# Capitalism K – Starter Pack – UTNIF 2022

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#### NATO-US security cooperation is a militarized project of racial capitalism. Despite its intentions, the aff merely expands Western imperialism.

Campbell 19 (Horace, Professor of African American Studies and Political Science @ Syracuse University, “Global NATO: A 70-Year Alliance of Oppressors in Crisis”, Counter Punch, April 9)

The celebration of NATO’s 70 years of existence provides another opportunity to unearth the real history of the ideas, practices and destruction wrought by this military alliance. Even with the clear exposure of the cooperation between NATO, the CIA and the British MI6 to spread terror and psychological warfare in Europe immediately after the formation of this military alliance, the mainstream media, academics and policy makers remain silent on activities of the ‘stay behind armies’ and ‘false flag’ operations that distorted the real causes of insecurity in the world after 1945. The evidence of the manipulations of the peoples of the world to ensure the continued survival of NATO has been well documented in the fraudulent interventions and bombings in the Balkans right up the present multiple wars against the peoples of Iran.

Vijay Prashad had identified NATO as the prime defender of the Atlantic project. This Atlantic project, he noted was, “a fairly straightforward campaign by the propertied classes to maintain or restore their position of dominance.” This Atlantic Project was anchored in the military alliance called NATO with its principal work, that of reversing the South Project; the struggles for peace bread and justice by the poorer citizens of the planet, especially those who had emerged on the world stage after the decolonization of Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean.

The ostensive reason for the founding of NATO was to ‘thwart’ Soviet aggression, but in practice the organization was a prop for western capital and after the fall of the Berlin Wall, became the core prop for Wall Street. In this year, there will be many commentaries on the fact that the existence of NATO reflects a Cold War relic, that NATO is obsolete and lost its mandate, but very few will link the expansion of NATO to the military management of the international system. Prior to 1991, the planners of NATO could justify the existence of NATO on ideological and political grounds, but with the threat of a multi polar world and the diminution of the dollar, NATO expanded to the point where this author joined with others in labelling this organization Global NATO to reflect its current imperial mandate. The Global thrust of NATO now comprises 29 members from Europe and North America along with 41 ‘partners’ that had started off under the banner of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) in 1991. Since that time, NATO has launched a lengthy war without end in Afghanistan, colluded in the destruction of Iraq and conspired with militarists to forge ‘Partnership for Peace’ (with most members of the former Warsaw Pact states). The core 29 members are now enmeshed with treaties and undertakings from states involved in the Mediterranean Dialog and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative: Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates. There are also the ‘partners’ from across the globe: Afghanistan, Australia, Colombia, Iraq, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand and Pakistan. This enlargement served the military purposes of encircling China and Russia who military planners in the West targeted.

There is no shortage of literature on NATO and its milestones, but very few have documented the real crimes of this global network of anticommunist operatives who precipitated real terror and psychological warfare against the citizens of Europe and North America while supporting mass atrocities from Algeria to Indonesia, and South Africa. Books such as that of NATO’s Secret Armies: Operation GLADIO and Terrorism in Western Europe by Danielle Ganser and The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and Their Secret World War, by Stephen Kinzer used rigorous research techniques to uncover the dark history of NATO. These two books can be distinguished from the bland international relations texts that discusses NATO inside the old calculations of ‘strategy,’ ‘concert of democracies’, ‘security cooperation’ and the balance of power,’ and spheres of influence. Most recently, this IR rendering of the history of NATO has been served up in a document entitled, NATO at Seventy: An Alliance in Crisis. Published by Harvard University with one of the coauthors being a former US ambassador to NATO. This document spelt out ten challenges.[1] However, in a testimony before Congress, Nicolas Burns boiled down the challenge of NATO to one objective; that the current role of NATO must be to contain Russia and China.[2] On the day before the actual 70th anniversary, on April 3, the Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg delivered an address to a joint session of the US Congress advocating an expansion of the alliance while promoting a military buildup against Russia. [3] European progressives will have to reflect deeply on whether the current sanctions regime and the special propose vehicle called the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX), is ushering in another round of inter imperialist rivalry reminiscent of the currency wars of 1929-1939. Then, the shifting alliances yielded confusion among working peoples who ultimately went to fight against each other in Europe, spreading barbarism throughout the world, from Auschwitz to Hiroshima.

#### Capitalism is terminally unsustainable and causes extinction.

FOSTER 19 – Professor of Sociology @ the University of Oregon, Ph.D. in Political Science @ York University, editor of the Monthly Review, former critical Essay Editor/Archives Editor, Organization & Environment, editor and author of numerous books and articles about economics, environment, and capitalism [John, “Capitalism Has Failed—What Next?” 2/1/2019, <https://monthlyreview.org/2019/02/01/capitalism-has-failed-what-next/>, DKP]

Less than two decades into the twenty-first century, it is evident that capitalism has failed as a social system. The world is mired in economic stagnation, financialization, and the most extreme inequality in human history, accompanied by mass unemployment and underemployment, precariousness, poverty, hunger, wasted output and lives, and what at this point can only be called a planetary ecological “death spiral.”1 The digital revolution, the greatest technological advance of our time, has rapidly mutated from a promise of free communication and liberated production into new means of surveillance, control, and displacement of the working population. The institutions of liberal democracy are at the point of collapse, while fascism, the rear guard of the capitalist system, is again on the march, along with patriarchy, racism, imperialism, and war. To say that capitalism is a failed system is not, of course, to suggest that its breakdown and disintegration is imminent.2 It does, however, mean that it has passed from being a historically necessary and creative system at its inception to being a historically unnecessary and destructive one in the present century. Today, more than ever, the world is faced with the epochal choice between “the revolutionary reconstitution of society at large and the common ruin of the contending classes.”3 Indications of this failure of capitalism are everywhere. Stagnation of investment punctuated by bubbles of financial expansion, which then inevitably burst, now characterizes the so-called free market.4 Soaring inequality in income and wealth has its counterpart in the declining material circumstances of a majority of the population. Real wages for most workers in the United States have barely budged in forty years despite steadily rising productivity.5 Work intensity has increased, while work and safety protections on the job have been systematically jettisoned. Unemployment data has become more and more meaningless due to a new institutionalized underemployment in the form of contract labor in the gig economy.6 Unions have been reduced to mere shadows of their former glory as capitalism has asserted totalitarian control over workplaces. With the demise of Soviet-type societies, social democracy in Europe has perished in the new atmosphere of “liberated capitalism.”7 The capture of the surplus value produced by overexploited populations in the poorest regions of the world, via the global labor arbitrage instituted by multinational corporations, is leading to an unprecedented amassing of financial wealth at the center of the world economy and relative poverty in the periphery.8 Around $21 trillion of offshore funds are currently lodged in tax havens on islands mostly in the Caribbean, constituting “the fortified refuge of Big Finance.”9 Technologically driven monopolies resulting from the global-communications revolution, together with the rise to dominance of Wall Street-based financial capital geared to speculative asset creation, have further contributed to the riches of today’s “1 percent.” Forty-two billionaires now enjoy as much wealth as half the world’s population, while the three richest men in the United States—Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and Warren Buffett—have more wealth than half the U.S. population.10 In every region of the world, inequality has increased sharply in recent decades.11 The gap in per capita income and wealth between the richest and poorest nations, which has been the dominant trend for centuries, is rapidly widening once again.12 More than 60 percent of the world’s employed population, some two billion people, now work in the impoverished informal sector, forming a massive global proletariat. The global reserve army of labor is some 70 percent larger than the active labor army of formally employed workers.13 Adequate health care, housing, education, and clean water and air are increasingly out of reach for large sections of the population, even in wealthy countries in North America and Europe, while transportation is becoming more difficult in the United States and many other countries due to irrationally high levels of dependency on the automobile and disinvestment in public transportation. Urban structures are more and more characterized by gentrification and segregation, with cities becoming the playthings of the well-to-do while marginalized populations are shunted aside. About half a million people, most of them children, are homeless on any given night in the United States.14 New York City is experiencing a major rat infestation, attributed to warming temperatures, mirroring trends around the world.15 In the United States and other high-income countries, life expectancy is in decline, with a remarkable resurgence of Victorian illnesses related to poverty and exploitation. In Britain, gout, scarlet fever, whooping cough, and even scurvy are now resurgent, along with tuberculosis. With inadequate enforcement of work health and safety regulations, black lung disease has returned with a vengeance in U.S. coal country.16 Overuse of antibiotics, particularly by capitalist agribusiness, is leading to an antibiotic-resistance crisis, with the dangerous growth of superbugs generating increasing numbers of deaths, which by mid–century could surpass annual cancer deaths, prompting the World Health Organization to declare a “global health emergency.”17 These dire conditions, arising from the workings of the system, are consistent with what Frederick Engels, in the Condition of the Working Class in England, called “social murder.”18 At the instigation of giant corporations, philanthrocapitalist foundations, and neoliberal governments, public education has been restructured around corporate-designed testing based on the implementation of robotic common-core standards. This is generating massive databases on the student population, much of which are now being surreptitiously marketed and sold.19 The corporatization and privatization of education is feeding the progressive subordination of children’s needs to the cash nexus of the commodity market. We are thus seeing a dramatic return of Thomas Gradgrind’s and Mr. M’Choakumchild’s crass utilitarian philosophy dramatized in Charles Dickens’s Hard Times: “Facts are alone wanted in life” and “You are never to fancy.”20 Having been reduced to intellectual dungeons, many of the poorest, most racially segregated schools in the United States are mere pipelines for prisons or the military.21 More than two million people in the United States are behind bars, a higher rate of incarceration than any other country in the world, constituting a new Jim Crow. The total population in prison is nearly equal to the number of people in Houston, Texas, the fourth largest U.S. city. African Americans and Latinos make up 56 percent of those incarcerated, while constituting only about 32 percent of the U.S. population. Nearly 50 percent of American adults, and a much higher percentage among African Americans and Native Americans, have an immediate family member who has spent or is currently spending time behind bars. Both black men and Native American men in the United States are nearly three times, Hispanic men nearly two times, more likely to die of police shootings than white men.22 Racial divides are now widening across the entire planet. Violence against women and the expropriation of their unpaid labor, as well as the higher level of exploitation of their paid labor, are integral to the way in which power is organized in capitalist society—and how it seeks to divide rather than unify the population. More than a third of women worldwide have experienced physical/sexual violence. Women’s bodies, in particular, are objectified, reified, and commodified as part of the normal workings of monopoly-capitalist marketing.23 The mass media-propaganda system, part of the larger corporate matrix, is now merging into a social media-based propaganda system that is more porous and seemingly anarchic, but more universal and more than ever favoring money and power. Utilizing modern marketing and surveillance techniques, which now dominate all digital interactions, vested interests are able to tailor their messages, largely unchecked, to individuals and their social networks, creating concerns about “fake news” on all sides.24 Numerous business entities promising technological manipulation of voters in countries across the world have now surfaced, auctioning off their services to the highest bidders.25 The elimination of net neutrality in the United States means further concentration, centralization, and control over the entire Internet by monopolistic service providers. Elections are increasingly prey to unregulated “dark money” emanating from the coffers of corporations and the billionaire class. Although presenting itself as the world’s leading democracy, the United States, as Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy stated in Monopoly Capital in 1966, “is democratic in form and plutocratic in content.”26 In the Trump administration, following a long-established tradition, 72 percent of those appointed to the cabinet have come from the higher corporate echelons, while others have been drawn from the military.27 War, engineered by the United States and other major powers at the apex of the system, has become perpetual in strategic oil regions such as the Middle East, and threatens to escalate into a global thermonuclear exchange. During the Obama administration, the United States was engaged in wars/bombings in seven different countries—Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, and Pakistan.28 Torture and assassinations have been reinstituted by Washington as acceptable instruments of war against those now innumerable individuals, group networks, and whole societies that are branded as terrorist. A new Cold War and nuclear arms race is in the making between the United States and Russia, while Washington is seeking to place road blocks to the continued rise of China. The Trump administration has created a new space force as a separate branch of the military in an attempt to ensure U.S. dominance in the militarization of space. Sounding the alarm on the increasing dangers of a nuclear war and of climate destabilization, the distinguished Bulletin of Atomic Scientists moved its doomsday clock in 2018 to two minutes to midnight, the closest since 1953, when it marked the advent of thermonuclear weapons.29 Increasingly severe economic sanctions are being imposed by the United States on countries like Venezuela and Nicaragua, despite their democratic elections—or because of them. Trade and currency wars are being actively promoted by core states, while racist barriers against immigration continue to be erected in Europe and the United States as some 60 million refugees and internally displaced peoples flee devastated environments. Migrant populations worldwide have risen to 250 million, with those residing in high-income countries constituting more than 14 percent of the populations of those countries, up from less than 10 percent in 2000. Meanwhile, ruling circles and wealthy countries seek to wall off islands of power and privilege from the mass of humanity, who are to be left to their fate.30 More than three-quarters of a billion people, over 10 percent of the world population, are chronically malnourished.31 Food stress in the United States keeps climbing, leading to the rapid growth of cheap dollar stores selling poor quality and toxic food. Around forty million Americans, representing one out of eight households, including nearly thirteen million children, are food insecure.32 Subsistence farmers are being pushed off their lands by agribusiness, private capital, and sovereign wealth funds in a global depeasantization process that constitutes the greatest movement of people in history.33 Urban overcrowding and poverty across much of the globe is so severe that one can now reasonably refer to a “planet of slums.”34 Meanwhile, the world housing market is estimated to be worth up to $163 trillion (as compared to the value of gold mined over all recorded history, estimated at $7.5 trillion).35 The Anthropocene epoch, first ushered in by the Great Acceleration of the world economy immediately after the Second World War, has generated enormous rifts in planetary boundaries, extending from climate change to ocean acidification, to the sixth extinction, to disruption of the global nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, to the loss of freshwater, to the disappearance of forests, to widespread toxic-chemical and radioactive pollution.36 It is now estimated that 60 percent of the world’s wildlife vertebrate population (including mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and fish) have been wiped out since 1970, while the worldwide abundance of invertebrates has declined by 45 percent in recent decades.37 What climatologist James Hansen calls the “species exterminations” resulting from accelerating climate change and rapidly shifting climate zones are only compounding this general process of biodiversity loss. Biologists expect that half of all species will be facing extinction by the end of the century.38 If present climate-change trends continue, the “global carbon budget” associated with a 2°C increase in average global temperature will be broken in sixteen years (while a 1.5°C increase in global average temperature—staying beneath which is the key to long-term stabilization of the climate—will be reached in a decade). Earth System scientists warn that the world is now perilously close to a Hothouse Earth, in which catastrophic climate change will be locked in and irreversible.39 The ecological, social, and economic costs to humanity of continuing to increase carbon emissions by 2.0 percent a year as in recent decades (rising in 2018 by 2.7 percent—3.4 percent in the United States), and failing to meet the minimal 3.0 percent annual reductions in emissions currently needed to avoid a catastrophic destabilization of the earth’s energy balance, are simply incalculable.40 Nevertheless, major energy corporations continue to lie about climate change, promoting and bankrolling climate denialism—while admitting the truth in their internal documents. These corporations are working to accelerate the extraction and production of fossil fuels, including the dirtiest, most greenhouse gas-generating varieties, reaping enormous profits in the process. The melting of the Arctic ice from global warming is seen by capital as a new El Dorado, opening up massive additional oil and gas reserves to be exploited without regard to the consequences for the earth’s climate. In response to scientific reports on climate change, Exxon Mobil declared that it intends to extract and sell all of the fossil-fuel reserves at its disposal.41 Energy corporations continue to intervene in climate negotiations to ensure that any agreements to limit carbon emissions are defanged. Capitalist countries across the board are putting the accumulation of wealth for a few above combatting climate destabilization, threatening the very future of humanity. Capitalism is best understood as a competitive class-based mode of production and exchange geared to the accumulation of capital through the exploitation of workers’ labor power and the private appropriation of surplus value (value generated beyond the costs of the workers’ own reproduction). The mode of economic accounting intrinsic to capitalism designates as a value-generating good or service anything that passes through the market and therefore produces income. It follows that the greater part of the social and environmental costs of production outside the market are excluded in this form of valuation and are treated as mere negative “externalities,” unrelated to the capitalist economy itself—whether in terms of the shortening and degradation of human life or the destruction of the natural environment. As environmental economist K. William Kapp stated, “capitalism must be regarded as an economy of unpaid costs.”42 We have now reached a point in the twenty-first century in which the externalities of this irrational system, such as the costs of war, the depletion of natural resources, the waste of human lives, and the disruption of the planetary environment, now far exceed any future economic benefits that capitalism offers to society as a whole. The accumulation of capital and the amassing of wealth are increasingly occurring at the expense of an irrevocable rift in the social and environmental conditions governing human life on earth.43

#### The alternative is to reject the plan in favor of commitment to organizing anti-capitalist international revolution.

Tavan '21 [Luca; 3/7/21; writer for Red Flag; "Worldwide revolution is possible and necessary," <https://redflag.org.au/article/worldwide-revolution-possible-and-necessary/>]

From the moment Marx and Engels urged workers of the world to unite at the climax of the Communist Manifesto, the goal of international revolution has been at the core of Marxist politics.

International revolution isn’t just a romantic dream, but an urgent necessity. It’s the only means by which capitalism can be permanently uprooted and replaced with socialism. This is because capitalism, unlike previous class societies, is a globally integrated system. “For the first time in history”, wrote British Marxist Colin Barker of this phenomenon, “capitalism has created a genuinely world society, where all our lives are entwined together in a common history and a common fate”.

Capitalism has linked every nation in a global chain of production. Take your mobile phone for example. It was likely assembled in China, using computer chips manufactured in Taiwan, powered by coal exported from Australia and produced with minerals mined in the Democratic Republic of Congo according to specifications developed in Europe or the United States. No single country produces all the things necessary to satisfy its population’s needs, unlike the various forms of society that came before capitalism, which were mostly self-sufficient and organised around small local economies.

Capitalism was established as a world system through immense robbery and violence—from the international slave trade, which fuelled the Industrial Revolution, to the murderous colonisation of what is now Australia. That same violence is today used by states to defend their imperialist interests, and discipline any movements that get in their way. Movements that aspire to national independence or that back left-wing reformist governments have been demolished with the aid of the great capitalist powers countless times in the past century, from the overthrow of the Allende government in Chile in 1973 to the 2019 Bolivian coup.

Revolutionary movements that attempt to overturn the entire capitalist system face a much more severe response. This was confirmed by the defeat of the Russian Revolution. In 1917 workers, radicalised by years of war and economic crisis, overthrew the tsarist regime and eventually took power into their own hands. In response, the capitalist powers of the world united to crush the workers’ state, in alliance with reactionaries who wanted to restore the tsarist regime. Unless revolutions can spread internationally and challenge the imperialist powers that have an interest in destroying them, they will be crushed.

A heroic effort by Russian workers and peasants fought off 16 foreign invading armies, but at a great cost. The working class was decimated, the factories were depopulated, and the radical working-class democracy that had been built withered. The isolation and poverty imposed on Russia made building socialism an impossibility, and a new Stalinist regime emerged that reversed most of the gains of the revolution.

Because Russian revolutionary socialists who pinned their hopes on spreading revolution across the globe were ultimately defeated, their example is used by defenders of capitalism as a cautionary tale today: that a worldwide revolution against the system is an impossible dream.

But capitalism’s global nature means that revolts tend to spread across national borders. Workers today share increasingly similar experiences: conditions of work, forms of consumption, lifestyles and political cultures. And the global integration of production serves to transmit struggle from one country to another. In 1974, for instance, resistance to the brutal military dictatorship in Chile spread to East Kilbride, Scotland, of all places. Workers at the Rolls Royce factory there learned that the engines they were repairing were being used by the Chilean air force to drop bombs on workers resisting the coup. They downed tools and refused to work on the engines, keeping them out of the hands of the military junta for four years.

While nationalism still has a powerful hold on the consciousness of many, it’s increasingly clear that the real line of polarisation across the globe is between the minority ruling class and the majority working class. And when revolts break out in one part of the world, people can identify with the causes and motivations of their struggles, and draw comparisons with their own situation. “Languages remain different,” observed UK Marxist Chris Harman in 1992, “but what they say is increasingly the same”. Harman’s words ring true in every wave of political radicalisation.

1968 is remembered as a year of global revolt, when millions of workers, students and oppressed people drew inspiration from each other’s movements. Activists in the US were radicalised by the heroic resistance of the Vietnamese people to American imperialism. Irish civil rights activists emulated the militant politics of the Black Panthers. When students and workers united to launch a massive general strike in France in May, it taught student radicals in Australia that they needed to link up with the power of the organised working class in order to win.

The movements of 1968 united people across superficially very different societies. For decades, Cold War common sense had dictated that the greatest divide on the planet was between Western liberal capitalism and Stalinist “Communism”. But in 1968, both sides of the iron curtain exploded in revolt. The triggers for the struggles may have been different, but they were all responses to similar issues: inequality, exploitation and war, imposed by monstrous bureaucratic states.

In 2011, a poor Tunisian street vendor set himself alight to protest against police harassment. Within days, his act had inspired anti-government protests across the country. Within weeks, the protests escalated into a regional revolt that challenged regimes across the Arab world. One small act tapped into resentment against inequality, unemployment and state violence that engulfed an entire region. The radical wave spread even further: at a massive demonstration against an anti-union bill in the US city of Madison, Wisconsin, a man held up a poster with a picture of Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak beside Republican Governor Scott Walker. The caption read: “One dictator down. One to go”. The Arab revolutions went on to inspire the Occupy movement, which spread to more than 80 countries.

Today, more than ever, insurgent social movements and working-class uprisings are spurring action in other parts of the world—from Hong Kong to Chile, from Lebanon to France. One placard at a memorial for protesters murdered while resisting the military coup in Myanmar took up Marx’s incitement: “Workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains”.

While the Russian Revolution is cynically held up by capitalist ideologists as the ultimate argument against international revolution, it actually proves the opposite. It shows that the goal is not only necessary, but also that it’s possible. The news of workers seizing power in Russia, overthrowing their capitalist government and declaring their withdrawal from WWI, created shock waves across the planet. Workers in Germany rose in revolt a year later, ending the war for good and building soviets, a form of radical working-class democracy inspired by the Russian example. This was followed by uprisings in France, Italy and Hungary.

The revolutionary wave spread further. A classified British government report from 1919 noted a “very widespread feeling among workers that thrones have become anachronisms, and that the Soviet may be the best form of Government for a democracy”.

The rising tide of radicalism had an impact in Australia too. Meatworkers in the Queensland city of Townsville donned red jumpers, stormed the local police station to free jailed unionists, and placed the city under workers’ control. The editor of the conservative Townsville Daily Bulletin lamented: “Townsville for the last year or so has been developing Bolshevism ... the mob management of affairs in this city, differs very little, from the Petrograd and Moscow brand”.

The Russian Bolsheviks, the revolutionary working-class party that led the revolution to victory in 1917, didn’t just passively wait for revolutions elsewhere. They actively organised to spread the revolt. In 1919, they established the Communist International, an organisation for debate, discussion and coordination between different revolutionary workers’ parties. Revolutionaries in Russia, Italy, France, Germany, the US, Australia and elsewhere attempted to clarify and develop a strategy for overthrowing capitalism everywhere. In none of these countries was there a party like the Bolsheviks, steeled in years of organising working-class struggle to overthrow the state, and capable of leading a revolution. But for a number of years, workers came close to overthrowing capitalism in several countries.

In periods of stability, when social conservatism dominates, international revolution can seem like a pipe dream. Defenders of the status quo actively work to reinforce this illusion. But history proves that the crises that the system generates are international, and that they will inevitably provoke international resistance.

Capitalism is a global system. It requires a global movement to tear it up, root and branch. But it also makes global revolution more possible, and more likely. The most important thing that socialists can do, whether you live in Hong Kong or France, Myanmar or Australia, is to get stuck into organising for it today.

## Links – K

### NATO – Generic – Link

#### NATO serves an integral part of the war machine’s command structure, expanding neoliberal violence across the globe.

Campbell 19 (Horace, Professor of African American Studies and Political Science @ Syracuse University, “Global NATO: A 70-Year Alliance of Oppressors in Crisis”, Counter Punch, April 9)

The continued struggles for bread, peace and justice ensure that it is only the authoritarian leaders from the Global South who are compromised on the real meaning of the existence of NATO. In the present era, there is a new capitalist competition while North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) serves as an integral part of the Pentagon’s world command structure. Recent experiences have demonstrated in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya that the moguls of Wall Street are willing to wage as many wars, to destroy as many countries and to kill as many people as necessary to achieve the dominance of US capitalism. The destruction of Libya was a classic example of the convergence of finance as warfare, the weaponization of information and incessant bombing to destroy a society. Where at the start of NATO the war scare was the propaganda method, In the current digital age, brain hacking and the engineering of smart phones have placed the giant technology firms of Apple , Google, Amazon, Microsoft, Facebook at the forefront of the new weapons platform of NATO and Wall Street. This analysis is in three parts spelling out the rationale for the call for all progressive forces to join together to concentrate their energies in the dismantling of NATO.

NATO at Birth: Stay behind armies, directed terrorist organizations and psychological warfare against Europeans.

In the period after the fall of the Berlin Wall there were major press reports on the role of NATO’s stay behind armies that had been operating inside Western Europe since 1949. Ten years earlier, when the kidnapping and killing of the former Italian Prime Minister, Aldo Moro rocked western Europe, it emerged that his demise had been authored byclandestine paramilitary network code-named “Operation Gladio” that was a false flag operation of NATO. Danielle Ganser’s book, NATO’s Secret Armies: Operation GLADIO and Terrorism in Western Europe had meticulously documented how NATO funded and often even directed terrorist organizations throughout Europe in what was termed a “strategy of tension” with the aim of preventing a rise of the left in Western European politics. NATO’s “secret armies” engaged in subversive and criminal activities in several countries.

In the specific case of Italy, Aldo Moro had committed the unforgivable crime of contemplating a government that included Italians who belonged to the Italian Communist Party Right from the start of the Cold war, the CIA and MI6 had worked closely with former fascists to oppose citizens and organizations in Western Europe that were anti-capitalists. Under the leadership of US planners such as Allen Dulles, William Colby, Frank Wisner and later James Angleton, these operatives weaned and nursed a network of agents and secret arms dumps across Europe, a network that would remain secret but active throughout the Cold War. [4] Ganser elaborated on the extensive operations of Operation Gladio all across Europe with the explicit aim of subverting the democratic wishes of European citizens who were opposed to oppression. It is worth quoting at length the role of the secret armies.

“NATO’s “secret armies” engaged in subversive and criminal activities in several countries. In Turkey in 1960, the stay behind army, working with the army, staged a coup d’état and killed Prime Minister Adnan Menderes; in Algeria in 1961, the French stay-behind army staged a coup with the CIA against the French government of Algiers, which ultimately failed; in 1967, the Greek stay-behind army staged a coup and imposed a military dictatorship; in 1971 in Turkey, after a military coup, the stay-behind army engaged in “domestic terror” and killed hundreds; in 1977 in Spain, the stay behind army carried out a massacre in Madrid; in 1980 in Turkey, the head of the stay behind army staged a coup and took power; in 1985 in Belgium, the stay behind attacked and shot shoppers randomly in supermarkets, killing 28; in Switzerland in 1990, the former head of the Swiss stay behind wrote the US Defense Department he would reveal “the whole truth,” and was found the next day stabbed to death with his own bayonet; and in 1995, England revealed that the MI6 and SAS helped set up stay behind armies across Western Europe.”[5]

The mainstream media and University commentaries have not been able to confront this history in so far as the manipulation and deception that gave rise to the birth of NATO is still at work against the citizens of Europe and the United States.

