrast, leaders of states with weak internal markets have little interest in the global marketplace; they pursue wealth not through commerce, but through wars of expansion and demands for tribute. For these states, power equals threat, and therefore they tend to balance against the power of all states. Fearing stronger states, however, minor powers with weak internal markets tend to constrain their expansionist inclinations and, for security reasons, bandwagon with the relatively benign market-oriented powers. I argue that this liberal global hierarchy is unwittingly but systematically buttressing states’ embrace of market norms and values that, if left uninterrupted, is likely to culminate in permanent world peace, perhaps even something close to harmony. My argument challenges the realist assertion that great powers are engaged in a timeless competition over global leadership, because hegemony cannot exist among great powers with weak markets; these inherently expansionist states live in constant fear and therefore normally balance against the strongest state and its allies.5 Hegemony can exist only among market-oriented powers, because only they care about global order. Yet, there can be no competition for leadership among market powers, because they always agree with the goal of their strongest member (currently the United States) to preserve and protect the global order based on the principle of selfdetermination. If another commercial power, such as a rising China, were to overtake the United States, the world would take little notice, because the new leading power would largely agree with the global rules promoted and enforced by its predecessor. Vladimir Putin’s Russia, on the other hand, seeks to create chaos around the world. Most other powers, having market-oriented economies, continue to abide by the hegemony of the United States despite its relative economic decline since the end of World War II.6 To support my theory that domestic factors determine states’ alignment decisions, I analyze the voting preferences of members of the United Nations General Assembly from 1946 to 2010. I ªnd that states with weak internal markets tend to disagree with the foreign policy preferences of the largest market power (i.e., the United States), but more so if they are major powers or have stronger rather than weaker military and economic capabilities. The power of states with robust internal markets, in contrast, appears to have no effect on their foreign policy preferences, as market-oriented states align with the market leader regardless of their power status or capabilities. I corroborate that this pattern may be a consequence of states’ interest in the global market order by ªnding that states with higher levels of exports per capita are more likely than other states to have preferences aligned with those of the United States; those with lower levels of exports are more likely to have interests that do not align with the United States, but again more so if they are stronger rather than weaker. Liberal scholars of international politics have long offered explanations for why the incidence of war may decline, generally beginning with the assumption that although the security dilemma exists, it can be overcome with the help of factors external to states.7 Neoliberal institutionalists treat states as like units and international organization as an external condition.8 Trade interdependence is dyadic and thus an external condition.9 Democracy is an internal factor, but theories of democratic peace have an external dimension: peace is the result of the expectations of states’ behavior informed by the images that leaders create of each other’s regime types.10 In contrast, I show that the security dilemma may not exist at all and how peace can emerge in anarchy with states pursuing their interests determined entirely by internal factors.11

### 2AC---!---Global South

#### Globalization is immensely beneficial for improving quality of life in the Global South---it’s also widely supported which proves their epistemic skepticism is from an ivory tower.

Horner et al. 18 (Rory, Global Development Institute, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK, “Globalisation, uneven development and the North–South ‘big switch’,” Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society 2018, 11, 17–33 doi:10.1093/cjres/rsx026)

Citizen surveys further reveal dramatic changes in attitudes to globalisation across and within the global North and South. While such surveys have methodological limitations,1 the results indicate distinctive trends that support the thesis of the ‘big switch’. Among people in the global South, polls have consistently found quite positive attitudes towards globalisation. In 2007, the Times of India claimed that ‘Indians believe globalisation benefits their country’, citing a poll by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and World Public Opinion that 54% of Indians answered ‘good’ compared to 30% ‘bad’ to the question of whether increasing economic connections ‘with others around the world is mostly good or bad’. More recently, Stokes (2016) reported on Pew Research Surveys from 2016 which found that 60% of Chinese think their country’s involvement in the global economy is good (compared to 23% who think it is bad), while 52% of Indians surveyed thought it was good compared to 25% who said it was a problem. A recent YouGov survey of 20,000 people across 19 countries found a majority believed that globalisation has been a force for good. That survey found the most enthusiasm for globalisation in East and South-East Asia, where over 70% in all countries believed it has been a force for good. The highest approval, 91%, was in Vietnam, a relative latecomer to globalisation (Smith, 2017).

