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### T Private Sector — 1NC

#### Next off is T private sector

#### Private sector means all non-governmental persons or entities, including non-profits

Senate Report 95 (Senate Report. 104-1, “UNFUNDED MANDATE REFORM ACT OF 1995,” <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-report/104th-congress/senate-report/1> , date accessed 9/10/21)

"Private sector" is defined to cover all persons or entities in the United States except for State, local or tribal governments. It includes individuals, partnerships, associations, corporations, and educational and nonprofit institutions.

#### Violation: the aff applies exclusively to conduct in big tech, which is a specific segment of the private sector.

#### Vote neg:

#### FIRST---limits and ground---the number of potential subsets is infinite---any industry, product, single companies, individuals---undermines clash. Only big affs have link uniqueness.

#### SECOND----precision---our interp has intent to define, exclude and is in legislative context.

### K---1NC

#### Anti-trust against big tech is a ruse to restore capitalist competition and impose American ideology on the Global South — only a socialist alternative can effectively challenge digital colonialism and runaway climate change.

Kwet 20, Visiting Fellow of the Information Society Project at Yale Law School (Michael, October 26th, “A Digital Tech New Deal to break up Big Tech,” *Al Jazeera*, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/10/26/a-digital-tech-new-deal-to-break-up-big-tech>, Accessed 06-07-2021)

In July, the CEOs of Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon appeared before Congress in an “historic” antitrust hearing. The event was met with great fanfare from the press. In early October, the United States House Judiciary Committee published a 450-page report criticising the anti-competitive business practices of the four giants and recommending new measures to “restore competition” to the market.

Mainstream “tech critics” across the political spectrum of the so-called “techlash” are celebrating this antitrust agenda led by the US Congress and the intellectuals informing the hearings. They see nothing wrong with the American legal system reshaping corporations that dominate markets outside US borders. After all, they accept the notion that the US “owns” the world and see capitalism as the only system imaginable.

For them, the reformist goal to “restore” a “capitalism for the people” is seen as the proper way to fix Big Tech. The Americans are joined by European power elites, who are seeking to curb the dominance of Big Tech as part of an effort to increase market share for European companies.

Yet the solution to American Big Tech corporations dominating markets across the world cannot come from the American or European pro-capital legal systems. Rather, it has to be a collective effort by the international community, focused on bottom-first redistribution for the Global South, as part of a global transformation towards a sustainable green economy.

The new progressives and neo-Brandeisian antitrust

To understand Big Tech antitrust in the US, we need to understand its origins. The movement was spearheaded by a group of US legal scholars, sometimes called the neo-Brandeisians, named after Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis (1856-1941).

As a young lawyer and legal scholar, Brandeis focused on social justice issues and financial power. As corporations restricted competition through “trusts”, he became concerned with how monopoly power could undermine democracy and harm society. His work inspired “antitrust” legislation banning unfair business practices in the US.

Decades later, in the 1970s, a conservative group of legal scholars sought to restrict the scope of antitrust in the US. These neoliberals of the Chicago School, led by legal scholar Robert Bork, argued that antitrust should be narrowly concerned with economic efficiency, largely measured by lower prices for consumers. Inspired by the likes of Bork, US courts began ruling that “consumer welfare”, rather than broad concerns about democracy and power, should be the focus of antitrust.

Over the past few years, neo-Brandeisian scholars dug into legal history and argued, correctly, that the neoliberal antitrust framework does not work for Big Tech. Its business model cannot always be measured by the price that consumers pay for a firm’s product (eg Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are “free”), and broader concerns around democracy and equality should inform antitrust. In order to fix Big Tech, they insist, we need to think broadly about antitrust and antimonopoly, much like Louis Brandeis did a century ago.

While this all sounds great, a closer look at what neo-Brandesians offer reveals two significant problems with it: one, they want the US to legislate for a problem that concerns the whole world; two, they still insist on a capitalist solution which is incompatible with notions of global social justice and environmental protection.

Big Tech is global

Neo-Brandeisian scholars intend to restructure Big Tech within a framework of US law, spearheaded by US thinkers. However, the firms they want to regulate have a global reach that harms people outside of the US as well.

In fact, the central business model of Big Tech is digital colonialism. Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple, Microsoft (GAFAM) are worth more than $5 trillion in total and much of it is profit coming from abroad

For example, less than half of Facebook’s revenues come from the US and Canada, while nine of its top 10 user bases are from Global South countries, totalling 957 million users. The US, by comparison, has 190 million users.

Most revenue for Apple and Google comes from outside the US as well, and almost half of Microsoft’s revenue comes from abroad. A large majority of Amazon’s total revenue comes from its US operations, but it is expanding globally, and its Amazon Web Services dominate the global cloud market.

If we zoom in on individual countries, the scale of the problem becomes even clearer. A small country may provide a tiny fraction of GAFAM’s revenue, but the giants still capture a large share of various markets in that country. For example, in South Africa, Google controls 70 percent of local online advertising, and social media – led by Facebook – another 12 percent. South Africa’s largest media groups take just 8 percent of the pie

Some 84 percent of smartphones in South Africa use Google Android operating systems, while 15 percent – Apple; 72 percent of desktop computers have Microsoft Windows, while 17 percent – Apple. Other products and services, such as e-hailing, streaming entertainment, search, cloud and office suites are also dominated by American firms. This dynamic repeats throughout the world.

US tech reformers have little to say about the global nature of US tech transnationals, or about why laws regulated by the US government should reshape the core structure of global behemoths. Most of them also no longer discuss how the partnership between the National Security Agency and Big Tech promotes American military imperial interests outside of the US.

The best neo-Brandeisian scholars can argue is that their proposals would weaken the stranglehold of the Silicon Valley beyond US borders. But this is not enough to resolve the problem and does nothing to address the looming environmental catastrophe we are facing.

‘Kinder capitalism’ does not work

US tech reformers assume that market competition – supplemented by new privacy laws, public utility regulation, and some publicly subsidised, non-profit alternatives – is the solution to the power of monopoly. However, they do not address the problem of how private property in a capitalist marketplace creates inequality in the first place. Would “competitive markets” really benefit the Global South?

Competition means beating other people out, and poorer people and nations are naturally disadvantaged in such a competition.

After “restoring competition” to the tech economy, those who will dominate as “new market entrants” on the “open” internet will still be companies from richer countries: the US, European powers, China, etc, not low-income countries like Zimbabwe, Bolivia or Cambodia. And within low-income countries, the well-resourced classes will capture any new market opportunities that an antitrust push in the US may open.

Indeed, reformers assume we can restore “competitive capitalism” while we are staring at the abyss of permanent environmental destruction. Proponents of capitalism maintain that we can grow our way to poverty alleviation and innovate to stop climate change and environmental degradation. But estimates show that under the growth model of the past few decades, the global economy would require a 175-fold increase in global consumption and production just to bring billions of poor people up to a meagre $5 per day. And in the process, we would most definitely destroy the environment.

Degrowth researchers have demonstrated that capitalism is fatally flawed. A capitalist economy focuses on profit and growth, which increases greenhouse gas emissions overheating the planet and leads to over-extraction of material resources, which results in ecological collapses.

The richest nations are dependent on material extraction from the poorest. High-income countries have the worst material footprint, with a consumption level of about 26 tonnes per person per year, when the sustainable level is about eight tonnes per person globally. Low-income countries consume about two tonnes per person per year.

The Big Tech industry contributes to environmental destruction in several ways. E-waste now accounts for five percent of all global waste, and it is growing, in large part because gadgets are built with short lifespans. Instead of designing products that can last a long time, Big Tech has lobbied to kill “right to repair” laws, which would allow consumers to get their devices repaired or buy spare parts from third parties.

What is more, Big Tech directly contributes to inequality by extracting wealth from the poor and concentrating in the hands of a few US-based executives, shareholders and highly paid professionals. At the same time, it exploits workers and often denies them safe and dignified working conditions.

Digital capitalists also encourage consumerism through ads and monetise surveillance, which is destroying privacy, with grave consequences for civil rights and liberties.

Private ownership of the means of computation – software code, infrastructure and the internet – is required to extract money for content, force ads on audiences and spy on users. If the people own and control the digital environment, they would opt to share knowledge freely, reject ads and protect their privacy.

Solutions: Tech for Extinction Rebellion

It goes without saying that any solution for the digital economy must be part and parcel of a sustainable green economy. This, in turn, requires rapid wealth and income redistribution and degrowth. It is a monumental task.

Fortunately, there are some reasonable ways forward.

First, we can phase out copyright paywalls and patents. Such a move would enjoy the support of activists in the Global South and Global North, and would make the world’s scientific and cultural knowledge available to all people, irrespective of their ability to pay. Of course, equitable information sharing and generation also requires resources to bridge the digital divide and make use of scientific knowledge.

Second, software can be placed under strong free and open-source licences, online services can be decentralised, interoperable and owned by communities, while internet infrastructure can be fully socialised as communal property. The global Free Software Movement and activist scholars have already built a preliminary foundation and framework for moving in this direction.

Third, an eco-socialist Digital Tech New Deal has to be implemented to reorient the tech economy away from profit and towards satisfying the needs of the people. This requires socialising financial, intellectual and physical property. As first steps, we could impose heavy taxes on the rich to fund a global digital commons, produce plans to phase out private ownership of information and the means of computation, support workers and mandate economic redistribution to the global poor, and build a privacy-by-design tech ecosystem. All of this must be done within the confines of a sustainable economy.

These solutions need to be part of the global movement for wealth redistribution, reparations, and democratisation. In South Africa, we are building a People’s Tech for People’s Power movement to drive this agenda forward, through popular education and the formation of solidarity networks to launch actions against Big Tech and digital capitalism.

There already is a good historical precedent for global action against Big Tech. During South Africa’s apartheid era, people around the world initiated boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against corporations like IBM and Hewlett-Packard, which aided and abetted the apartheid state and businesses.

US corporations, in response, pushed a reformist agenda called the Sullivan Principles said to improve racial equality for workers. But anti-apartheid activists rejected the move as corporate propaganda designed to manufacture consent while US corporations continued to profit from apartheid misery.

Today, the US resembles the South African apartheid state, but on a global scale. Its high-tech military projects power across the world, its diplomats impose strong intellectual property protections at the World Trade Organization, its imperialist anti-immigrant policies control the movement of people and capital, and its tech corporations dominate nearly every industry vertical outside of mainland China, all while creating a global police state.

We do not need 21st century Sullivan Principles to save digital capitalism. We need digital socialism, reparations and democratisation of tech for a global green economy. This is a matter of survival for the whole human race.

#### Capitalism causes existential climate change, nuclear war, democratic collapse, extreme inequality, and perpetual exploitation of the global south — try or die for a transition.

Foster 19, Sociology Professor @ Oregon (John Bellamy, February 1st, “Capitalism Has Failed—What Next?” *The Monthly Review*, Volume 70, Issue 9, <https://monthlyreview.org/2019/02/01/capitalism-has-failed-what-next/>, Accessed 06-30-2021)

Less than two decades into the twenty-first century, it is evident that capitalism has failed as a social system. The world is mired in economic stagnation, financialization, and the most extreme inequality in human history, accompanied by mass unemployment and underemployment, precariousness, poverty, hunger, wasted output and lives, and what at this point can only be called a planetary ecological “death spiral.”1 The digital revolution, the greatest technological advance of our time, has rapidly mutated from a promise of free communication and liberated production into new means of surveillance, control, and displacement of the working population. The institutions of liberal democracy are at the point of collapse, while fascism, the rear guard of the capitalist system, is again on the march, along with patriarchy, racism, imperialism, and war.

To say that capitalism is a failed system is not, of course, to suggest that its breakdown and disintegration is imminent.2 It does, however, mean that it has passed from being a historically necessary and creative system at its inception to being a historically unnecessary and destructive one in the present century. Today, more than ever, the world is faced with the epochal choice between “the revolutionary reconstitution of society at large and the common ruin of the contending classes.”3

Indications of this failure of capitalism are everywhere. Stagnation of investment punctuated by bubbles of financial expansion, which then inevitably burst, now characterizes the so-called free market.4 Soaring inequality in income and wealth has its counterpart in the declining material circumstances of a majority of the population. Real wages for most workers in the United States have barely budged in forty years despite steadily rising productivity.5 Work intensity has increased, while work and safety protections on the job have been systematically jettisoned. Unemployment data has become more and more meaningless due to a new institutionalized underemployment in the form of contract labor in the gig economy.6 Unions have been reduced to mere shadows of their former glory as capitalism has asserted totalitarian control over workplaces. With the demise of Soviet-type societies, social democracy in Europe has perished in the new atmosphere of “liberated capitalism.”7

The capture of the surplus value produced by overexploited populations in the poorest regions of the world, via the global labor arbitrage instituted by multinational corporations, is leading to an unprecedented amassing of financial wealth at the center of the world economy and relative poverty in the periphery.8 Around $21 trillion of offshore funds are currently lodged in tax havens on islands mostly in the Caribbean, constituting “the fortified refuge of Big Finance.”9 Technologically driven monopolies resulting from the global-communications revolution, together with the rise to dominance of Wall Street-based financial capital geared to speculative asset creation, have further contributed to the riches of today’s “1 percent.” Forty-two billionaires now enjoy as much wealth as half the world’s population, while the three richest men in the United States—Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and Warren Buffett—have more wealth than half the U.S. population.10 In every region of the world, inequality has increased sharply in recent decades.11 The gap in per capita income and wealth between the richest and poorest nations, which has been the dominant trend for centuries, is rapidly widening once again.12 More than 60 percent of the world’s employed population, some two billion people, now work in the impoverished informal sector, forming a massive global proletariat. The global reserve army of labor is some 70 percent larger than the active labor army of formally employed workers.13

Adequate health care, housing, education, and clean water and air are increasingly out of reach for large sections of the population, even in wealthy countries in North America and Europe, while transportation is becoming more difficult in the United States and many other countries due to irrationally high levels of dependency on the automobile and disinvestment in public transportation. Urban structures are more and more characterized by gentrification and segregation, with cities becoming the playthings of the well-to-do while marginalized populations are shunted aside. About half a million people, most of them children, are homeless on any given night in the United States.14 New York City is experiencing a major rat infestation, attributed to warming temperatures, mirroring trends around the world.15

In the United States and other high-income countries, life expectancy is in decline, with a remarkable resurgence of Victorian illnesses related to poverty and exploitation. In Britain, gout, scarlet fever, whooping cough, and even scurvy are now resurgent, along with tuberculosis. With inadequate enforcement of work health and safety regulations, black lung disease has returned with a vengeance in U.S. coal country.16 Overuse of antibiotics, particularly by capitalist agribusiness, is leading to an antibiotic-resistance crisis, with the dangerous growth of superbugs generating increasing numbers of deaths, which by mid–century could surpass annual cancer deaths, prompting the World Health Organization to declare a “global health emergency.”17 These dire conditions, arising from the workings of the system, are consistent with what Frederick Engels, in the Condition of the Working Class in England, called “social murder.”18

At the instigation of giant corporations, philanthrocapitalist foundations, and neoliberal governments, public education has been restructured around corporate-designed testing based on the implementation of robotic common-core standards. This is generating massive databases on the student population, much of which are now being surreptitiously marketed and sold.19 The corporatization and privatization of education is feeding the progressive subordination of children’s needs to the cash nexus of the commodity market. We are thus seeing a dramatic return of Thomas Gradgrind’s and Mr. M’Choakumchild’s crass utilitarian philosophy dramatized in Charles Dickens’s Hard Times: “Facts are alone wanted in life” and “You are never to fancy.”20 Having been reduced to intellectual dungeons, many of the poorest, most racially segregated schools in the United States are mere pipelines for prisons or the military.21

More than two million people in the United States are behind bars, a higher rate of incarceration than any other country in the world, constituting a new Jim Crow. The total population in prison is nearly equal to the number of people in Houston, Texas, the fourth largest U.S. city. African Americans and Latinos make up 56 percent of those incarcerated, while constituting only about 32 percent of the U.S. population. Nearly 50 percent of American adults, and a much higher percentage among African Americans and Native Americans, have an immediate family member who has spent or is currently spending time behind bars. Both black men and Native American men in the United States are nearly three times, Hispanic men nearly two times, more likely to die of police shootings than white men.22 Racial divides are now widening across the entire planet.

Violence against women and the expropriation of their unpaid labor, as well as the higher level of exploitation of their paid labor, are integral to the way in which power is organized in capitalist society—and how it seeks to divide rather than unify the population. More than a third of women worldwide have experienced physical/sexual violence. Women’s bodies, in particular, are objectified, reified, and commodified as part of the normal workings of monopoly-capitalist marketing.23

The mass media-propaganda system, part of the larger corporate matrix, is now merging into a social media-based propaganda system that is more porous and seemingly anarchic, but more universal and more than ever favoring money and power. Utilizing modern marketing and surveillance techniques, which now dominate all digital interactions, vested interests are able to tailor their messages, largely unchecked, to individuals and their social networks, creating concerns about “fake news” on all sides.24 Numerous business entities promising technological manipulation of voters in countries across the world have now surfaced, auctioning off their services to the highest bidders.25 The elimination of net neutrality in the United States means further concentration, centralization, and control over the entire Internet by monopolistic service providers.

Elections are increasingly prey to unregulated “dark money” emanating from the coffers of corporations and the billionaire class. Although presenting itself as the world’s leading democracy, the United States, as Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy stated in Monopoly Capital in 1966, “is democratic in form and plutocratic in content.”26 In the Trump administration, following a long-established tradition, 72 percent of those appointed to the cabinet have come from the higher corporate echelons, while others have been drawn from the military.27

War, engineered by the United States and other major powers at the apex of the system, has become perpetual in strategic oil regions such as the Middle East, and threatens to escalate into a global thermonuclear exchange. During the Obama administration, the United States was engaged in wars/bombings in seven different countries—Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, and Pakistan.28 Torture and assassinations have been reinstituted by Washington as acceptable instruments of war against those now innumerable individuals, group networks, and whole societies that are branded as terrorist. A new Cold War and nuclear arms race is in the making between the United States and Russia, while Washington is seeking to place road blocks to the continued rise of China. The Trump administration has created a new space force as a separate branch of the military in an attempt to ensure U.S. dominance in the militarization of space. Sounding the alarm on the increasing dangers of a nuclear war and of climate destabilization, the distinguished Bulletin of Atomic Scientists moved its doomsday clock in 2018 to two minutes to midnight, the closest since 1953, when it marked the advent of thermonuclear weapons.29

Increasingly severe economic sanctions are being imposed by the United States on countries like Venezuela and Nicaragua, despite their democratic elections—or because of them. Trade and currency wars are being actively promoted by core states, while racist barriers against immigration continue to be erected in Europe and the United States as some 60 million refugees and internally displaced peoples flee devastated environments. Migrant populations worldwide have risen to 250 million, with those residing in high-income countries constituting more than 14 percent of the populations of those countries, up from less than 10 percent in 2000. Meanwhile, ruling circles and wealthy countries seek to wall off islands of power and privilege from the mass of humanity, who are to be left to their fate.30

More than three-quarters of a billion people, over 10 percent of the world population, are chronically malnourished.31 Food stress in the United States keeps climbing, leading to the rapid growth of cheap dollar stores selling poor quality and toxic food. Around forty million Americans, representing one out of eight households, including nearly thirteen million children, are food insecure.32 Subsistence farmers are being pushed off their lands by agribusiness, private capital, and sovereign wealth funds in a global depeasantization process that constitutes the greatest movement of people in history.33 Urban overcrowding and poverty across much of the globe is so severe that one can now reasonably refer to a “planet of slums.”34 Meanwhile, the world housing market is estimated to be worth up to $163 trillion (as compared to the value of gold mined over all recorded history, estimated at $7.5 trillion).35

The Anthropocene epoch, first ushered in by the Great Acceleration of the world economy immediately after the Second World War, has generated enormous rifts in planetary boundaries, extending from climate change to ocean acidification, to the sixth extinction, to disruption of the global nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, to the loss of freshwater, to the disappearance of forests, to widespread toxic-chemical and radioactive pollution.36 It is now estimated that 60 percent of the world’s wildlife vertebrate population (including mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and fish) have been wiped out since 1970, while the worldwide abundance of invertebrates has declined by 45 percent in recent decades.37 What climatologist James Hansen calls the “species exterminations” resulting from accelerating climate change and rapidly shifting climate zones are only compounding this general process of biodiversity loss. Biologists expect that half of all species will be facing extinction by the end of the century.38

If present climate-change trends continue, the “global carbon budget” associated with a 2°C increase in average global temperature will be broken in sixteen years (while a 1.5°C increase in global average temperature—staying beneath which is the key to long-term stabilization of the climate—will be reached in a decade). Earth System scientists warn that the world is now perilously close to a Hothouse Earth, in which catastrophic climate change will be locked in and irreversible.39 The ecological, social, and economic costs to humanity of continuing to increase carbon emissions by 2.0 percent a year as in recent decades (rising in 2018 by 2.7 percent—3.4 percent in the United States), and failing to meet the minimal 3.0 percent annual reductions in emissions currently needed to avoid a catastrophic destabilization of the earth’s energy balance, are simply incalculable.40

Nevertheless, major energy corporations continue to lie about climate change, promoting and bankrolling climate denialism—while admitting the truth in their internal documents. These corporations are working to accelerate the extraction and production of fossil fuels, including the dirtiest, most greenhouse gas-generating varieties, reaping enormous profits in the process. The melting of the Arctic ice from global warming is seen by capital as a new El Dorado, opening up massive additional oil and gas reserves to be exploited without regard to the consequences for the earth’s climate. In response to scientific reports on climate change, Exxon Mobil declared that it intends to extract and sell all of the fossil-fuel reserves at its disposal.41 Energy corporations continue to intervene in climate negotiations to ensure that any agreements to limit carbon emissions are defanged. Capitalist countries across the board are putting the accumulation of wealth for a few above combatting climate destabilization, threatening the very future of humanity.

#### Racial capitalism outweighs — Capitalism necessitates super-exploitation of the Global South, colonial dispossession, militaristic imperialism, and racial hierarchies to sustain itself. The system must be rejected on ethical grounds.

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Drawing on the intellectual production of twentieth-century Black anticapitalists, I theorize modern U.S. racial capitalism as a racially hierarchical political economy constituting war and militarism, imperialist accumulation, expropriation by domination, and labor superexploitation.14 The racial here specifically refers to Blackness, defined as African descendants’ relationship to the capitalist mode of production—their structural location—and the condition, status, and material realities emanating therefrom.15 It is out of this structural location that the irresolvable contradiction of value minus worth arises. Stated differently, Blackness is a capacious category of surplus value extraction essential to an array of political-economic functions, including accumulation, disaccumulation, debt, planned obsolescence, and absorption of the burdens of economic crises.16 At the same time, Blackness is the quintessential condition of disposability, expendability, and devalorization.

Footnote 14: Another feature of modern U.S. racial capitalism is property by dispossession. In Theft Is Property! Dispossession and Critical Theory, Robert Nichols draws on the experience of Indigenous peoples in the United States, Canada, and New Zealand to theorize how the “system of landed property” was fundamentally predicated on violent dispossession. While the Anglo-derived legal-political regimes differed in these localities, the “intertwined and co-constitutive” material effects converged in the legalized theft of indigenous territory amounting in “approximately 6 percent of the total land on the surface of Earth.” Such dispossession, Nichols notes, is recursive: “In a standard formulation one would assume that ‘property’ is logically, chronologically, and normatively prior to ‘theft.’ However, in this (colonial) context, theft is the mechanism and means by which property is generated: hence its recursivity. Recursive dispossession is effectively a form of property-generating theft.” As such, theft and dispossession, through property regimes, are an ongoing feature of the Indigenous reality of modern U.S. racial capitalism. Robert Nichols, Theft Is Property! Dispossession and Critical Theory (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 50–51.

Footnote 15: Borrowing from Karl Marx’s dictum that the labor process is the hidden abode of the capitalist production of value, and Nancy Fraser’s conceptualization of reproduction as the even more hidden abode, or background condition, for the possibility of capitalist production, I understand Blackness as the obfuscated abode. The immense value of Blackness is obscured and rendered unintelligible by its positioning as worthlessness, as something that does not amount to anything—but that does not equal nothing. As a structural location at the intersection of indispensability and disposability, Blackness exceeds the category of race, is not reducible to class, and does not fit the specifications of caste.

My operationalization of capitalism follows Oliver Cromwell Cox’s explication in Capitalism and American Leadership.17 Modern U.S. racial capitalism arose in the context of the First World War, when, as Cox explains, the United States took advantage of the conflict to capture the markets of South America, Asia, and Africa for its “over-expanded capacity.”18 Cox further expounds upon this auspicious moment of ascendant modern U.S. racial capitalism thus:

By 1914, the United States had brought its superb natural resources within reach of intensive exploitation. Under the stimulus of its foreign-trade outlets, the financial assistance of the older capitalist nations, and a flexible system of protective tariffs, the nation developed a magnificent work of transportation and communication so that its mines, factories, and farms became integrated into an effectively producing organism having easy access to its seaports.… [Likewise,] further internal expansion depended upon far greater emphasis on an ever widening foreign commerce.… Major entrepreneurs of the United States proceeded to step up their campaign for expansion abroad. The war accentuated this movement. It accelerated the growth of [modern] American [racial] capitalism and impressed upon its leaders as nothing had before the need for external markets.19

Relatedly, Peter James Hudson argues that the First World War fundamentally changed the terms of order of international finance, allowing New York to compete with London, Paris, and Berlin for the first time in the realm of global banking. This was not least because the Great War “drastically reordered global credit flows,” with the United States transforming from a debtor into a creditor nation.20 In addition to Latin American and Caribbean nations and businesses turning to the United States for financing and credit, domestic saving and investment patterns were altered to the benefit of imperial financial institutions like the City Bank.21

Although the United States is, to use Cox’s terminology, more a “lusty child of an already highly developed capitalism” than an exceptional capitalist power, the nation perfected its techniques of accumulation through its vast natural wealth, large domestic market, imbalance of Northern and Southern economies, and, importantly, through its lack of concern for the political and economic welfare of the overwhelming masses of its population, least of all the descendants of the enslaved.22 Modern U.S. racial capitalism is thus sustained by military expenditure, the maintenance of an extremely low standard of living in “dependent” countries, and the domestic superexploitation of Black toilers and laborers. Cox notes that Black labor has been the “chief human factor” in wealth production; as such, “the dominant economic class has always been at the motivating center of the spreads of racial antagonism. This is to be expected since the economic content of the antagonism, especially at its proliferating source in the South, has been precisely that of labor-capital relations.”23 In a general sense, racial capitalism in the United States constitutes “a peculiar variant of capitalist production” in which Blackness expresses a structural location at the bottom of the labor hierarchy characterized by depressed wages, working conditions, job opportunities, and widespread exclusion from labor unions.24

Furthermore, modern U.S. racial capitalism is rooted in the imbrication of anti-Blackness and antiradicalism. Anti-Blackness describes the reduction of Blackness to a category of abjection and subjection through narrations of absolute biological or cultural difference; ruling-class monopolization of political power; negative and derogatory mass media propaganda; the ascent of discriminatory legislation that maintains and reinscribes inequality, not least various modes of segregation; and social relations in which distrust and antipathy toward those racialized as Black is normalized and in which “interracial mass behavior involving violence assumes a continuously potential danger.”25 Anti-Blackness thus conceals the inherent contradiction of Blackness—value minus worth—obscuring and distorting its structural location by, as Ralph and Singhal remark, contorting it into only a “debilitated condition.”26 Antiradicalism can be understood as the physical and discursive repression and condemnation of anticapitalist and/or left-leaning ideas, politics, practices, and modes of organizing that are construed as subversive, seditious, and otherwise threatening to capitalist society. These include, but are not limited to, internationalism, anti-imperialism, anticolonialism, peace activism, and antisexism.

Anti-Blackness and antiradicalism function as the legitimating architecture of modern U.S. racial capitalism, which includes rationalizing discourses, cultural narratives, technologies of repression, legal structures, and social practices that inform and are informed by racial capitalism’s political economy.27 Throughout the twentieth century, anti-Blackness propelled the “Black Scare,” defined as the specter of racial, social, and economic domination of superior whites by inferior Black populations. Antiradicalism, in turn, was enunciated through the “Red Scare,” understood as the threat of communist takeover, infiltration, and disruption of the American way of life.28 For example, in the 1919 Justice Department Report, Radicalism and Sedition Among the Negroes, As Reflected in Their Publications, it was asserted that the radical antigovernment stance of a certain class of Negroes was manifested in their “ill-governed reaction toward race rioting,” “threat of retaliatory measures in connection with lynching,” open demand for social equality, identification with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), and “outspoken advocacy of the Bolshevik or Soviet doctrine.”29

Here, anti-Blackness, articulated through the fear of the “assertion of race consciousness,” was attached to the IWW and Bolshevism—in other words, to anticapitalism—to make it appear even more subversive and dangerous. Likewise, antiradicalism, expressed through the denigration of the IWW and Soviet Doctrine, was made to seem all the more threatening and antithetical to the social order in its linkage with Black insistence on equality and self-defense against racial terrorism. In this way, “defiance and insolently race-centered condemnation of the white race” and “the Negro seeing red” came to be understood as seditious in the context of modern U.S. racial capitalism.