#### NATO-US Cooperation is grounded in colonialism and imperialism for Western Economic gain. Reject the aff’s intensification of violence on the periphery.

Campbell 19 (Horace, Professor of African American Studies and Political Science @ Syracuse University, “Global NATO: A 70-Year Alliance of Oppressors in Crisis”, Counter Punch, April 9)

In the celebratory events to memorialize the founding of NATO in 1949, it is usually forgotten that when the North American Treaty was signed in April 1949 most of the founding members were colonial overlords. Colonialism and imperialism took a new form under the leadership of US capitalists defending the dollar and Wall Street. At that historical moment in 1949, the justification for starting this organization was that it constituted a system of collective defense whereby its member states agreed to mutual defense in response to an attack by any external party. The external party in question at that time was the USSR; insofar as NATO had been formed as an alliance ostensibly to defend Western Europe against ‘communist expansion’. In the Treaty’s renowned Article 5, the new Allies agreed “an armed attack against one or more of them… shall be considered an attack against them all.”

The US military and industrial leaders studied the terror and propaganda tactics of the Nazis in order to learn the lessons of how to develop an efficient military machine. James Whitman in the book, Hitler’s American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law, outlined what the fascists had learnt from the eugenics movement in the United States. [10] Although many anti-fascist scientists from Germany had found a place in the US academy, the top planners of the Cold War linked the US primacy to the global history of racism to the efficient, bureaucratic and professionalism of conservative Germany.

One of the unspoken aspects of the first years of NATO was the question of containing the possible revolutionary impulses of the German working peoples. To forestall such a possibility, the thinkers and planners of NATO collaborated with the former fascists to learn their skills. The details of this alliance have been spelt out in the book on the CIA by David Talbot in the book, The Devil’s Chessboard: Allen Dulles, the CIA, and the Rise of America’s Secret Government. The merging of fascist ideas with the ideas of Jim Crow in the United States were refined in the secret operation called, Operation Paperclip. Anne Jacobsen, Operation Paperclip: The Secret Intelligence Program to Bring Nazi Scientists to America, [11] elaborated in great detail the secret program of the Joint Intelligence Objectives Agency (JIOA) largely carried out by Special Agents of Army Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC), in which more than 1,600 German scientists, engineers, and technicians, such as Wernher von Braun and his V-2 rocket team, were taken from Germany to America for U.S. government employment, primarily between 1945 and 1959. Many were former members, and some were former leaders, of the Nazi Party. These elements were the foundation of a military program that has brought us the weaponization of space.

The creators of NATO simultaneously mobilized the colonial and fascist elements in Belgium, Spain, Italy and France. Of the twelve founding members, six were outright colonial powers and at that moment, countries such as France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Britain and Portugal looked to the USA to support their plunder of colonial societies. In the specific case of France, in order to assist French colonialism, Algeria was named as a territory of NATO. Sixty years later when the President of France, Macron, apologized for the crimes of killing more than one million Algerians, there is no reflection inside western academic institutions on this role of NATO in Africa. Currently, the French have been the most aggressive in promoting the fiction that the defense radius of Europe stretches 4000 kilometers out from Brussels, up to the arctic, well across the Russian frontier and down into central Africa.

It is not widely known that, initially, the Portuguese fascists were some of the principal beneficiaries of the membership of NATO, with major deployment of nuclear weapons in the Azores as reward for the NATO support for colonialism in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea and other Portuguese outposts of colonial domination. Prior to the formation of NATO in 1949, the 1947 document of the State Department on Cooperative Development of Africa had stipulated that colonialism would assist the recovery of European capitalism. [12]The State Department had been explicit in outlining how cheap foodstuffs and raw materials from Africa would assist Europe’s recovery and create the basis for unity and economic regeneration.

The USA set about creating a number of international institutions to guarantee the survival of Europe and of capitalism, the IMF, IBRD (World Bank), the NATO, GATT, to guarantee the strength of the USA in international trade and finance.

### Artificial Intelligence – Link

#### Capitalism provides the incentive for AI development.

**Dyer-Witherford 20** - an author, and associate professor at the University of Western Ontario in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, (“The Rise of AI-Capitalism: An Interview with Nick Dyer-Witheford,” *Los Angelos Review of Books*, 3-11-20, <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/the-rise-of-ai-capitalism-an-interview-with-nick-dyer-witheford/>, Accessed 3-27-21)

BRIAN JUSTIE: Inhuman Power bills itself as both “a Marxist critique of AI” and “an AI-informed critique of Marxism.” What makes the current moment so ripe for a dual framework of this nature? NICK DYER-WITHEFORD: The moment is ripe because of the surging corporate interest in and applications of machine learning and other new branches of AI research. Major info-tech companies have come to see the cognitive and biological limits of the human as a barrier to accumulation, and glimpse the possibilities of smashing through that obstacle with machine learning, advanced robotics, and other “fourth industrial revolution” technologies. AI today is still in a rudimentary phase, limited to narrow, domain-specific applications, very far from the human-equivalent or human-exceeding general AI that remains the stuff of sci-fi imaginaries, although it is also the target of some serious research programs. Nevertheless, in this restricted form AI permeates everyday life, in the Global Northwest, in China, and to some degree globally: its algorithms organize social media feeds, financial activities, virtual games, workplace monitoring, welfare systems, and police surveillance. We are now in what I and my co-authors, Atle Mikkola Kjøsen and James Steinhoff, term “actually-existing AI capitalism.” Its technologies will likely continue to encroach on what we have thought of as exclusively human capacities, and be applied across a steadily broadening spectrum of activities. As James Steinhoff speculates, AI may well become what Marx termed a “general condition of production,” a prerequisite infrastructure for commercial activity, as steam engines and railways were in the 19th century, and electricity and mass transportation for the 20th. This process is unfolding almost entirely under the direction of giant oligopolistic corporations — Google, Microsoft, IBM, Amazon, Facebook, Alibaba, Tencent, Baidu — with help thrown in by governments eager for AI’s national security state applications. Marx would have understood this very well. So we need a Marxist critique of AI, as what is probably the prime contemporary example of profit-driven and revolt-suppressing appropriation and direction of techno-scientific knowledge. But this process is also throwing into doubt the humanist assumptions built into Marx’s concept of labor: so we also need to critique Marxism from the viewpoint of AI. Marx’s latent humanism is one of the main targets you and your co-authors take aim at in the latter half of the book. Can you elaborate a bit more on this? For Marx, the pinnacle of capitalist machinery was of course the steam-driven factory of his age, a techno-apparatus that still employed and exploited workers on a mass basis. So he could continue to think of the machine as a supplement to and by-product of human effort — “dead labor” that derives from, and has to be animated by, “living labor.” He had one or two prophetic flashes about the marginalization of workers that extreme automation might ultimately enable, moments in his work that remain controversial within the Marxist tradition. But Marx never encountered even an early mechanical computer, let alone an AI. What AI research puts on the event horizon now, however, is the possibility that the machinic “supplement” to labor becomes the main game: that the border Marx conceived between what is living and what is dead collapses. The fraught distinction between the “living” and the “dead,” between the human and the inhuman, looms large in this book. But this prospect of destabilization might be read as the bellwether of dystopian peril or as the realization of a certain utopian promise. To that end, why do you think a growing coterie of Silicon Valley power-players have lately coalesced around the nebulous idea of “humane technology”? Humanism, as others have pointed out, is once again en vogue! The impulse to create digital technologies that support human flourishing has always been important; for example, it is present at the origin of the internet, in hackers’ jail-break of the network of networks from Pentagon control. And this sort of emancipatory hope reappears perennially. But the inhuman power that thwarts it is the market. That was what Marx was referring to when he wrote the line from which our book takes its title: “[I]n the end, an inhuman power rules over everything.” What we are pointing to is the way capital directs and designs technologies as an extension of market power, as instruments not of human development but of profit accumulation. With the arrival of AI, these instruments now seem to take on a life of their own, rendering capital increasingly autonomous from the human. In the 1990s, the days of the early popularization of the internet, when I started writing about digital technologies, and before the business world had worked out how to assimilate them, there was a cultural and political effervescent excitement about the potential of creative commons, open source software, and decentralized collaborative global communication: “dot.com” ambitions and “dot.communist” aspirations expanded side by side. But by the mid-2000s, in the wake of the dot.com crash, capital really got down to incorporating digital tech, developing the model of what Nick Srnicek calls “platform capitalism,” based on big data collection, precision-targeted advertising, and monetization of user-generated content — all managed by algorithmic processes that are now being intensified by machine learning — in effect, narrow forms of AI. What do we have now? A system to accelerate the advertising and sale of commodities, which combines mass surveillance with the targeted dissemination of attention-grabbing content, regardless of the toxic social and ecological consequences, run by giant corporations, with collateral damage-control handed off to legions of precarious, low-paid, and traumatized click-workers. And it is the oligopolists who constructed this apparatus — Google, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft, and their counterparts in China, Baidu, Alibaba, Tencent — that are, with subsidization from their respective national security states, directing the development of machine learning and other AI technologies, while proceeding to bake their commercial priorities, and those of their military and paramilitary partners, into its very design. Today, revived hopes for emancipatory digitization are mostly futile, unless we are also willing to think about dismantling and expropriating the current AI-industrial complex: so the expression of such hopes by Silicon Valley “power players” deeply embedded in that complex is, at best, disingenuous … I want to home in on this invocation of the “current AI-industrial complex,” or what you previously alluded to as “actually-existing AI-capitalism,” a key concept in the book. The implication seems to be that this burgeoning strand of AI-capitalism must necessarily be understood as something different from its predecessors by a matter of kind, and not just a matter of degree. This brings to mind Shoshana Zuboff’s recent tome The Age of Surveillance Capitalism. Some critics of her book have argued, I think rightfully, that surveillance and capitalism are old friends, and so the grand assertion of a new paradigm is overblown and perhaps even obfuscatory. Does capitalism bearing the “AI-” prefix constitute a new paradigm? I will answer at two levels. The first is simple: there’s a wide acceptance of the idea that while capitalism has a persistent logic — the commodification of everything — it also periodically changes the way that logic is worked through, in terms of the orchestration of dominant technologies, work organization, consumption practices, and so on. So, for example, mid-20th-century Fordism, organized around the assembly line, mass work, and mass consumption, had by the millennium had morphed into a post-Fordism of digital technology, so-called flexibilized labor and niche marketing. In Inhuman Power, we suggest that AI could be an important element in another of these metamorphoses, or, as David Harvey puts it “sea changes,” in how capital operates. So here our proposition is an extension and extrapolation from other periodizations of capital. However — second level — in postulating an “AI-capitalism,” we are suggesting a transformation that may pose some very deep problems, possibly for capital itself, and if not, certainly for its human subjects, and also, as a small piece of collateral damage, for Marxist theory. This of course has to do with the status of labor in an era of machine intelligence. A few years ago there was widespread alarm about a “robopocalypse,” an abrupt, induced crisis of technological unemployment. These fears of a sudden onset “end of work” are today contradicted, at least in North America, by the post-Recession return to reasonably robust employment levels — however dubious the wages and conditions of that employment. But longer term, there are real prospects that AI adoption will in more gradual, oblique ways attenuate and hollow out the wage labor relation. We see it as a slow tsunami. Waves of sectoral technological unemployment, ratcheting in sync with business cycles and financial crises, will be a part of this, as will various intermediate phases of job replacement, in which truck drivers ride shotgun on convoys of automated vehicles, or diminishing call center staff fill the gaps in banks of algorithmic answering services. But this is not the whole story. As Jason Smith says, under capitalism people must sell their labor power to avoid total immiseration, so even as automation advances they seek employment and find exploitation, or self-employment and self-exploitation, in increasingly baroque forms of service work. But labor in AI-capitalism will likely be recurrently contingent, deskilled and disposable, controlled by programs opaque and, at a certain level, incomprehensible even by their developers; its human elements will be increasingly peripheral to both production and profit. The issue is perhaps not so much joblessness as powerlessness; a labor force without force, as capital gradually autonomizes itself from the human. In that sense, AI-capitalism might be a period not so much like Fordism or post-Fordism, but more like the process of primitive accumulation in which capital drove populations off the land into factory work — except in reverse. It would be the beginning of a period of futuristic accumulation, in which capital, rather than accumulating its proletarian workforce, gradually, over centuries, marginalizes and then discards it.

### Bio-Technology – Link

#### Bio-Tech fails under capitalism’s technocapitalist optimism. Obsession with profitability makes critical research ineffective.

Schmachtenberger 21 (Daniel, Founding member of The Consilience Project aimed at improving public sensemaking and dialogue, “The Case Against Naive Technocapitalist Optimism”, The Consilience Project, August 1, <https://consilienceproject.org/the-case-against-naive-technocapitalist-optimism/>)

Technocapitalism exists as a highly competitive marketplace of intangibles.

These intangibles include intellectual property such as software products, or access to proprietary “platforms” like Amazon Marketplace or app stores. Technocapitalist products may be defined typically as “disruptive innovations,” in the words of Clayton Christensen: they are ideas that begin as inferior alternatives to existing offerings, and enter play either at the foot of the market or in a new market altogether. The underlying technology is significant because it can provide cost-effective, novel competition to ideas that are already in production.[26] Research-intensive industries, such as computing and biotechnology, are at the forefront of these efforts. With public funding for scientific research on a steady decline since the latter half of the 20th century, private funding is increasingly needed for viability.[27] In this environment, research must consistently prove its value to funders in order to persist. A well-known example of this, extrapolated from data gathered in the 1990s, is that over 75% of all medical research is privately funded. As a result, rare disease research relies disproportionately on private funding.[28] This effect is mirrored in other fields, and has increased in proportion: between 2012 and 2016, academic-industry collaborations more than doubled globally.[29] The pharmaceutical industry is notoriously fickle about what constitutes marketability and is therefore likely to pass over areas of research that are not clearly profitable.[30]

Private funding can offer flexibility by bypassing public bureaucracy, and technocapitalist campaigns often emerge as efforts to reduce red tape.[31] For example, when the Gates Foundation began funding research into experimental pandemic response efforts, their proposed solution until approximately 2015 was for a NATO-like organization to handle public health policy, and they worked extensively with the WHO and the GAVI vaccine alliance, a public-private enterprise. However, the WHO’s sluggish Ebola response between 2014 and 2016 prompted the Gates Foundation in 2017 to provide backing for CEPI, a vaccine research accelerator, and in 2020, the Gates Foundation’s COVID response efforts largely bypassed intergovernmental organizations, instead utilizing direct, private funding to pivot existing research initiatives into COVID testing trials. These redirections of private research provided data that outstripped the WHO by a critical few months before the FDA halted the program due to regulatory approval issues.[32]

A cause for concern, however, is that private funding has private goals, and that this may impact trustworthiness of private research. Objective empiricism is questionable when it is connected to corporate objectives, and this has the potential to reduce public trust in the research process. Privately funded studies are demonstratively more likely to reach conclusions that favor sponsors’ interests. One analysis of medical industry funding found that privately-funded research is four times more likely to provide a favorable assessment of a drug than publicly-funded research.[33] It also appears that the public is, generally speaking, in on the plot. A meta-analysis of pharmaceutical trials suggests that trials with disclosed financial ties to industry are perceived as “less interesting, important, relevant, valid, and believable” than those without financial disclosures. Though a consistent quantitative effect is difficult to document due a limited sample size, a significant portion of patients and clinicians may feel that disclosed financial ties reduce research quality, and can discourage patients from participating.[34]

Notably, corporations themselves are also experiencing a reduction in internal science funding. The proportion of corporate funding allocated toward the research side of industrial R&D dropped from 28% in 1985 to 20% in 2015. The same review of scientific publications found that the rate of papers being published by corporations dropped significantly between 1980 and 2010, indicating that it is most cost-effective for companies to rely on existing data as opposed to producing new data.[35] This is because market pressures favor applied research in the interest of greenlighting products, not higher-risk investments in foundational science that are likely to pay off at a later date. In the interest of budget conservation, research may be dropped. Patents increase the value of innovations, and in turn stimulate continued R&D in the interest of “inventing around” (i.e. around existing innovations). As a result, there is a disproportionate focus on development rather than research as the most profitable approach for a corporation.[36]

The balance of public relations and institutional respectability is delicate.

If both the public and traditional private sectors are experiencing funding squeezes, the technocapitalist investment sector should be a great source of support for the technological and scientific communities. However, the technocapitalist “disruptor” efforts are subject to the same issues choking industry funding: they favor low-risk research with high payoffs. Research that requires a fifteen-year timeline to produce tangible effects is passed over in favor of disruptive options. These initiatives can have limited shelf lives due to regulatory issues or poor adoption rates.[37]

**Cap causes disease BUT the alt solves it.**

Lemm 20 (Karsten Lemm is an Associate Editor with DLD and has been covering innovation and the digital economy since the dawn of (Internet) time.; “Why Covid-19 Highlights the Limits of Capitalism”; DLD; May 28, 2020; https://dldnews.com/covid-19-shows-the-limits-of-capitalism/)//eleanor

What’s the price of a human life? How do markets reward long-term research and prevention – if a payoff for investors may never come? “Obviously this crisis comes at great human cost”, Albert Wenger, managing partner at Union Square Ventures in New York, says with regard to the coronavirus pandemic. “At the same time, this is an opportunity for us. It’s an opportunity to see the limits of capitalism.” In conversation with Isabell Welpe, Chair for Strategy and Organization at Technische Universität München, Wenger made the case that humanity urgently needs to “leave the industrial age behind and create what I call the knowledge age.” In his vision, much of human attention would be directed toward existential problems like climate change, preventing the next pandemic or detecting asteroids that are on a collision course with Earth. The discussion – part of the DLD Sync series – spanned across a vast range of topics, from crisis management and consumer power to economic freedom, democracy, social safety and how to finance a potential Universal Basic Income. Excerpts follow below, along with a video recording of the complete session. Points of Failure Since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, Western-style market capitalism has been the dominant economic model in much of the world. But the success has also exposed capitalism’s weaknesses, Wenger argues. “Over time, the problems that remain are by definition problems that it’s not good at solving.” In the view of the German-born investor, many of the world’s largest issues today require a different approach because capitalism relies on prices and markets to function properly. “And there are things for which there can’t be markets”, Wenger says. “Exhibit 1 is the pandemic. There’s no price for pandemic preparedness.” Even the trillions of dollars in losses that the pandemic will likely bring to the global economy won’t suffice as a permanent incentive for preparedness, Wenger believes. “What is the ‘demand mechanism’ by which you establish that you should be stockpiling ventilators or fund fundamental research into new ways of creating vaccines?”, he asked. “It’s crucially important, I believe, that we figure out how we free up more human attention onto non-market related activities.” Striking A Balance A baker who sells dry bread will likely go out of business soon because customers stay away – illustrating that “whenever you can measure the quality of something, markets work quite well”, Isabell Welpe pointed out. “But it’s very difficult to judge the quality of ideas or the services that a hospital provides.” If a hospital does a good job in disease prevention, for example, “you won’t see it”. Universities face a similar conundrum, Welpe said. To prove their merits in a market-based environment, “universities have started to produce quantity instead of quality – because it is of great use to us politically but it’s not of good use for the society that funds us”, Welpe said. “It’s hard to judge, if not impossible, the quality of groundbreaking research. It’s also hard to judge the quality of good journalism.” Therefore, she concluded, “for some institutions I don’t think capitalism, or the market system, are a very good idea.” In the Loop Most people work to earn a living, spending money that keeps the economy going, Albert Wenger observed. “In my book, World After Capital, I call this the ‘job loop’”, he said. “Lots of human attention is caught up in making stuff, getting paid for that and then immediately turning around and consuming.” You might expect a venture capitalist to be quite happy with this system, but Wenger sees enormous downsides. For one, it leads to overconsumption, encouraging people to buy “ever more stuff that they don’t really need” – depleting resources and fuelling climate change through globalized supply chains. In addition, Wenger argues, people are forced to spend time and attention on tasks that bring neither them nor society forward. “There are all these large-scale threats” like pandemics, climate change or asteroids that could collide with Earth, but they’re largely overlooked by societies focused on economic growth and consumption, Wenger believes. “The amount of attention, collectively, that we’re allocating to these [threats] is completely out of whack with their relative importance”, he said. “For human attention, we really should try to get away from market-based approaches.”

### Cybersecurity – Link

#### Cyberwar is merely a manifestation of capitalism – automating war against the working class. Refuse the aff’s project as a continuation of the neoliberal war machine. It’s try or die for the alternative’s movements to abolish the order altogether.

Dyer-Witheford and Matviyenko 19 (Nick, associate professor @ University of Western Ontario in Faculty of Information and Media Studies, Svitlana, assistant professor of communication @ Simon Fraser University, “What is to be done?”, Chapter 3, Cyberwar and Revolution: Digital Subterfuge in Global Capitalism)

The argument of this book is that cyberwar is a manifestation of the competitive nature of capitalism, which, beneath the surface of globalization, fosters a war of all against all, conducted in the accelerated, automated, and abstracted forms on which this entire mode of production now depends. It follows from this that the prospects for reducing the dangers of cyberwar, and of the other types of war of which it is now part, depend strongly on movements and struggles to constrain and, ultimately, abolish this internally antagonistic order. A recognition of the extreme difficulty of this project is inherent in the point on which we opened this chapter, namely, Noys’s observation that the military high-technology “endocolonization” of society has been a factor in decomposing the traditional industrial working-class movements that were historically the main agencies of socialist and communist projects. However, there is also a possible reversal of this logic, if averting war, including cyberwar, becomes entwined with other issues, such as struggles for social equality and ecological sustainability, a focal point for recomposition of movements looking beyond capital, drawing on new and diverse constituencies. We have indicated some of the issues that we think might be drawn together around resistance to the rise of cyberwar: antisurveillance sentiment, rejection of the secrecy of the security state and its new digital complexes, concern over the corruption of the general intellect by mis- and disinformation, objection to corporate and military criminality, and, of course, revulsion at the exterminatory horrors of war, from the terror of dirty wars to global thermonuclear catastrophe.

In his reflections on Marxist theories of war and revolution, Balibar (2002) remarks on the coexistence within this body of thought of two contradictory elements, one stressing the idea of “revolutionary war,” the other of “revolutionary peace.” The first stresses “armed struggle against capital,” the second “the refusal of capitalist wars”—“in many respects this class war is therefore also a non-war, or an anti-war” (11). If, in the title to this chapter, we invoked Lenin’s What Is to Be Done?, it is partly to remember that, though Lenin is today primarily thought of as a theorist of revolutionary war, perhaps the major decision of Leninism was one for peace (even if his later adoption of Trotsky’s formula of “no war, no peace” resonates with today’s state of cyberwar). The outbreak of World War I precipitated a schism in the international socialist movement. Leading European socialist democratic parties all too rapidly discarded their longheld view that war exemplified the irrationality of competitive capitalism, forgot their commitments to peace and worldwide worker solidarity, rallied behind their governments, and joined the march to mass slaughter. Only the faction of what is sometimes known as the Zimmerwald Left (Nation 1989), led by Lenin, continued to speak out for internationalism. It was thus not just revolt against exploitation but rejection of the holocaust of World War I, a program of “bread and peace,” that gave communism a moral claim to universality. Terrifying contemporary parallels to the pre1914 years today demand an updated strategy for “bread and peace,” with “bread” understood as a securing of ecological conditions for species life and “peace” as elimination of systemic social violence.

One of the slogans of the Zimmerwald Left was “Krieg dem Krieg,” “war on war,” and it is tempting to take this up, in a very literal sense, and propose a “cyberwar on cyberwar.” As we have seen, there is a hacking front to both the struggles against digital militarism and contemporary anticapitalist movements. They have exposed the workings of the cyberwar complex and brought it to light. Their main figures are defectors from that complex. More broadly, over recent decades, many critical theorists have argued for forms of “cyborg” dissent and for deployment of the arms available to “immaterial labor,” whether in the networked mobilization of protest or in more direct digital disruptions of war making. Cyberwar on cyberwar is both a metaphorical and practical possibility, and we have seen situations when “Krieg dem Krieg,” in the most concrete sense, is the only effective response to murderous attack.

## Framework – K

### Competing Visions – Framework

#### Pedagogy is key and shapes subjectivity – debate is a cite for alternative education that refuses capital – the permutation is co-option and an example of how white, male, heteronormative educational institutions are designed to consume radical scholarship and twist it in the service of capital

Hall 21 –Professor of Education and Technology at De Montfort University, Director of the Institute for Research in Criminology, Community, Education and Social Justice. He is also a member of the Centre for Urban Research on Austerity and a Research Associate in the Centre for Computing and Social Responsibility at DMU, PhD, MA [Richard, “Alternative Education,” Critical reflections on the language of neoliberalism in education: dangerous words and discourses of possibility, Routledge, 2021, DKP]

Alternative education raises questions about whether another world is possible. Alternatives ask educators and students to question the governance, regulation and resourcing of hegemonic, institutionalized forms of education, alongside their curricula, through prefigurative practices. The idea of an alternative questions the legitimacy of formalized spaces, often standing against both their forms and content, and as a result defining an educational undercommons (Harney & Moten, 2013). Such an undercommons is a space for solidarity and resistance, from where resources and relations can be drawn. It might exist inside formal education, as a sector of the economy or in its institutional forms. An undercommons forms an underground that enables subversion and new forms of organization, and which problematizes dominant narratives about education (for entrepreneurship, growth, sustainable development and so on).

In this being inside-and-against the school or the university, alternative education takes the perspective of voices that are marginalized because they are racialized, gendered or rendered economically valueless or indebted, in order to re-imagine and re-produce new forms of educational life or sociability. The idea of an alternative also emerges beyond formalized spaces, in autonomous communities that exist beyond the school or university as it is repurposed as a factory (Cleaver, 2002; University of Utopia, The, n.d.).

This idea of alternatives being in, against and beyond recognizes that hegemonic educational institutions have been subsumed within the circuits of capital. This means that the governance and forms of such institutions, and the work of academics, professional service staff and students, have been reengineered by capital on a global terrain. Moreover, the labor that takes place inside these institutions is repurposed and re-produced in its relation to money capital, productive capital and commodity capital, in order to generate surplus value, surpluses, profits and so on. The domination of capitalist social relations over academic labor is driven by the abstracted power of money and the generation of surplus value. This opens up the possibility for alternative forms of education, both inside formal spaces and beyond the boundary of the formal, to become new sites of struggle in response to the on-going crisis of sociability. This crisis is signalled by the co-option of socially useful knowledge, or the general intellect, so that it can be valorized (Hall, 2018; Virno, 2004). Educational relationships have been productively intensified in order to facilitate the expansion of capital, rather than for the solution of global, socio-economic and socio-environmental crises. Inside the school or the university, educational innovations are fetishized as emancipatory, whereas in working against and beyond these spaces, scholars in alternative educational spaces are working to abolish the relations of production that drive societies to ignore concrete emergencies (Hall & Smyth, 2016).