By contrast, public support for globalisation in the global North has plummeted. Bhagwati (2004) cited an Environics International Survey presented at the 2002 World Economic Forum Meetings to argue that disillusionment with globalisation was not universal; ‘anti-globalisation sentiments are more prevalent in the rich countries of the North, while pluralities of policy makers and the public in the poor countries of the South see globalisation instead as a positive force’ (2004, 8). Although Bhagwati suggested this was an ‘ironic reversal’, it proved to be in line with a 2007 BBC World Service poll that found 57% of people in G7 countries thought the pace of globalisation was too rapid, whereas the majority of those in ~~developing~~ countries surveyed thought it was just right or too slow (e.g. IMF, 2008; Pieterse, 2012). A 2007 Pew Global Poll similarly found a decline in the percentage of people in many Northern countries who believed trade had a positive impact. In its analysis of the survey results, Kohut and Wilke (2008, 6–7) commented that ‘it is in economically stagnant Western countries that we see the most trepidation about globalisation’. Almost 10 years later, The Economist (2016) reported on a YouGov survey of 19 countries, which found that fewer than half of people in the USA, UK and France believed that globalisation is a ‘force for good’ in the world. This broad change in attitude toward globalisation is playing out in national electoral politics as well as gatherings such as the World Economic Forum and the meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.

The ‘big switch’ and the geography of uneven development

The ‘big switch’ seemingly confounds the predictions of the most vocal proponents and critics of globalisation alike. Uneven development is dynamic and relates to differences both within and among countries (Sheppard, 2016). Naïve claims that the world is flat or that economic globalisation is ‘win-win’ have rightly been dismissed (Baldwin, 2016; Christopherson et al., 2008; Turok et al., 2017), yet it is also insufficient to suggest that globalisation simply leads to a reproduction of existing inequalities, overlooking how that unevenness may be changing as a result of new macroeconomic geographies (Peck, 2016). While trade theory could predict that there would be ‘losers’ in the global North from international economic integration, proponents of economic globalisation have asserted that they would be few in number and could be compensated. More recently, it appears that a large group of people feel more forsaken than compensated. Similarly, for those who embraced Marxian political economy, and warned of its negative consequences in the South, the apparent optimism and support for globalisation in the South may have been unexpected. The sceptical internationalists (e.g. Evans, 2008; Kaplinsky, 2001; Stiglitz, 2006) should be acknowledged, however, for forecasting downsides in the global North. As we outline below, many people in the global North have experienced relative stagnation, whereas, albeit from a very low starting point and amidst considerable inequality, many people (but not all) have experienced improved development outcomes in the global South. We then explore what this apparent ‘big switch’ may tell us about contemporary economic globalisation.

The new geography of global uneven development

Significant portions of the population in the USA and other countries in the global North have experienced limited, if any, income gains in an era of globalisation. Milanovic’s (2016) ‘elephant graph’ (Figure 1) has quickly become a popular way to demonstrate the relative stagnation experienced in North America and Europe in recent decades. Exploring changes in real incomes between 1988 and 2008, he showed that those who particularly lost out on any relative gain in income were the global upper middle class (those between the 75th and 90th percentiles on the global income distribution) and the poorest 5% of the world population. Of these least successful percentiles, 86% of the population were from mature economies in the global North (Lakner and Milanovic, 2016, 23). Considering these contrasts more widely, a growing body of evidence shows that the global North’s dominance in the global economy is receding, with the share of high-income countries in global GDP having fallen from 76.8% in 2000 to 65.2% in 2015 (see Figure 1).

A different picture emerges in the global South. In Figure 1, it was Asians who comprised 90% of the population in the percentiles which did best in terms of relative income gains from 1988 to 2008 (Lakner and Milanovic, 2016, 223). The UNDP has remarked that

A striking feature of the world scene in recent years is the transformation of many ~~developing~~ countries into dynamic economies…doing well in economic growth and trade … they are collectively bolstering world economic growth, lifting other ~~developing~~ economies, reducing poverty and increasing wealth on a grand scale. (UNDP, 2013, 43)

The share of global GDP of low and middle income countries increased from 22.5% in 2000 to 34.1% in 2015 (Figure 2). Much of this increase is accounted for by China, as well as India and Brazil. Their share of global GDP, only 4.6% in 1960, 6.6% in 1990 and 9.3% in 2000, had almost doubled in the 21st century to 18% by 2015.

