# Harvard---Round 1---vs. Liberty CR

## 1NC

## OFF

### T---1NC

Topicality

#### The role of the ballot is to determine the efficacy of a topical proposal relative to the status quo or a competing option.

#### The ‘core’ antitrust laws are Sherman, Clayton, and FTC

Michael A. Rataj 21, PC, Law Degree from the Detroit College of Law, “Consequences for Breaking Antitrust Laws”, 5/12/2021, https://www.michaelrataj.com/blog/2021/05/consequences-for-breaking-antitrust-laws/

The core antitrust laws are…

The three core antitrust laws are the Sherman Act, the Federal Trade Commission Act and the Clayton Act. The Sherman Act primarily prohibits unreasonable restraint of trade and monopolization. Those who are in violation of the Sherman Act may face hefty fines, up to $100 million, and up to 10 years behind bars.

The FTC Act prohibits unfair practices or acts and unfair approaches to harming competition. Only the FTC can file cases under this act. The Clayton Act is a catch-all that covers every practice not covered by the Sherman and FTC Acts. Then consequences for violations of both of these acts are usually civil in nature.

#### ‘Expanding the scope’ must increase the area covered by antitrust law

Cesar A. Noble 17, Judge on the Connecticut Superior Court, Hartford Judicial District, 777 Residential, LLC v. Metro. Dist. Comm'n, 2017 Conn. Super. LEXIS 4178, \*4-5 (Conn. Super. Ct. August 1, 2017), 8/1/2017, Lexis

The defendant relies upon §7-249 as authority for the supplemental assessment. The statute provides that "[b]enefits to buildings or structures constructed or expanded after the initial assessment may be assessed as if the new or expanded buildings or structures had existed at the time of the initial assessment." The parties dispute whether the conversion of the property constitutes a construction or expansion of buildings or structures granting authority to the defendant to levy a supplemental assessment. The plaintiff argues that because the conversion did not constitute an expansion, that is, an increase in the volume or physical area of a building the defendant had no authority under §7-249 for the supplemental assessment. 5 In the view of the plaintiff it is significant that the conversion did not increase the physical footprint or interior square footage of the property in any way including by a vertical [\*5] enlargement. Absent such an increase, asserts the plaintiff, there can be no construction or expansion of any building or structure. The defendant assert that the construction of the 285 new residential units constitute new structures within the plain meaning of §7-249. The court agrees with the defendant.

[FOOTNOTE]

5 The plaintiff relies upon the definition of the word "expand" found in Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (10th ed. 2002) of "to open up; to increase the extent, number, volume, or scope of."

#### Violation---the affirmative doesn’t defend prohibitions on anticompetitive business practices by the private sector by at least expanding the scope of its core antitrust laws.

#### The impact is clash---debates about scholarship in a vacuum are myopic and breed reactionary generics---they allow the aff to cement their infinite prep advantage, because all the aff has to do is find evidence supporting an ideological orientation towards the world---this crushes clash because all of our prepared negative strategies are based on praxis, and by not defending a clear actor and mechanism we lose 90% of negative ground, and the aff still retains traditional competition standards like perms to make being neg impossible---clash is an intrinsic good and it’s vital to the overall practice of debate. Every debater is here for different reasons, but they trace back to the pedagogical uniqueness of the space. An open topic prevents iteration through shallow debates, unpredictable advocacies, and lack of testing.

### Frame Subtraction---1NC

#### We affirm the 1AC sans its request for the ballot.

#### The 1AC’s value stands on its own---responding to it with judgement and the ballot is a hollow validation that siphons off political energy and draws them into the oppressive gaze of the academy---vote Negative to decline affirmation

Phillips 99 – Dr. Kendall R. Phillips, Professor of Communication at Central Missouri State University, PhD in Speech Communication from Pennsylvania State University, MA in Speech Communication from Central Missouri State University, BS in Psychology and Sociology from Southwest Baptist University, “Rhetoric, Resistance, and Criticism: A Response to Sloop and Ono”, Philosophy & Rhetoric, Volume 32, Number 1, p. 96-101

My concern with this movement centers around an issue that Sloop and Ono seem to take as a given, namely, the role of the critic. On one hand, calling for the systematic investigation of existing marginalized discourses is a natural extension both of critical rhetoric (see McKerrow 1989, 1991) and of the general ideological turn in criticism (see Wander 1983). On the other hand, the ease of transition from criticism in the service of resistance to criticism of resistance may obscure the need to address some fundamental issues regarding the general function of rhetorical criticism in an uncertain and contentious world. Beyond licensing the critic to engage in political struggle, Sloop and Ono advocate the pursuit of covert resistant discourses.

Such a move not only stretches our understanding of rhetoric and criticism, but also alters significantly the relationship between critic and out- law. Critical interrogation of dominant discursive practices in the service of political/cultural reform is supplanted in favor of positioning covert out- law communities as objects of investigation. Invited to seek out subversive discourses, the critic is positioned as the active agent of change and the out-law discourse becomes merely instrumental. Rather than academic criticism acting in service of everyday acts of resistance, everyday acts of resistance are put into the service of academic criticism.

Rhetorical resistance

That we are "caught within conflicting logics of justice that are culturally struggled over" (Sloop and Ono 1997, 50) and that rhetoric is employed in these struggles seems an uncontroversial statement. Despite the theoretical miasma surrounding judgment, Sloop and Ono accurately note, the material process of rendering judgments (and of disputing the logics of litigation) continues in the world of actually practiced discourse. In the materially contested world, rhetoric is utilized both by those seeking to secure the grounds of dominant judgment and by those seeking to undermine or supplant dominant cultural logics with some out-law notion of justice.

The distinction between these two cultural groups, "in-law" and out- law, however, deserves some consideration prior to any discussion of the role of the critic as implied in the out-law discourse project. The discourse of the dominant or those within the bounds of superordinate logics of litigation is reminiscent of Michel De Certeau's (1984) strategic discourse. For De Certeau, strategies are utilized by those who have authority by virtue of their proper position. Strategies exploit the institutionally guaranteed background consensus by which power relations (and litigations) are maintained and advanced. In contrast, tactics are utilized by those having no proper place of authority within the discursive economy who must seek opportunities whereby the discourse of the dominant might be undermined and contested. To extend Sloop and Ono's definition, out-law discourses are those that can (and, by their analysis, do) take advantage of situations (e.g., race riots) to disrupt the regularity of dominant cultural groups.

The ongoing struggle between strategically instituted cultural dominants and the "out-law always lurk[ing] in the distance" (66) is acknowledged, even celebrated, by Sloop and Ono. What their acknowledgment fails to provide, however, is a clear need for critical intervention. Indeed, quite the reverse is presented: It is the critic (particularly the left-leaning critic) who needs out-law discourse. While the struggles over justice, equality, and freedom have gone on, the left-leaning critics are those who have theoretically excluded themselves from the disputes. The study of out-law dis- courses, then, provides a means to reinvigorate the intellectual and re-institute (academic) leftist thinking into popular political struggles (53-54). Thus, Sloop and Ono's project incorporates three types of rhetoric: the rhetoric of the in-law, presumably the traditional object of critical attention; the rhetoric of the out-law, the study of which may transform our understanding of judgment as well as reinvigorate leftist democratic critiques; and the rhetoric of the critics who, having lost their political po- tency, can exploit the discourse of the out-law to promote ideological struggles. It is to this critical rhetoric that I now turn.

Resistance criticism

Sloop and Ono (1997) clearly state the relationship they envision between the rhetorical critic and out-law discourse: "Ultimately, we will argue that the role of critical rhetoricians is to produce 'materialist conceptions of judgment,' using out-law judgments to disrupt dominant logics of judgment" (54; emphasis added). Here the critic seeks out vernacular discourse (60), focuses on the methods and values embodied in these communities (62), listens to and evaluates the out-law community (62-63), and chooses appropriate discourses for the purpose of disrupting dominant practices (63). Essentially, it is the critic who seeks out marginalized discourses and returns them to the center for the purpose of provoking dominant cultural groups (63).

Despite acknowledging the efficacy of out-law discourses, Sloop and Ono assume that the critiques generated and presented by the out-law community have only minimal effect. The irony, and indeed arrogance, of this assumption is evident when they claim: "There are cases, however, when, without the prompting of academic critics, out-law discourses serve local purposes at times and at others resonate within dominant discourses, disrupting sedimented ways of thinking, transforming dominant forms of judgment" (60; emphasis added). Sloop and Ono seem to suggest that such locally generated critiques are the exception, whereas the political efficacy of the academic critic is the rule. This seems an odd claim, given that the justification for their out-law discourse project is the lack of politically viable academic critique and the perceived potency of out-law conceptions of judgment. Their suggestion that out-law communities are in need of the academic critic contradicts not only the already disruptive nature of existing out-law discourses (the grounds for using out-law discourse), but also the impotence of contemporary critical discourse (the warrant for studying out-law discourse).

By this I do not mean that the critiques and theories generated by academically instituted intellectuals have not been incorporated into subversive discourses. Just as out-law discourses inevitably mount critiques of dominant logics, so, too, the perspectives on rhetoric and criticism generated by academics are used in resistance movements. Feminist critiques of patriarchy, queer theories of homophobia, postcolonial interrogations of race have found their way into the service of resistant groups. The key distinction I wish to make is that the existence of criticism (academic or self-generated) in resistance does not necessitate Sloop and Ono's move to a criticism of resistance.

What Sloop and Ono fail to offer is an adequate argument for "taking public speaking out of the streets and studying it in the classroom, for treating it less as an expression of protest" (Wander 1983, 3) and more as an object for analysis and reproduction within the political economy of the academy. Philip Wander made a similar charge against Herbert Wicheln's early critical project, and this concern should remain at the forefront of any discussion aimed at expanding the scope and function of criticism. Sloop and Ono offer numerous directives for the critic without addressing whether the critic should be examining out-law discourses in the first place. While it is too early to suggest any definitive answer to the question of criticism of resistance, some preliminary arguments as to why critics should not pursue out-law discourses can be offered:

(1) Hidden out-law discourses may have good reasons to stay hidden. Sloop and Ono specifically instruct us that "the logic of the out-law must constantly be searched for, brought forth" (66) and used to disrupt dominant practices. But are we to believe that all out-law discourses are prepared to mount such a challenge to the dominant cultural logic? Or, indeed, that the members of out-law communities are prepared to be brought into the arena of public surveillance in the service of reconstituting logics of litigation? It seems highly unlikely that all divergent cultural groups have developed equally, or that all members of these groups share Sloop and Ono's "imperial impulse" (51) to promote their conceptions and practices of justice.

(2) Academic critical discourse is not transparent. Here I allude to the overall problem of translation (see Foucault 1994; Lyotard 1988; Lyotard and Thebaud 1985; Zabus 1995) as an extension of the previous concern. Critical discourse cannot become the medium of commensurability for divergent language games. Are we to believe that the "use" of out-law dis- course by critics to disrupt dominant practices can fail to do violence to these diverse/divergent logics? Are out-law discourses merely tools to be exploited and discarded in the pursuit of returning leftist academic dis- course to the center?

(3) Perhaps the academic translation of out-law discourse could be true to the internal logic of the out-law community. And, perhaps the re-presentation of out-law logic within the academic community will bestow a degree of legitimacy on the out-law community. Nonetheless, the effect of legitimizing out-law discourse is unknown and potentially destructive. In an effort to siphon the political energy of out-law discourse into academic practice, we may ultimately destroy the dissatisfaction that serves as a cathexis for these out-law discourses. It seems possible that academic recognition might take the place of struggle for material opportunities (see Fraser 1997). But, will academic legitimation create any material changes in the conditions of out-law communities? I mean to suggest, not that it is better to allow the out-law community to suffer for its cause, but rather that incorporating the struggle into an (admittedly) impotent academic critique does not offer a prima facie alternative.

(4) Criticism of resistance denies the practical and theoretical importance of opportunity. Returning to De Certeau's notion of tactics, the crucial element of these discursive moves is their use of opportunity to disrupt the proper authority of the dominant. The kairos of intervention provides the key to undermining "in-law" discourses. But when is the "right moment in time" for the academic reproduction of out-law discourse? Mapping the points of resistance (ala Foucault and Biesecker) entails interrogating "in-law" discourses for their incongruities and contradictions, not turning the academic gaze upon those communities waiting for an opportunity. Out-laws do not lurk in the forefront (66), hoping to be exposed by academic critics; they wait for the right moment for their disruption. Rhetoricians can provide rhetorical instructions for seeking opportunities and for exploiting these opportunities (literally making the culturally weaker argument the stronger), but this does not justify interrogating (intervening in) the cultural logics of the marginalized.

The concerns raised here are not designed to dismiss Sloop and Ono's provocative essay. The divergent critical logic they outline deserves careful consideration within the critical community, and it is my hope that the concerns I raise may help to further problematize the relationship between

resistance and rhetorical criticism.

Rhetorical criticism

As I have suggested, my purpose is to use the provocative nature of Sloop and Ono's project to extend disputes regarding the ends of rhetorical criticism. Diverging perspectives on the ends of criticism have been categorized by Barbara Warnick (1992) as falling along four general lines: artist, analyst, audience, and advocate. Leah Ceccarelli (1997) discerns similar categories around the aesthetic, epistemic, and political ends of rhetorical criticism.

The out-law discourse project presents clear ties to the notion of critic as advocate. For Sloop and Ono, the critic is an interested party, discerning (and at times disputing) the underlying values and forces contained within a discourse. Additionally, however, the out-law discourse critic is an analyst focusing on the hidden, aberrant texts of the out-law and "rendering] an incoherent or esoteric text comprehensible" (Warnick 1992, 233). Now, I am not suggesting that a critic must serve only one function or that the roles of advocate and analyst are mutually exclusive; rather, these entanglings of power (political ends) and knowledge (epistemic ends) are inevitable. My concern is that we not neglect the complexity of these entanglements. Turning covert out-law discourses into objects of our analyses runs the risk of subjecting them both to the gaze of the dominant and to the power relations of the academy. As the works of Michel Foucault (especially 1979, 1980) aptly illustrate, practices presented as extending such noble goals as emancipation and humanity may endow institutions of confinement and objectification. Any justification for studying out-law dis- course because doing so may extend our political usefulness in the pursuit of emancipatory goals must not obscure the already existing power relations authorizing such studies. Our attempts to extend our domains of knowledge and expertise (authority) must not be pursued unreflexively.

### K---1NC

#### The aff neoliberalizes difference by theorizing identities as essentially different and in competition for recognition. The only way out of oppression inflicted by specific systems is striving for solidarity to amplify class consciousness.