From inside-and-against the hegemonic institution, alternatives articulate the limits of formal education, including its problematic nature as a public or private good (Marginson, 2012). Here, the idea of the school or university as a form of enclosure of knowledge and practice is refused through public intellectualism or educational activity that is conducted in public. Such activities widen debates over ideas and fields of study beyond the academy to the public, in that they refuse both the colonization of disciplinary spaces by academics and the delegitimation of certain voices. This public activity contains the germ of militancy (Neary, 2012; Thorburn, 2012) because it aims to do counter-hegemony and be counter-hegemonic. As a form of workers’ enquiry, militancy in research or pedagogic practice points toward projects that produce knowledge useful for activist ends. This may take the form of open education or scholarship that refuses neoliberal recuperation (Eve, 2014) for the production of marketized outcomes like performance data, or new spaces for the generation of surpluses or profits. Such refusals question the societal value of business-as-usual models for public, higher education (Open Library of Humanities, 2020).

However, experiments that are against hegemonic practices also offer the potential for radical experiment, alongside the re-imagining of education as a distributed, co-operative, democratic activity. Such experiments question education’s relationship to society. Prefigurative responses then emerge in the pedagogic practices of social movements rooted in pedagogy (Caldart & the Movement of Landless Workers, 2011), and through forms of resistance inside the university grounded in community and environmental justice (Pearce, 2012), resistance to gender-based violence, and trades union educational activity (Scandrett, 2014). This work situates the experience of the educator and student against that which emerges from within social movements, in order to address the possibilities for alternative forms of knowing and being. Here traditions of critical pedagogy are central to the ways in which critical knowing and being emerge to challenge the dominant framing of learning, teaching and scholarship as separate from society and everyday life (Amsler, 2015; Motta and Cole, 2016).

Work that emerges beyond formal educational contexts is situated in practical, alternative initiatives that point toward alternative, societal re-imaginings of education. Such re-imaginings are forms of autoethnography, framed by the idea of the student or educator as a co-operative activist, and as such operating collectively through organic intellectualism (People’s Political Economy, 2013; Social Science Centre, The, 2016). Such alternatives offer a means of using critical sociology and critical pedagogy to analyse concrete moments of crisis of specific communities, such as the politics of austerity and climate justice (Buxton & Hayes, 2015; Lockyer & Veteto, 2013).

In particular, these alternatives are infused by comparative analyses with the pedagogic practices of indigenous communities and people of colour (Motta, 2016; Zibechi, 2012), for whom the crisis of sociability imposed by capitalism is on-going, historical and material. Such practices are affirmative in attempting to generate new cultural definitions and recognitions (Connell, 1987), as acts of becoming (Braidotti, 2011). Here, the white, male, heteronormative educational institution is the adversary of and antithetical to an ongoing process of becoming. In its deployment of organizational forms, technologies and institutional spaces, pedagogic practices and assessment regimes, it seeks to maintain the domination of the market. As such, in order to move beyond the market as the sole arbiter of crises, it becomes important to nurture alternative educational spaces that are affirmative of intersectional lines of flight away from our hegemonic anchoring points (Braidotti, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2006). A key issue is whether those voices which catalysed or contributed to crisis, are the same voices who should dominate our responses.

Such affirmative lines of flight develop analyses that specifically relate cooperative, inclusive educational practices of creating and legitimizing communities, and challenge the on-going colonization of knowing and being. They offer ways to refuse the dominant power relations of knowledge production inside contemporary capitalism, and instead speak of decolonization by feminized and racialized subjects on the margins. This enables those projects to establish unique analyses of educational possibility from within new, emancipatory horizons. These analyses recognize the desire for progressive and democratic forms of education: first, in terms of its governance and politics, and the social relations that circulate inside educational spaces; and second, in terms of enacting radical pedagogies grounded in the abolition of power relations in the classroom.

Here a re-politicization of autonomy becomes central to a movement away from the internalization of capitalism’s value-set, which is rooted in productivity/intensity and where any alternative mode of life is seen as sinful. Tactical and affective autonomy reduces the acceptance of hierarchical discipline, and increases demands for the quality and content of work that is both necessary/in the sphere of heteronomy and free/in the sphere of autonomy (Gorz, 1982). What alternative education offers is less a masculine, engineered, corporate life driven by technique, and instead one rooted in humane values where individuals rather than capital are sovereign. Anything otherwise makes capital/exploitation/appropriation central to a productive life, and diminishes the space for a useful life.

Marx (1894/1991) describes the sphere of freedom or autonomy beginning beyond the sphere of necessity or heteronomy. Freedom consists of being able to work with as much dignity and efficiency as possible (in the sphere of necessity) for as brief a time as possible. It is important that a heteronomous sphere is subordinate to the sphere of autonomy, with the maximum efficiency and the least expenditure of effort and resources. The key is to make it possible for individuals to move from heteronomous, wage-based social labor effected in the general interest and requiring little time or intense involvement, to autonomous activities which carry their end in themselves. This resonates with descriptions and discussions of self-actualization through the classroom, rooted in acts of teaching that “share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students” (bell hooks, 1994, p. 13). Moreover, it takes alternative educational spaces as pivots for reimagining the curriculum for two reasons. First, because by dismantling the curriculum, we are able to reveal flows of alienation at the intersections of: self/subject and other/object reflected in it; gender and race reproduced through it; and the disciplinary separations demanded by it. Second, we are able to re-describe the curriculum as a form of social wealth and a process of struggle (Ahmed, 2012; Olufemi, 2017).

From this complex educational ecosystem, alternatives sit against the neoliberal enclosure of existing structures and forms, like the school and university. They stress: first, democratic activity, based upon a radical politics; second, militant research strategies, which see research as a tool for political action and for widening the field of struggle against the re-production of alienating forms of education; third, the re-definition of scholarship undertaken in public, as a revolutionary activity. In a politics of community engagement and cross-disciplinary activity, and in radical education collectives, these strategies form cycles of struggle that point toward possibilities for: detonating the school or university (Amsler & Neary, 2012); using prefigurative pedagogical practices that enable labor to become the crisis of capital, so that it might become for itself rather than being for capitalization or valorization (Holloway, 2002; Occupied California, 2010); and describing what society might become (School for Designing a Society, The, 2016)

### Prioritize Ethics – Framework

#### Pedagogy is key – academic debates matter.

Giroux 12.

Henry Giroux – McMaster University Professor for Scholarship in the Public Interest and The Paulo Freire Distinguished Scholar in Critical Pedagogy. “Dangerous Pedagogy in the Age of Casino Capitalism and Religious Fundamentalism.” February 29, 2012. http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/6954:dangerous-pedagogy-in-the-age-of-casino-capitalism-and-religious-fundamentalism

All over the world, the forces of neoliberalism are on the march, dismantling the historically guaranteed social provisions provided by the welfare state, defining profit-making and market freedoms as the essence of democracy while diminishing civil liberties as part of the alleged "war" against terrorism. Secure in its dystopian vision that there are no alternatives to a market society, free-market fundamentalism eliminates issues of contingency, struggle and social agency by celebrating the inevitability of economic laws in which the ethical ideal of intervening in the world gives way to the idea that we "have no choice but to adapt both our hopes and our abilities to the new global market." Coupled with an ever-expanding culture of fear, market freedoms seem securely grounded in a defense of national security and the institutions of finance capital. Under such circumstances, a neoliberal model now bears down on American society, threatening to turn it into an authoritarian state. The script is now familiar: there is no such thing as the common good; market values become the template for shaping all aspects of society; the free, possessive individual has no obligations to anything other than his or her self-interest; profit-making is the essence of democracy; the government, and particularly the welfare state, is the arch-enemy of freedom; private interests trump public values; consumerism is the essence of citizenship; privatization is the essence of freedom; law and order is the new language for mobilizing shared fears rather than shared responsibilities; war is the new organizing principle for organizing society and the economy; theocracy now becomes the legitimating code for punishing women, young people, the elderly, and those groups marginalized by class, race and ethnicity when religious moralism is needed to shore up the war against all social order.[[2]](http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/6954:dangerous-pedagogy-in-the-age-of-casino-capitalism-and-religious-fundamentalism#2) Given this current crisis, educators need a new political and pedagogical language for addressing the changing contexts and issues facing a world in which capital draws upon an unprecedented convergence of resources - financial, cultural, political, economic, scientific, military and technological - to exercise powerful and diverse forms of control. If educators and others are to counter global capitalism’s increased ability to separate the traditional nation-state-based space of politics from the transnational reach of power, it is crucial to develop educational approaches that reject a collapse of the distinction between market liberties and civil liberties, a market economy and a market society. This suggests developing forms of critical pedagogy capable of challenging neoliberalism and other anti-democratic traditions, such as the emerging religious fundamentalism in the United States, while resurrecting a radical democratic project that provides the basis for imagining a life beyond the "dream world" of capitalism. Under such circumstances, education becomes more than testing, an obsession with accountability schemes, zero-tolerance policies and a site for simply training students for the workforce. At stake here is recognizing the power of education in creating the formative culture necessary to both challenge the various threats being mobilized against the very idea of justice and democracy while also fighting for those public spheres and formative cultures that offer alternative modes of identity, social relations and politics. The search for a new politics and a new critical language that crosses a range of theoretical divides must reinvigorate the relationship between democracy, ethics, and political agency by expanding the meaning of the pedagogical as a political practice while at the same time making the political more pedagogical. In the first instance, it is crucial to recognize that pedagogy has less to do with the language of technique and methodology than it does with issues of politics and power. Pedagogy is a moral and political practice that is always implicated in power relations and must be understood as a cultural politics that offers both a particular version and vision of civic life, the future, and how we might construct representations of ourselves, others, and our physical and social environment. As Roger Simon observes: As an introduction to, preparation for, and legitimation of particular forms of social life, education always presupposes a vision of the future. In this respect a curriculum and its supporting pedagogy are a version of our own dreams for ourselves, our children, and our communities. But such dreams are never neutral; they are always someone's dreams and to the degree that they are implicated in organizing the future for others they always have a moral and political dimension. It is in this respect that any discussion of pedagogy must begin with a discussion of educational practice as a form of cultural politics, as a particular way in which a sense of identity, place, worth, and above all value is - informed by practices which organize knowledge and meaning.[[3]](http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/6954:dangerous-pedagogy-in-the-age-of-casino-capitalism-and-religious-fundamentalism#3) An oppositional cultural politics can take many forms, but given the current assault by neoliberalism on all aspects of democratic public life, it seems imperative that educators revitalize the struggles to create conditions in which learning would be linked to social change in a wide variety of social sites, and pedagogy would take on the task of regenerating both a renewed sense of social and political agency and a critical subversion of dominant power itself. Making the political more pedagogical rests on the assumption that education takes place a variety of sites outside of the school. Under such circumstances, agency becomes the site through which power is not transcended but reworked, replayed and restaged in productive ways. Central to my argument is the assumption that politics is not only about power, but also, as Cornelius Castoriadis points out, "has to do with political judgements and value choices,"[[4]](http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/6954:dangerous-pedagogy-in-the-age-of-casino-capitalism-and-religious-fundamentalism#4) indicating that questions of civic education and critical pedagogy (learning how to become a skilled citizen) are central to the struggle over political agency and democracy. In this instance, critical pedagogy emphasizes critical reflexivity, bridging the gap between learning and everyday life, understanding the connection between power and knowledge, and extending democratic rights and identities by using the resources of history. However, among many educators and social theorists, there is a widespread refusal to recognize that this form of education is not only the foundation for expanding and enabling political agency, but also that it takes place across a wide variety of public spheres mediated through the very force of culture itself. One of the central tasks of any viable critical pedagogy would be to make visible alternative models of radical democratic relations in a wide variety of sites. These spaces can make the pedagogical more political by raising fundamental questions such as: what is the relationship between social justice and the distribution of public resources and goods? What are the conditions, knowledge and skills that are a prerequisite for civic literacy, political agency and social change? What kinds of identities, desires and social relations are being produced and legitimated in diverse sites of teaching and learning? How might the latter prepare or undermine the ability of students to be self-reflective, exercise judgment, engage in critical dialogues, and assume some responsibility for addressing the challenges to democracy at a national and global level? At the very least, such a project involves understanding and critically engaging dominant public transcripts and values within a broader set of historical and institutional contexts. Making the political more pedagogical in this instance suggests producing modes of knowledge and social practices in a variety of sites that not only affirm oppositional thinking, dissent and cultural work, but also offer opportunities to mobilize instances of collective outrage and collective action. Such mobilization opposes glaring material inequities and the growing cynical belief that today's culture of investment and finance makes it impossible to address many of the major social problems facing both the United States and the larger world. Most importantly, such work points to the link between civic education, critical pedagogy and modes of oppositional political agency that are pivotal to creating a politics that promotes democratic values, relations, autonomy and social change. Hints of such a politics is already evident in the various approaches the Occupy movement has taken in reclaiming the discourse of democracy and in collectively challenging the values and practices of finance capital. Borrowing a line from Rachel Donadio, the Occupy movement protesters are raising questions about "what happens to democracy when banks become more powerful than political institutions?"[[5]](http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/6954:dangerous-pedagogy-in-the-age-of-casino-capitalism-and-religious-fundamentalism#5) What kind of education does it take, both in and out of schools, to recognize the dissolution of democracy and the emergence of an authoritarian state? In taking up these questions and the challenges they pose, critical pedagogy proposes that education is a form of political intervention in the world and is capable of creating the possibilities for social transformation. Rather than viewing teaching as technical practice, pedagogy, in the broadest critical sense, is premised on the assumption that learning is not about processing received knowledge, but actually transforming knowledge as part of a more expansive struggle for individual rights and social justice. This implies that any viable notion of pedagogy and resistance should illustrate how knowledge, values, desire and social relations are always implicated in relations of power, and how such an understanding can be used pedagogically and politically by students to further expand and deepen the imperatives of economic and political democracy. The fundamental challenge facing educators within the current age of neoliberalism, militarism and religious fundamentalism is to provide the conditions for students to address how knowledge is related to the power of both self-definition and social agency. In part, this means providing students with the skills, knowledge and authority they need to inquire and act upon what it means to live in a substantive democracy, to recognize anti-democratic forms of power, and to fight deeply rooted injustices in a society and world founded on systemic economic, racial and gendered inequalities.

#### Their argument begins from an ideological bias that brackets out capitalism’s exploitation of the periphery – traditional impact calculus can’t take this into account, ethics must come first

Slavoj **Zizek and** Glyn **Daly**, Senior Lecturer in Politics in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at University College, Northampton, 200**4**, Conversations With Zizek, p. 14-16

For Zizek it is imperative that we cut through this Gordian knot of postmodern protocol and recognize that our ethico-political responsibility is to confront the constitutive violence of today’s global capitalism and its obscene naturalization/anonymization of the millions who are subjugated by it throughout the world. Against the standardized positions of postmodern culture — with all its pieties con¬cerning ‘multiculturalist’ etiquette — Zizek is arguing for a politics that might be called ‘radically incorrect’ in the sense that it breaks with these types of positions and focuses instead on the very organizing principles of today’s social reality: the principles of global liberal capitalism. This requires some care and subtlety. For far too long, Marxism has been bedevilled by an almost fetishistic economism that has tended towards political mor¬bidity. With the likes of Hilferding and Gramsci, and more recently Laclau and Mouffe, crucial theoretical advances have been made that enable the transcendence of all forms of economism. In this new context, however, Zizek argues that the problem that now presents itself is almost that of the opposite fetish. That is to say, the prohibitive anxieties surrounding the taboo of economism can function as a way of not engaging with economic reality and as a way of implicitly accepting the latter as a basic horizon of existence. In an ironic Freudian-Lacanian twist, the fear of economism can end up reinforcing a de facto economic necessity in respect of contemporary capitalism (i.e. the initial prohibi¬tion conjures up the very thing it fears). This is not to endorse any kind of retrograde return to economism. Zizek’s point is rather that in rejecting economism we should not lose sight of the systemic power of capital in shaping the lives and destinies of humanity and our very sense of the possible. In particular we should not overlook Marx’s central insight that in order to create a universal global system the forces of capitalism seek to conceal the politico-discursive violence of its construction through a kind of gentrification of that system. What is persistently denied by neo-liberals such as Rorty (1989) and Fukuyama (1992) is that the gentrification of global liberal capitalism is one whose ‘universalism’ fundamentally reproduces and depends upon a disavowed violence that excludes vast sectors of the world’s population. In this way, neo-liberal ideology attempts to naturalize capitalism by presenting its outcomes of winning and losing as if they were simply a matter of chance and sound judgement in a neutral marketplace. Capitalism does indeed create a space for a certain diversity, at least for the central capitalist regions, but it is neither neutral nor ideal and its price in terms of social exclusion is exorbitant. That is to say, the human cost in terms of inherent global poverty and degraded ‘life-chances’ cannot be calculated within the existing economic rationale and, in consequence, social exclusion remains mystified and nameless (viz, the patronizing reference to the ‘developing world’. And Zizek’s point is that this mystification is mag¬nified through capitalism’s profound capacity to ingest its own excesses and negativity: to redirect (or misdirect) social antagonisms and to absorb them within a culture of differ¬ential affirmation. Instead of Bolshevism, the tendency today is towards a kind of political boutiquism that is readily sus¬tained by postmodern forms of consumerism and lifestyle. Against this Zizek argues for a new universalism whose primary ethical directive is to confront the fact that our forms of social existence are founded on exclusion on a global scale. While it is perfectly true that universalism can never become Universal (it will always require a hegemonic-par¬ticular embodiment in order to have any meaning), what is novel about Zizek’s universalism is that it would not attempt to conceal this fact or to reduce the status of the abject Other to that of a ‘glitch’ in an otherwise sound matrix.

## Impact – K

### Extinction (Laundry List) – Impact

#### Global capitalism is unsustainable, militating towards extinction.

Martin '18 [Glen; 9/8/18; President of the World Constitution and Parliament Association, founder of the Radford University program in Peace Studies, Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Radford University in Virginia, PhD in Philosophy from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York; "Human Beings Face Extinction: We Need to Act Now," <https://dwfed.org/2018/09/human-beings-face-extinction-we-need-to-act-now>]

The global climate is unraveling at rates far beyond the predictions of scientists. The studies are so common by this date, and the scientific evidence so pervasive going back at least half a century, that there is no need to cite sources about this fact. The oceans are dying, the fisheries are becoming exhausted. The forests are dying. They are devastated through human overuse, logging, wildfires, acid rain, and rapidly changing climate conditions.

Agricultural lands are drying up and losing productivity, the land, water, and air are polluted. Artificial human-made chemical compounds are found in the tissues of every living creature on Earth, with unknown synergistic effects. The oceans are rising, displacing millions of coastal dwellers and submerging prime agricultural lands.

The habitats for animals and life in general are disappearing, and many species go extinct daily. The polar caps are melting, irrevocably altering the planet’s climate. Rainfall is irregular, with periodic droughts alternating with devastating floods. ….

At the same time, the global human population unsustainability continues to increase. … …Noam Chomsky declares: “Survival of Organized Human Life Is at Risk Due to Climate Change and Nuclear Weapons.”

UN CHARTER’S UNTOUCHABLE SACRED COW PREVENTS GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Meanwhile, the nations of the world focus on “sovereignty,” militarism, national independence, trade wars, and unsustainable capitalist development. “Sovereign independence” is written into the UN charter in multiple ways and continues to function as an untouchable sacred cow, preventing the development of global citizenship everywhere on Earth. Each nation inculcates loyalty into its citizens and criminalizes any non-government sponsored relationships with foreign officials, which they label “disloyalty” and “treason.” Trillions of dollars are poured down the toilet of militarism that are needed to protect and restore the planetary environment.

FEW PEOPLE SEEM TO CARE

Nuclear weapons are refined and made “combat ready,” and countries like North Korea correctly understand that without the nuclear deterrent, they would suffer the same destruction as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Libya. For the imperial system led by the U.S. and its NATO allies continues to work for a global hegemony to counter the growing influence of Russia and China, politically and economically, without concern for human rights, dignity, or the welfare and livelihood of many millions who appear of less worthiness to live because they are “not us.” Books such as Nuclear Madness by Helen Caldicott or The Doomsday Machine by Daniel Ellsberg regularly appear detailing the many times that the near use of these weapons has brought humanity close to extinction, but few seem to care. Our fragmentation, hate, fear, and need for “enemies” is so much greater than our desire for a future for our children or the planet.

SHOCK ALERT: IT’S A WAR SYSTEM, STUPID!

Our planetary system is inherently a war system requiring enemies and producing vast profits for the industries that supply and encourage this system. As climate and military disasters around the world increase so do the profits of the system of “disaster capitalism” described by Naomi Klein in her 2007 book The Shock Doctrine the Rise of Disaster Capitalism. Meanwhile the big banks and masters of the global monetary systems continue to dominate unsustainable global economics, running the world as a debt system from which they derive not only vast profits but vast political power, as Ellen Brown showed in detail in her 2007 book The Web of Debt.

IS THE RULING CLASS “INSANE” OR SIMPLY CRIMINAL?

A Google search reveals a number of articles by different authors who have declared that the ruling class is “insane.” Indeed, if bringing the entire planet to ruin in the service of ones personal greed for wealth and power is insane, then this label is appropriate, although I prefer the term “criminal,” since the majority of the ruling class of the world are simply criminals who control the mass media, the politicians, and the UN in the service of their criminal enterprises that are bringing humankind to extinction.

In the US, the majority of both Democrats and Republicans in the Washington, DC, government are criminals in this sense, serving both themselves and the ruling class. Many so-called liberals in the US are working to remove Trump as President, and to “take back our country.” But the truth is they never had “their country.” The ruling class has always had it, and human extinction advanced perhaps just as rapidly under Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, or Barack Obama. The mass media, the war system, and the “sovereign nation” propaganda keep the people of the US asleep no matter who is president. Whomever fills that office can do little because the system itself defeats rationality, recognition of our common planetary humanity, and the changes necessary for survival.

REFUSING TO BECOME WORLD CITIZENS IS A DEATH SENTENCE

Trump is a symptom and not a cause. People refuse to actualize what Karl Marx called our species-being. They refuse to become world citizens in any real sense of this word. They cling to their sovereign borders and delude themselves that somehow extinction can be avoided if the peoples of some 193 different, militarized sovereign nations all care about the environment, recycle, and “dispose” of the trash properly. Rather than living in what I call a “boundary-less world,” they insist on their puerile boundaries and identities, even as this exacerbates the rush to total climate collapse and human extinction. To cling to a tiny, exclusive identity that divides one from others who are “not me” becomes more important than the survival of the human race.

MASS MEDIA A MAIN SOURCE FOR IMMATURE IDEOLOGIES

It has often been pointed out that the mass media keep ordinary people distracted, immature, and unable to think clearly. The mass media are designed for this purpose. For more sophisticated ordinary people, there are sources like the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and Washington Post, which frame the immature ideologies in a more erudite manner to satisfy the egoism of the “educated” middle classes. But the entire world system is immature and structurally inculcates immaturity into the peoples of Earth.

MISGUIDED LOYALTIES TO OUTDATED SYSTEMS

The system of sovereign nation-states is nearly four centuries old, often said to have begun formally at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, developed at a time when people were riding horses and fighting with swords. The system of capitalism is just as old, developed at a time when the Earth seemed to have inexhaustible resources, was able to receive unlimited wastes from human industries, and the population of the world was a fraction of what it is today. These systems structurally condition people into loyalty to their puerile national identities and into a capitalism that has no concern for the environment or human dignity, but only for egoistically pursued private profit. “Freedom” becomes promoting egoistic self-interest regardless of the social or environmental consequences.

### Fascism – Impact

#### Neoliberal globalization is at its breaking point and is collapsing into neo-fascism now – systemic failures and exponentially increasing inequality have pushed the working class to its brink – failure to theorize a new international paradigm results in fascist take over and ensures global war

Robinson 2019 (William Robinson, Department of Sociology University of California at Santa Barbara, "Global Capitalist Crisis and Twenty-First Century Fascism: Beyond the Trump Hype", Science and Society, Vol 83 No 2, April 2019, <https://guilfordjournals.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1521/siso.2019.83.2.155>, mmv) \*\*TCC = transnational capitalist class\*\*