The link between my theory of modern U.S. racial capitalism and Robinson’s catholic theory of racial capitalism, beyond his “suggest[ion] that it was there,” is vivified through the prison abolitionist and scholar Ruth Wilson Gilmore, who writes: “Capitalism…[is] never not racial.… Racial capitalism: a mode of production developed in agriculture, improved by enclosure in the Old World, and captive land and labor in the Americas, perfected in slavery’s time-motion, field factory choreography, its imperative forged on the anvils of imperial war-making monarchs.”30 Racial capitalism, she continues, “requires all kinds of scheming, including hard work by elites and their compradors in the overlapping and interlocking space-economies of the planet’s surface. They build and dismantle and reconfigure states, moving capacity into and out of the public realm. And they think very hard about money on the move.”31 Perhaps more than Gilmore, though, my approach aligns with that of Neville Alexander as described by Hudson.32 Like Alexander, who focused on South Africa, I offer a particularistic understanding of racial capitalism, mine being rooted in the political economy of Blackness and the legitimating architectures of anti-Blackness and antiradicalism in the United States. Gilmore qua Robinson offers a more universalist and transhistorical conception. Like Alexander, my theory of modern U.S. racial capitalism is primarily rooted in (Black) Marxist-Leninists and fellow travelers. This is an important epistemological distinction: whereas Robinson finds Marxism-Leninism to be, at best, inattentive to race, my theory of modern U.S. racial capitalism is rooted in the work of Black freedom fighters who, as Marxist-Leninists, were able to offer potent and enduring analyses and critiques of the conjunctural entanglements of racialism, white supremacy, and anti-Blackness, on the one hand, and capitalist exploitation and class antagonism on the other hand.33

Although Robinson draws on scholars like Fernand Braudel, Henri Pirenne, David Brion Davis, and Eli Heckscher to understand European history, socialist theory, and the European working class, the work of Black Marxists like James Ford, Walter Rodney, Amílcar Cabral, and Paul Robeson offer me those same intellectual, historical, and theoretical resources. Finally, I agree with Alexander that the resolution to racial capitalism is antiracist socialism, not a cultural-metaphysical Black radical tradition.

In what remains of this essay, I will draw on the work of Black Marxist-Leninists and anticapitalists to explicate the defining features of modern U.S. racial capitalism—war and militarism, imperialist accumulation, expropriation by domination, labor superexploitation, and property by dispossession. In this, I demonstrate that their critiques and analyses offer a blueprint for theorizing modern U.S. racial capitalism.

War and militarism facilitate the endless drive for profit. Military conflicts between imperial powers result in the reapportioning of boundaries, possessions, and spheres of influence that often exacerbate racial and spatial economic subjection. War and militarism also perpetuate the endless construction of “threats,” primarily in racialized and socialist states, against which to defend progress, prosperity, freedom, and security. The manufacturing of conflict legitimates the mobilization of extraordinary violence to expropriate untold resources that produce relations of underdevelopment, dependency, extraversion, and disarticulation in the Global South. Moreover, the ruling elite and labor aristocracy in imperialist countries, not least the United States, wage perpetual war to defend their way of life and standard of living against the racialized majority who, because they would benefit most from the redistribution of the world’s wealth and resources, represent a perpetual threat.

#### The alternative is to reject the aff and critically interrogate the neoliberal discourse of the 1AC — resisting capitalist pedagogy in educational spaces is the first step towards a broader movement away from Capitalism; COVID provides a unique transition opportunity.

Giroux 20, McMaster University Professor for Scholarship in the Public Interest and The Paulo Freire Distinguished Scholar in Critical Pedagogy (Henry, June 9th, “Racist Violence Can’t Be Separated from the Violence of Neoliberal Capitalism,” *Truthout*, <https://truthout.org/articles/racist-violence-cant-be-separated-from-the-violence-of-neoliberal-capitalism/>, Accessed 08-24-2021)

As educators, it is crucial for us to examine how we talk, teach, and write about inequality as an object of critique in an age of precarity, uncertainty and the current pandemic crisis. This is especially true at a time when a growing number of authoritarian regimes around the globe substitute replace thoughtful dialogue and critical engagement with the suppression of dissent and a culture of forgetting r. How do we situate our analysis of education as part of a broader discourse and mode of analysis that interrogates the promises, ideals, and claims of a substantive democracy? How do we fight against iniquitous relations of power and wealth that empty power of its emancipatory possibilities, and as Hannah Arendt has argued, “makes most people superfluous as human beings”? How might we understand how neoliberal ideology, with its appropriation of market-based values, regressive notions of freedom and agency, uses language to infiltrate daily life? How does a pandemic pedagogy in the service of neoliberalism produce identities defined by market values, and normalize a notion of responsibility and individuality that convinces people that whatever problem they face they have no one to blame but themselves? Repeated endlessly on right-wing media platforms, the underlying conditions that disproportionately produce chronic illness among poor people of color disappear among a public distracted, if not persuaded, by a pandemic pedagogy that celebrates unchecked self-interest, disdains social responsibility, and turns away from the reality of a society with deep-seated institutional rot and unravelling of social connections and the social contract.

Pandemic pedagogy thrives on inequality and becomes a militarized and heartless normalizing tool to convince the broader public that the lives of the elderly, sick, and vulnerable should be valued according to how much they contribute to the economy. And if they are willing to die in order not to be a drain on the economy, all well and good. Nothing escapes the cruel logic of neoliberalism with its arrogance and hubris on full display as it bathes in the glow of right-wing populism, ultra-nationalism, and neofascism. Its accoutrements of dictatorship are everywhere and can be seen in the swagger of militia that storm state capitals, in police who punch and pepper spray protesters and push elderly men to the ground, and in military forces on the streets without badges reinforcing a climate of fear, repression, and unaccountability. There is more at work here than a lack of humanity on the part of the Trump administration. As the Irish journalist Fintan O’Toole observes, there is also the deepening grip of a culture of cruelty and dehumanization. He writes:

“As a society the American people are being habituated into accepting cruelty on a wide scale. Americans are being taught by Trump and his administration not to see other people as human beings whose lives are as important as their own. Once that line has been crossed – and it is not just Trump and the people around him, but many of Trump’s supporters as well – then we know where that all leads, what the ultimate destination is. There is no mystery about it. We know what happens when a government and its leaders dehumanize large numbers of people.”

Depoliticization and the Authoritarian Turn

Neoliberalism is not only an economic system, it is also an ideological apparatus that relentlessly attempts to structure consciousness, values, desires, and modes of identification in ways that align individuals with its governing structures. Central to this pedagogical project is the attempt to prevent individuals from translating private issues and troubles into broader systemic considerations. By doing this, it becomes difficult for individuals to grasp the historical, social, economic, and political forces at work in shaping a social order as a human activity deeply immersed in specific relations of power. Neoliberalism’s attempt to erase or rewrite historical and social forces makes it difficult for individuals to imagine alternative notions of society, with themselves as collective actors, or view their problems as more than the limitations of faulty character, moral failure, or a problem of personal responsibility. Reducing individuals to isolated, discrete, hermetically-sealed human beings whose lives are shaped only by notions of self-reliance and self-sufficiency is a pedagogical strategy that utterly depoliticizes people, leading them to believe that however a society is shaped, it is part of a natural order. President Trump echoed this “no alternative” narrative when asked about celebrities and rich people having special access to being tested for the coronavirus while few others had access. He replied, “Perhaps that’s been the story of life.”

This individualization of the social with its mounting privatization, gated communities, and social atomization undermines collective action, any viable notion of solidarity, and weakens the notion of global connectivity. The philosopher Byung-Chul Han has rightly argued that contemporary neoliberal society is shaped by a dysfunctional notion of solitude and hermitically-sealed notions of agency, all of which undermine the values and social connections vital to a democracy. He writes:

“Those subject to the neoliberal economy do not constitute a we that is capable of collective action. The mounting egoization and atomization of society is making the space for collective action shrink… The general collapse of the collective and the communal has engulfed it. Solidarity is vanishing. Privatization now reaches into the depths of the soul itself. The erosion of the communal is making all collective efforts more and more unlikely.”

This panoptical nature of hyper-individualism is more aligned with shared fears than shared responsibilities. Under such circumstances, trust and the notion that all life is related become difficult to grasp as the myopic language of private self-interest inures individuals to wider social problems such as extreme inequality. There is no understanding in this discourse of the damage fanatical entrepreneurialism does to our embodied collectivity. Nor is there any value attributed to the important responsibilities, social values, and notion of the common good that exceeds who we are as individuals, or how we have been shaped by diverse social forces in particular ways.

It should be clear that questions of economic and social justice cannot be addressed by a neoliberal pedagogy that enshrines self-interest and privatization while converting every social problem into individualized market solutions or regressive matters of personal responsibility. Under neoliberalism’s disimagination machine, individual responsibility is coupled with an ethos of greed, avarice, and personal gain. One consequence is the tearing up of social solidarities, public values, and an almost pathological disdain for democracy. This radical form of privatization is also a powerful force for the rise of fascist politics because it depoliticizes individuals, immerses them in the logic of social Darwinism, and makes them susceptible to the dehumanization of those considered a threat or disposable.

Just as the spread of the pandemic virus in the United States was not an innocent act of nature, neither is the rise and pervasive grip of inequality. What is clear is that neoliberal support for unbridled individualism has weakened democratic pressures and eroded democracy and equality as governing principles. Moreover, as a mode of public pedagogy, it has undercut social provisions, the social contract, and support for public goods such as education, public health, essential infrastructure, public transportation, and the most basic elements of the welfare state. As a form of pedagogical practice, neoliberalism has morphed into a form of pandemic pedagogy that sacrifices social needs and human life in the name of an economic rationality that values reviving economic growth over human rights. As a lived system of meaning and values, self-reliance and rugged individualism are the only categories available for shaping how individuals view themselves, and their relationship to others and to the planet. The individualization of everyone and the reduction of social problems to private troubles is paralleled by sanctioning a world marked by borders, walls, racism, hate, and a rejection of government intervention in the interest of the common good. Most importantly, neoliberal individualization personalizes power, creating a depoliticized subject whose only obligation as a citizen is defined by consuming and living in a world free from ethical and social responsibilities. In many ways, it does not just empty politics of any substance, it destroys its emancipatory prospects.

The neoliberal strategists use education not only to mask their abuses and the effects of their criminogenic policies, they also – in a time of crisis, when dissatisfaction of the masses might lead to chaos, revolts, and dangerous levels of resistance – move dangerously close to creating the conditions for a fascist politics. The noted theologian Frei Betto is right in stating that under such conditions, “…they cover up the causes of social ills and cover up their effects with ideologies that, by obscuring causes, fuel mood in the face of the effects. That’s why neoliberalism is now showing its authoritarian face – building walls that divide countries and ethnic groups, executive power over legislature and judiciary, disinformation about digital networks, the cult of the homeland, the brazen offensive against human rights.”

Neoliberalism and its regressive notion of individualism and individual responsibility has undermined the belief that human beings both make the world and can change it. The pandemic has ushered in a crisis that undermines that belief and opens the door for rethinking what kind of society and notion of politics will be faithful to the creation of a socialist democracy that speaks to the core values of justice, equality and solidarity. Under such circumstances, private resistance must give way to collective resistance, and personal and political rights must include economic rights. If inequality is to be defeated, the social state must replace the corporate state and social rights must be guaranteed for all. There can be no adequate struggle for economic justice and social equality unless economic inequality on a global level is addressed along with a movement for climate justice, the elimination of systemic racism and a halt to the spiraling militarism that has resulted in endless wars. This can only take place if the anti-democratic ideology of neoliberalism, with its collapse of the public into the private and its institutional structures of domination, are fully addressed and discredited. Étienne Balibar is right in stating that the triumph of neoliberalism has resulted in the “death zones of humanity.” Following Balibar, what must be made clear is that neoliberal capitalism is itself a pandemic and a dangerous harbinger of an updated fascist politics.

Overcoming Pandemic Pedagogy

The kind of societies that will emerge after the pandemic is up for grabs. In some cases, the crisis will give way to authoritarian regimes such as Chile, Hungary and Turkey, all of which have used the urgency of COVID-19 as an excuse to impose more state control and surveillance, squelch dissent, eliminate civil liberties and concentrate power in the hands of an authoritarian political class. As is well documented, history in a time of crisis also has the potential to change dominant ideologies, rethink the meaning of governance, and enlarge the sphere of justice and equality through a vision that fights for a more generous and inclusive politics. It is crucial to rethink the project of politics in order to imagine forms of resistance that are collective, inclusive and global, capable of producing new democratic arrangements for social life, more radical values and a “global economy which will no longer be at the mercy of market mechanisms.” This is a politics that must move beyond siloed identities and fractured political factions in order to build transnational solidarities in the service of an alternative radically democratic society. Making the pedagogical more political means challenging those forms of pandemic pedagogy that turn politics into theater, a favorite tactic of Trump. In this case, the performance works to suspend disbelief, hold power accountable and unravel one’s sense of critical agency. Pandemic pedagogy does more than undermine critical thinking and informed judgments, it dissolves the line between the truth and lies, fantasy and reality, and in doing so, destroys the foundation for understanding, engaging and promoting that social and economic justice. The endgame under the rubric of a pandemic pedagogy is not simply the destruction of the truth, but the elimination of democracy itself.

Central to developing an alternative democratic vision is development of a language that refuses to look away and be commodified. Such a language should be able to break through the continuity and consensus of common sense and appeals to the natural order of things. At stake here is the need to reclaim both critical and redemptive elements of a radical democracy in order to address the full spectrum of violence that structures institutions and everyday life in the United States. This is a language connected to the acquisition of civic literacy, and it demands a different regime of desires and identifications to enable us to move from “shock and stunned silence toward a coherent visceral speech, one as strong as the force that is charging at us.”

Of course, there is more at stake here than a struggle over meaning; there is also the struggle over power, over the need to create a formative culture that will produce informed critical agents who will fight for and contribute to a broad social movement that will translate meaning into a fierce struggle for economic, political and social justice. Agency in this sense must be connected to a notion of possibility and education in the service of radical change. Reimagining the future only becomes meaningful when it is rooted in a fierce struggle against the horrors and totalitarian practices of a pandemic pedagogy that falsely claims that it exists outside of history.

Václav Havel, the late Czech political dissident-turned-politician, once argued that politics follows culture, by which he meant that changing consciousness is the first step toward building mass movements of resistance. What is crucial here in the age of multiple crises is a thorough grasp of the notion that critical and engaged forms of agency are a product of emancipatory education. Moreover, at the heart of any viable notion of politics is the recognition that politics begins with attempts to change the way people think, act and feel with respect to both how they view themselves and their relations to others. There is more to agency than the neoliberal emphasis on the “empire of the self,” with its unchecked belief in the virtues of a form of self-interest that despises the bonds of sociality, solidarity and community.

The U.S. is in the midst of a political and pedagogical crisis. This is a crisis defined not only by a brutalizing racism and massive inequality, but also a constitutional crisis produced by a growing authoritarianism that has been in the making for some time. The recent attacks by the police on journalists, peaceful protesters and even elderly people marching for racial justice echoes the violence of the Brownshirts in the 1930s. Let’s stop the futile debate about whether or not the U.S. is in the midst of a fascist state and shift the register to the more serious question of how to resist it and restore a semblance of real democracy.

Under such circumstances, education should be viewed as central to politics, and it plays a crucial role in producing informed judgments, actions, morality and social responsibility at the forefront not only of agency, but politics itself. In this scenario, truth and politics mutually inform each other to erupt in a pedagogical awakening at the moment when the rules are broken. Taking risks becomes a necessity, self-reflection narrates its capacity for critically engaged agency and thinking the impossible is not an option, but a necessity. Without an informed and educated citizenry, democracy can lead to tyranny, even fascism.

Trump represents the malignant presence of a fascism that never dies and is ready to remerge at different times in different context in sometimes not-so-recognizable forms. The COVID-19 crisis and the pandemic of inequality and racism have revealed elements of a fascist politics that are more than abstractions. The struggle against a fascist politics is now visible in the rebellions taking place across the United States. While there are no political guarantees for a victory, there is a new sense that the future can be changed in the image of a just and sustainable society. There is a new energy for reform taking place in the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd. Massive protests for racial, economic and social justice are emerging all over the globe. As I have argued in The Terror of the Unforeseen, at stake here is the need for these protests to transition from a pedagogical moment and collective outburst of moral anger to a progressive international movement that is well organized and unified. Such a movement must build solidarity among different groups, imagine new forms of social life, make the impossible possible, and produce a revolutionary project in defense of equality, social justice and popular sovereignty. The racial, class, ecological and public health crisis facing the globe can only be understood as part of a comprehensive crisis of the totality. Immediate solutions such as defunding the police and improving community services are important, but they do not deal with the larger issue of eliminating a neoliberal system structured in massive racial and economic inequalities. David Harvey is right in arguing that the “immediate task is nothing more nor less than the self-conscious construction of a new political framework for approaching the question of inequality, through a deep and profound critique of our economic and social system.” This is a crisis in which different threads of oppression must be understood as part of the general crisis of capitalism. The various protests now evolving internationally at the popular level offer the promise of new global anti-fascist and anti-capitalist movements. In the current moment, democracy may be under a severe threat and appear frighteningly vulnerable, but with young people and others rising up across the globe — inspired, energized and marching in the streets — the future of a radical democracy is waiting to breathe again.

### Horsetrading---1NC

#### Antitrust only passes after it’s horse-traded with Republicans for censorship prohibitions

Perera 3-12-2021, veteran cybersecurity reporter, Data security & privacy reporter for MLex (Dave, “US antitrust legislation faces uphill battle despite unified Democratic government,” <https://mlexmarketinsight.com/news-hub/editors-picks/area-of-expertise/antitrust/us-antitrust-legislation-faces-uphill-battle-despite-unified-democratic-government>)

Renewed interest among US lawmakers in antitrust legislation is unlikely to produce radical policy shifts, notwithstanding the Democratic Party’s unified control of the federal government. Democrats promised a “big, bold agenda” after they captured the Senate by a hairsbreadth in January. Democratic lawmakers may very well stick to those ambitions and announce audacious legislative proposals. But the fate of those bills is at the mercy of a political dynamic ensuring that the more liberal the policy prescriptions, the less likely they are to become law. The most likely outcome over the next two years is more funding for enforcers at the Department of Justice and Federal Trade Commission, whether directly through appropriated funds, steeper merger notification filing fees, or both. It’s also possible Congress could incrementally tinker along the edges of antitrust. It might lower the threshold for challenging mergers, or mandate data portability requirements for social media companies. Those expecting — or fearing — more ambitious outcomes likely won’t see them enacted. So until America’s November 2022 election, scratch from the list of high probabilities reforms such as requiring dominant firms to separate lines of business, or shifting the burden of proof onto an acquiring company. Put another way, unless a bill can attract significant Republican support, not even two years of unified Democratic government can guarantee reforms. — American exceptionalism — Single party control of both congressional chambers and the presidency is relatively rare in American politics. It has occurred in fewer than a third of legislative sessions since 1980. When it strikes, it doesn’t last long — typically just the two years between one congressional election and another. Historically, unified control is a fertile period for new regulations. President George W. Bush overhauled Medicare. President Barack Obama ushered in financial sector reforms and the Affordable Care Act. Indications are that President Joe Biden is emboldened by his party’s last-minute capture of the Senate. History, of course, isn’t a blueprint. Even a brief look at past episodes of unified control reveals that not even single-party capture of the executive and legislative branches of the US government can assure the enactment of a partisan agenda. For one thing, neither political party is a monolith. Although far more politically aligned than when Democratic conservatives found common cause in the 20th century with Republicans, the major American parties nonetheless are coalitions of centrist and activist wings. For Democrats, the tensions inherent in appeasing all sides became apparent earlier this month when centrists trimmed benefits in the $1.9 trillion coronavirus stimulus package. Neither is single party grip on power secure unless it commands an overwhelming majority in the Senate, thanks to a uniquely American institution: the filibuster. In the Senate, the rules mandate a three-fifths vote before debate over a bill is cut off. In recent decades, it’s become a weapon routinely wielded by the minority party to kill legislation. The upshot is that policy legislation needs supermajority support before it can proceed, meaning the 50 Democrats of today’s Senate have little choice but to resign themselves to the grind of finding Republican supporters. There are limited exceptions. Assuming Democrats stay in unison, they don’t need Republican votes to appoint judges, approve executive branch nominations or pass fiscal legislation such as the coronavirus stimulus that just became law. It’s within Democrats’ power to abolish the filibuster, but for now, the maneuver appears safe. Asked just days ago about the matter, White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki told reporters that the president’s preference is for it to stay in place. “The president is an optimist by nature,” Psaki added. — Hunting for bipartisan consensus — Not every bill introduced in Congress, nor even every bill approved by a committee or even an entire single chamber, makes it through the process because its sponsors believe it’ll become law. There are a host of bills drafted with the intent of sending a message to industry, to independent regulators, to donors, to constituents. There are bills that lawmakers view as setting out a position to influence an ongoing policy debate. Even if it won’t become law this year, it might the next year, or the next, reintroduced and refined along the way. Telltale signs of whether a bill is a serious attempt at law are the number of cosponsors, and whether that list of names includes members of both parties in good stead with their party’s leadership. Bipartisan support is important even in the House, where Democrats have the votes to completely bypass Republicans. Because the House doesn’t have the filibuster to contend with, those with the majority of seats control the chamber. House Democrats can and do pass bills in the face of absolute House Republican opposition, but — special exceptions for fiscal bills aside — those bills are dead on arrival in the Senate. As long as the filibuster exists or Democrats lack a Senate supermajority, the House Judiciary antitrust subcommittee must court Republican support if its intention is to make new law. Finding clues of what House Democrats might seriously achieve, then, may be little more difficult than looking up the policy prescriptions House Republicans favor: giving regulators more resources, shifting the burden of proof in merger cases and boosting data portability and interoperability. A report issued by now-ranking Republican Ken Buck as a rejoinder to last year’s Democratic House Judiciary antitrust subcommittee staff report on competition in digital markets allowed that the GOP shares other Democratic concerns, including predatory pricing, monopoly leveraging and control over marketplace platforms. That conciliatory signal also came weighted, with warnings that Congress should be wary of “handing additional regulatory to agencies in an attempt to micromanage.” Instead, try instead telling enforcers they should return to first principles, the Colorado lawmaker advised. Whether Republicans and Democrats in the Senate can find common cause is an even more fraught question. Unlike its House counterpart, the Senate Judiciary subcommittee on antitrust hasn't conducted a 16-month investigation into digital monopolization. The subcommittee’s senior Republican, Utah’s Mike Lee, is prone to touting the importance of the consumer welfare standard and rails against online platforms “eager to impose the ideological censorship called for by their political benefactors.” Lee also says he’s open to working with subcommittee Chairwoman Amy Klobuchar on strengthening enforcement, adding the caveat that current antitrust laws are sufficient. Klobuchar, a Minnesota Democrat, doesn’t need Lee to get a bill through her subcommittee, but failing to find consensus with Republicans imperils her chances of making law. The prospects for her Competition and Antitrust Law Enforcement Reform Act becoming law as current written aren't good. — 'Big tech is out to get conservatives' — A looming question hanging over any bill, even one tailored to win bipartisan support, is whether it could be derailed by Republican anger at online platforms for alleged anti-conservative bias. A right-wing trope especially spread by President Donald Trump during his last year in office — the belief that platforms use their content moderation powers to silence conservatives — has mainstream acceptance in Republican circles. It’s a refrain almost obligatory for Republican lawmakers to repeat when discussing any issue related to online platforms. “Big tech is out to get conservatives,” House Judiciary Committee ranking member Jim Jordan of Ohio has said more than once. Democrats have their own share of anger at online platforms’ content-moderation practices, to be sure. They accuse online platforms of circumventing consumer protections, undermining civil rights laws and not doing enough to stymie disinformation. It’s Republicans, though, who appear the angriest, and are the more likely to insist that any legislative reform touching online platforms address content moderation, with the intention of making it harder, not easier, for online platforms to remove users, potentially imperiling a compromise measure.

#### That allows the GOP to successfully weaponize misinformation---triggers epistemic decay and cements a perma-GOP government