Bruce Rogers-Vaughn 16, Associate Professor of the Practice of Pastoral Theology and Counseling at Vanderbilt Divinity School, “Muting and Mutating Suffering: Sexism, Racism, and Class Struggle,” Caring for Souls in a Neoliberal Age, pg 131-166

INTERSECTIONALITY AS A POST-CAPITALIST THEORY: THE INTER-RELATIONALITY OF SUFFERING In light of the foregoing discussions of the neoliberal alterations of sexism, racism, and class conflict, I propose that we understand intersectionality theory as a post-capitalist project. This is not a stretch, given its origin among 1970s feminists who were themselves quite critical of capitalism. This requires, however, careful attention to the radical impulse within intersectionality theory and a dedicated precision regarding terminology. Otherwise, as I have already noted, it can quite easily be co-opted by neoliberal versions of diversity and multiculturalism. I will make no effort to be exhaustive in this concluding section. Rather, I draw upon prior sections of this chapter to suggest, in summary fashion, five features of an intersectionality theory that help to preserve its post-capitalist spirit. In brief, a post-capitalist intersectionality theory: (a) is primarily concerned with understanding the social generation of suffering rather than individual identity formation; (b) emphasizes a material grounding in actual human relationships rather than intersections between abstract categories of difference; (c) refuses to ontologize or prioritize the differences that appear in relationships; (d) strives to establish solidarities rather than dwelling solely upon the recognition of difference; and (e) works toward an increase in consciousness that addresses both second- and third-order suffering. As for the first point, I have the impression that intersectionality theory, despite its original countercultural impetus, is often read superficially as first and foremost a discourse about identity formation and cultural difference. The isolated individualism of neoliberal rationality, furthermore, tends to interpret identity as simply a matter of personal choice or individual formation. The combination of these two moves robs intersectionality theory of its radical critique. This can have unfortunate real life consequences. For example, psychologists Grzanka and Miles ( 2016 ), after studying the literature and training videos for “LGBT Affirmative Therapy,” conclude that this psychotherapy training program reconceives intersectionality simply as a matter of “multiple identities.” They argue that this is an instance of the “multicultural turn” in psychology, elements of which “are actually consonant with neoliberal transformations of social and institutional life that foremost function to incorporate difference, rather than to redirect and reconfigure the ways power and material resources are unfairly distributed” (emphasis in original). 4 They conclude that, while this form of therapy should not be seen as “fundamentally neoliberal,” it is co-opted by a neoliberal agenda that ignores structural inequalities and shifts responsibility onto individual agents. The result, as we will see in the next chapter, is that individuals may blame themselves and remain unaware of the social–material origins of their distress. The overriding concern of intersectionality, however, is not identity but the suffering arising from systemic oppression. It is a theory about the social genesis of suffering more than it is an identity theory. In her overview of intersectionality theory, pastoral theologian Nancy Ramsay ( 2014 ) observes that social justice is “the normative goal in intersectionality” (p. 456). This means that, while it may indeed shed light on questions regarding identity, its main concern is social well-being. The statement of the Combahee River Collective ( 1977 /1979), for example, focuses on social systems of oppression. The intersections the authors envision are not between identities as such. In the initial paragraph, they note that their analyses and practices are “based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking ” (p. 362, my emphasis). The spirit of this document is preserved in bell hooks’s ( 2004 ) recurrent description of contemporary oppressions as emanating from “imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy” (p. 17). 5 Unlike many of the lists common in the intersectionality literature—race, class, gender, sexuality, and so on—the culprits here are systems rather than identity categories. Furthermore, the concern here is laser-focused on suffering . Oppression is accomplished, however, by both configuring identities and manipulating the power dynamics circulating around and through them. The black feminists who wrote the Combahee River Collective statement believed that, while racism, sexism, and heterosexism cannot be reduced to class conflict, neither can the oppressions around these identities be understood without comprehending their place in capitalist systems of production. For our purposes here, it is critical to remember that neoliberal rationality is perfectly capable of co-opting intersectional discourse, primarily by reemploying the economics/culture divide I have previously discussed in this book. This has become evident during the 2016 presidential campaigns in the USA, in which the problems of racism and sexism are often discussed without reference to class struggle. As Denvir ( 2016 ) has observed, such injustices “cease to be intersectional the moment they are abstracted from political economy” (para. 7). Speaking of abstraction, those who espouse a post-capitalist intersectionality, which is to say, a version of this theory that retains its historical origins, will have reservations about this designation. This brings us to the second feature of a post-capitalist intersectionality. The term “intersectionality” is highly conceptual and immaterial. On its face, it appears to conjure up a mental exercise in which abstract categories of difference, rather than actual people, are interrelated. Worse yet, it could be taken to imply—contrary to its original principles—that these are categories of essential difference that are first separate, with the challenge being how to theorize their points of contact. In addition to leaving aside considerations of class, this is precisely what neoliberalized forms of intersectionality tend to do. The neoliberal imagination conceives societies as aggregates of distinctive and separate-but-equal individuals. The intellectual problem is then how to explain the ways these individual building blocks intersect. Perhaps, then, we need a better word for theorizing the sufferings emerging around social differences. It is generally accepted that the term intersectionality first appeared in a paper by the legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw ( 1989 ). Thus neither the term “intersectionality” nor any of its derivatives appears in the statement of the Combahee River Collective ( 1977 /1979). Rather, the document consistently refers to human relationships . Markers of difference (identities) are understood as entangled in the dynamics of everyday relationships, not only between individuals but also between individuals and social systems, as well as between collectives. Womanist theologian and ethicist emilie townes (personal communication, January 19, 2016) suggests that a better term might be inter-relationality . In my view, this means that the differences suffusing actual relationships, and the sufferings that often originate in them, are embedded in the materiality of relationships. They appear as we relate in concrete ways—eating together, living together, working together—including the ways we collaborate within and among collectives, as well as how we construct the economics and policies of social life. From this perspective, identities are always formed in relationships. They may be healthy or unhealthy, just or unjust, or combinations thereof. But they are never simply “personal choices.” Thus Ramsay ( 2014 ) observes: “Intersectional approaches to identity clearly link individual and social dimensions to any experience of identity. Identity is socially and historically constructed” (p. 456). The sociologist Zygmunt Bauman ( 2004 ) adds that identity “cannot be formed unless in reference to the bonds connecting the self to other people and the assumption that such bonds are reliable and stable over time” (p. 68). In more just relationships and societies, individuals have enough liberty to improvise upon what is given to them, and identities remain flexible. In less just societies, identities are simply imposed and rigid. I have been claiming that neoliberal transformations of sexism and racism refer to identity categories that are shorn of class. This may be a good place to comment on the connection, within an inter-relational perspective, between class and other identities. In a previous publication, I have argued that class is not an identity (Rogers-Vaughn, 2015 ). I must now repent of that opinion. At the time, I was focused on the difference between class and identity as this term is understood within neoliberal identity politics. Inter-relationality, however, gives us a way to understand identity, and even identity politics, from outside neoliberal discourse. Class, of course, has to be amenable to identification. Otherwise there could be no “class consciousness,” as well as forms of solidarity and social movements founded upon it. I still claim, however, that class is “a different kind of difference.” As theologian Joerg Rieger ( 2013 ) has noted, to talk about inclusion or diversity with regard to class, as we might with gender and race, makes little sense (p. 199). For instance, applying affirmative action to gender and race leads to a more equitable society. If applied to class differences, however, “it would mean the end of capitalism” (p. 202). What I wish to add here is that the economic and political power differentials indicated by the term class are not simply the basis for a potential identity. More importantly, class power manifests the capacity to generate and reconfigure identities, including those attributed to sex, gender, and race. For example, the ability to have an identity, much less multiple identities, as well as the degree of agency to improvise upon identity varies with class power. Bauman ( 2004 ) summarizes this capacity: At one pole of the emergent global hierarchy are those who can compose and decompose their identities more or less at will, drawing from the uncommonly large, planet-wide pool of offers. At the other pole are crowded those whose access to identity choice has been barred, people who are given no say in deciding their preferences and who in the end are burdened with identities enforced and imposed by others ; identities which they themselves resent but are not allowed to shed and cannot manage to get rid of. (p. 38, emphasis in original) Although I reject the notion of identity as a personal choice, I am reinterpreting Bauman’s position with reference to the relative capacity to improvise upon what is given. Most of us, says Bauman, “are suspended uneasily between those two poles,” and must tolerate a level of anxiety surrounding the precariousness of our identities (p. 38). Finally, Bauman notes: “there is a lower space than low—a space underneath the bottom” (p. 39). In this space dwell those whom he calls the “underclass,” those whom Sassen ( 2014 ) calls “the expelled.” These inhabitants have no identities at all, even those that may be oppressive: The meaning of the ‘underclass identity’ is an absence of identity ; the effacement or denial of individuality, of ‘face’—that object of ethical duty and moral care. You are cast outside the social space in which identities are sought, chosen, constructed, evaluated, confirmed or refuted. (Bauman, 2004 , p. 39, emphasis in original) Bauman is pointing here to desubjectivation in its most extreme form, and thus to what I am calling third-order suffering. While desubjectivation appears in other classes, in the underclass it is pervasive and near-absolute. But what I wish to emphasize here is that class has a dual meaning. It is both a potential identity and a power that generates and configures other identities. Thirdly, a post-capitalist intersectionality, or inter-relationality, refuses to ontologize or prioritize the differences that appear in human relationships. It is clear to most people, I think, that class is not ontological. It is not, in other words, given or natural. The ideal of social mobility—shared in the USA by political conservatives and liberals alike—assumes that one may be born into one class but ascend (or descend) into another. This is one thing that distinguishes capitalism, which divides society into classes, from pre-capitalist feudal societies, which divided the populace into rigid caste systems. What is often missed is that race and gender have no more ontological status than class. Scientific efforts to identify essential differences according to race and gender, beyond somatic variations such as sexual anatomy, skin pigmentation, eye color, body morphology, and hair texture have either come up empty or confirmed cultural stereotypes (e.g. Fields & Fields, 2014 ; Fine, 2010 ). Reed ( 2013 ) concludes that such efforts are “nothing more than narrow upper-class prejudices parading about as science” (p. 51). Theories emphasizing inter-relationality eschew assertions of essential difference and seek instead to identify ways that a hegemony utilizes asserted differences to serve its interests and agendas. The focus here is on how dominant powers create, configure, and utilize identities to accomplish political and material agendas. Regarding designations of race, Victor Anderson ( 1999 ) has been a pioneer in asserting that “blackness” is not ontological. Similarly, Fields and Fields ( 2014 ) argue that through a process the authors call “racecraft.” As Harry Chang (Liem & Montague, 1985 ) claimed during the 1970s, racialization is a type of reification: “Money seeks gold to objectify itself—gold does not cry out to be money” (p. 39). The upshot of all this, according to Reed, is that race and gender are “ascriptive differences” utilized by systems of domination: “Ideologies of ascriptive difference help to stabilize a social order by legitimizing its hierarchies of wealth, power, and privilege, including its social division of labor, as the natural order of things” (p. 49). This is not an argument for a “class first” approach. While gender and race, like class, are created and configured within matrices of domination, the consequent sexism and racism are quite real and take up lives of their own. Moreover, gender, race and class are always already entangled . It would be futile to attempt to prioritize them, even in concrete instances of oppression. For this reason, the statement of the Combahee River Collective ( 1977 /1979) asserts that “race, sex, and class are simultaneous factors in oppression” (p. 371). It is tempting to think that each may assume priority, depending on contextual circumstances. Even bell hooks (Lowens, 2012 ), in a recent interview, observes that theories of intersectionality “allow us to focus on what is most important at a given point in time. …Like right now, for many Americans, class is being foregrounded like never before because of the economic situation” (para. 19). I fear that such declarations may be slippery slopes that function to maintain antagonistic divisions within the progressive left. Furthermore, such a position does not attend to how, in everyday life, the oppressions circulating around these identities are directly , rather than inversely, proportional. It just does not seem to be the case that, with the increasing economic inequality under neoliberalism, class concerns move to the foreground, while sexism and racism recede. Rather, they all rise together and in tandem. It is true that rampant inequality has intensified class conflict and made it more visible. However, sexism has also increased under these conditions, with disproportional numbers of women pressured into low-paid and unpaid work, and with discrimination and violence against women accelerating (Braedley & Luxton, 2010 ; Connell, 2010 ). Likewise, growing economic inequality has been accompanied by suppressed income for blacks and by more frequent and egregious acts of violence and exploitation toward people of color (Giroux, 2010 ; Goldberg, 2009 ). It is surely no coincidence that this period, in the USA, has been marked by massive incarceration of blacks and an escalation in killings of unarmed blacks by law enforcement officials. As a parent, I fear for the future of my two biracial sons, now eight years of age, who will likely experience oppression at the hands of dominant neoliberal powers unless substantial changes occur. The point is that economic and social exclusion and exploitation go together. We simply can no longer afford a “class first” or “race first” or “gender fi rst” approach to political action. This brings us to a fourth dimension of a post-capitalist inter- relationality. While the statement of the Combahee River Collective ( 1977 /1979) may be interpreted as laying out the significance of identity politics, it is not the same identity politics that have become so familiar in neoliberal societies. Neoliberal identity politics have effectively balkanized what was once “the public.” Society breaks up into a multitude of identity groups, each more or less insulated from the others and in competition with them. This sort of fractiousness is absent in the statement of the Combahee River Collective. While clear about their own identity and interests, these women look for ways to collaborate with others, especially for political action. They stress, for example: “Although we are feminists and lesbians, we feel solidarity with progressive black men and do not advocate the fractionalization that white women who are separatists demand” (p. 365). After noting a number of examples, they emphasize that they “continue to do political work in coalition with other groups” (p. 371). This underscores that a postcapitalist inter-relationality presses through the recognition of difference in search of solidarity . If the problems of class exploitation, sexism, and racism arise together, then they must be addressed together. Pastoral theologian Cedric Johnson ( 2016a ) observes: Social exclusion and labor exploitation are different problems, but they are never disconnected under capitalism. And both processes work to the advantage of capital. Segmented labor markets, ethnic rivalry, racism, sexism, xenophobia, and informalization all work against solidarity. (para. 77) Any approach that gives primacy to a particular identity, much less attributing ontological status to it, necessarily undermines solidarity and political action. Johnson singles out “liberal antiracist discourse,” which separates race from class and prioritizes racism, as an example: Liberal antiracist discourse further isolates the conditions of the most excluded segments of workers, separating their experiences from those of other workers, and their labor from the broader processes at work, instead of emphasizing the empirical and potential unity of the laboring classes. (para. 78) This aids and abets the “divide and conquer” strategy that financial elites have historically used to divide working people against each other. Finally, a post-capitalist inter-relationality strives toward the increase of consciousness, particularly with regard to the social origins of suffering. Even with regard to second-order suffering, consciousness-raising is often critical. This is because the complex machinations of institutions and social systems tend to occur, as Marx often noted, “behind the backs” of the people. With third-order suffering—which arises from the synergy of deinstitutionalization, desymbolization, and desubjectivation—the increase of consciousness is even more important. As I discussed in previous sections, neoliberal rationality denies and thus renders sexism, racism, and class conflict invisible. Furthermore, by undertaking the “Three Ds,” neoliberalization erodes a sense of belonging, a common language for naming the suffering, and any durable agency. This yields the most profound unconsciousness imaginable, including, ultimately, a lack of awareness of goingon- being. How is the language of inter-relationality to make any sense for people in such a condition? Where are its referents now? We are reduced here to a voiceless and nameless suffering. So that is where we must begin. William Davies ( 2015 ) speaks, I believe, to this situation: “Rather than seek to alter our feelings, now would be a good time to take what we’ve turned inwards, and attempt to direct it back out again” (p. 11). Part of the wisdom of inter-relationality is that nothing can “make sense” outside of relationships. Especially when we no longer know who we are, and our suffering has no name, we need others who will be present to bear witness. We can only direct our suffering back out when we can direct it to others, even when this means, initially, sitting in silence together. There is no hope unless we can begin with at least this seed of solidarity. This does not mean “psychotherapy for everybody.” Rising from such a deep unconsciousness occurs best in groups, and perhaps even in movements, where “deep calls unto deep.” After many years of activism, Angela Davis ( 2016 ) confesses: I don’t know whether I would have survived had not movements survived, had not communities of resistance, communities of struggle. So whatever I’m doing I always feel myself directly connected to those communities and I think that this is an era where we have to encourage that sense of community particularly at a time when neoliberalism attempts to force people to think of themselves only in individual terms and not in collective terms. It is in collectivities that we find reservoirs of hope and optimism. (p. 49) So, to undo the spell of neoliberalism, we must “play the record in reverse.” That means finding paths, however meager, back to solidarity. And this brings us to the next chapter, in which I must respond to the inevitable question: “Where do we go from here?”