20th- and 21st-Century Fascism Fascism, whether in its classical 20th-century form or possible variants of 21st-century neo-fascism, is a particular response to capitalist crisis. Trumpism in the USA, BREXIT in the UK, Bolsonaro in Brazil, the increasing influence of neo-fascist and authoritarian parties throughout Europe (including Poland, Germany, Hungary, Austria, Italy, Holland, Great Britain, Denmark, France, Belgium, and Greece)2 and around the world, such as in Israel, Turkey, the Philippines, Brazil, and India, represent a far-right response to the crisis of global capitalism. They are symptomatic of the general crisis of capitalist rule. Organic crises of capitalism involve objective and subjective dimensions. The particular conditions in any one nation are always linked to more general conditions in the global system. In this case, those general conditions are the rise of a truly integrated global economy and society and the deep structural and cultural crisis of the new global capitalism. The structural dimension of overaccumulation and stagnation discussed above has become aggravated in conjunction with a crisis of state legitimacy and of capitalist hegemony. Here we must turn to Gramsci, for whom hegemony refers to a particular relation of social domination in which subordinate groups lend their “active consent” to the system of domination. Projects of hegemony involve not merely rule but political and ideological leadership based on a set of class alliances. Such hegemony must be constantly reconstructed, because the possibility of hegemonic or consensual domination rests on both ideological and material foundations. Hegemony therefore requires a material base, or the material conditions, institutions, and concomitant norms that allow for the social reproduction of a sufficient number of people among subordinate groups. No would-be ruling class can exercise hegemony without developing diverse mechanisms of legitimation and securing a social base — a combination of consensual integration through material reward for some, and coercive exclusion of others that the system is unwilling or unable to coopt. Beyond this, for Gramsci a class or class fraction achieves hegemony to the extent that it is able to present its own interests as the general interest, and insofar as “the interests of the dominant group prevail, but only up to a certain point, i.e., stopping short of narrowly corporate economic interests” (Gramsci, 1971, 182, my emphasis). As I have discussed at some length elsewhere (see, i.a., Robinson, 2004), emergent transnational elites set about in the 1980s and 1990s to construct a global capitalist historic bloc. A historic bloc is a social ensemble involving dominant strata and a social base beyond the ruling group, in which one group exercises leadership and imposes its project through the consent of those drawn into the bloc. To be successful in constructing a historic bloc, the ruling group must be able to present its class project as in the general interest and gain the active support of those brought into the bloc through the combination of material reward and ideological leadership, thus achieving what Gramsci referred to as expansive hegemony. It appeared for a time in the 1990s that transnational elites would be able to establish this historic bloc, as globalization, neoliberalism and the “TINA” (“there is no alternative”) syndrome seemed to become “common sense.” But efforts to cement the bloc proved elusive. The TCC has turned to naked pursuit of its own corporate interests, unrestrained from national regulatory control and seemingly impervious to mass pressure from below. It can no longer even pretend to represent a “general interest,” much less assure the social reproduction of the global working class to secure its hegemony, as global capitalism becomes ever more predatory, a veritable gangster capitalism. Under these conditions, coercive domination and violent exclusion appear to prevail over consensual incorporation. By the turn of the century counter-hegemonic forces began to accumulate into a transnational movement against the depredations of neoliberalism and for global justice, followed by a global revolt in the wake of the 2008 financial collapse. When a crisis of political authority or hegemony does not find an organic solution, “it means that a static equilibrium exists (whose factors may be disparate, but in which the decisive one is the immaturity of the progressive forces),” wrote Gramsci. “It means that no group, neither the conservatives nor the progressives, has the strength for victory, and that even the conservative group needs a master” (Gramsci, 1971, 221). In these moments, notes Gramsci, “the crisis creates situations which are dangerous in the short run since the various strata of the population are not all capable of orienting themselves equally swiftly, or of reorganizing with the same rhythm” (ibid., 210). Gramsci’s analysis goes far in identifying the current conjuncture, that of a sharp political polarization between left/progressive and far-right responses to the crisis (and indeed the “immaturity of the progressive forces”); yet he was writing in reference to the rise of fascism in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. What, then, does 21st-century fascism share with its 20th-century predecessor, and what is distinct? Above all, fascism in the 20th century involved the fusion of reactionary political power with national capital. It was, in part, the inability of German and Italian national capital to out-compete the national capitals of other European powers in the imperialist conquests of the turn of the 19th century and following the German defeat in World War I that led to a fascist response in the 1930s, once the crisis hit full force. In distinction, 21st-century fascism involves the fusion of transnational capital with reactionary and repressive political power — an expression of the dictatorship of transnational capital. In addition, the fascist projects that came to power in the 1930s in Germany, Italy, and Spain, as well as those that vied unsuccessfully to win power in many European countries (see, i.a., Paxon, 2004; Eco, 1995), in the United States, and in some South American countries, had as a fundamental objective crushing powerful working-class and socialist movements. But in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere, the left and the organized working class are now at a historically weak point. In these cases, 21st-century fascism appears to be a preemptive strike at working classes and at the spread of mass resistance through the expansion of a global police state. The fourth industrial revolution promises to increase the ranks of surplus humanity and also impose greater competitive pressures on the TCC, thus heightening its need to impose more oppressive and authoritarian forms of labor discipline on the global working class. Moreover, a global police state is centrally aimed at coercive exclusion of surplus humanity. The restructuring of world capitalism through globalization has greatly expanded the ranks of the surplus labor population. The processes by which surplus labor is generated have accelerated under globalization. Spatial reorganization has helped transnational capital to break the territorially bound power of organized labor and impose new capital–labor relations based on fragmentation, flexibilization, and the cheapening of labor. Crises provide capital with the opportunity to accelerate the process of forcing greater productivity out of fewer workers. These developments, combined with a massive new round of primitive accumulation and displacement of hundreds of millions, have given rise to a new global army of superfluous labor that goes well beyond the traditional reserve army of labor that Marx discussed. 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 (on the new slavery, see, i.a., Patel and Moore, 2017, 30). Surplus humanity cannot consume and so does not provide transnational capital with a significant market. Dominant groups face the challenge of how to contain both the real and potential rebellion of surplus humanity. As world capitalism reaches the limits of its extensive expansion, new spaces have to be violently cracked open and the peoples in these spaces must be repressed by a global police state. The mechanisms of coercive exclusion include mass incarceration and the spread of prison-industrial complexes, pervasive policing, anti-immigrant legislation and deportation regimes, and the manipulation of space in new ways so that both gated communities and ghettos are controlled by armies of private security guards and technologically advanced surveillance systems, ubiquitous, often paramilitarized policing, “non-lethal” crowd control methods, and mobilization of the culture industries and state ideological apparatuses to dehumanize victims of global capitalism as dangerous, depraved, and culturally degenerate. States abandon efforts to secure legitimacy among this surplus population, and instead turn to criminalizing the poor and the dispossessed, with tendencies towards genocide in some cases. But these mechanisms also involve ideological campaigns aimed at seduction and passivity among those locked out. The newfound ability of transnational capital to achieve political domination through control over the means of intellectual production, the mass media, the educational system, and the culture industries allows it to achieve a much more profound and complete penetration into the spheres of culture and community, indeed, into the life world itself. Corporate marketing strategies depoliticize through the manipulation of desire and of libido, so that the grievances and frustrated aspirations of the excluded become channeled into petty consumption and flight into fantasy rather than into placing political demands on the system through collective mobilization. In this regard, I observed in my earlier work that the heightened role of political and ideological domination in this digital age through control over media and the flow of images and symbols would make any project of 21st-century fascism more sophisticated and, together with new panoptical surveillance and social control technologies, probably allow it to rely more on selective than generalized repression — unless a revolt from below comes to actually threaten the rule of the TCC. These new modalities of social control and ideological domination blur boundaries, so that there may be a constitutional and normalized neo-fascism (with formal representative institutions, a constitution, political parties and elections), all while the political system is tightly controlled by transnational capital and its representatives and any dissent that actually threatens the system is neutralized if not liquidated (see Robinson and Barrera, 2012). We may see a “withering away” of constitutional order rather than a rupture, if a global police state and the impulse towards 21stcentury fascism are not contained. The Social Bases of 21st-Century Fascism Twentieth-century fascism took root in an earlier stage of capitalist development, when middle classes and the petty bourgeoisie that represented a significant portion of the population were experiencing a destabilization of their status and the threat of downward mobility into the ranks of the proletariat. Fascist movements offered the ruling groups the ability to successfully compete with mass working-class parties for the allegiance of the middle classes and the petty bourgeoisie, although these movements did recruit among the working class as well. These strata came to be seen as the core social base of the fascist movements — instruments in the hands of national capitalist classes attempting to resolve the crisis of capitalism (Rosengarten, 2014). The middle classes and the petty bourgeoisie are strata that own their own means of livelihood and therefore do not have to sell their labor to capital; among them, small shopkeepers, business people, independent artisans and professionals, family farmers, and other small commodity producers. These strata were reduced to small pockets in the cores of world capitalism as proletarianization accelerated in the latter half of the 20th century, and especially in the age of globalization. While analysis of the petty bourgeoisie remains important in assessing current political processes, this class is not numerous enough to form a critical mass that could provide a viable social base for 21st-century fascism to triumph. Today that role is played in the cores of world capitalism by certain sectors of the working class. Twenty-first–century fascist projects seek to organize a mass base among historically privileged sectors of the global working class, such as white workers in the Global North and urban middle layers in the Global South, that are experiencing heightened insecurity and the specter of downward mobility and socioeconomic destabilization. As with its 20th-century predecessor, the project hinges on the psychosocial mechanism of displacing mass fear and anxiety at a time of acute capitalist crisis towards scapegoated communities, such as immigrant workers, Muslims and refugees in the United States and Europe, southern African immigrants in South Africa, Muslims and lower castes in India, Palestinians in Palestine/ Israel, or the darker skinned and disproportionately impoverished population in Brazil. Far-right forces pursue this project through a discursive repertoire of xenophobia, mystifying ideologies that involve race/culture supremacy, an idealized and mythical past, millennialism, a militaristic and masculinist culture that normalizes, even glamorizes war, social violence and domination, and contempt toward rather than empathy for those most vulnerable. The key to this neo-fascist appeal is the promise to avert or reverse downward mobility and social destabilization; to restore some sense of stability and security. This discursive repertoire of 21st-century fascism, of course, shares many features with classical 20th-century fascism, including what Umberto Eco has characterized as a “cult of tradition,” “fear of diversity,” a siege mentality, a sense of deprivation of a clear social identity, “selective populism,” and Orwellian “newspeak” (Eco, 1995). However, as I have emphasized, these discursive and emotive elements take place under very different circumstances, a distinct historical moment in world capitalism. With regard to extreme masculinization, although here is not the place for full discussion, the denigration of women in general and the sexual predation of Trump (and of Duterte in the Philippines, among others), almost seems to be a point in his favor among his diehard base. This phenomenon may be a sexual sublimation of what are fears of social and economic emasculation. On the matter of contempt rather than empathy, witness Trump’s notorious comments on poor countries being “shithole countries,” his mocking of a disabled reporter, and so on. It is not too much of an analytical stretch to associate such public displays of contempt with the process whereby policies of aggression and repression of these vulnerable groups achieve discursive or psycho-social legitimation in the commonsense consciousness of those who would provide the mass social base for a neo-fascist project. There is a heavy overlap with ideologies of national regeneration, national/race purity, and a mystique of heroism that characterized 20th-century fascism (although in the particular case of Trump, the latter resembles an extreme narcissistic mystique of his self). Twentyfirst–century fascism, like its 20th-century predecessor, is a violently toxic mix of reactionary nationalism and racism. The nation, argued Benedict Anderson, is an “imagined political community,” in which “the nation is always conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship” regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that exists (Anderson, 1983, 15–16). In conjunction, argues Callinicos (1983, 38), racism offers workers from the dominant racial or ethnic group an imaginary solution to real contradictions; recognition of the existence of suffering and oppression, even though its solution is a false one. Neo-fascist projects on the rise at this time offer precisely this mix of nationalism and racism in attempting to organize better-off sectors of the working class experiencing social and economic destabilization in the face of capitalist globalization. The parties and movements associated with such projects have put forth a racist discourse, less coded and less mediated than that of mainstream politicians, targeting the racially oppressed, ethnic or religious minorities, immigrants and refugees in particular as scapegoats. It is crucial to note that deteriorating socioeconomic conditions do not automatically lead to racist backlash. A racist/fascist interpretation of these conditions must be mediated by political agents and state agencies. Trumpism, for instance, represents just such a mediation. Here there is a great deal of insight to be had from the fact that the presidential campaigns of both Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump in the 2016 U. S. presidential elections appealed to the same social base of disaffected workers, one with a left interpretation of the crisis and the other with a far-right populist and openly racist interpretation.3 While there is nothing inevitable about a fascist outcome to the current lurch to the far-right, the more the current racist mobilization becomes entrenched the greater the danger of such an outcome. In the United States, the far right and neo-fascists are attempting to reconstruct the white racist historic bloc that to one extent or another reigned supreme from the end of post–Civil War reconstruction to the late 20th century, but has become destabilized through capitalist globalization. In Europe the far-right and neo-fascist movements are following a very similar path as Trump’s, in terms of recruiting formerly privileged sectors among the working classes who are suffering under the crisis by scapegoating Muslims, immigrants, and other vulnerable sectors. Similarly to Trump, they are promising to stabilize the situation for these precariatized sectors. “National” identity becomes a stand-in (that is, a code) for racist mobilization against scapegoats. Yet the discourse of national regeneration is in sharp contradiction with the transnational integration of capital and a globally integrated production and financial system upon which hinge the class and status interests of the major capitalist groups and state elites. Here there is a critical distinction to be made between the conjuncture of fascist projects in the last century and those of the 21st century. Fascism in Germany and Italy arose at the height of nation-state capitalism and it did offer some material benefits — employment and social wages — to a portion of the working class through corporatist arrangements, even as it unleashed genocide on those outside the chosen group. In this age of globalized capitalism there is little possibility in the United States or elsewhere of providing such benefits, so that the “wages of fascism” now appear to be entirely psychological. In the regard, the ideology of 21st-century fascism rests on irrationality — a promise to deliver security and restore stability that is emotive, not rational. It is a project that does not and need not distinguish between the truth and the lie. The Trump regime’s public discourse of populism and nationalism, for example, bears no relation to its actual policies. In its first year, Trumponomics involved deregulation — the virtual smashing of the regulatory state — slashing social spending, dismantling what remained of the welfare state, privatizations, tax breaks to corporations and the rich, and an expansion of state subsidies to capital — in short, neoliberalism on steroids. This is a distinction lost on many commentators. German monopoly capitalists turned to the Nazis to crush the powerful trade unions, socialist and communist movements. But they also turned to the Nazi state to open up vast new opportunities for accumulation and to compete, including through territorial expansion, against capitalist groups from other countries. In sharp distinction to this fusion of German national capital with the fascist state, Trumpism has sought to open up vast new opportunities for profit-making inside the United States (and around the world) for transnational capital. The Trump White House has called for transnational investors from around the world to invest in the United States, enticed by a regressive tax reform, unprecedented deregulation, and some limited tariff walls that would benefit groups from anywhere in the world that establish operations behind them. “America is open for business,” Trump declared at the 2018 meeting of the global elite gathered for the 2018 annual conclave of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. “Now is the perfect time to bring your business, your jobs and your investments to the United States” (Bierman, 2018, A3).

### Environment – Impact

#### State-sanctioned environmental destruction is intrinsic to capitalism---culminates in extinction.

Plested '20 [James; 2/17/20; editor of Red Flag; "Capitalist roots of the environment crisis," https://climateandcapitalism.com/2020/02/18/capitalist-roots-environment-crisis/]

Climate change is only one aspect of the problem. Everywhere we look, the natural systems that maintain our planet in its habitable state are rapidly deteriorating. Can we survive the destruction of the tropical rain forests of the Amazon – the lungs of Earth? Can we survive the spread of dead zones – areas too low in oxygen to sustain life – across our oceans? Can we make do without the bees and other insects we currently depend on to pollinate our crops?

Perhaps the scariest thing about the situation isn’t the vast scale of breakdown in natural systems but the fact that those entrusted with the leadership of our society appear determined to hasten us to our doom. Instead of listening to the advice of the scientists, firefighters, land managers and others who’ve been sounding the alarm about climate change for decades, Scott Morrison and Co. parrot propaganda points from the Murdoch press. Instead of agreeing, finally, to contribute more to global efforts to reduce carbon emissions, they double down on the expansion of Australia’s booming coal and gas industries, attempting all the while to distract the public with fairy tales about greenies preventing back-burning and the fires just being part of Australia’s natural cycle.

Elsewhere in the world, the picture is the same. Decades of global climate negotiations have gone nowhere. Despite the increasingly urgent warnings of scientists, emissions continue to rise. And with the likes of Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin and Jair Bolsonaro in charge of some of the world’s biggest economies, the prospects for a major shift occurring soon appear terrifyingly dim.

Where did it all go wrong? The answer is suggested by the increasingly popular slogan System change, not climate change. Morrison, Trump and their fellow fossil fuel enthusiasts act not simply in accordance with their personal whims and desires but as the conscious servants of a system: capitalism. Proponents of capitalism talk as if it’s the natural form of human society – something that has existed since the dawn of time. The reality, however, is that the age of capitalism spans only the past two to three centuries. For the vast majority of our 200-300,000 year history, humans lived in societies, like those of the Indigenous inhabitants of Australia prior to invasion, characterized by collective decision making and sharing of resources, not the system of private property and the endless competitive scramble for individual gain that define the world today.

If the capitalist system was most befitting of our human nature, you would expect its emergence to have been embraced by all whose lives were transformed by it. But the birth of capitalism in the 17th and 18th centuries was an extremely violent process that was strongly resisted from the start. As Karl Marx put it in Capital: “The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signaled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production.” Capital came into the world, he wrote, “dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt.”

Since the earliest days of human existence, we have had a significant impact on the environment. Scientists believe, for instance, that hunting, along with the use of fire and other land management techniques employed by Australia’s Indigenous population, contributed to the extinction of the continent’s megafauna. Deforestation was a major problem in ancient Greece and the Roman Empire. Air pollution from the burning of wood and coal was an issue in London as early as the 12th and 13th centuries. All this, however, was on a minuscule scale compared to the devastation of the past 200 years, and particularly in the period after World War Two – the era in which capitalism came to dominate every corner of the globe.

In 1950, global carbon emissions totaled 5.28 billion tonnes. By 2017, they were 36.15 billion tonnes. According to the World Wildlife Fund’s Living Planet Report 2018, the total population of mammals, birds, fish and reptiles has declined by 60 percent since 1970. Every year, the rate of extinctions rises, and scientists estimate that a million animal and plant species may go extinct over the coming decades. According to a 2016 report by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, the production of plastic has risen 20-fold since 1964 and is expected to double again in the next 20 years and quadruple by 2050. Only around 5 percent of plastic ends up being recycled. If current trends continue, the report predicts, by 2050 there will, by weight, be more plastic in the world’s oceans than fish.

No one of these gloomy metrics, considered alone, can capture the depths of the crisis we face. In only 200 years of existence, capitalism has brought us to the brink of such a calamitous breakdown in the world’s natural systems that our entire civilization is now under threat.

Among Marx’s most evocative metaphors for the operation of capital is his description of it as “dead labor, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labor, and lives the more, the more labor it sucks”. It’s not only “living labor,” however, that sustains the vampire of capital, but also the natural inputs of the productive process – the raw materials that labor works up into the products that capitalists sell on the market for their coveted profits.

What makes capitalism uniquely destructive in comparison to previous systems is the rupture of the connection between the main drivers of economic life and the natural world that sustains us. A capitalist may own a significant amount of land. But unlike the feudal lords of the Middle Ages, their wealth isn’t tied to the piece of land that they own. If a capitalist destroys their land – say by digging up all the coal or oil it contains, poisoning it with chemicals or exhausting the fertility of the soil through over-farming – they can simply take the profits they’ve generated from it and buy more land elsewhere.

The vampire metaphor is powerful precisely because it speaks to this fundamental rift between the lifeblood of capitalism – profit – and society’s underlying life systems, including labor and the natural environment, that are the ultimate source of all wealth. Rolling Stone contributor Matt Taibbi’s description of investment bank Goldman Sachs as “a great vampire squid wrapped around the face of humanity, relentlessly jamming its blood funnel into anything that smells like money”, can be extended to the whole capitalist class. The environmental (or other) consequences of their activities don’t give them much pause for concern as long as they’re making money.

The wealth of the capitalist ruling class of today is so immense that even the existential threat posed by climate change won’t shake them into action. According to Oxfam, the combined wealth of the world’s 2,153 billionaires exceeds that of the poorest 4.6 billion people, who make up 60 percent of the global population. Catastrophic events like the Australian bush fires are unlikely to faze them – in contrast to the mass of ordinary people impacted by the fires, they can easily buy their way to safety.

The ruling class’s lack of concern for the environment is reinforced by the competitive nature of the system. Each individual capitalist must keep their costs low and their profits high to stay ahead of their rivals. The main way they do this is by keeping workers’ wages down. But if they can save money by not dealing with the environmental costs of their operations, they’ll do that too.

The capitalist class gains immense savings from treating environmental destruction as an “externality” that they can pass on to society. The International Monetary Fund calculated that global subsidies to fossil fuel companies amount to US$5.2 trillion a year, approximately 6.4 percent of world GDP. Most subsidies relate to the cost of dealing with the destructive consequences of all the carbon emissions produced by burning fossil fuels. This includes the impacts of climate change, along with the costs of health care associated with air pollution and so on.

You might wonder why governments are willing to let fossil fuel companies and other destructive industries get away with this. The answer lies in the role of the capitalist state. We’re taught that it is a neutral body that mediates between the conflicting interests of different social layers and guides society in the collective interest. The state, however, has never been neutral. Modern capitalist states emerged in conjunction with the rise of the capitalist class as the dominant economic power in society, and they’ve always, as Marx put it, been “a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.”

The role of the capitalist state, in other words, is to protect and advance the interests of big business and the rich, rather than the mass of the population who suffer the consequences of their environmentally destructive practices. And again, this dynamic is reinforced by competition on an international scale. Each national state defends the interests of its capitalist class against those of their foreign rivals. This involves both maintaining good business conditions (e.g. low wages and a lack of environmental and other regulations) at home and projecting power externally, through diplomatic and military means, to ensure access to resources and markets around the world.

The destructive consequences of these dynamics can be seen in capitalism’s almost uninterrupted history of war. And they also help explain the continuing failure of global efforts to secure agreement on any serious action to reduce carbon emissions or address other major environmental issues. Sacrificing short term profits in the name of long term sustainability goes against the DNA of the capitalist nation state. This is particularly clear in the case of Australia, one of the world’s most fossil fuel-dependent nations. Neither the Liberals nor Labor are prepared to forgo the tens of billions in profits that flow from coal and gas exports. The strength of the fossil fuel industry is just too important to Australia’s status as a major regional power.

We’re in a battle for our lives. The entire future of the human experiment – so utterly miraculous and so terrifyingly fragile – depends on what we do in the coming years and decades. As Russian Marxist Nikolai Bukharin, writing a few years after the revolution of 1917, put it: “No system, including that of human society, can exist in empty space; it is surrounded by an ‘environment,’ on which all its conditions ultimately depend. If human society is not adapted to its environment, it is not meant for this world; all its culture will inevitably pass away; society itself will be reduced to dust.”

### Disease – T/C – Impact

#### K turns and outweighs the entire aff

**Phillips, 20** (Leigh Phillips is a science writer and EU affairs journalist., 12-22-2020, accessed on 3-9-2021, Jacobinmag, "Thank Socialism for the Vaccine. Blame Capitalism for Its Distribution.", <https://jacobinmag.com/2020/12/socialism-vaccine-capitalism-distribution>)

The jaw-dropping speed of COVID-19 vaccine development is a glorious marvel of science, cooperation, and economic planning — a glimpse of how much more an egalitarian world could produce and achieve. But the lifeboat ethics of vaccine rollout is a horrifying display of the inefficiency and cruelty of capitalism. A medical professional prepares to administer a vaccine. (Wikipedia Commons) Our new issue, “Biden Our Time,” is out now. We discuss the last four chaotic years of US politics, what happened in November, and what to expect from the Biden administration. Get a $20 discounted print subscription today! This article is a preview from a forthcoming print issue of Jacobin. Just for the holidays, subscribe to a year of our quarterly magazine for just $12. When nurse May Parsons administered the first injection in the world of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to ninety-year-old British grandmother Margaret Keenan, applauded by dozens of moist-eyed medical staff at University Hospital Coventry, it was as glorious and moving a moment as any humanity has ever seen. A jaw-dropping marvel of science, economic planning, and selfless, humanist cooperation by thousands of researchers around the globe, the development of this and other vaccines hot on Pfizer’s heels has taken a mere nine months since the discovery of the disease, rather than the years or even decades such medical research and development (R&D) normally takes. They offer a glimpse of how much more an egalitarian, rationalist world could produce and achieve, freed from the fetters of profit. While the American private pharmaceutical giant and its German biotech start-up partner may bear the name of the first vaccine, this is no triumph for capitalism. Pfizer-BioNTech, along with the second-place finisher, Moderna, and the other front-runners, all depended on years of public-sector funding for their success, and, in many cases, on research actually performed by government or public university labs long before 2020. And again during this plague year, these private companies relied on state shepherding and bankrolling of the vaccine development process or, in the case of Pfizer, state-guaranteed purchase of millions of doses. In many cases, national governments arranged purchase agreements and manufacturing support ahead of clinical trial results so that rollout could start as soon as regulatory approval was given, rather than having to wait for approval before manufacture could begin. Washington promised to purchase some $2 billion worth of the Pfizer vaccine and guaranteed about $2.5 billion to Moderna for the development and manufacture of its option. The incredible speed of vaccine development just about makes up for the all-too-predictable news that the head of Pfizer cashed out 62 percent of his stock on the same day the company released the results of its vaccine trial showing 90 percent–plus efficacy, and that executives at Moderna made similar moves after their own announcement. In both cases, the stock sale occurred through what the firms insist was an entirely by the book, prearranged application of Rule 10b5-1, which insider trading law permits. But, as NPR has reported, experts in insider trading ethics say this is the thinnest of defenses of what is “very suspicious” or even “wholly inappropriate” behavior. Even if we are gullibly charitable in our assessment of the ethics of these moves, strategically, they remain profoundly stupid, given the scale of vaccine hesitancy. It is not enough to be ethical; one must be seen to be ethical as well. So, to even appear to be engaging in insider trading with respect to vaccine development is a gift to anti-vax campaigners and COVID conspiracists. Such insider trading ethical fiascos aside, the rapid development of the vaccine has stunned experts. They knew more than anyone how long it normally takes for vaccine development. For years, these same infectious disease researchers, clinicians, and public health officials have damned the pharmaceutical giants for largely getting out of the business of vaccine development several decades ago. Contrary to anti-vax legend, pharmaceutical companies are, in reality, loath to engage in vaccine production because of the financial risk involved and their sheer unprofitability. Now, suddenly, in the face of a nigh-on existential threat, when the state bashes CEO heads together and takes on all financial risk, vaccines of stunning efficacy appear after just months. It is almost identical to what happened during World War II, when the US government, frustrated with the intransigence of chemical companies and nascent pharmaceutical firms again fearing lack of profitability, simply ordered cooperation across enterprises, made investment decisions on behalf of the private sector, and covered the costs of research, development, and manufacturing. The result was the development or improvement of ten vaccines of military significance. The same wartime planning efforts produced the mass rollout of the first antibiotic, penicillin. Moving forward, these lessons show that the inefficiencies of the market must now permanently be done away with for vaccine development related to all other infectious diseases that suffer from a dearth of private R&D. For tuberculosis, for example, we have only a feeble, century-old vaccine that ameliorates the problem but is insufficient to prevent deaths from TB each year equivalent to those killed by COVID-19. In 2020, COVID killed 1.7 million worldwide; in 2019, TB killed 1.4 million. But before we get out the champagne and toast our genuinely heroic scientists and clinicians, we have to recognize that while these vaccines are indeed a light at the end of a very long tunnel, that same tunnel will be yet longer than it needs to be, thanks once again to the irrationality, inefficiency, and injustice of capitalism. It will be especially unfair for those in the developing world — and even in many poorer, less populous parts of the developed West, there will be cruelties for those who live outside the metropolitan core, as there already have been throughout 2020 in the United States especially. In the spring, stories abounded of testing, PPE, and ventilation machines being distributed on the basis of who could pay the most rather than who needed them the most. Even Republican governors of small states were fuming at how orders, paid in full, for essential equipment were canceled — sometimes mid-shipment — so as to make more money servicing richer jurisdictions. An almost identical crime is already in progress once again, but this time with respect to the logistics of vaccine manufacture and distribution. To explain the profound injustice and hair-pulling inefficiencies of what is about to happen with respect to the domestic and worldwide distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines, we need to take a brief detour to explain how these vaccines work — in particular, how the ones first out of the gate are very different, even revolutionary, compared to other vaccines. Conventional vaccines work essentially the same way they did upon their discovery in the days of Louis Pasteur. Inoculation involves exposure to a weakened or killed virus, which thus presents to the immune system an antigen — a molecular structure that is part of a pathogen that prompts an immune system response. The antigen we are focused on, with respect to the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19, is the infamous “spike” protein that covers its surface. The immune system then is able to remember and recognize any “live” version of the pathogen if, in the future, it attempts to invade the body. Now the immune system has a ready-prepared capability of combating and defeating it. Depending on the virus, this protection can last for life, a few years, or even a few months — hence the need for booster shots for some vaccines. Traditional vaccines have been around for well over a century, and so the technology is mature and the manufacturing process is well established — even if the supply chain is somewhat withered due to the aforementioned decades-long retreat by Big Pharma from not just vaccine R&D but also vaccine production. The major challenge with respect to rapid rollout of traditional vaccines is that they need to be “grown” in hens’ eggs or insect cells. Each batch takes several weeks. There are eight main vaccine techniques, including a handful of traditional, weakened virus versions, among the roughly two hundred candidate COVID vaccines currently at various stages of development (there are fifty-seven presently undergoing clinical trials). Right now, the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines are of most immediate interest and are the most exciting in terms of the possibility that they may revolutionize vaccine production. They are messenger RNA, or mRNA, vaccines, the concept of which has been in development for many years — funded primarily by, you won’t be surprised to hear by now, the public sector. (The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine uses a different method, or “molecular platform” — more on this shortly.) Messenger RNA, as you might remember from high school biology, is the molecule that transcribes the instructions in your DNA. This transcription is then read by ribosomes, the little machines in your cells that use these transcribed instructions to manufacture the proteins that make up almost everything in your body. With mRNA vaccines, instead of presenting the immune system with a whole virus, which has taken weeks to grow in hens’ eggs, just this bit of mRNA, embedded in a lipid nanoparticle (a fat molecule that helps it enter a cell) with the instructions on how to manufacture a viral antigen, is injected into the body. The mRNA then directs the cell’s ribosome protein factories to produce copies of the antigen (the spike, in this case), sans virus. The immune system recognizes the spikes as foreign and attacks them, then subsequently remembers how to attack when confronted with the real thing. It’s very clever on a number of levels. Far smaller doses are required to prompt an immune response, which means greater quantities can be produced much more rapidly than traditional vaccines. Also, once the genetic sequence for an antigen protein is known, you can quickly repurpose the same manufacturing equipment — bioreactors — for this new antigen. Conventional vaccine manufacture, meanwhile, requires slightly different bespoke equipment each time. The mRNA molecular platform had already been developed well ahead of the COVID-19 pandemic, which meant that as soon as the gene sequence for the spike was identified, which happened within days of the disease’s discovery, the vaccine could immediately start being produced. What took time was the clinical trials, and to speed them up, the different phases of the trials were performed in parallel instead of sequentially, as is normal practice. This is the reason vaccine development has been so fast. In the future, when confronted with other outbreaks of novel viruses, so long as we have set up the mRNA production equipment ahead of time, ready to go, we can simply fire them up with the new antigen genetic sequence. As it may be a long time between outbreaks, without any opportunity for profit, such facilities will likely need to be maintained or at least funded by the state simply as a public service, like sewage systems or, more analogously, like fire brigades, paid primarily to just be there, ready for when the emergency comes. The downside is that while some other types of vaccine can be kept stable in regular refrigerators, the lipid nanoparticle vehicles for the mRNA need to be kept ultracold to avoid breaking down. The mRNA molecule likewise begins to fall apart at room temperature. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine requires refrigerators that can keep the combo at a cozy -70ºC (-94ºF). And this, what is called a “cold chain” — a low-temperature-sensitive supply chain — is where we confront just the first in a series of hurdles to efficient and fair rollout of the vaccines that are caused by or exacerbated by market irrationality. Food distribution worldwide already depends on a highly developed cold chain, but an ultracold chain, with the sort of temperatures the Pfizer vaccine requires, is a step beyond that. It’s common for research labs to have freezers that can keep things that cold, but not the pharmacies where, for example, you might have received a flu shot. Pfizer is shipping the vaccine in dry ice pack boxes. Once received, the dry ice needs to be replenished within a day. Once taken out of the dry ice pack boxes, the vaccine can be kept at regular refrigerator temperatures for twenty-four hours, or a maximum of two hours once thawed at room temperature. Ultracold freezers can extend shelf life by six months and are, in principle, commercially available. As a result, major hospitals in metropolitan areas are running around trying to get their hands on these very cold but also very expensive freezers (which cost $10–15,000 a pop). And much like the hunt for personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilation machines in the spring, a disorganized every-man-for-himself approach has returned in the winter. Rural areas and towns with smaller populations are being trampled in the stampede. The pandemic has bludgeoned the finances of less well-off hospitals, and these are expenditures they often just cannot afford. Even those hospitals that could afford one or two freezers are being told by manufacturers that delivery will take months; wealthier, larger hospitals that are able to buy in bulk get priority.