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Natali Fierros Bock says she could feel this mass delusion calcifying in the wake of the election in Pinal County, a rural area between Phoenix and Tucson where she serves as co–executive director of the group Rural Arizona Engagement. “It feels like an existential crisis,” Bock adds. Many of the Sharpiegate claims online referred to Pinal County, and Gosar, whose district includes a portion of the area, was reportedly responsible for helping organize the January 6 “Stop the Steal” rally in Washington that resulted in the deaths of five people. Mark Finchem, a Republican who represents part of Pinal County in the statehouse, was also in Washington on January 6. The Capitol insurrection threw into relief the real-world consequences of America’s increasingly siloed media ecosystem, which is characterized on the right by an expanding web of outlets and platforms willing to entertain an alternative version of reality. Social media companies, confronted with their role in spreading misinformation, scrambled to implement reforms. But right-wing misinformation is not just a technological problem, and it is far from being fixed. Any hope that the events of January 6 might provoke a reckoning within conservative media and the Republican Party has by now evaporated. The GOP remains eager to weaponize misinformation, not only to win elections but also to advance its policy agenda. A prime example is the aggressive effort under way in a number of states to restrict access to the ballot. In Arizona, Republicans have introduced nearly two dozen bills that would make it more difficult to vote, with the big lie about election fraud as a pretext. “When you can sell somebody the idea that their elections were stolen, they’ve been violated, right? So then you need protection,” Bock says, explaining the conservative justification for the suite of new restrictions in her state. Voting rights is her organization’s “number one concern” at the moment. But Bock’s fears about political misinformation are more sweeping. Community organizing is difficult in the best of times. “But when you can’t agree on what is true and not true, when my reality doesn’t match the reality of the person I’m speaking to, it makes it more difficult to find common ground,” she says. “If we can’t agree on a common truth, if we can’t find a starting place, then how does it end?” Around the time of the 2016 election, Kate Starbird, a professor at the University of Washington who studies misinformation during crises, noticed that more and more social media users were incorporating markers of political identity into their online personas—hashtags and memes and other signifiers of their ideological alignment. In the footage from the Capitol she saw the same symbols, outfits, and flags as those she’d been watching spread in far-right communities online. “To see those caricatures come alive in this violent riot or insurrection, whatever you want to call it, was horrifying, but it was all very recognizable for me,” Starbird says. “There was a time in which we were like, ‘Oh, those are bots, those aren’t real people,’ or ‘That’s someone play-acting,’ or ‘We’re putting on our online persona and that doesn’t really reflect who we are in an offline sense.’ January 6 pretty much disabused us of that notion.” It was a particularly rude awakening for social media companies, which had long been reluctant to respond to the misinformation that flourished on their platforms, treating it as an issue of speech that could be divorced from real-world consequences. Facebook, Twitter, and other platforms had made some changes in anticipation of a contested election, announcing plans to label or remove content delegitimizing election results, for instance. Facebook blocked new campaign ads for the week leading up to the election; Twitter labeled hundreds of thousands of misleading tweets with fact-checking notes. Yet wild claims about election fraud spread virally anyway, ping-ponging from individual social media users to right-wing influencers and media. During the 2016 campaign, most public concern about misinformation centered on shadowy foreign actors posing as news sources or US citizens. This turned out to be an oversimplification, though many on the center and left offered it as an explanation for Hillary Clinton’s defeat in 2016; blaming Russian state actors alone ignored factors like sexism, missteps made by the Clinton campaign itself, and the home-grown feedback loop of right-wing media. In 2020, according to research done by Starbird and other contributors to the Election Integrity Project, those most influential in disseminating misinformation were largely verified, “blue check” social media users who were authentic, in the sense that they were who they said they were—Donald Trump, for example, and his adult sons. DONATE NOW TO POWER THE NATION. Readers like you make our independent journalism possible. Another key aspect in the creation of the big lie was what Starbird calls “participatory disinformation.” Trump was tweeting about the election being stolen from him months beforehand, but once voting got under way, “what we see is that he kind of relies on the crowd, the audiences, to create the evidence to fit the frame,” Starbird explains. Individuals posted their personal experiences online, which were shared by more influential accounts and eventually featured in media stories that placed the anecdotes within the broader narrative of a stolen election. Some of the anecdotes that fueled Sharpiegate came from people who used a felt-tip pen to vote in person, then saw online that their vote had been canceled—though the “canceled” vote actually referred to mail-in ballots that voters had requested before deciding to vote in person. “It’s a really powerful kind of propaganda, because the people that were helping to create these narratives really did think they were experiencing fraud,” Starbird says. Action by content moderators usually came too late and was complicated by the fact that many claims of disenfranchisement by individual users were difficult to verify or disprove. The Capitol riot led the tech giants to take more aggressive action against Trump and other peddlers of misinformation. Twitter and Facebook kicked Trump off their platforms and shut down tens of thousands of accounts and pages. Facebook clamped down on some of its groups, which the company’s own data scientists had previously warned were incubating misinformation and “enthusiastic calls for violence,” according to an internal presentation. Google and Apple booted Parler, a social media site used primarily by the far right, from their app stores, and Amazon stopped hosting Parler’s data on its cloud infrastructure system, forcing it temporarily offline. But these measures were largely reactions to harm already done. “Moderation doesn’t reduce the demand for [misleading] content, and demand for that content has grown during some periods of time when the platforms weren’t moderating or weren’t addressing some of the more egregious ways their tools were abused,” says Renée DiResta, technical research manager at the Stanford Internet Observatory. Deplatforming individuals or denying service to companies that tolerate violent rhetoric, as Amazon did with Parler, can have an impact, particularly in the short term and when done at scale. It reduces the reach of influential liars and can make it more difficult for “alt-tech” apps to operate. A notorious example of deplatforming involved Alex Jones, the conspiracy theorist behind the site Infowars. Jones was kicked off Apple, Facebook, YouTube, and Spotify in 2018 for his repeated endorsement of violence. He lost nearly 2.5 million subscribers on YouTube alone, and in the three weeks after his accounts were cut off, Infowars’ daily average visits dropped from close to 1.4 million to 715,000. But Jones didn’t disappear—he migrated to Parler, Gab, and other alt-tech platforms, and he spoke at a rally in Washington the night before the Capitol attack. One outcome of unplugging Trump and other right-wing influencers has been a surge of interest in those alternative social media platforms, where more dangerous echo chambers can form and, in encrypted spaces, be more difficult to monitor. “Isn’t this just going to make the extreme communities worse? Yes,” says Ethan Zuckerman, founder of the Institute for Digital Public Infrastructure at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. “But we’re already headed there, and at least the good news is that [extremists] aren’t going to be recruiting in these mainstream spaces.” The bad news, in Zuckerman’s view, is that the far right is now leading the effort to create new forms of online community. “The Nazis right now have an incentive to build alternative distributed media, and the rest of us are behind, because we don’t have the incentive to do it,” Zuckerman explains. He argues that a digital infrastructure that is smaller, distributed, and not-for-profit is the path to a better Internet. “And my real deep fear is that we end up ceding the design of this way of building social networks to far-right extremists, because they are the ones who need these new spaces to discuss and organize.” In March, Trump spokesman Jason Miller said on Fox that the former president was likely to return to social media this spring “with his own platform.” A more fundamental problem than Trump’s presence or absence on Twitter is the power that a single executive—Jack Dorsey, in the case of Twitter—has in making that decision. Social media companies have become so big that they have little fear of accountability in the form of competition. “To put it simply, companies that once were scrappy, underdog startups that challenged the status quo have become the kinds of monopolies we last saw in the era of oil barons and railroad tycoons,” concluded a recent report by the staff of the Democratic members of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Antitrust. For now, the reforms at Facebook and other companies remain largely superficial. The platforms are still based on algorithms that reward outrageous content and are still financed via the collection and sale of user data. Karen Hao of MIT Technology Review recently reported that a former Facebook AI researcher told her “his team conducted ‘study after study’ confirming the same basic idea: models that maximize engagement increase polarization.” Hao’s investigation concluded that Facebook leadership’s relentless pursuit of growth “repeatedly weakened or halted many initiatives meant to clean up misinformation on the platform.” The modest “break glass” measures Facebook took during the election in response to the swell of misinformation, which included tweaks to its ranking algorithm to emphasize news sources it considered “authoritative,” have already been reversed. Tech companies could do more, as the election-time tweaks revealed. But they still “refuse to see misinformation as a core feature of their product,” says Joan Donovan, research director for the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University. The problem of misinformation appears so vast “because that’s exactly what the technology allows.” There are some signs of a growing appetite for regulation on Capitol Hill. Democrats have proposed reforms to Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which insulates tech companies from legal liability for content posted to their platforms, such as requiring more transparency about content moderation and opening platforms to lawsuits in limited circumstances when content causes real-world harm. (GOP critiques of Section 230, on the other hand, make the false argument that it allows platforms to discriminate against conservatives.) Another legislative tactic would focus on the algorithms that platforms use to amplify content, rather than on the content itself. A bill introduced by two House Democrats would make companies liable if their algorithms promote content linked to acts of violence. Democratic lawmakers are also eyeing changes to antitrust law, while several antitrust lawsuits have been filed against Facebook and Google. But litigation could take years. Even breaking up Big Tech would leave intact its predatory business model. To address this, Zuckerman and other experts have called for a tax on targeted digital advertising. Such a tax would discourage targeted advertising, and the revenue could be used to fund public-service media. Held to account? Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey testified remotely before the Senate Judiciary Committee in November 2020. (Matt York / AP) Social media plays a key role in amplifying conspiracy theories and political misinformation, but it didn’t create them. “When we think of disinformation as something that appeared [only in the Trump era], and that we used to have this agreed-upon narrative of what was true and then social platforms came into the picture and now that’s all fragmented… that makes a lot of assumptions about the idea that everyone used to agree on what was true and what was false,” says Alice E. Marwick, an assistant professor at the University of North Carolina who studies social media and society. Politicians have long leveraged misinformation, particularly racist tropes. But it’s been made particularly potent not just by social media, Marwick argues, but by the right-wing media industry that profits from lies. “The American online public sphere is a shambles because it was grafted onto a television and radio public sphere that was already deeply broken,” argue Yochai Benkler, Robert Faris, and Hal Roberts of Harvard’s Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society in their book Network Propaganda. The collapse of local news left a vacuum that for many Americans has been filled by partisan outlets that, on the right, are characterized by blatant disregard for journalistic standards of sourcing and verification. This insulated world of right-wing outlets, which stretches from those that bill themselves as objective sources, Fox News chief among them, to talk radio and extreme sites like Infowars and The Gateway Pundit, “represents a radicalization of roughly a third of the American media system,” the authors write. The conservative movement spent decades building this apparatus to peddle lies and fear along with miracle cures and pyramid schemes, and was so successful that Fox and other far-right outlets ended up in a tight two-step with the White House. Fox chairman Rupert Murdoch maintained a close relationship with Trump, as did Sean Hannity and former Fox News copresident Bill Shine, who became White House communications director in 2018. The backlash against Fox in the wake of the election hinted at a possible dethroning of the ruler of the right’s media machine. Its farther-right rival Newsmax TV posted a higher rating than Fox for the first time ever in the month after the election, following supportive tweets from Trump, and during the week of November 9 it passed Breitbart as the most-visited conservative website. But Fox quickly regained its perch. The network backpedaled rapidly during its post-election ratings slump, firing an editor who’d defended the projection of a Biden win in Arizona and replacing news programming with opinion content. According to Media Matters, Fox News pushed the idea of a stolen election nearly 800 times in the two weeks after declaring Biden the winner. The network’s ad revenue increased 31 percent during the final quarter of 2020, while its parent company, Fox Corporation, saw a 17 percent jump in pretax profit. The far-right media ecosystem has become so powerful in part because there’s been no downside to lying. Instead, the Trump administration demonstrated that there was a market opportunity in serving up misinformation that purports to back up what people want to believe. “In this day and age, people want something that tends to affirm their views and opinions,” Newsmax CEO Chris Ruddy told The New York Times’ Ben Smith in an interview published shortly after the election. Claims of a rigged election were “great for news,” he said in another interview. Trump’s departure from the White House won’t necessarily reduce the demand for this kind of content. Since the Capitol riot, two voting-systems companies have launched an unusual effort to hold right-wing outlets and influencers accountable for some of the lies they’ve spread. Dominion Voting Systems, a major provider of voting technology, and another company called Smartmatic were the subjects of myriad outlandish claims related to election fraud, many of which were used in lawsuits filed by Trump’s campaign and were repeatedly broadcast on Fox, Newsmax TV, and OAN. Since January the companies have filed several defamation suits against Trump campaign lawyers Sidney Powell and Rudy Giuliani, MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell, and Fox News and three of its hosts. Dominion alleges that as a result of false accusations, its “founder and employees have been harassed and have received death threats, and Dominion has suffered unprecedented and irreparable harm.” The threat of legal action forced a number of media companies to issue corrections for stories about supposed election meddling that mentioned Dominion. The conservative website American Thinker published a statement admitting its stories about Dominion were “completely false and have no basis in fact” and “rel[ied] on discredited sources who have peddled debunked theories.” OAN simply deleted all of the stories about Dominion from its website without comment. These lawsuits will not dismantle the world of right-wing media, but they have prompted a more robust debate about how media and social media companies could be held liable for lies that turn lethal—and whether this type of legal action should be pursued, given the protections afforded by the First Amendment and the fact that the powerful often use libel law to bully journalists. Alternative reality: Trump supporters in Maricopa County derided Fox for reporting on election night that Biden had won the state. (Hannah McKay / Pool / Getty Images) Ethan Zuckerman has been thinking about how to build a better Internet for years, a preoccupation not unrelated to the fact that, in the 1990s, he wrote the code that created pop-up ads. (“I’m sorry. Our intentions were good,” he wrote in 2014.) Still, he believes that framing misinformation as a problem of media and technology is myopic. “It’s very hard to conclude that this is purely an informational problem,” Zuckerman says. “It’s a power problem.” The GOP is increasingly tolerant of, and even reliant on, weaponized misinformation. “We’re in a place where the Republican Party realizes that as much as 70 percent of their voters don’t believe that Biden was legitimately elected, and they are now deeply reluctant to contradict what their voters believe,” Zuckerman says. Republicans are reluctant, at least in part, because of a legitimate fear of primary challenges from the right, but also because they learned from Trump the power of using conspiracy theories to mobilize alienated voters by preying on their deep mistrust of public institutions. It’s one thing for an ordinary citizen to retweet a false claim; it’s another for elected officials to legitimize conspiracy theories. But holding the GOP to account may prove to be even harder than reforming Big Tech. The radical grass roots have been empowered by small-dollar fundraising and gerrymandering, while more moderate Republicans are retiring or leaving the party. Writer Erick Trickey argued recently in The Washington Post that what undercut a similar wave of conservative crackpot paranoia driven by the John Birch Society in the 1960s was explicit denunciation by prominent conservatives like William Buckley and Ronald Reagan as well as Republican congressional leaders. But today’s party leaders have been unwilling to excommunicate conspiracy-mongers. In the aftermath of the Capitol riot, elected officials who spread rumors that the violence was actually the result of antifascists—including Arizona’s Paul Gosar and Andy Biggs—gained notoriety, while those critical of Trump were publicly humiliated. The embrace of conspiratorial narratives has been particularly pronounced in state GOP organizations. The Texas GOP recently incorporated the QAnon slogan “We are the storm” into official publicity media, and the Oregon GOP’s executive committee endorsed the theory that the riot had been a “false flag” operation. In March, members of the Oregon GOP voted to replace its Trump-supporting chairman with a candidate even farther out on the extremist fringe. Weaponized misinformation could have a lasting impact not only on the shape of the GOP but also on public policy. Republicans are now using the big lie to try to restrict voting rights in Arizona, Georgia, and dozens of other states. As of February 19, according to the Brennan Center for Justice, lawmakers in 43 states had introduced more than 250 bills restricting access to voting, “over seven times the number of restrictive bills as compared to roughly this time last year.” In late March, Georgia Governor Brian Kemp signed a 95-page bill making it harder to vote in that state in a number of ways. Many of the far-right extremists, politicians, and media influencers who spread misinformation about the presidential election are now pushing falsehoods about Covid-19 vaccines. The rumors, which have spread on social media apps like Telegram that are frequented by QAnon adherents and militia groups, among others, range from standard anti-vax talking points to absurd claims that the vaccines are part of a secret plan hatched by Bill Gates to implant trackable microchips, or that they cause infertility or alter human DNA. Sidestepping the craziest conspiracies, prominent conservatives like Tucker Carlson and Wisconsin Senator Ron Johnson, who has become one of the GOP’s leading purveyors of misinformation, are casting doubt about vaccine safety under the pretense of “just asking questions.” Vaccine misinformation plays into the longstanding conservative effort to sow mistrust in government, and it appears to be having an effect: A third of Republicans now say they don’t want to get vaccinated. These are the true costs of misinformation: deadly riots, policy changes that could disenfranchise legitimate voters, scores of preventable deaths. These translate into financial externalities: the additional expense of securing the Capitol, additional dollars devoted to the pandemic response. More abstract but no less real are the social costs: the parents lost down QAnon rabbit holes, the erosion of factual foundations that permit productive argument. The problem with the far right’s universe of “alternative facts” is not that it’s hermetically sealed from the universe the rest of us live in. Rather, it’s that these universes cannot truly be separated. If we’ve learned anything in the past six months, it’s that epistemological distance doesn’t prevent collisions in the real world that can be lethal to individuals—and potentially ruinous for democratic systems.

#### Disinformation undermines collective responses to existential threats

Roston 21, citing Bak-Coleman, PhD, postdoctoral fellow at the University of Washington Center for an Informed Public (Eric, “As Climate Change Fries the World, Social Media Is Frying Our Brains,” *Bloomberg News*, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-06-29/as-climate-change-fries-the-world-social-media-is-frying-our-brains>)

Amid emergency heat, flooding, and famine, it’s even more critical that people recognize and agree at least on the big picture. And yet, as recent history has shown us time and again, they don’t. Much of that can be blamed on the pandemic of misinformation—concerning climate change, Covid-19, vaccines, and so much more— now running rampant on social media. It reminds Joseph Bak-Coleman of fish. Bak-Coleman is the lead author of a provocative new article in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences about scientists’ inability thus far to adequately inform policymakers about how digital technology is impeding efforts to solve climate change and other collective-behavior problems. Individual fish swimming in a school intuit each other so rapidly and clearly that they can instantaneously and in unison pivot away from whatever dangers they encounter. Insofar as that is true, they have a limited error margin for passing along bad information. “It costs energy when you get scared for no reason, and it also costs life if you don’t get scared when you should,” said Bak-Coleman, a University of Washington postdoctoral scholar with expertise in neuroscience and evolutionary biology. “Animal groups are highly tuned to do these really fantastic feats of behavior. But it’s all quite fragile.” The development of digital communications has eroded or vaporized community protections developed over millennia to ensure at least a minimally healthy flow of information, which leads to healthy decision-making. That loss, Bak-Coleman and his co-authors write, “combined with rapid distribution of falsehood, may present one of the larger threats to human well-being.” Think of it like this. If you wanted to make the most obvious statement in the world, you could do worse than: “Technology now allows people to communicate instantaneously and across great distances.” Yet if you wanted to elicit the most tortured answer in the world, you might ask something incredibly similar: “What happens when people can communicate instantaneously and across great distances?” The tension between the obvious statement and the unanswerable question—which holds within it just about all of the world’s large-scale problems, including climate change—is so great, Bak-Coleman and his colleagues propose a whole new academic discipline just to try to understand it. As physiology has medicine and climate science has emissions-mitigation and adaptation–planning, they argue, the digital-misinformation pandemic requires an applied science—or as they call it, a “crisis discipline.” The need for such a discipline is also urgent, they argue, because “given that algorithms and companies are already altering our global patterns of behavior for financial reasons, there is no safe hands-off approach.” Despite the many joys and productive uses of digital communication, it routinely conveys so many falsehoods, so quickly, that many people are left either unable to see or unwilling to fix existential dilemmas, leaving humanity overall in a precarious condition.

### T Per Se — 1NC

#### T Prohibition

#### “Prohibition” requires a declaration of per se illegality

Loevinger 61 (Honorable Lee Loevinger- Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Antitrust Division. “THE RULE OF REASON IN ANTITRUST LAW” , *Section of Antitrust Law* , 1961, Vol. 19, PROCEEDINGS AT THE ANNUAL MEETING, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, AUGUST 7 THROUGH 11, 1961 (1961), pp. 245-251, JSTOR accessed online via KU libraries, date accessed 9/13/21)

Running through the history of antitrust law are two contrapuntal themes: A prohibition of restraint of trade and a principle lately called the "rule of reason" which limits the prohibition. The legal rule against restraint of trade began in the 15th century in cases holding that a contract by which a man agreed not to practice his trade or profession was illegal.1 However, in the course of development of the common law, it became established that agreements which were ancillary to the sale or transfer of a trade or business and which were limited so as to impose a restriction no greater than reasonably necessary to protect the purchaser's interest.2

Thus, when the Sherman Act incorporated the common-law principles on this subject into federal statutory law 3 by adopting the concept of restraint of trade, it presumably imported both the principle that restrictions on competition are illegal and also the principle that in some circumstances a showing of reasonableness will legalize restrictions on competition. Nevertheless, when the question was first presented to the United States Supreme Court under the Sherman Act, it was clearly held (despite later disavowals4 ) that the justification of reasonableness was not available as a defense to a combination which had the effect of restraining trade.' Indeed, it was intimated that the question of reasonableness was not open to the courts in these actions at common law.6 However, when the Court reviewed this matter in Standard Oil Co. v. United States,7 it said in fairly explicit terms both that the Sherman Act prohibited only contracts or acts which unreasonably restrained competition and that the standard of reasonableness had been applied to all restraints of trade at the common law. The Court's assertion is somewhat weakened by the fact that it construed the rule of reason not as applying a standard for judging the character or consequences of the challenged conduct, but as a technique involving the application of human intelligence, or reason, to the problem of making a judgment about whether the conduct does restrain trade.'

#### Violation — rule of reason is not topical

McKibben 85 (Michael D. McKibben-Vanderbilt University Law School, J.D., 1985, Vanderbilt Law Review, Associate Editor; Patrick Wilson Scholar. The Resale Price Maintenance Compromise: A Presumption of Illegality, 38 Vanderbilt Law Review 163 (1985), Available at: <https://scholarship.law.vanderbilt.edu/vlr/vol38/iss1/3> , date accessed 9/13/21)

A rebuttable presumption, followed by rule of reason analysis 14 [[BEGIN FOOTNOTE 14]] 14. Under the rule of reason "the factfinder weighs all of the circumstances of a case in deciding whether a restrictive practice should be prohibited as imposing an unreasonable restraint on competition." Sylvania, 433 U.S. at 49. [[END FOOTNOTE 14]] in cases in which the defendant satisfies the threshold inquiry,15 would restore certainty and intellectual honesty to RPM cases. The rebuttable presumption would eliminate the need to reconcile contrary cases and the need to consider issues that parties now must address under the rule of reason. While the rebuttable presumption does not require that courts maintain or reject the Colgate doctrine,16 this Note argues that the Court could retain Colgate but primarily rely upon the guidelines and safeguards of the rebuttable presumption. This new line of inquiry would retain the benefits of the per se rule-efficiency and certainty-and would remain flexible enough to accommodate special cases in which RPM may be beneficial to the market. In many cases, the rebuttable presumption also would save society, courts, and litigants the protracted costs of rule of reason analysis.

Part II of this Note considers major RPM cases since the early 1900s, with special focus on Russell Stover and Filco v. Amana Refrigeration, Inc.,'17 cases which protect the defendant under the Colgate doctrine. Part III analyzes the weaknesses of the per se rule and the benefits that could inure to manufacturers and the marketplace under the rebuttable presumption. Part IV examines the strengths and weaknesses of the rule of reason and offers an improved rule of reason approach as the second part of the rebuttable presumption standard. Finally, Part V outlines a suggested analysis for RPM disputes using a rebuttable presumption of illegality. Part V also considers the effects of the presumption on federal antitrust laws.

II. THE CURRENT CONTROVERSY

A. Minimum Price Restrictions in the Supreme Court

Vertical price restrictions are written or oral directives setting a price above or below which a manufacturer wishes its distributors to sell. If the manufacturer establishes a price below which a distributor should not resell a product, the manufacturer is imposing minimum price RPM. Maximum price RPM-the setting of price ceilings- and minimum RPM are per se violations of section 1 of the Sherman Act."' Nonprice vertical restrictions, however, which include primarily territorial distributorship limitations, generally are reviewed under the rule of reason. 19

1. Dr. Miles: The Per Se Rule

Dr. Miles Medical Co. v. John D. Park & Sons Co.20 is the basis of much of the current academic criticism of the Supreme Court's RPM approach.2 ' The plaintiff Dr. Miles, a medicine manufacturer, required its wholesalers and retailers to adhere to a minimum resale price schedule. The plaintiff also required its wholesalers to maintain control over the retailers' subsequent resale prices. The defendant Park & Sons, a wholesaler that refused to purchase from Dr. Miles under the minimum price contract, bought Dr. Miles' medicines from third parties and resold them below the plaintiff's price schedule. The plaintiff charged the defendant with inducing the plaintiff's distributors to breach their contracts by reselling to a price cutter.22 The Court denied the plaintiff's request for relief and held that the plaintiff's contract provision was void under common law and the Sherman Act. 3

After determining that the agreement between Dr. Miles and its vendees fulfilled the duality requirement of the Sherman Act,24 the Court found that the plaintiff's resale price schedule eliminated competition by controlling the price at which all purchasers received the product.25 The Court refused to accept the defendant's argument that producers of patented products have a right ordinary sellers do not have-the right to dictate the destiny of their products.26 The Court inquired whether the plaintiff had a right to restrain trade. The Court held that generally a right to control alienation does not exist without an agreement.2 7 Applying the common-law rule that contractual restraints on alienation must be reasonable and limited to the necessity of the circumstances, 2 the Court found that Dr. Miles' agreement did not fit any of the common forms of acceptable restraints.29

The Court's final inquiry was whether the benefits that the plaintiff gained from its pricing restrictions were entitled to more protection than the property rights that the defendants had in the medicine.30 The Court's response to this issue forms the heart of the per se rule.31 [[BEGIN FOOTNOTE 31]] 31. Per se rules prohibit certain conduct without inquiry into possible justifications for the conduct. Courts impose per se rules when the interests of judicial economy outweigh other interests. See Note, Fixing the Price Fixing Confusion: A Rule of Reason Approach, 92 YALE L.J. 706, 708 (1983). [[END FOOTNOTE 31]] Although the Court never explicitly condemned all vertical price fixing agreements, it found that the effects of the Dr. Miles scheme were the same as the effects that could result from horizontal price fixing at the dealer level. The Court, therefore, held that both kinds of price fixing were illegal.3 2 The Supreme Court's focus on the effects of the alleged violative activity, without regard to its purposes or benefits, is characteristic of other Supreme Court per se decisions. 3

#### VOTE NEG

#### FIRST---Ground---balancing tests devastate core links, because they allow the practice when it’s beneficial. AND, creates a moving target, because the disallowed behavior is context-dependent.

#### SECOND---Bidirectionality---rule of reason creates legally protected practices

### States---1NC

#### The 50 United States and relevant subnational entities should limit anticompetitive mergers through the application of a presumption against potential competition mergers in the technology sector.

#### State antitrust is enforceable and solvent.

Lange et al. 21, \*Perry A., JD, antitrust lawyer, vice-chair of the ABA Antitrust Section’s Joint Conduct Committee. \*Brian K. Mahanna, JD, former chief of staff and deputy attorney general in the Office of the New York State Attorney General, \*Nicole Callan, JD, vice chair of the Civil Practice and Procedure Committee of the American Bar Association (ABA)'s Section of Antitrust Law, \*Álvaro Mateo Alonso, LLM, Law Degree, antitrust lawyer. (3-5-2021, "Developments in Antitrust Law: Keep an Eye on New York", *WilmerHale*, Full report accessible at: https://www.wilmerhale.com/en/insights/client-alerts/20210305-developments-in-antitrust-law-keep-an-eye-on-new-york)

Although much attention recently has been focused upon debates in Congress, potential legislative changes to U.S. antitrust law are not limited to proposals at the federal level. Many states are considering changes to their own antitrust laws, which usually can be enforced by state attorneys general and private plaintiffs. Importantly, New York legislators have introduced two bills that propose sweeping changes to the State’s antitrust law, the Donnelly Act, building on measures introduced in New York’s last legislative session.

These proposals, if enacted, would make New York’s single firm conduct statutory provisions the most aggressive in the United States and would give the New York Attorney General a more prominent role in reviewing transactions—including by creating a first-of-its-kind state merger notification requirement. These changes would allow New York’s antitrust law to reach a range of conduct not actionable under any existing federal or state antitrust law, and would introduce European-style antitrust standards to New York. Accordingly, this reform would create considerable new compliance challenges and risk for companies potentially subject to New York antitrust law, whether or not those companies are located in New York.

Other U.S. states and territories are considering antitrust law changes, but the New York proposals are the most significant. Although much of the conversation concerning developments in antitrust law has focused on “Big Tech” companies, these proposals would affect businesses across all sectors of the economy. This alert discusses these legislative proposals and key implications for businesses.

## Advantage---Innovation

### Innovation Adv---1NC

#### Pursuit of hegemony emerges from an anti-black paradigm that supplements domestic policing and stokes instability.

Kizer 20, MA, Policy Director at Win Without War. (Kate, 6-10-2020, "US Hegemony Relies on Dehumanization and White Supremacy", *Inkstick*, https://inkstickmedia.com/us-hegemony-relies-on-dehumanization-and-white-supremacy/)

When I began writing this column, Black Hawk helicopters were still circling over Washington, DC, flying low to intimidate and disperse protestors demanding justice for yet another murder of an unarmed Black person, this time George Floyd by Minneapolis police.

While the spread of popular uprisings against police brutality across the United States feels like an unprecedented tipping point, the impunity with which police and military forces operate is not new. Nor is it isolated to domestic policing. The willingness to weaponize state power against those expressing their discontent and calls for change has long been a part of both US domestic and foreign policy.

Some Washington national security professionals have made laudable statements committing to do better to address the structural inequities that keep the profession majority-white and cis-male in the face of this repression. Yet these efforts have not addressed the fundamental problem at hand: the state violence taking place in streets across the United States is a natural outgrowth of decades, if not centuries of domestic and foreign policy that first and foremost relies on the dehumanization of Black and brown people to pursue hegemony at home and abroad. Until we reckon with this fundamental truth, we will continue to fail to actually address the institutionalized and structural racism that has led to decade after decade of state violence against Black people in this country and people of color around the world.

In the United States, this dehumanization has its roots in the founding of our country. The prosperity the white majority in the United States enjoys today cannot be divorced from the genocide of Indigenous people and the enslavement of Africans, all for the economic benefit of white colonizers. The violent domination of the white colonial project and its basis in exploitation and white saviorism not only defined the foundations of early US society, but is echoed today here at home, and in US foreign policy.

For decades, the United States military has used many of the same tactics abroad that are used against Black and brown people by police in the United States. The use of force is never a last resort, but instead the preferred tool to ensure submission. Local conditions, individual experiences, and other drivers to violence, dissent, or crime – often rooted in governance failure, human rights abuses, and economic and/or political disenfranchisement – are ignored. Instead, a more pernicious, dangerous motive is assigned to all members of subjugated groups once one individual decides to resort to violence or commit a crime.

A violent response is then justified in cloaked language about patriotism, security, and saviorism. The United States military is undertaking dangerous missions against “extremists” to “save” the Afghan people, to “secure freedom” for Iraqis; just as in the United States police are keeping the streets of the US “safe,” tracking “extremists” that threaten the status quo and private property. As the experience of the past several weeks has shown, however, violence from the oppressive force ultimately begets more defiance. The idea that violence can quell dissension is ultimately rooted in the orientalist, racist belief that non-white people are inherently threats that must ultimately be silenced in order for stability to take hold.

The US government’s use of force is continuously justified by its stated intention to create safety — but safety for whom? Surely not the countless innocents killed in endless wars abroad, the diaspora communities surveilled, or the Black people murdered by police here at home. The Trump administration’s current militarized response to the popular uprisings sweeping the country is merely an outgrowth of long-standing policies that have devalued Black and brown lives, and ignored the unique injustices and inequities these communities face in achieving safety, well-being, and liberation. The post-9/11 police state and outdated slavery-era laws merely provide useful levers for Trump to pull in the face of this new challenge to his power.

If people in power continue to see these latest instances of violence and repression as isolated, unfortunate instances that “don’t reflect who we are as a nation,” then we will have failed to truly challenge and disrupt the forces and systems at play that have allowed white supremacy to infiltrate every aspect of US public life, including foreign policy.

#### The aff is based on a fantasy of perfecting liberal internationalism, which glosses over global class and racial inequalities. Maintaining US dominance over international law is terminally unsustainable and reproduces racial hierarchies on a global scale.

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The overall finding is that liberal internationalist thinking/theory is, in effect (albeit unconsciously on the part of its proponents), a legitimating ideology rather than an effective explanatory frame for understanding the way in which the LIO actually works. That conclusion is reached, in part, by suggesting the applicability of a rather different perspective on the operations of the LIO and US power: specifically, a synthesized Gramscian–Kautskyian framework, explained below.

The key point is that the LIO is a class-based, elitist hegemony—strongly imbued with explicit and implicit racial and colonial/imperial assumptions—in both US domestic and foreign relations. At home, this analysis helps to explain in part the phenomenon of the ‘left behind’ white working/middle class, including the affluent but economically anxious voters whose salience on the right has transformed US politics since the Reagan revolution of the 1980s.2 Responding to the (minorities’) rights revolution of the 1960s, and the loss of economic opportunity and decline in living standards due to technological change and the global redistribution of industry,3 white working- and middle-class voters drifted towards the Republicans as the party of low taxes and fiscal conservatism.4 This delivered little in material terms, however; and, as inequality increased with market freedom and real wages stagnated, workers in the ‘rust belt’ and other areas grew increasingly dissatisfied with the status quo of establishment politics, their frustration exacerbated by anxieties about ethno-racial diversity and American identity as the United States moves towards a society in which whites are a minority.5 The result was the election as president in 2016 of Donald Trump on an overtly anti-conservative and barely concealed white identity platform at home and a programme of protectionism and non-interventionism—America First—abroad.6

Yet political dissatisfaction or disaffection was not confined to the political right.7 ‘Occupy Wall Street’ and other movements and groups vented their anger at the inequalities of power, wealth and income, particularly in the wake of the Iraq War and the 2008 financial crisis.8

In external policy, the analysis helps to explain the difficulty, perhaps the impossibility, of the US readily embracing a more diverse international order, as well as the character of that very embrace.9 Accepting nations of the global South on an equal footing may become a strategic necessity, but the process remains problematic given the racialized discourses of western power over the past several centuries, fortified in the United States by the experience of the slave trade, slavery, the ‘Jim Crow’ era, Orientalist views of Asians, and other factors.10 Class power helps to explain the strategic embrace of foreign elites as the sources of change and the agents of American influence, however diluted it may have been due to target states’ national interest considerations. Those at the apex of America’s hierarchies sought to forge alliances with and incorporate their foreign elite counterparts— with their full cooperation—in South Korea and China.11 Hence, the liberal internationalist ‘successes’ in the cases of South Korea and China must be qualified by considering the repercussions of developing market-oriented societies marked by economic inequality, rising social unrest and varying degrees of political repression. In ‘successful’ China and South Korea, as in India and other emerging powers, there remain major challenges underpinned by profound inequalities in power, wealth and income, associated with a politics that is frequently class-based but also heavily racialized and xenophobic.12

Why choose South Korea and China as key cases? Although these are two very different states, varying in global significance, and analysed at different periods of historical time, they do allow us to test out important claims made by liberal internationalists. South Korea is considered as a key test at the very birth of the US-led order—at a time when we might expect the new principles embodied in the UN, such as the rule of law, the lessons of the Nuremberg and Tokyo war crimes trials, the Geneva Conventions and the rights of civilians in combat zones, to be pursued with some determination if not fully achieved. Given the fervour of anti-colonialism at the time, and US claims to champion that cause, we might also expect the behaviour of the international system’s leading power to differ sharply from that of colonial rulers in what became known as the Third World. The case of South Korea tells us a great deal about the practical application of a new international system developed by US power within an international system of rules, applicable to hegemon and others alike, a key liberal internationalist claim.

