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**The World Computer is the system of computational racial capitalism that presents the world as we know as the elaboration of *real abstraction*, where information and meaning is quantified from social qualifiers in order to extract value in the form of capital risk. The meta-structure of the World Computer overdetermines sociality and conscripts thought into algorithms of profit – that sediments algorithmic racism and fascism.**

**Beller 21** (Jonathan Beller = Professor of Humanities and Media Studies and Critical and Visual Studies at Pratt Institute, “*The World Computer: Derivative Conditions of Racial Capitalism”*, Duke University Press, BEH)

Information as Real Abstraction Taking the **notion that Capital was always a computer as a starting point** (Dyer-Witheford, 2013), The World Computer understands the **history of the commodification** of life as a process of encrypting the world’s myriad qualities as quantities. Formal and informal techniques, from double-entry bookkeeping and racialization, **to the rise of information and discrete state machines**, imposed **and extended the tyranny of racial capital’s relentless calculus of profit.** By means of the **coercive colonization of almost all social spaces, categories, and representations**—where **today language, image, music, and communication all depend upon a computational substrate** that is an outgrowth of fixed capital—all, or nearly all, expressivity has been captured in the dialectic of massive capital accumulation on the one side and radical dispossession on the other. **Currently the money-likeness of expression**—**visible as “likes”** and in other attention metrics that treat attention and affect as currency—is symptomatic of the financialization of daily life (Martin, 2015a). **All expression,** no matter what its valence, **is conscripted by algorithms of profit** that intensify **inequality by being put in the service of racial capitalism**; consequently, we are experiencing a near- apocalyptic, world-scale failure to be able to address global crises including migration for reparations, carceral systems, genocide, militarism, climate racism, racism, pandemic, anti-Blackness, extinction, and other geopolitical ills. The colonization of semiotics by racial capital has rendered **all “democratic” modes of governance outmoded** save those designed for the violent purpose of extracting profits for the enfranchised. Culturally these modes of extraction take the form of fractal fascism. An **understanding that informationalized semiotic practices** function as financial derivatives may **allow for a reimagining of the relationship between** language, visuality, and that other economic medium, namely **money, in an attempt to reprogram economy** and therefore the creation and distribution of value**—and thus also the politics and potentials of representation.** In what would amount to an end to postmodernism understood as the cultural logic of late capitalism, our revolutionary politics require, as did the communisms of the early twentieth century, a new type of economic program. In the age of computation, putting political economy back on the table implies a reprogramming of our cultural logics as economic media for the radical redress of the ills of exploitation and the democratization of the distribution of the world social product. **Sustainable communism requires the decolonizaton of abstraction** and the remaking of the protocols of social practice that give rise to real abstraction. **Though in this section we will more narrowly address the issues of money, race, and information as “real abstraction,” and their role in computational racial capitalism**, we note the overarching argument for the larger study: **1 Commodification inaugurates the global transformation** of qualities into quantities and gives rise to the world computer. **2 “Information” is not a naturally occurring** reality but emerges in the footprint of price and is always a means to posit the price of a possible or actual product. 3 **The general formula for capita**l, M-C-Mʹ, where M is money, C is commodity, and Mʹ is more money) can be **rewritten M-I-Mʹ,** where I is information. 4 “Labor,” Attention, Cognition, Metabolism, **Life converge as “Informatic Labor” whose purpose,** with respect to Capital, **is to create state changes in the Universal Turing Machine** that is the World Computer— racial capital’s relentless, granular, and planetary computation of its accounts**. 5 Semiotics, representation, and categories of social difference** function as financial derivatives—as wagers on the economic value of their underliers and as means of structuring risk for capital. 6 **Only a direct engagement with the computational colonization** of the life-world through a reprogramming (remaking) of the material processes of abstraction that constitute real abstraction can secure victory—in the form of a definitive step out of and away from racial capitalism—for the progressive movements of our times. Such a definitive movement requires an occupation and decolonization of information, and therefore of computation, and therefore of money. Only through a remaking of social relations at the molecular level of their calculus, informed by struggle against oppression, can the beauty of living and the fugitive legacies of creativity, community, and care prevail. The mode of comprehension, analysis, and transformation proposed here will require an expanded notion of racial capitalism. It interrogates the existence of deep continuities and long-term emergences—what one could correctly call algorithms of extractive violence—in the history of capitalism. These algorithms of violence include the reading and writing of code(s) on bodies, their surveillance and overcoding by informatic abstraction. Such algorithms of epidermalization or “the imposition of race on the body” (Browne: 113) are inscribed and executed on the flesh (Spillers 1987); and they are executed by means of codification processes that violently impose both a metaphysical and physical reformatting of bodies. As Simone Browne shows, epidermalization is given “its alphanumeric form” (99) through a vast array tools of marking, scarification, discipline, and surveillance that include branding irons, implements of torture, auction blocks, ship design, insurance policies, newspaper ads for runaway “property,” photographs in postcard form and a panoply of other media of dehumanization. Executable code is imposed as social categories of race, gender, religion and property, as ideologies, psychologies, contracts, brands, communication theories, game theories, and quantities of money—these abstractions work their ways into and are indeed imposed by the machines of calculation—and their avatars. We confront a continuous process of unmaking and remaking using all means available; it is violently inscribed on bodies. Sylvia Wynter, in her post– Rodney King piece “No Humans Involved: An Open Letter to My Colleagues” writes, “Both W. E. B. Du Bois and Elsa Goveia have emphasized the way in which the code of ‘Race’ or the Color Line, functions to systemically predetermine the sharply unequal re-distribution of the collectively produced global resources; and therefore, the correlation of the racial ranking rule with the Rich/Poor rule. Goveia pointed out **that all American societies are integrated on the basis of a central cultural belief** in which all share. This belief, that of **the genetic-racial inferiority** of Black people to all others, functions to enable our social hierarchies, including those of rich and poor determined directly by the economic system, to be perceived as having been as pre-determined by ‘that great crap game called life,’ as have also ostensibly been the invariant hierarchy between White and Black. Consequently in the Caribbean and Latin America, within the terms of this sociosymbolic calculus, to be ‘rich’ was also to be ‘White,’ to be poor was also to be ‘Black’ ” (Wynter: 52). “To be ‘rich’ was also to be ‘White,’ to be poor was also to be ‘Black.’ ” The real abstraction imposed by executable code—the “**code of ‘Race’ ” that “functions to systematically predetermine** the structurally **unequal redistribution of global resources**” is beholden to mediating capitalist exchange while embarking on a radical reformatting of ontology. This reformatting, the supposed result of “that great crap game called life,” brutally correlates race and value, but not entirely by chance, while racial capitalism embarks on imposing this calculus globally. Racial abstraction is endemic to what we will further explore as “real abstraction”; the evacuation of quality by abstract categories and quantities is, as we shall see in more detail, a “necessary” correlate to a world overrun by the calculus of money. Such algorithms of violence encode social difference, and although they may begin as heuristics (“rules of thumb”), they are none the less crucial to the **calculated and calculating expansion of racial capital**. Its processes and processing structures the meanings that can be ascribed to— and, as importantly, what can be done to—those of us whose data profiles constitute us as “illegal,” “Mexican,” “Black,” “[Roma] Gypsy,” “Jew,” and a lexicon of thousands of other actionable signs. This codification process draws from the histories of slavery, of colonialism, of state formation, of genocide, of gender oppression, of religious pogroms, of normativity, and again from the militarization and policing and the apparatuses of calculation that have developed within states and parastates in their own biometric pursuit of capital—power. Their violent destruction and remaking of the world. The **internalization of these codes**, including the struggles with them and the ways in which they license and/or foreclose various actions, exists in a recursive relationship to their perilous refinement. **Their analysis, a code-breaking of sorts,** will therefore demand some drastic modifications in many of the various anticapitalist, antistate warrior-stances practiced to date, particularly in a large number of their European and U.S. incarnations that until very recently remained blind to their own imperial violence and are too often complicit with hegemonic codes of masculine, unraced agency, imperialist nationalism, and default liberal assumptions in relation to questions of race, gender, sexuality, coloniality, and other forms of historically institutionalized oppression.3 The analytic, **computational racial capital, would identify the field of operations** that emerges around the embryonic form of the commodity and coarticulates with racial abstraction to formalize its code, code **that serves as operating system for the virtual machine here hypostasized as “the world computer”** and by inscribing itself on bodies and everything else. The commodity, the analysis of which famously begins volume 1 of Marx’s Capital, expressed the dual being and indeed dual registration of the humanly informed object as both quality of matter and quantity of exchange-value, along with the global generalization of this form. “The wealth of societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails appears as an immense collection of commodities” (125). Commodities were (and with some modifications to be discussed further on, still are) humanly informed materials with a **use-value and an exchange-value— humanly informed qualities indexed by quantities**. “Computational racial capital,” as a heuristic device, stages an analysis of the convergence of what on the one side often appeared as universal: **the economic, abstract, and machinic operating systems of global production** and reproduction endemic to the commodity form and its calculus, with what on another side, sometimes appeared as particular or even incidental: racism, colonialism, slavery, imperialism, and racialization. The concept organizes this dramaturgy of analytically reunifying elements that were never materially separate in light of the study that the late Cedric Robinson conducted and recorded as Black Marxism. Robinson writes, “The development, organization and expansion of capitalist society pursued essentially racial directions, so too did social ideology. As a material force, then, it could be expected that racialism would inevitably permeate the social structures emergent from capitalism. I have used the term ‘racial capitalism’ to refer to the development and to the subsequent structure as an historical agency” (1983: 2–3). The World Computer takes what Robinson saw as “civilizational racism,” and its central role in the development of capital as axiomatic,—and sees that this role extends to and deeply into capitalist calculation and machinery during the entire period in which the world economic system seems to have moved form the paradigm of the commodity to a paradigm of information. “**Computational racial capitalism” would** **thus understand the generalization of computation** as an extension of capital logics and practices that include and indeed require the economic calculus of the dialectics of social difference. These differences, both economic and semiotic, would include those plied by slavery, anti- Blackness and other forms of racism during the past centuries. Computation must **therefore be recognized** as not a mere technical emergence but the **practical result of an ongoing and bloody struggle** between the would-have- it-alls and the to-be-dispossessed. Developed both consciously and unconsciously, computational racial capitalism is, when seen in the light of ongoing racialization and value extraction, “the subsequent structure as an historical agency.” The racial logic of computation must be pursued when considering finance, surveillance, population management, policing, social systems, social media, or any of the vast suite of protocols plying difference for capital. The local instance of computation, a specific 1 or 0, may seem value neutral, a matter as indifferent as lead for a bullet or uranium for a bomb. But we are looking at computation as the modality of a world- system. Computation emerges as **the result of struggles that informed “class struggle**” in all its forms, recognized or not by the often spotty tradition(s) of Marxism, including those struggles specific to the antagonisms of colonialism, slavery, imperialism, and white supremacist heteropatriarchal capitalism more generally. It is the result of struggles indexed by race, gender, sexuality, nationality, and ethnicity, along with additional terms indexing social differentiation too numerous to incant here but that together form a lexicon and a grammar of extractive oppression—and as we have said and as must always be remembered, also of struggle. The lexicon includes compressions that result in many of history’s abstractions including a perhaps singularly pointed abstraction: “a history whose shorthand is race” (Spillers 1997: 142). The grammar for that lexicon depends upon the deployment and execution of forms of differentiating abstraction that are lived—lived processes of abstraction and lived abstraction organized by the increasingly complex and variegated calculus of profit and thus of domination. “**Real abstraction,”** then**, emerges** not just as money in Sohn-Rethel’s sense, but **as the codification of race, gender, sexuality, geography, credit and time**—and gives rise to a “grammar,” in Hortense Spillers’s (1987) use of the term, that not only structures meaning and redounds to the deepest crevices of being smelted by social practices, but also, and not incidentally, prices differentials indexed to social difference.4 “Real abstraction,” as Sohn-Rethel spent his life deciphering, takes place “behind [our] backs” as the practical and historical working out of the exchange of equivalents within the process of the exchange of goods (33). For him, the development of the money-form, of the real abstraction that is money, is Exhibit A of the abstraction process mediating object exchange. This capacity for abstraction, realized first in “the money commodity” and then as money provided the template for further abstraction, not least in the conceptual formations of Western philosophy itself (1978). Sohn-Rethel develops this argument that practices of exchange precede the abstraction of value in Intellectual and Manual Labour, providing the full quotation from Marx: “Men do not therefore bring the product of their labour into relation with each other as value because they see these objects merely as the material integuments of homogeneous human labour. The reverse is true: by equating their different products to each other in exchange as values, they equate their different kinds of labour as human labour. They do this without being aware of it. (Marx 1990: 166 in Sohn-Rethel 1978: 32). Here is Sohn- Rethel’s commentary: People become aware of the exchange abstraction only when they come face to face with the result which their own actions have engendered “behind their backs” as Marx says. In **money the exchange abstraction achieves concentrated representation**, but a mere functional one— embodied in a coin. It is not recognizable in its true identity as abstract form, but disguised as a thing one carries about in one’s pocket, hands out to others, or receives from them. Marx says explicitly that the value abstraction never assumes a representation as such, since the only expression it ever finds is the equation of one commodity with the use- value of another. The gold or silver or other matter which lends to money its palpable and visible body is merely a metaphor of the value abstraction it embodies, not this abstraction itself. (33–34) Exchange-value is “in our heads” but is not the creation of any individual. Alongside use-value it is the other, abstract component of the “double being” of the commodity-form. Like Norbert Wiener’s (1961: 132) definition of information but, strictly speaking, emerging long before the idea of information proper, real abstraction is “not matter or energy.” There is not an atom of matter in exchange-value, or, as Marx puts it, “Not an atom of matter enters into the objectivity of commodities as values; in this it is the direct opposite of the coarsely sensuous objectivity of commodities as physical objects” (1990: 138). And a bit on, “So far no chemist has ever discovered exchange-value in a pearl or diamond” (177). But unlike in Wiener’s naturalist definition of information, exchange-value is an index of a social relation, an historical outcome. It indexes “abstract universal labor time,” a third term that forms the basis of comparison between two ostensibly incomparable and therefore incommensurable commodities, and, because common to both, creates the ratio of value that renders them quantitatively commensurable. **This distinction between the social basis of exchange-value and the universal character** of information should give us pause. As we shall have occasion to observe, information, as it is today (mis)understood, is thought to be a naturally occurring additional property of things—neither matter nor energy—rather than a domain of expression constituted by means of a technological and economic repression of its social dimension. Notably, Sohn-Rethel “set[s] out to argue that the **abstractness operating in exchange and reflected in value does nevertheless find an identical expression**, namely the abstract intellect, or the so-called pure understanding—the cognitive source of scientific knowledge” (34). For him, it gives rise to the abstract capacities of the subject of philosophy as well as the quantitative capacities of the subject of science and mathematics that in the twentieth century move toward a paradigm of information. Echoing Sohn-Rethel, we could say then that information is in our machines but not the creation of any individual machine. Not an atom of matter enters into information, though, like value, it is platformed on matter and requires energy for creation. This thesis will take on particular importance as we consider social differences whose descriptors, it turns out, are executable in a computational sense, at least from the point of view of financial calculus, but platformed on matter, and indeed, on living matter, on life. Beyond the intention of any individual, abstraction as “exchange-value” in “money” occurs in and as the process and processing of exchange in accord with an emerging standard. This standard, which economists call “exchange-value,” and which, in Marx is based on abstract universal labor time (the historically variable, socially necessary average time required to produce a commodity), persists alongside and within the specific qualities of the commodity (its use-value) and creates the commodity’s dual being. Though without chemical or material basis, **this standard, exchange-value, is a social relation**—a social relation as an abstraction—that inheres in the commodity-form itself and is formalized with the rise of the money commodity. The money commodity, in becoming a general equivalent, standardizes and thus renders fully quantifiable the exchange-value of commodities—exchange-values denominated in quantities of money. The quantification of value in a measure of money is an abstraction enabled by money itself which, as we have seen, is a real abstraction. It is a calculation that has occurred behind our backs, and indeed produces what Hayek (1945) identifies as the price system. When we recognize the differences in wages among people who are raced, gendered, nationed, and classed by various matrices of valuation, we also recognize that the calculus performed by and as real abstraction includes racial abstraction and gender abstraction. It is part of the calculus of **capital that provides it with an account of and discounts on the rate of exchange** with the labor power of marked people(s) —by discounting people(s) (Beller 2017b; see also Bhandar and Toscano 2015: 8–17). Racial abstraction provides capital with an index that measures a deviation from the average value of human life (itself historically driven down by the falling rate of profit). In this, computational racial capitalism is not merely a heuristic or a metaphor for the processes of a virtual machine; it is a historical-material condition. As we shall see, and as is obvious at least in the general case to anyone who has thought seriously about it, whiteness (and the fascist masculinity endemic to it) is not only operating where one finds “race”: it is operating everywhere in the imperium that it can be imagined (by some) that race is not a factor—**in medicine, in science, in statistics, in computation, in information**. As I wrote—resituating Bateson’s (1972) definition of information—in The Message Is Murder, **information is not merely “a difference that makes a difference”; it is a difference that makes a social difference**. **This slight difference in expression situates information historically.** While in keeping with Bateson’s far reaching ideas regarding an ecology of mind **(“If I am right, the whole thinking about what we are and what other people are has got to be restructured”;** 468), ideas that at **once problematize any distinction between inside and outside** and that make him dubious of any thought that presupposes sovereign subjectivity, my interpolation of “social” in his formulation “a difference that makes a social difference” **shifts the emphasis somewhat by insisting on the always already sociohistoricity** of any possible knowledge. Bateson believed that his understanding of information and systems ecology promised a new mode of thinking that he himself, as a twentieth-century bourgeois white man, did not feel capable of really embodying. Thus our interpolation, in keeping with Bateson but made compatible with Marx is, in keeping with Marx, designed to “transform ... the problem of knowledge into one of social theory” (Postone 2003: 216). Such a transformation **situates knowledge and now also information in the sociohistorical milieu**, the ecology such that it is, of racial capitalism, and therein finds information’s historical conditions of possibility. Here we advance the argument for the ultimately determining instance of social difference (and up the ante for the bet against whiteness) by **proposing that information is the elaboration of real abstraction**, of abstraction that results from collective practices of economic exchange and therefore from the general management of value as a social relation. I argue that set out in logical sequence, information is posited by, then posits and then presupposes the human processes of exchange that Sohn-Rethel, following Marx, argues are the practices that first give rise to the money- form and to real abstraction. For Sohn-Rethel the result of the activities of comparison, adequation, and trading of specific things that have qualities— which are, strictly speaking, incomparable—resulted over time in a process of finding a relation of equivalence and then general equivalence indexed to abstract labor time, what was in effect socially average human labor time. Exchange-value was a quantitative measure of that abstract time—the average socially necessary time to create commodity X denominated in money. This real abstraction was no one’s invention but was the practical result of exchange—of people’s activity—and thus emerged as a nonconscious result that nonetheless interceded on conscious process. Consequently, real abstraction was for Sohn-Rethel also the precursor to conceptual abstraction, including philosophy, science and mathematics. He writes: **The essence of commodity abstraction, however, is that it is not thought-induced**; it does not originate in ~~men’s~~(people’s) minds but in their actions. And yet this **does not give “abstraction” a merely metaphorical meaning. It is abstraction in its precise, literal sense.** The economic concept of value resulting from it is characterized by a complete absence of quality, a differentiation purely by quantity and by applicability to every kind of commodity and service which can occur on the market. These qualities of the economic value abstraction indeed display a striking similarity with fundamental categories of quantifying natural science without, admittedly, the slightest inner relationship between these heterogeneous spheres being as yet recognizable. While **the concepts of natural science are thought abstractions, the economic concept of value is a real one**. It exists nowhere other than in the human mind but it does not spring from it. Rather it is purely social in character, arising in the spatio-temporal sphere of human interrelations. It is not people who originate these abstractions but their actions. “They do this without being aware of it.”5 The practical rise of a form of abstraction indifferent to particular qualities is key here and is to be understood as a precursor to the content- indifferent abstractions of a variety of types. As Simmel notes in The Philosophy of Money, law, intellectuality, and money “have the power to lay down forms and directions to which they are content indifferent” (441–2). Without doubt, such power informed the racial categories of the Humanism of Ernst Renan, Roger Caillois, and others so brilliantly excoriated by Aimé Césaire in his Discourse on Colonialism. We add here the hypothesis that **the rise of information as the content-indifferent assignation of numerical index to any social relation** whatever, is a development of the abstraction necessary for economic exchange to persist under the intensive “developmental” pressure of global racial capitalism—information is derived from the increasingly complex things that people do through and as exchange and as such is both precursor and corollary to financialization— **the social conditions that sustain what is fetishistically apprehended as “finance capital”** and its seeming capacity to derive wealth from pure speculation and risk management in ways that (incorrectly) appear to be fully detached from labor and labor time. In this light, information reveals itself as **neither naturally occurring nor the creation of anyone in particular**, but, in keeping with Sohn-Rethel’s Marxian formulation of real abstraction, is likewise invented “**behind our backs” as a result of ~~“man’s”~~ “People’s” practical activity**. Information enables a complexification and further generalization of what will turn out to be monetary media, media that would be adequate to, and indeed are adequate (from the perspective of capital) to contemporary forms of exchange—what people do when they interact with one another in what is now the social factory. In brief, information is the extension of a monetary **calculus adequate to the increasingly abstract character of social relations and social exigencies**. It is an interstitial, materially platformed, calculative fabric of abstraction that through its coordinated capillary actions orchestrates social practice and provides interface for the uptake of value production. Once this idea is fully grasped, it becomes pointless to look for any other origin to the information age. Just as for Marx there is not a single atom of matter in exchange value (1990: 138), we say that there is not a single atom of matter in information.6 “All the phenomenon of the universe, whether produced by the hand of man or indeed by the universal laws of physics, are not to be conceived as acts of creation but solely as a reordering of matter” (Pietro Verri 1771, cited in Marx 1990: 133; note 13). Value is the socially valid informing of matter, so too is information. Economy then is society’s matter compiler and, approximately simultaneously with the advent of “man,” “history,” and “the world market,” “exchange value” emerges as a quantitative measure of the social value of material state changes indexed to human labour posited as “abstract universal labour time.” Marx’s famous example of the simple wooden table in Chapter 1 of Capital, which “transcends sensuousness” when leaving the clear-cut framework of use value and becoming a commodity and thus an exchange value, registers as “fetishism,” the “metaphysical subtleties,” “theological niceties,” and “grotesque ideas” (1990: 163), endemic in the table’s computability as value. In brief, just as **discreet states of matter embodying value as a network of commodities** mediated by markets and tied to labor give rise historically to the discrete state machine, otherwise known as the computer, exchange value gives rise to computable information and then to computation itself, becoming interoperable with it. Even before the rise of information proper, **exchange value operates as information** (and thus, necessarily information processing) —and then, as synthetic finance and contemporary forms of computer- mediated accounting and production readily testify, by means of it. Computation is the extension, development, **and formalization of the calculus of exchange value**—the ramification of its fetish character—and becomes in spirit and in practice, a **command control layer for the management of the profitable calculus of value**. Platformed on states of matter, information, not matter but rather difference between and among states of matter, extends, grammartizes, and granularizes the calculus of value regarding the organization of matter. **Commodities and computation thus run the same basic operating system**—state changes in matter driven by human practices—the value of which in any given state is expressed in the context of an informatic network and indexed to labor time. As such, information is the processing power of money itself and is inexorably beholden to abstract labor time and thus to racial capitalism. It is, in brief, an outgrowth of the money form. The cost of computation, the **arrival at a discrete state, is a derivative operation**, indicating an investment, that is explicitly a risk on the future value of an underlier, that is, on value itself. This argument for understanding the social as the ultimate referent and ground for any and all information, further advanced in chapter 1, is not content to serve **as a mere heuristic for cultural theorists to express a modicum of suspicion** with respect to truth claims backed by statistics and information. It is a **thoroughgoing indictment of information as a technique of value extraction**, racialization, and instrumental social differentiation. As a first approximation, actually existing information, like actually existing money, can indeed be said to be the root of all evil—in as much as the fact of its existence is a symptom of a far more complex historical process than what would seem to be discernible from the fact of the coin or the bit. The problem, of course, is that your metabolism (and mine), cannot easily extend into the future without access to both. I develop this idea here to say that everywhere computation operates, so too does racial capitalism—at least until proven otherwise. The repressive apparatus of capital clearly assumes this role for information, even if it does so at a level that most often exceeds ordinary default “human” (white) understanding: **the net result to date of the number crunch of “the world computer**” is a hierarchy of valuations inseparable from the violence of racialization and its attendant dispossession, and inseparable again from what Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007: 28) in her classic and statistically attuned definition of racism calls “the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group- differentiated vulnerability to premature death.” Today, we argue, no calculation**, networked as it is with the world computer, is fully separable from informatics and its basis in racial capitalism.** We will argue for this logical and also horrific history of abstraction in more detail below as we explore the interoperability of digital systems and their colonization of the semiotic, corporeal and material domains. The global learning curve of revolutionary praxis must attend to this modal innovation of systemic oppression, an oppression which is at once beyond all calculation and one with it.7