#### Stopping capital is necessary to avoid extinction

William Robinson 16, UC Santa Barbra sociology professor, 4-12-2016, “Sadistic Capitalism: Six Urgent Matters for Humanity in Global Crisis,” http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/35596-sadistic-capitalism-six-urgent-matters-for-humanity-in-global-crisis)

In these mean streets of globalized capitalism in crisis, it has become profitable to turn poverty and inequality into a tourist attraction. The South African Emoya Luxury Hotel and Spa company has made a glamorized spectacle of it. The resort recently advertised an opportunity for tourists to stay "in our unique Shanty Town ... and experience traditional township living within a safe private game reserve environment." A cluster of simulated shanties outside of Bloemfontein that the company has constructed "is ideal for team building, braais, bachelors [parties], theme parties and an experience of a lifetime," read the ad. The luxury accommodations, made to appear from the outside as shacks, featured paraffin lamps, candles, a battery-operated radio, an outside toilet, a drum and fireplace for cooking, as well as under-floor heating, air conditioning and wireless internet access. A well-dressed, young white couple is pictured embracing in a field with the corrugated tin shanties in the background. The only thing missing in this fantasy world of sanitized space and glamorized poverty was the people themselves living in poverty. The "luxury shanty town" in South Africa is a fitting metaphor for global capitalism as a whole. Faced with a stagnant global economy, elites have managed to turn war, structural violence and inequality into opportunities for capital, pleasure and entertainment. It is hard not to conclude that unchecked capitalism has become what I term "sadistic capitalism," in which the suffering and deprivation generated by capitalism become a source of aesthetic pleasure, leisure and entertainment for others. I recently had the opportunity to travel through several countries in Latin America, the Middle East, North Africa, East Asia and throughout North America. I was on sabbatical to research what the global crisis looks like on the ground around the world. Everywhere I went, social polarization and political tensions have reached explosive dimensions. Where is the crisis headed, what are the possible outcomes and what does it tell us about global capitalism and resistance? This crisis is not like earlier structural crises of world capitalism, such as in the 1930s or 1970s. This one is fast becoming systemic. The crisis of humanity shares aspects of earlier structural crises of world capitalism, but there are six novel, interrelated dimensions to the current moment that I highlight here, in broad strokes, as the "big picture" context in which countries and peoples around the world are experiencing a descent into chaos and uncertainty. 1) The level of global social polarization and inequality is unprecedented in the face of out-of-control, over-accumulated capital. In January 2016, the development agency Oxfam published a follow-up to its report on global inequality that had been released the previous year. According to the new report, now just 62 billionaires -- down from 80 identified by the agency in its January 2015 report -- control as much wealth as one half of the world's population, and the top 1% owns more wealth than the other 99% combined. Beyond the transnational capitalist class and the upper echelons of the global power bloc, the richest 20 percent of humanity owns some 95 percent of the world's wealth, while the bottom 80 percent has to make do with just 5 percent. This 20-80 divide of global society into haves and the have-nots is the new global social apartheid. It is evident not just between rich and poor countries, but within each country, North and South, with the rise of new affluent high-consumption sectors alongside the downward mobility, "precariatization," destabilization and expulsion of majorities. Escalating inequalities fuel capitalism's chronic problem of over-accumulation: The transnational capitalist class cannot find productive outlets to unload the enormous amounts of surplus it has accumulated, leading to stagnation in the world economy. The signs of an impending depression are everywhere. The front page of the February 20 issue of The Economist read, "The World Economy: Out of Ammo?" Extreme levels of social polarization present a challenge to dominant groups. They strive to purchase the loyalty of that 20 percent, while at the same time dividing the 80 percent, co-opting some into a hegemonic bloc and repressing the rest. Alongside the spread of frightening new systems of social control and repression is heightened dissemination through the culture industries and corporate marketing strategies that depoliticize through consumerist fantasies and the manipulation of desire. As "Trumpism" in the United States so well illustrates, another strategy of co-optation is the manipulation of fear and insecurity among the downwardly mobile so that social anxiety is channeled toward scapegoated communities. This psychosocial mechanism of displacing mass anxieties is not new, but it appears to be increasing around the world in the face of the structural destabilization of capitalist globalization. Scapegoated communities are under siege, such as the Rohingya in Myanmar, the Muslim minority in India, the Kurds in Turkey, southern African immigrants in South Africa, and Syrian and Iraqi refugees and other immigrants in Europe. As with its 20th century predecessor, 21st century fascism hinges on such manipulation of social anxiety at a time of acute capitalist crisis. Extreme inequality requires extreme violence and repression that lend to projects of 21st century fascism. 2) The system is fast reaching the ecological limits to its reproduction. We have reached several tipping points in what environmental scientists refer to as nine crucial "planetary boundaries." We have already exceeded these boundaries in three areas -- climate change, the nitrogen cycle and diversity loss. There have been five previous mass extinctions in earth's history. While all these were due to natural causes, for the first time ever, human conduct is intersecting with and fundamentally altering the earth system. We have entered what Paul Crutzen, the Dutch environmental scientist and Nobel Prize winner, termed the Anthropocene -- a new age in which humans have transformed up to half of the world's surface. We are altering the composition of the atmosphere and acidifying the oceans at a rate that undermines the conditions for life. The ecological dimensions of global crisis cannot be understated. "We are deciding, without quite meaning to, which evolutionary pathways will remain open and which will forever be closed," observes Elizabeth Kolbert in her best seller, The Sixth Extinction. "No other creature has ever managed this ... The Sixth Extinction will continue to determine the course of life long after everything people have written and painted and built has been ground into dust." Capitalism cannot be held solely responsible. The human-nature contradiction has deep roots in civilization itself. The ancient Sumerian empires, for example, collapsed after the population over-salinated their crop soil. The Mayan city-state network collapsed about AD 900 due to deforestation. And the former Soviet Union wrecked havoc on the environment. However, given capital's implacable impulse to accumulate profit and its accelerated commodification of nature, it is difficult to imagine that the environmental catastrophe can be resolved within the capitalist system. "Green capitalism" appears as an oxymoron, as sadistic capitalism's attempt to turn the ecological crisis into a profit-making opportunity, along with the conversion of poverty into a tourist attraction. 3) The sheer magnitude of the means of violence is unprecedented, as is the concentrated control over the means of global communications and the production and circulation of knowledge, symbols and images. We have seen the spread of frightening new systems of social control and repression that have brought us into the panoptical surveillance society and the age of thought control. This real-life Orwellian world is in a sense more perturbing than that described by George Orwell in his iconic novel 1984. In that fictional world, people were compelled to give their obedience to the state ("Big Brother") in exchange for a quiet existence with guarantees of employment, housing and other social necessities. Now, however, the corporate and political powers that be force obedience even as the means of survival are denied to the vast majority. Global apartheid involves the creation of "green zones" that are cordoned off in each locale around the world where elites are insulated through new systems of spatial reorganization, social control and policing. "Green zone" refers to the nearly impenetrable area in central Baghdad that US occupation forces established in the wake of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The command center of the occupation and select Iraqi elite inside that green zone were protected from the violence and chaos that engulfed the country. Urban areas around the world are now green zoned through gentrification, gated communities, surveillance systems, and state and private violence. Inside the world's green zones, privileged strata avail themselves of privatized social services, consumption and entertainment. They can work and communicate through internet and satellite sealed off under the protection of armies of soldiers, police and private security forces. Green zoning takes on distinct forms in each locality. In Palestine, I witnessed such zoning in the form of Israeli military checkpoints, Jewish settler-only roads and the apartheid wall. In Mexico City, the most exclusive residential areas in the upscale Santa Fe District are accessible only by helicopter and private gated roads. In Johannesburg, a surreal drive through the exclusive Sandton City area reveals rows of mansions that appear as military compounds, with private armed towers and electrical and barbed-wire fences. In Cairo, I toured satellite cities ringing the impoverished center and inner suburbs where the country's elite could live out their aspirations and fantasies. They sport gated residential complexes with spotless green lawns, private leisure and shopping centers and English-language international schools under the protection of military checkpoints and private security police. In other cities, green zoning is subtler but no less effective. In Los Angeles, where I live, the freeway system now has an express lane reserved for those that can pay an exorbitant toll. On this lane, the privileged speed by, while the rest remain one lane over, stuck in the city's notorious bumper-to-bumper traffic -- or even worse, in notoriously underfunded and underdeveloped public transportation, where it may take half a day to get to and from work. There is no barrier separating this express lane from the others. However, a near-invisible closed surveillance system monitors every movement. If a vehicle without authorization shifts into the exclusive lane, it is instantly recorded by this surveillance system and a heavy fine is imposed on the driver, under threat of impoundment, while freeway police patrols are ubiquitous. Outside of the global green zones, warfare and police containment have become normalized and sanitized for those not directly at the receiving end of armed aggression. "Militainment" -- portraying and even glamorizing war and violence as entertaining spectacles through Hollywood films and television police shows, computer games and corporate "news" channels -- may be the epitome of sadistic capitalism. It desensitizes, bringing about complacency and indifference. In between the green zones and outright warfare are prison industrial complexes, immigrant and refugee repression and control systems, the criminalization of outcast communities and capitalist schooling. The omnipresent media and cultural apparatuses of the corporate economy, in particular, aim to colonize the mind -- to undermine the ability to think critically and outside the dominant worldview. A neofascist culture emerges through militarism, extreme masculinization, racism and racist mobilizations against scapegoats. 4) We are reaching limits to the extensive expansion of capitalism. Capitalism is like riding a bicycle: When you stop pedaling the bicycle, you fall over. If the capitalist system stops expanding outward, it enters crisis and faces collapse. In each earlier structural crisis, the system went through a new round of extensive expansion -- from waves of colonial conquest in earlier centuries, to the integration in the late 20th and early 21st centuries of the former socialist countries, China, India and other areas that had been marginally outside the system. There are no longer any new territories to integrate into world capitalism. Meanwhile, the privatization of education, health care, utilities, basic services and public land are turning those spaces in global society that were outside of capital's control into "spaces of capital." Even poverty has been turned into a commodity. What is there left to commodify? Where can the system now expand? With the limits to expansion comes a turn toward militarized accumulation -- making wars of endless destruction and reconstruction and expanding the militarization of social and political institutions so as to continue to generate new opportunities for accumulation in the face of stagnation. 5) There is the rise of a vast surplus population inhabiting a "planet of slums," alienated from the productive economy, thrown into the margins and subject to these sophisticated systems of social control and destruction. Global capitalism has no direct use for surplus humanity. But indirectly, it holds wages down everywhere and makes new systems of 21st century slavery possible. These systems include prison labor, the forced recruitment of miners at gunpoint by warlords contracted by global corporations to dig up valuable minerals in the Congo, sweatshops and exploited immigrant communities (including the rising tide of immigrant female caregivers for affluent populations). Furthermore, the global working class is experiencing accelerated "precariatization." The "new precariat" refers to the proletariat that faces capital under today's unstable and precarious labor relations -- informalization, casualization, part-time, temp, immigrant and contract labor. As communities are uprooted everywhere, there is a rising reserve army of immigrant labor. The global working class is becoming divided into citizen and immigrant workers. The latter are particularly attractive to transnational capital, as the lack of citizenship rights makes them particularly vulnerable, and therefore, exploitable. The challenge for dominant groups is how to contain the real and potential rebellion of surplus humanity, the immigrant workforce and the precariat. How can they contain the explosive contradictions of this system? The 21st century megacities become the battlegrounds between mass resistance movements and the new systems of mass repression. Some populations in these cities (and also in abandoned countryside) are at risk of genocide, such as those in Gaza, zones in Somalia and Congo, and swaths of Iraq and Syria. 6) There is a disjuncture between a globalizing economy and a nation-state-based system of political authority. Transnational state apparatuses are incipient and do not wield enough power and authority to organize and stabilize the system, much less to impose regulations on runaway transnational capital. In the wake of the 2008 financial collapse, for instance, the governments of the G-8 and G-20 were unable to impose transnational regulation on the global financial system, despite a series of emergency summits to discuss such regulation. Elites historically have attempted to resolve the problems of over-accumulation by state policies that can regulate the anarchy of the market. However, in recent decades, transnational capital has broken free from the constraints imposed by the nation-state. The more "enlightened" elite representatives of the transnational capitalist class are now clamoring for transnational mechanisms of regulation that would allow the global ruling class to reign in the anarchy of the system in the interests of saving global capitalism from itself and from radical challenges from below. At the same time, the division of the world into some 200 competing nation-states is not the most propitious of circumstances for the global working class. Victories in popular struggles from below in any one country or region can (and often do) become diverted and even undone by the structural power of transnational capital and the direct political and military domination that this structural power affords the dominant groups. In Greece, for instance, the leftist Syriza party came to power in 2015 on the heels of militant worker struggles and a mass uprising. But the party abandoned its radical program as a result of the enormous pressure exerted on it from the European Central Bank and private international creditors. The Systemic Critique of Global Capitalism A growing number of transnational elites themselves now recognize that any resolution to the global crisis must involve redistribution downward of income. However, in the viewpoint of those from below, a neo-Keynesian redistribution within the prevailing corporate power structure is not enough. What is required is a redistribution of power downward and transformation toward a system in which social need trumps private profit. A global rebellion against the transnational capitalist class has spread since the financial collapse of 2008. Wherever one looks, there is popular, grassroots and leftist struggle, and the rise of new cultures of resistance: the Arab Spring; the resurgence of leftist politics in Greece, Spain and elsewhere in Europe; the tenacious resistance of Mexican social movements following the Ayotzinapa massacre of 2014; the favela uprising in Brazil against the government's World Cup and Olympic expulsion policies; the student strikes in Chile; the remarkable surge in the Chinese workers' movement; the shack dwellers and other poor people's campaigns in South Africa; Occupy Wall Street, the immigrant rights movement, Black Lives Matter, fast food workers' struggle and the mobilization around the Bernie Sanders presidential campaign in the United States. This global revolt is spread unevenly and faces many challenges. A number of these struggles, moreover, have suffered setbacks, such as the Greek working-class movement and, tragically, the Arab Spring. What type of a transformation is viable, and how do we achieve it? How we interpret the global crisis is itself a matter of vital importance as politics polarize worldwide between a neofascist and a popular response. The systemic critique of global capitalism must strive to influence, from this vantage point, the discourse and practice of movements for a more just distribution of wealth and power. Our survival may depend on it.

#### The alternative is a politics of organizing around the common experience of life shaped by political economy. This starting point creates a mode of solidarity that doesn’t just add categories and stirs but creates an inclusive class identity via struggle that transforms participants.

Leo Panitch 18, York University Canada Research Chair in Comparative Political Economy, From the Streets to the State: Changing The World By Taking Power, pg 26-28

What accounts for the impasse of the left by the late twentieth century? Over the last four decades one of the central tropes of intellectual discourse, epitomized by the popularity of Laclau and Mouffe’s Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, criticizes the strategic mistake of excessively emphasizing class identity and consciousness. Even Geoff Eley’s (2002) monumental historical study, quoted above, which demonstrates how effective socialist labor movements were as advocates for democratic reform, also stresses “the insufficiencies of socialist advocacy,” not least pertaining to gender and race, in terms of “all the ways socialism’s dominance of the Left marginalized issues not easily assimilable to the class-political precepts so fundamental to the socialist vision” (10). Yet the left’s current conundrum in the face of the new right also brings to light the insufficiencies of the politics of identity, which has not only filled the void of class politics in recent decades but has often played a significant role in shunting class aside. Adolph Reed Jr. (1999) has perhaps most powerfully made the case for “a politics focused on bringing people together” around the common experience of everyday life shaped and constrained by political economy—for example, finding, keeping or advancing in a job with a living wage, keeping or attaining access to decent healthcare, securing decent, affordable housing. . . . Such concerns and the objective of collectively crafting a vehicle to address them is a politics that proceeds from what we have in common. . . . To the extent that differences are real and meaningful, the best way to negotiate them is from a foundation of shared purpose and practical solidarity based on a pragmatic understanding of the old principle that an injury to one is an injury to all. This is not simply a politics that attempts to build on a base in the working class; it is a politics that in the process can fashion a broadly inclusive class identity. (xxvii–xxviii) The failure to absorb this strategic insight, which might entail severe costs even for liberal democracy, is becoming ever clearer amidst the reactionary electoral appeal of a new right to working class voters. Nevertheless, this chapter shall argue that it also has much to do with the longstanding problems with the practice of democracy inside the institutions of the labor movement and the political parties with which they were intertwined. It has become far too commonplace to address these problems by criticizing the “ontological” mistake of those theorists who advance a class-oriented politics. This is a kind of idealism which attributes far too much historical impact to theoretical texts. It avoids serious inquiry into what determined the actual historical practices of working class parties and unions as democratic institutions. It thereby fails to uncover what really accounts for their limited contribution to the development of workers’ democratic capacities so as to carry the struggle for democracy beyond the electoral arena to the workplace, to the corporations and banks that dominate the economy, and perhaps most important to the democratization of the institutions of the state.

## Case

### AT: Trust Black Women---1NC

#### Role is to evaluate normative statements based on the quality of debating.

#### Prefer it: It’s the least arbitrary metric for decision-making. Anything else devolves into solipsism AND bankrupts any model for debate.

#### Calls for surrender will lead to elite capture.

Olúfémi Táíwò 20, Assistant Professor, Philosophy, Georgetown University, “Being-in-the-Room Privilege: Elite Capture and Epistemic Deference,” The Philosopher, vol. 108, no. 4, dml.