China’s integration into the US-led international system from the late 1970s also tells us a great deal about the character of the international order, especially about how significant change is managed within it and what the embrace of diversity means in practical terms. By the 1970s, the US-led order was facing challenges, of course—from West Germany and Japan, for example, and the oil-producing states—not to mention demands from the G77 for a New International Economic Order (NIEO), and was also recovering from defeat in Vietnam and the legitimacy crisis following the Watergate scandal. For liberal internationalists, the integration of China is claimed as a success story both for the liberal order and for China. Yet, without denying the country’s dramatic increase in economic power, I question the character of China’s success, given the high levels of internal turmoil and the extremes of inequality that are giving rise to major political and economic instability. China, then, is a test of the claim that the liberal order rewards societies as a whole; a Gramscian–Kautskyian counter-argument would suggest that it is largely the Chinese ruling elite and its business allies, not the mass of ordinary Chinese, who have been accommodated in the US-led international system.

Liberal internationalism: theory, ideology, practice

Liberal internationalism is an ambiguous, multifaceted approach to understanding, explaining, justifying and practising international politics. One aspect of it is as a positive theory taught in academic International Relations (IR), derived from liberalism as applied to international affairs, explaining how the foreign policies of leading states, especially the United States and Britain, work. It is also a normative world-view, used by some of its proponents to indicate what the world ought to look like and how it might, and frequently does, work. Liberal internationalism, therefore, is also a set of policies, institutions and established practices.13

As an IR theory, the key pillars of liberalism, as embodied in liberal societies, are limited government, individual freedom, private property, pluralism and tolerance, progress, institutions and cooperation for peace, and interdependence. As a theory of US foreign policy, which is the object of analysis here, it encompasses democratic values, economic interdependence, international institutions as a framework for cooperation in addressing global crises and problems, and the broad promotion of general welfare. Emerging historically from the era of rising anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, with the United States and Britain in the lead, the US-led order laid claims to being opposed to colonial rule, and in favour of national and human rights, within a system of international power undergirded by rules binding hegemon and others alike. It was promoted not as a continuation of empire by other means, but as a new system based on universalistic principles applicable to all regardless of race, colour or history.

For my immediate purposes, it is unnecessary to disentangle the positive from the normative, the theoretical from the practical, because this framework of thought emerges both from deep principles and also as a set of solutions to international problems, especially world wars. Hence, liberal internationalism is frequently referred to as Wilsonianism, after the internationalist programme promulgated by US President Woodrow Wilson after the First World War that included the formation of the League of Nations, the forerunner of the longer-lasting post-1945 United Nations system.

I argue here that, as a theory, it operates as ideological legitimation even when its proponents offer reform; it justifies the status quo. In that regard it differs little overall from other theories like Marxism, for example, or realism. But because it is the principal system of ideas and practices, and ideals, that are used to explain, implement and defend the present international status quo, I would suggest that it elides too much to be fully validated beyond the circle of its proponents. Of course, it explains aspects of the world’s functioning; but its interpretation tends to be benign: crises and challenges are explained as resolvable within the system’s governing principles through socialization, integration and assimilation.

I use the term liberal internationalism, then, as an amalgam to suggest that, while it is all of the above, upon reflection it serves within academia and in IR as a positive theory of how things actually are—that is, as the opposite of an ideology. It purports to be able to explain the world, at the same time as its adherents are normative supporters of the theory. I show that it is actually ideological, because it elides key factors of how the liberal world order actually works, and that other theories suggest better ways of explaining the world.

In the next section of the article, I analyse liberal internationalist ideas and claims in more depth and more critically, with a view to identifying key elements of a more viable framework to explain the LIO—a critical theory influenced by the work of Antonio Gramsci and to some extent synthesized with the work of Karl Kautsky. The principal aim of this article is to identify the weaknesses of liberal internationalism in practice with the purpose of opening space for subsequent theorizing. In sum, what appears to be missing from liberal internationalism is any recognition of domestic power inequalities—such as those based on class and race—its broad attachment to (democratic) elitism, and its hierarchical approach to other powers, especially in the global South.

While Wilsonian liberal internationalism is widely recognized as privileging a belief in the free movement of people, capital, goods and services, less attention has been given to its origins in a time when ‘international relations’ was overtly understood as ‘race relations’, and its consequent implication in managing overtly racialized imperial power after the First World War.14 The Wilson administration’s role in racially segregating the US federal government had its foreign policy counterpart in a belief in an eventual, but far distant, self-government of the colonies and opposition to a Japanese proposal for a racial equality clause in the charter of the fledgling League of Nations.15 The development of liberal internationalism, then, was symbiotically bound to Wilson’s conviction that US intervention in world affairs was essential, and to what were effectively parastatal organizations created both by the federal executive and by private foundations—the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, among others. Wilsonian ‘theory’ was practical, idealistic and ideological from the very beginning. It is also the case that, long after overt racial discourses became politically damaging, subliminal racial thinking remained—and (unconsciously) remains—a significant element of liberal internationalism, affecting its analyses of the politics of domestic and global demographic power shifts.16

Nevertheless, liberal internationalists are cosmopolitans—opposed to narrow nationalism and trade protectionism, within a US-led international system. But its core ideas—rule of law, superiority of the western idea (however lightly worn), a rules-based institutional order open to all, in principle—are deeply embedded in US political-intellectual elite think-tanks, university public policy schools, corporate media and the leaderships of both main political parties,17 the core of the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant establishment.18 Importantly, however, there are influential voices in the emerging powers and regions that support the liberal international order by calling for internal reform to take account of the changing distribution of global power away from the West and towards the ‘rest’.19

The upshot is a broad consensus around certain core ideas: that the post-1945 rules-based world order, whatever its weaknesses, serves the world well by spreading prosperity and maintaining peace; and that, although it cannot continue unreformed, the US-led system draws on deep resources—economic, military, systemic and ‘soft’—that bestow upon it continuing strengths to contain, engage, manage and socialize emerging powers. Charles Kupchan lists a range of problems requiring US leadership, even if only within a suitably reformed international system reflecting ‘the real distribution of power’.20

John Ikenberry of Princeton University, the leading proponent of this school of thought, makes significant claims as well as several unquestioned assumptions, undeveloped allusions to core powers’ violent and other connections with the periphery, and a number of significant silences. He claims, for example, that the United States is a fully functioning democracy, yet fails to acknowledge evidence of the power of racialized, class-based elites. For critical theorists, such as Robert Cox, Stephen Gill and Craig Murphy,21 the international relations of elites across states and societies operate to reproduce extant patterns of power and manage or engineer change to the benefit of elites in a generally zero-sum game in which broad masses and lower classes lose out. This is clearly a far cry from liberal internationalist claims associated with the benefits of globalization, notwithstanding proposed ameliorative remedies against the harshest effects. Likewise, claims about the centrality of the rule of law occlude consideration of significant violations in practice. The question of imperial power is hardly addressed, and there is a general Eurocentric neglect of the significance of global areas beyond the core to the ‘welfare’ and cohesion of the core itself. There is a clear link between Ikenberry’s overt theory of American democracy and its liberal-hegemonic world role. The United States, and the western order it built, is characterized as a pluralistic liberal market democracy that is broadly inclusive and tolerant of ethnic diversity. The US-built security community exhibits its leading state’s internal character as a plural one and, very significantly, one in which the United States is bound by rules.22 Yet liberal internationalists’ underlying assumptions effectively deny the findings of numerous well-researched studies challenging American democracy’s principal claims.23

As far as Ikenberry and Deudney (and many others) are concerned, the ‘western idea’ is a significant part of the strength of the US-led order.24 The West, a spectacularly successful ‘civilizational heritage’, was underpinned by America’s New Deal liberalism, and extended globally via Bretton Woods, the Marshall Plan and NATO. In effect, this vision and programme aimed to defuse domestic class conflict and the threat of war through ‘activist government, political democracy, and international alliance’. That system is in principle capable of assimilating emerging powers, given the universalism of its values and its tolerance of ethnic differences, although others joining this privileged grouping are expected to conform to its rules and accept US leadership. Western order is exclusive also because special rules apply within its zone of peace. Beyond it, conversely, other rules apply—cruder, neo-imperial and violent, although the implications of this contrast are left unaddressed.25 By drawing a line around the West, Ikenberry cuts off the rest of the world while addressing questions about the sources of world order which, empirically, lie in a symbiotic relationship between core and periphery. Yet, even within the ‘greater’ West, Japan and South Korea were not accorded the same treatment as western Europe.26 The LIO really was conceived and developed as a system of the West and the rest, in a zero-sum game. As Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, noted on Twitter in May 2017, the whole point of ‘Euro-Atlanticism’ was to ‘prevent post-West world order’.27

Yet the claim persists that this is no empire, despite America’s privileged place at the top of the ‘hierarchical political order’, because its hegemony is built on ‘consent’ and bounded by law. Power, which was necessary at the creation, faded away as consensual hegemony developed. This interpretation, of course, elides America’s overwhelming military superiority, including in and over Europe. Beyond Europe, however, Ikenberry concedes that American hegemony remained hierarchical, ‘with much fainter liberal characteristics’,28 again closing off an avenue of analytical and empirical analysis that might threaten the intellectual edifice of the LIO.

The (unconsciously) racialized world-view of Ikenberry’s Eurocentrism is subtly buttressed by Walter Russell Mead’s exploration of the significance of superior Anglo-Saxons who win wars, build world structures, and govern efficiently owing to ethno-cultural, not biological, characteristics.29 Mead’s interpretation of Anglo-Saxonism makes it appear benign, assimilative and universal— a scaffolding to support Ikenberry’s more overtly institutional analysis.

Assimilating minorities, however, is not embracing diversity—learning from other cultures and creating something new; it is maintaining conformity to the cultures of the powerful, dominant group.30 Looking to the future, as new global powers emerge, Mead advises America to both embrace and contain them, retaining military superiority should ‘rising’ powers become ‘opponents’.31 Mead complements the prescriptions of other liberal-realist internationalists, all seeking to incorporate, assimilate and mobilize emerging powers to absorb difference and produce conformity.

The liberal view is challenged by scholars who argue that the New Deal order effectively represented a political compromise, made in order to attain class peace and greater productivity, that mainly benefited major corporations while incorporating organized labour and thereby drawing its teeth. The postwar settlement was a narrow one—excluding racial minorities, unskilled and unorganized labour, and women—and relied on war and a heavily militarized economy that arose with the war in Korea and led directly to that in Vietnam.32 Liberal internationalists’ accounts elide the class, gendered and racial bases of the order, both at home and abroad. Ikenberry paints an appealing picture of a liberal order that delivered material benefits and security to all, while also raising some doubts about the operation of the system, especially with regard to the inequality of rewards generated by globalization and its potential political consequences. Those consequences are regarded by Ikenberry as posing the greatest threats to the stability of the liberal order, laying bare a central mechanism and dynamic of the system itself: market-driven class inequality, exacerbated in a society in which racialized class politics is salient.33 Yet Ikenberry never mentions class, race or gender—an omission central to critical theories of the making of the LIO.34

The other key omission is the role played in building the order by violence and outright war—not just the Second World War but also the Korean War, the ‘hot’ war at the birth of the order that propelled the formation of NATO, the rearmament of Germany, the security alliance with Japan and indeed the US military–industrial complex.35 Accordingly, a key focus of consideration here is wartime planning for a new world order and the manner of its foundation as a direct result of military violence that violated the UN Charter, international law, the lessons of the Nuremberg and Tokyo war crimes trials, and the 1949 Geneva Conventions. Wars ‘out there’ secured the core ‘over here’.36

And, of course, what is referred to as benign ‘liberal internationalism’ is what Mark Mazower refers to as ‘imperial internationalism’—trying to maintain a global hierarchy established by centuries of colonial and semi-colonial rule over what is now called the global South.37

Finally, the construction of the postwar western order was constitutive of a political, social, economic and ideological ‘vital center’, as Schlesinger terms it38—opposed to both right-wing nationalists and left-wing anti-imperialists. This entailed the acceptance by core forces of the ‘New Deal order’ that the price of class harmony, stability and mobility at home was the export and continuation of inequality,39 and therefore military violence, on the periphery; and that the removal of vast quantities of raw materials required a global military basing strategy, both to protect allied trade and to deny it to adversaries.40 Ikenberry accurately notes that the internal character of the leading state in the liberal order has an impact on the international system it built; but I diverge from his presentation of this impact as the externalization of a democratic regime. He elides the racial, class and gendered character of American historical, economic and political development—including that of Wilsonianism itself.41 His conclusion, however, is accurate, even if he fails to recognize its significance in the building and maintenance of the liberal order: ‘Access to resources and markets, socioeconomic stability, political pluralism, and American security interests—all were inextricably linked.’42

The framework that may best fit the actual underlying engine of liberal orderbuilding and maintenance, however, must also incorporate understanding of the ‘soft’ processes of socialization or incorporation. Violence is a powerful tool, but always and everywhere it is connected with the processes of non-violent elite socialization and alliance-building. It is one of the great strengths of Ikenberry’s analysis of international order that elite socialization is considered so significant.43 Yet a critical view of elite socialization in the building and perpetuation of hegemony views it not as a reflection of a democratic and benign foreign policy, but as incorporation into hegemonic agendas or ‘domestication’.44 In the Gramscian perspective, capitalist Great Powers, including the United States, are deeply unequal at home and imperialistic abroad, ultimately pursuing the interests of their ruling classes and elites, whether embedded in private, public or state– private realms.45 Their hegemony is a combination of persuasion and coercion involving a ‘state–society complex’.46 Admittedly, liberalism gives an account of elite socialization processes that overlaps with Gramscian approaches. However, liberal approaches see it as relatively benign, politically neutral or representative of democracy/popular sovereignty.

#### The vestiges of order are the intellectual underpinnings of a cosmopolitan dystopia that involutes into permanent violence

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Travelling to Iraq and Syria for ‘humanitarian purposes’ may have provided the alibi or initiation for many a Western would-be jihadi, but however pure or impure their motives, however authentic or inauthentic their compassion, it is unsurprising that the logic of humanitarian rescue was entwined with that of violent regime change.4 After all, while the world bewailed the human rights abuses and atrocities committed by the Syrian government, it was jihadis who were the ones actually fighting the government on the ground, and it was only jihadis who actively, persistently and unambiguously sought to overthrow the Syrian regime. As one reflective would-be jihadi put it, viewing military conquest as a charitable act and feeling entitled to intervene in other countries’ civil wars and to rebuild their societies were popular Western ideals more than they were Islamic scripture.5 In short, humanitarian compassion for distant strangers entwined with transcending nation-states by force if necessary and scorning nationalism through transnational organisation and supranational authority were familiar themes in world politics. What we were seeing in Iraq and Syria was only a murky mirror, one in which familiar ideals and hopes were being played out in dark and terrible form: permanent war inspired by global ideals in a borderless world.

As J. M. Keynes once noted, ‘Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back’. As the spectre of totalitarianism had faded at the end of the Cold War, many international political theorists had turned their scribblings to intellectually subduing that most intensely concentrated, brash and unrestrained form of political power – that institution that recognises peers but has no superiors, the sovereign state. While these scribblings were numerous and varied, many of them shared a similar cast, in that they sought to supersede state sovereignty in various ways. Whether through appealing to global law or vesting their hopes in supranational new regimes and institutions, a common and recurrent concern was to assimilate peoples into new supranational social, legal and political structures – those varied elements that together constituted the ‘postnational constellation’, as the title of philosopher Jürgen Habermas’s book on the matter put it.6 Vertically, people had to be integrated into new supranational institutions and laws that ramified from regional up to global bodies, and horizontally they had to be blended together, less segmented by national political loyalties.

While many of these changes were often assumed to be a result of the movement of capital and new types of media, globalisation was never merely a matter of spontaneous trade flows or extemporaneous new technologies, but also involved explicitly political projects of integration and reordering to better fit the emergent infrastructure of a new social order. Part of this also involved military force, in which powerful Western states were expected to act as the direct military enforcers and executors of global law, defending individuals’ human rights from the depredations of their own negligent and criminal national leaders, arresting war criminals to haul them off before international courts, promoting democracy up to and including the use of force if necessary, and acting to neutralise global security threats – security threats that paradoxically seemed to become more apocalyptically menacing the more globalised Western power became. This was the view of NATO as the ‘left hand of God’, as per the title of an exultant essay by the philosopher Slavoj Žižek in which he defended the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, the North Atlantic alliance cast as the imperfect instrument of a higher justice.7

If wars had previously been defined in liberal terms of antitotalitarianism and anti-communism, they had also been justified in unabashedly national terms too – defending national rights and honour, self-defence and sometimes even plain unadorned national self-interest. In the post-Cold War era, the use of force was still defined in liberal terms but also terms that were at once more cosmopolitan (justified on behalf of others) and humanitarian (protection and alleviating suffering rather than defending liberty). Thus, while in 1999 Habermas acknowledged the ‘inevitability of a transitory paternalism’8 in NATO’s invocation of higher right over the rights of sovereign states, he nonetheless welcomed NATO’s war against Yugoslavia as embodying ‘a leap from the classical international law of states to a cosmopolitan law of a global civil society’.9 Cosmopolitan political theorist Patrick Hayden saw post-Cold War developments in international security such as the doctrine of the responsibility to protect and the international human security regime as concrete steps towards ‘replacing the realist national interest-based security paradigm with a cosmopolitan, person-based paradigm’.10

A crucial constituent element of this cosmopolitan vision of politics was human rights. As Perry Anderson observed, for an entire generation of political theorists who had hitherto restricted themselves to theorising politics inside the state during the Cold War, after the Cold War ‘human rights became the global trampoline for vaulting over the barriers of national sovereignty, in the name of a better future’.11 Human rights were to be used to abrade nation-states in order to insert them into new global configurations so that they would fit better alongside new actors such as non-governmental organisations, international courts and supranational bodies. Human rights provided the legal undergirding for cosmopolitan politics, the human face of globalisation. Powerful, evocative and densely layered and distributed across international treaties, conventions, national courts and supranational agencies, human rights have captured the hopes of many millions of people around the world – hopes for justice, social improvement, legal redress and political change. By the same token, human rights have also been widely criticised, not only for the hypocrisy of their defenders but also for an imperious universalism that bleaches out cultural particularism. To be sure, the language of human rights has certainly provided Western states with a supple new discourse of moral superiority to wield over up-start ex-colonies in place of white supremacy. The discourse of human rights also gave an appropriately supranational expression to old European imperial states that had grown habituated to pooling their sovereignty as their individual power waned. There is, though, one element of human rights that has hitherto been overlooked and yet is crucial to understanding both their cosmopolitan character and their dystopic results. That element is the post- or counter-utopian character of human rights. Political philosopher John Rawls, for instance, expressly framed his cosmopolitan vision in The Law of Peoples as a ‘realistic utopia’ – that is to say, a vision that was expressly modest, pragmatic and selfrestrained rather than being crusading or militant.12 Juxtapose this with Samuel Moyn’s work, which has shown most clearly how human rights could necessarily politically succeed only as a response to thwarted utopianism.13 It was the failure of New Left hopes for radical transformation in Western democracies – accompanied by the frequently dismal results of Third World and anti-colonial revolutions – that formed the disenchantment that was to provide the basis for human rights as a project. At once modest and fervent, human rights offered a model of politics and activism that was restrained, diffident, circumspect and minimalistic. In place of the radical hopes for drastic improvement to be achieved through the high drama of national politics, the seizure of state power and even revolution, change was to be limited to marginal, incremental but persistent improvement through the alleviation of suffering. Conceived as such, human rights were explicitly anti-political. With human rights targeted à tous azimuts, activists confronted both East and West in the Cold War, championing the rights of dissidents across totalitarian Eastern Europe as well as the rebels imprisoned by fascistic military dictatorships in the Americas, Southern Europe and apartheid South Africa.14

Rooted in civil society movements rather than campaigning political parties, human rights activists were uninterested in seizing or wielding state power. Indeed, the human rights movement carried with it the hostility to and suspicion of centralised political authority that would become the core of post-Cold War cosmopolitanism. The advocates of human rights vested their hopes in civil society organisations rather than nationalist movements or political parties. Yet by the same token, nor was the human rights movement anarchist. There was never any intention of abolishing the state as such, for such a vision would, after all, be a political one, involving precisely the kind of ambition and sweep that human rights were defined against. The project never envisaged the dissolution of the state but rather a new kind of state, one in which the mailed fist of state power was softened by the velvet glove of international law, and was to be coordinated with a range of new appendages and prostheses – transnational regimes, new regional bodies, supranational courts, non-governmental organisations, social movements, ethically aware corporations, transnational regulatory agencies and so on.

In political terms, human rights embodied nothing so much as the liberalism of fear – a distinctive strain of post-war liberalism that was cultivated by thinkers such as Isaiah Berlin, Judith Shklar and Raymond Aron.15 While these thinkers were as suspicious of and as hostile to the utopian totalitarianism that they saw on the other side of the Iron Curtain as any other liberal, they were also wary of grandiose attempts to counter totalitarianism that might risk mimetically replicating its crushing uniformity.16 Their political vision and hopes for liberalism were thus restricted, with the most that could be hoped for being the cautious, prudent relief of extreme human suffering in a world that was irredeemably conflicted, plural and fallen, beyond redemption. Human rights were the legal and institutional embodiment of this exemplary hope that suffering and injustice could be meliorated while at the same time avoiding the terrible, ineluctable fate of utopians, whose radical passion for sweeping political change inevitably leads to dystopian totalitarianism.

Yet if human rights activists and civil society movements flaunted their lack of interest in political power, political power was certainly interested in them. Human rights rapidly became the dominant ideology of Western states in their foreign affairs, haltingly at first under the Carter and Reagan administrations over the 1970s and 1980s, and then peaking under the Clinton administrations, while remaining firmly entrenched throughout the Bush and Obama era.17 Widely seen as having provided Czechoslovak, Polish and East German dissidents and activists with the ideological solvent to dissolve the totalitarian permafrost of Eastern Europe, the apolitical, thin but astringent universalism of human rights provided the ideological tonic to exalt Western victory in the Cold War and boost its new military efforts. Human rights became the ideology of post-ideological, multicultural liberal democracies, the moral framework for booming business as capitalism advanced eastwards into Eastern Europe and Asia.

Yet, despite having eschewed the utopian fanaticism of violent rebellion and the seizure of state power, human rights became entwined with war, across Africa, the Balkans and Asia. In the form of humanitarian intervention, democratisation and the responsibility to protect, defending human rights became a necessary component of every Western military intervention as surely as anti-communism had once been during the Cold War.18 As General Colin Powell, defence secretary in the first administration of US President George W. Bush, put it, non-governmental humanitarian organisations were a ‘force multiplier’ for the US military.19 In 1999, as NATO bombed Yugoslavia, Habermas disparaged states’ sovereign right to non-interference, arguing that this ‘presumption of innocence’ built into classical international law was palpably ‘absurd’ in light of the ‘catastrophic history’ of the twentieth century.20 Yet the erosion of the right to non-interference also made all domestic politics directly global. Questions of foreign affairs became instead questions of rights, democracy and government rather than, say, nationally specific institutions and conflicts, a regional balance of power or geopolitical rivalry. Without the presumptive right of noninterference institutionalised in the claims of sovereignty, every domestic crisis becomes a potential vortex that will suck in external powers: at the time of writing, this pattern is repeating with the stand-off in Venezuela between the government and opposition, which is drawing in Brazil and Colombia as well as the US.

After thirty years of perpetual warfare by Western states under the banner of human rights, human rights can no longer claim to be innocent either. Evidently even anti-utopian, cosmopolitan ideals can just as easily succumb to the intoxication of military power and crusading zeal to improve the world. One humanitarian emergency has followed another in which humanitarian intervention is urged even if not enacted, in an unbroken chain reaching back to the no-fly zone established in 1992 over northern Iraq after the end of the first Gulf War and going through the Balkans, East Timor, Somalia, West Africa, Rwanda, Darfur, Iraq, Syria, Kurdistan (not to mention all those instances in which intervention was urged but never materialised – Zimbabwe, Darfur, South Sudan, Myanmar).

More than this, not only have human rights been weaponised, they have also become dystopic. Western interventions have left a chain of shattered states across the Greater Middle East that are locked in perpetual civil strife; Islamic State would never have emerged were it not for the Anglo-American intervention in Iraq of 2003. However much the defenders of human rights may still protest that intervention in Iraq was not an authentic expression of humanitarian ideals,21 the fact remains that the invasion would never have happened had not the humanitarian suspicion of centralised state power and jurisdictional limits not been normalised by the globalisation of human rights ideology, and had the precedent not been established that humanitarian protection could be invoked to trump the rights of state sovereignty. Cosmopolitan dystopia was thus not restricted to insurgent enclaves in the Middle East: human rights helped to normalise our era of permanent war and with it a new wave of humanitarian occupation.22 This saw the recreation of trusteeship and a new generation of protectorates sprawling around the world, with a new imperial standard of civilisation, justified on the grounds of the need for prolonged humanitarian protection and oversight. All these together constituted the dystopic involution of liberal internationalism, of which cosmopolitan jihadism and global terror networks were merely the inadvertent progeny.

The centrality of human rights to the political problems of our age is being made increasingly visible in the growing volume of critique directed at the theory and practice of human rights.23 The entirety of this debate is beyond the scope of this book, and in any case I wish to add only one element to the growing collective critique. This element is to say that it is precisely the counterutopian character of human rights that makes them dystopian. Negatively defined against the world-historic evils of the twentieth century, human rights cast the alleviation of suffering as the most that can be hoped for. In international affairs at least, this necessarily leads, I argue, to a politics of exceptionalism. This is a politics that is defined by its reaction to exceptional crises, a politics defined against the extreme – halting genocide, massacre, tyranny, starvation, slavery, ethnic cleansing and so on.24 By having renounced the hope for systemic transformation or radical improvement of the human condition, under the banner of human rights political action necessarily becomes increasingly defined by the extreme, with the result that the extreme comes increasingly to define the norm. As the norm and the exception collapse into each other, the need for perpetual redress of recurrent evil that can, by its very nature, never be abolished, only repressed, results in … cosmopolitan dystopia. That is, a world order in which permanent war is normalised by perpetual policing in order to reduce human suffering. The crusading zeal and imperialist aggressiveness of cosmopolitan liberalism are not the results of still being contaminated by lingering traces of revolutionary utopianism, but by an anti-political monism that refuses to countenance a pluralistic international order.

Despite never having set their sights higher than curbing the most extreme human suffering, cosmopolitan liberals have nonetheless produced dystopias in their wake, complete with slave markets, tyrannies, ethnic pogroms, mass murder, massive refugee camps, beleaguered ‘safe havens’ and ‘safe zones’, protectorates and permanent war; in more recent times, their efforts have even revived geopolitical rivalries between nuclear-armed states. That their efforts were fated to be dystopic is the core argument of the book, and it is put forward in chapter 3. As well arguing for the dystopic character of cosmopolitan humanitarianism, I also seek to provide a more detailed overview of what cosmopolitan dystopia looks like – to show what an international order built around a dystopic politics of humanitarian emergency looks like. This is done across chapters 1 and 4. Chapter 2 looks at existing critiques of humanitarian intervention and where their limits lie – limits that necessitate a turn towards theorising exceptionalism as the key to understanding humanitarian intervention, the responsibility to protect and cosmopolitan dystopia. Before we review the structure of the argument in more detail, let us briefly define the terms and set the parameters that will operate in the discussion.

#### No leadership impact.

Fettweis 20, Associate Professor of Political Science at Tulane University. (Christopher J., 6-3-2020, "Delusions of Danger: Geopolitical Fear and Indispensability in U.S. Foreign Policy", *A Dangerous World? Threat Perception and U.S. National Security*, <https://www.cato.org/publications/publications/delusions-danger-geopolitical-fear-indispensability-us-foreign-policy>)

Like many believers, proponents of hegemonic stability theory base their view on faith alone.41 There is precious little evidence to suggest that the United States is responsible for the pacific trends that have swept across the system. In fact, the world remained equally peaceful, relatively speaking, while the United States cut its forces throughout the 1990s, as well as while it doubled its military spending in the first decade of the new century.42 Complex statistical methods should not be needed to demonstrate that levels of U.S. military spending have been essentially unrelated to global stability.

Hegemonic stability theory’s flaws go way beyond the absence of simple correlations to support them, however. The theory’s supporters have never been able to explain adequately how precisely 5 percent of the world’s population could force peace on the other 95 percent, unless, of course, the rest of the world was simply not intent on fighting. Most states are quite free to go to war without U.S. involvement but choose not to. The United States can be counted on, especially after Iraq, to steer well clear of most civil wars and ethnic conflicts. It took years, hundreds of thousands of casualties, and the use of chemical weapons to spur even limited interest in the events in Syria, for example; surely internal violence in, say, most of Africa would be unlikely to attract serious attention of the world’s policeman, much less intervention. The continent is, nevertheless, more peaceful today than at any other time in its history, something for which U.S. hegemony cannot take credit.43 Stability exists today in many such places to which U.S. hegemony simply does not extend.

Overall, proponents of the stabilizing power of U.S. hegemony should keep in mind one of the most basic observations from cognitive psychology: rarely are our actions as important to others’ calculations as we perceive them to be.44 The so‐​called egocentric bias, which is essentially ubiquitous in human interaction, suggests that although it may be natural for U.S. policymakers to interpret their role as crucial in the maintenance of world peace, they are almost certainly overestimating their own importance. Washington is probably not as central to the myriad decisions in foreign capitals that help maintain international stability as it thinks it is.