#### Data, not antitrust, controls the free market -- circulation is the site of profit accumulation which increasingly lacks physical reference.

Halpern et al., 22 [Orit Halpern is an associate professor in sociology and anthropology at Concordia University. She is also the director of the Speculative Life Research Cluster and D4 : The Disrupting Design Research Group, laboratories bridging the arts, environmental sciences, media, and the social sciences. She is the author of Beautiful Data: A History of Vision and Reason since 1945 (2015). Patrick Jagoda is a professor in the Departments of English Language and Literature, Cinema and Media Studies, Obstetrics and Gynecology, and the College at the University of Chicago. He is executive editor of Critical Inquiry and director of the Weston Game Lab. He is the author of Network Aesthetics (2016), The Game Worlds of Jason Rohrer (2016, cowritten with Michael Maizels), and Experimental Games: Critique, Play, and Design in the Age of Gamification (2020). He is also a recipient of a 2020 Guggenheim Fellowship. Jeffrey West Kirkwood is an assistant professor in the Department of Art History at Binghamton University, State University of New York. He is the author of Endless Intervals: Cinema, Psychology, and Semiotechnics around 1900 (2022). Leif Weatherby is associate professor of German and director of the Digital Theory Lab at New York University. He is the author of Transplanting the Metaphysical Organ: German Romanticism between Leibniz and Marx (2016)., “Surplus Data: An Introduction,” Winter 2022, Critical Inquiry, volume 48, number 2, p 197-210]//Townes

Surplus Derivation

“Data is the new capital asset of the 21st century,” announces Tom Wheeler, former chairman of the US Federal Communications Commission, commenting on the rise of Amazon over companies like Walmart.25 We can further extend this line of thinking to consider Facebook, Alphabet, and Twitter’s role in the Capitol riots of January 2021. Democratic members of Congress have suggested that the mayhem that day was driven by informational excesses, whose exploitation was responsible for simultaneously destabilizing the American political system and generating a huge windfall for the largest tech companies. According to Wheeler, such situations lay bare the inadequacy of old regulatory concepts for capturing new technological, social, and commercial realities. The regulation that Wheeler and others are accostomed to is based on “industrial antitrust, anti-centralization kinds of concepts.”26 What Wheeler suggests is that our contemporary situation in both politics and economy no longer functions according to the ideals of efficiency, energy, and scarcity that preoccupied industrial economies. Surplus data is the condition that Wheeler places beyond the industrial, and its paradigm is derivation. It was once the imagined limits to resources and energy that shaped industrial conceptions of efficiency, energy, and labor power.27 In the early twenty-first century, data capitalism changes this formula by putting the derivative before the source. Derivation takes the place of extraction, and where there was efficiency, there is now optimization.28

We glimpse the centrality of such inefficiency and derivation in the highprofile case of the r/wallstreetbets subreddit, whose members in January 2021 (and again in February and again in June) strategically bought up shares of dying brick-and-mortar companies, such as GameStop and AMC Theatres, which had high levels of short interest. These actions triggered a massive short squeeze that nearly drove some hedge funds, like Melvin Capital, out of business. The improbably parabolic price movement was made possible by ferreting out the unhedged positions of (ironically) hedge funds in the share interest data and mobilizing a vast army of traders invisibly in plain sight. What had come to feel like a guarantee of endless surplus to mega-money investment firms was, in a matter of days, undone by a data overload in the form of digital buy orders sent by retail traders on desktop and smartphone trading apps. The amount of trading data was so great that it created liquidity problems for brokerages, who decided to block buying of some popular meme stocks at various times. Conspiracy speculation took root on the Reddit boards, which then passed to mainstream attention and finally to hearings in Congress.

As this case demonstrates, the actions of the masses are now a resource for capital. Robinhood, a trading app launched in 2015 that advertises a dark utopian mission to “democratize finance for all,” offers commission-free trading and became the popular vehicle for the retail traders who joined the GameStop mania.29 But, as Richard Serra and Carlota Fay Schoolman contended in their 1973 piece, Television Delivers People, producing a statement that has since become a foundational principle of media studies: when something is free, you are not the consumer, “you are consumed.”30 And sure enough, Robinhood makes much of its money from selling traders’ order flow data to market makers like Citadel, whose CEO had invested $2 billion in Melvin Capital, the very hedge fund that was caught in the short squeeze. Beneath the David and Goliath story of Main Street investors sticking it to Wall Street villains was a more nefarious revelation that the real surplus at work in the meme stock affair was reaped as data that helped shore up the more traditional forms of surplus among big institutional firms that control the very contours of a supposedly free market. Moreover, the qualitative, affective response to such market dynamics, as recorded on Reddit and Twitter, have now become a tactical resource of hedge funds, who have learned to profit from even the best attacks against them. Quantitative trading algorithms analyzing massive amounts of social media data using advanced natural language processing are deployed to perform sentiment analysis and opinion mining. And so the cycle of surplus continues from data to affect to data, ad infinitum—each derived from the last with the derivative more fundamental than the putative source of derivation.

Surplus Politics

During the COVID-19 pandemic, an unprecedented portion of the population was confined to their homes, producing and consuming data in a state of hermetic globalism, straining the already overloaded bandwidth of global data transfer.31 On 6 January 2021, a group of right-wing supporters of Donald Trump attacked the Capitol building in Washington, D.C., fueled by the conspiracy theory of the group QAnon, a widespread online network surrounding a putative source high up in the “deep state” (the figure known as Q) and propagating racist, anti-Semitic, and xenophobic propaganda. As we see in Cullen Hoback’s documentary about the movement, Q: Into the Storm (2021), Q operates on the suspicion that the truth is in hidden byways of digital data, sometimes yielding deadly consequences. To witness Hoback accompany Jim Watkins—a businessman and the operator of 8Chan, the main platform on which Q, an alleged intelligence officer, posted his “drops”—laughing as the crowd breaks into the Capitol building is to see the conflation of the digital and the social all too directly.32 Q has created a semiotic world of clues that severs itself and its followers from the fabric of social reality altogether, gamifying it as Hoback suggests in a comparison to Cicada 3301, alternately characterized as an actual secretive organization or a fictional alternate reality game that has run complex digital scavenger hunts since 2012. 33 Q’s game indeed has rules, a perverse affective sense of fun, and easter eggs that provide domesticated surprise. QAnon’s slogan “‘do your own research’” might be taken as a command to surf your own surplus data channels.34And the Q movement has one thing right: data is worldly; digital channels do shape the world and are in excess of any heuristic intent. Events like the Capitol riot reify the data surround, among other things giving rationale to the increasingly datafied police to expand their quantitative vision.35 The events themselves are shocking and somehow predictable all at once: it is as though image boards (4Chan, 8Chan, 8kun) premeditate events by sniffing them out of the back alleys of data and insinuating them into reality.

This eruption of conspiratorial violence reminds us that data has inherited the legacy of biopolitics, particularizing its manipulation of society as a mass. As Rob Kitchin has argued, it is not just size that makes data big. Even speed of transfer and variety of format make up necessary but insufficient conditions for the revolution we were promised. Data deserving the name big also has to be “flexible” and “relational”—open to the inclusion of new fields—and, crucially, both “exhaustive” and “fine-grained.”36 The usefulness of data was traditionally attached to the precision with which it was gathered and defined. Sparse data, very exact, could create predictions to guide action by means of averages. The resulting categories, like those in an actuarial table, did not apply to individuals directly but at the level of the mass. This type of data was a crucial technique of what Michel Foucault called biopolitics, governance not of the individual body but at the level of generality. However, if biopolitics still relied on the assumed reality of demographic data, surplus data is something entirely novel. What was once a disjunction between individual and mean has become a partly automated loop between machine vision (or more generally, categorization) and its application to singular states of affairs. This logic stretches from FICO scores to healthcare data, from global logistics to finance capital.

Data has indeed become big and granular, and it has gained the ability to move from particulars to generalities and back again. Ecological fallacies emerging from large data sets now simply become new sources of value in both markets and politics. Without norms or quantifiable risks, we enter endless loops of uncertainty. David Bering-Porter, in his contribution to this issue, juxtaposes W. E. B. Du Bois’s data visualizations and speculative fictions with the famous case of Judge Schreber’s paranoid fantasies. Extrapolating into our present, we might imagine the paranoid conspiratorial politics of QAnon as occupying the space of paranoic dreams, ones of absolute counting, datafication, and control of the future, aspirations whose impossibility always drives violent forms of speculation and politics. But, Bering-Porter suggests, there are other pathways available. In the quantitative countermyths put forth by Du Bois to document racism in America, there was also an alternative aspiration “to reconcile the aims of visuality and data in two senses: as sight and apparition, evidence and aspiration.”37 Perhaps there is a future in which data stories offer evidence of a reality surplus data seems to foreclose in the present, the reality of the Black lives that Du Bois highlights and that have taken center stage in US politics today. It is the new task of a progressive politics to turn the endless extendable and colonizing frontiers of machine learning systems into something other than conspiratorial derivative instruments. In the surplus of data, any faith in the singularity of the real has been shattered—but these systems might harbor another way to encounter the world, one grounded in the experiences and data of the diverse multitudes. Our machines make technically visible what perhaps has always been there—the social nature of our technical lives. They need only be turned toward that future.

#### Anti-trust’s promise of reformed capitalist competition is a ruse to solidify American domination. Western academics erase imperialism from consideration, ensuring anti-trust cases will always hinge on American interests and never consider global impact.

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Limitations of liberal and progressive ‘techlash’ reforms

In response to the rise of Big Tech, the intellectual classes in the Global North, led by American scholars, researchers and journalists, have formulated a liberal/progressive critique of Big Tech and a corresponding set of capitalist reforms they call the ‘techlash’. Their framework, informed by progressive-era figures like Louis Brandeis and Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR), aims to restore the Golden Age of Capitalism through enlightened state regulation. This circuit of intellectuals are drawn primarily from elite universities (Ivy League, MIT, Stanford, Oxford, etc.) and the corporate media. Money for their research is sourced from elite academia and media outlets, wealthy foundations, philanthropists and Big Tech itself. The techlash critics ignore or downplay the analytical and moral centrality of digital capitalism and colonialism, ecological context and the need for a socialist transformation. A de facto vanguard within the intellectual community tuned into tech, together with Big Tech itself, these elite intellectuals set the bounds of leftist discourse and exercise ‘tech hegemony’ over the broader narrative.37

There are two branches of critique put forth by the American techlashers: a legal branch which focuses on anti-trust as its centrepiece to reform digital capitalism and a human rights branch which focuses on discrimination, privacy, content moderation and workers’ welfare. These intellectuals are typically in agreement with each other and often weave their critiques and solutions together. Let us consider each in turn.

Legal reformers

Within the legal domain, a new wave of anti-trust scholars have occupied centre-stage to address the digital economy.38 At the leftmost end of the spectrum in the United States, ‘neo-Brandeisian’ anti-trust scholars draw inspiration from Louis Brandeis, who viewed a fair and just democracy as one without extreme concentrations of wealth and power into the hands of corporations. Neo-Brandeisians share with socialists the idea that socioeconomic inequality in part springs from the monopoly power of big corporations. However, anti-trust reformers depart from socialists in irreconcilable ways.

For one, they envision a ‘small business capitalism’ of private property owners kept intact by enlightened state regulators. Socialists, by contrast, argue that the capitalist system naturally concentrates wealth and objects to class inequalities and private ownership of the means of production. For another, neo-Brandeisians fetishise competition as a force for social good, rather than a force which pits owners and workers against each other in the battle for revenue, profits and market share.

Critically, the limits of economic growth are not acknowledged anywhere in the literature, nor are digital colonialism and American empire. This is an analytical failure because the fact that Big Tech corporations exercise global dominance should be evaluated in light of their international and environmental impact. It’s as if central features of the global tech economy – American empire and ecological crisis – don’t even exist. It is a moral failure because all parties affected should be involved in formulating and implementing remedies, but, instead, the United States’ scholars, lawmakers, courts and regulators are the ones making critical decisions about reforming American firms with global reach.

European counterparts share in the US anti-trust reformist agenda, with an added caveat: the Europeans are explicitly trying to cut down the American super-giants in order to build their own tech giants and colonise global markets.

In Europe, there are already tens of unicorns (privately held start-ups valued over $1 billion). Rich European countries dominate this race. The UK leads the pack and aims to produce its own trillion-dollar behemoth. President Emanuel Macron will be pumping €5 billion to tech start-ups in hopes that France will have at least twenty-five unicorns by 2025. Germany is attracting billions for its start-ups and spending €3 billion to become a global AI powerhouse and a world leader (i.e., market coloniser) in digital industrialisation. For its part, the Netherlands aims to become a ‘unicorn nation’. In 2021, the European Union’s competition commissioner, Margarethe Vestager, told the press in no uncertain terms that Europe needs to ‘build its own European tech giants’.39

Thus, the notion that European leaders are against Big Tech is demonstrably false. They are trying to shrink the American super-giants (GAFAM) so they can carve out market share for burgeoning European tech giants. It’s pure power politics – an inconvenient truth for America’s neo-Brandeisians, who laud and borrow ideas from their European counterparts.

The new anti-trust scholars erase these realities from within their own self-referential echo chambers, and instead act as if anti-trust is a matter of remedying harms to their own citizens. This is not a small point. Even if anti-trust reforms go through, the space created for new market entrants will almost certainly be dominated by the rich countries, who still have the most advanced engineers and resources to pay them high salaries and poach foreign talent.

#### Trade is actively detrimental to economies in the global south---unequal exchange is the principal way countries in the imperialist core extract wealth

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Unequal exchange was once considered one of the most important new developments in imperialism studies of the 20th century. The theory, first proposed by French-Greek theorist and resistance fighter Arghiri Emmanuel in the 1960s, was quickly taken up by many of the underdevelopment and imperialism theorists of the day, from Walter Rodney to Samir Amin. Dependency theorists like Andre Gunder Frank had proven that the imperialism had developed to a point where empire was best understood not in terms of capital exports from the core (as in Hobson, Bukharin, Hilferding and Lenin’s models), but in terms of the wealth extracted from the periphery. However, they were not always clear on how this wealth was generated. Emmanuel was the first to propose an original theory of where exactly that extracted wealth came from. This was the theory of unequal exchange, the idea that the bulk of imperialist superprofits stemmed not from monopolies, noncompetition or securing captive markets, but rather from the difference in wages between nations.

To Emmanuel, Marx’s factors of production were not only fixed quantities of labour and material inputs, they also represented the stake each class holds in the total surplus value produced by a society (whether this stake is recognised is another matter). A given quantity of labour hours invested in production represents a stake workers hold over an end product, while a given quantity of raw materials or fixed capital represents the stake a capitalist holds.

 In pre-capitalist artisanal production, the labourer is the only one who holds a stake over the end product of their labour. The labourer controls both the tools and the resources required for production, and can work whenever they choose. The labourer can move freely between industries, and will move to whichever one yields the best prices. Many artisans will move into an industry if the prices are very high, and begin producing greater quantities of that commodity, forcing prices down. In pre-capitalist production, the market will reward labourers for fulfilling particular needs, and that reward falls in relation to the degree that need is met, and so wages and profitability both equalise freely.