I think it’s less about the core ideas and more about the prevailing norms that convert them into practice. The call to “listen to the most affected” or “centre the most marginalized” is ubiquitous in many academic and activist circles. But it’s never sat well with me. In my experience, when people say they need to “listen to the most affected”, it isn’t because they intend to set up Skype calls to refugee camps or to collaborate with houseless people. Instead, it has more often meant handing conversational authority and attentional goods to those who most snugly fit into the social categories associated with these ills – regardless of what they actually do or do not know, or what they have or have not personally experienced. In the case of my conversation with Helen, my racial category tied me more “authentically” to an experience that neither of us had had. She was called to defer to me by the rules of the game as we understood it. Even where stakes are high – where potential researchers are discussing how to understand a social phenomenon, where activists are deciding what to target – these rules often prevail.

The trap wasn’t that standpoint epistemology was affecting the conversation, but how. Broadly, the norms of putting standpoint epistemology into practice call for practices of deference: giving offerings, passing the mic, believing. These are good ideas in many cases, and the norms that ask us to be ready to do them stem from admirable motivations: a desire to increase the social power of marginalized people identified as sources of knowledge and rightful targets of deferential behaviour. But deferring in this way as a rule or default political orientation can actually work counter to marginalized groups’ interests, especially in elite spaces.

Some rooms have outsize power and influence: the Situation Room, the newsroom, the bargaining table, the conference room. Being in these rooms means being in a position to affect institutions and broader social dynamics by way of deciding what one is to say and do. Access to these rooms is itself a kind of social advantage, and one often gained through some prior social advantage. From a societal standpoint, the “most affected” by the social injustices we associate with politically important identities like gender, class, race, and nationality are disproportionately likely to be incarcerated, underemployed, or part of the 44 percent of the world’s population without internet access – and thus both left out of the rooms of power and largely ignored by the people in the rooms of power. Individuals who make it past the various social selection pressures that filter out those social identities associated with these negative outcomes are most likely to be in the room. That is, they are most likely to be in the room precisely because of ways in which they are systematically different from (and thus potentially unrepresentative of) the very people they are then asked to represent in the room.

I suspected that Helen’s offer was a trap. She was not the one who set it, but it threatened to ensnare us both all the same. Broader cultural norms – the sort set in motion by prefacing statements with “As a Black man…” – cued up a set of standpoint-respecting practices that many of us know consciously or unconsciously by rote. However, the forms of deference that often follow are ultimately self-undermining and only reliably serve “elite capture”: the control over political agendas and resources by a group’s most advantaged people. If we want to use standpoint epistemology to challenge unjust power arrangements, it’s hard to imagine how we could do worse.

To say what’s wrong with the popular, deferential applications of standpoint epistemology, we need to understand what makes it popular. A number of cynical answers present themselves: some (especially the more socially advantaged) don’t genuinely want social change – they just want the appearance of it. Alternatively, deference to figures from oppressed communities is a performance that sanitizes, apologizes for, or simply distracts from the fact that the deferrer has enough “in the room” privilege for their “lifting up” of a perspective to be of consequence.

I suspect there is some truth to these views, but I am unsatisfied. Many of the people who support and enact these deferential norms are rather like Helen: motivated by the right reasons, but trusting people they share such rooms with to help them find the proper practical expression of their joint moral commitments. We don’t need to attribute bad faith to all or even most of those who interpret standpoint epistemology deferentially to explain the phenomenon, and it’s not even clear it would help. Bad “roommates” aren’t the problem for the same reason that Helen being a good roommate wasn’t the solution: the problem emerges from how the rooms themselves are constructed and managed.

To return to the initial example with Helen, the issue wasn’t merely that I hadn’t grown up in the kind of low-income, redlined community she was imagining. The epistemic situation was much worse than this. Many of the facts about me that made my life chances different from those of the people she was imagining were the very same facts that made me likely to be offered things on their behalf. If I had grown up in such a community, we probably wouldn’t have been on the phone together.

Many aspects of our social system serve as filtering mechanisms, determining which interactions happen and between whom, and thus which social patterns people are in a position to observe. For the majority of the 20th century, the U.S. quota system of immigration made legal immigration with a path to citizenship almost exclusively available to Europeans (earning Hitler’s regard as the obvious “leader in developing explicitly racist policies of nationality and immigration”). But the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act opened up immigration possibilities, with a preference for “skilled labour”.

My parents’ qualification as skilled labourers does much to explain their entry into the country and the subsequent class advantages and monetary resources (such as wealth) that I was born into. We are not atypical: the Nigerian-American population is one of the country’s most successful immigrant populations (what no one mentions, of course, is that the 112,000 or so Nigerian-Americans with advanced degrees is utterly dwarfed by the 82 million Nigerians who live on less than a dollar a day, or how the former fact intersects with the latter). The selectivity of immigration law helps explain the rates of educational attainment of the Nigerian diasporic community that raised me, which in turn helps explain my entry into the exclusive Advanced Placement and Honours classes in high school, which in turn helps explain my access to higher education...and so on, and so on.

It is easy, then, to see how this deferential form of standpoint epistemology contributes to elite capture at scale. The rooms of power and influence are at the end of causal chains that have selection effects. As you get higher and higher forms of education, social experiences narrow – some students are pipelined to PhDs and others to prisons. Deferential ways of dealing with identity can inherit the distortions caused by these selection processes.

​But it’s equally easy to see locally – in this room, in this academic literature or field, in this conversation – why this deference seems to make sense. It is often an improvement on the epistemic procedure that preceded it: the person deferred to may well be better epistemically positioned than the others in the room. It may well be the best we can do while holding fixed most of the facts about the rooms themselves: what power resides in them, who is admitted.

But these are the last facts we should want to hold fixed. Doing better than the epistemic norms we’ve inherited from a history of explicit global apartheid is an awfully low bar to set. The facts that explain who ends up in which room shape our world much more powerfully than the squabbles for comparative prestige between people who have already made it into the rooms. And when the conversation is about social justice, the mechanisms of the social system that determine who gets into which room often just are the parts of society we aim to address. For example, the fact that incarcerated people cannot participate in academic discussions about freedom that physically take place on campus is intimately related to the fact that they are locked in cages.

Deference epistemology marks itself as a solution to an epistemic and political problem. But not only does it fail to solve these problems, it adds new ones. One might think questions of justice ought to be primarily concerned with fixing disparities around health care, working conditions, and basic material and interpersonal security. Yet conversations about justice have come to be shaped by people who have ever more specific practical advice about fixing the distribution of attention and conversational power. Deference practices that serve attention-focused campaigns (e.g. we’ve read too many white men, let’s now read some people of colour) can fail on their own highly questionable terms: attention to spokespeople from marginalized groups could, for example, direct attention away from the need to change the social system that marginalizes them.

Elites from marginalized groups can benefit from this arrangement in ways that are compatible with social progress. But treating group elites’ interests as necessarily or even presumptively aligned with full group interests involves a political naiveté we cannot afford. Such treatment of elite interests functions as a racial Reaganomics: a strategy reliant on fantasies about the exchange rate between the attention economy and the material economy.

Perhaps the lucky few who get jobs finding the most culturally authentic and cosmetically radical description of the continuing carnage are really winning one for the culture. Then, after we in the chattering class get the clout we deserve and secure the bag, its contents will eventually trickle down to the workers who clean up after our conferences, to slums of the Global South’s megacities, to its countryside.

But probably not.

A fuller and fairer assessment of what is going on with deference and standpoint epistemology would go beyond technical argument, and contend with the emotional appeals of this strategy of deference. Those in powerful rooms may be “elites” relative to the larger group they represent, but this guarantees nothing about how they are treated in the rooms they are in. After all, a person privileged in an absolute sense (a person belonging to, say, the half of the world that has secure access to “basic needs”) may nevertheless feel themselves to be consistently on the low end of the power dynamics they actually experience. Deference epistemology responds to real, morally weighty experiences of being put down, ignored, sidelined, or silenced. It thus has an important non-epistemic appeal to members of stigmatized or marginalized groups: it intervenes directly in morally consequential practices of giving attention and respect.

The social dynamics we experience have an outsize role in developing and refining our political subjectivity, and our sense of ourselves. But this very strength of standpoint epistemology – its recognition of the importance of perspective – becomes its weakness when combined with deferential practical norms. Emphasis on the ways we are marginalized often matches the world as we have experienced it. But, from a structural perspective, the rooms we never needed to enter (and the explanations of why we can avoid these rooms) might have more to teach us about the world and our place in it. If so, the deferential approach to standpoint epistemology actually prevents “centring” or even hearing from the most marginalized; it focuses us on the interaction of the rooms we occupy, rather than calling us to account for the interactions we don’t experience. This fact about who is in the room, combined with the fact that speaking for others generates its own set of important problems (particularly when they are not there to advocate for themselves), eliminates pressures that might otherwise trouble the centrality of our own suffering – and of the suffering of the marginalized people that do happen to make it into rooms with us.

The dangers with this feature of deference politics are grave, as are the risks for those outside of the most powerful rooms. For those who are deferred to, it can supercharge group-undermining norms. In Conflict is Not Abuse, Sarah Schulman makes a provocative observation about the psychological effects of both trauma and felt superiority: while these often come about for different reasons and have very different moral statuses, they result in similar behavioural patterns. Chief among these are misrepresenting the stakes of conflict (often by overstating harm) or representing others’ independence as a hostile threat (such as failures to “centre” the right topics or people). These behaviours, whatever their causal history, have corrosive effects on individuals who perform them as well as the groups around them, especially when a community’s norms magnify or multiply these behaviours rather than constraining or metabolizing them.

For those who defer, the habit can supercharge moral cowardice. The norms provide social cover for the abdication of responsibility: it displaces onto individual heroes, a hero class, or a mythicized past the work that is ours to do now in the present. Their perspective may be clearer on this or that specific matter, but their overall point of view isn’t any less particular or constrained by history than ours. More importantly, deference places the accountability that is all of ours to bear onto select people – and, more often than not, a hyper-sanitized and thoroughly fictional caricature of them.

The same tactics of deference that insulate us from criticism also insulate us from connection and transformation. They prevent us from engaging empathetically and authentically with the struggles of other people – prerequisites of coalitional politics. As identities become more and more fine-grained and disagreements sharper, we come to realize that “coalitional politics” (understood as struggle across difference) is, simply, politics. Thus, the deferential orientation, like that fragmentation of political collectivity it enables, is ultimately anti-political.

Deference rather than interdependence may soothe short-term psychological wounds. But it does so at a steep cost: it can undermine the epistemic goals that motivate the project, and it entrenches a politics unbefitting of anyone fighting for freedom rather than for privilege, for collective liberation rather than mere parochial advantage.

How would a constructive approach to putting standpoint epistemology into practice differ from a deferential approach? A constructive approach would focus on the pursuit of specific goals or end results rather than avoiding “complicity” in injustice or adhering to moral principles. It would be concerned primarily with building institutions and cultivating practices of information-gathering rather than helping. It would focus on accountability rather than conformity. It would calibrate itself directly to the task of redistributing social resources and power rather than to intermediary goals cashed out in terms of pedestals or symbolism. It would focus on building and rebuilding rooms, not regulating traffic within and between them – it would be a world-making project: aimed at building and rebuilding actual structures of social connection and movement, rather than mere critique of the ones we already have.

The water crisis in Flint, Michigan presents a clear example of both the possibilities and limitations of refining our epistemic politics in this way. Michigan’s Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), a government body tasked with the support of “healthy communities”, with a team of fifty trained scientists at its disposal, was complicit in covering up the scale and gravity of the public health crisis from the beginning of the crisis in 2014 until it garnered national attention in 2015.

The MDEQ, speaking from a position of epistemic and political authority, defended the status quo in Flint. They claimed that “Flint water is safe to drink”, and were cited in Flint Mayor Dayne Walling’s statement aiming to “dispel myths and promote the truth about the Flint River” during the April 2014 transition to the Flint River water source. That transition was spearheaded under the tenure of the city’s emergency manager Darnell Earley (an African-American, like many of the city residents he helped to poison). After the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) circulated a leaked internal memo from the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in July of 2014 expressing concern about lead in Flint water, the MDEQ produced a doctored report that put the overall measure of lead levels within federally mandated levels by mysteriously failing to count two contaminated samples.

The reaction from residents was immediate. The month after the switch in water source, residents reported that their tap water was discoloured and gave off an alarming odour. They didn’t need their oppression to be “celebrated”, “centred”, or narrated in the newest academic parlance. They didn’t need someone to understand what it felt like to be poisoned. What they needed was the lead out of their water. So they got to work.

The first step was to develop epistemic authority. To achieve this they built a new room: one that put Flint residents and activists in active collaboration with scientists who had the laboratories that could run the relevant tests and prove the MDEQ’s report to be fraudulent. Flint residents’ outcry recruited scientists to their cause and led a “citizen science” campaign, further raising the alarm about the water quality and distributing sample kits to neighbours to submit for testing. In this stage, the alliance of residents and scientists won, and the poisoning of the children of Flint emerged as a national scandal.

But this was not enough. The second step – cleaning the water – required more than state acknowledgement: it required apportioning labour and resources to fix the water and address the continuing health concerns. What Flint residents received, initially, was a mix of platitudes and mockery from the ruling elite (some of this personally committed by a President that shared a racial identity with many of them). This year, however, it looks as though the tireless activism of Flint residents and their expanding list of teammates has won additional and more meaningful victories: the ongoing campaign is pushing the replacements of the problematic service lines to their final stage and is forcing the state of Michigan to agree to a settlement of $600 million for affected families.

This outcome is in no way a wholesale victory: not only will attorney fees cut a substantial portion of payouts, but the settlement cannot undo the damage that was caused to the residents. A constructive epistemology cannot guarantee full victory over an oppressive system by itself. No epistemic orientation can by itself undo the various power asymmetries between the people and the imperial state system. But it can help make the game a little more competitive – and deference epistemology isn’t even playing.

The biggest threats to social justice attention and informational economies are not the absence of yet more jargon to describe, ever more precisely or incisively, the epistemic, attentional, or interpersonal afflictions of the disempowered. The biggest threats are the erosion of the practical and material bases for popular power over knowledge production and distribution, particularly that which could aid effective political action and constrain or eliminate predation by elites. The capture and corruption of these bases by well-positioned elites, especially tech corporations, goes on unabated and largely unchallenged, including: the corporate monopolization of local news, the ongoing destruction and looting of the journalistic profession, the interference of corporations and governments in key democratic processes, and the domination of elite interests in the production of knowledge by research universities and the circulation of the output of these distorted processes by established media organizations.

Confronting these threats requires leaving some rooms – and building new ones.

The constructive approach to standpoint epistemology is demanding. It asks that we swim upstream: to be accountable and responsive to people who aren’t yet in the room, to build the kinds of rooms we could sit in together, rather than merely judiciously navigating the rooms history has built for us. But this weighty demand is par for the course when it comes to the politics of knowledge: the American philosopher Sandra Harding famously pointed out that standpoint epistemology, properly understood, demands more rigour from science and knowledge production processes generally, not less.

But one important topic stands unaddressed. The deferential approach to standpoint epistemology often comes packaged with concern and attention to the importance of lived experience. Among these, traumatic experiences are especially foregrounded.

At this juncture, scholarly analysis and argument fail me. The remainder of what I have to say skews more towards conviction than contention. But the life of books has taught me that conviction has just as much to teach, however differently posed or processed, and so I press on.

I take concerns about trauma especially seriously. I grew up in the United States, a nation structured by settler colonialism, racial slavery, and their aftermath, with enough collective and historical trauma to go round. I also grew up in a Nigerian diasporic community, populated by many who had genocide in living memory. At the national and community level, I have seen a lot of traits of norms, personality, quirks of habit and action that I’ve suspected were downstream of these facts. At the level of individual experience, I’ve watched and felt myself change in reaction to fearing for my dignity or life, to crushing pain and humiliation. I reflect on these traumatic moments often, and very seldom think: “That was educational”.

These experiences can be, if we are very fortunate, building blocks. What comes of them depends on how the blocks are put together: what standpoint epistemologists call the “achievement thesis”. Briana Toole clarifies that, by itself, one’s social location only puts a person in a position to know. “Epistemic privilege” or advantage is achieved only through deliberate, concerted struggle from that position.

I concede outright that this is certainly one possible result of the experience of oppression: have no doubt that humiliation, deprivation, and suffering can build (especially in the context of the deliberate, structured effort of “consciousness raising”, as Toole specifically highlights). But these same experiences can also destroy, and if I had to bet on which effect would win most often, it would be the latter. As Agnes Callard rightly notes, trauma (and even the righteous, well-deserved anger that often accompanies it) can corrupt as readily as it can ennoble. Perhaps more so.