The indispensability fallacy owes its existence to a couple of factors. First, although all people like to bask in the reflected glory of their country’s (or culture’s) unique, nonpareil stature, Americans have long been exceptional in their exceptionalism.45 The short history of the United States, which can easily be read as an almost uninterrupted and certainly unlikely story of success, has led to a (perhaps natural) belief that it is morally, culturally, and politically superior to other, lesser countries. It is no coincidence that the exceptional state would be called on by fate to maintain peace and justice in the world.

Americans have always combined that feeling of divine providence with a sense of mission to spread their ideals around the world and battle evil wherever it lurks. It is that sense of destiny, of being the object of history’s call, that most obviously separates the United States from other countries. Only an American president would claim that by entering World War I, “America had the infinite privilege of fulfilling her destiny and saving the world.“46

Although many states are motivated by humanitarian causes, no other seems to consider promoting its values to be a national duty in quite the same way that Americans do. “I believe that God wants everybody to be free,” said George W. Bush in 2004. “That’s what I believe. And that’s one part of my foreign policy.“47 When Madeleine Albright called the United States the “indispensable nation,” she was reflecting a traditional, deeply held belief of the American people.48 Exceptional nations, like exceptional people, have an obligation to assist the merely average.

Many of the factors that contribute to geopolitical fear — Manichaeism, religiosity, various vested interests, and neoconservatism — also help explain American exceptionalism and the indispensability fallacy. And unipolarity makes hegemonic delusions possible. With the great power of the United States comes a sense of great responsibility: to serve and protect humanity, to drive history in positive directions. More than any other single factor, the people of the United States tend to believe that they are indispensable because they are powerful, and power tends to blind states to their limitations. “Wealth shapes our international behavior and our image,” observed Derek Leebaert. “It brings with it the freedom to make wide‐​ranging choices well beyond common sense.“49 It is quite likely that the world does not need the United States to enforce peace. In fact, if virtually any of the overlapping and mutually reinforcing explanations for the current stability are correct, the trends in international security may well prove difficult to reverse. None of the contributing factors that are commonly suggested (economic development, complex interdependence, nuclear weapons, international institutions, democracy, shifting global norms on war) seem poised to disappear any time soon.50 The world will probably continue its peaceful ways for the near future, at the very least, no matter what the United States chooses to do or not do. As Robert Jervis concluded while pondering the likely effects of U.S. restraint on decisions made in foreign capitals, “It is very unlikely that pulling off the American security blanket would lead to thoughts of war.“51 The United States will remain fundamentally safe no matter what it does — in other words, despite widespread beliefs in its inherent indispensability to the contrary.

#### Heg is unsustainable---retrenchment is gradual now, but recommitting makes it violent and forced.

Kupchan 20, professor of international affairs at Georgetown University and senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. (Charles A., 10-21-2020, "America’s Pullback Must Continue No Matter Who Is President", *Foreign Policy*, https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/10/21/election-2020-smart-retrenchment/)

As the Trump era potentially comes to an end, many foreign-policy voices in the United States and abroad relish the prospect of the country’s roaring return to the global stage. But attempting a full-on comeback would be a mistake. If anything, the strategic pullback that President Donald Trump has initiated needs to continue—albeit in a more coherent and judicious manner.

Much of the debate surrounding the next administration’s foreign policy has focused on boldly reasserting U.S. leadership in the world. And it’s true: Global interdependence and upheaval do require steady U.S. leadership and engagement. What’s been largely missing from this debate, however, are the challenges facing the next president when it comes to right-sizing U.S. engagement abroad—especially military involvement—and bringing the nation’s strategic commitments back into line with it means and purposes.

The American electorate has turned sharply inward in response to military overreach in the Middle East, the economic dislocations brought about by innovation and globalization, and the national calamity caused by COVID-19. The nation’s next president would be wise to take note—and craft a brand of global statecraft that is effective but also politically sustainable. Otherwise, the strategic pullback that needs to take place will occur by default rather than by design, risking that U.S. overreach could turn into even more dangerous underreach. Indeed, that’s what’s been happening during Trump’s presidency. He seems to have understood the need to retrench. But his troop withdrawals from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Germany have been haphazard, making a hash of the effort. Retrenchment cannot be done by tweet, in unpredictable fits and starts, and couched in an abrasive “America first” unilateralism that has alienated allies and set the world on edge.

Democratic candidate Joe Biden is far better suited to restore an equilibrium between the nation’s foreign policy and its political will. Throughout his career, he has been a pragmatic and prudent internationalist; looking forward, pragmatism and prudence will require a more selective and discriminating internationalism, not restoration of the status quo ante. Three-quarters of the American public want U.S. troops to leave Afghanistan and Iraq—it is time to downsize the U.S. footprint in the Middle East. U.S. foreign policy has become over-militarized—the next administration should reallocate priorities and resources, putting more emphasis on diplomacy, cybersecurity, global public health, and climate change. Washington should also return to being a team player if it is to lighten its load; retrenchment and multilateral engagement go hand in hand. Meeting the threat posed by China, managing international trade and finance, preventing nuclear proliferation, addressing pandemics—these and other urgent challenges all require broad international cooperation. And as the United States pulls back from its role as global policeman, it will want like-minded partners to help fill the gap. These partnerships become stronger through diplomacy and teamwork.

The top priorities of the next president will be at home: taming the pandemic, repairing the economy, and reviving democratic institutions and norms. Only if the country’s democratic lights come back on can it effectively deal with the rest of the world. In the meantime, the next administration needs to continue Trump’s effort to downsize the nation’s foreign entanglements—but in a smart and measured way. The United States needs to step back without stepping away. “Build back better” applies abroad just as much as it does at home.

#### Transition is peaceful---bipolarity is stable, and institutions and economics cap escalation.

Paudel 20, currently pursuing his MA in International Relations from SIPA, Jilin University. (Sirish, 9-3-2020, "Decline in US Hegemony: Will this Result in Hegemonic War or not?", *Modern Diplomacy*, <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/09/03/decline-in-us-hegemony-will-this-result-in-hegemonic-war-or-not/>)

One of the contemporary issues in international relations is that the current hegemon, the United States, has undergone a relative decline. It is argued that American hegemony that emerged aftermath the Second World War is undergoing a decline and with the rise of a potential challenger in China looming, one major issue concerning IR scholars is whether or not the relative decline of US hegemony will result in a hegemonic war.

Hegemonic wars occur when a rising challenger – revisionist power – isn’t content with the current international order and wants to change it so as to become a preponderant force and dictate terms of a new world order. This article assumes that although the US is in a relative decline it is still a dominant power and the rising power is content with the current status quo so no war occurs between the dominant and the rising power. In order to support the argument that a hegemonic war does not occur, this article provides explanation using several theoretical perspectives.

Structural Realism and Balance of Power

To begin with, prominent neorealist Kenneth Waltz contends that the end of the Cold War has changed the structure of international politics from bipolar to unipolar with the US being the dominant power. According to Waltz, days of US being unipolar force in world politics is numbered and slowly the world is moving towards bipolarity or multipolarity because changes in the structure of international system brings about changes in state behavior. It does not matter how much self-restraint and self-control a preponderant power is in its conduct of international relations; states are always wary and fear the dominant power and thus he maintains that balancing is universal. [1]

In order to explain why, he has resorted to the Balance of Power (theory). In most basic sense, international politics is a state of anarchy where there is no central government and states rely on themselves to protect their autonomy and perpetuate their survival. Balance of Power contends that states involve in a balancing act to check the powers of preponderant force so that no any single state has enough power to become a global hegemon. [2]

With the relative decline of US, China and America can enter into bipolar relationship much like the US and the USSR during the Cold War. Since Waltz himself posits bipolarity as the most stable of international configurations, it can be argued that act of balancing between the US and China brings the international distribution of power into an equilibrium and averts the risk of war.

Socialization of Hegemonic Power

Most scholars posit that hegemons use threats and rewards to get compliance from secondary states. Contrary to popular wisdom, scholars Ikenberry and Kupchan have contended that in addition to material power, hegemons also have the power of socialization to achieve compliance from secondary states. They call this the socialization process which involves ‘altering of the belief systems’ of elites.

Basically, hegemons project their vision of international order through normative principles (norms and values) and not by material incentives; elites in secondary states internalize them, and devise policies that are compatible to the hegemon’s ideal of the international order. The authors contend that the world order thus created can sustain even when hegemon undergoes a decline because the world order created is relatively inexpensive to maintain in the sense that altering of states preferences are by virtue of ideals rather than use of coercion. Thus, by virtue of socialization of hegemonic power, relative changes in hegemon’s distribution of material power (military and economy) does not put strain on the international system.

So, on viewing the world from the lens of socialization, it can be argued that the expansion of US normative principles on liberal economic norm to its former allies and enemies aftermath the second world war that led to the formation of the current liberal economic world order provides an explanation as to why in spite of US’ relative decline there is continuity for America’s liberal economic order. [3] The rising challenger China can be considered to have been socialized – it has accepted US led international norms, and participates in various International Organizations. Thus, it makes less sense for China to wage war against the hegemon whose ideals it has internalized.

Hegemonic Stability Theory

According to this theory, a hegemon creates a stable international economic order characterized by market openness but its decline results in global instability. This hegemonic effect of open trade benefits all participants, especially, weaker states that do not have any burden of public goods. In this sense, global economic stability is born out of hegemony and provides provision of collective public goods and in doing so facilitates a stable international system.

The motivation to create an economic openness lie in the interest of the hegemon – it has the largest economy and so benefits most from open markets. In addition, only hegemons have the material capability (political and military) to provide public goods and induce other states to embrace open trade. [4]

By virtue of the Hegemonic Stability Theory, the hegemon is an important element in creation and maintenance of the international system. As stated earlier, open trade benefits all participants, even the rising challengers that are accommodated in the system. In contemporary world politics, China is the fastest rising power and it is also reaping the benefits of the open economic order created by the US. By participating in the globalized economy, China has earned a comparative advantage in labor-market and its economy has been growing. On top of that China is an export-based economy and thus, it has very little incentive to jeopardize this benefit by engaging with the hegemon and thereby disrupting the order. In his article, Artur Stein has argued that decline in hegemony does not bring about a complete collapse of the trade regime as long as hegemonic power is committed to economic openness. Taking these two points in consideration, it can be argued that it is not in the interest of China to challenge US hegemony. On account, likelihood of war is averted. [5]

Robert Keohane and Institutionalist Approach

In After Hegemony, Robert Keohane uses an institutional approach to explain inter-state cooperation. He posits that states have common interest and in order to realize it requires achieving mutually beneficial agreements which is where international regimes come in. These regimes foster cooperation by making it easier to reach mutually beneficial inter-state agreements. They help overcome the problem of lack of qualitative and asymmetrical information, through institutional embeddedness reduces transaction costs, legal costs reduce incentive to cheat thereby reducing uncertainty and building confidence among states. Since hegemonic leadership is required to create regimes in the first place, even after the erosion of hegemony, they have high stakes and play important role in fostering cooperation (US role in the IMF and WTO). Because cooperation fosters absolute gain, all participants are benefitted. [6] By this approach, states see cooperation more beneficial than conflict. Thus, it can be argued from institutionalist approach that international regimes foster cooperation thereby reducing likelihood of conflict in the event of hegemonic decline.

#### No terrorist resurgence---COVID checks.

Davis 20, president of Insight Threat Intelligence, an international consultant on counterterrorism and intelligence, a former senior strategic analyst with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. (Jessica, 4/28/20, "Terrorism During a Pandemic: Assessing the Threat and Balancing the Hype", *Just Security*, https://www.justsecurity.org/69895/terrorism-during-a-pandemic-assessing-the-threat-and-balancing-the-hype/)

The COVID-19 pandemic also creates mitigating conditions for the terrorist threat in much of the world. Around the globe, people are implementing physical distancing measures and, therefore, removing a significant terrorist target: crowds. Physical distancing measures make tactics such as vehicle rammings, stabbings, and bombings far less effective. Without the crowds that usually allow these relatively simple attacks to generate casualties, terrorists may determine that their plans are best perpetrated once physical distancing measures are no longer in place.

While it may be convenient to think of terrorists as relatively omnipotent, my work in counter-terrorism has demonstrated that this is far from the case. Terrorists, like everybody else, can and do get sick, as do their family and friends, creating a burden on care. At the same time, the economic devastation caused by the virus has likely left many would-be terrorists without a source of income. They may be struggling with daily subsistence, meaning devoting additional resources (both in time and money) to attack planning and weapons/component procurements may take a back seat to more immediate needs.

The intense media focus on COVID-19 may also dissuade some would-be terrorists from engaging in attacks during the pandemic. Most terrorists seek recognition for their attacks, with the ultimate goal of sowing fear in a population. This is difficult to do if no one is paying attention to you. A recent attack in France demonstrates how little media attention some attacks are generating. Even for a COVID-19 attack (involving an infected individual), this tactic also does not guarantee media attention. The reality is that anyone we come into contact with could be a virus carrier – determining responsibility would be difficult and far from instantaneous, minimizing one of terrorism’s objectives: instilling fear. This fear would also likely be mitigated by the current environment, which is one where fear is already pervasive due to the global pandemic.

## Advantage---EU

### EU Adv---1NC

#### No impact to the internet---no reason privacy violations cause extinction.

#### The new “cold war” battle for tech supremacy with China is a race manufactured to cover up US digital colonialism — only movements against capitalism can reign in US imperialism and prevent the aff’s impact.

Kwet 21, PhD in Sociology from Rhodes University and is a Visiting Fellow of the Information Society Project at Yale Law School (Michael, March 4th, “Digital colonialism: The evolution of US empire,” *The Transnational Institute*, <https://longreads.tni.org/digital-colonialism-the-evolution-of-us-empire>, Accessed 07-08-2021)

A Chinese or US digital empire?

In the West, there is a lot of chatter about “a new Cold War,” with the US and China battling it out for global technological supremacy. Yet, a close look at the tech ecosystem shows that US corporations are overwhelmingly dominant in the global economy.

China, after decades of high growth, generates around 17 percent of global GDP and is predicted to overtake the US by 2028, feeding into claims that American empire is on the decline (a narrative that was previously popular with the rise of Japan). When measuring the Chinese economy by purchasing power parity, it is already larger than the US. However, as economist Sean Starrs points out, this wrongly treats states as self-contained units, “interacting as billiard balls on a table.” In reality, Starrs contends, American economic dominance “hasn’t declined, it globalized.” This is particularly true when looking at Big Tech.

In the post-WWII period, corporate production was spread across transnational production networks. For instance, in the 1990s, companies like Apple began outsourcing electronics manufacturing from the US to China and Taiwan, exploiting sweatshop workers employed by companies like Foxconn. US tech transnationals often design the IP for, say, high-performance router switches (e.g. Cisco) while outsourcing manufacturing capacity to hardware manufacturers in the South.

Starrs profiled the world’s top 2,000 publicly traded companies, as ranked by Forbes Global 2000, and organized them according to 25 sectors, showing the dominance of US transnationals. As of 2013, they dominated in terms of profit shares in 18 of the top 25 sectors. In his forthcoming book American Power Globalized: Rethinking National Power in the Age of Globalization, Starrs shows that the US remains dominant. For IT Software & Services, US profit share is 76 percent versus China’s 10 percent; for Technology Hardware & Equipment, it is 63 percent for the US versus 6 percent for China, and for Electronics, it is 43 and 10 percent, respectively. Other countries, such as South Korea, Japan and Taiwan, often fare better than China in these categories as well.

Portraying the US and China as equal contenders in the battle for global tech supremacy, as is often done, is therefore highly misleading. For example, a 2019 United Nations “Digital Economy” report states that: “Geography of the digital economy is highly concentrated in two countries” — the United States and China. But the report not only ignores factors identified by authors like Starrs it also fails to account for the fact that most of China’s tech industry is dominant inside China, save a handful of major products and services, such as 5G (Huawei), CCTV cameras (Hikvision, Dahua), and social media (TikTok), which also hold large market shares abroad. China also has substantial investments in some foreign tech firms, but this hardly suggests a genuine threat to the dominance of the US, which has a much larger share of foreign investments as well.

In reality, the US is the supreme tech empire. Outside of US and Chinese borders, the US leads in the categories of search engines (Google); web browsers (Google Chrome, Apple Safari); smartphone and tablet operating systems (Google Android, Apple iOS); desktop and laptop operating systems (Microsoft Windows, macOS); office software (Microsoft Office, Google G Suite, Apple iWork); cloud infrastructure and services (Amazon, Microsoft, Google, IBM); social networking platforms (Facebook, Twitter); transportation (Uber, Lyft); business networking (Microsoft LinkedIn); streaming entertainment (Google YouTube, Netflix, Hulu), and online advertising (Google, Facebook) — among others.

The upshot is, whether you are an individual or a business, if you are using a computer, American companies benefit the most. They own the digital ecosystem.

Political domination and the means of violence

The economic power of US tech giants goes hand-in-hand with their influence in the political and social spheres. As with other industries, there is a revolving door between tech executives and the US government, and tech corporations and business alliances spend a great deal lobbying regulators for policies favorable to their specific interests — and digital capitalism in general.

Governments and law enforcement agencies, in turn, form partnerships with tech giants to do their dirty work. In 2013, Edward Snowden famously revealed that Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook, PalTalk, YouTube, Skype, AOL, and Apple all shared information with the National Security Agency via the PRISM program. More revelations followed, and the world learned that data stored by corporations and transmitted over the internet is sucked into enormous government databases for exploitation by states. Countries in the South have been targets of NSA surveillance, from the Middle East to Africa and Latin America.

Police and the military also work with tech corporations, who are happy to cash fat checks as providers of surveillance products and services, including in countries across the South. For example, through its little-known Public Safety and Justice Division, Microsoft has built an extensive partnership ecosystem with “law enforcement” surveillance vendors, who run their tech on Microsoft cloud infrastructure. This includes a city-wide command-and-control surveillance platform called “Microsoft Aware” that was purchased by police in Brazil and Singapore and a police vehicle solution with facial recognition cameras that has been rolled out in Cape Town and Durban, South Africa.

Microsoft is also deeply involved with the prison industry. It offers a variety of prison software solutions that cover the entire correctional pipeline, from juvenile “offenders” to pretrial and probation, through jail and prison, as well as those released from prison and put on parole. In Africa, they partnered with a company called Netopia Solutions, which offers aPrison Management Software (PMS) platform that includes “escape management” and prisoner analytics.0

While it is not clear where exactly Netopia’s Prison Management Solution is deployed, Microsoft stated that “Netopia is [a Microsoft partner/vendor] in Morocco with a deep focus on transforming digitally, government services in North and Central Africa.” Morocco has a track record of brutalizing dissidents and torturing prisoners, and the US recently recognized its annexation of Western Sahara, in contravention of international law.

For centuries, imperial powers tested technologies to police and control their citizens on foreign populations first, from SirFrancis Galton’s pioneering work on fingerprinting applied in India and South Africa, to America’s combination of biometrics and innovations in managing statistics and data management that formed the first modern surveillance apparatus to pacify the Philippines. As historian Alfred McCoy has shown, the collection of surveillance technologies deployed in the Philippines offered a testing ground for a model which was eventually brought back to the United States for use against domestic dissidents. Microsoft and its partners’ high-tech surveillance projects suggest that Africans continue to serve as a laboratory for carceral experimentation.

Conclusion

Digital technology and information plays a central role in politics, economy, and social life everywhere. As part of the American empire project, US transnational corporations are reinventing colonialism in the South through their ownership and control of intellectual property, digital intelligence, and the means of computation. Most of the core infrastructure, industries, and functions performed by computers are the private property of American transnational corporations, who are overwhelmingly dominant outside US borders. The largest firms, such as Microsoft and Apple, dominate global supply chains as intellectual monopolies.

An unequal exchange and division of labor ensues, reinforcing dependency in the periphery while perpetuating mass immiseration and global poverty.

Instead of sharing knowledge, transferring technology, and providing the building blocks for shared global prosperity on equal terms, the rich countries and their corporations aim to protect their advantage and shake down the South for cheap labor and rent extraction. By monopolizing the core components of the digital ecosystem, pushing their tech in schools and skills training programs, and partnering with corporate and state elites in the South, Big Tech is capturing emerging markets. They will even profit from surveillance services provided to police departments and prisons, all to make a buck.

#### The United States is a revisionist power. Concerns of Chinese tech dominance are rooted in orientalist Sinophobia.

**Nair 18** , founder and CEO of the Global Institute For Tomorrow (GIFT), an independent think tank based in Hong Kong. (Chandran, 12/21/2018, “Why Asia Should Be Worried By America’s Bullying of China,” *The Diplomat*, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/12/why-asia-should-be-worried-by-americas-bullying-of-china/> Date Accessed: 3/19/2021)

Imagine a scenario where a senior American business executive is suddenly detained overseas, at the behest of the Chinese government, which accuses him or her of violating its national security. American and Western media would undoubtedly express outrage and have a field day bashing China.

Yet when the equivalent happened last week with Canada’s detention of Huawei’s chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, on behalf of the United States, questions about the arrest’s legitimacy, or the presence of political motives behind it, were largely absent.

This is not to argue that Meng is completely innocent of breaking American law. But it is important to note that the right to this extraterritorial behavior is asymmetric: only the United States is allowed to wield it “legitimately.” No other country, such as Malaysia, which is trying to recover 1MDB-related money from Goldman Sachs, can dare to act in this way. If other nations tired of U.S. judicial bullying – and there are many – start to retaliate by detaining Americans and citizens of its Western allies, things could become very messy, very quickly.

But Meng’s arrest leads to a different question. Despite protests to the contrary, the United States made a choice to escalate tensions by taking this action. Why?

Some have connected Meng’s arrest to the wider trade tensions between China and the United States. Huawei had already been accused by Western politicians of being a front for the Chinese government, and it has been denied access to Western markets. Given that technology is one of the few areas where the West is still clearly dominant, people have viewed this pressure as strategic economic leverage.

But this misses a more fundamental cause for the worries about China, which now spread beyond trade and economics. Articles about China’s technology and surveillance, such as its “social credit system,” worry about a techno-dystopia, despite similar surveillance being done in Western countries (and by their own tech companies). The United States has expressed concern about the activities of university students from China, while Australian politicians have spent months debating “foreign influence” in their domestic politics: a rather poorly veiled reference to China.

A good case study is Google’s cancelled re-entry into China with a Chinese-compliant version of Google search. This was met with controversy both by Western media and Google’s own employees. This is partly the company’s own fault, due to its loud and public withdrawal from China almost 10 years ago. But similar concessions by Google in smaller countries have not sparked such controversy; only China has. Interestingly, a Chinese version of Google might actually be of value to Chinese people, as local search engines like Baidu have been plagued with scandal, hoaxes, and frauds. But the fear that Western observers have about China means that this benefit could be denied them.

One could argue that this is part and parcel of the usual geopolitical conflict between an incumbent power and a rising one, or that they are merely representations of how the economic relationship between China and the West continues to change.

But the source of suspicion is deeper and often not spoken about. For a long time, “American exceptionalism” (and “Western exceptionalism” in general) has been based on the idea that the American or Western culture, way of life, and values are superior. One could perhaps see racial supremacist undertones in these beliefs as well. After all, these were the same sentiments that permeated the colonial era and were used to explain away or justify the shameful excesses of colonialism.

It is clear that neither the United States nor Europe is mentally prepared for the prospect of another country, especially a non-Western one, being successful, let alone overtaking the West. This is particularly true for China: a country long viewed as backward but which has now succeeded while following its own political, economic, and cultural model. For the first time in two centuries a non-Western nation with a wholly different political system is challenging the West, and this is causing great anguish.

“American exceptionalism” is threatened when a country with different values does well. We first saw this in the 1980s: anti-Japan sentiment was sparked when Japanese companies started to buy American cultural symbols. This worry was reflected in American popular culture, best shown in any depiction of an American future dominated by Japanese companies. But this sentiment was nowhere near the level we can see today regarding China. Even the most liberal of Western media outlets have found it near impossible to portray China in a balanced way, finding it difficult to remove their inherent comfort with deep-rooted Western ideas and framings, and to confront their own prejudices.

The United States and the West by extension cannot accept China’s success on its own terms and this permeates almost all segments of society. This is one issue on which there is bipartisan support in the United States. The fear of China and the rest is real. They cannot just accept that China’s success says nothing about how Western countries should govern themselves. Instead, China’s model must be proven incorrect, by ignoring its successes in poverty reduction, education, and economic development and focusing on other issues.

There are hard lessons and warnings for here for developing countries, especially large ones finding their rightful place in the community of nations. People assume that the rise of other large developing nations, such as India, Indonesia, or Nigeria, will not be as disruptive as China’s, perhaps due to the belief that they would “balance” China or would not threaten to disrupt the international order. But this betrays a Western need to oppose China at all costs. Other countries need to be aware that they might be next if they begin to demand a say in world affairs. A rising India could be next.

If the roots of American-Chinese tensions come from something other than just geopolitics or economics, then the ascent of these large developing countries may not be as smooth as they hope. This would be due to the Western, U.S.-led opposition to the “rise of the others,” something the world has not seen in over two centuries. It is this that could well define and shape geopolitics in the 21st century. Denying that this sentiment exists and drives foreign policy would be to play into the hands of those who wish to preserve a Western world order at all costs.

One question many Americans asked themselves in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks was “Why do they hate us?” One wonders if people in China are asking themselves the same thing. They may not like the answer they get back.

#### Heg destabilizes the Middle East.

Soubrier 19, Visiting Scholar (Postdoc) at GW – PhD in Political Science. (Emma, March 2019; “In America’s Wake: Turbulence and Insecurity in the Middle East;” Published in *Shifting Global Politics and the Middle East*; pg. 14-15) \*\*Typo corrected

Since the Arab Uprisings, Middle East geopolitics has transformed from a system organized around and against a US-managed security architecture into a multipolar system lacking norms, institutions, or balancing mechanisms to constrain conflict and the use of force. This shift is a product of repeated US efforts to order the region through coercive force but also shaped by the emerging multipolar system at the global level. With regional Middle East states lacking a shared understanding of threats, US post-9/11 interventions failed to establish a stable regional security architecture. Instead, they generated intense insecurity for both rival and allied states while witnessing the proliferation of armed non-state actors. As the regional system has become more complex and multipolar, continued US reliance on coercion, rather than accommodation and compromise, has only intensified the forces of regional instability.

That structural realism cannot adequately map the Middle East regional system is not news. Transnational movements and ideologies have long been recognized as important in defining threats to regime security. Moreover, the relative levels of state consolidation, the permeability between domestic, regional, and global levels, and the disjuncture between regime, state, and social understandings of security have been critical to the development of distinct approaches to the study of the Middle East IR. Most recently, the rise of non-state actors is recognized as critical to understanding recent changes in the Middle East regional system.

Building from these insights, I suggest the current Middle East regional system is best understood as a model of “turbulence.” By turbulence I mean a system with a proliferation of heterogenous actors below and above the state level with expanded capabilities that complicate the dynamics of the regional politics. States remain the most powerful actors, but the definition of their interests and their capacity to achieve desired goals is diminished as these states must negotiate a multidimensional geography of rival forces and actors within the context of increasingly multipolar global politics. The inefficiency of balancing, breakdown of regulatory norms, and increased capacities for self-organization by armed non-state actors all help sustain the regional environment of turbulence. The result is a turbulent regional system in which state interests are often hard to discern and shift in complex ways. Such an environment fostered the emergence of ISIS and complicates regional politics as states have to navigate a hyper-polar environment that gives greater leverage to smaller actors and makes the alignment of interests between states more contingent and fragile.

After (failed) hegemony

The rise of turbulence in the Middle East not a result of the retreat of the US or a consequence of a so-called “power vacuum,” but a product of repeated American deployments of military force and its failure to engage in the necessary accommodations to promote balancing between regional rivalries. Many of the dynamics of turbulence emerged in the 1990s as countercurrents to increasing US power projection in the region and with the instituting of socially destructive neoliberal economic policies.

The post-World War II Middle East regional system has long been unstable, fraught with tendencies towards inter-state conflict and rivalry, but local and external actors often sought to balance against threats, limit escalation, and restrain revisionist actors including at times their own allies. In contrast, over the past two decades we have witnessed the erosion of mechanisms that mitigate and limit conflict. For a decade after the end of the Cold War, the major external powers seemed to prefer conflict management, balancing, and geopolitical stability. Since 2001, they have instead become agents of instability as they recklessly engage in intervention, regime change, and the arming of proxies.

THEORIZING STRUCTURAL CHANGE

The Middle East system was most radically transformed by the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, the US strategy of regional transformation, and more broadly its “global war on terror.” In addition to leading to state breakdown in Iraq as well as the rise of a domestic insurgency and the mobilization of transnational jihadists, the massive US military presence in the region and its disregard for norms of use of force and state sovereignty generated heighten[ed] insecurity among US rivals, such as Iran and Syria, as well as loosened normative restraints on the aggressive behavior of regional states and external powers. Iran and other US rivals sought new techniques to challenge American power by supporting armed militias, insurgent networks, and acquiring new military capabilities through local manufacturing and imports.

Following the US invasion of Iraq, processes of state erosion and territorial fragmentation, previously found in northern Iraq and southern Lebanon, spread across the region. 1 New networks of resistance were mobilized by armed militias, transnational terrorist groups, and underground insurgencies. The spread of the ability of non-state actors to buy or manufacture low-tech weapons, the diffusion of military expertise, and increased access to networks of communication, transportation, and trade enabled even the smallest militant groups and insurgencies to challenge state authorities and “secure” their local communities. 2 After 2010, these dynamics and support from regional and external powers enabled the rapid militarization of several uprisings and the outbreak of multiple civil wars leading to the fragmentation of territorial control in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya.