All that changes in a society with two classes involved in production. Under capitalist production, both the labourer and capitalist have stakes in the final product, and thus the degree to which wages and prices equalise depends on different factors. When capital moves freely between industries, this tends to equalise the rate of profit. When labour moves freely between industries, this tends to equalise wages. Both wages and profitability must be considered when setting prices.

This is all well and good in the context of individual countries. In most countries, labour and capital moves freely between industries, and so wages, profitability, and prices are all relatively consistent between towns and cities in one country.

On an international level however, wages, profitability and prices are often completely inconsistent, especially between richer and poorer countries. This is because capital often moves freely between the core and the periphery, shifting to wherever has the highest rate of profit, while labour is constrained. Workers cannot move between countries due to militarised borders, repressive governments, and migration quotas. In the end, the rate of profit slowly equalises between countries, while wages only become more and more dissimilar between countries due to different levels of unionisation, and other “historical and moral determinants” like the degree of reactionary violence, market suppression and underdevelopment.

At the end of the day, a situation is produced wherein, as Charles Bettleheim explains, “on the world market the poor nations are obliged to sell the product of a relatively large number of hours in order to obtain in exchange from the rich nations the product of a small number of hours of labour.”

This inequality in trade can be further explored in a number of ways. In the past, unequal exchange has been explained through equations and figures, but this topic is too important to be bound up in academic language and convention. What follows is my attempt to explore the consequences of unequal exchange through the eyes of two fictional workers in countries separated by a small stretch of South Pacific ocean.

An example: Natia and Tim

Unequal Exchange can be hard to understand in human terms. By its nature it deals with abstract transfers of wealth in the spaces between nations, never really connecting with our human experience of work and life. But it does have a human dimension, and it extends outwards from a web of interconnected human experiences and struggles. Compare Natia and Tim.  
  
Natia works at a copra plantation in Savai’i, in Samoa. She spends her day collecting coconuts, halving them, and leaving them out to dry in the sun in large batches. Sometimes she helps at the kilns, where the sun-dried coconuts are fully dried, and the desiccated meat is crushed into oil and meal. It is a hard process, and sometimes whole batches develop mold and have to be thrown out. The market for the meal is shrinking, as the New Zealand farmers who used to buy it as animal feed have now shifted to Palm Kernel Expeller, much of it [grown by debt slaves in Malaysia.](https://thespinoff.co.nz/business/24-11-2020/the-searing-report-linking-popular-nz-brands-to-sexual-abuse-and-slavery/)

In the end, Natia gets about $350 USD per month for her full-time labour. It’s considered a decent wage in Samoa. Her employer has few ongoing costs aside from her low wages. However, considering the need to compete with PKE and other copra producers, the employer can only sell the copra meal for a very low price: just above the amount needed to pay for Natia and the other workers’ labour.

3,000 kilometres away from Natia, Tim is just starting his shift. He works at a plastics factory in Auckland, New Zealand. The factory is designed to turn mineral oil into a range of commodity plastics and tupperware, and while Tim works hard, his productivity is mostly due to the wide variety of factory machines at his disposal. Tim is able to produce a large amount of plastic products in just one hour, and the market for the products is always high, since the factory is generally able to out-produce and out-compete its smaller competitors.

Tim has been working at the company for a while, and has always participated in his union. The most recent strike was 2 years ago, when the union representatives were able to secure a new collective bargaining agreement that raised Tim’s wages to $3,150 USD per month. It’s nowhere near as much as his many managers get, but Tim is pretty thankful, since it’s considered a living wage by New Zealand standards. The company fought tooth and nail against the pay increase, but in the end it didn’t hurt business too much, and they were able to compensate by raising prices, thanks to their healthy market share.

The products of Natia and Tim’s labour are often exported around the Pacific. A handful of New Zealand farmers still import Pacific copra meal, while stores in Savai’i often stock the tupperware containers and commercial plastics Tim produces. The problem is that the products of their equivalent labour hours are sold at wildly different prices. The amount of tupperware that Time produces in one labour hour gets sold for enough to pay for nine hours of Natia’s work.

Is Tim’s labour itself worth nine times more than Natia’s? Not really; if Natia went to New Zealand and performed similar agricultural work, she would be paid at a rate much more comparable to Tim, if only due to labour laws and the higher cost of living in New Zealand. The product of her labour would also be exchanged at a vastly higher rate, even without additional machinery to help her. The real problem is that Natia could only access those wages if she won a visa through the ballot system, and only a few were given out each year, even before it was shut down entirely due to Covid.

The disparity between the two only becomes more extreme as time goes on. Thousands of other workers produce commodities that are traded between New Zealand and Samoa, and all of them have very similar wages to Natia and Tim. Samoa is limited in how many New Zealand imports it can buy, since its products are worth nine times less than New Zealand’s by default. Meanwhile, New Zealand exporters are making a killing: their products could buy nine times their own value in Samoan commodities! Over time, Samoan industry becomes more and more specialised and export-oriented, and less able to supply domestic consumers with cheaper local goods, processes covered by Samir Amin in Unequal Development. Instead, imported western goods become the norm, and Natia is forced to spend much more on necessities. Competition in the animal feed market threatens to force Natia’s wages down further, or even put the plantation out of business entirely.

Meanwhile, Tim’s wages are enough to buy plenty of consumer goods. He can’t always afford the boutique local brands, but he can afford as much imported produce as he could ever need. Over time, his wages are supplemented by these cheaper goods, and he can afford to save. In addition, the state mandates access to a superannuation fund for workers, and Tim’s contributions are invested in all sorts of foreign industry and international trade futures. Tim doesn’t ever have enough to stop working for a living, but he has enough to perhaps retire comfortably, or even to ensure that his kids don’t have to work as hard as he did. He is secure in the knowledge that in the long run, things seem to be getting better.

Workers like Natia represent the bulk of the global working class, labouring in low-paid labour producing much of the world’s most basic commodities. Their conditions are deteriorating due to the increased dependency, specialisation, and export-orientation of industry in the global periphery, as this means there is less local industry devoted to local needs. They are unable to save, or move to countries with better conditions. Their main hope is an increase in the total global mobility of labour, which might equalise wages and prices between countries. For them, freedom of migration is liberation, as even if they don’t migrate themselves, the resulting wage equalisation benefits everyone.

Workers like Tim represent a minority in the global working class: [he is at the bottom end of a labour aristocracy](https://anticonquista.com/2021/04/27/dissecting-global-economic-apartheid-western-monarchies-and-labour-aristocracies/). As we have seen, Tim’s conditions aren’t wonderful, or somehow post-scarcity, but he has the ability to save, to move between industries freely, to invest his surplus wages, and to send his kids to be educated. These are all rights Tim ought to enjoy, ones which he fought hard to keep, but the institutions which enable those rights are also unwittingly contributing to global inequality.

In rich countries, prices and wages are caught in an upward death spiral. Since prices are determined by the interrelationship between wages and profitability, and wages tend to gravitate around the ability to purchase a fixed number of commodities, we can see how wages might push prices higher and vice versa. Other factors push wages and prices higher, including the efforts by unions to stay ahead of the cost of living, and increases in the overall standard of living enabled by external debt.

To break out of that spiral means acting internationally, securing better wages for all workers up and down the supply chain. An alternative approach would involve pressuring western governments to impose price ceilings: a hard limit on the cost of living set in a fixed number of commodities. Theorists like Emmanuel singled out western unions as a major cause of unequal exchange, and it is certainly true that many cannot be relied upon, but it is not necessarily unions themselves so much as the underlying upward spiral of prices and wages. A world with fewer unions, even the most compromised ones, is nonetheless one in which workers wield less power, and have less potential energy to turn towards international organisation.

The global consequences of Unequal Exchange

The relationship between Natia and Tim is just one tiny part of the global problem of unequal exchange. The true scale of unequal exchange has only been explored relatively recently thanks to the work of Zak Cope, [in his book The Wealth of (Some) Nations](https://anticonquista.com/2019/06/29/revolutionary-reads-review-the-wealth-of-some-nations-by-zak-cope/), as well as [recent studies that have built upon his findings.](https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/YQ9Y8PIUAF5I2H2QGVEA/full?target=10.1080%2F13563467.2021.1899153&)

Much of Cope’s recent work is devoted to quantifying and exploring various forms of imperialist superprofits (or the Imperial Transfer of Value). In Cope’s analysis, unequal exchange is not the sole form of imperialist superprofits, but it does constitute a majority. By measuring wage differentials between core and peripheral countries, and comparing those wages to a midpoint (the global median wage), Cope was able to find the total value gained each year through unequal exchange: roughly 2.8 trillion dollars per year.

To put this in perspective, the value gained through unequal exchange is 53.8% of all superprofits flowing from the periphery to the core. It is also 31.5% of the core’s profits available for reinvestment (calculated as the core’s GDP multiplied by rate of savings), in other words, nearly a third of all profits in the core are purely the result of being able to sustain higher wages.

Decades ago, Samir Amin predicted that as the rate of profit fell in core industries, unequal exchange would slowly come to be the dominant source of profits for western capitalists, locking the periphery into a permanent state of dependency in order to prop-up the decayed husk of domestic industry in the core. In many of the world’s richest nations, that prediction is being borne out today.

Shifting the locus of value creation from the core to the periphery means that the core relies less and less on the unprofitable exploitation of its own workers. Instead, many core workers are increasingly being placed in menial office and managerial jobs which produce little to no real value. Such workers are ostensibly there to increase the value of other labourers’ work – so-called “reflexive” labourers – [but in practice this is economically impossible](https://www.peacelandbread.com/post/innovators-bullshitters-or-aristocrats-towards-an-explanation-of-unproductive-work?fbclid=IwAR1J4FhEInB8P_YvjM7eJY8zVVhfv3biGWC38NignYElTFVGli5bEg3eYeU), and many of these managers, administrators, and functionaries are simply paid consumers, shifting and manipulating various forms of debt, sitting at the heights of increasingly top-heavy finance and tech juggernauts.

As the core [systematically underdevelops itself](https://www.peacelandbread.com/post/how-the-west-is-underdeveloping-itself), taking away its own ability to autogenously produce value, the periphery stands at a crossroads. Many nations are now choosing to promote trade between peripheral partners, effectively disengaging from the predatory trade imperialism of the core. This too has dangers, in that it risks imperialist intervention, and some peripheral nations still side with the core out of fear of repercussions, out of a bribed ruling class, or out of a lack of alternatives.

Workers in the core are still able to organise against trade imperialism directy, even if such activism will always be opposed by sections of the labour aristocracy. Pushing for increased migrant quotas and rights is one proven way to mitigate global wage inequality, as remittances and competition tend to raise peripheral average wages. To return to our Pacific example, compare Samoa with the Cook Islands: both nations were colonised and dominated by New Zealand imperialism, but the Cooks have at least gained an average wage more comparable to the core, entirely thanks to the ability to migrate to a core nation.

Another step would be to encourage labour organisation across national boundaries. As we have seen, a narrow-minded focus on only improving the wages of core workers can actively harm peripheral workers by encouraging greater differences in wages. If the entire supply chain of an industry can be organised, not only would workers exercise greater control over their workplaces by influencing the factors of production, they would also be able to raise the lowest-paid workers up to a greater standard.

One of the greatest lessons we can draw from recent advances in unequal exchange theory is that business-as-usual activism can have unintended consequences. Do we fight to perpetuate labour aristocracy, wealth extraction, and the further stratification of our class? Or do we fight to bring about unity between workers of all nationalities, no matter their position in the hierarchies of industry and empire?

#### The idealization of competition and innovation is a product of technological fetishism that depends on hyperexploitation, imperialism, and material extraction.

Fuchs 16, Professor and Director of the Communication and Media Research Institute at the University of Westminster (Christian, “Digital Labor and Imperialism”, *Monthly Review*, Vol. 67, Iss. 8, retrieved from KU Libraries) strikethrough modifies gendered language

The International Division of Digital Labor

Global communications, in the form of the telegraph and international news agencies, already played a role in imperialism by the time of the First World War, helping to organize and coordinate trade, investment, accumulation, exploitation, and war. A hundred years later, qualitatively different means of information and communication such as supercomputers, the Internet, laptops, tablets, mobile phones, and social media have emerged. But just like the labor of workers in the periphery during earlier stages of imperialism, the production of information and information technology is part of an international division of labor, one that continues to shape modes of production, distribution, and consumption.

Critical scholars introduced the notion of the new international division of labor (NIDL) in the 1980s in order to stress that developing countries had become cheap sources of manufacturing labor and to track the rise of multinational corporations.25 In their book The Endless Crisis, John Bellamy Foster and Robert W. McChesney situate the rise of multinationals in capital's attempt to overcome long-term economic stagnation and attain global monopoly profits.26 Multinationals aim to drive down the wage share globally and increase their profits by installing a system of global competition among workers. The consequence is a worldwide increase in the rate of exploitation that Foster and McChesney, drawing on Stephen Hymer's work, call a "strategy of divide and rule."27

Table 1 shows comparative data for the world's 2,000 largest multinational corporations in the years 2004 and 2014. These companies' revenues accounted for more than 50% of worldwide GDP, showing that multinationals compete for monopoly status at the global level. In both years, almost three-quarters of the capital assets of these companies were located in the FIRE sector-finance, insurance, real estate-which confirms Foster and McChesney's assertion that we can accurately speak of a system of global monopoly-finance capitalism.28 However, these assets also include significant shares in mobility industries (transportation infrastructure, oil and gas, vehicles), manufacturing, and information (from telecommunications hardware, software, and semiconductors to advertising, the Internet, publishing, and broadcasting). All of this indicates that to varying degrees, global capitalism means not only monopoly-finance capitalism, but also monopoly-mobility capitalism, monopolyhyperindustrial capitalism, and monopoly-information capitalism.29

A significant change between 2004 and 2014 was the rise of Chinese multinationals, whose shares of assets, revenues, and profits dramatically increased. European and North American multinational corporations now no longer control around three-quarters, but instead two-thirds of global capital, which means that they nevertheless continue to be dominant. That Chinese multinationals play a more important role does not signify a fundamental break, but rather shows that China imitates Western-style capitalism, so that a "capitalism with Chinese characteristics" has emerged.

The N1DL is at the heart of the information and digital economy that produces information and communication technologies (ICT) and information itself. Various forms of physical work produce information technologies that are then used by workers in the media and cultural industries to create digital content, such as music, movies, data, statistics, multimedia, images, videos, animations, texts, and articles. Technology and content are thus dialectically interconnected, so that the information economy is at once physical and non-physical. The information economy is neither a superstructure nor immaterial, but rather a specific form of the organization of productive forces that cuts across the basesuperstructure divide.

Figure 1 shows a model of the major production processes that are involved in the international division of digital labor. Each production stage involves human subjects (S) using technologies of labor (T) on objects of labor (0), yielding a new product. The very foundation of global digital labor is the agricultural labor cycle by which miners extract minerals. These minerals then become the objects in the next production stage, as they are processed into ICT components, which in turn enter the next labor cycle as objects: assembly workers build digital media technologies using ICT components as inputs. The outcome of all this labor is these digital media technologies, which manage the production, distribution, circulation, and consumption of diverse types of information.

"Digital labor," therefore, does not only denote the production of digital content. It is a category that rather encompasses the whole mode of digital production, a network of agricultural, industrial and informational labor that enables the existence and use of digital media. The subjects (S) involved in the digital mode of production-miners, processors, assemblers, and information workers-stand in specific relations of production. So what is designated as S in figure 1 is actually a relationship, S,-S2, between different subjects or subject groups.

Today most of these digital relations of production are shaped by wage labor, slave labor, unpaid labor, precarious labor, and freelance labor, making the international division of digital labor a vast and complex network of interconnected, global processes of exploitation. These range from the Congolese slave miners who extract minerals for use in ICT components, superexploited wage-workers in Foxconn factories, and lowpaid software engineers in India to highly paid, highly stressed software engineers at Google and other Western corporations, precarious digital freelancers who create and disseminate culture, and e-waste workers who disassemble ICTs, exposing themselves to toxic materials.

Let us look at one example of digital labor. In 2015, according to the Fortune list of the largest transnational corporations, Apple was the world's twelfth largest company.30 Its profits grew from $37 billion in 2013 to $39.5 billion in 2014 and $44.5 billion in 2015.31 That year, iPhones accounted for 56 percent of Apple's net sales, iPads for 17 percent, Macs for 13 percent, and iHines, software, and other services for 10 percent.32 The Chinese labor involved in manufacturing an iPhone made up only 1.8 percent of the iPhone's price, while Apple's profits from iPhone sales were 58.5 percent, and Apple's suppliers, such as the Taiwanese company Foxconn, made a 14.3 percent profit.33 Thus the iPhone 6 Plus does not cost $299 because of labor costs, but rather because for each phone, Apple on average earns $175 in profits and Foxconn makes $43, while the workers assembling the phones in a Foxconn factory receive just $5. The high cost of iPhones and other products are a consequence of a high profit rate and a high rate of exploitation-direct results of the international division of digital labor. China is, as Foster and McChesney write, "the world assembly hub" in a system of "global labor arbitrage and... superexploitation."34

According to the 2015 Fortune Global 500 list, Foxconn is the third-largest corporate employer in the world, with more than a million workers, made up mostly of young migrant workers from the countryside.35 Foxconn assembles the iPad, iMac, iPhone, and the Amazon Kindle, as well as video game consoles by Sony, Nintendo, and Microsoft. When seventeen Foxconn workers tried to commit suicide between January and August 2010, and most of them succeeded, the issue of dismal working conditions in the Chinese ICT assembly industry began to attract wider attention. A number of academic studies have subsequently documented the everyday reality at Foxconn factories, where workers must endure low wages, long hours, and frequent work schedule disruptions: inadequate protective gear; overcrowded, prison-like accommodations: yellow unions managed by company officials and distrusted by workers; prohibitions on talking during work; beatings and harassment by security guards; and disgusting food.36

Yet Apple boasts in its Supplier Responsibility 2014 Progress Report that the company requires its "suppliers to achieve an average of 95 percent compliance with our maximum 60-hour work week."37 The International Labor Organization's Convention C030 on work hours recommends an upper limit of forty-eight hours per work week, and no more than eight hours a day. That Apple prides itself on enforcing a sixty-hour work week for labor in its supply chain shows that contemporary imperialism's international division of digital labor is not just exploitative, but also effectively racist: Apple assumes that for people in China, sixty hours is an appropriate standard.

Apple's 2014 report also claims that the company audited the working conditions of more than a million workers. However, these audits are not conducted independently, nor are their results reported independently. Since Apple doesn't rely on independent corporate watchdog organizations such as Students and Scholars against Corporate Misbehavior (SACOM), its reports must be considered inherently biased: workers being studied by their own employers will certainly not report their complaints, lest they lose their jobs.

As to the numerous labor-rights violations listed above, the report's style and language suggest that the failings of suppliers and local agencies are the problem: "Our suppliers are required to uphold the rigorous standards of Apple's Supplier Code of Conduct, and every year we raise the bar on what we expect....We audit all final assembly suppliers every year." The report could never acknowledge that such behavior is really driven by multinational corporations' own demand to produce cheaply and quickly. Apple's ideological strategy diverts attention from its own responsibility for the exploitation of Chinese workers.

Conclusion: Ideology and Resistance

Apple has marketed the iPhone 5 as being made "for the colorful" and the iPhone 6 as "bigger than big." Such slogans imply that the digital technological revolution has brought about a new and better society that benefits all. Similar ideological promises and claims can be found in the context of social media, cloud computing, big data, crowdsourcing, and related phenomena. Such assertions are forms of technological fetishism that assume that technology inherently fosters a good society without analyzing the social relations in which it is embedded. In technological fetishism, just as Marx wrote of classic commodity fetishism, the "definite social relation between ~~men~~ [people] themselves" assume "the fantastic form of a relation between things."38

Confronting the international division of digital labor with Lenin, Luxemburg and Bukharin's classical concepts of imperialism helps us to unmask this technological fetishism. The example of Apple shows that digital technology and the ideologies that frame it in advertising and politics are obscured by a fascination with the new that necessarily overlooks the continuities of global exploitation.