The development context of the global South has changed significantly since the turn of the Millennium, across a variety of important indicators. The total number of people in the world living on less than $1.90 per day (i.e. extreme poverty) has more than halved from 1.69 billion in 1999 to 766 million in 2013. At least by official estimates, the share of the population in the global South who are living in extreme poverty has fallen considerably this century. Whereas the percentage of the population in the global South with a daily consumption level of less than $1.90 was 33.4% in 1999, it was just 13.4% in 2013.2 The percentage of the world’s countries classified by the World Bank as low-income, albeit a very low threshold, more than halved within the first 15 years of the 21st century. Moreover, the total number of countries which are highly dependent on aid (having a net ODA > 9% of GNI) has fallen considerably, from 42 in 2000 to 29 in 2015, or from 34.1% to 23.2% of all low and middle-income countries with data available over that period.3

Considered overall, in comparison with the 1990s, the global South, in aggregate, now earns a much larger share of world GDP, has more middle-income countries, more middleclass people, less aid dependency, considerably greater life expectancy and lower child and maternal mortality. Table 1 provides some summary indicators for high-income countries (HICs) and low and middle-income countries (L&MICs), as somewhat imperfect approximations for global North and South.

After two hundred years of a ‘divergence, big time’ (Pritchett, 1997) between developed and ~~developing~~ countries following the Industrial Revolution, recent measurements suggest a change in the pattern of global inequality across a number of indicators (Horner and Hulme, 2017). The Global GINI of income distribution across all individuals in the world has fallen from 69.7 in 1988 to 66.8 in 2008 and 62.5 in 2013 (World Bank, 2016, 81). Analysis presented in the World Bank’s Taking on Inequality (2016) suggests that, in 1998, 26% of global income inequality was related to differences within countries, with the remaining 74% relating to differences among countries. By 2013, these shares were 35 and 65%. Two hundred years of a great divergence between global North and South now seems to have had some reversal, although more than half of an individual’s income can be accounted for by the country where he/she lives or was born (Milanovic, 2013). Inter-country inequality, rather than intra-country inequality, is still dominant, but it accounts for a diminished share of income-based and other inequalities (World Bank, 2016).

# 1AR

## AT: T---God Thing

#### death outweighs because it ontologically destroys the subject

Paterson 3 , Department of Philosophy, Providence College, Rhode Island (Craig Patterson, 2003, “A Life Not Worth Living?,” Studies in Christian Ethics, <http://sce.sagepub.com>)

Contrary to those accounts, I would argue that it is death per se that is really the objective evil for us, not because it deprives us of a prospective future of overall good judged better than the alter- native of non-being. It cannot be about harm to a former person who has ceased to exist, for no person actually suffers from the sub-sequent non-participation. Rather, death in itself is an evil to us because it ontologically destroys the current existent subject — it is the ultimate in metaphysical lightening strikes.80 The evil of death is truly an ontological evil borne by the person who already exists, independently of calculations about better or worse possible lives. Such an evil need not be consciously experienced in order to be an evil for the kind of being a human person is. Death is an evil because of the change in kind it brings about, a change that is destructive of the type of entity that we essentially are. Anything, whether caused naturally or caused by human intervention (intentional or unintentional) that drastically interferes in the process of maintaining the person in existence is an objective evil for the person. What is crucially at stake here, and is dialectically supportive of the self-evidency of the basic good of human life, is that death is a radical interference with the current life process of the kind of being that we are. In consequence, death itself can be credibly thought of as a ‘primitive evil’ for all persons, regardless of the extent to which they are currently or prospectively capable of participating in a full array of the goods of life.81 In conclusion, concerning willed human actions, it is justifiable to state that any intentional rejection of human life itself cannot therefore be warranted since it is an expression of an ultimate disvalue for the subject, namely, the destruction of the present person; a radical ontological good that we cannot begin to weigh objectively against the travails of life in a rational manner. To deal with the sources of disvalue (pain, suffering, etc.) we should not seek to irrationally destroy the person, the very source and condition of all human possibility.82

#### Alt and epistemic claims get stuck — never get around to solving

Lake 11 — David A., Jerri-Ann and Gary E. Jacobs Professor of Social Sciences and Distinguished Professor of Political Science at the University of California – San Diego, “Why ‘‘isms’’ Are Evil: Theory, Epistemology, and Academic Sects as Impediments to Understanding and Progress,” International Studies Quarterly (2011) 55, 465–480)