#### No Middle East war---deterrence.

Cobban 19, MA, Senior Fellow at the Center for International Policy. (Helena, 10-13-2019, "Mutual Deterrence: Good for the Middle East, Bad for the Nuclear Weapons Industry?", *LobeLog*, https://lobelog.com/mutual-deterrence-good-for-the-middle-east-bad-for-the-nuclear-weapons-industry/)

Over the past three-plus months it has become increasingly clear that, despite the bombast that Pres. Donald Trump has hurled against the Islamic Republic of Iran (along with a full deck of extremely harmful sanctions and some cyber attacks), neither he nor his closest regional allies in the anti-Iran coalition have been willing to escalate to any military attack against Iran that could escalate to all-out war. Might the Middle East now be seeing the emergence of a situation of mutual deterrence that could bring it some much-needed stability — and that could also put the long-vaunted “value” of nuclear weapons into deep question? Let’s do a quick recap. On June 20, Iranian forces shot down a large U.S. Reaper Hawk drone that had almost certainly ventured into Iranian airspace. The military reaction from the United States, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates? As I noted here a few weeks later: goose egg. Then on September 14, either Iranian allies or Iran itself launched a large-scale, stunningly intricate attack against Saudi Arabia’s oil complex at Abqaiq. More goose egg. Along the way, in late August, Israel killed two fighters affiliated with Iran’s Lebanese ally, Hizbullah, in Syria and sent explosive drones against two Hizbullah-related targets inside Lebanon. The Hizbullah chief warned publicly that the organization would retaliate against Israel. Israel’s response? Its military leaders organized a very public withdrawal of their forces from a strip along the country’s northern border with Lebanon. Then, after Hizbullah indeed launched a quick missile strike against an Israeli military vehicle fleeing deeper into Israel, the Israelis’ only response was to shoot a few pieces of ordnance, seemingly at random, into uninhabited parts of southern Lebanon. In an analysis of the incident and its background that I published September 5, I noted that, “the situation of reciprocal (if highly asymmetrical) deterrence that has existed between Israel and Hizbullah since … 2006 remains in place.” Now, in the aftermath of the Abqaiq attacks, it is clearer than ever that a situation of mutual (if asymmetrical) deterrence exists not just between Israel and Hizbullah over the Lebanon-Israel border, but also more broadly in the region between Israel and Hizbullah’s backers in Iran. In Israel, nuclear scientist Uzi Even recently assessed the capabilities the Iranians or their allies revealed during the Abqaiq attack: The Iranian technology is reliable and advanced, and the Iranians are capable of producing and operating simultaneously a large number of drones and cruise missiles. He argued that, Either the Saudi defense system failed or communication between the Iranian missiles was hidden and hard to discover. Either way, the attack was successful and effective… The Iranians, or their proxies, showed that they can hit specific targets with great precision and from a distance of hundreds of kilometers. We have to accept the fact that we are now vulnerable to such a strike. Yes, we can also carry out such strikes and perhaps inflict great damage on them, but so what? Does rational deterrence always work in the Middle East? He also argued that, above all… operation of [Israel’s] Dimona nuclear reactor should be halted. It has now been shown to be vulnerable, and the harm it could cause would likely exceed its benefits. For the staunchly pro-war and pro-Israel New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman, the main takeaway from Even’s analysis was that: Israel has been signaling two things to Hezbollah and Iran. One is that in response to any missile attacks, Israel will carpet bomb neighborhoods in Lebanon where Hezbollah’s families live and where it manufactures the missiles, and turn them into rubble, as it did on a small scale in 2006. And it will make the Lebanese economy collateral damage. And the other is that Israel will attack Tehran directly, either with precision long-range missiles from Israel or submarine-launched missiles from the Persian Gulf, with this message: “Every time Tel Aviv is hit by your proxies, we will hit Tehran. You will not sit out this war. And you will not out-~~crazy~~ us.” Notably, neither of these “signals” seemed to be ones that Friedman disagreed with, or had any problem with. But his analysis of the crucial war that Hizbullah and Israel fought in 2006 also seemed badly askew: the bombing that Israel carried out that year of the “neighborhoods in Lebanon where Hizbullah’s families live” — and indeed, of numerous key elements of the country’s vital national infrastructure — was extremely far from “small-scale.” It was truly monumental. Yet Hizbullah not only survived it, it survived it with its standing in Lebanon’s political system significantly enhanced and with the Israeli ground units that had attempted a broad invasion of the country racing back as fast as they could to Israel with their tails between their legs. Hizbullah’s performance in 2006 reaffirmed to all objective observers that a situation of reciprocal (if asymmetrical) deterrence existed between it and Israel — and it achieved that by having only relatively “dumb” weapons at its command. Friedman was right to warn that with the much smarter surveillance and guidance systems now presumably at its command, Hizbullah’s ability to project targeted threats against vital Israeli infrastructure is almost certainly much, much higher. Friedman’s conclusion was that the demonstrations that Iran and its allies (whether in Lebanon, Yemen, or elsewhere) have given in the past few months of the high level of their targeting and command-and-control capabilities have made the Middle East a considerably more dangerous place: [T]he Middle East may look calm right now, but that’s an illusion. Everyone is recalculating: The Iranians are emboldened, the Arabs are frightened and Israel and Iran are one miscalculation away from a war of precision missiles that neither can afford. I question this conclusion, which seems unthinkingly Israelocentric. After all, for 40 years of the US-Soviet Cold War, the situation of reciprocal deterrence and “Mutually Assured Destruction” (MAD) between the world’s two largest, nuclear-armed superpowers gave a measure of strategic calm to a world still reeling from the two globe-girdling wars of the first half of the 20th century. (True, there were lots of nations in the Global South that suffered in that era.) But why would we think that in the Middle East of the second quintile of the 21st century, a situation of Mutual Intraregional Deterrence (MID) would be any more destabilizing than the Cold War’s MAD was at the global level? Indeed, the actual situation of being deterred that Israel, Saudi Arabia, the United States, and the UAE have all evinced in recent months — at the hands of the non-nuclear-weapons state Iran and its allies in the region — is the most intriguing aspect of the current situation. Bearing in mind that two of those powers, Israel and the United States are both well-endowed nuclear powers, what does this tell us about the utility of nuclear weapons in today’s world? A subject for another day…

# 2NC

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#### Fiat DA — Their model forwards a broken approach to political organizing, assuming the government will listen if we just ask them nicely. That reifies neoliberal logics and state control — only the alt proposes a clear road map for breaking down neoliberalism.

Quinn 16, Canadian writer and comedian based in London (R.J., December 10th, “Can I Talk to a Manager?” *Jacobin Magazine*, <https://jacobinmag.com/2018/12/liberalism-brexit-donald-trump>, Accessed 08-24-2021)

If Guy Debord were alive today, he might say that “in societies where the neoliberal conditions of political economy prevail, all of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of customer service interactions.” That is, to the liberal, all relationships are business transactions.

Nowhere is this tendency more apparent than in the contemporary liberal approach to political organizing, which seems to be reducible to a great cry of “Can I speak to a manager?” And nowhere was it better exemplified than in early October, when several thousand middle-class dog owners marched through central London to protest Brexit. Yet another outgrowth of the “People’s Vote” campaign (which is pushing for a redo of the Brexit referendum), the demonstration was called the “Wooferendum.”

The ur-concept of contemporary liberal politics is faith in the authority of a rule-governed order, and an expectation that the appointed minders of that rule-governed order will operate society, more or less, as a service to those who pay for it. In other words, “Excuse me, I do not mean to cause a fuss, but I’m not entirely satisfied.”

In the two years since its vote to leave the European Union, the UK has seen innumerable marches on parliament advancing the demand that the government cancel Brexit, or at least offer a People’s Vote. These marches, proudly unaffiliated with a political tendency, and frequently tinged with rhetoric suggesting that the Brexit vote was enabled by provincial rubes or spending skulduggery, have been an exhortation to the government of the day to just act, please. They are billed as marches politicians “cannot ignore,” that politicians have gone on to ignore. The political theory of change used by The Wooferendum, and others like it, is that once displeasure is voiced by enough people, the powerful — be they billionaires, political leaders, or whoever else — will then graciously remove the offending policy.

This phenomenon, of course, is hardly confined to the United Kingdom. In the United States, the years since Donald Trump’s election have been marked by a liberal obsession with the prospect of a released tax return or well-placed confession extracted by special counsel Robert Mueller to get rid of him. Just act, please.

“Speaking to the manager” is a sort of tyrannical helplessness; it is the haughty demand for intercession on one’s behalf by an array of greater forces you assume are servile. It is worded like a demand, but it is in fact a plea. It relies on a deeply held belief that society has been ordered for your benefit, because you bought it. And by repeatedly reminding those in charge that society is not entirely to your liking, a number of dutiful institutions or solicitous political Jeeveses will course correct and bring things “back to normal.”

It also assumes a hierarchical society, ordered like a restaurant: some eat, some serve, and there is a manager to keep it all going. This is why these same liberals tend to find the prospect of greater popular control over the media, economy, or society chilling, because they must confront the possibility that they will no longer be served and tended to.

We have been conditioned by the market to believe “the customer is always right.” But the power the customer holds over a business is a thin simulacrum of power. Power is classically understood as the ability to compel others to do what, but for you, they would not have done. Yet “consumer” power relies on businesses doing what customers say when it is in their interest to do so. The human construed as a customer can pull but one lever for change: “no.” The customer can decline to purchase, even voice displeasure, but the role of customer is inherently passive.

#### Digital colonialism causes policing of the global south, global incarceration, and labor exploitation.

Kwet 21, PhD in Sociology from Rhodes University and is a Visiting Fellow of the Information Society Project at Yale Law School (Michael, March 4th, “Digital colonialism: The evolution of US empire,” *The Transnational Institute*, <https://longreads.tni.org/digital-colonialism-the-evolution-of-us-empire>, Accessed 07-08-2021)

For centuries, imperial powers tested technologies to police and control their citizens on foreign populations first, from SirFrancis Galton’s pioneering work on fingerprinting applied in India and South Africa, to America’s combination of biometrics and innovations in managing statistics and data management that formed the first modern surveillance apparatus to pacify the Philippines. As historian Alfred McCoy has shown, the collection of surveillance technologies deployed in the Philippines offered a testing ground for a model which was eventually brought back to the United States for use against domestic dissidents. Microsoft and its partners’ high-tech surveillance projects suggest that Africans continue to serve as a laboratory for carceral experimentation.

Conclusion

Digital technology and information plays a central role in politics, economy, and social life everywhere. As part of the American empire project, US transnational corporations are reinventing colonialism in the South through their ownership and control of intellectual property, digital intelligence, and the means of computation. Most of the core infrastructure, industries, and functions performed by computers are the private property of American transnational corporations, who are overwhelmingly dominant outside US borders. The largest firms, such as Microsoft and Apple, dominate global supply chains as intellectual monopolies.

An unequal exchange and division of labor ensues, reinforcing dependency in the periphery while perpetuating mass immiseration and global poverty.

Instead of sharing knowledge, transferring technology, and providing the building blocks for shared global prosperity on equal terms, the rich countries and their corporations aim to protect their advantage and shake down the South for cheap labor and rent extraction. By monopolizing the core components of the digital ecosystem, pushing their tech in schools and skills training programs, and partnering with corporate and state elites in the South, Big Tech is capturing emerging markets. They will even profit from surveillance services provided to police departments and prisons, all to make a buck.

Yet against the forces of concentrated power, there are always those who push back. Resistance to Big Tech in the South has a long history, dating back to the days of international protests against IBM, Hewlett Packard, and others doing business in apartheid South Africa. In the early 2000s, Global South countries embraced Free Software and the global commons as a means to resist digital colonialism for a while, even if many of those initiatives have since faded. In the last few years, new movements against digital colonialism are emerging.

There is much more going in this picture. An ecological crisis created by capitalism is rapidly threatening to permanently destroy life on Earth, and solutions for the digital economy must intersect with environmental justice and broader struggles for equality.

To stamp out digital colonialism, we need a different conceptual framework that challenge root causes and major actors, in connection with grassroots movements willing to confront capitalism and authoritarianism, American empire, and its intellectual supporters.

#### Anti-trust makes tech more unethical — small companies expand surveillance capitalism and divide privacy along classist lines. This proves only the alt can solve their “internet openness scenarios” because US tech companies are surveilling the internet now.

Kwet 20, PhD in Sociology from Rhodes University and is a Visiting Fellow of the Information Society Project at Yale Law School (Michael, Fixing Social Media: Toward a Democratic Digital Commons, *Markets, Globalization & Development Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Article 4. DOI: 10.23860/MGDR-2020-05-01-04)

The Neo-Brandeisian Solution

In the past few years, a new group of antitrust scholars channeled the philosophy of Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis (associate justice from 1916 to 1939) to challenge how antitrust should work in the internet era. As they note, in the 1970s, the Chicago School of legal scholars narrowed the scope of antitrust from concerns about centralized private power and the well-being of society to concerns about the price paid by consumers as a measure of consumer welfare (for an overview, see Kahn 2017). Such a narrow view is especially inadequate for the digital economy, where many Big Tech products and services are anticompetitive and harmful, despite the ‘zero price’ (at least in terms of subscriptions) paid by consumers for access.

For social media, most of the neo-Brandeisians hold that Facebook is harmful because it can use monopolistic power to erode our privacy, restrict consumer choice and innovation, undermine traditional media, and manipulate the behavior of users (Lynn and Stoller 2018, Patel 2018). The solution, they argue, is twofold: First, break up companies into component parts as a part of structural separation, and then force social networks to interoperate. Facebook, for example, concentrated its market power by acquiring Instagram and WhatsApp. Why not break it up into three separate companies? Most recognize that this in and of itself has its limitations, as there would still only be a few additional companies on the market performing the same functions. A second solution, neo-Brandeisians argue, is to force social networks to interoperate.

A Skeptical View of the Neo-Brandeisian Perspective

Creating multiple, competing social media platforms sounds nice until one starts thinking about how digital capitalism works. For starters, in order to turn profits, a corporation needs to generate revenue. One way to do this is to spy on users and monetize their data for marketing such as through personalized ads. People generally do not like surveillance or ads, so the corporations owning the platform have to force it on them. Ads can only be imposed on people because social media networks own and control the infrastructure, which they run as centralized networks on their corporate clouds. Even with more competitors, each company would still own and control the infrastructure, so they can all impose an ad-based revenue model on their users.

In fact, we already see this in the app marketplace. Seventy percent of the apps in the two most popular app stores, Google Play and Apple iOS, have hidden app trackers that spy on users (Vallina-Rodriguez et al. 2016, O’Brien and Kwet 2018). There are millions of apps, yet “competition” does not stop apps from spying on users. In fact, apps compete to spy on users, and users cannot do anything about it except stop using their beloved apps, because these are proprietary software applications that cannot be controlled by the users. There is no reason to assume competition among profit-seeking social networks will end differently.

A second possibility within the neo-Brandeisian framework is to charge users to access their services. Paid networks would then offer people a service that pledges to protect their privacy such as no data monetization. The “pay-for-privacy” option, however, is ethically flawed. Most of the world’s people have little or no disposable income (Hickel 2019). Poor people would be forced to use “free” surveillance-based networks, while the wealthy would pay to preserve their privacy. To fix this problem, one might advocate serving users ads without exploiting their data for personalization. This, too, is problematic. Most ads are involuntary corporate propaganda designed to manipulate people into buying more stuff. Bombarding people with ads all day pushes an environmentally destructive consumerist lifestyle on the world precisely at the time when we need to scale back overconsumption in rich countries and produce things that are needed in poorer countries, in order to transition to a sustainable and egalitarian global economy.

The real problem is we want a free and equitable social networking experience that respects privacy, provides the desired experience of users, and supports democracy; but we cannot deliver it in a capitalist system. A capitalist social network is enticed to profit and grow, which cannot be achieved without user exploitation or the generation of inequality. Indeed, business strategy scholars as well as political analysts understand it all too well – the prevailing conditions favor winner-take-all models (Hill 1997).

#### Capitalism makes inequality inevitable even with anti-trust — turns terror.

Bruenig 21, Founder of the People’s Policy Project (Matt, June 5th, “No, Small Isn’t Beautiful,” *Jacobin*, <https://jacobinmag.com/2021/06/small-business-monopoly-socialism-collective-ownership/>, Accessed 06-07-2021)

Once you understand that this is what motivates a lot of anti-monopoly types (some consciously, others unconsciously), a lot of the tensions and confusions circulating in that world get cleared up. Lynn’s “Open Markets” refers not to competition or tariff policy, but instead to the idea of making sure that the markets are open to small businesses. One of his frequent lines on this is that antitrust law has focused too much on the freedom of the consumer and not enough on the freedom of the producer, by which he means the freedom of small business owners to have and run a business. That freedom is dashed by competition from the big guys as that competition makes many inefficient small businesses non-viable.

I can understand the gut appeal of this perspective. It is the appeal of anarchism in many respects: the equality of socialism without the collectivist governing institutions — whether cooperative board, worker council, or parliament — that, in some minds, are themselves vehicles of unacceptable control and coercion.

But, for me, this gut appeal disappears when you move from abstraction to reality. Jefferson is the last guy whose ideas on this made some sense because Jefferson was talking about a yeoman farming freehold that was entirely or almost entirely insulated from capital markets, labor markets, and consumer markets. A subsistence farmer operating like that really does mostly live on an island not affected by the whims and desires of other economic actors.

But that is the only arrangement that works like that. After industrialization, everyone is producing for others, even self-employed small business owners who have no formal bosses but are ultimately jerked around by their clients and customers.

It is hard to imagine any economic arrangements based on our current level of technology that does not involve the vast majority of people working inside some kind of larger organization rather than being the owner-operator of a single-member firm. Even if anti-bigness advocates were extremely successful to the point where they managed to quadruple the number of firms in the country and spread production out across those firms, the vast majority of working people would be employees not owners.

Anti-bigness advocates sometimes acknowledge this and then try to claim that these workers would nonetheless be benefited by this new world in which they worked for a smaller firm, but this is pretty clearly not true, and also does not address the point that, by their own reasoning, those workers are experiencing unfreedom.

#### Capitalism causes home grown extremism – biggest internal link.

Parisot 19 White Terror and American Capital By James Parisot Mar 6, 2019 <https://marxistsociology.org/2019/03/white-terror-and-american-capital/> James Parisot currently teaches (precariously) in the sociology department at Drexel University. He is the author of How America Became Capitalist: Imperial Expansion and the Conquest of the West (Pluto, 2019) and co-editor of American Hegemony and the Rise of Emerging Powers: Cooperation or Conflict? (Routledge, 2017).

Recent years have seen an [increase](https://www.splcenter.org/20180723/terror-right#2018) in white supremacist violence. Fueled by a cycle of hate encouraged by the conspiracy-laden world of the alt-right, from the beginning of 2008 to the end of 2016 terrorist acts by right-wingers outnumbered Islamists by nearly a [two to one ratio](https://www.revealnews.org/article/home-is-where-the-hate-is/). Even the FBI and Department of Homeland Security have been forced to acknowledge, in a [recent report](https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/08/14/fbi-and-dhs-warned-of-growing-threat-from-white-supremacists-months-ago/), that white supremacy is a major source of domestic terrorism. To take one of the most recent examples, on February 19th a document was filed with the District Court of Maryland charging Christopher Paul Hasson, a Coast Guard lieutenant, as a [domestic terrorist](https://www.npr.org/2019/02/20/696470366/arrested-coast-guard-officer-planned-mass-terrorist-attack-on-a-scale-rarely-see?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=npr&utm_term=nprnews&utm_content=20190220&fbclid=IwAR064xIqtzB6P09_g_VAyCmVu4joT2v8KCDpbLrhT3-ifwZhlNaWV_XgZzs). Inspired by, among other things, a manifesto written by Anders Behring Breivik, Hasson stockpiled a large amount of weapons and wrote “Have to take serious look at appropriate individual targets, to bring greatest impact. Professors, DR’s, Politian’s, Judges, leftists in general” as he wanted to “get whitey off the couch” and use a terrorist act to encourage white people to rise up and turn the US into a [white homeland](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wl1WR4NJ95llQmNo7bmfVg6pvrq-cgzX/view). The roots of the alt-right today have been documented well by scholars such as [David Neiwert](https://www.versobooks.com/books/2801-alt-america) who has written on the ways its origins can be traced back as early as the 1990s, the age of right-wing white militants and the Oklahoma City Bombing. While descriptive accounts such as this shine much light on the concrete actions and ideology of right-wing white supremacists, they do not address broader questions of the ways in which the historical and contemporary contradictions of capitalism push racism, sexism, and violence. By showing how the power of capitalism, and its shifting periods, has encouraged particular types of social pressures, a deeper explanation of the causes of toxic white masculinity might be located. While gender inequality existed well before the rise of capitalism, the gradual remaking of social relations in the image of capital, and subsumption of life to capitalism, entailed the remaking of gender relations to synchronize with the power of capital. As this occurred older forms of masculinity were slowly remade in uneven ways to fit with new types of masculinity that had greater accord with capitalist social relations. In other words, there was no “inner logic” of capital that necessitated a specific type of gender relation or form of manhood. The ways masculinity reacted to the rise of capitalism structurally articulated with capital but was also historically contingent. Within this, additionally, masculinity has never been singular, rather, there are [multiple masculinities](http://www.raewynconnell.net/p/masculinities_20.html). And even a single man will put on different masks of manhood in different social situations; whether at home or at work, with their partners, or family, or friends. In daily life masculinity is negotiated. It is contradictory as a particular man performs different, and potentially conflicting, types of manhood in various social situations. But masculinity does tend to situate around an image of [hegemonic masculinity](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0891243205278639), the dominant type of socially acceptable manhood in a given historical context. Regardless, men are pushed to live up to a standard of being a “real man” and historically this has meant being patriarchal and dominating, misogynist, egotistical, sexist, and in the case of white men, devaluating other races of men such as Asians and Native Americans as effeminate, and Africans as hypersexual, among other stereotypes. As [W.E.B. Du Bois](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/15210/15210-h/15210-h.htm) pointed out many years ago the history of capitalism, colonialism, and empire brought with it the invention of whiteness as a racial category as global white supremacy provided a glue to hold capitalism together. In the US case, the history of masculinity and the [rise of capitalism](https://www.plutobooks.com/9781786803870/how-america-became-capitalist/) had a complicated relationship. The initial settlers in the Virginia colony were primarily white men who sailed across the ocean and viewed colonization as a way to reproduce and strengthen their masculinity. Many of them were gentlemen who hoped their colonial settlement would be a new space to recreate their aristocratic lifestyles. They brought over indentured servants to work for them, and, in many regards against the will of the Virginia Company that pushed for a more diverse economy, began to specialize in tobacco production. As, through the 1600s, indentured servants were gradually replaced with black slaves, and as women, so-called “tobacco brides,” were brought over and traded for tobacco, the link between racism and white masculinity grew. By the end of the 1600s a legal system was in place separating free or temporarily indentured whites from so-called ‘red’ native Americans and black slaves. And as classes of ‘poor white trash’ and middling ‘plain folk’ developed alongside big planters, so even poor white men could find confidence in defining their masculinity through racism. Meanwhile, in the north, the New England colony took a different path, both in terms of the social relations themselves and the ways masculinity was defined. As one religious Puritan settler put it, “our ribs were not ordained to be our rulers.” A woman’s place was under that of the man, ruler of the family. But the ideal community which formed was not one organized around capital, but the moral economy of the religious community. This set in place a trajectory of small farm based production, in which labor for the household took precedence over market production. Over time, though, the relations of masculinity that supported more capitalist relations in the south and less capitalist relations in the north shifted. In the north, in the half century before the Civil War, the breadwinner-housewife relation gradually became the hegemonic white ideal. As urban artisans became wage laborers and as small farmers were either dispossessed through for instance debts and rising land prices, or else simply became market dependent for their survival, so the woman’s place as remade as the “purifying” motherly space against the competitive, rational, business-oriented man’s space. This ideal was perhaps dominant ideologically, but only the privileged white middle and upper class could live up to it. From Irish workers laboring alongside slaves building railroads, to black urban domestic woman workers, to even poor whites themselves, concrete gender relations never fit the ideal. This was especially true for black workers in the south after the Civil War. The question of manhood was a central question to the question of abolition. As the militant black abolitionist [David Walker](https://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/walker/walker.html) put it “Are we MEN!!—I ask you, O my brethren! are we MEN?” And for white abolitionists, slavery, it was said, degraded the manhood of slaves and likewise distorted the manhood of slaveowners, as it pushed them towards brutality and away from the ideals of liberal northern freedom. Now freed from the confines of slavery, black men were in a position to remake their manhood. Some did internalize a certain type of patriarchal middle-class values, including some church leaders and those who were able to move up to a somewhat more middle class economic position. But for most ex-slaves, while they were not necessarily opposed to wage labor-it was better than slavery-many desired simply a piece of land to farm on and have a stable family life. Over time, a variety of sharecropping arrangements won out over black autonomy and independence, though, as the white south, supported by northern capital, reasserted their racialized profit-oriented system of labor control. Through all the complicated articulations between the ever-changing forms of capitalism and masculinity some continuities remained. To take a prototypical example from popular blog [theartofmanliness.com](https://www.artofmanliness.com/articles/what-is-manliness/), which has over one million Facebook followers, masculinity is comprised of virtues including courage, loyalty, industry, resilience, resolution, personal responsibility, self-reliance, integrity, and sacrifice. Masculinity is exercised through physical strength and intellectual entrepreneurship: a successful man is a wealthy man. This then leads to the question of white male terrorism today. White people in general feel they are under threat. As one [NPR survey](https://www.npr.org/2017/10/24/559604836/majority-of-white-americans-think-theyre-discriminated-against) found, 55 percent of white people say they feel they are being discriminated against. And white men are feeling their position at the top of the social hierarchy is being challenged although their privileges still propel them to the top: after all, out of the [Fortune 500’s CEOs](https://www.cnbc.com/2018/05/21/2018s-fortune-500-companies-have-just-24-female-ceos.html) only 24 are women. White men feel it is their rightful place to be on top, and they feel they deserve this because they got there due to their hard work. And more broadly, white supremacy has always been central to the history of American capitalism: a country built on slavery, patriarchy, and ethnic cleansing from the start. And white men are being challenged, in some regards. From #BlackLivesMatter criticizing the persistence of racism as central to the American dream to #MeToo pushing back against men’s view of women as instruments for their own pleasure and satisfaction, so there is a political tendency for white patriarchy to be less politically and socially acceptable than it was in the past. At the same time, white men are finding it more difficult to live up to the ideals of manhood to which they were born into and ascribe to. As the economic security white men had in an earlier era has been replaced with the neoliberal age of precarious labor and the “gig economy,” so men are struggling to live up to their supposed role as provider, protector, and patriarch. As has been [well documented](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/000312240907400101), over the last several decades stable middle class jobs have been increasingly replaced with part time, temporary positions hollowing out, to some extent, the class basis of post-World War II white supremacy. While this precariousness has hit workers of color harder than white workers, it has also meant a decrease in status for those whites unable to live up to the middle class ideal. Take the case of Dylann Roof, who murdered nine people in the [Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emanuel_African_Methodist_Episcopal_Church). His class position was one of the unstable working class, and, in struggling with this, he found white supremacy and racism to be a solution. As Roof’s elementary school principle [Ted Watcher](https://www.gq.com/story/dylann-roof-making-of-an-american-terrorist) noted, the community Roof came from was one divided from more privileged whites and a source of resentment. In other words, Roof’s working class frustration found an outlet in racism. The general explanation for these attacks has been that of the “lone wolf,” as if each act of white terrorism is due to individual mental health issues rather than broader social processes at work. For instance, after Robert Bowers killed eleven people at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, the media narrative suggested that the man had [personal problems](https://pittsburgh.cbslocal.com/2018/11/05/pittsburgh-synagogue-shooting-robert-bowers-motivation/) which led him towards racism and anti-Semitism. Less discussed was Bowers’ working class position as a truck driver and the ways racism becomes a failed scapegoat to the pressures of working class life. Similarly, mail bomber [Cesar Altieri Sayoc](https://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/florida/fl-ne-who-is-mail-bomb-suspect-cesar-sayoc-20181026-story.html) was seen as a “loner” with mental health issues. Although half-Filipino, half-Italian, Sayoc espoused [homophobic views and racism](https://www.thedailybeast.com/ex-boss-pizza-deliverer-turned-mail-bomb-suspect-was-anti-gay-anti-black-anti-jews) towards African Americans and Jews. He also, at one point, used an online account handle [Killall Socialist](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/mail-bomb-suspect-cesar-sayoc-custody-allegedly-sending-pipe-bombs-n924856). Most importantly, he was a steroid abusing hyper-macho bouncer who attempted to realize his manhood through muscles and saw right-wing politics as an expression of his own masculinity. As neoliberalism pushes us away from finding collective solutions to social problems, and instead towards individualization, and as working class life has become increasingly segmented, divided, and lonely, so the tendency becomes to turn right towards hate and racism as a perceived solution rather than to turn left towards class solidarity. In this context tensions caused by both the political pushback against white male supremacy and unstable neoliberal economic conditions has made it harder for white men to live up to their ideal image of manhood, creating a cauldron of contradictions. The result is that men, and especially white men, lash out. They organize into the alt-right. They attack schools. They attack synagogues, mosques, and historically black churches. They attack women. They attack people of color. All in an attempt to use violence and murder to renew their manhood, and pushed by the contradictions between their ideal of “being a man,” the material realty that disallows this idea from being fulfilled, and the pressures of contemporary capitalism.

#### No decoupling — data that accounts for offshoring and rebound effects prove energy efficiency is getting worse. Staying below 1.5° is biophysically impossible under capitalism.