Apple achieves high profits in the international division of digital labor by outsourcing manufacturing labor to China, where the Western strategy of "exporting capital abroad" achieves high profits because wages are low and the rate of exploitation is high.39 The exploitation of workers at Foxconn, Pegatron and other companies shows that "'[s]weating blood and filth with every pore from head to toe' characterizes not only the birth of capital but also its progress in the world at every step."40 Through it all, Lenin's and Luxemburg's analyses remain as true in the twentyfirst century as they were a hundred years ago.

#### The World Computer superimposes a failed imagination of risk arbitrage onto society that will cause extinction.

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Finance, in a sense, represents capitalism’s form of partial but functional self-awareness. Of course, capitalism is not a living human being capable of self-awareness. Yet it is a system that, increasingly globally, is replete with autonomous feedback mechanisms, ways of knowing the world.

For Hayek (2007), perhaps the most brilliant 20th century capitalist theorist, free markets ideally represent a uniquely perfect knowledge systems. For Hayek, markets operate as price discovery mechanisms where competitive bidders collectively determine the true value of commodities, otherwise unknowable to any single actor. In this sense, markets are, writ large, as Beller (2021) suggests, a kind of world-encompassing meta-computer, constantly calculating (though a million independent, competitive bets) the world. In Martin’s (2015) reading of Hayek, capitalism with advanced financial markets is not only the fairest system, but also the truest. Though no individual can “know” the sublime market (and, indeed, failure to perfectly know the market is what, ironically, drives the differential behaviour of market actors of which the market is composed), the market has a kind of perfect, superhuman knowledge of the world.

In a similar but distinct fashion, and from the opposite side of the ideological spectrum from Hayek, Marxist geographer Harvey (2018) proposes that financial markets represent the central nervous system of capitalism. Financial markets, writ-large, take in market signals from around the world and, in response, send out prompts for investment and divestment, a process exacerbated and accelerated by recent advances in computing and telecommunications technology. Financial firms compete to study and evaluate firms, industries, sectors and whole nations, the better to speculate on their future fortunes and thereby determine where to advance or withdraw capital. I have suggested that, in contrast to the “central nervous system,” the metaphor of imagination may be more appropriate because it connotes the chaotic, conjectural and hallucinatory aspect of finance’s reckoning of the world (Haiven 2012). Approaching finance as capitals’ imagination also helps bring into focus the way that financial speculation relies on a multitude of acts of the individual human imagination, a position echoed by Beckert (2016) and Komporozos-Athanasiou (2021). My approach builds on Castoriadis’s (1997) framework which frames the imagination not as an individual quality of mind but as a material social force from which the institutions of social reality are crafted. In this sense describing finance as capital’s imagination seeks to identify the process by which it comes to understand and shape the world.

If finance represents capital’s means of self-reflexivity, then this imagination is constantly failing to accurately measure the meaningful value of things. It suffers from a debilitating and destructive solipsism, within which all worldly things are imagined exclusively in terms of risk, yield, and speculative profitability. It’s not simply that Financialized markets are constantly misvaluing stocks, bonds, derivatives, currencies and other assets; this is already part of the system: the failure of accurate measurement is key to many bedrock financial activities, like arbitrage. More importantly and damningly, financial market’s failure to properly imagine and value the world also jeopardizes human and environmental rights, communities and even the future of humanity itself. Functionally, it necessarily places the speculative concerns of a handful of major financial firms over material needs of millions, even billions of people. The financially-driven market’s imagination of the world is a fundamentally skewed one, but its power is such that, increasingly, the world is cut to measure its skewed imagination.

There is another, deeper failure of the imagination inherent to this situation. Financialization depends on most social actors, including notably those with political and economic power, internalizing finance’s imagination of the world and making it their own, the better to compete in a world financialization is creating. Frequently, major political and economic decisions are made based on a sense of inevitability, fatalism or a sense that no other options are possible, representing a profound failure of the imagination.

In sum, to identify finance as capital’s failed imagination of the world is to identify financialization’s reliance on the transformation of the human imagination, but also to contend with it as the means by which the system gains some measure of associative reflexivity. It’s not simply that how capital imagines the world is objectively wrong. That may be the case, but more dangerously still, its power is such that this mismeasured world in then instantiated in reality thanks to finance’s economic, political, social and cultural power.

#### Our political imperative is refusal. It’s try or die to reject capitalist logics. There are communist strategies – that’s certain – but the more relevant question is a study of capital’s encroachment and how we produce it.

Beller 21 (Jonathan Beller = Professor of Humanities and Media Studies and Critical and Visual Studies at Pratt Institute, “Introduction:  The Social Difference Engine and the World Computer,” in *The World Computer: Derivative Conditions of Racial Capitalism*, Duke University Press, pp. 183-189 BEH)

Given the sea change in the nature of **languages and images** themselves— their wholesale transposition and transformation from a means of **representation to a means of production**— the difficulty here is both with the substrate of communication (its bits) and with the us- versus- them perspective: we want to ban advertisers, but today we must also confront the disturbing possibility that we are them. Remember, “they” **program** “our” language and “our” imagination, “we” speak **“their” thought**— indeed, that is our work, or rather our labor. What to do with the fact that “we have seen the enemy and he is us?” One could say, one could want to say, “I don’t care who you are: if you live in the first world, if you live in the Global North, then fuck you! You ain’t no victim, even if you’re sick.” But who would be saying that? Probably some other Northerner, writing about how culture or the Venice Biennale, as if it were, could or should be more than a lavish spectacle of global suffering staged for a cosmopolitan elite. As capital’s nations, banks, armies, schools, languages, newspapers, and films did to its colonies and colonial subjects, the current **institutions from states to computer**- media companies do to “us”: they command us to make ourselves over **in capital’s image** for their own profit through networked strategies of **expropriation and dispossession**. “We” do it to ourselves, and our representations of **self and other are designed to sell** a version of ourselves back to ourselves so that we can perform further work on what is now the raw material for the next iteration of images. Therein lies our ontological lack, an ontological lack of solidarity and of even the possibility for solidarity. Therein lies the desire for and indeed necessity **to become a plantation manager** — the word is overseer. Though it is beyond the scope of this essay, this digital neocolonialism that practically commands global Northerners to in one way or another accept Nazism and genocide with their cappuccino could be understood as being on a continuum with the internal colonization of Europe by the German banks— which depends of course on the **distributed production of a kind of neoliberal “realism**” that Mark Fisher (2009) called “**capitalist realism,”** and was only ever a hair’s breadth away from fascism. This fact of our investment in and by advertising, the conversion of the sign to what I call the “advertisign,” poses a genuine problem for theory— indeed an unprecedented one. This problem is particularly evident considering the material conditions (class, nationality, education, race, language, et c.) of the participants in the would-be counterhegemonic theoretical discussions of culture and policy that presuppose the books, computers, schools, and institutions that sustain these. Those within the circuit of these discussions have already passed through a homogenization process which **programs them in compatible systems languages**. **Without submitting ourselves** and our own aspirations to radical critique, without conducting a Gramscian inventory of our ostensibly internal constitutions, we run the risk of merely trying to set up a **competing corporation** with a new business model. The revolution will not **be televised**; decolonization **will not be a brand.** Any would-be anticapitalist “we” runs this risk of coopting and cooptation from the get-go, particularly if it does not think about the materiality of **social production** from top to bottom: class, yes, but also race, nation, gender, sexuality, ability, geolocation, historical stratification. The world’s postmodern poor, the two billion– plus living on two dollars a day, also lab or to survive in the material landscape organized by the post- Fordist social factory its **anti- Blackness, its Islamophobia, its endless and mutating racism** and imperialism. However, from the standpoint of capital, **the role of those at the bottom is to serve as substrate** for image- production and semiosis; not only in factories, cottage- industries, subsistence farming, and informal economies, but also as starving Advertisarial Relationshordes; “irrational,” criminalized or surplused populations; subject- objects for policing, encampment, and bombing; desperate refugees; and even as voids in the idea of the world—as sites of social death. Forgive me, but I’d wager that no one capable of understanding these words can claim full exemption from the indictment they issue regarding structural complicity with the production and reproduction of everyday life. Humans **are troped (via discourse and the screen) to organize military production**, national policy, internment camps and prisons, bourgeois imaginations, museum shows, corporate strategy, and market projections. Let us clearly state here that **any program** that does not admit this excluded **planet into dialogues** **that vitiate** the **monologues imposed by capitalist** informatics and advertisigns is still floating in the realm of the ruling ideas **and therefore participant in murder.** These ruling ideas are the ones whose density and weight, whose material support and very machinery, threaten to further crush the late- capitalist poor out of not just representation but out of existence. This erasure and disposability, imposed by systems of informatic inscription designed to absorbe very output of sense, is the achievement of the advertisarial relations endemic to computational racial capitalism. When information is an advertisement for itself that presupposes the operating system of the world computer as virtual machine, **banning what we recognize as advertising on the internet, even if an excellent beginning,** is just not adequate to address these issues of representation, social justice, planetary and climate racism, and emancipation. To summarize: the forms of sociality which are the conditions of possibility for the online, informatically organized r elations— best characterized as advertisarial — run through e very sector and register of planetary life. The internet, while recognizable as an effect and a cause of the current form of **planetary production and reproduction**, cannot be considered in isolation as a **merely technical platform or set of platforms if its historical role is to be properly understood.** To take the internet as an autonomous technological force results in a species of platform **fetishism that disavows both the histories and material conditions** of its emergence, conditions that are, in short, those of screen culture and racial capitalism; this is to say that it, the internet, is the very means by which the capitalist suppression of global democracy (which is emphatically, economic democracy as well) has been accomplished and continues. If the internet is autonomous, it is because it expresses the autonomization of the value form. As noted previously, **with the hijacking of communications** and **semiotic infrastructures** by racial capitalism, the medium is the message and **the message is murder.** To ban advertising on the internet would be a good start— but what if the whole thing is advertising? **One reading of** what I have said thus far might suggest that, giv**en the expropriation of the cognitive- linguistic, our volition is overtaken by capital logic;** and given our inability to cogitate in any way that is genuinely resistant to capitalist expropriation, coercion, strictly speaking, **is no longer necessary to impose cooperation for capitalist production.** We “want” to cooperate productively, our desire— which, from the dispossession of even language and mind constitutes ourselves as subjects in the media ecology of the capital is t technical image, that is, in and through the organization of digital information—**is itself an iteration of capital, a script of becoming predestined to become capital**. The old language scored by the new image machines and their extractive algorithms locally organizes cooperative subjects who want to cooperate with vectoral capitalization. **We want to provide content in order to derive currency and survive.** Our solidarity on the internet produces more internet. Thus, in a certain way— and particularly since **we no longer properly have any thoughts of our own—we all collaborate in a world organized by images and screens, thereby participating more or less mindlessly in the seamless realization and triumphant apotheosis of the programming business.** However, I am sorry to have to report that the dystopian vision **here is not quite as bucolic as even this** already dreary picture of unwitting and irredeemable pulverization and servitude. While I do see that representation and semiotics have been increasingly flattened à la Orwell and Marcuse by a vast internalization of the apparatuses of oppression ( in which “**thought” is the** [productive] thought **of the [capitalist**] Party and “**repressive desublimation**” is an engine of capitalist- fascist **production)** the “old problems” like the hierarchy of class have not gone away; neither have racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and fascist nationalisms ceased playing their roles to create vectors of privilege for white male– identifying aspiration. Indeed, most thought today, such that it is, is all about maintaining hierarchical society. **The thinking runs thus**: capital is nature, capital is eternal, capital is information is nature. Or, in a more pedestrian mode: **human beings are naturally acquisitive and competitive**, economic growth and technological advancement mean progress, **this tech provides**, **or almost provides,** a color- , gender- , and religion- blind society, and so on— and one must advance one’s place in it by any (crypto- or not- s o- cryptofascist**) means necessary.** Of course, there exists better thinking out there. Mia Mingus: “As organizers, we need to think of access with an understanding of disability justice, moving away from an equality based model of sameness and ‘we are just like you’ to a model of disability that embraces difference, confronts privilege and challenges what is considered ‘normal’ on every front. We don ’t want to simply join the ranks of the privileged; we want to dismantle those ranks and the systems that maintain them” (Mingus 2011, cited in Puar 2017: 16). However, there is **broad- band, ambient programming that facilitates assuming neo- liberal** and full-on **fascist subjective sovereignty**. This programming seeks triumphant brushes with plenitude (communion with the big Other, as distinct from the racial or otherwise other, becomes the ego- ideal) , and this same programming is violent, competitive, hateful, mean- spirited, and alienating when embraced—at the same time that it is also cooperative, simpering, and abject. Servitude, even when automatic and mostly unconscious, is unhappy and, as we can see any day from the daily news, utterly pathological and sick. Of course, this diagnosis represents a huge generalization, but despite its broad-brushing lack of subtlety we may find that such a schizoid oscillation between entitled adjudicator and abject supplicant sums up the contours of your average reality televisions how or comments section on YouTube. It is Bateson’s (2000) and Deleuze and Guattari’s (1977) schizophrenic, caught in the double- bind, who has become the capitalist norm— the one who struggles to negotiate in the form of contradictory signals the aporias of hierarchical society, while reproducing it, and all the while experiencing their own psychic dissolution as an injunction to create. 3 With this schizoid capture in mind, let me then develop my question about the internet— “ What if it is all advertising?”—in the framework of post- Fordist production. The argument is that, in the context of virtuosity and the expropriation of the cognitive- linguistic by computational racial capital, sociality itself has become advertisarial, a ceaseless waging of capitalized exploits designed to garner attention and value for oneself and one’s capitalistic. This situation represents— indeed imposes— a derivative logic, a logic **in which every action** is a hedge, a kind of risk management devoted to maximize a return. In addition to the fractalization of fascism, in which agency is manifest as a profile that has aggregated the attention of others, advertising has worked its way into the sign itself, into the image, and into data visualization, and it has generated the advertising . All signs become points of potential cathexis, derivative positions on the underlier that is social currency and ultimately value. This new type of sign is not simply the brand but also an element of vectoral language (Wark 2007): functionalized words in a production channel, engaging in the micromanagement of desire, the production of new needs, and the capturing of the imagination, all in order to induce linguistic and behavioral shifts in the attention of others while aggregating their attention for oneself— t urning their heads with an interface. This combination of the manipulation of market conditions (that is, everyday life) through techniques of risk management is no longer merely the province of advertising but of so- called tuman interactivity 188 Chapter 4(what was once just communication and before that culture), now become adversarial through and through. From Smythe’s claim in the “Blindspot” essay (1977) that all leisure time has become lab or time, to Virno’s (2004) notion of virtuosity, we have seen aspects of this model for the capitalist overdetermination of apparently unremunerated time before. However, here— with the financialization of expression—we clearly grasp that the financialization of everyday life means also the convergence of semiotics and financial derivatives. Given the thoroughgoing intensification of vectoral, and in fact matrixial, signs, we need to investigate its implications in the context of a discussion of radical media practice. I will make two additional points here before shifting gears and turning at the end of this chapter to what I identify as an aesthetics of survival—an aesthetics that emerges from within the matrix of adversarial, schizoid capture. The final chapter of this volume will endeavor to extend aspects of such socio aesthetic forms, those resistant to computational racial capitalism, to new notions of radical finance and the possibility of platform communism. If, as was already becoming true in the cinematic mode of production, the dominant means of representation have become the dominant means of production, the questions of and models for political agency are radically transformed, and the urgent need to decolonize communication and decolonize finance presents itself. Future communication will require a cybernetic approach, and, as wes hall argue, this cybernetic approach will necessarily be financial, though it will be reaching toward a different order and different mode of production. Like communism, because it will need to be communist, it will see economic transformation of the material relations of production and reproduction as essential to the revolution. It will draw on the repressed and extracted cognitive- linguistic resource of the racialized and other wise marginalized and configure ways to make our voices matter both as meaning and as tools for the reorginzation of the material world and the social relations therein prescribed. Language and images are neither inside nor outside; they are part of the general intellect— currently they are at once media of thought and of capital. We also know that languages and images are not isolable, meaning that they are not and have never been stand- alone entities but rather exist in relation to their media, their platforms, which are again inseparable from society and its institutions. Furthermore, each platform relates to another platform. Paraphrasing McLuhan, we could even say that the “content” of a media platform is another platform. Thusly the general intellect is inseparable from its media platforms and their financials. We see that the general intellect, once largely held in common, is increasingly being privatized; the very media of our thought belong to someone else . This expropriation of the media commons is precisely the precondition of the real subsumption of society 189 Advertisarial Relationsby capital. It is an extension of the ongoing expropriation begun by primitive accumulation and money as capital, and it has been accomplished through the financialization of media as platforms of extraction. The ramification of mediation by computation and information has resulted in its convergence into formats offering derivative exposure to underliers that are the expressive vitality and futurity of our communication. We therefore no longer have any organic relation to the materials for thought itself (sincerity has become a myth, at least in the medium- term of most circles)— t he words, images, and machines we require to think, to express ourselves, to interact, and to know have been ripped from the species and privatized via the longue durée of dissymmetrical exchange. We work on the words and images, but as numbers they belong to someone else. The media themselves have become forms of capital— forms of racial capital— and our usage of these media means that we work to add value that valorizes capital, for the capitalist and within a relation designed as much as possible to guarantee that our creative acts necessarily occur as dissymmetrical exchange with capital. I write this book in a discourse that does not just not belong to me because it is shared, but in a discourse that is increasingly the property of a set of institutions— publishers, journals, universities— that all have their eye on the bottom line. The means by which we most intimately know the world, ourselves, and our desires (our images and words) are themselves vectors of capitalization intent upon converting our very life- process into surplus value (which is to say value for capital). We need strategies that will seize the means of production and create a reverse subsumption of affect, intellect**, knowledge**, **capability, communication, and community.** When all media have converged as economic media, it is **economic media that must be re- engineered**. When all media have converged as economic media, it is economic media that must be re- engineered. Again, I think this subsumption of cognitive and affective capacity, the quasi-automating (scripting) of productive labor for capital, is what Stiegler means by the proletarianization of the nervous system—which would include the proletarianization of the pathways of feeling and thought. Our affective capacities are put to alienated and alienating work in the social factory, and their product too is alienated, producing ever-intensifying and ever-accumulating dispossession and disempowerment as the dialectical antithesis of its simultaneous production of unprecedented wealth and power for the cyborg avatars of the great media conglomerates. Intellect and emotional intelligence, the product of thousands of years of species- becoming, is being strip-mined so that extraction machines may continue their furious innovation to further discount people. I write this book aware of the pressure to think it just right, to at once extend thinking in order to command attention and produce new needs, but also to delimit it, to control myself, and to put the reins on whatever counterpower may rage within my body, because academia can tolerate only so much “bullshit” and no more. Yes sir, I’ll be careful not to cross that line, but a word to the woke: the bullshit is the best part. From a historical perspective, this encroachment on the means of representation—that Banksy and I and a billion others join the silenced majority in opposing—indicates that the individual subjective agent, itself a platform for sociality that developed with the rise of capitalism (as the subject who relates to other subjects in the market, the bearer of the commodity and thus its thought), is nearly **defunct.** As has been noted previously, in a world where life processes are stripped, ripped apart, rebundled, and sold as derivative exposures, the individual subject is an outmoded technology despite the fact that it still appears as a skeuomorph in certain updated technosocial apparatuses—like the latest forms of films, games, influencers, and versions of national politics that proffer invitations to momentary individualistic identification for the dividual purpose of providing a sense of familiarity and orientation. While palliative for some in small doses, such individuality is no longer a viable (which is to say, sustainable) fantasy. The real thought is that of the infrastructure, of the AI that codes our meat and scripts our sheets. Sure I take up the mantle for a few moments each day to appear as the agent of this text, suiting up as the operator of an intellect that might be adequate to the informatic shit-storm of racist, capitalist, imperialist, patriarchal, for-profit assaults, but then I drop off into an ocean of petty concerns, food shopping, and home repairs. And even when I say “I,” to perform as the nexus of all this insight, I also know that it’s hardly me talking. I’m just curating at the gates of shit that needs to be said, and hopefully titrating to let the right stuff through. That’s part of my politics though Dog knows that I could create a more lucrative named-professor type profile with just a little more discipline, a bit more self-interested adherence to the protocols of the academy’s factory code. Instead, there is the effort to overturn, to be or at least to live something beyond being the scribe of the world computer, to at once witness the drama of the emergence of the intelligence of commodification, testify to its outrage, and intimate the possibility of its overthrow. Such would be the art of this text, practiced at the limits of disciplinarity and of subjectivity, guaranteed by nothing and no one. The expiration of the subject form, imminent since the subject’s first intimation of mortality—and made structurally mandatory by Freud and especially, with the full-blown rise of the sign at the moment of it radical marginalization by visuality, by Lacan—is not necessarily a cause for lament, despite the increasingly intense fading of its incalculable beauty, its sad reduction to cliché. From a political perspective, it means that within each concrete individual body the presumed continuity of the individual is riddled with contradictory and indeed unassimilable indicators; it means also that there exists in differing quantities and qualities capitalist and noncapitalist striations or sectors. Hallways of emptiness, but also hallways of love. Like bundled assets, the mind-body is tranched by executable logics organized by a calculus of risk available to investors. There are, to be a bit simplistic, **aspects of desire that are** programmed (indeed farmed) to produce practices that function in perfect accord with capitalist accumulation strategies (individualizing or schizoid) and aspects of **desire that are atavistic or collectivist**, utopian, communist, or maybe even just plain lonely, and, in short, subprime. In reality, of course, desire is more singular than even such formalizations might indicate. Insert your favorite snippet of poetry here. Hortense Spillers in “All the Things You Could Be by Now If Sigmund Freud’s Wife Was Your Mother” (1997) invokes “the Dozens” and the music of and like that of Charles Mingus (152–3), to make present an “interior intersubjectivity”(140) testifying to the rich unaudited psychic life of what might today be called Blackness. There are vast resources beyond the easy resolution of hegemonic hermeneutics whether deployed by institutionally validated psychoanalysis or compressed by current systems of informatic extraction. In agreeing with Freud that consciousness makes up a small part of mental life when compared to the preconscious, the unconscious, dreams, and so on, but in rejecting the normative assumptions and disavowals (including his own Jewishness) that situate Freud and the psychoanalytic discourse that will become part of European and U.S. bourgeois society, Spillers recognizes a vast store of mental life and the possibility of listening anew. However, when speaking of politics now, we therefore necessarily speak of the abstract forms available for the conceptualization and deployment of concrete emergences whether referring to haecceities that are innumerable or collective forms of existence and psychic life actively mediating between “the one” and “the ‘masses’ ” (141). Let us listen anew. Acknowledging that we ultimately and if possible immediately want to “marry our thought” (Wynter 1994b: 65) to the wealth of subaltern forms of life and the care of the bios, allow me then to put the situation of the post- Fordist subject thusly: in Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, Lenin (1939) showed how imperialist dividends complicated class issues in England, since many people, otherwise part of the working class, got a share of the dividends of imperialism by clipping the coupons of their investments in racist, exploitative British enterprises across the globe. Today this race-based class fractionalization is fully internalized in the Global North; on our iPads built by Chinese slaves from blood metals extracted from the Congo, we may momentarily feel like biomorphically unmarked nobles in the global cosmopolis; while on the job market or when simply seen in our raced and gendered embodiments, we are abjects. Materially and intellectually we are nodal points on a global network. The signal oscillates between narcissistic megalomania and utter abjection and can be affected by a billion parameters taking us from melancholia to outrage. **Thus, even the concrete individual is composed of class fractions, race fractions, gender fractions.** In the form of signs, we clip coupons that validate our investments. The language of object-identification, we observe here, cannot really keep up with the fluctuations resulting from the throughput of code as we work to identify and disidentify our agency. Can we audit a different mode of emergence, a different futurity than one inexorably overcoded by capital? Of course this is still somewhat simplistic and also class-specific, as many (billions even) never get to participate as an enfranchised global citizen in any aspect or moment of life, even if the lived experience of these same billions is radically overdetermined by the class(es) from which they are excluded.4 The gilded poverty of the enfranchised, as opposed to the mere poverty of the rest, is now a measure of connectivity. A more complete view is that we are the product of the world system and thus everything we are has been produced vis-à-vis globalization, and therefore everything bears the trace of the system in its entirety (again, in varying proportions). This conceptualization of concrete individuals (bodies) as global communitarian products forced to varying degrees into templates of individualized risk by capitalist states, is not to erase class; however, it suggests that, just as Fanon saw the great European metropoles as the product of third world labor, we are all products of the worst conditions prevailing in the Global South and around the planet. Global inequality is internal to **our being**. It is us. How then does one (such a one who is relatively enfranchised by the derivative language of texts such as this one) inventory those relations and produce them as formations of solidarity rather than as disavowed residuum? Is there another data-sphere, a communist one? Can we build communist interfaces, networks, **and finance?** How would **we register,** track, amplify, and render actionable the communitarian affinities, **solidarities, obligations, and debts**, the resources in the wake of too many genocides to count, that in actual practice **underpin the official economy,** collective life, and whatever authentic hope is left to our species? Perhaps we have arrived at a question worthy of theory: Is there, could there be communist algorithms? Communist derivatives? Derivative communism? We are looking for that path. To add to my point about the shifting, distributed character of political actors—that goes so far as to suggest that we can no longer think only of actors but rather must think of vectors and fields in addition to thinking of the resources developed in cultures of survival—I will make a second observation. **A political intervention** in the advertisarial relations that have this planet heading toward environmental doomsday requires not only revolutionary policy but revolutionary culture. (I defer further discussion of a third requirement, revolutionary finance, to the final chapter.) This culture must take into account that, for many on this planet, Armageddon is not the future but an **ongoing constant**. My call here (which should not be entirely unfamiliar, as it gives petit bourgeois intellectuals something important to do) is to (re)politicize semiotic and affective structures and practices, including and perhaps especially those we might control, for example our own utterances—our expression. Of course, to call them “our own” seems to contradict what I’ve said about the expropriation of the cognitive- linguistic and the intensification of aphanisis by visual, verbal, and digital media derivatives, but it is here precisely that we confront one of the significant material contradictions of our time: who or what speaks in us? This question, which I shorthand using the phrase the politics of the utterance and which you can experience palpably right now (as you endeavor to think), seems to me to insist that **our idea-making** must actively produce its solidarity with the dispossessed. We must struggle for the **radical constellation.** The question concerning the politics of the utterance, asked here in a strange passage of this text through a beyond-academic terrain, a moonless forest the traversal of which may or may not at this point lead us back to the plot, also raises the question of becoming, as well as the questions of agency and of action within the capitalist image— programmable images, racializing and racist images that, in the terms we have set out, are functionally omnipresent. Continuous media throughput has generated a capitalist imaginary structuring both language function and imaging processes, coordinated at scales and by calculative logics that exceed individual comprehension. Though the occasion is upon us, **we must struggle for space and time to think. We must** open a spread on which to bet against the dominant order. We glimpse, and we feel, that to insist upon the unremitting relevance of both culture-making and of cross-cultural transnational solidarity helps **to avoid platform fetishism** because it sees the internet and its machines not as a set or collection of autonomous technologies but as a historically emergent system of value-expropriative communication and organization, built directly upon older but nonetheless contemporaneous forms of inequality, including but not limited to historically emergent techniques of gendering, racialization, and imperialism, and embedded in the living flesh of the world. All of this calculative interconnectivity and networked agency implies, contradictorily, in fact, that the internet is not all advertising—but neither is advertising all advertising. It is also murder and struggle. Banksy knows that. The advertisarial relation is the programmatic relation encrypted in the apparatuses of capital: the war of each against all, taken all the way from finance, computation, and surveillance to the speech act and the imagination in accord with the autopoietic algorithm of the distributed Leviathan. Marx himself saw capitalism as vampiric, and today’s processes of **capitalization are even more totalitarian**, more widely distributed, and more blood-, life-, and indeed soul-sucking than even in prior eras—though such comparisons **don’t do those killed by past iterations of capitalism any good.** Despite the disavowals to the contrary, we recognize that capital needs labor, needs metabolic time more desperately and more voraciously than ever before (what else is biopolitics?) and, furthermore, that it wages war on life-time on all fronts, in order to secure labor power, its product and basis, at a discount. The pyramids of inequality become internal fractals, and even as the base broadens, the tip with the all-seeing eye (that is not a subject) ascends ever higher. **We do not** yet **know what can be destroyed** or indeed built with the massive appropriation of Banksy’s rocks, but we do know that at present **there is** total war against our using them to build anticapitalist, nonhierarchical, horizontal, solidary sociality. The refusal or détournement **of capital’s encroachment** **is** itself a creative act. Perhaps we have only **begun to glimpse what** a total **refusal might achieve.**