These ﬁve pathologies combine to divert professional debate from the substance of world politics to ﬁrst principles. Having created academic sects based on incommensurate assumptions and supported by selective evidence, we do not seek to assess which approach helps us understand world politics best (or helps us understand which range of phenomena best). We focus instead on the inherent superiority of this or that set of assumptions. Rather than seeking to understand the world—our highest obligation as scholars—we debate assumptions seemingly without end. What are the fundamental units of world politics? Are individuals, groups or social collectivities, or organizations ‘‘rational’’? Do actors seek power, welfare, justice, or something else? Which matters more, system or unit, structure or agency? Without comparable propositions derived from these competing research traditions and assessed against the same patterns of behavior, there is no possible answer to such existential questions. This makes for a continuing and lively debate of course, but it adds little to our understanding of world politics and nothing at all to practical policymakers. Rather than seeking to understand the complex and often frightening world around us, we spend far too much of our intellectual time and energy debating assumptions as if they mattered in absolute terms. It is here that research traditions tip over from being useful organizing devices to theologies. Assumptions stop being treated as more or less useful simpliﬁcations of a complex reality and become beliefs that are accepted or not as truths. We have left the realm of scholarly inquiry and entered the world of academic religions. By whatever deﬁnition, we have stopped doing ‘‘science.’’

## AT: K---Schlag

### 2AC---AT:Schlag

#### Debate’s a game, which doesn’t displace agency

Henricks 10, J. Earl Danieley Professor of Sociology and Distinguished University Professor at Elon University (Thomas Henricks, Fall 2010, “Caillois’s Man, Play, and Games,” American Journal of Play, Volume 3, Number 2)

Both of these forms described allow people to continue being themselves, albeit in new (perfected) settings. The third form of games, mimicry, is quite different. There, the player tries to “escape himself [themselves] and become another.” Caillois’s chooses his terminology intentionally for he wishes to remind readers of “mimetism, notably of insects, so that the fundamental, elementary, and quasi-organic nature of the impulse that stimulates it can be stressed.” Caillois sought to discover the prehuman foundations of our playful impulses. He was fascinated by the ways in which certain species camouflage themselves or even assume the appearance of another species. In humans, masking serves a similar purpose, “to change the viewer’s appearance and to inspire fear in others” (2001b, 20). Unlike animals, humans can control their disguises. They understand that what they are doing is a contrivance. A reveler at a carnival does not believe that she is in fact a dragon; a child’s playing at cowboy is only make-believe. And the motivation shifts somewhat from the inspiration of fear in others to the pleasure that “lies in being or passing for another.” Again, the player does not try to become entirely the person or creature that ~~she~~ [they] performs; nor [do they] ~~does she~~ expect to convince others that [they are] ~~she is~~ really a locomotive or a toreador. To this degree, playful make-believe in the contemporary world is a somewhat softened version of the ritual enactments of traditional societies.

## K---Capitalism

### 1AR---AT: Ag

#### Ag sustainable

McAfee 19, \*Andrew Paul McAfee, a principal research scientist at MIT, is cofounder and codirector of the MIT Initiative on the Digital Economy at the MIT Sloan School of Management; (2019, “More from Less: The Surprising Story of How We Learned to Prosper Using Fewer Resources and What Happens Next”, https://b-ok.cc/book/5327561/8acdbe)

Agriculture. As we saw in chapter 5, leading farms have demonstrated an ability to increase their tonnage of output year after year while decreasing their use of inputs such as land, water, and fertilizer. This trend toward optimization will continue thanks to a set of innovations under the label precision agriculture. The precision comes from many sources, including better sensors of plant and animal health, soil quality and moisture, and so on; the ability to deliver fertilizer, pesticides, and water just where they’re needed; and machinery that adapts itself to each plant or animal. All these varieties of precision will combine to allow traditional farms to generate more from less.

So will changes to the genomes of plants and animals. DNA modifications will increase disease and drought tolerance, expand where crops can be grown, and allow us to get more of what we want from each crop or herd. As we saw in chapter 9, they’ll also allow us to take better care of vulnerable populations such as infants in poor countries by creating golden rice and other nutrition enhancers. We’ll also be able to make much more precise and targeted genetic modifications thanks to a new crop of gene-editing tools that are large improvements over their more scattershot predecessors. Opposition to genetically modified organisms is fierce in some quarters, but isn’t based on reason or science. This opposition will, one hopes, fade.

Throughout human history, just about all farming has been done in fields. For some crops, this is now changing. Agriculture has moved indoors, where parameters such as light, humidity, fertilizer, and even the composition of the atmosphere can be precisely monitored and controlled. In everything from urban buildings to shipping containers, crops are now being grown with progressively less labor and fewer material inputs. These completely contained farms will spread and help reduce the planetary footprint of our agriculture.