Contra the old expression, pain – whether borne of oppression or not – is a poor teacher. Suffering is partial, short-sighted, and self-absorbed. We shouldn’t have a politics that expects different: oppression is not a prep school.

When it comes down to it, the thing I believe most deeply about deference epistemology is that it asks something of trauma that it cannot give. Demanding as the constructive approach may be, the deferential approach is far more demanding and in a far more unfair way: it asks the traumatized to shoulder burdens alone that we ought to share collectively. When I think about my trauma, I don’t think about grand lessons. I think about the quiet nobility of survival. The very fact that those chapters weren’t the final ones of my story is powerful enough writing all on its own. It is enough to ask of those experiences that I am still here to remember them.

Deference epistemology asks us to be less than we are – and not even for our own benefit. As Nick Estes explains in the context of Indigenous politics: “The cunning of trauma politics is that it turns actual people and struggles, whether racial or Indigenous citizenship and belonging, into matters of injury. It defines an entire people mostly on their trauma and not by their aspirations or sheer humanity”. This performance is not for the benefit of Indigenous people, but “for white audiences or institutions of power”.

I also think about James Baldwin’s realization that the things that tormented him the most were “the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, who had ever been alive”. That I have survived abuse of various kinds, have faced near-death from both accidental circumstance and violence (different as the particulars of these may be from those around me) is not a card to play in gamified social interaction or a weapon to wield in battles over prestige. It is not what gives me a special right to speak, to evaluate, or to decide for a group. It is a concrete, experiential manifestation of the vulnerability that connects me to most of the people on this Earth. It comes between me and other people not as a wall, but as a bridge.

#### Trusting black femmes as a political strategy fails given that you will inevitably receive contradictory advice from black women who disagree with each other. This is because identity doesn’t guarantee radical interests, but privilege doesn’t necessarily make us clueless. Use debate as a space to build substantive political opinions.

RL Stephens 14, Chicago-based organizer for DSA, “My Skinfolk Ain’t All Kinfolk: The Left’s Problem with Identity Politics,” http://www.orchestratedpulse.com/2014/03/problem-identity-politics

Imperial America, murderous America, the America that abused and robbed countries like Bolivia —that America was me. I too was a settler; my Black feet were stained red with blood as I stood on stolen indigenous land. I too benefitted from colonialism, capitalism, and the other facets of White supremacy. I could no longer simply point the finger at White people. My marginalized identity didn’t absolve me. I began to think systemically. I had to actually develop a multidimensional worldview and take political stances that drew on more than my lived experiences. When I returned to the United States and became involved in leftist politics, I soon realized that the political scene was, unfortunately, still stuck on personal identity. WHAT IS IDENTITY POLITICS? In this age of (misinterpreted) intersectionality, our politics tend to rely on the body. When we deal with race, White people embody White supremacy and privilege, while non-Whites are the corporal manifestation of resistance. We obsess over White privilege and how we can get more people of color involved in our spaces and projects, but does White supremacy really disappear when there are no White people in the room? Some people look at these flaws and call for an end to “identity politics”, but I think that’s a mistake. At its most basic level, identity politics merely means political activity that caters to the interests of a particular social group. In a certain sense, all politics are identity politics. However, it’s one thing to intentionally form a group around articulated interests; it’s another matter entirely when group membership is socially imposed. Personal identities are socially defined through a combination of systemic rewards/marginalization plus actual and/or potential violence. We can’t build politics from that foundation because these socially imposed identities don’t necessarily tell us anything about someone’s political interests. Successful identity politics requires shared interests, not shared personal identities. I’m not here to tell you that personal identity doesn’t matter; we rightfully point out that systemic power shapes people’s lives. Simply put, my message is that personal identity is not the only thing that matters. We spend so much energy labeling people—privileged/marginalized, oppressor/oppressed—that we often neglect to build spaces that antagonize the systems that cause our collective trauma. All You Blacks Want All the Same Things We assume that if a person is systemically marginalized, then they must have a vested interest in dismantling that system. Yet, that’s not always the case. Take Orville Lloyd Douglas, who last summer wrote an article in the Guardian in which he admitted that he hates being Black. I can honestly say I hate being a black male… I just don’t fit into a neat category of the stereotypical views people have of black men. I hate rap music, I hate most sports, and I like listening to rock music… I have nothing in common with the archetypes about the black male… I resent being compared to young black males (or young people of any race) who are lazy, not disciplined, or delinquent. Orville Lloyd Douglas, Why I Hate Being a Black Man As we can see from Douglas’ cry for help, membership in a marginalized group is no guarantee that a person can understand and effectively combat systemic oppression. Yet, we seem to treat all marginalized voices as equal, as if they are all insightful, as if there is no diversity of thought, as if—in the case of race– “All you Blacks want all the same things”. Shared identity does not equal shared interests. John Ridley, the Oscar-winning screenplay writer of 12 Years a Slave, is a good example. He’s written screenplays based on Jimi Hendrix, the L.A. riots, and other poignant moments and icons within Black history. He wants to see more Black people in Hollywood and he has a long history of successfully incorporating Black and Brown characters into comic book stories and franchises. However, in 2006, Ridley made waves with an essay in which he castigated Black people who did not live up to his standards; saying, “It’s time for ascended blacks to wish niggers good luck.” So I say this: It’s time for ascended blacks to wish niggers good luck. Just as whites may be concerned with the good of all citizens but don’t travel their days worrying specifically about the well-being of hillbillies from Appalachia, we need to send niggers on their way. We need to start extolling the most virtuous of ourselves. It is time to celebrate the New Black Americans—those who have sealed the Deal, who aren’t beholden to liberal indulgence any more than they are to the disdain of the hard Right. It is time to praise blacks who are merely undeniable in their individuality and exemplary in their levels of achievement. The Manifesto of Ascendancy for the Modern American Nigger While Ridley and I share cultural affinity, and we both want to see Black people doing well, shared cultural affinity and common identity are not enough– which recent history makes abundantly clear. Barack Obama continues to deport record numbers of Brown immigrants here at home, while mercilessly bombing Brown folks abroad. Don Lemon, speaking in support of Bill O’Reilly, said that racism would be lessened if Black people pulled up their pants and stopped littering. Last fall, 40% of Black U.S. Americans supported airstrikes against Syria. My skinfolk ain’t all kinfolk, and the Left needs to catch up. NO MORE ALLIES John Ridley, Barack Obama, myself, and Don Lemon are all Black males. We also have conflicting political positions and interests, but how can we decide which paths are valid if we only pay attention to personal identity? Instead of learning to recognize how the overarching systems maintain their power and then attacking those tools, we spend our energy finding an “other” to embody the systemic marginalization and legitimize our spaces and ideals. In some interracial spaces I feel like nothing more than an interchangeable token whose only purpose is to legitimize the politics of my White peers. If not me, then some other Black person would fill the slot. We use these “others” as authorities on various issues, and we use concepts like “privilege” to ensure that people stay in their lanes. People of color are the authorities on race, while LGBTQ people are the authorities on gender and sexuality, and so forth and so on. Yet, experience is not the same as expertise, and privilege doesn’t automatically make you clueless. As I’ve discussed, these groups are not oriented around a singular set of political ideals and practices. Furthermore, as we see in Andrea Smith’s work, there are often competing interests within these groups. We mistake essentialism for intersectionality as we look for the ideal subjects to embody the various forms of oppression; true intersectionality is a description of systemic power, not a call for diversity. If we don’t develop any substantive analysis of systemic power, then it’s impossible to know what our interests are, and aligning with one another according to shared interests is out of the question. In this climate all that remains is the ally, which requires no real knowledge or political effort, only the willingness to appear supportive of an “other”. We can’t build power that way. After having gathered to oppose organized White supremacy at the University of North Carolina, a group of organizers in Durham, North Carolina found that the Left’s emphasis on personal identity and allyship was a major reason why their efforts collapsed. They proposed that we adopt the practice of forming alliances rather than identifying allies. (h/t NinjaBikeSlut) Much of the discourse around being an ally seems to presume a relationship of one-sided support, with one person or group following another’s leadership. While there are certainly times where this makes sense, it is misleading to use the term ally to describe this relationship. In an alliance, the two parties support each other while maintaining their own self-determination and autonomy, and are bound together not by the relationship of leader and follower but by a shared goal. In other words, one cannot actually be the ally of a group or individual with whom one has no political affinity – and this means that one cannot be an ally to an entire demographic group, like people of color, who do not share a singular cohesive political or personal desire. The Divorce of Thought From Deed While it’s vital for me to learn the politics and history of marginalized experiences that differ from my own, listen to their voices, and respect their spaces and contributions — it’s also important for me to understand the ways in which these same systems have shaped my own identity/history as well. Since we know that oppression is systemic and multidimensional, then I’m going to have to step outside of personal experience and begin to develop political ideals and practices that actually antagonize those systems. I have to understand and articulate my interests, which will allow me to operate from a position of strength and form political alliances that advance those interests– interests which speak to issues beyond just my own immediate experience. Ultimately, I want to attack power, not people. In order to get there, the Left needs more identity politics, not less.

#### Substance of argument matters, not a procedural emphasis on identity. Their model self-isolates into political failure.

Stephens 16 – R.L Stephens, A. Philip Randolph Fellow at Jacobin, DSA National Political Committee & Editor-In-Chief of DSA Weekly, Founder of Orchestrated Pulse, “What Is the Left?”, Jacobin, 7-25, https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/07/left-class-racism-identity-struggle-oppression

Again, I love being Black, the joys and the wounds, I embrace it all. My cultural affinity for Black identity informs my politics, of course, but it doesn’t define them. Nor do I possess a wounded attachment to the marginalization I experience as a result of racism, as We Are The Left would have me do.

WATL claim, “To overturn this hierarchy, it is essential that marginalized people speak to their own concerns, define the agenda, lead movements, and continually complicate the white, male picture of the world with their own perspectives.” They center marginalized identity, which is to traffic in essentialism, as if — to quote Kanye — “all you Blacks want all the same things.”

We must judge a tree by its fruit, but what exactly is the practical effect of this chatter about the primacy of personal identity? Just yesterday, I was distributing anti-Trump leaflets. A woman aggressively shoved the paper back in my hand, saying, “I’m with Trump.” She was Black. She was an immigrant. She spoke in a thick accent as she ranted at me about the evils of homosexuality and abortion. She concluded her diatribe by saying “the liberals take Black people for granted,” and so she would be voting for Trump because “he really gets it.”

Did this marginalized immigrant Black woman’s perspective “complicate the white, male picture of the world” as WATL assume? Their procedural emphasis on speech and voice, without an attendant scrutiny of political substance, makes for the tokenization of marginalized people and not our emancipation. That may work for corporate diversity initiatives, and that’s no compliment.

At one point, the WATL writers imply that it’s whiteness and not capitalism that is the enemy and they flat out mock anyone who would say otherwise. Each year, nearly thirty million low-wage workers suffer billions of dollars of wage theft. It’s true that ethnic and gender minorities as well as women are over-represented among low-wage workers, but it’s also a fact that not all the thieving bosses are white. Wage theft by a Black boss rather than a white one in no way mitigates the loss.

We Are The Left members present themselves as being “the people the Left explicitly stands in solidarity with.” That doesn’t mean much to me. A Latino and an Asian American crafted the Bush torture memos, which were then carried forward by the nation’s first Black president. The diversity at hand makes the waterboarding no less painful for those detained in Guantanamo’s dungeons.

The weapons manufacturer Lockheed Martin made a touching “It Gets Better” video featuring its gay employees, but their presence makes Lockheed’s bombs no less deadly. Solidarity is about what you do, not who you are.

Though WATL write that racism and the like are “varieties of capitalist oppression,” the rest of their analysis belies this understanding. Their intersectional worldview in effect treats class as merely another link in a colinear line of oppression, rather than the base from and through which all other forms of oppression flow.

My objection to the reductive fetishism of personal identity does not, however, mean I don’t care about race and gender and other hierarchies. So my critiques of so-called identity politics in no way “directly attack marginalized people” as We Are The Left accuse of any critic.

As a labor organizer, I see our fight against the bosses as being fundamental to transforming the cultural hierarchies that subjugate working people. Cultural hierarchies are part and parcel to the social reproduction of capitalism and can therefore only be overcome through class struggle.

Let’s go back to the issue of wage theft, where billions are stolen from low-income people. For poor women, it’s very difficult to leave an abusive partner when the boss is stealing their wages. Again, the solution isn’t abstract intersectional affinity with an identity group, it’s material class struggle. Just as faith without deeds is dead, so too is solidarity without struggle.

Secretaries in my union did an organizing drive a couple decades back. They fought the bosses, and they won real gains in wages, benefits, and respect on the job. In the wake of the victory, around fifteen of the women divorced their husbands. It was the class struggle against the boss which gave them the financial resources, organizing skill, and community support necessary to free themselves from their abusers. That anecdote is my politics in a nutshell. Material struggle changes people, shifts their ideologies, creates opportunity to embrace new cultural practices and institutions.

It’s hard work, but material struggle brings progress. Struggle is just that, struggle; it’s imperfect people striving to make a more perfect world. We will not all get along all the time. But there is no collective struggle for the perpetually offended, who purge and self-isolate their way to irrelevance. That is not to excuse abuse or bigotry, but to know that in wrestling to bring people together in common struggle we create the possibility for shared values, for personal transformation.

#### Reject presumptive distrust. It locks in existing inequities.

Smith 10 – Sandra Susan Smith, Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Chicago, Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Michigan's Poverty Research and Training Center, “Race and Trust”, http://sociology.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/faculty/Smith/RACE%20AND%20TRUST.pdf

Trust, generalized, particularized, and strategic, has been associated with a whole host of benefits, not only for individuals, but for communities and nations as well. Luhmann (1979) describes trust as a "social lubricant" that "reduces complexity." In so doing, trust encourages solidarity, cohesion, consensus, and cooperation (Suttles 1968, Rotter 1980, Fukuyama 1995, Misztal 1996, Yamagishi 2001), which reduces transaction costs (Putnam 2000) and promotes health (Kawachi et al. 1997), happiness (Rotter 1980, Yamagishi 2001), safety (Sampson & Raudenbush 1999), the development of mutually beneficial, cooperative relationships (Cook et al. 2005), economic prosperity (Fukuyama 1995), and democracy (Brehm & Rahn 1997, Putnam 2000; but see Uslaner 2002).

Given the benefits often associated with generalized, strategic, and even particularized trust, groups that trust less and distrust more are at a distinct disadvantage in terms of social and economic well-being. And indeed, many point to blacks' lower trust toward whites and each other to explain their poorer social and economic outcomes. Fukuyama (1995), for instance, writes that pervasive distrust is one of the key factors delaying economic advancement in the black community. He argues that blacks' distrust of others and each other has hindered their ability to start their own businesses that would, at the very least, cater to the unique needs of the black community while providing opportunities for economic advancement. This, after all, Fukuyama argues, is how most immigrant groups have achieved mobility. Fukuyama locates blacks' low rates of self-employment in their low levels of social cohesion and in-group trust, a product of the particularly harsh and atomizing system of American slavery. Lacking cohesion and trust, native-born blacks in particular have been unable to organize informal systems of economic support, such as rotating credit associations (see also Bonnett 1981 and Light 1972) and character loans (Portes & Sensenbrenner 1993), which have been critical sources of funds that other ethnoracial groups have used for business start-up and survival. Thus, according to Fukuyama, native-born blacks' relatively delayed social and economic mobility has as much if not more to do with their lack of social cohesion, solidarity, and in-group trust than it does with structures of inequality.

My own research also suggests that pervasive distrust among the black poor hinders jobseekers’ abilities to find out about and get jobs. Specifically, employing in-depth interviews and survey data of 105 low-income blacks from one Midwestern city, I found that those in possession of job information and influence overwhelmingly approached job-finding assistance with great skepticism and distrust (Smith 2005, 2007). Over 80% of respondents in my sample expressed concern that jobseekers in their networks were too unmotivated to accept assistance, required great expenditures of time and emotional energy, or acted too irresponsibly on the job, thereby jeopardizing contacts’ own reputations in the eyes of employers and negatively affecting their already tenuous labor market prospects. Consequently, they were generally reluctant to provide the type of assistance that best facilitates job acquisition in low-wage labor markets where employers rely heavily on informal referrals for recruitment and screening. Although some remain skeptical about the importance of these micro-level processes for understanding persistent joblessness among the black poor (Quillian & Redd 2008), I posit that these interpersonal trust dynamics are central, essentially cementing the disadvantage initiated by larger macro- and meso-level forces (see Sampson 2009).