### Sustainability – Impact

#### Capitalism is terminally unsustainable and guarantees global extinction from climate change – its try or die to develop a new socioeconomic system

Foster 21 (John Bellamy Foster is the editor of Monthly Review and a professor of sociology at the University of Oregon; R. Jamil Jonna is associate editor for communications and production at Monthly Review; Brett Clark is associate editor of Monthly Review and a professor of sociology at the University of Utah; “The Contagion of Capital”; Monthly Review; January 1, 2021; https://monthlyreview.org/2021/01/01/the-contagion-of-capital/)//eleanor

The U.S. economy and society at the start of 2021 is more polarized than it has been at any point since the Civil War. The wealthy are awash in a flood of riches, marked by a booming stock market, while the underlying population exists in a state of relative, and in some cases even absolute, misery and decline. The result is two national economies as perceived, respectively, by the top and the bottom of society: one of prosperity, the other of precariousness. At the level of production, economic stagnation is diminishing the life expectations of the vast majority. At the same time, financialization is accelerating the consolidation of wealth by a very few. Although the current crisis of production associated with the COVID-19 pandemic has sharpened these disparities, the overall problem is much longer and more deep-seated, a manifestation of the inner contradictions of monopoly-finance capital. Comprehending the basic parameters of today’s financialized capitalist system is the key to understanding the contemporary contagion of capital, a corrupting and corrosive cash nexus that is spreading to all corners of the U.S. economy, the globe, and every aspect of human existence. Free Cash and the Financialization of Capital “Capitalism,” as left economist Robert Heilbroner wrote in The Nature and Logic of Capitalism in 1985, is “a social formation in which the accumulation of capital becomes the organizing basis for socioeconomic life.”1 Economic crises in capitalism, whether short term or long term, are primarily crises of accumulation, that is, of the savings-and-investment (or surplus-and-investment) dynamics. Investment in new productive capacity in new or existing businesses is what determines growth. Such investment decisions are governed by expected profits on new investments. Viewed in these terms, the decline in the long-term growth rate experienced by the mature, monopolistic economies of the United States, Europe, and Japan over the last half century can be seen as related principally to the atrophy of net investment.2 Existing excess capacity in plant and equipment, a product of the monopolistic structure of accumulation, tends to decrease expected profits on new investment.3 The U.S. economy has seen a long-term decline in capacity utilization in manufacturing, which has averaged 78 percent from 1972 to 2019—well below levels that stimulate net investment.4 As a result, the capital accumulation process within production has stagnated, with existing idle capacity tending to shut off the creation of new capacity. From 1960 to 1980, it was common for private net investment to constitute around 40 percent of private gross investment. Since 2000, this has dropped to around 20 percent, even as gross investment has weakened relative to national income.5 The significance of the atrophy of net investment in the core capitalist countries cannot be exaggerated. As the foremost emerging economy in the world today, China has what economist Zhun Xu calls a “high Baran ratio,” standing for investment as a share of economic surplus. Conceptually, economic surplus—the difference between national output and wage income or essential consumption—is gross property income (profit, rent, interest). Zhun uses the income of the top 10 percent as a proxy for economic surplus. On this basis, he explains, China has invested around 80 percent of its economic surplus, leading to high growth rates of 7 percent or higher. In contrast, mature, monopolistic economies such as the Group of 7 (the United States, Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Canada) typically have relatively low Baran ratios, investing less than 50 percent of economic surplus, resulting in what for decades have been weak and declining average annual growth rates.6 Given these conditions, it is important to ask: What happens to that part of the economic surplus held by corporations and individual capitalists that is not invested in new capacity?7 Some of it is used for capitalist consumption, but this has inherent limits. The vast economic surplus (actual and potential) generated by the system of economic exploitation far exceeds what can be spent in the luxury consumption of the wealthy, however ostentatious. More importantly, capitalists do not desire to consume the larger part of the economic surplus at their disposal, since, above all else, they seek to amass wealth. Government spending absorbs some of the economic surplus, as does waste in the business process. However, government deficit spending also increases corporate profits after taxes above the level determined by capitalist spending on consumption and investment.8 Hence, with both the growth of the federal deficit and the stagnation of investment, the amount of free cash in corporate coffers has dramatically expanded. This free cash plays a central role in the financialization of capital and the resulting extreme polarization of society.9 As stipulated by Craig Medlen in Free Cash, Capital Accumulation and Inequality, free cash equals corporate profits after taxes plus depreciation minus investment. (In national income accounting, corporate profits after taxes plus depreciation is known as corporate cash flow. The funds associated with depreciation [or capital consumption] are part of the gross surplus available to corporations.)10 A wider conception of free cash, utilized in this article, also includes net interest. Hence, in the wide version, Free Cash = Corporate Profits After Taxes + Depreciation + Net Interest – Investment.11 This free cash is held by corporations or is distributed to stockholders through dividend payouts and/or stock buybacks.12 Building on the research of Michał Kalecki, Medlen demonstrates that the amount of free cash is identical to the federal government deficit minus the excess of savings over investment of the noncorporate sector (now usually negative) plus the current account balance. The three factors of (1) the federal deficit, (2) the country’s current account balance (or the trade deficit), and (3) the deficit spending of the noncorporate sector (encompassing noncorporate business, housing, and personal finance) can therefore be seen as underpinning free cash.13 Chart 1 shows the growth of corporate free cash in the U.S. economy from the period immediately after the Second World War to the present. Free cash, as non-invested surplus, became a much bigger and bigger factor in the U.S. economy beginning in the 1980s due mainly to the combined effects of a long-term decline in corporate taxation, the increasing federal deficit, and the atrophy of net investment.14 Free cash falls in recessions (due to lower business activity and income), but then rockets up soon afterward due to investment not keeping up with increasing economic activity, freeing up more cash after investment. This sudden rebound in cash is also a product of the fact that the Federal Reserve Board now steps in during every recession, at precisely such “Minsky Moments” when the prospects for investment are at their worst, with lavish provision of low-interest credit. Another way of looking at this phenomenon is to chart the total cash or liquid funds that corporations actually have ready at hand, if they were to choose to invest (or otherwise productively use) the surplus at their disposal. Of course, corporate investment is not dependent on the prior availability of savings/surplus, since capitalism, as Joseph Schumpeter long ago explained, is a system that creates “credit ad hoc”; while John Maynard Keynes and Kalecki taught that investment determines savings, not the other way around.15 Nevertheless, it is significant that the cash funds of corporations in the current phase of monopoly-finance capital far exceed profitable investment outlets. At the beginning of 2020, nonfinancial corporations were sitting on over $4 trillion dollars in cash; before the end of 2020 this had risen to over $5 trillion.16 According to the Federal Reserve Flow of Funds data, shown in Chart 2, total cash held by U.S. nonfinancial corporations as a share of gross domestic product (GDP)—much of it parked abroad in tax havens—has almost tripled between the early 1990s and the present.17 The total cash holdings of nonfinancial corporations on hand at any given time are not to be confused with free cash, which is that part of the corporate cash flow left over after investment in a given year—much of which is not held as cash deposits but instead spent on mergers and acquisitions, stock buybacks, and other financial instruments. Rather, total cash on hand, as defined by the Federal Reserve Flow of Funds, simply measures the actual cash deposits sitting in the accounts of nonfinancial corporations presented as annual averages based on quarterly data. Still, the rapid growth of total cash currently held by nonfinancial corporations in the form of ready monies, both absolutely and as a proportion of GDP (as shown in Chart 2), is a further indication of an economy that has shifted from capital formation to speculation. As we have seen, when corporations do not invest their economic surplus in new capital formation—primarily due to vanishing investment opportunities in an economy characterized by excess capacity—they are left with abundant free cash that is partly returned to the shareholders through share buybacks and, to a lesser degree, dividends. It is also used for speculation, including mergers, acquisitions, and the panoply of corporate “cash management” techniques that amount to the leveraging of free cash to enhance returns.18 This gives rise to a whole alphabet soup of financial instruments, in which corporations use the cash at their disposal partly as collateral for debt leverage, with nonfinancial corporate debt rising rapidly as a share of national income. Predictably recurring internal corporate funds in the form of free cash constitute a “flow collateral” allowing for further leverage, feeding speculation. A speculative economy relies on borrowed funds for leverage, backed up in part by cash. Expanding cash reserves are also needed as hedges in case of financial defaults. The whole system is a house of cards. The progressive financialization of the capitalist economy, whereby the financial superstructure continues to expand as a share of the underlying productive economy, has led to ever-greater asset price bubbles and growing threats of world economic meltdown. So far, a complete meltdown has been headed off by central banks, as in the 2000 and 2008 financial crashes. At every major recurring disturbance, and with serious economic repercussions, the monetary authorities pump massive amounts of cash into the financial superstructure of the economy only to give rise to greater bubbles in the future. Theoretically, stock values represent future expected streams of earnings arising primarily from production.19 Nowadays, however, finance has become increasingly autonomous from production (or the “real economy”), relying on its own speculative “self-financing,” leading to financial bubbles, contagions, and crashes, with the monetary authorities intervening to keep the whole house of cards from collapsing. This serves to reduce the risk to speculators, thereby keeping the value of stocks and other financial assets rising on a long-term basis, along with the overall wealth/income ratio. In these circumstances, so-called asset accumulation by speculative means has replaced actual accumulation or productive investment as a route to the increase of wealth, generating a condition of “profits without production.”20 In order to grasp the full significance of the financialization of the economy, it is useful to look at the two conceptions of capital (relative to national income) depicted in Chart 3.21 One of these, the numerator of the lower line, is the traditional conception of capital as fixed investment stock (physical structures and equipment) at historical cost minus depreciation. This is called the fixed capital stock of the nation and is tied directly to economic growth.22 It represents what economic theorists from Adam Smith to Karl Marx to Keynes have referred to as the accumulation of capital. Capital formation and national income are closely related, generally rising and falling together, producing the relatively flat line, representing the ratio of fixed capital stock to national income, shown in Chart 3. Yet, capital, as Marx noted very early in the process, has more and more taken on the “duplicate” form of “fictitious capital,” that is, the structure of financial claims (in monetary values) produced by the formal title to this real capital. Insofar as economic activity is directed to the appreciation of such financial claims to wealth relatively independently of the accumulation of capital at the level of production, it has metamorphosed into a largely speculative form.23 This can be seen by looking again at Chart 3. In contrast to the lower line, the upper line depicts what is traditionally seen as the wealth/income ratio (which some economic theorists, such as Thomas Piketty, conflate with the capital/income ratio, treating wealth as capital).24 The numerator here is the value of corporate stocks. Since the mid–1980s, the ratio of stock value to national income has increased more than 300 percent. This marks an enormous growth of financial wealth, with speculation-induced asset growth sidelining the role of productive investment or capital accumulation as such in the amassing of wealth. This is associated with a massive redistribution of wealth to the top of society. The top 10 percent of the U.S. population owns 88 percent of the value of stocks, while the top 1 percent owns 56 percent.25 Rising stock values relative to national income thus mean, all other things being equal, rapidly rising wealth (and income) inequality.26 The existence of the two conceptions of capital (and of capital/income ratios) presented here—one representing historical investment cost minus depreciation, and conforming to the notion of accumulated capital stock, the other the monetary value of stock equities (in economics traditionally treated as wealth rather than capital)—is often downplayed within establishment economics under the assumption that in the long run they will simply fall in line with each other, and with national income. As leading mainstream economic growth theorist Robert Solow writes: “Stock market values, the financial counterpart of corporate productive capital, can fluctuate violently, more violently than national income. In a recession the wealth-income ratio may fall noticeably, although the stock of productive capital, and even its expected future earning power, may have changed very little or not at all. But as long as we stick to longer-run trends…this difficulty can safely be disregarded.”27 But can the divergence of stock values from income (and from fixed capital stock) in reality be so easily disregarded? Chart 3 depicts a sharp increase in stock values relative to national income, which has now continued for over a third of a century, with decreases in total stock values as a ratio of national income (output) occurring during recessions, then rebounding during recoveries.28 The overall movement is clearly in the direction of compounded financial hyperextension. This conforms to the general pattern of the financialization of the capitalist economy, constituting a structural change in the system associated with the growth of monopoly-finance capital. This has gone hand in hand with a bubblier economy, with financial bubbles bursting in 1987, 1991, 2001, and 2008, but ultimately shored up by the Federal Reserve and other central banks. Today, vast amounts of free cash are spilling over into waves of mergers and acquisitions, typically aimed at acquiring megamonopoly positions in the economy. A major focus is the tech sector, much of which is directed at commodifying all information in society, in the form of a ubiquitous surveillance capitalism.29 All financial bubbles derive their animus from some common rationale, which claims that this time is different, discounting the reality of a bubble. In the present case, the rationale is that the advance of the FAANG stocks (Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix, and Google), which now comprise almost a quarter of the value of Standard and Poor 500’s total capitalization, is unstoppable, reflecting the dominance of technology. Apple alone has reached a stock market valuation of $2 trillion. All of this is feeding a massive increase in income and wealth inequality in the United States, as the gains from financial assets rise relative to income. Yet, like all previous bubbles, this one too will burst.30 Kalecki determined that the export surplus on the U.S. current account increased free cash, as did the federal deficit.31 However, the current account deficit cannot be seen, in today’s overall structural context, as simply reducing free cash, because of the changed role of multinational corporations in late imperialism, which alters other parts of the equation. Due to globalization and the rise of the global labor arbitrage, U.S. multinational corporations in their intrafirm relations have in effect substituted production overseas by their affiliates for parent company exports, thereby decreasing their investment in fixed capital in the United States.32 The sales abroad of goods by majority-owned affiliates of U.S. multinational corporations in 2018 were 14.5 times the exports of goods to majority-owned affiliates.33 Foreign profits of U.S. corporations as a proportion of U.S. domestic corporate profits rose from 4 percent in 1950 to 9 percent in 1970 to 29 percent in 2019. This mainly reflects the shift in production to low unit labor cost countries in the Global South. Samir Amin described the vast expropriation of surplus from the Global South, based on the global labor arbitrage, as a form of “imperialist rent.”34 This expansion of global labor-value chains is also associated with an epochal increase in what is called the non-equity mode of production, or arm’s length production. Companies like Apple and Nike rely not on foreign direct investment abroad, but instead draw on subcontractors overseas to produce their goods at extremely low unit labor costs, often generating gross profit margins on shipping prices on the order of 50 to 60 percent.35 The loss of investment in the United States, as U.S. multinational corporations have substituted production overseas, coupled with the growth of foreign profits of U.S. megafirms, has further increased the free cash at the disposal of corporations (even with a growing deficit in the current account), thereby intensifying the all-around contradictions of overaccumulation, stagnation, and financialization in the U.S. economy. Much of this free cash is parked in tax havens overseas to escape U.S. taxes.36 Washington uses its printing press, through the federal deficit, to compensate for the U.S. current account deficit. Foreign governments cooperate, providing the “giant gift” of accepting dollars in lieu of goods, thereby acquiring massive dollar reserves.37 At some point, however, these contradictions are bound to undermine the hegemony of the dollar as the world’s reserve currency, with dire ramifications for the U.S.-based world empire.

### AT: Green Growth/Decoupling – Impact

#### Decoupling is wrong – they ignore basic physics and green capitalism fails

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The Central Flaws in the Neoclassical Theory of Growth

The intellectual foundations of the decoupling narrative derive from neoclassical economic theory, the prevailing paradigm of explanation among orthodox economists that support capitalism. Neoclassical theory is generally plagued by unrealistic assumptions about society, numerous mathematical inconsistencies, and has no predictive power at all.[14](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en14) In this piece, however, we focus on the cardinal sin of this intellectual train wreck: its rejection of physics and its ignorance of the natural order. In the 1950s, the economist Robert Solow developed one of the first major models to describe how economic growth happens.[**15**](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en15) In these versions of neoclassical theory, the production inputs of capital and labor combine to produce outputs, or finished goods, that are traded in the economy. Growth in capital leads to more output, but depreciation in capital assets also drags down a portion of that output. The economy eventually reaches a stationary state where growth and depreciation balance each other out and there is no more growth. In order to produce continuous growth, neoclassical theory argues that the economy needs a steady stream of technological progress, defined as a gain in total productivity. This gain implies that productive output can increase while productive inputs are held constant. Solow came up with a mathematical scheme for detecting the impact of this technological growth on changes in GDP. Although his work earned widespread acclaim from other neoclassical thinkers, much of it was based on dubious mathematical results that did not actually validate his claims.[**16**](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en16)

In extensions of Solow’s original theory, the productive inputs have typically included capital, labor, and technology. Energy is sometimes subsumed under the three traditional inputs, or it may be treated as a separate input in and of itself. Critically, the production inputs are viewed as largely independent from one another, meaning that they can be substituted as necessary in order to maintain or to boost the maximum level of production. If societies are running short on natural resources, neoclassical theory argues that these shortages can be overcome through technological innovation, efficiency gains, or other forms of substitution. Indeed, neoclassical economists tend to assume that the long-run sustainability of capitalism is materially possible and all we need to do is figure out the social and institutional arrangements that can ensure that sustainability.[**17**](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en17) Solow entertained the idea that the natural world does not provide limits to economic growth on the following grounds: “If it is very easy to substitute other factors for natural resources, then there is in principle no ‘problem.’ The world can, in effect, get along without natural resources, so exhaustion is just an event, not a catastrophe.”[**18**](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en18) Although his model also showed that competition would eventually result in the exhaustion of natural resources, his statement nicely describes the general attitude that many economists hold about the inevitability of growth under capitalism.

For a highly simplified toy model of what this all means, consider your local pizza store. According to neoclassical theory, the pizza store can maintain or boost current levels of pizza production in the face of any shortfall. A shortage of workers can be overcome by adding more ovens. A shortage of cheese can be overcome through technical improvements that yield more efficient methods of making cheese. A shortage of electricity can be overcome by increasing labor productivity, perhaps by training the workers to make the pizzas faster under the new time constraints. Everything can be replaced. Everything can be substituted, seemingly without end. The ideas and principles just described represent fundamental assumptions in neoclassical economics and they are often used to explain the relationship between energy consumption and economic growth. If there were no hard limits to substitution, then it would be possible for our economies to keep growing even in an ecosphere with declining quantities of natural resources and with highly chaotic, nonlinear ecological consequences that result from the enormous energy losses of capitalist societies. In other words, better technologies and higher efficiencies would always be available to boost production, regardless of any depletions or instabilities in the wider natural world caused by those productivity gains.

To chip away at this elaborate fantasy, it helps to begin with some basic physics. The most fundamental limits to substitution come from thermodynamics, the branch of physics that studies quantities like heat, work, and energy. Thermodynamic limits impose constraints on the maximum efficiency of energy flows through technological systems.[**19**](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en19) Car engines, power plants, and photovoltaic cells are all limited in their capacities to convert one type of energy into another. Technological progress cannot overcome these limits; no car engine can ever be more efficient than an engine running on the Carnot cycle.[**20**](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en20) In an earlier article for this magazine, I defined the aggregate efficiency of an economic system as the fraction of all primary energy consumption that produces mechanical work and electricity.[**21**](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en21) I argued that aggregate efficiencies are highly inertial over time because improving them substantially requires enormous investments that would disrupt the reigning economic order.

Once a society has settled into a particular energy structure, changing it much further becomes a daunting task because of elite classes and groups that rely heavily on that structure for their wealth and influence. We can look to the recent experience of Germany for a prominent case study. In 2000, the German government launched its ambitious *Energiewende*, a comprehensive plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by shifting energy production towards renewable sources, such as wind and solar.[**22**](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en22) For a time, the program made some notable achievements. Compared to 1990, greenhouse gas emissions had declined 28 percent by 2017. That same year, renewables reached a 13 percent share of primary energy consumption. Although these numbers are impressive, progress has recently come to a standstill. It has become increasingly clear that Germany will not reach the climate targets that it set for 2020. And once we dig into the numbers a bit deeper, even those that look impressive come with huge caveats. For example, the large reduction of carbon emissions since 1990 can be largely attributed to the collapse of heavy industry in East Germany after reunification.[**23**](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en23) Over the past eight years, greenhouse gas emissions from Germany have hardly changed. The variabilities associated with wind and solar power have opened up problems related to electricity storage. Prices fluctuate dramatically depending on weather conditions. To compensate for these and other issues, Germany began sabotaging its energy program by constructing a series of new coal power plants when the coal industry pressured Chancellor Angela Merkel’s government to relax its policies. The German example offers an important lesson: the necessary substitution of fossil fuels with renewables will never come fast enough under the market logic of capitalism.

Another major limit to substitution comes from the ecological instabilities associated with excessive levels of economic growth. These instabilities can combine to pump and amplify existing natural phenomena. The amplifier effect works as follows. Economies absorb energy from the natural world and then exploit that energy for cycles of production and consumption. For highly energy-intensive economies, these cycles necessarily yield extensive levels of waste and dissipation, or energy losses that are dumped back out to the environment. These energy losses are not “useless” from the standpoint of physics or ecology. Under the right circumstances, they can power the formation of other natural dynamical systems, including everything from viruses and bacteria to wildfires and hurricanes.[24](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en24) These highly chaotic effects associated with energy-intensive economies are largely ignored and dismissed by neoclassical theory, even though they have often played a central role in the evolution of human history.[**25**](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en25) As a highly dissipative system, capitalism regularly produces very powerful amplifier effects. Collectively, these amplifiers are now creating what Marx called a “metabolic rift” between nature and society, which means that the ecological basis of civilization is steadily eroding under profit-seeking and energy-intensive development that does not care about replacing what it extracts.[**26**](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en26) The natural world has major tipping points that we should not cross, but indefinite economic growth through substitution virtually guarantees that some of those critical thresholds will be breached, threatening the broader ecosphere that supports human civilization.[**27**](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en27)

Consider another problem. Substitution can occur quite frequently on small and restricted scales of economic activity. A pizza store can always substitute certain ingredients for others. A homeowner can substitute heating fuel for insulation. A company can replace older light bulbs for more efficient lighting in its offices. And even some countries can substitute various forms of wealth for others, at least temporarily. The Pacific island nation of Nauru provides a classic example that highlights the central themes of the debate. In the twentieth century, Nauru possessed vast deposits of phosphate, which is highly prized as an agricultural fertilizer. These deposits were extensively mined, depleted, and then traded in global markets, allowing Nauru to reach a sky-high standard of living by 1990.[**28**](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en28) Nauru converted a portion of its earnings from the phosphate trade into a public trust fund, which invested in manufactured capital through financial markets. However, its impressive standard of living collapsed sharply after the phosphate vanished, along with most of the money in the trust fund.[**29**](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en29) Nauru offers a cautionary tale for the world as a whole. If global civilization runs out of natural resources, we cannot replace them by investing in commodities through financial markets. People cannot eat money. Substitution in the long run may be possible at the microlevel of economic activity, but long-term macrolevel substitution is downright wishful thinking.

We can better understand the limits to substitution on a global, macroscopic level by considering a specific example: a global economy meeting its electricity needs through the consumption of solar power. There are fundamental limits to the amount of solar energy absorbed by solar panels that can be converted into useful electrical energy. Most commercial photovoltaics convert less than 30 percent of the solar energy they absorb into electricity; the remaining energy balance is lost as heat and infrared radiation.[**30**](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en30) The theoretical efficiency limits for the most advanced photovoltaic designs are just under 90 percent, a number that not even the latest laboratory experiments have come close to matching.[**31**](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en31) But suppose neoclassical theory is right about its eternal commitment to technological progress and that eventually we do manage to produce photovoltaics that are 90 percent efficient at converting solar energy. Once all theoretical efficiency limits are actually realized, boosting electricity production even further would require the construction of new solar panels, which takes up more land. As the earth has a finite surface area, indefinite growth would not be possible even with the proliferation of renewables. This argument underscores the central point that renewable technologies are important, but they cannot solve the global ecological crisis under the economic regime of capitalism, which is completely reliant on the false promise of eternal growth in production and consumption. Substituting fossil fuels for renewables while pushing for more growth would still lead to the total ruin of global civilization in a few centuries.

Economists love to pretend that technological innovation can yield greater “qualitative growth” without any corresponding “quantitative growth.”[**32**](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en32) On the basis of improving knowledge and technological growth, they believe that the monetary value of stuff can keep increasing even as the quantity of stuff itself remains stable. But what they fail to grasp is that technological innovations do not happen magically—they also require energetic conversions. Changes to the production cycle are dependent on the stock of electrical, chemical, and mechanical energy available for research and training. A coder sitting in front of a computer writing a new program needs energy to think and type. The computer itself needs electricity to continue operating. No possible improvement can be made to computer programs without a continuous stream of energetic conversions. Expansions in productivity require energy flows, meaning that all forms of technological change are intertwined with the energetic transformations that facilitate human existence.