### 1AR---AT: Warming

#### \*Growth is sustainable---climate change is shifting economic incentives towards reducing emissions.

Henderson 20, John and Natty McArthur University Professor @ Harvard (Rebecca, May/June Issue, “The Unlikely Environmentalists: How the Private Sector Can Combat Climate Change,” Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2020-04-13/unlikely-environmentalists)

There’s a reason climate change is often described as a “wicked problem.” Fully decarbonizing the economy will require not only completely transforming the global energy infrastructure, at a cost of many trillions of dollars, but also retrofitting all of the world’s buildings, remaking the planet’s agricultural practices, and revolutionizing transportation systems. It is difficult to see how this can be accomplished without some kind of global carbon tax or regulatory regime. But putting such a system in place is proving to be enormously difficult. The 2015 Paris agreement on climate change was a good first step, but many countries show little sign of meeting the commitments they made as part of that agreement, and the United States’ withdrawal from the process has presented a significant barrier to further progress. Given the slowing global economy and the slide toward populism and nationalism in much of the world, the prospects for any kind of comprehensive global accord seem increasingly remote. So far, at least, the public sector is failing to confront the problem. But the private sector has begun to step in to fill the vacuum. In January, Larry Fink, the CEO of BlackRock, the largest asset manager in the world, declared that “climate risk is investment risk” and announced that going forward BlackRock would ask every firm in its portfolio to disclose its carbon emissions. BlackRock has roughly $7 trillion under management and is one of the largest shareholders in nearly every publicly traded firm in the world. So companies around the world paid attention when Fink went on to say that BlackRock would consider voting against boards whose firms “do not make sufficient progress” in addressing climate-related risks and would cease to invest altogether in some fossil fuel projects. Fink is not alone. Many of the world’s largest asset owners are coming to the conclusion that climate change is the most important risk to the long-term health of their portfolios. More than a third of global invested capital—about $19 trillion—is controlled by the world’s 100 largest asset owners. Nearly two-thirds of this money is in pension funds; the remaining third is in sovereign wealth funds. These funds are now so large that they are sometimes referred to as “universal owners” or “universal investors” since, in effect, they hold the entire market. For that reason, they cannot diversify away from the risk of climate change—a risk that Mark Carney, who until earlier this year was the governor of the Bank of England, suggested could result in an abrupt financial collapse, potentially wiping out as much as $20 trillion of assets. To avert that kind of calamity, major asset owners are starting to push the companies in their portfolios to address climate change. This trend is not driven by altruism or a deep commitment to the environment: it’s a function of economic interests. For the world’s largest asset owners, climate change is not an externality—it is a profound threat to their long-term returns. It will, after all, be significantly harder to make money in a world where most of the major ports are underwater, harvests are failing on a routine basis, and hundreds of millions of people are on the move. As more and more major asset owners come to this realization, it is creating increasingly strong incentives for them to cooperate with one another in support of large-scale decarbonization. Together, they are pressing the firms in their portfolios to set concrete targets for emission reductions and to make progress toward meeting those targets, potentially solving the problem posed by firms’ unwillingness to cut their emissions unless they can be assured that their competitors will follow suit. Someone, however, will need to monitor that progress and sanction firms that lag behind—a role that would be best filled by government regulators. The need for such public-sector involvement will likely increase private-sector support for the policy changes required to drastically reduce carbon emissions. In this way, private-sector pressure may serve as the force that finally breaks the political logjam that has long blocked the public action needed to solve the climate crisis. MONEY TALKS One of the most promising examples of what this might look like in practice is Climate Action 100+, a nonprofit affiliation of more than 300 investors who collectively control nearly half of the world’s invested capital. The group was founded in 2017 with the goal of persuading the world’s 100 largest private-sector carbon emitters to “cut the financial risk associated with catastrophe” by putting in place board-level processes to assess their climate-related risks and oversee plans for dealing with them, pledging to clearly disclose those risks, and taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across their value chains rapidly enough to help meet the Paris agreement’s goal of limiting the increase in the global average temperature to well below two degrees Celsius. In December 2018, a group of investors belonging to Climate Action 100+ published a letter in the