## 1NC — Resources

### 1NC — AT: Minerals Advantage

#### Their internal link makes zero sense — there is no link to export cartels in the US and mineral control in other countries — the plan doesn’t increase enforcement against international cartels —

### 1NC — AT: Impacts

#### India-Pakistan won’t escalate---empirics.

Ganguly 19, Distinguished Professor of Political Science and Rabindranath Tagore Chair in Indian Cultures and Civilizations at Indiana University, Bloomington. (Sumit, 3-5-2019, "Why the India-Pakistan Crisis Isn’t Likely to Turn Nuclear", *Foreign Affairs*, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/india/2019-03-05/why-india-pakistan-crisis-isnt-likely-turn-nuclear)

THE LESSONS OF HISTORY

No one can say for sure, but history suggests that there is cause for optimism. During the Kargil War, India worked to contain the fighting to the regions around Pakistan’s original incursions and the war concluded with no real threat of nuclear escalation.

Less than two years later, the two countries plunged into crisis once again. In December 2001, five terrorists from the Pakistan-based groups Lashkar-e-Tabia and Jaish-e-Mohammed attacked the parliament building in New Delhi with AK-47s, grenades, and homemade bombs, killing eight security guards and a gardener. In response, India launched a mass military mobilization designed to induce Pakistan to crack down on terrorist groups. As Indian troops deployed to the border, terrorists from Pakistan struck again. In May 2002, three men killed 34 people in the residential area of an Indian army camp in Kaluchak, in Jammu and Kashmir. Tensions spiked. India seemed poised to unleash a military assault on Pakistan. Several embassies in New Delhi and Islamabad withdrew their nonessential personnel and issued travel advisories. The standoff lasted for several months, but dissipated when it became apparent that India lacked viable military options and that the long mobilization was taking a toll on the Indian military’s men and materiel. The United States also helped ease tensions by urging both sides to start talking. India claimed victory, but it was a Pyrrhic one, as Pakistan failed to sever its ties with a range of terrorist organizations.

Other nuclear states have also clashed without resorting to nuclear weapons. In 1969, China, then an incipient nuclear weapons state, and the Soviet Union, a full-fledged nuclear power, came to blows over islands in the Ussuri River, which runs along the border between the two countries. Several hundred Chinese and Soviet soldiers died in the confrontation. Making matters worse, Chinese leader Mao Zedong had a tendency to run risks and dismissed the significance of nuclear weapons, reportedly telling Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru that even if half of mankind died in a nuclear war, the other half would survive and imperialism would have been razed to the ground. Yet despite Mao’s views, the crisis ended without going nuclear, thanks in part to the efforts of Soviet Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin, who took the first step by travelling to Beijing for talks.

There’s reason to believe that the current situation is similar. Pakistan’s overweening military establishment undoubtedly harbors an extreme view of India and determines Pakistan’s policy toward its neighbor. The military, however, is not irrational. In India, although Prime Minister Narendra Modi has a jingoistic disposition, he, too, understands the risks of escalation, and he has a firm grip on the Indian military.

Another source of optimism comes from what political scientists call the “nuclear revolution,” the idea that the invention of nuclear weapons fundamentally changed the nature of war. Many strategists argue that nuclear weapons’ destructive power is so great that states understand the awful consequences that would result from using them—and avoid doing so at all costs. Indian and Pakistani strategists are no different from their counterparts elsewhere. Even Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, a political neophyte, underscored the dangers of nuclear weapons in his speech addressing the crisis last week. And Modi, for all his chauvinism, has scrupulously avoided referring to India’s nuclear capabilities.

The decision by India and Pakistan to allow their jets to cross the border represents a major break with the past. Yet so far both countries have taken only limited action. Their principal aim, it appears, is what the political scientist Murray Edelman once referred to as “dramaturgy”—theatrical gestures designed to please domestic audiences. Now that both sides have gone through the motions, neither is likely to escalate any further. Peering into the nuclear abyss concentrates the mind remarkably.

## 1NC — Modelling

### 1NC — Turn — EU Alignment

#### We will concede the front level link to the advantage — other countries are modeling the EU now and the aff makes them shift to modelling the US by removing backlash against the US — we are straight turning this advantage —

#### ASEAN alignment with the EU is happening now and is key to being perceived as an honest broker, which is the only way to prevent US-China war

Bitas 3/16/22, former Associate Professor of Law at the Singapore Management University, where he taught Comparative Legal Systems, the Economic Analysis of Law, and Business Ethics and Social Responsibility. (Basil, 3/16/22, The EU answer to great power competition, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2022/03/16/the-eu-answer-to-great-power-competition/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=the-eu-answer-to-great-power-competition>)

ASEAN has emerged as an astute regional player and potential beneficiary of great power development initiatives, with its interests aligning with the European Union on the creation of a stable, open and neutral space. Accordingly there is scope for ASEAN and the EU to pool their strengths in a constructive manner. The BRI and the US Indo-Pacific strategy are dual-use initiatives, encompassing both economic development and geostrategic dimensions. In a crowded Indo-Pacific theatre, how will Europe’s soft power earn it a seat at the table as an honest broker? The current great power infrastructure competition has been framed as one of disparate values and approaches. Section 1411 of the BUILD Act specifically aims to ‘provide countries a robust alternative to state-directed investments by authoritarian governments’. The text does not take account of ongoing Chinese efforts to promote greater transparency, financial viability and sustainability in the planning and execution of BRI projects. With the BRI, the BUILD Act and the Global Gateway in play, the current task is to harness their unique attributes to promote regional development while mitigating the underlying ideological frictions. To cement its position as a moderating force amid China–US rivalry, the European Union’s obvious partner is ASEAN, which is also seen in many quarters as an honest broker whose development goals dovetail with those of the EU. The two groupings also have complementary experiences and approaches to integration and security. The EU supra-national model has used law as the primary lever for promoting integration. ASEAN’s state-centric approach has focused on consensus to promote a more organic form of economic integration even as it displays increasing recourse to normative, rules-based instruments. The EU brings years of managing great power politics, participating in a balance of power that has promoted stability in Europe and opened the way to explosive economic growth. ASEAN brings essential local knowledge in managing disparate cultural dimensions and latent border disputes to promote a stable regional identity. Despite disparate perceptions of national interest among certain member states in response to escalating China–US competition, ASEAN continues to pursue its overriding organisational goals of regional ‘centrality’ and balanced economic development. The possibility of a type of ‘stability compact’ — building on the EU–ASEAN Strategic Partnership of 2020 — exists. Such an understanding would entail the pursuit of openness, development and modernity. But it must be supported by a meaningful financial contribution from the EU that goes beyond existing foreign direct investment and official development assistance commitments. The EU will have to assess whether its initial Global Gateway sum of US$343 million will be sufficient to transform noble aspirations into concrete realisation. The Global Gateway offers a framework for deploying resources in a focused manner, giving the EU a unitary development identity in the Indo-Pacific. The Global Gateway could become somewhat analogous to the BRI by providing a ‘branded’ umbrella for EU infrastructure projects in the region. Specifically, EU expertise in environmental and sustainability issues could form the basis of a ‘green’ partnership consistent with both regional development goals and the general aims of the European Fund for Sustainable Development. The melding of the EU’s external resources and ASEAN’s regional knowledge presents a salutary, cooperative paradigm to a region fraught with great power competition. European soft power hardened with financial resources and targeted expertise — and buttressed by an operational partnership with ASEAN — defines a forward-looking vision for managing regional development amid strategic competition.

#### BUT ASEAN modelling of the US would scare China — increased fear of US cultural influence in the region makes them perceive US encirclement

Henrick 22, Associate Research Fellow at the Regional Security Architecture Programme at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), (Tsjeng, originally published 11/5/21 but Updated 1/10/22, IP21013 | China’s Vision for Southeast Asia: The Struggle to Create a “Friendly Backyard”, https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/idss/ip21013-chinas-vision-for-southeast-asia-the-struggle-to-create-a-friendly-backyard/#.YjLkKnrMI2w)

Yet another key target of China’s vision is regional US military, economic and socio-cultural influence. The United States’ view of China’s vision as antithetical to the international order, and its suspicions that Beijing seeks to supplant its dominant role, have fuelled US actions to counter any increase in Chinese influence. As such, Chinese actions in Southeast Asia are also aimed at reducing US influence in the region, so that Southeast Asian states, or even ASEAN itself, will never be used by the United States or other hostile external powers to counter China’s regional influence. Most importantly, the number of multilateral partnerships which, from the point of view of Beijing are targeted against a rising China, is steadily growing. Frameworks like the Indo-Pacific concept and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad) have only heightened China’s fears of encirclement by hostile external powers. The most recent is the newly minted Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) defence pact, which China has denounced. ASEAN’s Divided Response A key issue, however, is how ASEAN responds. ASEAN countries do not have a coherent, let alone unified, stance about how to address mounting Chinese influence in a comprehensive and strategic manner. ASEAN countries generally welcome Chinese economic ties, which have proven beneficial for their economic development. In particular, Laos and Cambodia, both recipients of large amounts of Chinese investment and financial aid, have progressively moved closer to Beijing as its influence on their economies has increased. However, not every ASEAN member state is fully on board with burgeoning Chinese influence in their respective countries. Other ASEAN countries, notably Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaysia, have territorial spats with China over the South China Sea, with incidents in disputed areas causing tensions to flare up. Additionally, China’s own reclamation of maritime features into military bases within its claimed waters in the “nine-dash line”, as well as its refusal to accept the rulings of the Permanent Court of Arbitration that declared its claims in the South China Sea invalid, have undermined China’s efforts to reassure Southeast Asian nations, particularly South China Sea claimants, of China’s peaceful intentions. ASEAN countries are also divided on how to deal with the wider China-United States rivalry. This is best encapsulated by the divergent responses of ASEAN countries towards AUKUS. While Malaysia and Indonesia have raised concerns about the dangers of an arms race, Singapore, Vietnam and the Philippines have been generally more accommodating of the agreement. China’s Strategy: Keep ASEAN Divided A divided ASEAN may not necessarily best serve Chinese interests, even if it is to ASEAN’s detriment. Certain ASEAN countries still prefer that the United States maintain its military presence in Southeast Asia, or seek to balance their relations between Washington and Beijing. This means, from Beijing’s perspective, that a part of Southeast Asia could potentially still be used by the United States to counter China’s regional influence. China’s vision of a “friendly backyard” free of US influence would simply be impossible in the short to medium term. A divided ASEAN, however, could help China by ensuring that ASEAN would never be able to form a cohesive bloc that acts against Beijing’s interests in the region. Rather than turning the whole of ASEAN into its “friendly backyard”, China has been ensuring that ASEAN remains divided, and sowing more divisions whenever it can. Beijing has done this by focusing on improving its relations with countries that are relatively more dependent on Chinese economic clout, while behaving assertively and even coercively whenever any state performs actions deemed to be detrimental to Chinese interests. The combination of both approaches is most evident in Malaysia, where Chinese economic largesse has resulted in Putrajaya being relatively more muted on the South China Sea issue except more recently, precisely due to assertive Chinese actions in Malaysia’s claimed exclusive economic zone off the coast of Sarawak and Sabah.

#### That triggers miscalculation

Wirth 14, a research fellow at Australia’s Griffith University Asia Institute,. (Christian interviewed by Anthony Fensom, Analyst: China’s Encirclement Could Spark War, <https://thediplomat.com/2014/10/analyst-chinas-encirclement-could-spark-war/>)

Containment as it happened during the Cold War was different to what we’re seeing now – there’s no real or de facto containment, but that doesn’t really matter. What matters is the Chinese view on the current security environment. When leading think tank experts tell you: “Look there’s fires all around us, what are we supposed to do?”, then, that is not a good sign. I think that’s the real danger – when you have the leadership of a country feeling encircled, isolated, that’s where rationality calculations change. You will see more assertiveness, aggressiveness even. Leaders will be prone to miscalculations because they can’t see the overall situation.