Technological changes are physically embedded in greater knowledge among people and the development of more productive assets, both of which need energy and material flows to continue operating. Thermodynamic limits also constrain the extent to which these flows can be reduced while sustaining labor and capital. In short, technological changes themselves are subject to hard physical limits, along with the qualitative growth that can be derived from them. Power plants provide one of the most well-known examples of the limits to technological growth. They have been hovering near their peak efficiency ratings for decades and getting them to go much further has proven to be extremely difficult.[**33**](https://monthlyreview.org/2019/06/01/energy-economic-growth-and-ecological-crisis/#en33) The failure of breeder reactors for nuclear power plants highlights another prominent technological bust, and plenty of other exotic technologies, like fusion reactors, will inevitably end up in the same category. The bloated profit margins of capitalism depend critically on the energy-intensive basis of its entire existence. Take away that basis and there is no more capitalism.

### AT: Inequality – Impact

#### Cap is not solving poverty - the world is getting worse and their data sucks

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Dear Steven, I’m writing to respond to a letter you posted regarding claims I made in the Guardian about the global poverty narrative. I’m addressing you directly because I think it’s preferable to engaging in back-channel debates, and because I’d like to invite you to respond to what follows. This is an important question, and it demands serious, honest engagement. The point of my piece was that the story of global poverty is more complex than you and Gates have been willing to acknowledge, and the data do not support your narrative about neoliberal globalization. Let me elaborate on my key points here, to clear up any confusion, while also addressing your specific comments. First, the long-term poverty graph (1820 to present) developed by Max Roser and recently tweeted by Bill Gates is misleading and has little empirical legitimacy. There are a few reasons for this. Real data on poverty has only been collected since 1981, by the World Bank. It is widely accepted among those who research global poverty that any data prior to 1981 is simply too sketchy to be useful, and going back to as early as 1820 is more or less meaningless. The data for 1820–1970 comes from a source (Bourguignon and Morrisson 2002) that draws on the Maddison database on world GDP. That data was never intended to assess poverty, but rather the distribution of GDP — and that for only a limited range of countries. Data for the Global South is particularly thin, and there is very little that exists for prior to 1900. The data is not robust enough to draw meaningful conclusions about what was happening to people’s livelihoods during the colonial period. It is important to recognize that the graph mixes two very different measures. The measure for 1820–1970 is based on estimates of GDP per capita, with only rough guesses about household share, and takes little if any account of the goods and resources that people may have acquired from their land, from trees, from forests, from rivers and the sea, and in the form of gifts from relatives. We might try to speculate about the share of GDP that the poorest people had, but that’s very different from telling us anything very useful about poverty. By contrast, the World Bank’s measure is based on surveys that seek to assess household income and, wherever possible, consumption of all non-monetary goods. These two disparate measures cannot be united into a single long-term trend and cannot be used to draw confident conclusions. Roser’s graph might make for nice social media, but it’s not rooted in science. In fact, uniting the two methodologies is misleading in both directions. (1) By using GDP per capita from 1820–1970, it likely understates the resources that households had at their disposal in comparison to the representation of the later period, and (2) By including total consumption from 1981 onward it likely overstates people’s “income” in comparison to the representation of the earlier period. The only way to construct a legitimate long-term graph would be to use a single consistent indicator. While data on GDP per capita alone is not regarded as a robust way of assessing poverty, it is at least available (if too patchy to be useful) for the whole period. But in such a graph the falloff in poverty since 1981 would not be nearly as steep, as it would not count non-monetary transactions. Alternatively, we could wait until someone devises a reasonable method for measuring poverty in terms of household consumption since 1820. But in the meantime, I think it’s wise to refrain from making claims about long-term poverty trends that lack empirical validity. You say: “Hickel’s picture of the past is a romantic fairy tale, devoid of citations or evidence.” On the contrary, as the above makes clear, it is the graph of the past on which you so glibly rely that is devoid of meaningful evidence. As to my actual claims about the past, my argument was straightforward. I simply pointed out that we cannot ignore the fact that the period 1820 to circa 1950 was one of violent dispossession across much of the Global South. If you have read any colonial history, you will know colonizers had immense difficulty getting people to work on their mines and plantations. As it turns out, people tended to prefer their subsistence lifestyles, and wages were not high enough to induce them to leave. Colonizers had to coerce people into the labor market: imposing taxes, enclosing commons and constraining access to food, or just outright forcing people off their land. You ask for citations. Here are some you might try: Sven Beckert’s Empire of Cotton, Ellen Wood’s The Origin of Capitalism: A Longer View, Mike Davis’s Late Victorian Holocausts, Adam Hochschild’s King Leopold’s Ghost, and of course Karl Polanyi’s The Great Transformation. The process of forcibly integrating colonized peoples into the capitalist labor system caused widespread dislocation (a history I cover in The Divide). Remember, this is the period of the Belgian labor system in the Congo, which so upended local economies that 10 million people died — half the population. This is the period of the Natives Land Act in South Africa, which dispossessed the country’s black population of 90 percent of the country. This is the period of the famines in India, where 30 million died needlessly as a result of policies the British imposed on Indian agriculture. This is the period of the Opium Wars in China and the unequal treaties that immiserated the population. And don’t forget: all of this was conducted in the name of the “free market.” All of this violence, and much more, gets elided in your narrative and repackaged as a happy story of progress. And you say I’m the one possessed of romantic fairy tales. The Maddison database on which you rely might tell us what the dispossessed gained in GDP per capita (eventually), but it does not tell us whether those gains offset their loss of lands, commons, supportive communities, stable local economies. And it tells us nothing about what Global South economies might be like today had they been free to industrialize on their own terms (take the case of India, for instance). Let me be clear: this is not a critique of industrialization as such. It is a critique of how industrialization was carried out during the period in question. If people had willingly opted into the capitalist labor system, while retaining rights to their commons and while gaining a fair share of the yields they produced, we would have a very different story on our hands. So let’s celebrate what industrialization has achieved — absolutely — but place it in proper context: colonization, violence, dispossession, and all. All we gain from ignoring this history is ignorance. Now, to the present period. You say that the “massive fall of global extreme poverty” is simply a neutral fact of the data. But here again the data on this is more complex than you have ever acknowledged (I collaborated with Charles Kenny to review the basics here). The narrative that you and Gates peddle relies on a poverty line of $1.90 per day. You are aware, I’m sure, that this line is not a neutral phenomenon, handed down by the gods or given in nature. It was invented by people, is used for particular ends, and is hotly contested both inside and outside of academia. Most scholars regard $1.90 as far too low to be meaningful, for reasons I have outlined in my work many times (see here and here). See Reddy and Lahoti’s withering critique of the $1.90 methodology here. Here are a few points to keep in mind. Using the $1.90 line shows that only 700 million people live in poverty. But note that the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) says that 815 million people do not have enough calories to sustain even “minimal” human activity. 1.5 billion are food insecure and do not have enough calories to sustain “normal” human activity. And 2.1 billion suffer from malnutrition. How can there be fewer poor people than hungry and malnourished people? If $1.90 is inadequate to achieve basic nutrition and sustain normal human activity, then it’s too low — period. It’s time for you and Gates to stop using it. Lifting people above this line doesn’t mean lifting them out of poverty, “extreme” or otherwise. Remember: $1.90 is the equivalent of what that amount of money could buy in the US in 2011. The economist David Woodward once calculated that to live at this level (in an earlier base year) would be like thirty-five people trying to survive in Britain “on a single minimum wage, with no benefits of any kind, no gifts, borrowing, scavenging, begging or savings to draw on (since these are all included as ‘income’ in poverty calculations).” That goes beyond any definition of “extreme.” It is patently absurd. It is an insult to humanity. In fact, even the World Bank has repeatedly stated that the line is too low to be used in any but the poorest countries, and should not be used to inform policy. In response to the Atkinson Report on Global Poverty, they created updated poverty lines for lower-middle-income ($3.20/day) and upper-middle-income ($5.50/day) countries. At those lines, some 2.4 billion people are in poverty today — more than three times higher than you would have people believe. But even these figures are not good enough. The USDA states that about $6.70/day is necessary for achieving basic nutrition. Peter Edwards argues that people need about $7.40 if they are to achieve normal human life expectancy. The New Economics Foundation concludes that around $8 is necessary to reduce infant mortality by a meaningful margin. Lant Pritchett and Charles Kenny have argued that since the poverty line is based on purchasing power in the US, then it should be linked to the US poverty line — so around $15/day. The literature on this issue is now vast and nuanced — I have only scratched the surface here — and yet you pretend it doesn’t even exist. That is intellectually irresponsible, and an inadequate approach to scholarship. You say: “The level at which one sets an arbitrary cutoff like ‘the poverty line’ is irrelevant — the entire distribution has shifted, so the trend is the same wherever you set it.” Not so fast. In fact, the story changes quite a bit — and you know it. If we use $7.40 per day, we see a decline in the proportion of people living in poverty, but it’s not nearly as dramatic as your rosy narrative would have it. In 1981 a staggering 71 percent lived in poverty. Today it hovers at 58 percent (for 2013, the most recent data). Suddenly your grand story of progress seems tepid, mediocre, and — in a world that’s as fabulously rich as ours — completely obscene. There is nothing worth celebrating about a world where inequality is so extreme that 58 percent of people are in poverty, while a few dozen billionaires have more than all of their wealth combined. That’s proportions. Don’t get me wrong: proportions are an important indicator — and we should pay attention to it. But absolute numbers are equally important. In fact, that is the metric that the world’s governments first agreed to target in the Rome Declaration in 1996, the precursor to the Millennium Development Goals. The goalposts were shifted to proportions in the following years, which created the impression of faster progress. But really now it’s a moot point: if the goal is to end poverty, what matters is absolute numbers. Certainly that’s what matters from the perspective of poor people themselves. And if we look at absolute numbers, the trend changes completely. The poverty rate has worsened dramatically since 1981, from 3.2 billion to 4.2 billion, according to World Bank data. Six times higher than you would have people believe. That’s not progress, in my book — that’s a disgrace. It is a crushing indictment of our global economic system, which is clearly failing the majority of humanity. Your claims about global poverty intentionally skate around this fact. Again, that is not responsible scholarship. But what’s really at stake here for you, as your letter reveals, is the free-market narrative that you have constructed. Your argument is that neoliberal capitalism is responsible for driving the most substantial gains against poverty. This claim is intellectually dishonest, and unsupported by facts. Here’s why. The vast majority of gains against poverty have happened in one region: East Asia. As it happens, the economic success of China and the East Asian tigers — as scholars like Ha-Joon Chang and Robert Wade have long pointed out — is due not to the neoliberal markets that you espouse but rather state-led industrial policy, protectionism, and regulation (the same measures that Western nations used to such great effect during their own period of industrial consolidation). They liberalized, to be sure — but they did so gradually and on their own terms. Not so for the rest of the Global South. Indeed, these policy options were systematically denied to them, and destroyed where they already existed. From 1980 to 2000, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank imposed brutal structural adjustment programs that did exactly the opposite: slashing tariffs, subsidies, social spending, and capital controls while reversing land reforms and privatizing public assets — all in the face of massive public resistance. During this period, the number of people in poverty outside China increased by 1.3 billion. In fact, even the proportion of people living in poverty (to use your preferred method) increased, from 62 percent to 68 percent. (For detailed economic data and references to the relevant literature, see Chapter 5 of The Divide.) In other words, the imposition of neoliberal capitalism from 1980 to 2000 made the poverty rate worse, not better. Since 2000, the most impressive gains against poverty (outside of East Asia) have come from Latin America, according to the World Bank, coinciding with a series of left-wing or social-democratic governments that came to power across the continent. Whatever one might say about these governments (I have my own critiques), this doesn’t sit very well with your neoliberal narrative. But there is something else that needs to be said here. You and Gates like to invoke the poverty numbers to make claims about the legitimacy of the existing global economic system. You say the system is working for the poor, so people should stop complaining about it. When it comes to assessing such a claim, it’s really neither absolute numbers nor proportions that matter. What matters, rather, is the extent of global poverty vis-à-vis our capacity to end it. As I have pointed out before, our capacity to end poverty (e.g., the cost of ending poverty as a proportion of the income of the non-poor) has increased many times faster than the proportional poverty rate has decreased (to use your preferred measure again). By this metric we are doing worse than ever before. Indeed, our civilization is regressing. Why? Because the vast majority of the yields of our global economy are being captured by the world’s rich. As I pointed out in the Guardian piece, only 5 percent of new income from global growth goes to the poorest 60 percent of humanity — people living on less than $7.40/day. You have neither acknowledged this as a problem nor attempted to defend it. Instead you just ignore it, I suppose because it undermines your claims about how well the economy is working for poor people. Here’s how well it’s working: on our existing trajectory, according to research published in the World Economic Review, it will take more than one hundred years to end poverty at $1.90/day and over two hundred years to end it at $7.40/day. Let that sink in. And to get there with the existing system — in other words, without a fairer distribution of income — we will have to grow the global economy to 175 times its present size. Even if such an outlandish feat were possible, it would drive climate change and ecological breakdown to the point of undermining any gains against poverty. It doesn’t have to be this way, of course. We can end poverty right now simply by making the rules of our global economy fairer for the world’s majority (I describe how we can do this in The Divide, looking at everything from wages to debt to trade). But that is an approach that you and Gates seem desperate to avoid, in favor of a blustering defense of the status quo. You say, “The drastic decline in extreme poverty is corroborated by measures of well-being other than income that are correlated with prosperity, such as longevity, child mortality, maternal mortality, literacy, basic education, undernourishment, consumption, etc.” Yes, life expectancy, mortality, and education have improved — this is fantastic news that we should celebrate! But, a few things: (1) You can’t make an argument about poverty by pointing to something else entirely. Consumption is increasing, yes. But that’s not what’s at stake here. What’s at stake is whether consumption is increasing enough to raise people out of poverty. (2) I’ll be the first to agree that income and consumption are not the only measures of well-being. But one reason they are absolutely crucial is because they allow us to assess inequality in the distribution of world resources. A higher life expectancy among the poor is no justification for condemning them to a tiny and ever-shrinking share of global income. That is not a morally defensible position. (3) In your work you have invoked gains in life expectancy and education as part of a narrative that seeks to justify neoliberal globalization. But here again that’s intellectually dishonest. What contributes most to improvements in life expectancy are in fact simple public health interventions (sanitation, antibiotics, vaccines), and what matters for education is, well, public education. Indeed, the countries that have been most successful at this are those that have robust, free health care and education. Don’t forget that the US has worse infant mortality than Cuba. (4) As for hunger, your claim here relies on a methodology used by the FAO after 2012 that has been widely criticized by scholars. The hunger-reduction narrative depends on a calorie line that — like your $1.90 poverty line — is too low to support normal human activity, ignores the impacts of food price crises, and tells us nothing about nutrient deficiencies. I cover this in detail in the second half of this paper. According to the FAO’s earlier methodology, both the number and proportion of people in hunger was higher in 2009 than in 1995 — another trend that you glibly ignore. In your concluding point, you descend to citing a piece by Ryan Bourne, not an academic who studies poverty but rather an employee of the Cato Institute, a right-wing think tank funded by the Koch Brothers. The piece is riddled with misleading claims which, when I pointed them out to him, he never corrected. I don’t think we should consider this a valid source. You opened your letter by slandering me as a “Marxist ideologue.” I don’t need to tell you that this doesn’t count as an argument, and doesn’t cover for the fact that you haven’t addressed any of my substantive claims. In any case, I’m not quite sure what you mean. If by Marxist ideologue you mean someone who points out that the poverty data is more complex than your narrative allows, then, well, I suppose I am.

## Alternative – K

### Revolutionary Theory – Alt

#### **The alternative is a commitment to a marxist revolutionary theory that connects in solidarity with anti-capitalist movements that are rising all over the globe. Building solidarity through different sphere of productions is key – communism emerges out of the dialectical movement of labour and resistance that continually challenge capitalism through strategic interventions at every level of society. Centering the structure of capitalism is critical to organizing class resistance and building enduring political forms of communism.**

**Harvey 09** (David-Harvey;  British Marxist economic geographer and professor of anthropology and geography at CUNY, 12/16/09, “Organizing for the Anti-Capitalist Transition”, <http://davidharvey.org/2009/12/organizing-for-the-anti-capitalist-transition/>)

**The difference between socialism and communism is worth noting. Socialism aims to democratically manage and regulate capitalism in ways that calm its excesses and redistribute its benefits for the common good. It is about spreading the wealth around through progressive taxation arrangements while basic needs – such as education, health care and even housing – are provided by the state out of reach of market forces. Many of the key achievements of redistributive socialism in the period after 1945, not only in Europe but beyond, have become so socially embedded as to be immune from neoliberal assault.** Even in the United States, Social Security and Medicare are extremely popular programs that right wing forces find it almost impossible to dislodge. The Thatcherites in Britain could not touch national health care except at the margins. Social provision in Scandinavia and most of Western Europe seems to be an unshakable bed-rock of the social order. Communism, on the other hand, seeks to displace capitalism by creating an entirely different mode of both production and distribution of goods and services. **In the history of actually existing communism, social control over production, exchange and distribution meant state control and systematic state planning. In the long-run this proved to be unsuccessful** though, interestingly, its conversion in China (and its earlier adoption in places like Singapore) has proven far more successful than the pure neoliberal model in generating capitalist growth for reasons that cannot be elaborated upon here. Contemporary attempts to revive the communist hypothesis typically abjure state control and look to other forms of collective social organization to displace market forces and capital accumulation as the basis for organizing production and distribution. Horizontally networked as opposed to hierarchically commanded systems of coordination between autonomously organized and self-governing collectives of producers and consumers are envisaged as lying at the core of a new form of communism. Contemporary technologies of communication make such a system seem feasible. All manner of small-scale experiments around the world can be found in which such economic and political forms are being constructed. In this there is a convergence of some sort between the Marxist and anarchist traditions that harks back to the broadly collaborative situation between them in the 1860s in Europe. While nothing is certain, it could be that 2009 marks the beginning of a prolonged shake out in which the question of grand and far-reaching alternatives to capitalism will step-by-step bubble up to the surface in one part of the world or another. The longer the uncertainty and the misery is prolonged, the more the legitimacy of the existing way of doing business will be questioned and the more the demand to build something different will escalate. Radical as opposed to band-aid reforms to patch up the financial system may seem more necessary**.** The uneven development of capitalist practices throughout the world has produced, moreover, anti-capitalist movements all over the place**. The state-centric economies of much of East Asia generate different discontents (as in Japan and China) compared to the churning anti-neoliberal struggles occurring throughout much of Latin America where the Bolivarian revolutionary movement of popular power exists in a peculiar relationship to capitalist class interests that have yet to be truly confronted. Differences over tactics and policies in response to the crisis among the states that make up the European Union are increasing** even as a second attempt to come up with a unified EU constitution is under way. **Revolutionary and resolutely anti-capitalist movements are also to be found, though not all of them are of a progressive sort, in many of the marginal zones of capitalism. Spaces have been opened up within which something radically different in terms of dominant social relations, ways of life, productive capacities and mental conceptions of the world can flourish.** This applies as much to the Taliban and to communist rule in Nepal as to the Zapatistas in Chiapas and indigenous movements in Bolivia, the Maoist movements in rural India, even as they are world’s apart in objectives, strategies and tactics. The central problem is that in aggregate there is no resolute and **sufficiently unified anti-capitalist movement that can adequately challenge the reproduction of the capitalist class and the perpetuation of its power on the world stage. Neither is there any obvious way to attack the bastions of privilege for capitalist elites or to curb their inordinate money power and military might. While openings exist towards some alternative social order, no one really knows where or what it is. But just because there is no political force capable of articulating let alone mounting such a program, this is no reason to hold back on outlining alternatives.** Lenin’s famous question “what is to be done?” cannot be answered, to be sure, without some sense of who it is might do it where. But a global anti-capitalist movement is unlikely to emerge without some animating vision of what is to be done and why. A double blockage exists: the lack of an alternative vision prevents the formation of an oppositional movement, while the absence of such a movement precludes the articulation of an alternative. How, then, can this blockage be transcended? The relation between the vision of what is to be done and why, and the formation of a political movement across particular places to do it has to be turned into a spiral. Each has to reinforce the other if anything is actually to get done. Otherwise potential opposition will be forever locked down into a closed circle that frustrates all prospects for constructive change, leaving us vulnerable to perpetual future crises of capitalism with increasingly deadly results. Lenin’s question demands an answer. The central problem to be addressed is clear enough. Compound growth for ever is not possible and the troubles that have beset the world these last thirty years signal that a limit is looming to continuous capital accumulation that cannot be transcended except by creating fictions that cannot last. Add to this the facts that so many people in the world live in conditions of abject poverty, that environmental degradations are spiraling out of control, that human dignities are everywhere being offended even as the rich are piling up more and more wealth (the number of billionaires in India doubled last year from 27 to 52) under their command and that the levers of political, institutional, judicial, military and media power are under such tight but dogmatic political control as to be incapable of doing much more than perpetuating the status quo and frustrating discontent. **A revolutionary politics that can grasp the nettle of endless compound capital accumulation and eventually shut it down as the prime motor of human history, requires a sophisticated understanding of how social change occurs. The failings of past endeavors to build a lasting socialism and communism have to be avoided and lessons from that immensely complicated history must be learned.** Yet the absolute necessity for a coherent anti-capitalist revolutionary movement must also be recognized. The fundamental aim of that movement is to assume social command over both the production and distribution of surpluses. We urgently need an explicit revolutionary theory suited to our times. **I propose a “co-revolutionary theory” derived from an understanding of Marx’s account of how capitalism arose out of feudalism.** Social change arises through the dialectical unfolding of relations between seven moments within the body politic of capitalism viewed as an ensemble or assemblage of activities and practices**: a) technological and organizational forms of production, exchange and consumption b) relations to nature c) social relations between people d) mental conceptions of the world, embracing knowledges and cultural understandings and beliefs e) labor processes and production of specific goods, geographies, services or affects** f ) institutional, legal and governmental arrangements g) the conduct of daily life that underpins social reproduction. Each one of these moments is internally dynamic and internally marked by tensions and contradictions (just think of mental conceptions of the world) but all of them are co-dependent and co-evolve in relation to each other. The transition to capitalism entailed a mutually supporting movement across all seven moments. New technologies could not be identified and practices without new mental conceptions of the world (including that of the relation to nature and social relations). Social theorists have the habit of taking just one of the these moments and viewing it as the “silver bullet” that causes all change. We have technological determinists (Tom Friedman), environmental determinists (Jarad Diamond), daily life determinists (Paul Hawkin), labor process determinists (the autonomistas), institutionalists, and so on and so forth. They are all wrong. It is the dialectical motion across all of these moments that really counts even as there is uneven development in that motion. **When capitalism itself undergoes one of its phases of renewal, it does so precisely by co-evolving all moments, obviously not without tensions, struggles, fights and contradictions. But consider how these seven moments were configured around 1970 before the neoliberal surge and consider how they look now and you will see they have all changed in ways that re-define the operative characteristics of capitalism viewed as a non-Hegelian totality.** An anti-capitalist political movement can start anywhere (in labor processes, around mental conceptions, in the relation to nature, in social relations, in the design of revolutionary technologies and organizational forms, out of daily life or through attempts to reform institutional and administrative structures including the reconfiguration of state powers). The trick is to keep the political movement moving from one moment to another in mutually reinforcing ways. **This was how capitalism arose out of feudalism and** this is how something radically different called communism**, socialism or whatever** must arise out of capitalism**. Previous attempts to create a communist or socialist alternative fatally failed to keep the dialectic between the different moments in motion and failed to embrace the unpredictabilities and uncertainties in the dialectical movement between them. Capitalism has survived precisely by keeping the dialectical movement between the moments going and constructively embracing the inevitable tensions, including crises, that result. Change arises, of course, out of an existing state of affairs and it has to harness the possibilities immanent within an existing situation.** Since the existing situation varies enormously from Nepal, to the Pacific regions of Bolivia, to the deindustrializing cities of Michigan and the still booming cities of Mumbai and Shanghai and the shaken but by no means destroyed financial centers of New York and London, so all manner of experiments in social change in different places and at different geographical scales are both likely and potentially illuminating as ways to make (or not make) another world possible. And in each instance it may seem as if one or other aspect of the existing situation holds the key to a different political future. But the first rule for a global anti-capitalist movement must be: never rely on the unfolding dynamics of one moment without carefully calibrating how relations with all the others are adapting and reverberating. Feasible future possibilities arise out of the existing state of relations between the different moments. Strategic political interventions within and across the spheres can gradually move the social order onto a different developmental path.This is what wise leaders and forward looking institutions do all the time in local situations, so there is no reason to think there is anything particularly fantastic or utopian about acting in this way. The left has to look to build alliances between and across those working in the distinctive spheres. An **anti-capitalist movement has to be far broader than groups mobilizing around social relations or over questions of daily life in themselves. Traditional hostilities between, for example, those with technical, scientific and administrative expertise and those animating social movements on the ground have to be addressed and overcome. We now have to hand, in the example of the climate change movement, a significant example of how such alliances can begin to work. In this instance the relation to nature is the beginning point, but everyone realizes that something has to give on all the other moments and while there is a wishful politics that wants to see the solution as purely technological, it becomes clearer by the day that daily life, mental conceptions, institutional arrangements, production processes and social relations have to be involved.** And all of that means a movement to restructure capitalist society as a whole and to confront the growth logic that underlies the problem in the first place**.** There have, however, to be, some loosely agreed upon common objectives in any transitional movement. Some general guiding norms can be set down. These might include (and I just float these norms here for discussion) respect for nature, radical egalitarianism in social relations, institutional arrangements based in some sense of common interests and common property, democratic administrative procedures (as opposed to the monetized shams that now exist), labor processes organized by the direct producers, daily life as the free exploration of new kinds of social relations and living arrangements, mental conceptions that focus on self-realization in service to others and technological and organizational innovations oriented to the pursuit of the common good rather than to supporting militarized power, surveillance and corporate greed. These could be the co-revolutionary points around which social action could converge and rotate. Of course this is utopian! But so what! We cannot afford not to be. Let me detail one particular aspect of the problem which arise in the place where I work. Ideas have consequences and false ideas can have devastating consequences. Policy failures based on erroneous economic thinking played a crucial role in both the run-up to the debacle of the 1930s and in the seeming inability to find an adequate way out. Though there is no agreement among historians and economists as to exactly what policies failed, it is agreed that the knowledge structure through which the crisis was understood needed to be revolutionized. Keynes and his colleagues accomplished that task. But by the mid-1970s, it became clear that the Keynesian policy tools were no longer working at least in the way they were being applied and it was in this context that monetarism, supply-side theory and the (beautiful) mathematical modelling of micro-economic market behaviors supplanted broad-brush macro-economic Keynesian thinking. The monetarist and narrower neoliberal theoretical frame that dominated after 1980 is now in question. In fact it has disastrously failed. We need new mental conceptions to understand the world. What might these be and who will produce them, given both the sociological and intellectual malaise that hangs over knowledge production and (equally important) dissemination more generally? The deeply entrenched mental conceptions associated with neoliberal theories and the neoliberalization and corporatization of the universities and the media has played more than a trivial role in the production of the present crisis. For example, the whole question of what to do about the financial system, the banking sector, the state-finance nexus and the power of private property rights, cannot be broached without going outside of the box of conventional thinking**. For this to happen will require a revolution in thinking, in places as diverse as the universities, the media and government as well as within the financial institutions themselves. Karl Marx, while not in any way inclined to embrace philosophical idealism, held that ideas are a material force in history. Mental conceptions constitute, after all, one of the seven moments in his general theory of co-revolutionary change.**

### Pedagogy – Alt

#### Critical Pedagogy Is key – the alternative calls for solidarity through grass roots political movements that mobilize spaces of education microcosms of a broader struggle against capitalism.