Financial Times listing some specific steps they were demanding of companies in which they invest, including “the rapid elimination of coal use by utilities in EU and OECD [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development] countries by no later than 2030.” Six months later, investors from the consortium pushed the oil giant Shell to announce short-term targets for limiting its greenhouse gas emissions and persuaded BP to support a shareholder resolution that binds the oil company to disclose the carbon intensity of its products, the methodology it uses to consider the climate impact of new investments, and its plans for setting and measuring emission targets. More than half of the 40 oil and gas companies with which the group has engaged have set long-term quantitative targets for reducing their emissions. And the group has helped persuade the shipping giant Maersk and two of the world’s largest mining companies, ArcelorMittal and Thyssenkrupp, to commit to becoming carbon neutral by 2050. These kinds of commitments are sometimes dismissed as mere greenwashing: public relations stunts designed to buy time. And sometimes they are. But they might also help catalyze an economic transformation that could play a major role in arresting climate change. Of course, large asset holders are not the only players who shape a company’s incentives: employees and consumers do, as well, and they are increasingly insisting that firms go green—and rewarding them when they do. For example, after the consumer goods giant Unilever announced that it planned to cut its carbon footprint in half and double its revenue at the same time—and then followed through by transforming its operations, brand by brand—the firm joined Facebook, Google, and Microsoft on LinkedIn’s list of the ten most desirable employers in the world. Sales of Unilever’s “sustainable living” brands—which include Ben & Jerry’s, Dove, and Vaseline and which Unilever claims “contribute to achieving the company’s ambition of halving its environmental footprint”—are growing 69 percent faster than the rest of the business and providing 75 percent of the company’s growth. Shifting public attitudes about climate change and public policies intended to combat it have also created clear business opportunities. Solar and wind energy are both multibillion-dollar businesses. The market for plant-based alternatives to meat is exploding. And global recycling could generate close to $400 billion in the next five years. RISKY BUSINESS But embracing the innovation that is required to exploit new opportunities is often risky and expensive. The venture capital industry lost at least $10 billion between 2005 and 2011 investing in clean energy technology. An electric utility that commits to phasing out coal plants might reap the benefits of declining solar and wind energy costs, but it could also misjudge the market and significantly increase its costs. An automobile company that invests in developing electric vehicles might leap ahead of its competitors, but it could also risk losing out to more cautious rivals. Universal investors can help mitigate those risks by funneling capital to firms that are willing to make the first move. This can be transformational in itself, since companies that decide to embrace new opportunities can often persuade an entire industry to follow them. Walmart’s massive investments in energy saving and waste reduction, for example, have helped persuade many other companies to take similar steps. Since 2010, the price of battery storage has fallen by at least 73 percent, a change driven largely by the electric vehicle company Tesla’s significant investments in the technology, which spurred the company’s competitors to invest more than $90 billion in the development of electric vehicles. Major asset holders can also push companies to commit to aggressive targets for decarbonizing their business models and insist that they report on their progress. In this way, universal investors may be able to force every firm in an industry to act, solving the collective action problem inherent in tackling climate change. Firms don’t naturally act collectively—for all kinds of reasons, including antitrust law. But when there exists a clear business case for doing so and cooperation can be credibly enforced, voluntary cooperation can be an effective means of creating or preserving public goods. Nearly half of the world’s inshore fisheries are managed through some form of cooperative agreement. Most of the rules governing international trade are designed and enforced by the International Chamber of Commerce, a voluntary association founded in 1919. Some of the world’s largest firms are increasingly exploring whether these kinds of voluntary agreements might be an effective way to reduce emissions. For example, after Unilever came under pressure from activists to stop using palm oil, the cultivation of which contributes to deforestation, Paul Polman, who was then the company’s CEO, was able to persuade many of his fellow consumer goods CEOs that continuing to purchase conventionally produced palm oil presented a significant threat to their own brands. Partly as a result, more than 60 percent of the world’s traded palm oil is now covered by sustainability commitments. Similar agreements with respect to soy and beef have greatly slowed rates of deforestation in the Amazon River basin. And companies in industries as diverse as airlines, food, retail, apparel, travel, hospitality, construction, health