Pervasive distrust has also been found to encourage delinquency among adolescents, dissatisfaction and rejection of legal authorities’ decisions, and noncooperation around crime prevention and conflict resolution. Among black adolescents, Taylor and colleagues (1994) have found that distrust toward whites is positively associated with a greater willingness to break the law (see also Biafora et al. 1993). Specifically, after controlling for class background, adolescents in their sample who reported distrust and suspicion toward whites were significantly less likely to report respect for the law and more likely to think it okay to take part in relatively minor acts of delinquency. According to Tyler & Huo (2002), blacks’ and Latinos’ poor experiences with legal authorities lead them to distrust the law and reject decisions that legal authorities make. And in Code of the Street, Anderson (1999) contends that pervasive distrust, both toward the law and toward other blacks, specifically those residing in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage, has led to individualistic approaches to handling conflicts and gaining respect that are based on violence and retribution; these approaches have only increased rates of violent crime.

Finally, pervasive distrust has also been found to hamper cooperation around child care. In Managing to Make It, Furstenberg and colleagues (1999) describe how pervasive distrust among neighbors led to individualistic approaches to childrearing within poor black communities (see also Sampson et al. 1999). The most successful inner-city parents were those who went outside of their communities to find the social and institutional supports they needed to raise well-adjusted children while isolating themselves from neighbors whose in- fluence they feared would have a detrimental effect on their children. Less successful parents also tended to self-isolate, but they did so without seeking extracommunity supports, leaving them relatively ill equipped either to protect their children or to provide them with the necessary skills and resources they need for healthy child development. Thus, although in some instances distrust can act as an effective coping or protective mechanism (Grier & Cobbs 1968), for most individuals, communities, and nations, the *negative consequences* for pervasive distrust and ethnoracial differences in the propensity to trust, whether generalized, particularized, or strategic, cannot be overstated.

### Collins---1NC

#### Coalitional politics can be strategic and flexible to disrupt violence against black femmes---they don’t reproduce civil society.

Patricia Hill Collins 17, Distinguished University Professor of Sociology at the University of Maryland, 4-5-2017, "On violence, intersectionality and transversal politics," Ethnic And Racial Studies Volume 40, 2017 - Issue 9, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01419870.2017.1317827

Towards transversal politics: flexible solidarity and coalition building When I wrote “The Tie That Binds”, I hoped that developing intersectionality’s theoretical contours might contribute to ameliorating violence as a social problem. Yet intersectional analyses, on their own, are unlikely to yield more effective political solutions to violence. Analysis is important, yet action also matters. Because “thinking” one’s way out of domination is unrealistic, I now ask, how might more sophisticated analyses of power that take into account the ties linking violence, intersecting oppressions and domination facilitate more robust analyses of political resistance? In “The Tie That Binds”, I discussed transversal politics as a form of political engagement that had important implications for understanding organized political resistance. Here I return to that argument via a brief discussion of solidarity and coalition-building. The responses of African American women and similarly historically subordinated groups to intersecting oppressions illuminates the nature of political domination as well the transversal politics it might engender. For example, African American women’s intellectual and political traditions raise some provocative questions concerning the nature of political solidarity. The trajectory of Black feminism within African American communities suggests that Black women’s responses to racial violence moved beyond racial solidarity that was centred exclusively on racism. Black feminist agendas regarding gender and sexuality existed much earlier than when they became visible to a broader public. The story of how Black feminism’s analyses of gender and sexuality advanced intersectional arguments is well-known. Yet the ways in which Black feminist understandings of political solidarity may have been shaped by intersectional analyses remains less familiar. In my recent work, I have returned to issues of political solidarity and coalition politics within African American women’s history (see e.g. Collins forthcoming 2017). Black women’s experiences with violence provide guidance, not as a universal case for oppressed groups, but rather as a catalyst for theoretical insight concerning the interconnections of domination and resistance. Because contemporary forms of violence visited upon African American women have become so routinized in U.S. social institutions and normalized within public hate speech, it is easy to overlook the centrality of violence to the origins and history of African Americans as a U.S. population group. African Americans became Black people in the context of a forced migration within global capitalist expansion, the differential exploitation of productive and reproductive labour of men and women during slavery, and the subsequent structural disadvantages have shaped African American life. Ghettoization and racial segregation were key to African American domination in the U.S. context. Persistent high levels of residential, educational and employment segregation in the U.S. constitute fundamental structural features that contribute to racial hierarchy. Violence was essential to forming Black people as a population as well as the shared meanings that were associated with this political Blackness. For African American women, these social conditions catalysed a particular form of politics, one characterized on the one hand by a stance of dissemblance from the external world whereby Black women hid the harm they experienced from rape, abuse and forms sexual violence (Hine 1989); and on the other hand, a distinctive Black feminist politics that reflected Black women’s analyses and actions in response to the ever-present threat of violence. As a collectively, Black women in the U.S. could not ignore how anti-Black hate speech and routinized racial violence took gender-specific forms. In this social context, Black women developed a more strategic, dynamic and sophisticated approach to solidarity that refutes understandings of solidarity as ideological uniformity that, within African American communities, took patriarchal and homophobic forms. Yet many Black feminist intellectual-activists never fully accepted this kind of group-think that define solidarity through the ideological lens of a homogeneous blackness that privileged masculinity and heterosexuality. Instead, Black women were more likely to see the ways in which they were simultaneously in solidarity with Black men regarding racism as well as the ways in which such solidarity was problematic regarding sexism and homophobia. Historically, Black women intellectual-activists developed forms of political action that were characterized by a flexible solidarity, one where alliances within African American communities have been grounded in ongoing relationships of compromise and contestation (Collins forthcoming 2017). Black women’s community work in particular fostered a commitment to Black solidarity as a core feature of African American women’s political engagement both within and on behalf of Black communities (Collins 2006, 123–160). Without solidarity among African Americans, political struggles to upend racial domination were doomed. Yet for Black women, an unquestioned solidarity could be neither inherently desirable nor effective when it rested on male-dominated, intergenerational gender hierarchies. Such solidarity was hierarchical, rigid, often backed up by religious theology or tradition, and created roadblocks for effective political action. Black women saw the need for solidarity, yet calibrated their ideas and actions to hone critical understandings of solidarity that were better suited for specific political projects, for example, opposing both lynching and rape because they were interconnected practices of violence. Solidarity was not an essentialist category, a bundle of rules that was blindly applied across time and space. Instead, a flexible understanding of solidarity enabled African American women to work with the concept, moulding it to the particular challenges at hand. Working within African American organizations often sensitized Black women to inequalities of gender and sexuality within African American communities as well as within broader society. This awareness catalysed a deepening analysis of intersectionality during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Moreover, these intellectual and political understandings of solidarity were also worked out over time, primarily through everyday, organized political behaviour within African American communities. Stated differently, sustaining political vigilance in the face of racism required being attuned to the political implications both of ideology and strategy. This idea of flexible solidarity within Black feminism lays a foundation for the kind of elasticity that Nira Yuval-Davis assigns to transversal politics (Yuval-Davis 1997, 125–132). Drawing on the work of Italian feminists, Yuval-Davis concludes her book Gender and Nation with a section sketching out several political and intellectual projects that seem to point toward a transversal politics. Rereading Yuval-Davis’s arguments, especially in light of the shifting interpretive climate of hate speech, the more visible connections between hate speech and actions, and the scope of routinized violence, suggests that revisiting the main ideas of transversal politics may be especially constructive. Several points stand out that merit review. For one, Yuval-Davis eschews understandings of groups that are based solely on self-chosen identities or identifications. Instead, she focuses on the authority of nation-states in creating and reproducing historically constituted, socially stratified population groups. She notes, “the boundaries of the groupings were determined not by an essentialist notion of difference, but by a concrete and material political reality” (Yuval-Davis 1997, 129). In the 1980s and into the 1990s, an emerging feminist literature on intersectionality engaged nationalism, examining topics such as how the public policies of nation-states were inherently intersectional, how the national identities of various nation-states relied on intersecting systems of power, and how differential citizenship rights underlay social inequalities (see e.g. Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992). Scholars in the 1990s seemingly moved away from the literature on nation-states and nationalism, especially its emphasis on the structures of state power. Rereading Yuval Davis in the aftermath of this discursive turn shows how she places far more emphasis on historically constituted groups and the opportunities and constraints they bring to coalition politics than contemporary emphases on individuals and their rights. Bringing groups back into analysis creates space to analyse inter-group politics. Yuval-Davis describes the structured yet dynamic sense of coalitions as being “rooted” in a particular social context but also “shifting” in order to engage in transversal dialogues and politics. Yuval-Davis’s depiction of transversal politics requires processes of shifting that do not mean losing one’s own rooting within historically situated communities and the intellectual and political sensibilities that rooting engenders. In this sense, ideas about intersectionality and flexibility that Black women develop within African American communities need not be jettisoned when shifting toward transversal politics. Far from one of subordinating one’s issues into some greater good, as suggested within prevailing understandings of solidarity, remaining rooted while shifting constitutes a viable if not essential political option. Another dimension of shifting is equally significant: the process of shifting must maintain the multiplicity of perspectives both within a group and across groups. This is the difficult challenge, one that recognizes that some coalitions may not be possible. My reading of the historical trajectory of Black feminism in the U.S. is that the flexible solidarity that Black women exhibit across many historical periods, and that informs intersectionality, constitute a missing dimension of transversal politics. Instead, the flexible solidarity by Black women within African American communities, when coupled with Yuval Davis’s framework of the rooting and shifting of transversal politics, potentially facilitates thinking through coalition politics within a context of intersecting power relations. How might the concept of flexible solidarity honed through Black women’s politics within African American communities and the idea of transversal politics as a framework for coalitions among groups inform anti-violence initiatives? Flexible solidarity and transversal politics remain abstract, and some might argue, unrealistic aspirational constructs. One construct seems wedded to past practices (flexible solidarity) whereas the other points toward an as yet unrealized future (transversal politics). Perhaps, however, both constructs inform contemporary anti-violence initiatives. Take, for example, the effective political mobilization of the Black Lives Matter movement against state-sanctioned violence (Cobb 2016). This movement illustrates how the ideas of intersectionality and flexible solidarity honed within Black feminism suggest a move toward transversal politics as a way to resist violence. Initially led by three queer African American women who created the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, the stellar growth of Black Lives Matter from 2012 to 2016 illustrates how the legacy of Black feminism has been brought to bear on the contemporary social problem of state-sanctioned racial violence. The deaths of several young African American men, widely shared on social media, was the spark that catalysed the movement. Yet Black women have been visible within the Black Lives Matter movement, from the initial leadership of the movement, to the large numbers Black women participating in the protests, demonstrations and urban rebellions that sustained the vitality of the movement. In essence, Black women who catalysed this movement drew upon the legacy of a Black feminism’s long history of resisting violence targeted toward Black people. At its inception, the Black Lives Matter movement also invoked the idea of intersectionality to expand the categories of Black people who should be respected by the movement. Historically, Black women themselves had used the idea of flexible solidarity to choose strategic moments to broaden Black solidarity to address issues of gender. The initial hashtag #BlackLivesMatter expressed a similar deepening of an intersectional analysis of Blackness, now expanded to highlight the issues of groups that were historically subordinated within Black communities. The web site of the Black Lives Matter movement has undergone substantial updating as the organization has grown, yet the initial intersectional description of their mission has remained constant: Rooted in the experiences of Black people in this country who actively resist our dehumanization, #BlackLivesMatter is a call to action and a response to the virulent anti-Black racism that permeates our society. Black Lives Matter is a unique contribution that goes beyond extrajudicial killings of Black people by police and vigilantes … Black Lives Matter affirms the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, black-undocumented folks, folks with records, women and all Black lives along the gender spectrum. It centers those that have been marginalized within Black liberation movement. (blacklivesmatter.com) The movement as laid out by the founders of #BlackLivesMatter is clearly intersectional by highlighting how all Black individuals within Black communities were worthy of political protection. Their intersectional mandate deepens analysis of how different sub-groups within Black communities experience racial domination. It is rooted in a collective Black past, yet not one that is uncritically celebrated or that mandates knee-jerk adherence to solidarity. Significantly, as the movement has grown, its organizational practices also illustrate the goal of drawing upon flexible solidarity to strengthen both its own organizational capacities as a political community as well as those of other Black political communities. As the movement has evolved, it rejected the hierarchical bureaucracies of traditional civil rights organizations in favour of a more fluid decentralized organizational structure that allows it to draw upon the flexibility of networks. This focus on flexible coalitions within a Black movement sets the stage for potential coalitions with external groups. In this sense, Black Lives Matter remains rooted in its anti-violence project, yet embraces a form of flexible solidarity within its practices that sees coalitions as always under construction and not as ideologically fixed. This orientation positions it to remain rooted in the needs of its own praxis. Black Lives Matter points to the necessary interconnectedness of intersectionality and flexible solidarity within its own praxis as well as the continued challenges of using these ideas within broader social movements. This example also signals the challenges of future coalition building with other groups that have been inspired by this movement, yet must find ways to bring more sophisticated understandings of their own group histories to the transversal politics that might ensue. Developing more complex analyses of intersectionality as a form of critical inquiry and praxis that resists violence promises to be a long-term intellectual and political project. Because violence is so deeply embedded into the fabric of society, it is unlikely to yield to the efforts of any one theory or group of social actors. Yet just as intersecting oppressions are far from static, forms of political resistance that are similarly flexible are well-positioned for such sustained intellectual and political struggle. In this endeavour, continuing to focus on violence should illuminate new connections between intersecting systems of power and on new possibilities for political resistance.

### Zack---1NC

#### Undoing squo power relations requires analyzing and attacking power structures through agonistic struggle---normative appeals alone are ineffective.

Naomi **Zack 17**. Professor of philosophy at the University of Oregon. 02/2017. “Ideal, Nonideal, and Empirical Theories of Social Justice: The Need for Applicative Justice in Addressing Injustice.” The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Race, Oxford University Press.