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PPAE is a book of pedagogical theory (and in the spirit of revolutionary critical pedagogy, performative acts of polemic should be included within the field of theory proper), but as McLaren and Jaramillo put it, this book’s work is not intended “as grist for advancing our careers in the academy but as a way of participating in a wider political project in which we attempt (to echo Henry Giroux) to make the pedagogical more politically informed and the political more pedagogically critical” (p. 6). Thus, McLaren and Jaramillo’s collaborations, though often conceptually and linguistically dense, are not to be mistaken as yet another speculatory exercise in pedagogical pontification about the problems of schools or how to reconstruct them so as to emancipate their democratic potentials. This is not a Cartesian mediation on social reconstructionism, but an organic attempt to articulate a burgeoning worldwide standpoint theory born of class warfare and other forms of transnational oppression that produce the dehumanization of global society. Supporting this claim are a variety of personal photos included as textual bookends (which chronicle the authors’ journeys and meetings with key figures/groups over the last five years in places such as the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America) that are emblematic of how McLaren and Jaramillo have begun to construct a critical revolutionary pedagogy that both walks its talk and makes its road by walking it. Indeed, the images in PPAE undoubtedly gesture stylistically to those taken of Guevara during his travels – portraits produced to express the themes of unity, companionship and the vital embodiment of collective struggle, what Ché and Freire each meant in their respective ideas of a materialized “revolutionary love” (McLaren, 2000). It should be observed that PPAE’s emblematic cover art, produced by Erin Currier, a mural of stirring revolutionary portraits of everyday warrior women of color (which serve as necessary expansions of the legacies that otherwise tend to brandish names such as Zapata and Villa), similarly helps to evoke the potential beauty and dignity of the historical struggle from below as refleshed socialist passions in the face of the transnational imperialist enterprise. It is crucial, then, to recognize the extent to which PPAE attempts to both theorize and enact a critical revolutionary pedagogy that, as Gregory Martin (2005) describes, is “a radical shift of social priorities…that seeks to enrich the knowledge base of grassroots political movements through the development of social relations (labour practices) that encourage critical analysis, genuine dialogue and problem solving based upon people's everyday knowledge of capitalism.” When most progressive academics are still engaged in coffee talk over how to better involve the local community in campus life, McLaren and Jaramillo appear to have leapt over imperialist barricades in order to speak with and forge a wider resistance to present-day colonialist domination agendas. In short, with PPAE they provide a living example of how a forged solidarity between critical educators, political activists in social movements, informed workers of the world, and others involved in the growing struggle against imperial capitalism can be the fertile ground in which critical revolutionary pedagogy can become rooted and begin to sprout. By articulating a global working-class standpoint, McLaren and Jaramillo are essentially tracing the objective structures of global capitalism that have come to organize geo-political versions of the modern state as well as the social conditions of local communities across the planet. Further, by aligning their perspectives on the margins of global imperialism, their theoretical work provides an anthropological grounding that allows the authors to gain a variety of outsider-within critical ideational status on the contradictions of global capitalism that are at work within the U.S. presently. PPAE thusly spends a good amount of energy calling out and identifying these dehumanizing aspects of the U.S. corporate-state-military-academic complex which include, according to McLaren and Jaramillo, the institution of a state of permanent war (p. 35), a rightist fomenting of anti-immigration and other xenophobic attitudes throughout society (p. 99), the rise of anti-bilingual/multicultural efforts in educational policy such as NCLB (p. 76), the corporate media and culture industry’s complicity in the erosion of an educated civil society (p. 49), the blatant classism and racism underlying the Bush administration’s response to hurricane Katrina (p. 8), and the ecological genocide that is a direct result of predatory capitalist expansion at all costs (p. 17). In opposition PPAE hopes to bear witness to the birth and maturation of a movement within the field of education that viscerally realizes “the need for a new critical humanist pedagogy, an approach to reading the world and the world that puts the struggle against capitalism (and the imperialism inherent in it) at the center of the pedagogical project, a project that is powered by the oxygen of socialism’s universal quest for human freedom and social justice” (p. 20). Again, McLaren and Jaramillo’s mapping of the domestic contradictions of global capitalism evident here in the U.S. is importantly not limited by a parochial view of the matter. Rather, the spirit of the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela, the work of critical educators in Oaxaca, Mexico, and the historical legacy of an ongoing attempt for an emancipated Cuba animates the collective thrust of the book’s thesis. For McLaren and Jaramillo, such sites are not isolated instances of a controlled alternative to the capitalist form of life. They clearly delineate a burgeoning constellation of socialist resistance that is the movementgenerated possibility of another world beyond the paltry business-class-as-usual driven political openings for change in the social and educational structure of the United States. Drawing from the energy of the international workers movements, McLaren and Jaramillo want also to re-organize a worldwide front of critical, popular educators who will comprise an “educational left” (pp. 34-64) that works in concert with extrainstitutional revolutionary forces. One task this educational left has is to provide a map of the neoliberal educational landscape that highlights how the stranglehold of a corporate media oligarchy continues to distribute public knowledge through strong ideological filters, how standardized educational curricula have ossified into the normative goal of education and how the systematic segregation of people of color in schools all challenge both leftist educators and society generally with complicated and urgent problems. Therefore, McLaren and Jaramillo ask: “How can critical educators reinvigorate the civil societarian left precisely at a time when we are creating a world where elites are less accountable to civil society than ever before?” (p. 52). According to the authors the answer to this question lies largely in the potential for generating concrete revolutionary critical pedagogy, which means going beyond progressive constructivist curricular methods towards developing socialist sensibilities throughout the institution of public schooling by conscientizing “teachers, students, families and other cultural workers” (p. 63).

### Solvency – Alt

#### Worldwide movement is possible---latent discontent is mounting but unifying under collective struggle is a historical necessity to preserve humanity.

Foster '19 [John Bellamy; 2/1/19; Professor of Sociology at the University of Oregon, PhD in Political Science from York University, President and Board Member of the Monthly Review; "Capitalism Has Failed—What Next?" https://monthlyreview.org/2019/02/01/capitalism-has-failed-what-next/]

Indeed, history has been unkind to all such attempts to provide detailed forecasts of the future, particularly if they simply extend current trends and leave the bulk of humanity and their struggles out of the picture. It is for this reason that a dialectical view is so important. The actual course of history can never be predicted. The only thing certain about historical change is the existence of the struggles that drive it forward and that guarantee its discontinuous character. Both implosions and explosions inevitably materialize, rendering the world for new generations different than that of the old. History points to numerous social systems that have reached the limits of their ability to adapt their social relations to allow for the rational and sustainable use of developing productive forces. Hence, the human past is dotted by periods of regression, followed by revolutionary accelerations that sweep all before them. As the conservative historian Jacob Burckhardt declared in the nineteenth century, “a historical crisis” occurs when “a crisis in the whole state of things is produced, involving whole epochs and all or many peoples of the same civilization.… The historical process is suddenly accelerated in terrifying fashion. Developments which otherwise take centuries seem to flit by like phantoms in months or weeks, and are fulfilled.” He called this the “acceleration of historical processes.”91

Burckhardt principally had in mind social revolutions, like the French Revolution of 1789. This was an acceleration of history that, as the modern French historian Georges Lefebvre explained, commenced as a series of widening revolutions, mutating with terrifying speed, from an aristocratic revolution to a bourgeois revolution to a popular revolution and then a peasant revolution—finally taking on the character of a historic “bloc, a single thing,” seemingly unconquerable, which reshaped much of world history.92

Could such a revolutionary acceleration of history, though on an incomparably greater scale, happen in the twenty-first century? Most establishment commentators in the hegemonic countries of the world imperialist system would say no, based on their own narrow experience and limited view of history. Nevertheless, revolutions continue to break out in the periphery of the world system and are, even now, only put down by imperialist economic, political, and military interventions. Moreover, the failure of capitalism on a planetary scale today threatens all of civilization and life on the planet as we know it. If drastic changes are not made, global temperature this century will increase by 4° or even 6°C from preindustrial times, leading to conditions that will imperil humankind as a whole. Meanwhile, the extreme capitalism of today seeks to expropriate and enclose all the bases of material existence, siphoning off almost the entire net social surplus and robbing the natural environment for the direct benefit of a miniscule few.

As a direct result of capitalist social relations, the material challenges now facing humanity are greater than anything ever seen before, pointing to an accumulation of catastrophe along with the accumulation of capital.93 Hundreds of millions of people under these circumstances are already being drawn into struggles with the system, creating the basis of a new worldwide movement toward socialism. In his book Can the Working Class Change the World? Yates answers yes, it can. But it can only do so through a unifying struggle by workers and peoples aimed at genuine socialism.94

It may be objected that socialism has been tried and has failed and hence no longer exists as an alternative. However, like the earliest attempts at capitalism in the Italian city-states of the late Middle Ages, which were not strong enough to survive amongst the feudal societies that surrounded them, the failure of the first experiments at socialism presage nothing but its eventual rebirth in a new, more revolutionary, more universal form, which examines and learns from the failures.95 Even in failure, socialism has this advantage over capitalism: it is motivated by the demand for “freedom in general,” rooted in substantive equality and sustainable human development—reflecting precisely those collective social relations, borne of historical necessity and the unending struggle for human freedom, crucial to human survival in our time.96

The great conservative economist Joseph Schumpeter, who, as Austrian finance minister in Red Vienna, had allied himself for a time with the socialist government and found himself attacked on all sides, once wrote that capitalism would perish not because of “the weight of economic failure,” but rather because its “very success” in pursuing its narrow economic ends, had undermined the sociological foundations of its existence. Capitalism, Schumpeter exclaimed, “‘inevitably’ creates conditions in which it will not be able to live and which strongly point to socialism as its heir apparent.”97 He was, it turns out, in many ways correct, though not entirely in the way he expected. The global development of monopoly capitalism and financialization spearheaded by the very same counterrevolutionary neoliberalism that first arose in response to Red Vienna in the interwar years—at a time when Schumpeter himself was a major actor—has now undermined the material bases, not so much of capitalism itself, but of global society and planetary ecology. The result has been the emergence of an “atmosphere of almost universal hostility” to the prevailing social order, though, playing out in the confused context of the present, less as opposition to capitalism itself than to neoliberalism.98

It is capitalism’s undermining of the very basis of human existence that will eventually compel the world’s workers and peoples to seek new roads forward. An inclusive, class-based movement toward socialism in this century will open up the possibility of qualitative new developments that the anarchy of the capitalist-market society with its monopolistic competition, extreme inequality, and institutionalized greed cannot possibly offer.99 This includes the development of a socialist technology, in which both the forms of technology utilized and the purposes to which they are put are channeled in social directions, as opposed to individual and class gain.100 It introduces the prospect of long-term democratic planning at all levels of society, allowing decisions to be made and distributions to occur outside the logic of the cash nexus.101 Socialism, in its most radical form, is about substantive equality, community solidarity, and ecological sustainability; it is aimed at the unification—not simply division—of labor.

### NATO – Alt

#### The alternative solves – movements for peace are empirically successful against NATO’s projects of militarism as activists are gaining momentum.

Campbell 19 (Horace, Professor of African American Studies and Political Science @ Syracuse University, “Global NATO: A 70-Year Alliance of Oppressors in Crisis”, Counter Punch, April 9)

NATO and the peace Movement in the USA

The US military has been degraded by the humiliations in the war on terror and the fact that many of the youths do not support the global military campaign. The revolt of the youth in the Occupy Wall Street Movement, #Black Lives matter, #MeTooMovement, along with new movements such as the environmental justice movement and the other progressive forces dictate that drone warfare, brain hacking and cyber warfare become the choice tactics for contemporary militarism. The reversals for the US military did not come about by accident and although the US boasts the strongest military force in the world, the military has suffered massive morale problems compounded by the fact that in many communities where veterans come from now suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). With the rise in mental illness from veterans, young US citizens have no appetite for war. It is for these reasons why the peace and justice forces are not simply going to discussions on the anniversary of NATO, but thoughtful commentators are exposing the massive corruption of the military and Wall Street. The revelations of the ‘bottomless pit of the Pentagon’s budget’ do not fully grasp the centrality of the US military in the maintenance of the dollar. [25] Matt Taibbi has done excellent journalistic work on the massive corruption of Wall Street, but the connection was not made to NATO, the weaponization of Finance and global racism. One hundred years ago W.E.B Dubois warned of the racist motives behind imperial wars when he noted, “What do nations care about the cost of war, if by spending a few hundred millions in steel and gunpowder they can gain a thousand millions in diamonds and cocoa? How can love of humanity appeal as a motive to nations whose love of luxury is built on the inhuman exploitation of human beings, and who, especially in recent years, have been taught to regard these human beings as inhuman.” [26]

Global NATO is now the front for chauvinism, the ideals of white supremacy, islamophobia and hegemonic masculinity. It is among the peoples of African descent where NATO has been weakest over the past 70 years. The Black Liberation Movement understood the linkages between the false flag operations internationally and the war against those fighting against racism in the USA. This movement had been at the forefront of breaking the legitimacy of the war scare and the apartheid ideas of the US ruling class. In the present period, there are efforts to mobilize a small section of the black bourgeoisie to be in the room for the planning for the weaponization of everything, but Jim Crow habits and ideas die hard, hence the political leadership remains in the hands of the anti-imperialist and ant racist factions within the USA. It is this force that is still calling for the dismantling of NATO just as it continues to oppose the African arm of NATO called AFRICOM.

The progressive forces in all parts of the world must oppose the sanctions and militarism against Iran because this war has all of the hallmarks of escalating and cascading far beyond Iran. The exposure of the impact of Stuxnet (Code named Operation Olympic Games) has not been fully discussed by the progressives who are calling for the dismantling of NATO. The interconnections between the militarists of Saudi Arabia along with the Israeli lobby and those who are setting the belligerent tone of the US against China in the South China Sea can be seen from the output of some of the Washington think tanks, from the Islamophobia forces, and from the branches of the armaments culture that thrive on war.

During the wars against the people of Vietnam, the peace and justice forces matured and developed tactics to educate all sections of the society. These tactics survived to educate the population on the lies that were being peddled to embark on the occupation of Iraq. Despite the humiliation of wasting thousands of lives and expending trillions of dollars in useless war, the impetus for war is so ingrained that United States is being pushed on to another war. The difference for the war planners at this moment is that the combined forces of peace and social justice forces are much stronger than the pessimists make out.

The African dimensions of the anti-militarist campaign

Many on the left in the United States and Europe are holding discussions on the 70th anniversary of NATO but few if any of the Left commentaries have implicated NATO in Africa and the global expansion of racism and Islamophobia are now writing to oppose the war plans by the Israeli- lobby in the USA. However, because the commentaries excluded Africa there is no appreciation of how the revolutionary upsurges in all parts of Africa have sharpened the alternatives in Africa and the constant struggles of the youth for a new social system. The current struggles of the workers and youths of Algeria is only the recent manifestation of the turbulence in Africa which had been called the ‘Arab Spring.’ NATO has collaborated with dictators such as the Field Marshall in Egypt to derail the revolutionary upsurge in Egypt.

During the 20th century in every revolutionary situation, capital fomented war to weaken the revolutionary forces. The pace of change in Africa has created nervousness in the West and the deployment of French troops and AFRICOM is meant to contain the mobilization and organization of the oppressed in Africa. Workers of European descent are being lulled by white supremacy, the terrorist scare and humanitarian interventions to support the new military policies of global capitalism. The objective conditions of real exploitation in Africa intensify social struggles for better conditions so that the contours of revolutionary change will expand. Thus, while the media insists on delinking the Algerian, Egyptian and Tunisian revolts from the wider African struggles by writing on the ‘Arab spring,’ worker protests enveloped numerous African states with those such as the struggles in Swaziland, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Kenya, Senegal, Mali, South Africa, Nigeria and Ethiopia percolating, awaiting the right moment for the maturation of the global anti-imperialist and anti-racist forces.

It is from Africa where there is clarity on the tasks ahead. Reflecting on the challenges and opportunities, the late Samir Amin had called for ‘Audacity and more audacity.’ In calling for the socialization of the ‘ownership of the monopolies,’ Amin spelt out how ‘the historical circumstances created by the implosion of contemporary capitalism requires the radical left, in the North as well as the South, to be bold in formulating its political alternative to the existing system.’ While economists in North America continuously complain that the barons of Wall Street socialize losses while privatizing profits, Samir Amin spelt out in great details for citizens of all continents,

‘the alternative social project should be to reverse the direction of the current social order (social disorder) produced by the strategies of monopolies, in order to ensure maximum and stabilized employment, and to ensure decent wages growing in parallel with the productivity of social labor. This objective is simply impossible without the expropriation of the power of monopolies.’

If one reads an economist such as Samir Amin and others who are progressive (in the US context) one can see that Amin is drawing from the depth of the oppression on the world scale to elaborate alternatives. The challenge of the left is to understand the outline of the alternative social project and translate this into practical day to day programs so that wherever one lives and works one should not succumb to despair and pessimism. It is in the midst of this suffering where the discussions on the future of NATO is taking place. The power of US imperialism dictates that in all corners of the world humans are paying attention to the twists and turns of the political leadership of the USA in the midst of the extended capitalist recession since 2008. Our intervention stressed the importance of the weaponization of finance that thrust NATO to the forefront of the military management of the international system. Sections of the progressive forces in Europe are tinkering at the edges of this management seeking to carve out a space for the EU in Africa but this author will argue that that the calls for reform miss the essential militaristic nature of capitalism and that only a break with the system will avoid all-out war. Samir Amin in his input on “Financial Collapse, Systemic crisis? Illusory answers and necessary answers,” warned humanity,

If the USA has formulated an objective of military control of the planet, it is because, without it, they cannot secure the exclusive access to these resources. As we know: China, India and the South as a whole need them as well for their development. For the USA, they must limit the access and ultimately, there is only one means: war.[27]

Progressives must brace for intensified struggles

In the final analysis we must go back to the Middle East where an alliance between women in Bahrain, Israel, Yemen, Iran and Saudi Arabia holds promise for a new platform. The women of Egypt gave us that notice when they mobilized to come out in forces across religious and class lines. These women are opposed to fundamentalist who want women to cover up but will disrobe them and beat them if they fight for their rights. This new mobilization of progressive women can now be seen in the politics of the USA where a new generation is maturing with new skills to fully mobilize against the NATO and the Pentagon. What remains to be seen is whether these forces will oppose the massive expenditures of the Pentagon and return to the call of Seymour Melman for demilitarization and the conversion of the military, financial, information complex.

While the energies of many are focused on the issues of electoral politics, progressives must remain alert to new false flag operations of NATO. We are in a revolutionary moment and revolutionaries cannot be pessimistic. There are three important tasks: dismantle NATO, fight imperialism, racism, and white supremacy globally and be at the forefront for social justice and solidarity in all parts of the world.

### Cyberwar – Alt

#### The alternative solves. The role of debaters as academics is to reject the proliferation of securitized cyberwar discourse in the capitalist unconscious.

Dyer-Witheford and Matviyenko 19 (Nick, associate professor @ University of Western Ontario in Faculty of Information and Media Studies, Svitlana, assistant professor of communication @ Simon Fraser University, “What is to be done?”, Chapter 3, Cyberwar and Revolution: Digital Subterfuge in Global Capitalism)

As both of us are academics, we are concerned with how the neoliberal university is occupied today by cyberwar. Responding to the exhortations of states and corporations for a supply of labor power adequate to cyberwar conditions, institutions of postsecondary education are proliferating cybersecurity programs (Talley 2013; Ritchie 2016; Wilson 2017). They are also the target of intensifying cyberattacks, some aimed at military-related research (Ismail 2017; Young and Bennett 2017). But, most immediately from our point of view, the university has become a place where students receive mutually contradictory messages from faculty teaching critical theory about the risks of state and corporate surveillance and the public relations teams hired by higher administrators that encourage them to “like” the university’s profile on Facebook, follow it on Twitter, and become full participants in a regime of corporate promotion and selfbranding. Not only does this jeopardize pedagogical work (except when one manages to use such instances as case studies for politicoeconomic analysis in class, which is admittedly rare) but it is also unethical given the general awareness (including by higher administrators and public relations teams) that youths are being aggressively targeted by corporate platforms. This targeting does not just leave young people feeling stressed, defeated, overwhelmed, anxious, nervous, stupid, silly, useless, and like a failure. It also prepares them as the unthinking data-subject cannon fodder for wars already being waged with computational propaganda, botnets, and the viral relay of virtual weaponry with real material consequence.

We and our students are subjects of the “capitalist unconscious,” “the alienated subject at work in every discursive action” (Tomšič 2015, 54). Lacan traced the notion of the subject to the beginning of modern science, which initiated the emancipation of the human from theocratic social orders, replacing a ritualistic relation to the world of nature. Unfortunately, as Samo Tomšič argues, “the emancipatory political potential of scientific revolution” was captured and “neutralized” by a counterrevolutionary capitalism that “needs to be thought of as the restoration of pre-modernity within modernity” (235). This neutralization he characterizes as the construction of “a closed world, marked by totality, finitude and centralization”—the world market, mobilizing atomized, narcissistic, and competitive individuals in never-ending and all-subsuming commodity exchange, a world whose purported eternity and completion negate the perception of “contingency, infinity and instability” that is the true core of scientific emancipation. Pointing to a parallelism between Marx and Lacan, Tomšič observes that capitalist modernity “ceases at the critical point of the subject” (235). He explains,

While capitalism considers the subject to be nothing more than a narcissistic animal, Marxism and psychoanalysis reveal that the subject of revolutionary politics is an alienated animal, which, in its most intimate interior, includes its other. This inclusion is the main feature of a non-narcissistic love and consequently of a social link that is not rooted in self-love. (233)

The atavistic “pre-modernity within modernity” of capitalism, and the disaster of its capture of advanced science, is nowhere more clearly demonstrated today than by its tendencies toward cyberwar. As the young Althusser (1946, 14) wrote in the midst of the “apocalyptic panic” following the explosion of the first atomic weapons, “the world in which humanity trembles before what it has itself wrought is an extravagant image of the proletarian condition, in which the worker is enslaved by his own labour: it is quite simply, the same world.”

### AT: Transition War – Alt

#### Peaceful transition is possible but try or die for recovery post conflict if there’s war.

Hanappi '19 [Hardy; 1/7/19; PhD in Economics from the University of Vienna, chair for Political Economy at the European Commission and director of the Vienna Institute for Political Economy Research; "From Integrated Capitalism to Disintegrating Capitalism. Scenarios of a Third World War," <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/91397/1/MPRA_paper_91397.pdf/>]

It should not come as a surprise that a change of the dominant mode of production of human society takes place by a clash of brute forces, of worldwide war. Limiting his attention to the aspect of equality of men the anthropologist Walter Scheidel describes in fascinating historical detail how wars always preceded the setup of large scale new organization of society, see [Scheidel, 2017]. To which extent such a war again is on the agenda today - contrary to the existence of DC - clearly is a question of forecasting. The previous section of this chapter used a scenario technique to sketch some contours of a possible third World War. These scenarios are not independent, mixtures of them are to be expected, e.g. a common strategy of a player in scenario 1 is to stir up national civil war (scenario 2) in a satellite country of its opponent (e.g. Yugoslavia); or to use the rhetoric of scenario 3 to support the fight of national class struggle (scenario 2). But will WW3 happen at all?

Not necessarily, but with a frightening high probability. Some counterstrategies already have been mentioned along the discussion of the scenarios. The immediate candidate, of course, is a global peace movement. This movement already played a pivotal role in ending the Vietnam War, being an incubator for the worldwide cultural revolution of 1968. As the short life and the macroeconomic impotence30 of this rebellion showed, any movement with durable impact needs not only roots in personal perceptions and feelings, it also needs a very sophisticated and well-developed blueprint of the overall working of a global democratic society. A mode of production is a complicated political economy entity, which needs a complicated system design. Fortunately, the explosive accumulation of human knowledge, of science, should be able to provide just that – if it were not handcuffed by the singular tasks tailored by Disintegrating Capitalism. The next best counteraction thus is to organize the carriers of this knowledge, e.g. scientists, in a progressive global class. Even if WW3 happens, chances are that a restart is possible and the blueprint of a better mode of production is needed. In this case Umberto Eco’s vision of an upcoming new Middle Ages31, with monasteries (today: universities?) preserving and developing secret knowledge, might become reality.

### AT: Locked In – Alt

#### Capitalism has primed you with cognitive bias---the belief that capitalism is inevitable or natural is a myth that ignores decades of interdisciplinary science---organization without privatized profit is both possible and naturally aligned with human nature.

Raymond '20 [Robert; 1/5/20; contributor to Truthout, Senior Producer, Designer, and Creative Director of The Response; "How Economists Tricked Us Into Thinking Capitalism Works," https://truthout.org/articles/how-economists-tricked-us-into-thinking-capitalism-works/]

These days, it seems like someone is always trying to privatize something. One day it’s the Trump administration contemplating the privatization of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The next it’s the Tories looking to sell off the U.K.’s National Health Service, or economists promoting “market-based” solutions to the climate crisis. In this age of neoliberalism, the rallying cry for politicians and economists alike is always for “More privatization! More markets! Sell it all off to the private sector!”

Of course, much of the time this faith in the market is used as a cover by those looking to simply make a profit — or by the politicians representing their interests. But this is not always the case. There are many who actually believe, wholeheartedly, that markets are the most efficient and even the most ethical way to run a society. And because this is the worldview that is taught in the vast majority of economics departments throughout the world, it’s not surprising that this is the dominant worldview among those in power.

It’s an ideology that was carefully crafted during the time of the early Western economists like Adam Smith and David Ricardo. Homo sapiens are actually Homo economicus, the theory goes: selfish, competitive, rational agents who are all constantly seeking to efficiently maximize their own personal well-being.

No need to despair, however, because economists have figured out that these inherent traits can actually be utilized for good, through a social relation known as the market. By its nature, the market encourages competition and efficiency, and thus, by relying on the self-maximizing behavior of individuals, market capitalism is the only economic system that truly accepts human nature for what it is. And in fact, it’s the only system uniquely situated to actually channel this nature into a net positive outcome for society.

How does this all work? Well, when they are free to make choices that maximize their own interests, people in a market system negotiate on a price and quantity of a product or service until a sort of equilibrium is established. It’s a natural process of compromise that leaves everyone satisfied and also leads to an efficient way of producing and distributing goods and services. Everyone wins. And, the theory goes, it just so happens that the process aligns perfectly with human nature. It’s a fascinating theory. The only thing is, it’s completely wrong.

The foundation of this theory relies on an assumption about human nature that has been discredited over and over by research across multiple scientific disciplines. It turns out that Homo economicus is a fairytale, an outdated misconception, a gross distortion of reality. Yet, it still serves as the theoretical foundation of our entire economic system.

Studies have determined that the Homo economicus personality is an extremely rare one. Instead, most humans are marked by a deep capacity for reciprocity, cooperation and selflessness. For example, research shows that by 14 months of age, children are already beginning to help each other by handing over objects that others are unsuccessfully reaching for. This empathic behavior only increases as children grow older and begin to share things that they value with others and even object to other people’s violation of social norms.