## 1NC — Trade

### 1NC — AT: Trade Advantage

#### Their impacts our empirically false — the two acts they cite as the “death of free trade” were passed in 1918 and 1982 respectively — no recent timeframe card in the 1AC means that the exemptions existing for decades thumps any risk of an impact

#### Their link evidence is from 2015 and 2019 — that empirically denies their impacts because it is predicting the end of free trade from exemptions THEN

#### COVID puts them in a double bind — either it has irreparably thumped free trade, and disproves the impact

#### OR it proves trade can rebound from any hit, meaning there is zero risk of an impact

### 1NC — Turn — Antidumping

#### Their Papa evidence concedes a major solvency deficit and turn to the aff — lobbyists will push for protectionist policies, and Europe proves that when export cartels empirically lose their antitrust exemption, they shift to antidumping law

1AC Papa 20 – (\*Pierre M. Horna and \*\*Leni Papa \*Legal Affairs Official UNCTAD, Senior Visiting Research Fellow @ Institute of European Comparative Law, Faculty of Law @ Oxford University; Ph.D. in international law, Graduate Institute Geneva; LLM in International Business Law, Leiden University \*\*Policy Research and Advice @ OECD, consultant on competition policy for numerous government and private institutions; published 2020, Research Handbook on Methods and Models of Competition Law, pp. 493-4, “Export cartels in times of populist protectionism: challenges and options for young and small competition agencies,”) ISBN: 978 1 78536 864 6

Populist protectionist rhetoric is increasingly being heard around the globe. The US President, Donald J Trump, blames globalization for the loss of jobs and rising economic insecurity in the US.21 It was no surprise that in January 2017, the US issued a formal notice formally withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership discussions.22 In March 2017, his administration released a Trade Policy Agenda premised on the American people’s supposed frustration with the old trade policies of the US government, and their failure to see clear benefits from international trade agreements. The Agenda espoused a new approach of expanding trade ‘in a way that is freer and fairer for all Americans’,23 which includes the use of ‘all possible sources of leverage to encourage other countries to open their markets to U.S. exports of goods and services’, negotiating better trade deals, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and withdrawing from the same if such renegotiations were unsuccessful.24 In the US–China Summit held in April 2017, then US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson emphasized that the ‘chief goal of [US] trade policies is the prosperity of the American worker. To that end, [the US] will pursue economic engagement with China that prioritizes the economic well-being of the American people’.25 Populist protectionism has likewise been blamed for the UK’s withdrawal from the EU.26 Consequently, the UK’s 2018 trade policy indicated ‘widespread concern about the benefits of free trade and how evenly these are spread across the whole of the UK’.27 The World Bank warned that even isolated protectionist policies by large economies could be met with retaliatory responses and result in ‘wide-ranging negative effects’ for the rest of the world.28 Bouët and Laborde expressed the same concern about the global tariff wars that will arise from protectionist measures, predicting prejudice to all countries and to the world economy in general.29 Despite the general agreement about the damage caused by trade restrictions, the pressure for more ‘protectionist’ policies persists. Fouda explains: Those who gain from ‘protectionist’ laws are special-interest groups, such as some big corporations, unions, and farmers’ groups … all of whom would like to get away with charging higher prices and getting higher wages than they could expect in a free marketplace. These special interests have the money and political clout for influencing politicians to pass laws favorable to them. Politicians in turn play on the fears of uninformed voters to rally support for these laws.30 Cartelists also may be the ones pushing for or benefiting from the populist protectionist measures. Messerlin, for example, studied the interaction between anti-dumping measures and the formation of cartels in the polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and low-density polyethylene (LdPE) industries of the European Community in the early 1980s.31 Evidence from the cartel investigations revealed that sometime in the middle of 1980, major firms producing LdPE and PVC in Western Europe (Western Europe producers) formed a cartel which agreed on market sharing and price practices in the European Community. These firms were facing competition from chemical products coming from Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary and Romania (EEP). In an attempt to address the competition, the Western Europe producers asked the European Commission for an exemption from competition rules

on the basis of a crisis cartel,32 arguing that there was an overcapacity of LdPE production in Western Europe. When this effort failed, the Western Europe producers turned to anti-dumping actions against the EEP.33 Messerlin found that the anti-dumping actions were a way to enforce the cartel strategy and give members oxygen to survive. Following the imposition of anti-dumping measures, imports from EEP declined while prices of the products rose. Messerlin concluded that the relief from foreign competition that anti-dumping laws provided helped entrench the Western Europe cartel. The firms involved in the Western Europe cartel ‘obtained large net benefits from anti-dumping measures’, outweighing the heavy fines imposed by the anti-cartel office.34 The latter example is of fundamental importance in understanding the link between trade and competition policies and in showing how these policies need to be coordinated.35 Indeed, that was the basis for the formation of the former WTO Working Group on Trade and Competition in 1996 after the WTO Singapore Ministerial Conference, which was disactivated by July 2004.36 One of the obstacles that the Competition Policy faced at the WTO negotiations was precisely that the WTO Dispute Settlement Understanding was made to be triggered by member states (governments) and not private actors. In the case study provided by Messerlin above, the Western Europe producers hijacked the procedure for anti-dumping duties that was intended to be available to governments. In addition, a WTO platform could not be an appropriate forum for an international competition law regime because of the inherent conflict between national competition legislation and international trade principles.37 This is the case for export cartels being a national trade measure exercised nationally, which could be lawful under WTO rules but in the end may facilitate collusion or any other anticompetitive behaviour in the markets.38

#### Shifting to anti-dumping means they consistently win cases with the ITC

Cho 9, IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law. (Sungjoon, Anticompetitive Trade Remedies: How Antidumping Measures Obstruct Market Competition, 87 N.C. L. Rev. 357 (2009). https://scholarship.kentlaw.iit.edu/fac\_schol/734)

In sum, an antidumping regime is a legalistic reincarnation of protectionism. It stigmatizes otherwise legitimate business practices under the label of "unfair trade," and, based on such label, it imposes penalties resembling the remedies available for the torts of deceptive conduct or patent violations.127 Fair trade rhetoric serves as a facade of legitimacy, which conceals the protectionist nature of antidumping duties.'28 Once a group of domestic producers feel threatened by cheap foreign imports, they accuse foreign producers of dumping, and the ITC, in approximately eighty percent of all cases, issues an affirmative preliminary ruling that dumped imports have caused or threaten to cause injury to the petitioner.129

#### That turns the aff — the shift to antidumping is a net worse form of protectionism

Nagaoka 2k, Professor of economics at Tokyo Keizai University, (Sadao, International Trade Aspects of Competition Policy, https://www.nber.org/system/files/chapters/c8477/c8477.pdf)

It is important to note that the abolition of export cartels does not necessarily improve welfare, given the presence of contingent protection, to the extent that such cartels are used to prevent the use of contingent protection. In particular, antidumping measures can result in stronger restriction of trade

since the duties ordered are often prohibitively high. As shown by a recent U.S. International Trade Commission report (1995), antidumping measures often result in very large reductions in exports or in their complete abolition, so that the trade-restraining effect of such measures can be much larger than the monopolistic reduction of exports.’O Thus reform of antidumping measures is necessary to ensure that the international restriction of export cartels leads to welfare gains.

#### Independently, if their ban on cartels is modelled, it will devastate other countries ability to compete and enter global markets, which reduces free trade — turns the aff

Rodriguez 13, PhD dissertation Univ of Barsilia. (Eduardo, AS ISENÇÕES ANTITRUSTE A CARTÉIS DE EXPORTAÇÃO: PERSPECTIVAS DO OUTRO LADO DA FRONTEIRA , https://bdm.unb.br/bitstream/10483/6827/1/2013\_EduardoHenriqueKruelRodrigues.pdf)

“The real problem with a global ban on export cartels, whether achieved through international cooperation or through the harmonization of domestic laws, is that it ignores the unintended effects of such a policy. For many small firms, especially from countries that have historically been less involved in global markets, entry into global markets is an overwhelming challenge. Cooperation among firms that increases the number of participants in global markets makes competition more, not less, effective. Especially for smaller countries, where the alternative to a cooperative association is merger, elimination of cooperation as a legal possibility could lead to consolidation and the lessening of competition in the domestic market.” LEVENSTEIN, Margaret C.; SUSLOW, Valerie Y. The changing international status of export cartel exemptions. American University International Law Review, v.20, n. 4, p. 785–828, 2004, p. 813

### 1NC — AT: Impact

#### Trade doesn’t solve war.

White 13, Emeritus Professor of Strategic Studies at the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre of the Australian National University. (Hugh, “China: Power and Ambition,” *The China Choice: Why We Should Share Power*, pg. 51-53, Oxford University Press)

Certainly, the more countries trade and invest with one another, the greater the economic cost of conflict and the stronger the incentive to keep the peace. America and China today are more interdependent economically than any two comparably powerful states have ever been before, and this will certainly restrain ambition and rivalry on both sides. The question is whether the restraints will prove stronger than the pressures going the other way. If interdependence does trump strategic and political ambition, we should be seeing it happening between the United States and China now – but we have not seen much evidence of that yet. So far the two countries seem to be acting very much as strong states in the past have acted as relative power shifts from one to the other. Pessimists like John Mearsheimer and Niall Ferguson remind us that before war broke out in 1914, the great powers of Europe had grown more economically interdependent than they had ever been before, and than they would be again for almost a century.12

The lesson to draw is that interdependence increases the incentive for leaders to subordinate political ambitions and ignore nationalist sentiments, but it does not remove the need for them to take these bold and [politically] politicaly risky steps. The hard choices still have to be made. It is easy for leaders to see that economic interests require them to compromise their countries’ aspirations for international status and power, but it is harder for them to acknowledge that to their people, and harder still to put their economic interests ahead of strategic and political ones when a choice has to be made. In fact, most often people see it as shameful to put economic concerns first when issues of power and status are engaged. What president would tell the American people that their country will compromise its position on an issue like Taiwan in order to protect America’s economic interests? What Chinese leader could make the same argument to the Chinese people? When a choice has to be made, especially when it has to be made in the glare of an international crisis, it is very hard to put economics first.

In some ways the obvious importance of economic interdependence increases rather than limits the risk that rivalry will escalate, because of the way it can affect one country’s view of the other’s priorities. There seems to be a pattern here: each side believes that the imperatives of interdependence will press more heavily on the other. That inclines both governments to assume that the other will compromise to protect the economic relationship, so they do not have to do so. In Washington they expect China to back down from its challenge to America once Beijing understands the economic risks of rivalry. In Beijing they think America will blink. That makes both of them less inclined to compromise their own position – which makes escalation more likely.

Ultimately, faith in the power of interdependence boils down to faith in the power of money to trump other emotions and motivations. That is a risky proposition. We cannot assume that Chinese leaders will always choose rationally to maximise China’s objective benefits. They are no less liable than the leaders of any other country to allow what may be, or may seem to us to be, irrational desires for status and influence to trump the rational calculations of national interest.

Economics is important, but money isn’t everything. Countries, like people, want to be rich, but they also want to be safe and to feel good about themselves. For countries, as for individuals, aspirations for security and identity often compete with material interests, and often win. America’s and China’s divergent visions touch on very deep issues of national identity in both countries, which can easily seem to outweigh economic imperatives when the crunch comes. And there is always something a little strange about the assumption, implicit in the interdependence argument, that our economic desires will suppress the urge to strategic and political competition when our desire to avoid the horrors of war will not.

# 2nc – K

#### B---Scope

McDonald 19, writer and geography PhD student at University of Oxford studying the intersection of grassroots movements and energy transition. (Samuel Miller, 1-4-2019, “Deathly Salvation”, *The Trouble*, https://www.the-trouble.com/content/2019/1/4/deathly-salvation)

A devastating fact of climate collapse is that there may be a silver lining to the mushroom cloud. First, it should be noted that a nuclear exchange does not inevitably result in apocalyptic loss of life. Nuclear winter—the idea that firestorms would make the earth uninhabitable—is based on shaky science. There’s no reliable model that can determine how many megatons would decimate agriculture or make humans extinct. Nations have already detonated 2,476 nuclear devices. An exchange that shuts down the global economy but stops short of human extinction may be the only blade realistically likely to cut the carbon knot we’re trapped within. It would decimate existing infrastructures, providing an opportunity to build new energy infrastructure and intervene in the current investments and subsidies keeping fossil fuels alive. In the near term, emissions would almost certainly rise as militaries are some of the world’s largest emitters. Given what we know of human history, though, conflict may be the only way to build the mass social cohesion necessary for undertaking the kind of huge, collective action needed for global sequestration and energy transition. Like the 20th century’s world wars, a nuclear exchange could serve as an economic leveler. It could provide justification for nationalizing energy industries with the interest of shuttering fossil fuel plants and transitioning to renewables and, uh, nuclear energy. It could shock us into reimagining a less ~~suicidal~~ civilization, one that dethrones the death-cult zealots who are currently in power. And it may toss particulates into the atmosphere sufficient to block out some of the solar heat helping to drive global warming. Or it may have the opposite effects. Who knows? What we do know is that humans can survive and recover from war, probably even a nuclear one. Humans cannot recover from runaway climate change. Nuclear war is not an inevitable extinction event; six degrees of warming is.

#### 3---FEIGNED NEUTRALITY DA---Debating reactionary arguments as if they are truth claims is complicit in systemic and structural inequality. It’s better for us to move on.

Moufawad-Paul 21, professor of philosophy at York University, Maoist (Joshua, “Liberal Academia and Free Speech Absolutism in the Shadow of Imperialism”, May 24th 2021, M-L-M Mayhem!, <http://moufawad-paul.blogspot.com/2021/05/liberal-academia-and-free-speech.html> accessed 3/1/22)--js

The liberal claim to diversity of opinion was always a myth. It emerged in a world where the colonized and slaves were not imagined to be part of this diversity since they were not considered properly human. In this world of liberty and the “rights of man” and John Locke, the larger question of human equality did not matter because the only community of “equals” capable of expressing their liberty were individuals who were in general agreement about maintaining the colonial capitalist order. Such was the vaunted diversity of liberalism: a marketplace of ideas where only a limited sampling of humanity could participate. When the question of abolition was posed in these spaces––which was a rare occurrence because that marketplace of ideas was structured to keep all but a few abolitionists out––it was treated as an idea equivalent to the ideas of the advocates of slavery, with liberty for all invited to this table trumping the demand for equality. The larger question of settler-colonialism, and the legitimacy of nation-states to engage in colonial conquest and establish plantation orders in the first place, was never broached in these classic liberal spaces. Indeed, liberal progressives such as J.S. Mill (whose work represented the synthesis and apotheosis of classical liberal philosophy) could be sympathetic with abolition and suffrage to some extent, but was completely opposed to challenging the foundation of settler-colonialism. Indeed, Mill supported the abolition of slavery, just as he supported certain forms of suffrage, but in a manner that preserved the roots of Empire: he believed that British colonialism was just and necessary, that colonial tyranny of non-white populations was good for humanity as a whole, and thus was incapable of grasping that it was this very same colonialism that generated slavery in the first place. The patronizing attitude of liberal dialogue persists to this day; its vaunted “diversity” seeks to preserve the systemic and structural roots of inequality while arguing that it is providing the basis of social evolution.

But what about the possibility of a diversity that functions outside of the liberal myth of diversity? An explosion of new ideas and debates that can and should happen once we pass the threshold policed by liberalism? Can it not be the case that, once we break with old ideas and in fact suppress and reject these ideas as erroneous, we can have a diversity of thought that is grounded in truth rather than reactionary opinion?

It is in fact an uncritical commitment to liberalism, even amongst supposed anti-capitalists, that prevents these questions from even being asked. According to liberal thought, there can only be a narrow diversity of opinions within a liberal framework. The fact that such a diversity is already curated, that it is already bound within the rules of capitalist society, and functions according to the marketplace of ideas analogy is rarely questioned. Committed liberals work according to the fiction that “illiberal society” is monstrous because liberalism permits an “open society” of debate––that liberalism is essentially self-critical and open to all perspectives. Leaving aside the point, discussed above, that if we are to make a distinction between “truth” and “opinion” then being “open to all perspectives” is akin to treating a high school debate club as the model for a good society, such a commitment to liberalism betrays a willful ignorance regarding the very tradition of liberalism.

Liberal philosophy developed at the same time as settler-colonialism and slavery; its classical proponents developed their concepts of liberty while uncritically supporting this underbelly of modernity. Saidiya Hartman has demonstrated that the core conception of the liberal subject was constructed on the acceptance of natural slavery. Dominco Losurdo’s work on liberalism charts the ways in which liberal philosophy was consciously complicit in the colonial order. These are not whacky revisionist histories of liberalism. You only need to read what the original liberal philosophers write about colonialism, slavery, and race––and how they conceptualize their philosophy in this relationship, a conceptualization that is foundational to contemporary liberal theory––to realize there is something fundamentally flawed in the tradition. Take, for example, J.S. Mill’s treatment of colonialism. Although Mill was writing in a period later than Locke, and thus did not support African slavery as Locke did, his more “advanced” liberal theory was still based on an imperialist apprehension of the world. Mill defends British imperialism by likening the civilizations it has colonized to infants and barbarians in need of guidance of an advanced civilization. Far from being an aberration of his philosophy, this is precisely a core concept of classical liberalism: in On Liberty, Mill argues that European civilization at one point in time required tyranny to reign in an excess of liberty (i.e. Hobbes’ fictional state of nature) but that, since then, it has “grown up” and now can pursue a liberal society due to its maturity. By the same token, there are civilizations that are infantile and require illiberal control: the liberal conception of social evolution, rather than a conception of revolution and antagonism between the oppressed and the oppressor, is essential to liberal thought just as it is essential to justifications of colonialism.

Liberalism’s foundational relationship with capitalism and imperialism continues right up to the present order. Right up to liberal philosophers complaining that it is wrong to punch Nazis while, at the same time, associating “cancel culture” with the very fascism it refuses to confront. Right up to liberal philosophers refusing to say anything worthwhile regarding the obvious ethnic cleansing in Palestine. Hence, the notion that we should treat liberalism as a meaningful part of a revolutionary ethos should be treated with suspicion. While we can indeed say that aspects of liberalism should be examined seriously by revolutionary thought (i.e. some form of free discourse, some form of individual autonomy), we can also say that this does not mean the adoption of liberal categories of thinking any more than the borrowing from Aristotle and Plato by liberal philosophers means the adoption of Ancient Greek categories of thinking. That is, whatever insights can be gleaned from liberalism by anti-capitalist progressives are immediately transformed by a thinking that transcends liberalism. And this thinking does not speak the same language as liberalism: it speaks the language of revolution and, by speaking this language, necessarily rejects the marketplace of ideas, the harm principle, and the notion that free speech and expression can exist outside of class struggle without reifying the ideas of the dominant class.

#### 4---DATAFICATION DA---Resisting neoliberal valuations about the importance of our research is good.

Jackson 20, Professor, Department of International Education @ Education University of Hong Kong (Liz, “‘But Is It Really Research?’ Mentoring Students as Theorists in the Era of Cybernetic Capitalism.” Educational Philosophy & Theory, vol. 52, no. 1, Jan. 2020, pp. 17–21. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1080/00131857.2019.1591150.)

As Michael Peters notes (2017, 2018), in this age of 'cybernetic capitalism', the global knowledge infrastructure is dominated by trillion-dollar multinationals. These forces are reshaping what counts as valuable knowledge, interpreting academic significance in terms of the capacity of research to directly lead to neoliberal market-oriented economic growth. An outgrowth of the rise of the age of cybernetic capitalism is the increased valuation and appreciation of big data over other kinds of evidence and bases for knowledge. As Kenneth Neil Cukier and Viktor Mayer-Schoenberger (2013) have noted, the subsequent rise of big data as the most valued currency can be characterised by 'the ability to render into data many aspects of the world that have never been quantified before'. To neoliberal institutions and nation-states, which provide public and private information infrastructure, such data is of tremendous use and power. Ordinary academics in this environment have tended to conform to capitalistic frameworks of value in this case, working to gather and analyse data in ways that benefit dominant social institutions and political economic actors. Some may assume there is a mutual benefit, as more funding will be granted, and greater significance ascribed, to researchers gathering data that is of more value under neoliberal growth models and agendas.