Albert 20, M.D. @ John Hopkins. BA in Evolutionary Biology (Michael, April, The Dangers of Decoupling: Earth System Crisis and the ‘Fourth Industrial Revolution’, *Global Policy*, Volume 11, Issue 2, DOI: 10.1111/1758-5899.12791)

Unfortunately for the ecomodernists, degrowth scholars and ecological economists have begun to poke holes in their optimistic assessments. Their response can be summarized according to three key counter-arguments: (1) the evidence that ecomodernists provide for relative decoupling is flawed and limited at best; (2) their evidence for the possibility of absolute decoupling is even weaker; and (3) even if absolute decoupling was possible in principle, there is even weaker evidence that this could occur with the necessary speed to stabilize the earth system before reaching irreversible tipping points.

First, claims that rich countries have seen relative or even absolute decoupling of economic growth from domestic material consumption have been shown to focus solely on correlations between national GDP and material throughput while ignoring the material-energetic costs embodied in imported consumer goods. For example, Thomas Wiedmann and colleagues show that while the EU, the US, and Japan have grown economically while stabilizing or even reducing domestic material consumption, a broader analysis of their material footprint embedded in their imports shows that it has kept pace with GDP growth. They conclude that ‘no decoupling has taken place over the past two decades for this group of developed countries’ (Wiedmann et al., 2015, p. 6273). Focusing on the global economy as a whole, Krausmann et al. show that its resource intensity improved over the course of the 20th century, though the early 21st century has seen a faster rate of growing resource consumption than global economic growth (cited in Hickel and Kallis, 2019). Thus, as Kallis and Hickel (Kallis and Hickel, 2019, p. 4; italics added) explain: ‘Global historical trends show relative decoupling but no evidence of absolute decoupling, and twenty-first century trends show not greater efficiency but rather worse efficiency, with re-coupling occurring’.

Second, given the limited evidence for even relative decoupling, it is little surprise that the evidential basis on which claims for the possibility of absolute decoupling rest is even flimsier. In the most comprehensive summary of the modeling evidence to date, Hickel and Kallis (2019) show that even the most optimistic scenarios fail to prove the possibility of absolute decoupling. For example, a modeling study by Schandl et al. (2016) shows that in a ‘high efficiency’ scenario, one that combines a high and rising carbon price plus a doubling in the rate of material efficiency improvement, global resource use grows more slowly (about a quarter the rate of GDP growth) but steadily to reach 95 billion tons in 2050, while global energy use grows from 14,253 million tons of oil equivalent in 2010 to 26, 932 million in 2050. The authors therefore conclude: ‘While some relative decoupling can be achieved in some scenarios, none would lead to an absolute reduction in ... materials footprint’ (Schandl et al., 2016, p. 8). A high efficiency scenario modeled by the UNEP comes to even less optimistic conclusions (with global resource use rising to 132 billion tons in 2050), since it incorporates the ‘rebound effect’ in which efficiency improvements lead to increased consumption due to resulting price reductions (Hickel and Kallis, 2019). In short, as they conclude, these ‘models suggest that absolute decoupling is not feasible on a global scale in the context of continued economic growth’ (Hickel and Kallis, 2019, p. 6).

Third, the critics show that even if absolute decoupling (from both emissions and total environmental impact) were possible in principle, this would need to occur fast enough to prevent transgression of ecological tipping points. Just focusing on the climate problem, the 2018 IPCC report claims that emissions must be reduced 7 per cent annually to reach net zero by 2050 in order to achieve the 1.5 C target, whereas they must reduce 4 per cent annually to reach net zero by 2075 for a shot at the 2 degree target (IPCC, 2018, p. 15). However, even under optimistic assumptions (e.g. a near-term implementation of a high and rising carbon price, alongside heroic carbon intensity improvements), studies suggest that annual declines of 3–4 per cent might be the fastest rate possible assuming continued economic growth (Hickel, 2019). Thus, it would most likely be impossible to meet the 1.5 C target in a context of continuous compound growth. While the 2 degree target might be feasible in this context (assuming implementation of a globally coordinated program starting in 2020), many argue that the IPCC’s estimates downplay the existence of positive feedbacks in the earth system (e.g. Steffen et al., 2018), and thus more rapid emissions cuts might be needed even for 2 degrees. On top of this, economic growth must also be decoupled from impacts on other ‘planetary boundaries’ that may have already been overshot, especially land-use change and biodiversity loss (Raworth, 2017). A number of ecologists believe that to bring humanity back into a ‘safe operating space’, total resource consumption should be reduced from roughly 70 to 50 gigatons per year (Hoekstra and Wiedmann, 2014), while a ‘half earth strategy’ should be implemented that protects 50 per cent of the planet’s surface from direct human interference (up from roughly 18 per cent today) (Wilson, 2017), possibly by 2050 to prevent tipping points in biodiversity loss and land-use change (Hickel and Kallis, 2019). Even if these claims are exaggerated, the magnitude of the overall decoupling challenge remains clear. It would mean that total resource consumption and land use needs to shrink, remain stable, or only increase moderately (depending on our assumptions regarding the further stress (if any) that planetary boundaries can handle) even as the total output of the global economy triples by 2060. It is thus not hyperbole to say, as Boris Frankel puts it, that this goal of absolute decoupling is ‘overwhelmingly staggering in its ambition and historical novelty’ (Frankel, 2018, p. 127).

#### ‘Green growth’ relies on unsustainable colonial exploitation of the Global South — maintaining colonial mindsets makes solving warming impossible.

Kolinjivadi & Kothari 20, Vijay Kolinjivadi: Post-doctoral researcher at the Institute of Development Policy, University of Antwerp in Belgium. Ashish Kothari: Global Tapestry of Alternatives in India (May 20th, “No Harm Here is Still Harm There: The Green New Deal and the Global South (I),” *Jamhoor*, https://www.jamhoor.org/read/2020/5/20/no-harm-here-is-still-harm-there-looking-at-the-green-new-deal-from-the-global-south, Accessed 07-13-2021)

Additional crucial flaws would also severely hamper the GND’s potential for real change. Foremost, current variants of the GND retain a significant dependence on technological solutions to problems that are not necessarily technological in nature. They also say nothing about the need to reduce material consumption or energy demand overall (except ‘weatherization’ to reduce domestic consumption). Thus for example, they fail to acknowledge that even if the US transitioned completely to renewable energy and technologies like electric cars, it would still be engaging in unsustainable exploitation of nature and natural resources.

Moreover, by focusing heavily on carbon reductions, the GND ignores other major ecological crises, including those of biodiversity and ecosystem loss, driven by uncontrolled consumption in the Global North. Finally, while it commits to holding corporations accountable to domestic climate goals and labour standards, it does not ensure that they will also be held accountable globally (beyond carbon emissions). Similarly, while Bernie’s proposals were committed to ending rising inequality within the US, through taxes on fossil fuel billionaires and “green jobs” for low-income sectors, it is not clear how this inequality would be addressed in a way that does not just shift it outside the US.

As such, the GND cannot adequately challenge the structures of capitalism and patriarchy, and from a global perspective remains rooted in “green” colonialism. It effectively perpetuates the quest for cheap raw materials and black and brown labouring bodies to achieve “green” growth.

In the context of the Global South, then, the GND has failed to illustrate what is “new” about it. Put differently, it is simply inadequate, and indeed unjust, in our current hyper-connected world (laid bare by COVID-19) to limit a GND to the national policy of Global North countries. For instance, if a GND for Europe promises to be “climate neutral,” whose resources and labour will be deployed to power Europe’s unrestrained energy and consumption demands?

This is an especially salient question given how renewable technologies for “cleaner,” “greener” economies depend on the same socially and ecologically degrading land and labour practices as traditional energy sources. They are also conveniently located in countries of the Global South, such as Bolivia and DR Congo, where regulatory safeguards are more lax. The uneven playing field of resources and regulatory frameworks works in the favour of those who have not only historically usurped resources and labouring bodies around the world but also currently dictate the modus operandi of development, including its “greener and eco-friendly” varieties. What is easily forgotten in “eco-friendly” talk is just how development models of the Global North are structurally founded on dehumanization, in which hundreds of millions across the globe are seduced and stripped of their diverse ways of knowing the world, and dumbed down into passive consumerist onlookers and screen junkies, unable or unwilling to acknowledge (much less act upon) the consequences of their consumption patterns.

#### McAfee uses faulty data that ignores globalization.

Hickel 20, Economic anthropologist at Goldsmiths University of London (Jason, October 14th, “A response to McAfee: No, the “Environmental Kuznets Curve” won’t save us,” *MROnline*, https://mronline.org/2020/10/14/a-response-to-mcafee-no-the-environmental-kuznets-curve-wont-save-us/)

There’s only one problem: McAfee’s argument is based on a fundamental accounting error. McAfee uses data on domestic material consumption, which tallies up the resources that a nation extracts and consumes each year. But this metric ignores a crucial piece of the puzzle. While it includes the imported goods a country consumes, it does not include the resources involved in extracting, producing, and transporting those goods. Because the United States and other rich countries have offshored so much of their production to poorer countries over the past 40 years, that side of resource use has been conveniently shifted off their books.

In other words, what looks like “green growth” is really just an artifact of globalization. Given how much the U.S. economy relies on offshored production, McAfee’s data cannot be legitimately compared to U.S. GDP, and cannot be used to make claims about dematerialization.

Ecological economists have been aware of this problem for a long time. To correct for it, they use a more holistic metric called “raw material consumption,” which fully accounts for trade. When we look at this data, which is readily available from the United Nations, the story changes completely. We see that total resource use in the United States hasn’t been falling at all; in fact, it has been rising more or less exactly in line with GDP. The same is true of all other major industrial economies, including the European Union, and the OECD as a group. There has been zero dematerialization. No green growth. It was all an illusion of accounting.

#### CCS is net carbon positive – it’s grossly inefficient, causes upstream emissions, pollution, and leakage

Kubota ‘19 (Taylor Kubota; Citing Mark Z. Jacobson, professor of civil and environmental engineering @ Stanford AND senior fellow at the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment; 10/25/19; "Study casts doubt on carbon capture"; *Phys*; <https://phys.org/news/2019-10-carbon-capture.html>) \*Upstream emissions = emissions, including from leaks and combustion, from mining and transporting a fuel such as coal or natural gas

One proposed method for reducing carbon dioxide (CO2) levels in the atmosphere—and reducing the risk of climate change—is to capture carbon from the air or prevent it from getting there in the first place. However, research from Mark Z. Jacobson at Stanford University, published in Energy and Environmental Science, suggests that carbon capture technologies can cause more harm than good. "All sorts of scenarios have been developed under the assumption that carbon capture actually reduces substantial amounts of carbon. However, this research finds that it reduces only a small fraction of carbon emissions, and it usually increases air pollution," said Jacobson, who is a professor of civil and environmental engineering. "Even if you have 100 percent capture from the capture equipment, it is still worse, from a social cost perspective, than replacing a coal or gas plant with a wind farm because carbon capture never reduces air pollution and always has a capture equipment cost. Wind replacing fossil fuels always reduces air pollution and never has a capture equipment cost." Jacobson, who is also a senior fellow at the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment, examined public data from a coal with carbon capture electric power plant and a plant that removes carbon from the air directly. In both cases, electricity to run the carbon capture came from natural gas. He calculated the net CO2 reduction and total cost of the carbon capture process in each case, accounting for the electricity needed to run the carbon capture equipment, the combustion and upstream emissions resulting from that electricity, and, in the case of the coal plant, its upstream emissions. (Upstream emissions are emissions, including from leaks and combustion, from mining and transporting a fuel such as coal or natural gas.) Common estimates of carbon capture technologies—which only look at the carbon captured from energy production at a fossil fuel plant itself and not upstream emissions—say carbon capture can remediate 85-90 percent of carbon emissions. Once Jacobson calculated all the emissions associated with these plants that could contribute to global warming, he converted them to the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide in order to compare his data with the standard estimate. He found that in both cases the equipment captured the equivalent of only 10-11 percent of the emissions they produced, averaged over 20 years. This research also looked at the social cost of carbon capture—including air pollution, potential health problems, economic costs and overall contributions to climate change—and concluded that those are always similar to or higher than operating a fossil fuel plant without carbon capture and higher than not capturing carbon from the air at all. Even when the capture equipment is powered by renewable electricity, Jacobson concluded that it is always better to use the renewable electricity instead to replace coal or natural gas electricity or to do nothing, from a social cost perspective. Given this analysis, Jacobson argued that the best solution is to instead focus on renewable options, such as wind or solar, replacing fossil fuels. Efficiency and upstream emissions This research is based on data from two real carbon capture plants, which both run on natural gas. The first is a coal plant with carbon capture equipment. The second plant is not attached to any energy-producing counterpart. Instead, it pulls existing carbon dioxide from the air using a chemical process. Jacobson examined several scenarios to determine the actual and possible efficiencies of these two kinds of plants, including what would happen if the carbon capture technologies were run with renewable electricity rather than natural gas, and if the same amount of renewable electricity required to run the equipment were instead used to replace coal plant electricity. While the standard estimate for the efficiency of carbon capture technologies is 85-90 percent, neither of these plants met that expectation. Even without accounting for upstream emissions, the equipment associated with the coal plant was only 55.4 percent efficient over 6 months, on average. With the upstream emissions included, Jacobson found that, on average over 20 years, the equipment captured only 10-11 percent of the total carbon dioxide equivalent emissions that it and the coal plant contributed. The air capture plant was also only 10-11 percent efficient, on average over 20 years, once Jacobson took into consideration its upstream emissions and the uncaptured and upstream emissions that came from operating the plant on natural gas. Due to the high energy needs of carbon capture equipment, Jacobson concluded that the social cost of coal with carbon capture powered by natural gas was about 24 percent higher, over 20 years, than the coal without carbon capture. If the natural gas at that same plant were replaced with wind power, the social cost would still exceed that of doing nothing. Only when wind replaced coal itself did social costs decrease. For both types of plants this suggests that, even if carbon capture equipment is able to capture 100 percent of the carbon it is designed to offset, the cost of manufacturing and running the equipment plus the cost of the air pollution it continues to allow or increases makes it less efficient than using those same resources to create renewable energy plants replacing coal or gas directly. "Not only does carbon capture hardly work at existing plants, but there's no way it can actually improve to be better than replacing coal or gas with wind or solar directly," said Jacobson. "The latter will always be better, no matter what, in terms of the social cost. You can't just ignore health costs or climate costs." This study did not consider what happens to carbon dioxide after it is captured but Jacobson suggests that most applications today, which are for industrial use, result in additional leakage of carbon dioxide back into the air. Focusing on renewables People propose that carbon capture could be useful in the future, even after we have stopped burning fossil fuels, to lower atmospheric carbon levels. Even assuming these technologies run on renewables, Jacobson maintains that the smarter investment is in options that are currently disconnected from the fossil fuel industry, such as reforestation—a natural version of air capture—and other forms of climate change solutions focused on eliminating other sources of emissions and pollution. These include reducing biomass burning, and reducing halogen, nitrous oxide and methane emissions. "There is a lot of reliance on carbon capture in theoretical modeling, and by focusing on that as even a possibility, that diverts resources away from real solutions," said Jacobson. "It gives people hope that you can keep fossil fuel power plants alive. It delays action. In fact, carbon capture and direct air capture are always opportunity costs."

#### Utilitarianism is just another form of pandemic pedagogy — neutral impact calculus is impossible under capitalism since lives are valued based on productivity and peripheral violence is erased.

Giroux 20, McMaster University Professor for Scholarship in the Public Interest and The Paulo Freire Distinguished Scholar in Critical Pedagogy (Henry, June 9th, “Racist Violence Can’t Be Separated from the Violence of Neoliberal Capitalism,” *Truthout*, <https://truthout.org/articles/racist-violence-cant-be-separated-from-the-violence-of-neoliberal-capitalism/>, Accessed 08-24-2021)

Pandemic pedagogy thrives on inequality and becomes a militarized and heartless normalizing tool to convince the broader public that the lives of the elderly, sick, and vulnerable should be valued according to how much they contribute to the economy. And if they are willing to die in order not to be a drain on the economy, all well and good. Nothing escapes the cruel logic of neoliberalism with its arrogance and hubris on full display as it bathes in the glow of right-wing populism, ultra-nationalism, and neofascism. Its accoutrements of dictatorship are everywhere and can be seen in the swagger of militia that storm state capitals, in police who punch and pepper spray protesters and push elderly men to the ground, and in military forces on the streets without badges reinforcing a climate of fear, repression, and unaccountability. There is more at work here than a lack of humanity on the part of the Trump administration. As the Irish journalist Fintan O’Toole observes, there is also the deepening grip of a culture of cruelty and dehumanization. He writes:

“As a society the American people are being habituated into accepting cruelty on a wide scale. Americans are being taught by Trump and his administration not to see other people as human beings whose lives are as important as their own. Once that line has been crossed – and it is not just Trump and the people around him, but many of Trump’s supporters as well – then we know where that all leads, what the ultimate destination is. There is no mystery about it. We know what happens when a government and its leaders dehumanize large numbers of people.”

#### “No alternative” is an elite fallacy — the pandemic provides a unique opening to challenge capitalism and unify globally.

Alexander and Gleeson, 20 \*Research Fellow with the Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute, University of Melbourne. \*\*Director of the Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute. (Samuel Alexander and Brendan Gleeson“EVERYTHING IS THINKABLE, SO WHAT IS TO BE DONE?” accessed online 9/16/2021 https://arena.org.au/everything-is-thinkable-so-what-is-to-be-done/)

The deep decarbonisation and degrowth required for such contraction would clearly require significant shifts in the ways our economies are structured, including exploring innovative new ways to govern access to land and housing, and having difficult but compassionate conversations about things such as redistribution and population growth. And, if the response to COVID-19 shows us anything, it is that governments can mobilise extraordinary amounts of money when there is political will. This is good news for funding a transition to renewable energy, if we can develop the political will. A degrowth transition would also mean a cultural recognition that high-consumption lifestyles are unsustainable and that only lifestyles of material sufficiency, moderation and frugality are consistent with social and ecological justice. This challenges us to reimagine the good life beyond consumer culture, thereby sowing the seeds of a politics and economics of sufficiency. Social movements will be needed to help create the support for these structural and cultural shifts. These might include post-consumerist movements that are prefiguring degrowth cultures of consumption by embracing material simplicity as a path to freedom, meaning and reduced ecological burdens; community-led resistance and renewal movements; transgressive and creative forms of the sharing economy as means of thriving even in a contracting biophysical economy; and other social movements and strategies that are seeking to develop new (or renewed) informal economies ‘beyond the market’. So, while the pandemic continues to unfold, as a society we need to consider whether our ambitions are merely to return to business as usual. Alternatively, shaken awake by this disruption, do we aspire to a radical and final break from neoliberal globalisation and aim to transition to a social form that prioritises human well-being and ecology over material accumulation? What now for degrowth? A cautionary tale There is no reason to believe that the current season of forced degrowth represents a permanent and final dislocation of the growth-machine ambitions of neoliberalism. The relatively recent experience of the 2008–09 Global Financial Crisis (GFC) and its aftermath is a worrying precedent. There was much joyous banging of cymbals and song from progressive interests as Keynesian desiderata were rediscovered and reapplied, especially and successfully by the Rudd government in Australia. The revealed downside of this reinstatement of ‘progress’ was a failure to grasp that Keynes’ theories predated political ecology and were intended to rescue, not transform, industrial capitalism. Hence, the way out of the GFC was a massive re-stimulation of consumption and all the ecological destruction that goes with it. After a major dip, carbon emissions were quickly restored and, after some mild disturbance, the planet was set back on its path to climate destruction. The shadow of Keynes lay heavy on the re-firing smokestack economies of the world. We fear this replay for the current crisis, our anxieties deepened by the observation earlier that neoliberalism is a particularly historically insentient beast. The forces willing snap back are immense and omnipresent throughout the Global North. It’s easy to highlight, not to say pillory, the ‘let’s reopen for business’ cant of President Trump, but, as Streeck reminds us, the European Union is a deeply neoliberal institution, essentially a free-trade bloc, that is equally committed in the current historical moment to the earliest possible resumption of the growth machine. The centre-left and green parties typically operate within the same growth paradigm, too often committed to little more than a limp ‘third way’ that talks of ‘greening capitalism’ or giving it a human face. But that is merely going down the wrong road more slowly. But caution is advised. The cloak of pessimism is too often the disguise of determinism, a tendency that we reject as bad science and politics. Both defeats and victories are snatched from the jaws of historical crises and it’s far too early now to say what will come from the current degrowth moment which we, with the support of Scott Morrison, can type as lockdown. We write, in April 2020, in the steaming mists of the volcanic eruption of the economy and of everyday life. New (or are some old?) social shadows and shapes are discernible: people (often harshly) freed from the neoliberal work frame and finding their way under a closely scripted regime of movement—and, critically, of consumption—laid down by a newly assertive state. A dialectical play of possibilities is evident, and they are certainly too many to try to list now. But we cannot fail to see on the one progressive hand the radical reassertion of the state and of its care infrastructure, as well as the freeing of households from the treadmill of the neoliberal work order (and all the fractured and gendered coping reflexes that went with it). Equally, we discern and recoil from the authoritarian possibilities unleashed by new state arrogation, especially in Anglophone nations, where populist conservatives reign. Who knows what will emerge from this historical clash of possibilities? Our bleakest vision is the emergence of authoritarian states that will ‘lockdown the snap back’—that is, reanimate the Earth-eating monster and drive us harder and faster to the graveside of capitalism. On better days, we hope-think for transition, however messy it might be, to a different social order that finally accepts new ideas of growth and progress. And what mature human being doesn’t desire a life marked by growth and self-realisation, a promise-idea seeded most wondrously by the Enlightenment? The simple point of degrowth, and of most radical thought traditions under capitalism, is that this journey mustn’t consume the social and ecological substrates that sustain us. Will crisis play a consciousness-raising role? It may be that ever-deepening crisis in the existing system of capitalism is the most likely spark for a paradigm shift in both the political economy of growth and its cultural underpinnings. To say this, however, is not to romanticise crisis like dreamy-eyed optimists. In fact, our view of change is based on a deep pessimism about the prospects of smoother and less disruptive modes of societal transformation. As the pandemic deepens or exacerbates the range of pre-existing crises, it seems that our collective task now is to ensure that these destabilised conditions are used to advance progressive humanitarian and ecological ends, rather than exploited to further entrench the austerity politics of neoliberalism. How to ground this great and terrible opportunity in everyday life? For those who recognise the potential in this moment to think and act differently, our basic function is to keep hopes of a radically different and more humane form of society alive. The encounter with crisis can play an essential consciousness-raising role, if it triggers a desire for and motivation towards learning about the structural underpinnings of the calamity itself. We believe that social movements should be preparing themselves to play that educational role, and in fact it is heartening to see this already unfolding in the many inspiring social responses to this tragic time. Among many examples of this, we highlight but one: David Holmgren and the permaculture movement, who are mobilising as we write for the creative renewal of our cities and suburbs. Holmgren’s relaunch of his brilliant RetroSuburbia: The Downshifter’s Guide to a Resilient Future during the pandemic exemplifies this vision and faith in grassroots activity. And, importantly, under its warm messaging about restoration of natural ecology and human values lies a serious prosecution of accumulative capitalism. In the midst of this pandemic, our challenge is to come together and set sail for newer, safer shores and resist the sirens of destruction that would woo us back to the sinking Atlantis of capitalism. This is not a time of species affirmation; it is the hour of gravest peril. It is also a reopening of human possibility. To liberate human prospect, we must cast down, not defend, the burning bridges of a dying capitalist order and be brave enough to entertain the possibility of a permanent and planned economics beyond growth. This pandemic is an ambivalent invitation, even an incitement, to humanity to confront this turning point in the human story with all the creativity, wisdom and compassion we can muster.

#### Capitalism causes endless warfare and imperial violence.

Robinson, 20 is Professor of Sociology, University of California at Santa Barbara. (WILLIAM I. ROBINSON “Militarised accumulation: the global war economy” accessed online 9/16/2021 <https://arena.org.au/global-capitalist-crisis-deadlier-than-coronavirus-part-ii/>)

Militarised accumulation: the global war economy Beyond financial speculation, debt-driven growth, and pillaging state finances, the transnational capitalist class (TCC) turned to another mechanism to sustain accumulation in the face of stagnation, what I have termed militarised accumulation. Savage global inequalities are politically explosive and to the extent that the system is simply unable to reverse them or to incorporate surplus humanity it turns to ever more violent forms of containment to manage immiserated populations. As popular discontent has spread in recent years, the dominant groups have imposed systems of mass social control, repression and warfare—from mass incarceration to deadly new modalities of policing and omnipresent systems of state and private surveillance—to contain the actual and the potential rebellion of the global working class and surplus humanity. Militarised accumulation refers to how the global economy is becoming ever more dependent on the development and deployment of systems of warfare, social control and repression, apart from political considerations, simply as a means of making profit and continuing to accumulate capital in the face of stagnation. As the crisis intensifies, militarised accumulation may take over as prime driver of the global economy. The so-called wars on drugs and terrorism, the undeclared wars on immigrants, refugees and gangs (and poor, dark-skinned and working-class youth more generally), the construction of border walls, immigration detention centres, prison-industrial complexes and systems of mass surveillance, and the spread of private security-guard and mercenary companies have all become major sources of profit-making and they will become more important to the system as economic depression sets in. The events of September 11, 2001, marked the start of an era of permanent global war in which logistics, warfare, intelligence, repression, surveillance and even military personnel are more and more the privatised domain of transnational capital. Criminalisation of surplus humanity activates state-sanctioned repression, opening up new profit-making opportunities for the TCC. The Pentagon budget increased 91 per cent in real terms between 1998 and 2011, while worldwide, total defence outlays grew by 50 per cent from 2006 to 2015, from $1.4 trillion to $2.03 trillion, some 3 per cent of gross world product, although this figure does not take into account hundreds of billions of dollars in ‘homeland security’ spending. In the decade from 2001 to 2011 military-industry profits nearly quadrupled. Led by the United States as the predominant world power, military expansion in different countries has taken place through parallel, and often conflictive, processes, yet all show the same relationship between state militarisation and global capital accumulation. But militarised accumulation involves vastly more than activities generated by state military budgets. There are immense sums involved in state spending and private corporate accumulation through militarisation and other forms of generating profit through repressive social control that do not involve militarisation per se. The various wars, conflicts, and campaigns of social control and repression around the world involve the fusion of private accumulation with state militarisation. In this relationship, the state facilitates the expansion of opportunities for private capital to accumulate through militarisation, such as by facilitating global weapons sales by military-industrial-security firms, the amounts of which have reached unprecedented levels. Global weapons sales by the top 100 weapons manufacturers and military service companies increased by 38 per cent between 2002 and 2016. Private military and security firms have proliferated worldwide and their deployment is not limited to the major conflict zones in the Middle East, South Asia and Africa. In his study Corporate Warriors, P. W. Singer documents how private military forces (PMFs) have come to play an ever more central role in military conflicts and wars. Beyond the many based in the United States, PMFs come from numerous countries around the world, including Russia, South Africa, Colombia, Mexico, India, the EU countries and Israel. PMF clients include states, corporations, landowners, non-governmental organisations, and even the Colombian and Mexican drug cartels. By 2018, private military companies employed some 15 million people around the world, deploying forces to guard corporate property, provide personal security for TCC executives and their families, collect data, conduct police, paramilitary, counterinsurgency and surveillance operations, carry out mass crowd control and repression of protesters, manage prisons, run private detention and interrogation facilities, and participate in outright warfare. In addition, there were an outstanding 20 million private security workers worldwide in 2017, and the industry was expected to be worth over $220 billion by 2020. In half of the world’s countries, private security agents outnumber police officers. Meanwhile, criminalisation of the poor, the racially oppressed, immigrants, refugees and other vulnerable communities activates ‘legitimate’ state repression to enforce the accumulation of capital, whereby the state turns to private capital to carry out the repression of those criminalised. There has been a rapid increase in imprisonment in countries around the world, led by the United States, which has been exporting its own system of mass incarceration. The global prison population grew by 24 per cent from 2000 to 2018. This carceral state opens up enormous opportunities at multiple levels for militarised accumulation. Worldwide there were in the early twenty-first century some 200 privately operated prisons on all continents and many more ‘public–private partnerships’ that involved privatised prison services and other forms of for-profit custodial services such as privatised electronic-monitoring programs. The countries that were developing private prisons ranged from most member states of the EU to Israel, Russia, Thailand, Hong Kong, South Africa, New Zealand, Ecuador, Australia, Costa Rica, Chile, Peru, Brazil and Canada. Every phase in the war on migrants and refugees has become a wellspring of profit-making, from private, for-profit detention centres and the provision of services inside public detention centres such as healthcare, food and phone systems to other ancillary activities of the deportation regime, such as government contracting of private charter flights to ferry deportees back home and the equipping of armies of border agents. In the United States, the border-security industry was set to double in value, from $305 billion in 2011 to some $740 billion in 2023. In Europe, the budget for the EU public–private border-security agency, Frontex, increased a whopping 3688 per cent between 2005 and 2016, while the European border-security market was expected to nearly double, from some $18 billion in 2015 to approximately $34 billion in 2022. When the health emergency comes to an end we may be left with a global economy even more dependent on this militarised accumulation than before the virus hit, and with the threat that the ruling groups will turn to war. Historically, wars have pulled the capitalist system out of crisis and have also served to deflect attention from political tensions and problems of legitimacy.