Ideals of justice may do little toward the correction of injustice in real life. The influence of John Rawls’s A Theory of Justice has led some philosophers of race to focus on “nonideal theory” as a way to bring conditions in unjust societies closer to conditions of justice described by ideal theory. However, a more direct approach to injustice may be needed to address unfair public policy and existing conditions for minorities in racist societies. Applicative justice describes the applications of principles of justice that are now “good enough” for whites to nonwhites (based on prior comparisons of how whites and nonwhites are treated). Social information just dribbles in, bit by bit, and we simply get used to it. A single story about a person really hits home at once, but the grinding injustices of daily life are endured. It is easy to ignore them and we do. Judith Shklar, The Faces of Injustice (Shklar 1990, 110) IDEAL theory about justice extends from Plato’s Republic to John Rawls’s A Theory of Justice, including many careers devoted to analyses and criticism about such texts in political philosophy. Rawls offers a picture of the basic institutional structures of a just society, on the premise that in order to correct injustice, we must first know what justice is. According to Rawls, while “partial compliance theory” studies the principles that govern how we are to deal with injustice, full compliance theory, or ideal theory, studies the institutional principles of justice in a stable society where citizens obey the law. Rawls began A Theory of Justice with the claim: “The reason for beginning with ideal theory is that it provides, I believe, the only basis for the systematic grasp of these more pressing problems” (Rawls 1971, 8). Rawls’s ideal theory is too abstract to correct injustice or provide justice for victims of injustice in reality, because it is based on a thought experiment and the assumption of a “well-ordered” society in which there already is compliance with law (Zack 2016, 1–64). What people care about in reality concerning justice is not what ideal justice is or would be, but how immediate injustice can be corrected. Injustice is always specific in concrete events that are recognizable as certain types, for example, theft, murder, or police racial profiling. Injustice can be corrected by punishing those responsible for it in specific cases and instituting social changes that prevent or reduce future occurrences of the same type. Rawlsian nonideal theories of justice, constructed for societies where people do not comply with just laws, rely on ideal theory as a standard for just institutional structures. The main question driving nonideal theory is how to construct a model or picture of justice that will result in the future correction or avoidance of present injustices. John Simmons quotes John Rawls from Law of Peoples, on this matter. Nonideal theory asks how this long-term goal might be achieved, or worked toward, usually in gradual steps. It looks for courses of action that are morally permissible and politically possible as well as likely to be effective [LOP p. 89]. (Simmons 2010, 7) However, injured or indignant parties may not care about the long-term goal of justice that could lead to balance or compensation for their situations. Not only are what P. F. Strawson (1962) called “reactive attitudes,” such as moral indignation, blame, and a desire for deserved punishment, strong in their focus on injustice, but the best theory of justice in the world does not tell us what to do about the injustices we are faced with in the here and now, especially “the more pressing problems” of race-related injustices. Such questions cannot be answered with reference to ideal theory or some application of ideal or nonideal theory to their concrete situations, because the a priori nature of both of these does not provide a fit with specific contingencies—ideal and nonideal theories do not generate practical bridge principles. As theories, they posit ideal entities, but without the apparatus of scientific theories which provides connections to observable entities or events. (Moulines 1985). The correction of injustice or injustice theory requires a philosophical foundation for itself. Models of justice have often been naïvely utopian throughout the history of philosophy, because they are based on an assumption of automatic total compliance, as though the right words or pictures by themselves have the power to transform reality, or as though agreement with those right words or pictures will automatically result in action that will automatically make the world instantiate those words or pictures. When they are not fantastically and ineffectively utopian in this way, such models have been used to justify the already-existing dominance of some groups over others. (A prime example is John Locke’s Second Treatise of Government, written decades before 1688 Glorious Revolution, to express the interests of the new rising class of landed gentry, which were eventually fulfilled by a Protestant king on the throne and a strong representative parliament after that revolution [Laslett 1988].) Models of justice have legitimately served to inspire law in modern societies with government constitutions and national and local law. But, sometimes, as in US founding documents, although universal and absolute justice is proclaimed, subsequent events make it clear that this language was intended to legitimize just treatment for members of selected groups only, that is, white male property owners, at first. As a result of just law and its selective application, over time, there comes to be justice for an expanding group, but still not everyone in society. However, what is written, together with descriptions of real justice for some, can be a powerful lever for obtaining justice for at least some of the excluded. To understand how that works, it is necessary to develop an approach to justice that begins with injustice, in real situations where there is already some degree of justice in a larger whole. The extension of existing practices of justice to members of new groups is applicative justice, a concept with substantial historical and intellectual precedent, although not by that name. In what follows, more will be said about the idea of applicative justice and then its history will be considered. Voting rights and housing rights are examples of candidates for applicative justice in our time. Finally, content in the form of narrative may be motivational for social change. The Idea of Applicative Justice Applicative justice is an approach to justice with the goal of making the unjust treatment of some comparable to those who already receive just treatment. Applicative justice takes a comparative approach, for example, comparing how young black males are treated by police officers in contemporary US society, to how young white males are treated (Jones 2013; Zack 2013, 2015). Applicative justice rests on a pragmatic approach to social ills, which includes the premise, based on Arthur Bentley’s 1908 insights in The Process of Government, that government is much more than the apparatus of state and written laws and court decisions. Government is an extended, dynamic process, an ongoing contention among interest groups in society. This full-bodied, empirical and pragmatic view of government process entails, for example, that we consider as parts of the same political mix/phenomenon/raw material all of the foregoing: the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments, the 1960s Civil Rights Legislation, doctrines of probable cause, the disproportionate incarceration of African Americans, racial profiling, and police homicide with impunity. Thus, Rawls’s insistence that “the rights secured by justice are not subject to political bargaining or to the calculus of social interests” (Rawls 1971, 4), should be understood as “the rights secured by justice should not be subject to political bargaining or to the calculus of social interests.” In reality, “the rights secured by justice” are constantly subject to political bargaining and the living calculus of social interests. One consequence of this empirical perspective is that moral outrage, critiques of white supremacy, or analyses of white privilege, along with other forms of blame, cannot be assumed to have the power to change anything, by themselves. By contrast, changing relationships between police officers and their local communities, or changing the rules of engagement when police stop or attempt to stop suspects, might on this view have some causal power (Ayres and Markovits 2014). It is important to realize that such changes in practice would not be specific applications of a theory of justice, but ways of changing social reality into a different political mix. However, a better theory of justice, even a more racially egalitarian one and even a theory of applicative justice that was widely accepted, would still be no more than a change in what Bentley calls “political content.” Any theory of justice or any set of just laws is compatible with widespread racially unequal and unjust practice. And the converse also holds. Unjust laws or laws with gaps for unjust practice are compatible with just practice. Thus, applicative justice is pragmatic in taking the whole political mix/ phenomenon/raw material as its subject for a specific injustice. Unlike ideal or nonideal justice theory, the applicative justice approach brooks little faith that reality can be changed by a special conceptual space or mode of critical moral discourse that is undertaken apart from reality. Reality cannot be changed by normative pronouncements, by or on behalf of the oppressed, but only by shifts in existing interests of groups of real people. To base hopes for change on normative content alone may ~~paralyze~~ [eliminate] the means for taking action that could result in change, because such content proceeds as though matters of justice were only matters of argument. Those who have opposed social racial justice have understood this well enough, because instead of mainly arguing against new just law over the twentieth century, they have taken action to block progress. Race and Justice Consideration of race and injustice together, within political philosophy, focuses on the need for specific groups to not be treated unjustly. For a group to be treated justly, a large number of its members need to be treated justly. But for a group to be treated unjustly, it is sufficient if a smaller number or lower proportion than required to meet the standard of just treatment be treated unjustly. One reason for this asymmetry is that just treatment is easily normalized within communities, whereas unjust treatment of only a few is disruptive and considered abnormal among other members of the group to which victims belong (although not necessarily by members of groups who are generally treated justly). The unjust treatment of a small number ripples from their friends and relations to other members of the same group, who realize that they are subject to similar unjust treatment from their membership in that group alone. More broadly, if the group treated justly and the group treated unjustly belong to the same larger collective, such as whites and blacks in the United States, then the unjust treatment of even a very small number of that total collective of residents or citizens should be disruptive to the whole collective, given promulgated principles of “justice for all.” But that does not always happen, at least not in ways that result in real change. Apathy and self-absorption of those not treated unjustly is part of the reason, although another significant part is that the group treated justly already knows that the national collective rhetoric of justice is intended to apply primarily to them. It is that kind of disparate treatment, which does not disrupt everyone, even though it should, which calls for a theory of applicative justice, on the abstract level where people call for justice. But applicative justice is not only an abstract theory. Applicative justice requires comparisons of group treatment. If minorities are treated unjustly, a description of that injustice does not require an ideal or nonideal theory or model of justice, but simply a comparison with how the majority is treated. (The term “minorities” refers to those disadvantaged or oppressed, because sometimes minorities are greater in number than “majorities,” e.g., blacks under apartheid in South Africa, American slaves in some Southern states, or black Americans in some twenty-first-century cities.) The principles and mechanics of justice that work well enough for most white Americans need to be applied to nonwhite Americans. For rhetorical purposes, it might be evocative to talk about black lives or black rights, but strictly speaking the subject is a racial framework that is color-blind in an important part of law—constitutional amendments and federal legislation—but not in reality. This gap between written law and social reality can be viewed as hypocrisy, racial bias, or white supremacy, only if one assumes that written law is an accurate description of, or blueprint for, social reality. But a perspective that takes in the whole process of government reveals that the gap and what is permissible within it, are parts of the same whole process. The contrast between blueprints and maps is important to consider. Political philosophers often proceed as though their writings about justice are blueprints, when they should instead begin by constructing maps. Present politics or a political party in power may present obstacles and challenges to applicative justice in any specific case. Those who aim for applicative justice must struggle against such obstacles and challenges, as well as the ignorance, prejudice, and ill will of large parts of voting publics under democratic government, and in addition, media misrepresentations, business interests in a status quo, and lack of understanding of oppression by those who are treated unjustly. For example, the injustice in the disproportionately large number of African Americans in the US criminal justice system has been supported by law-and-order politics, the War on Drugs, belief in racial gender myths (e.g., the larger-than-life black rapist), explicit racism, media sensationalism of crime committed by black men, profits made by for-profit prison corporations, and embrace of self-destructive subcultures by some black men who become incarcerated. At the same time, as an efficient cause or precipitating factor, ongoing racial profiling by police helps feed the system with new suspects, about 90 percent of whom plead guilty in preference to the risks and costs of a trial (Kerby 2013; Rakoff et al. 2014). Intergenerational poverty, unemployment, and undereducation contain people within this system, and the high rates of nonwhites in the prison population are used as official justification for racial profiling (Zack 2015, chap 2). Thus, the complexity of causes and background factors associated with the disproportionate number of African American male prison inmates can be understood through a number of approaches. The normative approach of applicative justice would be to address those causes or factors, distinctly and individually, through specific changes in concrete practice, as well as changes in law, as relevant.

## 2NC

### Case---2AC

#### Institutional engagement is critical to untangle structural domain of power that reproduces black women’s exclusion – empirics prove

Hill Collins 9 (Patricia, Distinguished University Professor of Sociology at the University of Maryland, College Park, “Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment”, page 277-280, https://uniteyouthdublin.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/black-feminist-though-by-patricia-hill-collins.pdf)

The structural domain of power encompasses how social institutions are organized to reproduce Black women’s subordination over time. One characteristic feature of this domain is its emphasis on large-scale, interlocking social institutions. An impressive array of U.S. social institutions lies at the heart of the structural domain of power. Historically, in the United States, the policies and procedures of the U.S. legal system, labor markets, schools, the housing industry, banking, insurance, the news media, and other social institutions as interdependent entities have worked to disadvantage African-American women. For example, Black women’s long-standing exclusion from the best jobs, schools, health care, and housing illustrates the broad array of social policies designed to exclude Black women from full citizenship rights. These interlocking social institutions have relied on multiple forms of segregation—by race, class, and gender—to produce these unjust results. For AfricanAmerican women, racial segregation has been paramount. Racial segregation rested on the “separate but equal” doctrine established under the 1896 ruling of Plessy v. Ferguson where the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of segregation of groups. This ruling paved the way for a rhetoric of color-blindness (Crenshaw 1997). Under the “separate but equal” doctrine, Blacks and Whites as groups could be segregated as long as the law was color-blind in affording each group equal treatment. Despite the supposed formal equality promised by “separate but equal,” subsequent treatment certainly was separate, but it was anything but equal. As a result, policies and procedures with housing, education, industry, government, the media, and other major social institutions have worked together to exclude Black women from exercising full citizenship rights. Whether this social exclusion has taken the form of relegating Black women to inner-city neighborhoods poorly served by social services, to poorly funded and racially segregated public schools, or to a narrow cluster of jobs in the labor market, the intent was to exclude. Within the structural domain of power, empowerment cannot accrue to individuals and groups without transforming U.S. social institutions that foster this exclusion. Because this domain is large-scale, systemwide, and has operated over a long period of time via interconnected social institutions, segregation of this magnitude cannot be changed overnight. Structural forms of injustice that permeate the entire society yield only grudgingly to change. Since they do so in part when confronted with wide-scale social movements, wars, and revolutions that threaten the social order overall, African-American women’s rights have not been gained solely by gradual reformism. A civil war preceded the abolition of slavery when all efforts to negotiate a settlement failed. Southern states routinely ignored the citizenship rights of Blacks, and even when confronted with the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision that outlawed racial segregation, many dug in their heels and refused to uphold the law. Massive demonstrations, media exposure, and federal troops all were deployed to implement this fundamental policy change. The reemergence of White supremacist organizations in the 1990s, many of which recirculate troubling racist ideologies of prior eras, speaks to the deep-seated resentment attached to Black women, among others, working toward a more just U.S. society. Events such as these indicate how deeply woven into the very fabric of American society ideas about Black women’s subordination appear to be. In the United States, visible social protest of this magnitude, while often required to bring about change, remains more the exception than the rule. For U.S. Black women, social change has more often been gradual and reformist, punctuated by episodes of systemwide upheaval. Trying to change the policies and procedures themselves, typically through social reforms, constitutes an important cluster of strategies within the structural domain. Because the U.S. context contains a commitment to reformist change by changing the laws, Black women have used the legal system in their struggles for structural transformation. African-American women have aimed to challenge the laws that legitimate racial segregation. As Chapter 9’s discussion of Black women’s activism suggests, African-American women have used various strategies to get laws changed. Grassroots organizations, forming national advocacy organizations, and eventspecific social protest such as boycotts and sit-ins have all been used, yet changing the laws and the terms of their implementation have formed the focus of change. Even the development of parallel social institutions such as Black churches and schools have aimed to prepare African-Americans for full participation in U.S. society when the laws were changed. African-American women have experienced considerable success not only in getting laws changed, but in stimulating government action to redress past wrongs. The Voting Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Act of 1965, and other important federal, state, and local legislation have outlawed discrimination by race, sex, national origin, age, or disability status. This changed legal climate granted African-American women some protection from the widespread discrimination that we faced in the past. At the same time, class-action lawsuits against discriminatory housing, educational, and employment policies have resulted in tangible benefits for many Black women. While necessary, these legal victories may not be enough. Ironically, the same laws designed to protect African-American women from social exclusion have increasingly become used against Black women. In describing new models for equal treatment under the law, Black feminist legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw argues that the rhetoric of color-blindness was not unseated by the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education ruling. Instead, the rhetoric of color-blindness was reformulated to refer to the equal treatment of individuals by not discriminating among them. Under this new rhetoric of color-blindness, equality meant treating all individuals the same, regardless of differences they brought with them due to the effects of past discrimination or even discrimination in other venues. “Having determined, then, that everyone was equal in the sense that everyone had a skin color,” observes Crenshaw, “symmetrical treatment was satisfied by a general rule that nobody’s skin color should be taken into account in governmental decision-making” (Crenshaw 1997, 284). Within this logic, the path to equality lies in ignoring race, gender, and other markers of historical discrimination that might account for any differences that individuals bring to schools and the workplace. As a new rule that maintains long-standing hierarchies of race, class, and gender while appearing to provide equal treatment, this rhetoric of color-blindness has had some noteworthy effects. For one, observes Black feminist legal scholar Patricia Williams (1995), it fosters a certain kind of race thinking among Whites: Because the legal system has now formally equalized individual access to housing, schooling, and jobs, any unequal group results, such as those that characterize gaps between Blacks and Whites, must somehow lie within the individuals themselves or their culture. When joined to its twin of gender neutrality, one claiming that no significant differences distinguish men from women, the rhetoric of color-blindness works to unseat one important strategy of Black women’s resistance within the structural domain. Black women who make claims of discrimination and who demand that policies and procedures may not be as fair as they seem can more easily be dismissed as complainers who want special, unearned favors. Moreover, within a rhetoric of color-blindness that defends the theme of no inherent differences among races, or of gender-neutrality that claims no differences among genders, it becomes difficult to talk of racial and gender differences that stem from discriminatory treatment. The assumption is that the U.S. matrix of domination now provides equal treatment because where it once overtly discriminated by race and gender, it now seemingly ignores them. Beliefs such as these thus allow Whites and men to support a host of punitive policies that reinscribe social heirarchies of race and gender. In her discussion of how racism now relies on encoded language Angela Davis identifies how this rhetoric of color-blindness can operate as a form of “camouflaged racism”: Because race is ostracized from some of the most impassioned political debates of this period, their racialized character becomes increasingly difficult to identify, especially by those who are unable—or do not want— to decipher the encoded language. This means that hidden racist arguments can be mobilized readily across racial boundaries and political alignments. Political positions once easily defined as conservative, liberal, and sometimes even radical therefore have a tendency to lose their dis tinctiveness in the face of the seductions of this camouflaged racism (Davis 1997, 264). Americans can talk of “street crime” and “welfare mothers,” all the while claiming that they are not discussing race at all. Despite the new challenges raised by the rhetoric of color-blindness and gender neutrality, it is important to remember that legal strategies have yielded and most probably will continue to produce victories for African-American women. Historically, much of Black women’s resistance to the policies and procedures of the structural domain of power occurred outside powerful social institutions. Currently, however, AfricanAmerican women are more often included in these same social institutions that long excluded us. Increasing numbers of African-American women have gained access to higher education, now hold good jobs, and might be considered middle-class if not elite. These women often occupy positions of authority inside schools, corporations, and government agencies. Achieving these results required changing U.S. laws.

## 1NR

### Frame Subtraction---1NR

#### Their speech had value in and of itself, not because it was viewed by you, and it is fleeting and exists only in the moment---attempts to later connect to it via the ballot gives too much power to the audience because the speaker is structurally blocked from controlling the (re)presentation of their representations---this is a means of turning over one’s identity to the same reproductive economy that underwrites liberalism, which turns the case

Phelan 6 – Peggy Phelan, Chair of New York University's Department of Performance Studies, “Unmarked: The Politics of Performance”, in Visual Culture: Experiences in Visual Culture, p. 146-149

Performance’s only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology. Performance’s being, like the ontology of subjectivity proposed here, becomes itself through disappearance.