care, and high technology have begun to coordinate to reduce carbon emissions across supply chains, so that no single firm is placed at a disadvantage by going green. Such arrangements produce a wealth of knowledge about what effective decarbonization might look like on the ground. As one might expect, however, they are often unstable and difficult to enforce, since no mechanism exists through which to punish firms that drag their feet or refuse to conform. Here, universal investors might be able to make a significant difference by acting as enforcers. If BlackRock, for example, follows through on its threat to vote against the boards of companies that do not adequately disclose their climate emissions, every major firm in every industry will be forced to report—in an auditable, replicable way—the degree to which it is meeting its commitments. And if the world’s major investors then vote against the boards of those companies that are falling behind, investors could catalyze the transformation of entire industries. THE EARTH LOBBY Arresting climate change will still require government action, of course, and the changes afoot in finance and the corporate world could ease the path. As firms commit to reducing their carbon emissions, they are increasingly recognizing that the most effective way to ensure that they are not undercut by lagging companies is to press for regulation. Together, they are creating a constituency for effective climate policy. In 2017, for example, when U.S. President Donald Trump declared that he was going to withdraw the United States from the Paris agreement, the CEOs of more than 50 U.S. companies, including Apple, Gap, Google, HP, and Levi Strauss, published an open letter urging him to rethink the decision. When Trump stuck to his plan, Elon Musk, the CEO of Tesla, and Bob Iger, then the CEO of Disney, resigned from some of the president’s advisory councils in protest. More than 2,000 companies have joined a collaborative effort called “We Are Still In,” a group working to ensure that the United States meets its commitments under the agreement despite the administration’s withdrawal. The group includes not only businesses but also states, cities, religious organizations, and universities. Together, they represent 68 percent of U.S. GDP, 65 percent of the U.S. population, and the source of more than half of all U.S. carbon emissions. Such action independent of the federal government could make a big difference. According to America’s Pledge, a nongovernmental organization that tracks local progress toward emission reductions, the “full achievement of already on-the-books policies from state and local actors—paired with rapidly shifting economics in the power sector—would reduce emissions 19 percent below 2005 levels by 2025 and 25 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.” This would be a significant step toward the approximately 50 percent reduction in emissions that the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates is necessary to avoid the most dangerous potential outcomes of climate change. These efforts and others like them also have the potential to change the nature of the political conversation around climate change. In an increasingly partisan world, firms occupy a unique position. According to the 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer, an annual survey measuring credibility and trust, business is now the world’s most trusted institution, and 71 percent of employees around the world agree that “it is critically important” for the CEOs of their companies “to respond to challenging times.” A broad-based movement among the world’s biggest companies to tackle climate change could help legitimate the idea that climate change is a real danger, that acting to avert it could be a major driver of innovation and economic growth, and that appropriate public policy could be enormously helpful. Such a movement could also put increasing pressure on companies that resist decarbonizing. One of the reasons that climate regulation has stalled in the United States is that a small minority of firms have invested billions of dollars in actively lobbying against it. If their peers start to push for regulation and highlight the dangers inherent in continuing with business as usual, those laggards will be compelled to change their behavior. One day soon, flooding the political process with money to defend the burning of fossil fuels could be seen as an unacceptable reputational risk—or even as morally indefensible. For many years, experts have assumed that the fastest and most efficient route to global decarbonization is coordinated state action. But as the world’s political institutions have come under pressure, such action has become increasingly elusive. Against this background, the growing understanding that climate change presents a profound threat to the long-term returns of the world’s largest asset owners provides some reason for hope. As investors push for change and the realization dawns in more and more boardrooms that the benefits of climate action will outweigh the costs, it is possible that leading-edge firms could trigger a cascade of reinforcing reforms, transforming the economics of individual industries and creating a significant constituency for political action. For decades, when it came to addressing climate change, large asset holders and big companies acted more as obstacles than as catalysts. Those days may soon be over.