#### The only scenario for US-China war is containment — link turns the case.

Michael 2AC Mousseau 19, Professor in the School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs at the University of Central Florida, “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

It follows that it is not in the interests of members of the contractualist hegemony to confront China or try to contain it. Such efforts would compel China’s leaders to respond forcefully, which would be in the interest of the hegemonic order: if China’s leaders failed to react to such efforts when they are reported in the domestic media, the pro-market leadership of the Communist Party could be replaced by a Party faction opposed to the global order. Less visible efforts at containment might not trigger such reactions, but China’s leaders have staked the legitimacy of the Party on continued economic success. Therefore, any action that harms China’s economy puts at risk its promarket leadership. What happened in Germany and Japan could happen in China.78

As with the United States’ dealings with axial Britain, contractualist leaders today can seek to cajole China’s leaders to adopt nondiscriminatory practices. Any effort to contain China, however, risks calamity of catastrophic proportions. The implication is as clear as it is profound: contractualist policymakers must not confuse China’s pursuit of a mercantilist advantage with threat of a Thucydides Trap and act on this confusion.79

# 1NR

#### That outweighs and turns the aff — maintaining US dominance over I-Law ensures serial policy failure.

Parmar 18, Professor of International Politics @ University of London (Inderjeet, The US-led Liberal Order: Imperialism by Another Name? *International Affairs*, 151–172; DOI: 10.1093/ia/iix240)

Conclusion

The foundational values, interests and institutions of the (Anglo-)US liberal international order, with due respect for important but not fundamental recalibrations and corrections along the way, are the sources of its current crises or at least challenges. The mentalities and power structures of the LIO’s leaders are constructed by hierarchical, imperial and racial–civilizational ways of thinking, albeit in most cases subliminally embedded to the point of being unconscious deep structures themselves.117 The American white Anglo-Saxon Protestant (Wasp) establishment built and maintained the liberal order in a ‘competitively cooperative’ alliance with their British counterparts,118 whose own imperial and racial mentalities were hardly in conflict with those of their American cousins.119 Whatever changes occurred or were forced on US elites over time, those underlying and mainly subliminal values have remained significant in decision-making, including when nurturing new states and powers such as South Korea and China.

As a result, liberal internationalism as a ‘theory’ or approach to world order, eliding and skirting matters of hierarchy, race and class just as it does in its outline understandings of American democracy, misses a critical part of the picture—of the dynamics of international power as well as the dynamics of domestic power. Because of that elision, that failure to see, I suggest it is a legitimating ideology of the American ruling elite. I have argued above that the LIO is better understood as a system of hierarchy and inequality, and as what Persaud calls a ‘racio-civilizational’ phenomenon. What does that mean? It means that this system and its leaders cannot yet comprehend an order that encompasses on the basis of something approaching equality the broad mass of people—citizens—at home, let alone the non-western peoples of the global South, or even their elites. The tweet from Donald Tusk quoted above is revealing and instructive because it was addressed to President Trump in simple and stark terms, worth repeating here: ‘Euro-Atlanticism means the free world cooperating to prevent post-West world order’—so, please ‘do not touch’. International alliances of elites, including those of the emerging powers such as China, are in large part attempts to manage and channel change to prevent radical power shifts, to sustain a world order that serves elites and masses, in West and East, in starkly unequal ways. A Gramscian–Kautskyian synthesis combines consideration of domestic and international class-based imperial hegemonies and offers a good explanation of the existing order. However, it also offers a way out, in theory, and provides ways to assess the likelihood of avenues towards egalitarianism being taken by ruling elites. The prognosis is not positive at present, although the bases of ways forward appear to be coming into view as political strife and electoral shocks challenge the status quo.120

#### Treat their evidence with skepticism---there are strong financial incentives to defend hegemony and demonize alternatives.

Parmar 19, professor of International Politics at City, University of London, and Head of the Department of International Politics. He is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, and past President of the British International Studies Association. (Inderjeet, June 3rd, 2019; “Transnational Elite Knowledge Networks: Managing American Hegemony in Turbulent Times”, pg. 6-8, *Security Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/09636412.2019.1604986)

American elite knowledge networks center on the strategic and heavily interconnected corporate-philanthropic foundation. The liberal Ford and Rockefeller foundations and conservative variants all fund knowledge networks.28 Unburdened by electors or shareholders, these institutions are governed by trustees drawn from corporations, government, corporate media, and elite universities. Their elitist mindsets and ethno-racial and class identities differentiate these trustees from the majority of Americans. We can track the rise of American global hegemony by exploring the increasing significance of foundations and the institutional architecture that owes its origins to concentrated corporate wealth. At home, this comprised a dense network of think tanks, university foreign affairs organizations, area studies, and social-scientific programs, all of which interlinked with practitioners in politics, media, and government. These elite knowledge networks built long-term relationships that created pathways for the international circulation of ideas, people, and money, and usually connected strongly with American organizations like the Institute of Pacific Relations and the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). These knowledge networks’ greatest achievement is the elaboration of a liberal-internationalist elite consensus that rejects isolationism and spans the two main political parties, the media, and attentive publics. With the American state’s full cooperation, such knowledge networks helped to establish the post-1945 liberal international order that included Bretton Woods, the United Nations, the Marshall Plan, and NATO.

Official institutions of the liberal international order included the intertwined spines of the private and state-private institutional architecture that had been established during the Cold War to perform the major functions of US hegemonic knowledge networks. These networks grew deep roots in core Western states and civil societies. Symbiotic with NATO, European unity, and the special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom, such networks provided an international umbrella and developed politically powerful domestic constituencies that were invested in the liberal international order.29

Nevertheless, hegemony studies neglects American ideational-infrastructural power that is operationalized and embedded in influential power-knowledge networks, with linkages that unify private/public domains and international/domestic spheres, and that legitimize domestic vertical power inequality and horizontal inequalities between societies. Those networks are the power technology of the foreign policy establishment.30 Such neglect diminishes our understanding of the forces that perpetuate American hegemony and enable hegemonic elites to block or manage discontent. This article’s neo-Gramscian argument is that, despite crises and challenges that include the disruptive effects of Donald Trump’s presidential campaign and subsequent Twitter-disseminated rhetoric, those networks continue to successfully manage, channel, or block threats to American hegemony. Such networks are likely to remain significant during the Trump presidency, and to constrain attempts to radically alter the liberal international order.

American hegemony, because it is imperial in character and rooted in domestic power elites, is contested at home and abroad—more or less openly—depending on the balance of forces. Hegemony sets requirements on the hegemon. These requirements include delivery of certain freedoms, rights, security, and opportunities, which together construct “the American dream,” as well as a stable world order in which prosperity increases and aspirations appear achievable.31

#### Primacy solves nothing and causes blowback aggression.

Wertheim 20, Deputy Director of Research and Policy at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft and a Research Scholar at the Arnold A. Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies at Columbia University. (Stephen, March/April 2020, "The Price of Primacy", *Foreign Affairs*, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/afghanistan/2020-02-10/price-primacy)

THE WAR MACHINE

Both champions and critics of U.S. grand strategy after the Cold War have christened the project “liberal hegemony.” But American objectives and methods were always more hegemonic than liberal. Despite diverging over whether and how to promote liberalism, U.S. policymakers have for nearly three decades converged around the premise that Pentagon planners set forth in 1992: the United States should maintain a military superiority so overwhelming that it would dissuade allies and rivals alike from challenging Washington’s authority. That superiority quickly became an end unto itself. By seeking dominance instead of merely defense, the strategy of primacy plunged the United States into a downward spiral: American actions generated antagonists and enemies, who in turn made primacy more dangerous to pursue.

For most of the 1990s, the costs of this strategy remained somewhat hidden. With Russia flattened and China poor, the United States could simultaneously reduce its defense spending and expand NATO, launch military interventions in the former Yugoslavia and for the first time station tens of thousands of troops in the Middle East. Yet by the end of the decade, U.S. dominance had begun to generate blowback. Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda terrorist group declared war on the United States in 1996, citing the U.S. military’s presence in Saudi Arabia as their top grievance; two years later, al Qaeda bombed the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing 224 people. U.S. policymakers, for their part, were already exaggerating the threat posed by weak “rogue states” and gearing up for ambitious military interventions to promote democracy and human rights. These pathologies shaped Washington’s overly militarized reaction to the 9/11 attacks, as the United States entered into successive conflicts in which its capabilities and interests did not exceed those of local actors. The result was endless war.

Now, as the United States struggles to extricate itself from the Middle East, China is growing into an economic and political powerhouse and Russia is asserting itself as a spoiler. That outcome is exactly what primacy was supposed to prevent. The rise of a near-peer competitor does not necessarily pose a grave danger to the United States, whose nuclear deterrent secures it from attack. But clinging to the dream of never-ending primacy will ensure trouble, mandating the containment of rivals and provoking insecurity and aggression in return. China has yet to undertake a costly bid for military dominance in East Asia, let alone the world, but U.S. actions could push Beijing in that direction.

#### CFR are about bunch of capitalist hacks that promote imperialism---reject their studies.

Laurence H. Shoup 21, Ph.D. in History from Northwestern University in 1974. He is the author of five books, including Imperial Brain Trust (with William Minter) and Rulers and Rebels: A People’s History of Early California, 1769-1901, as well as many articles in scholarly and popular publications. He has taught U.S. history at the University of Illinois, San Francisco State University, Sonoma State University, and has been active in the anti-war and social justice movements since the 1960s. 5-1-2021, "Monthly Review," Monthly Review, https://monthlyreview.org/2021/05/01/the-council-on-foreign-relations-the-biden-team-and-key-policy-outcomes/

Team Connections to Key Institutions of the Plutocracy

The U.S. plutocracy, a ruling capitalist class with vast wealth and power, is small in number but extremely well organized to defend its own interests. Made up of families possessing at least tens of millions of dollars in assets, it is a class in itself and a class for itself. In order to delve into this class, we need to look at the four key types of organizations, their functions, the ones most linked to the U.S. plutocracy, and which Biden team individuals are connected to them. The CFR Group on the Biden Team Kamala Harris, Vice President (CFR through family; Harvard; DLA Piper; Uber through family) Antony Blinken, Secretary of State (CFR member; Harvard and Columbia; WestExec) Janet Yellen, Secretary of the Treasury (CFR member; Yale and Harvard; Brookings) Lloyd Austin, Secretary of Defense (CFR member; WestExec; Raytheon) Linda Thomas-Greenfield, UN Ambassador (CFR member; Albright Stonebridge) Cecilia Rouse, Council of Economic Advisors (CFR director; Princeton; Rowe Price) Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary of Homeland Security (CFR member; Wilmer Hale) Jake Sullivan, National Security Advisor (CFR author; Yale and Oxford; Carnegie) Ron Klain, Chief of Staff (CFR through family; Harvard; O’Melveny and Meyers) John Kerry, Special Envoy for Climate (CFR member; Yale) Susan Rice, Chief of Domestic Council (CFR member; Harvard, Oxford, and Stanford) William J. Burns, Director of Central Intelligence (CFR member; Oxford; Carnegie) Kurt M. Campbell, Indo-Pacific Tsar (CFR member; Harvard and Oxford; Asia Group) Thomas Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture (CFR member; Dairy Export Council) Gina Raimondo, Secretary of Commerce (CFR member; Oxford; Point Judith Capital) Eric S. Lander, Director of Office of Science and Technology (CFR member; Harvard) Jeffery Zients, Counselor to the President (CFR member; Cranemere) Data is as of March 1, 2021. Council on Foreign Relations, [Annual Report 2018](https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/pdf/CFR_2018_Annual_Report_web_v.pdf) (Washington DC: Council on Foreign Relations, 2018), 48–71; “[Celebrating a Century](https://www.cfr.org/celebrating-a-century),” Council on Foreign Relations, January 2021; biographies from websites of think tanks, corporations, and strategic policy groups. **Think tanks**: The function of think tanks (together with the mainstream media) is advance planning, setting agendas, and creating consensus, with the resulting climate of opinion favoring certain government policies. They also propose specific policies and select and train people to carry them out. There are numerous think tanks in the United States, but three are the most central for the ruling class: the CFR, the Carnegie Endowment, and the Brookings Institution. Of these, the most important U.S. policy think tank, which has helped set grand strategy for the country for one hundred years, is the CFR, dubbed “Wall Street’s Think Tank.” Founded a century ago, the CFR is the high-command plutocratic body promoting U.S. imperialism. It is the world’s most powerful private organization, the central think tank of U.S. monopoly-finance capital. It is also a membership organization and the ultimate networking, socializing, agenda-setting, strategic-planning, and consensus-forming organization of the dominant sector of the U.S. capitalist class. The CFR’s activities help unite the capitalist class into not just a class in itself, but also a class for itself. From its beginnings, it has been a behind-the-scenes organization and network led by well-connected financial capitalists of New York’s Wall Street. These capitalists are assisted by their expert allies in the professional class, especially from leading U.S. universities, but also from the nonprofit, government, law, and media sectors of society. From its founding, the Council has promoted an imperialistic conception of the capitalist class-based “national interest” of the United States, promoting a hegemonic “primacy” of the United States both regionally and globally. It has been very successful in its aims, setting agendas and policy as well as putting thousands of its members and leaders into high office.[1](https://monthlyreview.org/2021/05/01/the-council-on-foreign-relations-the-biden-team-and-key-policy-outcomes/#en1)

#### Decline solves transition conflict---only clinging causes war.

MacDonald & Parent 18, \*PhD, Associate Professor of Political Science at Wellesley College. \*\*PhD, Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame. (Paul K. and Joseph M., “Twilight of the Titans: Great Power Decline and Retrenchment”, pg. 2-3, Published by *Cornell University Press*)

In this book, we argue that the conventional wisdom is wrong. Specifically, we make three main arguments. First, relative decline causes prompt, proportionate retrenchment because states seek strategic solvency. The international system is a competitive place, and great powers did not get to the top by being imprudent, irrational, or irresponsible. When their fortunes ebb, states tend to retain the virtues that made them great. In the face of decline, great powers have a good sense of their relative capability and tend not to give away more than they must. Expanding or maintaining grand strategic ambitions during decline incurs unsustainable burdens and incites unwinnable fights, so the faster states fall, the more they retrench. Great powers may choose to retrench in other circumstances as well, but they have an overriding incentive to do so when confronted by relative decline.

Second, the depth of relative decline shapes not only how much a state retrenches, but also which policies it adopts. The world is complex and cutthroat; leaders cannot glibly pull a policy off the shelf and expect desired outcomes. Because international politics is a self-help system, great powers prefer policies that rely less on the actions of allies and adversaries. For lack of a better term, we refer to these as domestic policies, which include reducing spending, restructuring forces, and reforming institutions—all to reallocate resources for more efficient uses. But international policies may also help, and they include redeploying forces, defusing flashpoints, and redistributing burdens—all to avoid costly conflicts and reinforce core strongpoints. The faster and deeper states fall, the more they are willing to rely on others to cushion their fall. Retrenchment is not a weapon but an arsenal that can be used in different amounts and combinations depending on conditions and the enemies faced.

Third, after depth, structural conditions are the most important factors shaping how great powers respond to relative decline. Four conditions catalyze the incentives for declining states to retrench. One is the declining state’s rank. States in the top rungs of the great power hierarchy have more resources and margin for error than those lower down, so there is less urgency for them to retrench. Another is the availability of allies. Where states can shift burdens to capable regional powers with similar preferences, retrenchment is less risky and difficult. Yet another is the interdependence of commitments. When states perceive commitments in one place as tightly linked to commitments elsewhere, pulling back becomes harder and less likely. The last catalyst is the calculus of conquest. If aggression pays, then retrenchment does not, and great powers will be loath to do it. The world is not just complex and cutthroat, it is also dynamic. No set of conditions is everlasting, and leaders must change with the times.

Empirically, this work aims to add value by being the first to study systematically all modern shifts in the great power pecking order. We find sixteen cases of relative decline since 1870, when reliable data for the great powers become available, and compare them to their non-declining counterparts across a variety of measures. To preview the findings, retrenchment is by far the most common response to relative decline, and declining powers behave differently from non-declining powers. States in decline are more likely to cut the size of their military forces and budgets and in extreme cases are more likely to form alliances. This does not, however, make them ripe for exploitation; declining states perform comparatively well in militarized disputes. Our headline finding, however, is that states that retrench recover their prior rank with some regularity, but those that fail to retrench never do. These results challenge theories of grand strategy and war, offer guidance to policymakers, and indicate overlooked paths to peace.

#### There’s a unique opening for reversing primacy now.

Brown 20, policy associate at Ploughshares Fund, a global security foundation. (Zack, 10-31-2020, "The Myth of American Primacy", *National Interest*, https://nationalinterest.org/blog/skeptics/myth-american-primacy-171760)

Wertheim acknowledged that stepping back from our commitment to primacy won’t be easy—nor should it happen overnight. But he does see an opening for change. A big part of it will depend on whether Americans believe that primacy—perhaps necessary in the twentieth century—still pays in the twenty-first.

Increasingly, he said, they’re deciding that it doesn’t.

“There’s a core security argument that has failed the American people: that globe-spanning dominance makes us safe,” Wertheim explained. “It makes us less safe. It creates enemies, antagonisms, and leaves us helpless against the threats of the twenty-first century, as we see in the midst of this pandemic.”

“So, I would wager that the vast majority of Americans think that whatever possible good the United States might do projecting its armed forces permanently around the globe, it’s just outweighed by our urgent needs at home.”

#### Military force can’t pacify terrorism---BUT increases it through blowback and instability.

Mueller 18, Senior Research Scientist, Mershon Center for International Security Studies, Adjunct Professor, Department of Political Science @ Ohio State. (John, November 2, 2018, “An American Global Order? Or Pax Americana: Has the US Been Necessary?”, Prepared for presentation at the *ISSS-IS Annual Conference*; <https://politicalscience.osu.edu/faculty/jmueller/xisssisaPurdue2018.pdf>, pg. 14-15)

The threats

In conducting this destructive policy, the United States has applied military muscularity primarily to deal with two perceived threats that substantially don’t exist: international terrorism and nuclear proliferation.

Impelling for both was the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001. It seems reasonable to suggest, but unpleasant to point out, that, if the United States had followed a policy of security isolationism, the 9/11 attacks, and therefore the consequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, would never have taken place. The accepted narrative holds that the attacks were from people “who hate us for what we are rather than for what we do.” But it is clear the attackers’ central motivation was to affect America’s assertive foreign and military policy in the Middle East—to cease stationing troops in Saudi Arabia, to stop destroying Iraq with economic sanctions under the spell of the anti-proliferation obsession, and to reduce its support for Israel and for corrupt Muslim governments.44

Terrorism. After the 9/11 attacks, the United States massively exaggerated the capacities of the al-Qaeda terrorist group.45 In the process, it decided that, rather than simply going after the rather pathetic group essentially using policing methods as had been typical earlier, it must use military force not only to attack the little group at its base in Afghanistan, but to take down the rather unpleasant regime, the Taliban, which had been hosting the group (albeit with increasing dismay) and had had nothing to do with 9/11. That military adventure, or errand, was seemingly successful at first, but it then devolved into a long war as the Taliban and other groups adopted insurgency. Having created disorder, the United States has now helped to preserve it in the beleaguered and impoverished country for more than a decade even though it is essentially incapable of coming up with a coherent reason for continuing to do so.46

Largely because the resurgent Taliban is based in neighboring Pakistan and because the remnants of al-Qaeda central have also taken up residency there, that country has been inevitably drawn into the fight. Even though Pakistan receives $2-3 billion in American aid each year, large majorities of Pakistanis—74 percent in one tally—have come to view the United States as an enemy.47 As negative achievements go, that foreign policy development is a strong gold medal contender.

Looking more broadly, the United States has conducted a chaotic and destructive worldwide campaign against terrorism. Wherever there are terrorists who might conceivably be said to threaten the United States—and in many cases, the imaginative exercise has been impressive in its creativity—the US military is there, killing people and breaking things. The most important of these ventures had been against Islamic State, an especially vicious insurgent group that emerged in 2014 in Iraq and Syria. After almost ignoring the group at first, the United States later productively joined local forces, determined to put ISIS down after experiencing its mindless and fanatical brutality. The supportive venture is essentially humanitarian, although conducted only after Americans somehow managed to imagine that the group presented a existential threat to the United States itself primarily because the group, in full self-destructive mode, executed a few helpless American prisoners.48

#### Their authors omit facts---research on Chinese authoritarianism is biased and rooted in sinophobia

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Comment is Cheap: The ‘Evil’ Authoritarian Chinese State

In response to the question from the Financial Times to compare authoritarian systems – namely China and Russia– to Western democracies in handling the pandemic, Emmanuel Macron did not give a straightforward answer but marked a strong distinction and strength of Western democracies – free and transparent information, which are considered to be in the DNA of Western democracies but lacking in China and Russia (Mallet & Khalaf [2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0024)). He claimed that ‘the immediacy of the information bears no comparison with ours. Social media are not free in those countries, you don’t have any social media … And there are obviously some things happening which we don’t know about. It’s up to China to tell them’ (Mallet & Khalaf [2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0024)). Although he believed that cooperation and dialogues between countries of different political systems are necessary, he warned that ‘we should not allow ourselves as citizens of free democracies to be hypnotised by the way authoritarian regimes handle crises’ (Mallet & Khalaf [2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0024)).

The interview is representative of a dominant discourse about China’s response to the pandemic and a paradigm frame of China in general. Since the lockdown of Wuhan, authoritarianism has been invoked by journalists, politicians, and academics to explain the suffering of residents in China and to characterise the measures taken by Chinese authorities to bring the pandemic under control. As the epicentres started to shift to Europe and the US and the Chinese authorities reopened its economy, China’s authoritarian regime on the one hand is blamed for delayed responses and resultant socio‐economic upheavals in many countries in the West. On the other, many people in Western democracies are confronted with questions – which political system is better and is China the future? When questions are framed around the binary of authoritarian versus democratic countries like these, answering them – even in a balanced way – often conjures up discomfort and requires cautious calibration of vocabulary.

We engage with representations framed on authoritarian politics given its weight in representing China and imagining political life after the pandemic. Our main point is not that they are necessarily biased against China, although some of them do contain factual errors or deliberate misrepresentation. They raise some undoubtedly important questions about media censorship, freedom of expression, abusive state power, and disempowerment of CDC in China’s political system. However, what worries us here is the danger of ready submission to, and fixating attention on this conceptual category of authoritarianism in destructing, if not completely distorting, social realities. Unless we are ready to give in to conspiracy theories, believing that the virus is man‐made or genetically modified, we must admit that there are objectively existing knowledge gaps about the SARS‐CoV‐2 virus, since it is a new virus. It takes time to overcome this form of ignorance – a native state (Proctor [2008](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0025%20#tesg12441-bib-0026)) – and prepare mitigation strategies that are proportional to available knowledge, perceived risks, and available resources at a given moment. This temporal dimension is also necessary when assessing the responses of different governments and the production of ignorance in retrospect. Otherwise, instead of challenging ignorance, we may risk reproducing it.

A relevant example here is Jeffery Wasserstrom, professor in history at University of California, Irvine and author of several books on modern China, whose critiques of China’s responses were published in The Guardian. To support his claim that local politicians in Wuhan and Hubei province acted in accordance with the incentive structure of China’s authoritarian state systems to conceal information, Wasserstrom ([2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0035)) suggested that they had known of the first case as early as 8 December 2019. He referred to an article from BBC published on 27 January 2020 (Feng [2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0011)). The original article from BBC did not mention the source specifically. It does match with the date of the first case stated in the press release from the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission published on 11 January 2020 (Wuhan Municipal Health Commission [2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0036)). What the BBC journalist failed to communicate clearly, and which Wasserstrom failed to triangulate, is that this first case was backdated through retrospective epidemiological study (Wuhan Municipal Health Commission [2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0036)). It is also intriguing that his piece does not refer to the open‐access article published in The Lancet on 24 Janurary which would have thickened the plot he attempted to develop. In that study researchers pinned the date when the first patient showed symptoms on 1 December 2019 (Huang et al. [2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0020)). But again, it is crucial to bear in mind that this research was done retrospectively and that it takes time to make accurate diagnosis of infections with unknown causes during a flu season. It is justified to doubt information from China’s official sources. However, this is more because it is secondary data rather than because it comes from China and/or from its official organs. It is problematic to let a priori concern over authoritarianism – featured by secrecy, lack of transparency, and corruption – prevent us from doing our job of verifying and triangulating data.

While Wasserstrom may be unintentional, researchers at the Henry Jackson Society (a UK‐based foreign policy think tank) deliberately omitted information when cross‐referencing a source from outside mainland China. Their ignorance is deliberate and strategic (Proctor [2008](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0025%20#tesg12441-bib-0026)). It is produced to accumulate political capital. To establish culpability and legal responsibilities of China, they compiled a timeline to show that there was a deliberate cover‐up. The evidence they relied on was a journalistic report on South China Morning Post, which, based on documents of the Chinese government seen only by this journalist, claimed that the first case was recorded on 17 November 2019 and there were 266 cases by the end of 2019 when the Chinese state informed WHO (Ma [2020a](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0022%20#tesg12441-bib-0023)). Although the journalist cautiously suggested that some cases may be identified retrospectively (Ma [2020a](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0022%20#tesg12441-bib-0023)), this was removed in the Henry Jackson Society’s report. By silencing such noises – and only by doing so, these researchers can confidently conclude with certainty that China’s ‘medical authorities withheld authorisation to report the outbreak both internally and to the public’ (Henderson et al. [2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0019), p.14), a textbook example of authoritarian politics. In response to similar misrepresentation by the Sky News Australia, the journalist later clarified in her tweet, posted on 13 April 2020, and emphasised that ‘there was no indication when the Chinese government was made aware of the case’ and ‘Chinese doctors only realised they were dealing with a new disease in mid‐to‐late December 2019’(Ma [2020b](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0023)). The lens of authoritarianism is also used to interpret the drastic measures taken by the Chinese authorities and question their effectiveness. Bruce Buckley, China specialist reporting for The New York Times, took issue with the lockdown of Wuhan in his article published on 5 February 2020, and maintained that this level of measure is ‘a vast medical experiment conceivable only in authoritarian China’ (Buckley [2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0003)). The phrase ‘medical experiment’ conjures up the fear of a repressive authoritarian regime. For Emma Graham‐Harrison (a journalist for The Guardian), it was suspicious that two newly built hospitals were not running at full capacity one week after their completion (Graham‐Harrison [2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0014)). In her article published on 19 February 2020, She referred to the lack of capacity of existing hospitals in Wuhan not long ago (citing an article from the Wall Street Journal published on 5 February), the parallel efforts of converting exhibition halls and a sports stadium to ‘emergency hospitals’ and the absence of military‐style emergency field hospitals (an easier solution to the shortage of medical care facilities in her view). Instead of providing an answer through grounded research or consultation with medical communities, she opted for an easy explanation of authoritarian politics. She held that ‘the complicated reality on the ground is a reminder of one of the main challenges for Beijing as it struggles to contain the coronavirus: its own secretive, authoritarian system of government and its vast censorship and propaganda apparatus’ (Graham‐Harrison [2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0014)). Her conclusion appears to be influenced by her interviewee, Steve Tsang (professor of politics at SOAS China Institute), who believed that construction of these hospitals is more an attempt of the Communist Party to manage its image.

Mainstream media in the West are filled with similar accounts of China’s responses to the pandemic. With China watchers and China specialists focusing on authoritarian politics, this may have the worrying effect of drowning out the sobering voices from the expert communities on the frontline fighting this pandemic within China. The decision to lockdown Wuhan was not irrational but was based on the input from the scientific community about the virus and its threats. While there was much uncertainty about the virus during the early weeks of the outbreak in Wuhan, by the time the Chinese authorities decided to seal off the city, it was clear to an epidemiologist, Li Lanjuan, who proposed quarantining Wuhan to the elite politicians in Beijing on the night of 22 January, that the virus can transmit between humans even during the incubation period (Dong et al. [2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0010)). This was later confirmed by an article published by researchers from the University of Hong Kong in The Lancet on 24 January 2020, which additionally reported cases of asymptomatic patients (Chan et al. [2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0006)). According to Li Lanjuan in the interview, in view of the huge traffic around the Chinese Spring Festival, and the danger of this disease, it was a drastic but necessary decision in order to prevent further spread of the virus nationwide (Dong et al. [2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0010)). When it comes to treatment, ‘hospital’ for Chinese experts is also not an undifferentiated category. Not every hospital was capable of treating patients with a highly infectious disease, and a triage system was needed to treat patients with symptoms with different severities and to avoid overwhelming a stressed healthcare system. What Emma Graham‐Harrison called ‘emergency hospitals’ were in fact quarantine centres for patients with mild symptoms and without underlying conditions to avoid cluster transmission within families or communities and to keep patients under close medical monitoring and provide rapid intervention in case their conditions worsen, as explained by Wang Chen (a pulmonologist and an expert in critical care medicine) during an interview on 7 February 2020 (The Paper [2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0034)). These two new hospitals were designed and equipped to mainly treat infected patients with more severe symptoms or underlying conditions (Researchers at Nanfang Zhoumo [2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0029)). The decisions of Chinese authorities are based on knowledge accumulated about the disease, the threat to public health, China’s own conditions and available resources at that time.

Iterations of China’s response through the lens of authoritarianism are as much about China as about the West’s self‐imagination. They are symptomatic of, and perhaps due to, the conflation of sinophobia, orientalism, and statephobia. Since the eighteenth century, sinophobia has become a dominant way for the West to conceive of China (Zhang [2008](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0037)). Generalisations about China – a threatening, deviant, despotic, backward, and inferior other – are invoked to constitute the West. Classifying a nation or a regime as authoritarian consolidates the West’s power as a knowing subject to define others and affirms its moral authority and superiority. Characteristic here is the analysis from The Economist ([2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0033)). Drawing on a dataset on disasters compiled by researchers at Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium, it concluded that disasters killed more people in authoritarian countries than in democracies (defined as countries with ‘free and fair elections’)(The Economist [2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0033)). Even though China’s response may testify to the capacity of authoritarian governments in mobilising resources within a short period of time, the lack of transparency and limited participation of civil society still renders it inferior to democratic countries when it comes to disaster interventions (The Economist [2020](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tesg.12441#tesg12441-bib-0033)).