The pressures brought to bear on performance to succumb to the laws of the reproductive economy are enormous. For only rarely in this culture is the “now” to which performance addresses its deepest questions valued. (This is why the now is supplemented and buttressed by the documenting camera, the video archive.) Performance occurs over a time which will not be repeated. It can be performed again, but this repetition itself marks it as “different.” The document of a performance then is only a spur to memory, an encouragement of memory to become present.

The other arts, especially painting and photography, are drawn increasingly toward performance. The French-born artist Sophie Calle, for example, has photographed the galleries of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. Several valuable paintings were stolen from the museum in 1990. Calle interviewed various visitors and members of the muse um staff, asking them to describe the stolen paintings. She then transcribed these texts and placed them next to the photographs of the galleries. Her work suggests that the descriptions and memories of the paintings constitute their continuing “presence,” despite the absence of the paintings themselves. Calle gestures toward a notion of the interactive exchange between the art object and the viewer. While such exchanges are often recorded as the stated goals of museums and galleries, the institutional effect of the gallery often seems to put the masterpiece under house arrest, controlling all conflicting and unprofessional commentary about it. The speech act of memory and description (Austin’s constative utterance) becomes a performative expression when Calle places these commentaries within the 147 representation of the museum. The descriptions fill in, and thus supplement (add to, defer, and displace) the stolen paintings. The fact that these descriptions vary considerably—even at times wildly—only lends credence to the fact that the interaction between the art object and the spectator is, essentially, performative—and therefore resistant to the claims of validity and accuracy endemic to the discourse of reproduction. While the art historian of painting must ask if there production is accurate and clear, Calle asks where seeing and memory forget the object itself and enter the subject’s own set of personal meanings and associations. Further her work suggests that the forgetting(or stealing) of the object is a fundamental energy of its descriptive recovering. The description itself does not reproduce the object, it rather helps us to restage and restate the effort to remember what is lost. The descriptions remind us how loss acquires meaning and generates recovery—not only of and for the object, but for the one who remembers. The disappearance of the object is fundamental to performance; it rehearses and repeats the disappearance of the subject who longs always to be remembered.

For her contribution to the Dislocations show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1991, Calle used the same idea but this time she asked curators, guards, and restorers to describe paintings that were on loan from the permanent collection. She also asked them to draw small pictures of their memories of the paintings. She then arranged the texts and pictures according to the exact dimensions of the circulating paintings and placed them on the wall where the actual paintings usually hang. Calle calls her piece Ghosts, and as the visitor discovers Calle’s work spread throughout the museum, it is as if Calle’s own eye is following and tracking the viewer as she makes her way through the museum.1 Moreover, Calle’s work seems to disappear because it is dispersed throughout the “permanent collection”—a collection which circulates despite its “permanence.” Calle’s artistic contribution is a kind of self-concealment in which she offers the words of others about other works of art under her own artistic signature. By making visible her attempt to offer what she does not have, what cannot be seen, Calle subverts the goal of museum display. She exposes what the museum does not have and cannot offer and uses that absence to generate her own work. By placing memories in the place of paintings, Calle asks that the ghosts of memory be seen as equivalent to “the permanent collection” of “great works.” One senses that if she asked the same people over and over about the same paintings, each time they would describe a slightly different painting. In this sense, Calle demonstrates the performative quality of all seeing. 148

I

Performance in a strict ontological sense is nonreproductive. It is this quality which makes performance the runt of the litter of contemporary art. Performance clogs the smooth machinery of reproductive representation necessary to the circulation of capital. Perhaps nowhere was the affinity between the ideology of capitalism and art made more manifest than in the debates about the funding policies for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).2 Targeting both photography and performance art, conservative politicians sought to prevent endorsing the “real” bodies implicated and made visible by these art forms.

Performance implicates the real through the presence of living bodies. In performance art spectatorship there is an element of consumption: there are no left-overs, the gazing spectator must try to take everything in. Without a copy, live performance plunges into visibility—in a maniacally charged present—and disappears into memory, into the realm of invisibility and the unconscious where it eludes regulation and control. Performance resists the balanced circulations of finance. It saves nothing; it only spends. While photography is vulnerable to charges of counterfeiting and copying, performance art is vulnerable to charges of valuelessness and emptiness. Performance indicates the possibility of revaluing that emptiness; this potential revaluation gives performance art its distinctive oppositional edge.3

To attempt to write about the undocumentable event of performance is to invoke the rules of the written document and thereby alter the event itself. Just as quantum physics discovered that macro-instruments cannot measure microscopic particles without transforming those particles, so too must performance critics realize that the labor to write about performance (and thus to “preserve” it) is also a labor that fundamentally alters the event. It does no good, however, to simply refuse to write about performance because of this inescapable transformation. The challenge raised by the ontological claims of performance for writing is to re-mark again the performative possibilities of writing itself. The act of writing toward disappearance, rather than the act of writing toward preservation, must remember that the after-effect of disappearance is the experience of subjectivity itself.

This is the project of Roland Barthes in both Camera Lucida and Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes. It is also his project in Empire of Signs, but in this book he takes the memory of a city in which he no longer is, a city from which he disappears, as the motivation for the search for a disappearing performative writing. The trace left by that script is the meeting-point of a mutual disappearance; shared subjectivity is possible for Barthes because two people can recognize the same Impossible. To live for a love whose goal is to share the Impossible is both a humbling project and an exceedingly ambitious one, for it seeks to find connection only in that which is no longer there. Memory. Sight. Love. It must involve a full seeing of the Other’s absence (the ambitious part), a seeing which also entails the acknowledgment of the Other’s presence (the humbling part). For to acknowledge the Other’s (always partial) presence is to acknowledge one’s own (always partial) absence.

In the field of linguistics, the performative speech act shares with the ontology of performance the inability to be reproduced or repeated. “Being an individual and historical act, a performative utterance cannot be repeated. Each reproduction is a new act performed by someone who is qualified. Otherwise, the reproduction of the performative utterance by someone else necessarily transforms it into a constative utterance.”4 149

Writing, an activity which relies on the reproduction of the Same(the three letters cat will repeatedly signify the four-legged furry animal with whiskers) for the production of meaning, can broach the frame of performance but cannot mimic an art that is nonreproductive. The mimicry of speech and writing, the strange process by which we put words in each other’s mouths and others’ words in our own, relies on a substitutional economy in which equivalencies are assumed and re-established. Performance refuses this system of exchange and resists the circulatory economy fundamental to it. Performance honors the idea that a limited number of people in a specific time/space frame can have an experience of value which leaves no visible trace afterward. Writing about it necessarily cancels the “tracelessness” inaugurated within this performative promise. Performance’s independence from mass reproduction, technologically, economically, and linguistically, is its greatest strength. But buffeted by the encroaching ideologies of capital and reproduction, it frequently devalues this strength. Writing about performance often, unwittingly, encourages this weakness and falls in behind the drive of the documentary. Performance’s challenge to writing is to discover a way for repeated words to become performative utterances, rather than, as Benveniste warned, constative utterances.

#### Locating political value in the ballot instills an adaptive politics of being and effaces institutional constraints that reproduce structural violence

Brown 95 – Dr. Wendy Brown, Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley, Ph.D in Political Philosophy from Princeton University, States of Injury, p. 21-23

For some, fueled by opprobrium toward regulatory norms or other modalities of domination, the language of "resistance" has taken up the ground vacated by a more expansive practice of freedom. For others, it is the discourse of “empowerment” that carries the ghost of freedom's valence.

Yet as many have noted, insofar as resistance is an effect of the regime it opposes on the one hand, and insofar as its practitioners often seek to void it of normativity to differentiate it from the (regulatory) nature of what it opposes on the other, it is at best politically rebellious; at worst, politically amorphous. Resistance stands against, not for; it is re-action to domination, rarely willing to admit to a desire for it, and it is neutral with regard to possible political direction. Resistance is in no way constrained to a radical or emancipatory aim. a fact that emerges clearly as soon as one analogizes Foucault's notion of resistance to its companion terms in Freud or Nietzsche. Yet in some ways this point is less a critique of Foucault, who especially in his later years made clear that his political commitments were not identical with his theoretical ones (and un- apologetically revised the latter), than a sign of his misappropriation. For Foucault, resistance marks the presence of power and expands our under- standing of its mechanics, but it is in this regard an analytical strategy rather than an expressly political one. "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet. or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority to power. . . . (T]he strictly relational character of power relationships . . . depends upon a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations.\*39 This appreciation of the extent to which resistance is by no means inherently subversive of power also reminds us that it is only by recourse to a very non-Foucaultian moral evaluation of power as bad or that which is to be overcome that it is possible to equate resistance with that which is good, progressive, or seeking an end to domination.

If popular and academic notions of resistance attach, however weakly at times, to a tradition of protest, the other contemporary substitute for a discourse of freedom—“empowerment”—would seem to correspond more closely to a tradition of idealist reconciliation. The language of resistance implicitly acknowledges the extent to which protest always transpires inside the regime; “empowerment,” in contrast, registers the possibility of generating one’s capacities, one’s “self-esteem,” one’s life course, without capitulating to constraints by particular regimes of power. But in so doing, contemporary discourses of empowerment too often signal an oddly adaptive and harmonious relationship with domination insofar as they locate an individual’s sense of worth and capacity in the register of individual feelings, a register implicitly located on something of an other worldly plane vis-a-vis social and political power. In this regard, despite its apparent locution of resistance to subjection, contemporary discourses of empowerment partake strongly of liberal solipsism—the radical decontextualization of the subject characteristic of liberal discourse that is key to the fictional sovereign individualism of liberalism. Moreover, in its almost exclusive focus on subjects’ emotional bearing and self-regard, empowerment is a formulation that converges with a regime’s own legitimacy needs in masking the power of the regime.

This is not to suggest that talk of empowerment is always only illusion or delusion. It is to argue, rather, that while the notion of empowerment articulates that feature of freedom concerned with action, with being more than the consumer subject figured in discourses of rights and eco- nomic democracy, contemporary deployments of that notion also draw so heavily on an undeconstructed subjectivity that they risk establishing a wide chasm between the (experience of) empowerment and an actual capacity to shape the terms of political, social, or economic life. Indeed, the possibility that one can “feel empowered” without being so forms an important element of legitimacy for the antidemocratic dimensions of liberalism.

#### The ballot is a poor vehicle for change---wins-as-solidary are an extrinsic incentive, which fails and corrodes more effective intrinsic motivations

Kohn 93 – Alfie Kohn, MA in Social Sciences from the University of Chicago, BA from Brown University, internally quoting Edward L. Deci, Professor of Psychology and Gowen Professor in the Social Sciences at the University of Rochester, No Contest: The Case Against Competition, p. 59-60

The idea that trying to do well and trying to do better than others may work at cross-purposes can be understood in the context of an issue addressed by motivational theorists. We do best at the tasks we enjoy. An outside or extrinsic motivator (money, grades, the trappings of competitive success) simply cannot take the place of an activity we find rewarding in itself. "While extrinsic motivation may affect performance," wrote Margaret Clifford, "performance is dependent upon learning, which in turn is primarily dependent upon intrinsic motivation." More specifically, "a significant performance-increase on a highly complex task will be dependent upon intrinsic motivation."59 In fact, even people who are judged to be high in achievement motivation do not perform well unless extrinsic motivation has been minimized, as several studies have shown.60

Competition works just as any other extrinsic motivator does. As Edward Deci, one of the leading students of this topic, has written, "The reward for extrinsically motivated behavior is something that is separate from and follows the behavior. With competitive activities, the reward is typically 'winning' (that is, beating the other person or the other team), so the reward is actually extrinsic to the activity itself."51 This has been corroborated by subjective reports: people who are more competitive regard themselves as being extrinsically motivated.62 Like any other extrinsic motivator, competition cannot produce the kind of results that flow from enjoying the activity itself.

But this tells only half the story. As research by Deci and others has shown, the use of extrinsic motivators actually tends to undermine intrinsic motivation and thus adversely affect performance in the long run. The introduction of, say, monetary reward will edge out intrinsic satisfaction; once this reward is withdrawn, the activity may well cease even though no reward at all was necessary for its performance earlier. Money "may work to 'buy off one's intrinsic motivation for an activity. And this decreased motivation appears (from the results of the field experiment) to be more than just a temporary phenomenon."63 Extrinsic motivators, in other words, are not only ineffective but corrosive. They eat away at the kind of motivation that *does* produce results.

This effect has been shown specifically with competition. In a 1981 study, eighty undergraduates worked on a spatial relations puzzle. Some of them were asked to try to solve it more quickly than the penons sitting next to them, while others did not have to compete. The subjects then sat alone (but clandestinely observed) for a few minutes in a room that contained a similar puzzle. The time they voluntarily spent working on it, together with a self-report on how interested they had been in solving the puzzle, constituted the measure of intrinsic interest. As predicted, the students who had been competing were less intrinsically motivated than those who had originally worked on the puzzle in a noncompetitive environment. It was concluded that

trying to beat another party is extrinsic in nature and tends to decrease people's intrinsic motivation for the target activity. It appears that when people are instructed to compete at an activity, they begin to see that activity as an instrument for winning rather than an activity which is mastery-oriented and rewarding in its own right. Thus, competition seems to work like many other extrinsic rewards in that, under certain circumstances, it tends to be perceived as controlling and tends to decrease intrinsic motivation.114

#### Even when there’s change, it’s ephemeral---that’s worse than fleeting because it trades-off with lasting cooperative approaches

Kohn 93 – Alfie Kohn, MA in Social Sciences from the University of Chicago, BA from Brown University, No Contest: The Case Against Competition, p. 66-67

When we compete, we do so out of a primary concern for our own welfare. If the welfare in question is instead that of a group of people, then cooperation follows naturally. Working together as a group would not be a strategy for maximizing individual gain but a logical consequence of thinking in terms of what benefits all of us. Will I lose in order that the group will gain? Sometimes such a tradeoff will occur, but it will not be seen as catastrophic. More to the point, this question would not even occur to someone whose worldview is different from our own. It would seem as odd as your feet asking whether the body as a whole benefits from jogging at their expense.

Shifting to a concern for the group's welfare, which constitutes a change of *goals*, involves a radically different way of looking at the world. But even if we keep our individualism intact, an inquiry into various *strategies* for satisfying ourselves suggests that competition still makes little sense. The practice of trying to beat others, which derives from the assumption that my success depends on your failure, is productive only in the short run. If we evaluate our success over the long haul — a relatively modest shift in perspective that continues to ignore the question of what is best for the group — working together often benefits us as *individuals*.

Consider Garrett Hardin's notion of the "tragedy of the commons." From the perspective of each cattle farmer with access to a public pasture, it is sensible to keep adding animals to his herd. But the same reasoning that makes this decision seem sensible to one individual will make it seem sensible to all individuals. Each will pursue his selfinterest, the grass will be depleted, and everyone willlose.82 (If the farmers competed to feed more of their own cattle, or to get there first, the process would simply be accelerated: the more competition, the faster everyone loses.) In order to see this, we must adopt the perspective of the group. But even if we adopt this perspective temporarily, with our ultimate purpose still being to benefit each individual, it becomes clear that cooperation is more productive.

There are countless other examples of how cooperation works better than the competitive or independent pursuit of private gain. To cite a few:

• The economist Fred Hirsch pointed out that each individual in a crowd is able to see better by standing on tiptoe, particularly when others are doing so. But everyone would do better if no one stood on tiptoe.83

• Each individual thinks it in her interest to rush for the exit when fire breaks out, but a cooperative escape protects everyone's interests and saves lives.

• Each hockey player is reluctant to wear a helmet when others are not doing so, since it restricts his vision. But a group decision to wear them benefits everyone by reducing the risk of serious injury.84

• Social change that will benefit all workers can take place only if collective action supersedes the quest for individual rewards. "The achievement of short-run material satisfaction often makes it [illogical] irrational [from an individual perspective] to engage in more radical struggle, since that struggle is by definition against those institutions which provide one's current gain."85 This is precisely why "divide and conquer," along with the practice of co-opting activists, is such an effective strategy for maintaining the status quo — and why the individualist worldview is a profoundly conservative doctrine: it inherently stifles change.