Educational researchers are far from immune to these pressures and these seductions. Major associations for educational research such as the American Educational Research Association celebrate their connections with government funders such as the National Science Foundation, which specifically funds 'scientific' research that aims to have an impact. By 'impact', it is implied that the research must agree broadly with the goals of institutions and the value of forwarding them, without major critique or investigation. By 'scientific', there is an emphasis on data. While one might say, following Peter Roberts ([ 7]), that all research is informed by data, as it is 'generated through human experience', in competitive environments in the age of cybernetic capitalism 'more data' is regarded as better data. Quantitative data becomes better than qualitative data, and so on.

There is perhaps no more vital task of educational theorists in this age than to understand and examine how economic growth models are shaping knowledge production agendas, as well as economic and information distribution, normally to benefit the visions of leading players in the age of cybernetic capitalism (Peters, [ 3]). Yet in this context, it would appear that academics researchers are more constrained than ever before by these political-economic forces when it comes to producing research, to be accountable to higher educational institutions and other funding bodies which follow the lead of multinational giants. Rather than setting agendas, most are complying, seeing little recourse and indeed lacking tools that have become devalued by, or may even now be regarded as inherently threatening to, the architects of neoliberal structures that frame information production agendas today.

In the context of ordinary higher education and research institutions, with the ability to gather more data has come greater possibilities for quantitative research. In education, as in other fields, quantitative research has retained a favoured status over qualitative and philosophical approaches for decades. Maths and sciences are still seen as the 'hard' and 'tough' sciences and fields, over the 'softer' arts. That this is senseless binary, particularly in education, has been argued by many philosophers of education (Pring, [ 5]). Qualitative researchers are not immune to the significance of numbers, and quantitative researchers should not be looking at numbers to the neglect of everything else. Yet today, one can see that this binary clearly does have a logic: to divide and differentiate research according to its value within the orientation to the world undergirding cybernetic capitalism. In this framing, educational theory, with its focus on ideas, is even more of a loser than qualitative research, not even deemed as research by some due to its lack of big data—and lack of neoliberal priorities.

This is just the latest challenge educational theorists have faced in defending their position in the academy, given the way their work does not tend to fit perfectly with traditional conceptions of educational research, or of applied philosophy (Roberts, [ 7]). Philosophers of education have expressed for a long time a sense of a minority status in teacher education institutions as well, which are normally focused mostly on educational practice, and on training students in qualitative and quantitative research methods. Philosophers and theorists may be feel further crunched today, in education and other fields, as the datafication era aligns with the push for competitive large-scale grants in higher education, which also makes empirical and quantitative research appeal more than ever before.

In this context, educational theorists can do more than simply try to conform, in vain. Instead, they can take responsibility to question neoliberal assumptions about value and significance, interrogate contemporary political-economic influences on academic research and social life, and provide alternative accounts of what is good, significant, and 'productive'. As Roberts ([ 7]) writes, they can also resist 'some of the demands of a performance-driven world', for instance by taking time to pay attention to what is happening in their institutions and in the field today: not to be pragmatic or 'relevant' for the sake of developing neoliberal 'impact', but to reconsider the way their values and ideas do and do not align with the processes and value orientations experienced in the world around them. Additionally, they can train fellow researchers to focus on these issues to a greater extent than they had been focused on in the past. This can also entail cultivating communities which are dialogic and supportive of alternative visions in research and social life.

### 2NC---Links

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#### The impact is ecological waste.

Halpern ’18, Associate Professor in Sociology and Anthropology at Concordia University (Orit, “Golden Futures”, Limn Issue 10 https://limn.it/articles/golden-futures/)

Facing limits to planetary resources and maybe even life, we have turned to ubiquitous computing, geo-sensing, and algorithmic trading. To avoid these terminal thresholds of resources and toxins, the mine must conquer the limits of space by deriving value from the future. Enter derivatives. Derivatives are financial instruments that allow a certain amount of something (mortgages, minerals, oil, gold, etc.) to be traded at some point in the future at an agreed-upon price. One also can bet on the cancellation of an order or some other event changing the future price of the underlying commodity or security. The result is that the size of the derivatives markets far overshadows the actual world’s gross domestic product, by now exceeding the world’s GDP by 20 times. These markets have grown exponentially, by 25 percent per year over the last 25 years (Martin 2014).

Futures derivative markets make a double move. They bet change in value of some entity (you can even bet on the weather) between the present to some future point against another change in value of some other entity. But what makes the market interesting is that you can sell your bet before the event happens. In doing so, one “hedges” the future. Gold is the long-standing hedge bet. You can pull out when you make money irrespective of what the future might hold (Cooper 2010). Time no longer equals money but rather money derives from time=time, from bets on relations between times. One can swap the debt, for example, on a package of mortgages or of entire countries for gold futures without the homes being sold or the nations paying or defaulting on their loans. You are betting on temporalities of two different markets, looking to bet on fluctuations in price between the two markets. The forms of time here are speculative, not predictive. One does not need to calculate the final risk of the action of investment; only manage the time of the action. Risk, which is calculable, now has become just raw uncertainty to be managed through algorithmic financial logics that mirror the big-data infrastructures of the extraction industries themselves.

Such understandings of time, of course, demand that we ask: what is the relationship between derivation and extraction? This logic is based in a discourse of reclamation, optimization, and “sustainability” that now dominates mining and energy industries. The value of the mine is being transformed constantly through changes in the mines’ functions and extractions of value from what used to be waste. We are constantly panning our destruction of the environment in search of increments of changing future values to bet on. What is true of gold is also true of most other extraction industries, especially oil markets, which had become the second largest futures market and one of the largest derivatives markets by 2002 (EIA 2002). Our planet is now a hedged bet, where finitude in life is converted to surplus information for future speculation.

### 2NC—AT: Cap Good

#### 1—It’s not sustainable – their evidence assumes constant and sustained growth which is impossible under our theory of derivative speculation – even if they are right under traditional economics, those inevitably fail – that’s Halpern

#### 2---Decoupling is a joke – expected growth far outpaces expected decoupling.

Alexander & Rutherford 19, Co-director of the Simplicity Institute, is a lecturer at the Office for Environmental Programs, University of Melbourne, Australia, \*Coordinator of the New International Bookshop and a 'Simpler Way' activist (Samuel & Johnathan, A Critique of Techno-Optimism: Efficiency Without Sufficiency is Lost, *The Handbook of Global Governance*, http://samuelalexander.info/publications/)

The figures are confronting, to say the least. Let’s assume, as with the Ward et al (2016) scenario, that continuous economic growth at a modest 2.41% growth rate leads today’s developed nations (i.e. OECD) to expand their economies eight-fold by 2100. Let us also assume that by this time the world population will have reached 11 billion, in line with median U.N projections (UNDSEA, 2017). Let us finally assume that this population has by the end of the century, caught up to the per capita incomes of the OECD. If this scenario were ever to be achieved, the global economy would end up approximately 28 times larger than it is today!

Needless to say, ecosystems are already trembling under the pressure of one ‘developed world’ at the existing size. Who, then, could seriously think our planet could withstand the equivalent of a 28-fold increase in the size of the global economy? The very suggestion is absurd, and yet this very absurdity defines the vision of the global development agenda. It is the elephant in the room. If we remember that humanity is already in ecological overshoot by 70 per cent, then to achieve long-term sustainability humanity would need to achieve a factor 48 reduction in overall environmental impact (i.e. resource use, carbon emissions) per unit of GDP. Compare this 48-factor reduction with the 5-factor reductions that some techno-optimists think might be achievable via an efficiency revolution which has historically failed to fulfil its promise (Von Weizsacker, 2009; Lovins, 1998). Accordingly, even if these figures are overstated by an order of magnitude, the point would remain that efficiency gains could not possibly be expected to make the projected amount of GDP growth sustainable. The levels of decoupling required would simply be too much (Huesemann and Huesemann, 2011; Trainer, 2012). To think otherwise is not being optimistic but delusional.

#### 3—“Sustainable” capitalism is a new link– waste becomes speculated upon which is Halpern, and renewable development depends on colonial exploitation and resource extraction.

Hickel 19, PhD, Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, Senior Lecturer at Goldsmiths, University of London. (Jason, 5-6-2019, "The Limits of Clean Energy", *Foreign Policy*, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/09/06/the-path-to-clean-energy-will-be-very-dirty-climate-change-renewables/>)

The phrase “clean energy” normally conjures up happy, innocent images of warm sunshine and fresh wind. But while sunshine and wind is obviously clean, the infrastructure we need to capture it is not. Far from it. The transition to renewables is going to require a dramatic increase in the extraction of metals and rare-earth minerals, with real ecological and social costs.

We need a rapid transition to renewables, yes—but scientists warn that we can’t keep growing energy use at existing rates. No energy is innocent. The only truly clean energy is less energy.

In 2017, the World Bank released a little-noticed report that offered the first comprehensive look at this question. It models the increase in material extraction that would be required to build enough solar and wind utilities to produce an annual output of about 7 terawatts of electricity by 2050. That’s enough to power roughly half of the global economy. By doubling the World Bank figures, we can estimate what it will take to get all the way to zero emissions—and the results are staggering: 34 million metric tons of copper, 40 million tons of lead, 50 million tons of zinc, 162 million tons of aluminum, and no less than 4.8 billion tons of iron.

In some cases, the transition to renewables will require a massive increase over existing levels of extraction. For neodymium—an essential element in wind turbines—extraction will need to rise by nearly 35 percent over current levels. Higher-end estimates reported by the World Bank suggest it could double.

The same is true of silver, which is critical to solar panels. Silver extraction will go up 38 percent and perhaps as much as 105 percent. Demand for indium, also essential to solar technology, will more than triple and could end up skyrocketing by 920 percent.

And then there are all the batteries we’re going to need for power storage. To keep energy flowing when the sun isn’t shining and the wind isn’t blowing will require enormous batteries at the grid level. This means 40 million tons of lithium—an eye-watering 2,700 percent increase over current levels of extraction.

That’s just for electricity. We also need to think about vehicles. This year, a group of leading British scientists submitted a letter to the U.K. Committee on Climate Change outlining their concerns about the ecological impact of electric cars. They agree, of course, that we need to end the sale and use of combustion engines. But they pointed out that unless consumption habits change, replacing the world’s projected fleet of 2 billion vehicles is going to require an explosive increase in mining: Global annual extraction of neodymium and dysprosium will go up by another 70 percent, annual extraction of copper will need to more than double, and cobalt will need to increase by a factor of almost four—all for the entire period from now to 2050.

The problem here is not that we’re going to run out of key minerals—although that may indeed become a concern. The real issue is that this will exacerbate an already existing crisis of overextraction. Mining has become one of the biggest single drivers of deforestation, ecosystem collapse, and biodiversity loss around the world. Ecologists estimate that even at present rates of global material use, we are overshooting sustainable levels by 82 percent.

Take silver, for instance. Mexico is home to the Peñasquito mine, one of the biggest silver mines in the world. Covering nearly 40 square miles, the operation is staggering in its scale: a sprawling open-pit complex ripped into the mountains, flanked by two waste dumps each a mile long, and a tailings dam full of toxic sludge held back by a wall that’s 7 miles around and as high as a 50-story skyscraper. This mine will produce 11,000 tons of silver in 10 years before its reserves, the biggest in the world, are gone.

To transition the global economy to renewables, we need to commission up to 130 more mines on the scale of Peñasquito. Just for silver.

Lithium is another ecological disaster. It takes 500,000 gallons of water to produce a single ton of lithium. Even at present levels of extraction this is causing problems. In the Andes, where most of the world’s lithium is located, mining companies are burning through the water tables and leaving farmers with nothing to irrigate their crops. Many have had no choice but to abandon their land altogether. Meanwhile, chemical leaks from lithium mines have poisoned rivers from Chile to Argentina, Nevada to Tibet, killing off whole freshwater ecosystems. The lithium boom has barely even started, and it’s already a crisis.

And all of this is just to power the existing global economy. Things become even more extreme when we start accounting for growth. As energy demand continues to rise, material extraction for renewables will become all the more aggressive—and the higher the growth rate, the worse it will get.

It’s important to keep in mind that most of the key materials for the energy transition are located in the global south. Parts of Latin America, Africa, and Asia will likely become the target of a new scramble for resources, and some countries may become victims of new forms of colonization. It happened in the 17th and 18th centuries with the hunt for gold and silver from South America. In the 19th century, it was land for cotton and sugar plantations in the Caribbean. In the 20th century, it was diamonds from South Africa, cobalt from Congo, and oil from the Middle East. It’s not difficult to imagine that the scramble for renewables might become similarly violent.

If we don’t take precautions, clean energy firms could become as destructive as fossil fuel companies—buying off politicians, trashing ecosystems, lobbying against environmental regulations, even assassinating community leaders who stand in their way.

# 1nr - case

## Resources

## Trade

### 1NR — AT: Trade Advantage ov

### 1NR – Anti Dumping OV

#### Lobbyists in the U.S. will win increased antidumping

#### **Showalter 21**, a fellow at the American Economic Liberties Project where he researches concentration policy and antitrust law. He is also currently an associate with the Kanter Law Group, (Reed, 8/25/21, Democracy for Sale: Examining the Effects of Concentration on Lobbying in the United States, https://www.economicliberties.us/our-work/democracy-for-sale/) The bigger companies get, the more powerful they become. A large majority of Americans distrust concentrated economic power, and criticism of the world’s largest companies is a regular part of discourse within America’s political parties and around the world. Research has borne out the power of money in politics. Baumgartener et al. demonstrated that policy outcomes favor the interest group with the most lobbying resources.[1] Gilens and Page, for example, show that lobbying groups disproportionately represent business interests compared to more democratic interests and that these business lobbying groups are, dollar for dollar, twice as influential as other groups.[2] It is no surprise then that business interests employ more lobbyists, dispatch more lobbyists per issue, lobby on more issues, and spend more money compared to other interest groups.[3] Corporate lobbying works. A number of studies show that the amount spent on lobbying positively impacts a firm’s equity returns [4] and market share.[5] Firms that engage in lobbying also appear to have lower effective tax rates than those that do not.[6] Moreover, a growing body of scholarship suggests that lobbying can directly benefit individual firms or subindustries through tax breaks[7] or government contracts.[8] In many instances, companies receive exorbitant returns on this type of lobbying, like Boeing, which reportedly received a return of $7,250 for every $1 spent.[9] Other studies show companies directly avoiding applicable regulations in their industry. Firms that spend more money lobbying under antidumping laws can, for example, obtain favorable protection from foreign competition even when that competition is fair.[10] More troubling for antitrust enforcement, one study shows that lobbying allows firms to “receive favorable antitrust review outcomes

#### We postdate-- The U.S. is willing to use antidumping now

Nicely et al 21, Antitrust attorneys for Custard Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP Matthew R. Nicely, D (Matthew withD evin S. Sikes, Julia K. Eppard and Brandon J. Custard The International Trade Law Review: USA, <https://thelawreviews.co.uk/title/the-international-trade-law-review/usa>)

For the better part of the last century, the United States has been among the least restrictive markets for imports of foreign products. US normal customs duties are quite low compared with other nations around the world, and customs procedures generally permit the free, fast and reliable flow of goods to consuming industries and retail businesses. Combined with the country's culture of consumerism, the US market is a magnet for foreign goods. Yet, despite the generally free flow of goods across US borders, anyone doing business with the United States must be aware of the risks associated with various US laws that can impose additional and sometimes prohibitive special duties on US imports. Anti-dumping (AD) and countervailing duty (CVD) cases have long been a tool used by US industries to combat alleged unfair competition from imports and are the most common trade remedy practice under US law. The United States is by far the largest user of AD and CVD remedies, and the scale of recent cases is notable. For example, investigations of common alloy aluminium sheet involved imports from a record 18 countries.2 The investigation of passenger vehicle and light truck tyres from South Korea, Thailand, Taiwan and Vietnam involved almost US$4.5 billion in imports in a US market of US$20 billion.3 These kinds of cases are affecting a greater volume of US trade.

### AT: We ban antidumping

#### Anti-dumping is not covered by antitrust

Nordstrom 10, PhD, Economist at The Swedish Agency for Growth Policy Analysis . (Hakan, Antitrust instead of antidumping in the Community’s bilateral trade agreements, https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.589.4384&rep=rep1&type=pdf

The main difference between antidumping and antitrust law, apart from the range of anticompetitive practices covered, is that the latter focuses on market behaviour that harms competition per se. Dumping, in the meaning of setting a lower price in the export market than in the home market (the definition used in antidumping proceedings), is not a violation per se under antitrust rules. Dumping is only condemned if the alleged offender has (i) a dominant position and (ii) if this position is abused, e.g., if the offender set a price below average variable cost in an effort to squeeze out the competitors from the market or pre-empt new firms from entering the market.

#### The plan does not overturn the Antidumping Act

Cho 9, IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law. (Sungjoon, Anticompetitive Trade Remedies: How Antidumping Measures Obstruct Market Competition, 87 N.C. L. Rev. 357 (2009). https://scholarship.kentlaw.iit.edu/fac\_schol/734)

The Antidumping Act of 1921 superseded the 1916 Act and provided a prototype for the current antidumping statute.30 To protect infant U.S. industries from "powerful European cartels,"'" the 1921 Act only required that foreign dumping allegedly cause "injuries" to domestic industries without a separate requirement of predatory intent.32 The only remedy provided for by this new law was the imposition of duties equivalent to the magnitude of dumping on violators.33 It was this softened standard under the 1921 Act that ushered in the administrative flexibility that enabled the government to manage trade policies in the interests of domestic industries and in tune with protectionist political climates.34 The 1921 Act also provided a basis for Article VI of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade ("GATT"), which authorizes domestic antidumping measures.

### 1nr – ! Anti dumping

#### Even Their author says Anti-dumping is worse than export cartels

Murray 19—(Loyola Law School, Los Angeles, Juris Doctor, May 2019). Allison Murray. 2019. "Given Today's New Wave of Protectionism, Is Antitrust Law the Last Hope for Preserving a Free Global Economy or Another Nail in Free Trade's Coffin?". Loyola of Los Angeles International and Comparative Law Review, vol. 42, no. 1. HeinOnline. Accessed 9/4/21.