### 1AR---AT: Alt

#### Degrowth bad

Piper 21, \*Kelsey Piper, a Staff Writer for Vox's new vertical; (August 3rd, 2021,“Can we save the planet by shrinking the economy?”, https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/22408556/save-planet-shrink-economy-degrowth)

The tension at the heart of degrowth: Can we fix global poverty without economic growth?

One big problem with degrowth is this simple fact: In the coming decades, most carbon emissions won’t be coming from rich countries like the US — they’ll be happening in newly middle-income countries, like India, China, or Indonesia. Already, developing nations account for 63 percent of emissions, and they’re expected to account for even more as they develop further and as the rich world decarbonizes. Even if emissions in rich countries go to zero very soon, climate change is set to worsen as poorer countries increase their own emissions. That will, of course, have deeply negative climate impacts. But the alternative is a nonstarter — should the world really prioritize curbing emissions and economic growth if it meant suppressing the growth of those countries? Degrowthers see no dilemma here. What Hickel envisions is global movement in two directions: Poor countries could develop up to a certain level of prosperity and then stop; rich countries could develop down to that level and then stop. Thus, climate catastrophe could be averted, all while making the world’s poor more prosperous. “Rich countries urgently need to reduce their excess energy and resource use to sustainable levels so our sisters and brothers in the global South can live well too,” Hickel put it. “We live on an abundant planet and we can all flourish on it together, but to do so we have to share it more fairly, and build economies that are designed around meeting human needs rather than around perpetual growth.” From a climate change perspective, though, there’s a problem. First, it means that degrowth would do nothing about the bulk of emissions, [which are occurring in developing countries](https://www.cgdev.org/media/developing-countries-are-responsible-63-percent-current-carbon-emissions). Second, the global economy is more interconnected than Hickel implies. When Covid-19 hit, poor countries were devastated not just by the virus but by the [aftershocks of virus-induced slowdowns in consumption in rich countries](https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/799701589552654684/pdf/Costs-and-Trade-Offs-in-the-Fight-Against-the-COVID-19-Pandemic-A-Developing-Country-Perspective.pdf). There’s some genuine appeal to the idea of an end to “consumerism,” but the pandemic offered a taste of how a sudden drop in rich-world consumption would actually affect the developing world. Covid-19 [dramatically curtailed Western imports and tourism for a time](https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/799701589552654684/pdf/Costs-and-Trade-Offs-in-the-Fight-Against-the-COVID-19-Pandemic-A-Developing-Country-Perspective.pdf). The consequences in poor countries were devastating. Hunger rose, and child mortality followed. Covid-19, of course, wreaked direct economic havoc at the same time, with lockdowns having an [especially negative impact on some poor countries](https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2020/4/18/21212688/coronavirus-lockdowns-developing-world); the effects of the pandemic and international demand shock were combined, and in some cases they’re hard to separate. But the United Nations, the [World Bank](https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/799701589552654684/pdf/Costs-and-Trade-Offs-in-the-Fight-Against-the-COVID-19-Pandemic-A-Developing-Country-Perspective.pdf), and expert analyses point to the decline in global consumption as a significant part of the picture. Degrowthers reject this concern on two fronts: First, they argue that a sustained, deliberate reduction in consumption wouldn’t be anything like a recession. Recessions, they agree, are really bad, but that’s because consumption falls in affected sectors, instead of being targeted at things that don’t improve well-being. Degrowth, they say, would be different. Second, they contend that there is some path to economic growth in poor countries that doesn’t rely on trade with rich ones — certainly some countries managed economic growth when the whole world was poor, after all. Hickel’s perspective is that most trade between rich and poor countries is extractive, not mutually beneficial — and that maybe when that dynamic ceases, poor countries will have the chance for the catch-up growth they merit. That’s one take. But it means that degrowth’s case for not crushing the poor world is predicated on a speculative take on how those countries can grow — one that democratically elected leaders in those countries largely don’t share.

#### Armed opposition to the state fails.

**DeBoer 16**, Ph.D. from Purdue University, (Fredrik Deboer, March 15th, 2016, “c’mon, guys,” http://fredrikdeboer.com/2016/03/15/cmon-guys/)

I could be wrong about the short-term dangers, and the stakes are incredibly high. But in the end we’re left with the same old question: what tactics will actually work to secure a better world?

In a sharp, sober piece about the meaning of left-wing political violence in the 1970s, Tim Barker writes “If you can’t acknowledge radical violence, radicals are reduced to mere victims of repression, rather than political actors who made definite tactical choices under given political circumstances.” The problem, as Barker goes on to imply, is those tactical choices: in today’s America they will essentially never break on the side of armed opposition against the state. The government knows everything about you, I’m sorry to say, your movements and your associations and the books you read and the things you buy and what you’re saying to the people you communicate with. That’s simply on the level of information before we even get to the state’s incredible capacity to inflict violence.

Look, the world has changed. The relative military capacity of regular people compared to establishment governments has changed, especially in fully developed, technology-enabled countries like the United States. The Czar had his armies, yes, but the Czar’s armies depended on manpower above and beyond everything else. The fighting was still mostly different groups of people with rifles shooting at each other. If tomorrow you could rally as many people as the Bolsheviks had at their revolutionary peak, you’re still left in a world of F-15s, drones, and cluster bombs. And that’s to say nothing of the fact that establishment governments in the developed world can rely on the numbing agents of capitalist luxuries and the American dream to damper revolutionary enthusiasm even among the many millions who have been marginalized and impoverished. This just isn’t 1950s Cuba, guys. It’s just not. In a very real way, modern technology effectively lowers the odds of armed political revolution in a country like the United States to zero, and so much the worse for us.

This isn’t fatalism. It doesn’t mean there’s no hope. It means that there is little alternative to organization, to changing minds through committed political action and using the available nonviolent means to create change: a concert of grassroots organizing, labor tactics, and partisan politics. Those things aren’t exactly likely to work, either, but they’re a hell of a lot more plausible than us dweebs taking the Pentagon. Bernie Sanders isn’t really a socialist, but he’s a social democrat that moves the conversation to the left, and if people are dedicated and committed to organizing, the local, state, and national candidates he inspires will move it further to the left still. You got any better suggestions?