Anti-dumping policies are the antitrust topic that receives the most frequent and stark criticism. Anti-dumping policies allow governments to “impose duties [(e.g., fines on a company)] whenever goods are sold in export markets at less than their fair [(e.g., market)] value.”53 The policies are intended to “prevent firms from price discriminating between markets,” especially national ones.54 Similar to the above protectionist arguments about antitrust laws on the whole, critics often argue that antidumping laws “induce more distortions in the market than they resolve.”55 What sets antidumping apart from the rest of antitrust policy? Why is antidumping a riper target for criticism? Although all competition laws address market distortions, anti-dumping is the only measure among them that does not merely act to eliminate anti-competitive behavior of a firm; rather, anti-dumping is punitive in nature.56 A successful antidumping claim results in relief that is more severe than a mere injunction or making the injured party whole.57 Anti-dumping cases result in the imposition of fines and high tariffs on the anticompetitive party, even to the extent that the fines or tariffs dramatically affect the party’s ability to continue its current and future business dealings.58 For this reason, certain countries, like Japan, share the view that anti-dumping measures are the most easily abused antitrust tool and a great threat to the preservation of free market competition.59 Anti-dumping legislation gained popularity after the Second World War, perhaps unsurprisingly coinciding with the declining popularity and use of tariffs.60 Today, over ninety countries have adopted anti-dumping laws; nearly every country that has antitrust laws has anti-dumping laws as well.61 Some experts argue that trade liberalization and anti-dumping laws have spurred the rise of anti-dumping measures. These experts point to agreements that have eliminated trade tariffs as the cause of these adoptive anti-dumping measures.62 See Figure 1 below. Even against the “we want free trade” public backdrop of the 1980s and 1990s, countries attempted to protect themselves from overt anticompetitive behavior, like price dumping.64 Any alternative risked losing public support for trade liberalization at the first sign of abuse in the market.65 One can imagine the public outcry that would ensue if a country was unable to respond to anticompetitive behavior. Even the U.S., which had traditionally been a staunch advocate for free trade, “imposed more than 600 antidumping measures and nearly 300 anti-subsidy duties since 1980,” each of which were “aimed at correcting what the U.S. government deemed to be unfair trade.”66 A key criticism of anti-dumping policy is that it is used inconsistently to serve special political interests.67 In the U.S., steel is an “emblem of [the] country’s descent from greatness.”68 American steelmakers have lobbied for decades to preserve and protect the domestic industry.69 Today, the U.S. makes “half as much as 50 years ago and employs just a third of the workers.”70 Past U.S. Presidents made it part of their political platforms to initiate trade policies that would limit the importation of competing steel products, especially from Europe and Japan.71 The Trump Administration appears to be no exception. Although Trump recently resorted to imposing tariffs, he first used anti-dumping measures to protect the American steel industry.72 The first trade case brought by the U.S. government during the Trump Administration was an anti-dumping case alleging that producers from other countries (Brazil, Norway, and Australia) deliberately sold silicon metal (a raw material required to produce steel) “at artificially low prices in the U.S.”73 The alleged dumping margins were 134.9%, 45.7%, and 52.8% respectively.74 After an affirmative ruling in favor of the U.S. in October of 2017, the U.S. Department of Commerce (“DOC”) made final affirmative determinations in February of 2018.75 Additionally, on November 28, 2017, the DOC self-initiated an antidumping case against China alleging that China exported common alloy aluminum sheets at a low price in order to materially injure the domestic industry for that product in the U.S.76 This self-initiation is highly unusual and has not been done in more than twenty-five years.77 In its initial evaluation, the U.S. estimated that the illegal prices being set were between 48 to 100 percent less than the fair market value.78 These are only a few examples of antidumping cases that have affected the darlings of American industry. According to the DOC, “enforcement of U.S. trade law is a prime focus of the Trump administration. From January 20, 2017, through February 26, 2018, the Department of Commerce initiated 102 antidumping and countervailing duty investigations—a 96% increase from 52 in the previous period. The Commerce Department currently maintains 424 antidumping and countervailing duty orders which provide relief to American companies and industries impacted by unfair trade.”79 Of course, the hope remains that the U.S. process continues to be impartial and unmoved by political interests. Fairness is an integral part of our justice system and serves as the cornerstone justification for the imposition of otherwise unacceptable tariffs on foreign parties. However, such need for impartiality (in perception or otherwise) has not dissuaded special interest groups and political figures from publicly lobbying the U.S. Government to make certain rulings. As to the self-initiated case against China referenced above, Congressmen, CEOs, labor union leaders, and other politically powerful individuals created a spectacle of their public lobbying efforts, citing the importance of “protecting” the U.S. constituents from “trade practices . . . threatening U.S. jobs.”80 The perception that the law is susceptible to manipulation based on special political interests is partly what made Boeing’s 2017 filings against Bombardier for anti-dumping violations, and the preliminary findings of the U.S. International Trade Commission (“ITC”) in favor of Boeing, so controversial.81 Essentially, Boeing brought an action against Bombardier, a smaller competitor, alleging that Bombardier had been offering passenger jet products at well below its own costs.82 Boeing, a U.S. company, was ridiculed in the press and accused of filing the suit merely to obliterate a smaller foreign competitor’s growing foothold in a product market where Boeing already had strong market power.83 Boeing was perceived as a bully and a whiner, while Bombardier, the party alleged to have engaged in the improper and anticompetitive conduct, was portrayed as a victim. The U.S. Government made its preliminary ruling that Bombardier had engaged in anticompetitive conduct and recommended the application of hefty duties (~300%) against Bombardier as punishment.84 The preliminary ruling suggested that Boeing was well within its rights to bring the claim, despite being the larger and more powerful market player. Even still, the international and domestic press toward Boeing and the U.S. was pointedly negative. High profile national leaders, including British Prime Minister Theresa May, threatened trade wars against the U.S. and warned Boeing that continued action could jeopardize its contracts.85 Ultimately, the U.S. International Trade Commission (“USITC”) reversed its position and issued a decision against Boeing.86 The surprise ruling, which was contrary to their initial recommendation, calls into question whether the USITC succumbed to the immense political pressure surrounding the issue.87 Critiques aside, the benefit of anti-dumping policies is that they can be effective even without a supranational system of power. Much like a country’s standard trade tariff systems, the duties are imposed by that country without requiring any coordination or cooperation from other countries.88 However, unlike standard trade tariff systems, anti-dumping measures are still an acceptable application of a country’s power because they are not precluded by trade agreements.89 In light of the recent economic struggles of the Western world and resulting protectionist views, there seems to be no incentive for countries to subvert the trend toward increased anti-dumping enforcement.

#### It turns the case and entrenches de facto domestic cartels

Cho 9, IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law. (Sungjoon, Anticompetitive Trade Remedies: How Antidumping Measures Obstruct Market Competition, 87 N.C. L. Rev. 357 (2009). https://scholarship.kentlaw.iit.edu/fac\_schol/734)

In sum, antidumping actions facilitate cartelization. Without antidumping actions, "it is difficult to create, maintain, and enforce a price-fixing cartel. ' 282 Thanks to a statutorily stipulated antidumping proceeding, which creates a legal cartel, domestic industries can either deter noncartel members from advancing on the cartelized market or force them to join the cartel. 83 Since a petition for an antidumping investigation should be filed by a representative number of companies producing like products, these companies tend to discuss among themselves the prices and costs of foreign competitors whose low prices threaten their own market shares.

## Modeling

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#### Modeling U.S. antitrust increases perception of U.S. influence in the region

Gerber 12, Distinguished Professor of Law at Chicago-Kent College of Law. (David, Global Competition: Law, Markets, and Globalization, KU Library)

US economic and political power sometimes also directly supports the influence of US antitrust law. Th ese issues are seldom discussed, but their influence can be extensive. One form of power is governmental. The US government has actively sought to influence the development of foreign systems. Sometimes this is overt and well-publicized, as, for example, during the early 1990s when the US government pressured the government of Japan to increase enforcement of its antitrust laws, thereby hoping to increase the access of US fi rms to the Japanese market. More commonly, pressure is exerted in the context of aid and technical assistance programs, where a country can expect to gain US support and/or assistance by conforming its conduct to the wishes of the US authorities.

#### ASEAN can only prevent nuclear war if they are perceived as an honest broker and not tied to the U.S.

Ghee 22, PhD is a Malaysian economic historian and policy analyst, (Lim, 1/12/22, Can ASEAN Bring The US And China Together? – <https://www.eurasiareview.com/12012022-can-asean-bring-the-us-and-china-together-oped/>)

Recent events have highlighted the possibility and danger of ASEAN being sandwiched between the United States and China in a new cold war that has the Indo Pacific and South China Sea regions as its main battle front. Clearly the US strategy in targeting China as an enemy can only bring about adverse consequences in the form of an intensified arms and militarization race. The most pessimistic outcome could be a nuclear holocaust which will affect all humanity. Although put on the defensive by the United States identification as a rival out to eat its lunch and therefore to be brought down, it is in the interest of China to refrain from retaliation against the US and to work towards a peaceful and amicable outcome in the areas of contestation that have emerged between them. Meanwhile, concerns are growing that the United States and China could be moving to the brink of a nuclear war as the contest for primacy grows more intense. The biggest danger seems centred on the South China Sea, which China claims as its own, using logic not much different from the Monroe Doctrine that the United States has employed in the Caribbean and Latin American region since 1823 to claim that any intervention in the politics of the Americas by foreign powers is a potentially hostile act against the United States. In January, to underscore the nuclear and other global perils, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists moved the Doomsday Clock from two minutes to 100 seconds to midnight. This is closer to humanity’s doomsday hour than at any time since its creation in 1947. According to the Arms Control Association, there are 13,500 nuclear warheads in the world. Ninety percent are held by Russia and the US with a total payload of 6600 megatons, enough to destroy the world many times over. Some 3500 warheads are in military service: 700 deliverable warheads are in China. Is the world moving closer to Herman Kahn’s theory of “Thinking the Unthinkable” (1960) i.e., of states using thermonuclear weapons to win unwinnable wars? Will China or its North Korea ally nuke Japan for working to maintain US military dominance and for current and past anti-China and anti Korea policies? Is Washington thinking the unthinkable against an equally stubborn China that will not flinch in the face of threats from the US? Instead of the US overreacting to China’s growing military, economic and cultural power or China taking advantage of declining US influence to pursue a more aggressive foreign policy, both superpowers need to bury the hatchet and minimize their geopolitical differences to foster peace and stability in the world. They ought to mobilize their resources to overcome their own domestic shortcomings and just as, if not more importantly, turn their attention to the defining crisis of our time: covid 19 and climate change. Can this idealistic scenario play out on the global geopolitical stage and what can make it happen? UNSC’s Glimmer of Hope On January 3, a rare joint statement by the Five Permanent members of the United Nations Security (UNSC) consisting China, France, Russia, UK and US affirmed A nuclear war is the last thing the world needs. A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought Nuclear weapons – for as long as they exist – should serve defensive purposes, deter aggression and prevent war The importance of preserving and complying with bilateral and multilateral non-proliferation, disarmament, and arms control agreements and commitments to avert a nuclear holocaust The intention to continue seeking bilateral and multilateral diplomatic approaches to avoid military confrontations, strengthen stability and predictability, increase mutual understanding and confidence, and prevent an arms race that would benefit none and endanger all Besides reaffirmation of the grouping’s agreement on the nuclear issue, the statement is significant in that the five signatories point to their desire to work with “all states” and their resolution “to pursue constructive dialogue with mutual respect and acknowledgment of each other’s security interests and concerns”. This is a clear recognition of the multipolar global system and a repudiation of the uni- or bipolar world posited by advocates of US and Western dominance and hegemony. Opening for ASEAN To Leave a Mark The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) should follow up on this important opening by the UNSC to advance further its opposition to AUKUS and to reiterate the anti-nuclear position of the member countries. This step is necessary to ensure that Southeast Asian nations do not become embroiled or compromised in the US led campaign against China. A more difficult option for ASEAN to pursue – but one more beneficial to the cause of peace and security in the region – is for the Association to play a role as a referee or as an honest broker in the conflict between the two superpowers. Instead of taking the side of either power. If ASEAN member states can become an honest broker to mitigate the rivalry between the two, they would do the region a great service.

### Indict to Manne

#### Their author is ambivalent about what model is best—They say they don’t know what model is best but raise questions about whether the EU model is necessarily the best like most other experts conclude

Manne et al 21—distinguished fellow at Northwestern University Center on Law, Business, and Economics, JD from University of Chicago; \*\*Senior Fellow in Law & Economics at the International Center for Law & Economics, PHD in Competition Law from Université de Liège). \*Geoffrey A. Manne, \*\*Dirk Auer, and Sam Bowman. March 30, 2021. “Should ASEAN Antitrust Laws Emulate European Competition Policy?” Singapore Economic Review. <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3709730>.

No doubt the EU and US competition regimes are the most developed and dominant exemplars; following the policies of one or both to some extent is virtually inevitable. But this raises a critical question: should the ASEAN countries attempt to mimic the competition regimes of other developed nations, notably those that are in force in the EU and the US? And, if so, which one of these regimes should they draw more inspiration from? While we certainly do not purport to know what type of regime would best fit the idiosyncratic needs of the ASEAN countries, we seek to dispel the myth that the European model of competition enforcement would necessarily provide a superior blueprint. To the contrary, we show that the evolutionary, common-law-like regime that has emerged in the US has many strengths that are often overlooked by contemporary competition policy scholarship, and which might provide a particularly good fit for the economic and political realities of the ASEAN member states.

#### Their ev assumes that ASEAN copies the EU approach—they do not—they use it as a loose guide, not a template—it is about modeling the process—not the details

Velockava 15, Research intern at EU Centre in Singapore. (EU COMPETITION LAW: A ROADMAP FOR ASEAN?, <http://aei.pitt.edu/97414/1/WP25-EU-Competition-Law.pdf>)

Contrary to the EU, and expectedly, ASEAN has chosen a soft law approach to competition. The latter has been promoted by ASEAN Experts Group on Competition (AEGC) which is a regional forum established in 2007 to discuss and co-operate on competition law and policy. It has developed the ASEAN Regional Guidelines on Competition Policy (2010) and compiled a Handbook on Competition Policy and Law in ASEAN Member states for Business (launched in 2010 and updated in 2013). It has also drafted Guidelines on Developing Core Competencies in Competition Policy and Law for ASEAN (2012), based on the experiences of AMSs and internationally recommended practices. By providing a general framework, these guidelines promote cooperation, the sharing of best practices among the AMS, and the creation of a competition law culture. Their effectiveness has been questioned by many. According to Carol Osborne (Economist, Partner, HoustonKemp, Singapore, 2015), “the guidelines may be part of the process of drafting political and legal decisions on competition issues in the ASEAN countries, but it is difficult to expect them to be an efficient tool for economic integration of the less developed ASEAN countries”. To date, nine of ten AMS have comprehensive national competition laws. Cambodia is the only one out. Most recently, the Philippine Competition Act was signed into law on 21 July 2015 and the Laos Business Competition Law was passed on 16 July 2015. The competition laws of AMS originate from different stimuli. Both Indonesia and Thailand have implemented and enforced competition law since 1999 as they were urged by IMF to reform their economic and legal systems during the Asian financial crisis. In Vietnam, the implementation of competition law was accelerated by the accession to WTO and in Singapore, enforcement of competition law stems from legal obligations set out in the US-Singapore FTA (2003). Laws adopted by the nine AMS have similar objectives in that they all prohibit anti-competitive agreements in the private sector and abuse of dominance. However, variations remain, especially in terms of threshold levels and sanctions.17 These differences may have implications on transaction costs and cross-border investments. A unique regional competition law seems too ambitious a goal for ASEAN for the time being, not only because of legal differences in the AMS but also given the disparities in size, 18 economic weight, and level of industrialization among AMS. This diversity of economic structures within ASEAN has an impact on the competition regime in each AMS. Therefore, it would be difficult to implement competition law through EU style hard approach until national economies are more evenly developed. The guidelines also expressly state that the implementation of competition policy should not prevent AMS from “pursuing other legitimate policies that may require derogations from competition policy principles” (Art. 3.5.1). As a consequence, AMS may adopt exemptions or 17 Concerning penalties, some AMSs apply criminal sanctions (such as Thailand), some only apply administrative sanctions (such as Singapore), and some combine both types of sanctions (such as Indonesia). AMSs also chose different thresholds for merger notification and the latter is voluntary in Singapore. 18 The implementation of competition law in some AMSs such as Brunei, Cambodia and Lao PDR needs to take into account their small size as it is difficult to achieve scale economies in small market economies which also tend to be dominated by a few large firms. In practice, these AMSs may opt for merger controls that are more accommodating of efficiency defenses, and less focus on per se rule prohibitions on cooperative agreements related to SMEs (Lee & Fukunaga, 2014; Gal, 2001, 2003). exclusions aimed at specific industries or activities. In this regard, hard law approach might not be flexible enough to allow these differences and might also be too costly for AMS because “the lack of substantive convergence in some areas of antitrust across jurisdictions (particularly but not exclusively in the area of monopolization) may suggest high costs for a binding commitment” (Niels and Kate, 2004). Consequently, ASEAN harmonized approach to competition law aims only at narrowing the distinctions between national laws while leaving variations of detail to national legislators. Thus, it is less than the uniform EU competition law and relies on the network model based on mutual assistance and cooperation. Given the diversity of AMS, this model seems suitable for ASEAN for the time being because as Frederic Jernny (2002) put it: “any solution to the general problem of promoting the complementarity of trade liberalization, regulatory reform (regional economic integration) and competition policy must be flexible enough to allow such national differences to continue to exist”.

#### Manne is a U.S. law professor—U.S. lawyers have a financial incentive to push the U.S. model

Gerber 12, Distinguished Professor of Law at Chicago-Kent College of Law. (David, Global Competition: Law, Markets, and Globalization, KU Library)

US antitrust experience is also the lens through which members of the US antitrust community and many of those associated with it view transnational competition law issues and assess foreign antitrust laws. It is common for members of this community to assume that the US antitrust system is generally superior to others and that others should follow it, perhaps shorn of some of its inconsistencies and weaknesses (such as vestiges of classical-era case law thinking). Th e unique evolution of the US system and its relations with other competition law systems combine to shape these US attitudes. The lens they have shaped is the source of US confidence in competition law convergence as a strategy and the generally negative US views on multilateral commitment. We look briefly at the characteristics of this lens and the images it has shaped. A key feature of the lens is its narrow focus. There have been few incentives in US antitrust experience to look at competition law broadly, ie to view US antitrust as just one competition law among many. US antitrust law officials, scholars and lawyers have seldom had occasion to look carefully at foreign competition law experiences or to learn from them. There is, for example, very little in-depth comparative law writing in the antitrust field and what there is typically suggests that US antitrust law should instruct others. The general tenor of US writing that deals with foreign systems is to point out their inadequacies in relation to US antitrust learning. Related to this is a general tendency of the lens to exclude or marginalize political and social factors in considering antitrust law and its influence. US antitrust law is made by courts. In contrast to virtually all other competition law regimes, legislative influences have been minimal in its history, and thus there has been no vehicle for direct political influence. As a result, the US antitrust community pays primary attention to court decisions, which are generally less concerned with issues of political support. Using this lens, members of the US antitrust community generally view the basic principles and approaches of US antitrust law with satisfaction, or at least as preferable to its alternatives. Few would consider it unblemished, but most consider it to be basically ‘right.’ The rapid victory of this economics-based conception of antitrust has imbued members of the US antitrust community with confidence that current US antitrust thinking provides the ‘right answers’ to basic antitrust questions. There is little in US experience that generates questions as to whether what is ‘right’ in the US is also ‘right for the rest of the world. It is a universalizing view of US antitrust law. When it is combined with the power and influence of the US it can easily appear to others as arrogance, whereas from within the US antitrust community it is just a ‘better way’ developed through hard won experience. Confidence in the ‘superiority’ of US antitrust law is not new. It has long been common within the US antitrust community. US antitrust law was the first prominent antitrust system, and this long ago accustomed members of the US antitrust community to seeing their system as the ‘father’ of modern competition law and to having it seen as such by others. This father image has tended to generate and support the impression that others do and should look to the US system for leadership. Th is self-image was strengthened in the aftermath of the Second World War. Th e US promoted antitrust as part of its ‘mission’ to help democratize countries such as Germany and Japan and to spread market principles and democracy. Th is led many to forget that there had been a diff erent model of competition law in Europe prior to the war. US antitrust law became the model for antitrust law. Th e missionary tenor of this message has had a lasting, if altered and reduced impact. Th e reformulation of US antitrust philosophy that began in the 1970s strengthened the perception in the US antitrust community that US antitrust thinking had found the right answers to basic antitrust questions. It urged that an economics-based antitrust law was superior to earlier conceptions of antitrust law in which issues such as fairness and bigness had infl uenced decisions. In this image, US antitrust law has learned from its mistakes and now provides a convincing and analytically consistent basis for antitrust. Th is understanding of US antitrust experience leads many in US antitrust law to scorn forms of competition law in other countries that resemble those earlier US ‘mistakes.’ A common refrain is that ‘we did that, and we know that it doesn’t work.’ When this lens is applied internationally, it readily leads to the conclusion that foreign systems that are concerned with issues such as fairness that have been discredited in the US domestic context deserve limited respect. Th e 1990s again spotlighted the leadership role of US antitrust. Th e US was prominent in providing technical assistance based on US experience, and since then US officials and lawyers have generally been in the forefront of discussions of transnational competition law in many areas of the world. All this reinforces the image of the US as the most prominent antitrust system, ie the ‘leader’ in the fi eld. Finally, the image that US law is ‘the right way’ to do antitrust gives members of the US antitrust community something to ‘sell.’ US lawyers, economists and offi cials (many of whom expect to return soon to private practice) have incentives to promote the superiority of the US approach.⁵³ Where others adapt the US system, they will undoubtedly turn to the US for guidance and advice.