These are all early signs of prosociality — behavior that is marked by an intent to help or benefit others. And importantly, this behavior is motivated by a genuine concern for others and not by selfishness.

Evolutionary biologists have also largely debunked the theory of Homo economicus. Researchers like David Sloan Wilson and others have determined that more prosocial groups will robustly outcompete less prosocial groups, meaning that prosociality was an advantageous trait when it came to the natural selection of early humans. And these theories are not new. Over a century ago, the anarchist theorist Peter Kropotkin wrote convincingly on how the survival of our species has depended more on cooperation than on the heroic efforts of isolated individuals. It certainly is difficult imagining an early human taking down a woolly mammoth without engaging in highly coordinated prosocial behavior. How else could the human species evolve to dominate the globe if not by cooperating with one another to overcome the many challenges our species faced?

Another place where we see the myth of Homo economicus debunked is in the research that comes out of post-disaster communities. In her landmark book, A Paradise Built in Hell, Rebecca Solnit presents a thesis arguing that humans have an innate capacity toward collectivism — and that these traits tend to reveal themselves most strongly in community response to disasters. Far from resorting to antisocial behavior after a disaster (a myth which the media tend to elevate), Solnit’s book outlines enumerable instances where communities demonstrate prosocial behaviors like cooperation, solidarity, sacrifice and generosity instead.

“In the wake of an earthquake, a bombing, or a major storm, most people are altruistic, urgently engaged in caring for themselves and those around them, strangers and neighbors as well as friends and loved ones,” Solnit writes. “Decades of meticulous sociological research on behavior in disasters, from the bombings of World War II to floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, and storms across the continent and around the world, have demonstrated this.”

Yet, despite the overwhelming evidence contradicting it, we’ve come to accept Homo economicus as the truth. Perhaps not always consciously, but it haunts our dreams, our imagination. It confines our sense of possibility and imposes boundaries as arbitrary as those that carve up ecosystems and communities into nation-states.

Market capitalism has been imposed onto us, often at the point of a gun, and as a result, we’ve been forced to internalize the idea that we are a selfish, competitive and greedy species. Well, that’s just human nature, we’ll acquiesce when we hear about the profiteering of pharmaceutical companies or the greed of investment bankers. But the thing this, that’s not human nature — it’s just what we’ve been coerced into thinking by an unfeeling economic system that dominates every facet of our life. And in many ways, Homo economicus is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

It’s been demonstrated that studying economics actually makes you more selfish. Studies have shown that economics students are much less likely than other students to donate money that was given to them into a common pool; that they are more likely to “freeride” and are also more likely to defect than to cooperate; that they are more likely to participate in deception for personal gain; and even that they are more likely than their peers to rate greed as “generally good,” “correct” and “moral.”

And it’s not just students: economics professors give less money to charity than professors in other fields — including history, philosophy, education, psychology, sociology, anthropology, literature, physics, chemistry and biology.

When faced with the overwhelming evidence that Homo economicus — and thus the whole neoclassical economic project — is nonsense, the defenders of the status quo tend to rely on another myth: that there is no alternative. Margaret Thatcher famously uttered those words over 30 years ago, paving the way for an age of neoliberalism that has seen the dismantling of the social safety net, the stagnation of wages and the rise of extreme inequality.

But the thing is, there are alternative ways of organizing society that reflect the human capacity for reciprocity, selflessness and cooperation. The worker cooperative model promotes equity and democracy by giving workers ownership and control over their workplaces. It does so in a way that not only aligns with our inherently human traits, but in a way which has been shown to be more efficient and productive than the traditional workplace models.

There is also the commons model that reflects how communities organized themselves for thousands of years before they were torn off their land in the enclosure acts of 17th-century England. The commons are a way of organizing production and distribution where resources are held in common and are accessible to every member of society to be managed collectively for the benefit of all.

In fact, the political economist Eleanor Ostrom actually won the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2009 for disproving the long-held belief known as the “tragedy of the commons,” a theory which held that resources held in common by communities would naturally be overused and depleted. Ostrom’s work demonstrated that this assumption is false, and that it is in fact very possible for resources to be managed collectively without privatization.

There are many ways that community resources can be collectivized instead of privatized, from land trusts that take land off of the market to policy proposals like Medicare for All, which represents a major shift in how we view our collective responsibility when it comes to health care, or the Green New Deal, which recognizes our collective responsibility to prioritize climate justice in the fight against climate change.

The alternatives to market capitalism are out there — and the thing is, they actually align much more closely to the natural human tendencies toward reciprocity and sharing. The theories behind modern economics have left us with a burning planet and with skyrocketing inequality — it’s time to put them to rest.

And whether economists and politicians choose to accept it or not, the days of Homo economicus are limited, because a society based off of a lie cannot go on indefinitely.

#### “No alternative” is an elite fallacy---grassroots activists are laying the seeds for the end of capitalism, but global commitment is key.

Grubačić et al. '20 [Andrej; 9/24/20; Professor and Department Chair of Social and Cultural Anthropology at California Institute of Integral Studies; Brett Wilkins, Bridget Meehan, Cynthia Peters, Don Rojas, Elena Herrada, Mark Evans, Medea Benjamin, Michael Albert, Noam Chomsky, Oscar Chacon, Paul Ortiz, Peter Bohmer, Savvina Chowdhury and Vincent Emanuel; "Greenwashing Capitalism Won’t Heal the Planet," https://truthout.org/articles/greenwashing-capitalism-wont-heal-the-planet/]

Our Future Must Be One Without Economic Growth

So focused on serving the needs of the wealthy elites, most governments, political leaders and policy-makers are stuck in the certainty that “there is no alternative” and their plans lie at the core of that belief. The proposals support “business as usual” with a coat of greenwash and a nip and tuck here and there. They fail to recognize that economic growth is in direct conflict with decarbonization, slowing down global warming or redistributing wealth, and that we must eliminate or vastly reduce certain activities altogether.

It is time to expose the extreme fallacy behind mainstream policy positions regarding the climate crisis. Decarbonization that will slow global warming is going to require more than a few tweaks to the system and nods to green investment. It will demand that we jettison our current economic paradigm altogether and replace it with a more socialist, participatory and democratic paradigm that puts social and environmental needs at its center and massively redistributes wealth. We are only kidding ourselves if we think it can happen any other way.

Many millions of us have already come to this realization. Recent polls conducted in Britain, for example, showed that just 6 percent wanted to go back to the economy as it was before the COVID-19 pandemic and 82 percent wanted to prioritize health and well-being over economic growth. Grassroots activists and movements are busy creating and implementing the alternatives to the status quo. “Ordinary” people are light-years ahead of the governments and political leaders in taking these courageous steps.

Despite the heroic efforts of everyday people working at localized levels, there are three hard truths we must face. The first is that our governments and political leaders are a major barrier. They may be pathetic but they hold the levers of power, albeit on behalf of the elites. The second hard truth is that efforts at localized levels are insufficient. Solving the climate crisis will necessitate the end of capitalism and that necessitates action on a global scale through global coordination, planning and regulation. Both of these truths, therefore, make it critical for our governments and leaders to catch up and start working for and with us.

# AFF – Cap K

## Cap Good – Impact Turns

### Cap Good/Transition Bad

#### It’s sustainable. Only capitalism can counteract their impact.

Shi-Ling Hsu 21, D'Alemberte Professor of Law at the Florida State University College of Law, “2 How Capitalism Saves the Environment,” Capitalism and the Environment, Cambridge University Press, 10/31/2021, pp. 28–55

2.8 CHOOSING CAPITALISM TO SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT: LARGE-SCALE DEPLOYMENT

Finally, a third reason that capitalism is suited to the job of environmental restoration and protection is its ability to undertake and complete projects at very large scales. In keeping with a major thesis of this book, construction at very large scales should give us a little pause, because of the propensity of capital to metastasize into a source of political resistance to change. But some global problems, especially climate change, may require very large-scale enterprises.

For example, because greenhouse gas emissions may already have passed a threshold for catastrophic climate change, technology is almost certainly needed to chemically capture carbon dioxide from ambient air. But carbon dioxide is only about 0.15% of ambient air by molecular weight, and a tremendous amount of ambient air must be processed just to capture a small amount of carbon dioxide. This technology has often been referred to as "direct air capture," or "carbon removal." Given that inherent limitation, direct air capture technology must be deployed at vast scales in order to make any appreciable difference in greenhouse gas concentrations. There is certainly no guarantee that direct air capture will be a silver bullet. But if it is to be an effectual item on a menu of survival techniques, it will more assuredly be accomplished under the incentives of a capitalist economy.

Capitalism might also help with the looming crisis of climate change by helping to ensure the supply of vital life staples such as food, water, and other basic needs in future shortages caused by climate-change. In a climate-changed future, there is the distinct possibility that supplies of vital life staples may run short, possibly for long periods of time. Droughts are projected to last longer, with water supplies and growing conditions increasingly precarious. Capitalist enterprise could, first of all, provide the impetus to finally reform a dizzying multitude of price distortions that plague water supply and agriculture worldwide. Second, capitalist enterprise can undertake scale production of some emergent technologies that might alleviate shortages. Desalination technology can convert salty seawater into drinkable freshwater.54 A number of environmental and economic issues need to be solved to deploy these technologies at large scales, but in a crisis, solutions will be more likely to present themselves.

A technology that is already being adopted to produce food is the modernized version of old-fashioned greenhouses. The tiny country of the Netherlands, with its 17 million people crowded onto 13,000 square miles, is the second largest food exporter in the world,55 exporting fully three-quarters that of the United States in 2017.56 The secret to Dutch agriculture is its climate-controlled, low-energy green-houses that project solar panel-powered artificial sunlight around the clock. Dutch greenhouses produce lettuce at ten times the yield57 and tomatoes at fifteen times the yield outdoors in the United States58 while using less than one-thirteenth the amount of water,59 very little in the way of synthetic pesticides and, of course, very little fertilizer given its advanced composting techniques. Sustained shortages in a climate-changed future might require that a capitalist take hold of greenhouse growing and expand production to feed the masses that might otherwise revolt.

2.9 CHOOSE CAPITALISM

Clearly, the job in front of humankind is enormous, complex, and many-faceted. The best hope is to be able to identify certain human impacts that are clearly harmful to the global environment, and to disincentivize them. Getting back to notions of institutions in capitalism, what is crucial is aligning the right incentives with profit-making activity. What capitalism does so well — beyond human comprehension — is coordinate activity and send broad signals about scarcity. Information about a wide variety of environmental phenomena is extremely difficult to collect and process. If a set of environmental taxes can help establish a network of environ-mental prices, then an unfathomably large and complex machinery will have been set in motion in the right direction.

Also, because of the need for new scientific solutions to this daunting list of problems, new science and technology is desperately needed. Capitalism is tried and true in terms of producing innovation. Again drawing upon the study of institutions, it is not so much that individuals need a profit-motive in order to tinker, but the prospect of profit-making has to be present in order for institutions, including corporations, to devote resources, attention, and energy towards the development of solutions to environmental problems. Corporations can and should demonstrate social responsibility by attempting to mitigate their impacts on the global environment, but a much more conscious push for new knowledge, new techniques, and new solutions are needed.

Finally, the scale of needed change is profound. Huge networks of infrastructure centered upon a fossil fuel-centered economy must somehow be replaced or adapted to new ways of generating, transmitting, consuming, and storing energy. A global system of feeding seven billion humans (and counting), unsustainable on its face, must be morphed into something else that can fill that huge role. About a billion and a half cars and trucks in the world must, over time, be swapped out for vehicles that must be dramatically different.

This is a daunting to-do list, but look a bit more carefully among the gloomy news. Elon Musk, a freewheeling, pot-smoking entrepreneur shows signs of breaking into not one, but two industries dominated by behemoths with political power. Thanks to California emissions standards, automobile manufacturers have developed cars that emit a fraction of what they did less than a generation ago. Hybrid electric vehicles have thoroughly penetrated an American market that powerful American politicians had tried to cordon off for American manufacturers only. At least two companies have developed meat substitutes that are now widely judged to be indistinguishable from meat, and have established product outposts in the ancient power centers of fast food, McDonald's and Burger King. The tiny country of the Netherlands, about half the size of West Virginia, exports almost as much food as the United States, able to ship fresh produce all the way to Africa. At bottom, all of these accomplishments and thousands more are and were capitalist in nature. While they collectively repre-sent a trifle of what still needs to be accomplished, they were also undertaken without the correct incentives in place, and thus also represent the tremendous promise of capitalism.

#### Cap is sustainable – innovation is key to solve the climate and the alt can’t solve

Karlsson 21 – Associate Professor in political science at Umea University (Rasmus, "Learning in the Anthropocene" Soc. Sci. 10, no. 6: 233. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10060233> 18 June 2021)

Unpacking this argument, it is perhaps useful to first recognize that, stable as the Holocene may have seemed from a human perspective, life was always vulnerable to a number of cosmic risks, such as bolide collisions, risks that only advanced technologies can mitigate. Similarly, the Black Death of the 14th century should serve as a powerful reminder of the extreme vulnerability of pre-industrial societies at a microbiological level. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to think of the Holocene as providing a relatively stable baseline against which the ecological effects of technological interventions could hypothetically be evaluated. With most human activities being distinctively local, nature would for the most part “bounce back” (even if the deforestation of the Mediterranean basin during the Roman period is an example of that not always being the case) while larger geophysical processes, such as the carbon cycle, remained entirely beyond human intentional control. Even if there has been some debate about what influence human activities had on the preindustrial climate (Ruddiman 2007), anthropogenic forcing was in any case both marginal and gradual. All this changed with the onset of the Great Acceleration by which humans came to overwhelm the great forces of nature, causing untold damage to fragile ecosystems and habitats everywhere, forever altering the trajectory of life on the planet (Steffen et al. 2011b). In a grander perspective, humanity may one day become an interplanetary species and thus instrumental in safeguarding the long-term existence of biological life, but for the moment, its impact is ethically dubious at best as the glaciers melt, the oceans fill up with plastics, and vast number of species are driven to extinction. Faced with these grim realities, it is of course not surprising that the first impulse is to seek to restore some kind primordial harmony and restrain human activities. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that, even if their aggregate impact may have been within the pattern of Holocene variability, pre-modern Western agricultural societies were hardly “sustainable” in any meaningful sense. Experiencing permanent scarcity, violent conflict was endemic (Gat 2013), and as much as some contemporary academics like to attribute all evils to “capitalism” (Malm 2016), pre-capitalist societies exhibited no shortage of religious intolerance and other forms of social domination. It is thus not surprising that some have argued the need to reverse the civilizational arc further yet and return to a preliterate hunter-gather existence (Zerzan 2008) even if this, obviously, has very little to do with existing political realities and social formations. Under Holocene conditions, the short-term human tragedy may have been the same, but it did not undermine the long-term ability of the planet to support life. In a world of eight billion people, already accumulated emissions in the atmosphere have committed the planet to significant warming under the coming centuries, with an increasing probability that committed warming already exceeds the 1.5-degree target of the Paris Agreement even if all fossil-fuel emissions were to stop today (Mauritsen and Pincus 2017). This means that sustained negative emissions, presumably in combination with SRM, will most likely be needed just to stabilize global temperatures, not to mentioning countering the flow of future emissions. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), assuming that all the pledges submitted under the Paris Agreement are fulfilled, limiting warming to 1.5 degrees will still require negative emissions in the range of 100—1000 gigatons of CO2 (Hilaire et al. 2019, p. 190). The removal of carbon dioxide at gigaton scales from the atmosphere will presumably require the existence of an advanced industrial society since low-tech options, such as afforestation, will be of limited use (Gundersen et al. 2021; Seddon et al. 2020), especially in a future of competing land-uses. It is against this backdrop of worsening climate harms that the limits of “precaution”, at least as conventionally understood, become apparent. While degrowth advocates tend to insist that behavioral change, even explicitly betting on a “social miracle” (Kallis 2019, p. 195), is always preferable to any technological risk-taking (Heikkurinen 2018), that overlooks both the scope of the sustainability challenge and the lack of public consent to any sufficiently radical political project (Buch-Hansen 2018). While there may be growing willingness to pay for, say, an electric vehicle (Hulshof and Mulder 2020), giving up private automobile use altogether is obviously a different animal, to say nothing about a more fundamental rematerialization of the economy (Hausknost 2020). Again, the problem is one in which change either (a) remains marginal yet ecologically insufficient or (b) becomes sufficiently radical yet provokes a strong political counterreaction. A similar dynamic can be expected to play out at the international level where countries that remain committed to growth would quickly gain a military advantage. To make matters worse, there is also a temporal element to this dynamic since any regime of frugality and localism would have to be policed indefinitely in order to prevent new unsustainable patterns of development from re-emerging later on. All this begs the obvious question, if the political and economic enforcement of the planetary boundaries are fraught with such political and social difficulties, would it not be better to instead try to transcend them through technological innovation? Surprisingly, any high-energy future would most likely be subject to many of the same motivational and psychological constraints that hinder a low-energy future. While history shows that existing nuclear technologies could in theory displace all fossil fuels and meet the most stringent climate targets (Qvist and Brook 2015), it seems extremely unlikely, to put it mildly, that thousands of new reactors will be built over the course of the coming decades in response to climate change. Outside the world of abstract computer modelling, real world psychological and cultural inertia tends to ensure that political decision-making, at least for the most part, gravitates to what is considered “reasonable” and “common sense”—such as medium emissions electricity grids in which wind and solar are backed by biomass and gas—rather than what any utilitarian optimization scenario may suggest. Even if the global benefits of climate stabilization would be immense, the standards by which local nuclear risks are assessed, as clearly illustrated by the Fukushima accident which led to a worldwide retreat from nuclear energy despite only causing one confirmed death (which, though obviously regrettable, has to be put in relation to the hundred and thousands of people dying every year from the use of fossil fuels), underscores the uneven distribution of perceived local risks versus global benefits and the associated problem of socio-political learning across spatial scales. Almost two decades ago, Ingolfur Blühdorn identified “simulative eco-politics” as a key strategy by which liberal democracies reconcile an ever-heightened rhetoric of environmental crisis with their simultaneous defense of the core principles of consumer capitalism (Blühdorn 2007). Since then, declarations that we only have “ten years to save the planet” have proliferated, and so have seemingly bold investments in renewable energy, most recently in the form of US President Joseph Biden’s USD 2.25 trillion climate and infrastructure plan. Still, without a meaningful commitment to either radical innovation or effective degrowth, it is difficult to see how the deployment of yet more wind turbines or the building of new highways will in any way be qualitatively different from what Blühdorn pertinently described as sustaining “what is known to be unsustainable” (Blühdorn 2007, p. 253). However, all is not lost in lieu of more authentic forms of eco-politics. Independent of political interventions, accelerating technological change, in particular with regard to computing and intelligent machine labor, may one day make large-scale precision manipulation of the physical world possible in ways that may solve many problems that today seem intractable (Dorr 2016). Similarly, breakthroughs in synthetic biology may hold the key to environmentally benign biofuels and carbon utilization technologies. Yet, all such progress remains hypothetical and uncertain for now. Given what is at stake, there is an obvious danger in submitting to naïve technological optimism. What is less commonly recognized is that naïve optimism with regard to the prospects of behavioral change may be equally dangerous. While late-capitalist affluence has enabled many postmaterial identities and behaviors, such as bicycling, hobby farming, and other forms of emancipatory self-expression, a collapsing economy could quickly lead to a reversal back to survivalist values, traditional hierarchical forms of domination, and violence (Quilley 2011, p. 77). As such, it is far from obvious what actions would actually take the world as a whole closer to long-term sustainability. If sustainability could be achieved by a relatively modest reduction in consumption rates or behavioral changes, such as a ban on all leisure flights, then there would be a strong moral case for embracing degrowth. Yet, recognizing how farreaching measures in terms of population control and consumption restrictions that would be needed, the case quickly becomes more ambiguous. While traditional environmentalism may suggest that retreating from the global economy and adopting a low-tech lifestyle would increase resilience (Alexander and Yacoumis 2018), it may do very much the opposite by further fragmenting global efforts and slowing the pace of technological innovation. Without an orderly and functioning world trade system, local resources scarcities would be exacerbated, as seen most recently with the different disruptions to vaccine supply chains. In essence, given the lack of a stable Holocene baseline to revert to, it becomes more difficult to distinguish proactionary “risk-taking” from “precaution”, especially as many ecosystems have already been damaged beyond natural recovery. In this context, it is noteworthy that many of the technologies that can be expected to be most crucial for managing a period of prolonged overshoot (such as next-generation nuclear, engineering biology, large-scale carbon capture and SRM) are also ones that traditional environmentalism is most strongly opposed to. 3. Finding Indicators From the vantage point of the far-future, at least the kind depicted in the fictional universe of Star Trek, human evolution is a fairly straightforward affair along an Enlightenment trajectory by which ever greater instrumental capacity is matched by similar leaps in psychological maturity and expanding circles of moral concern. With the risk of sounding Panglossian, one may argue that the waning of interstate war in general and the fact that there has not been any major nuclear exchange in particular, does vindicate such an optimistic reading of history. While there will always be ups and downs, as long as the most disastrous outcomes are avoided, there will still be room for learning and gradual political accommodation. Taking such a longer view, it would nevertheless be strange if development was simply linear, that former oppressors would just accept moral responsibility or that calls for gender or racial justice would not lead to self-reinforcing cycles of conservative backlash and increasingly polarizing claims. Still, over the last couple of centuries, there is little doubt that human civilization has advanced significantly, both technologically and ethically (Pinker 2011), at least from a liberal and secular perspective. However, unless one subscribes to teleology, there is nothing inexorable with this development and, it may be that the ecological, social, and political obstacles are simply too great to ever allow for the creation of a Wellsian borderless world (Pedersen 2015) that would allow everyone to live a life free from material want and political domination. On the other hand, much environmental discourse tends to rush ahead in the opposite direction and treat the c limate crisis as ultimate evidence of humanity’s fallen nature when the counter-factual case, that it would be possible for a technological civilization to emerge without at some point endangering its biophysical foundations, would presumably be much less plausible. From an astrobiological perspective, it is easy to imagine how the atmospheric chemistry of a different planet would be more volatile and thus more vulnerable to the effects of industrial processes (Haqq-Misra and Baum 2009), leaving a shorter time window for mitigation. Nick Bostrom has explored this possibility of greater climate sensitivity further in his “vulnerable world hypothesis” (Bostrom 2019) and it begs to reason that mitigation efforts would be more focused in such a world. However, since climate response times are longer and sensitivity less pronounced, climate mitigation policies have become mired in culture and media politics (Newman et al. 2018) but also a statist logic (Karlsson 2018) by which it has become more important for states to focus on their own marginal emission reductions in the present rather than asking what technologies would be needed to stabilize the climate in a future where all people can live a modern life.

#### Capitalism is sustainable – solves climate impacts

Hausfather 21 – a climate scientist and energy systems analyst whose research focuses on observational temperature records, climate models, and mitigation technologies. He spent 10 years working as a data scientist and entrepreneur in the cleantech sector, where he was the lead data scientist at Essess, the chief scientist at C3.ai, and the cofounder and chief scientist of Efficiency 2.0. He also worked as a research scientist with Berkeley Earth, was the senior climate analyst at Project Drawdown, and the US analyst for Carbon Brief. He has masters degrees in environmental science from Yale University and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and a PhD in climate science from the University of California, Berkeley. (Zeke, "Absolute Decoupling of Economic Growth and Emissions in 32 Countries," Breakthrough Institute, 4-6-2021, https://thebreakthrough.org/issues/energy/absolute-decoupling-of-economic-growth-and-emissions-in-32-countries)

The past 30 years have seen immense progress in improving the quality of life for much of humanity. Extreme poverty — the number of people living on less than $1.90 per day — has fallen by nearly two-thirds, from 1.9 billion to around 650 million. Life expectancy has risen in most of the world, along with literacy and access to education, while infant mortality has fallen. Despite perceptions to the contrary, the average person born today is likely to have access to more opportunities and have a better quality of life than at any other point in human history. Much of this increase in human wellbeing has been propelled by rapid economic growth driven largely by state-led industrial policy, particularly in poor-to-middle income countries. However, this growth has come at a cost: between 1990 and 2019, global emissions of CO2 increased by 56%. Historically, economic growth has been closely linked to increased energy consumption — and increased CO2 emissions in particular — leading some to argue that a more prosperous world is one that necessarily has more impacts on our natural environment and climate. There is a lively academic debate about our ability to “absolutely decouple” emissions and growth — that is, the extent to which the adoption of clean energy technology can allow emissions to decline while economic growth continues. Over the past 15 years, however, something has begun to change. Rather than a 21st century dominated by coal that energy modelers foresaw, global coal use peaked in 2013 and is now in structural decline. We have succeeded in making clean energy cheap, with solar power and battery storage costs falling 10-fold since 2009. The world produced more electricity from clean energy — solar, wind, hydro, and nuclear — than from coal over the past two years. And, according to some major oil companies, peak oil is upon us — not because we have run out of cheap oil to produce, but because demand is falling and companies expect further decline as consumers increasingly shift to electric vehicles. The world has long been experiencing a relative decoupling between economic growth and CO2 emissions, with the emissions per unit of GDP falling for the past 60 years. This is the case even in countries like India and China that have been undergoing rapid economic growth. But relative decoupling alone is inadequate in a world where global CO2 emissions need to peak and decline in the next decade to give us any chance at limiting warming to well below 2℃, in line with Paris Agreement targets. Thankfully, there is increasing evidence that the world is on track to absolutely decouple CO2 emissions and economic growth — with global CO2 emissions potentially having peaked in 2019 and unlikely to increase substantially in the coming decade. While an emissions peak is just the first and easiest step towards eventually reaching the net-zero emissions required to stop the world from continuing to warm, it demonstrates that linkages between emissions and economic activity are not an immutable law, but rather simply a result of our current means of energy production. In recent years we have seen more and more examples of absolute decoupling — economic growth accompanied by falling CO2 emissions. Since 2005, 32 countries with a population of at least one million people have absolutely decoupled emissions from economic growth, both for terrestrial emissions (those within national borders) and consumption emissions (emissions embodied in the goods consumed in a country). This includes the United States, Japan, Mexico, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Spain, Poland, Romania, Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal, Sweden, Hungary, Belarus, Austria, Bulgaria, El Salvador, Singapore, Denmark, Finland, Slovakia, Norway, Ireland, New Zealand, Croatia, Jamaica, Lithuania, Slovenia, Latvia, Estonia, and Cyprus. Figure 1, below, shows the declines in territorial emissions (blue) and increases in GDP (red). To qualify as having experienced absolute decoupling, we require countries included in this analysis to pass four separate filters: a population of at least one million (to focus the analysis on more representative cases), declining territorial emissions over the 2005-2019 period (based on a linear regression), declining consumption emissions, and increasing real GDP (on a purchasing power parity basis, using constant 2017 international $USD). We chose not to include 2020 in this analysis because it is not particularly representative of longer-term trends, and consumption and territorial emissions estimates are not yet available for many countries. There is a wide range of rates of economic growth between 2005-2019 among countries experiencing absolute decoupling. Somewhat counterintuitively, there is no significant relationship between the rate of economic growth and the magnitude of emissions reductions within the group. While it is unlikely that there is not at least some linkage between the two factors, there are plenty of examples of countries (e.g., Singapore, Romania, and Ireland) experiencing both extremely rapid economic growth and large reductions in CO2 emissions. One of the primary criticisms of some prior analyses of absolute decoupling is that they ignore leakage. Specifically, the offshoring of manufacturing from high-income countries over the past three decades to countries like China has led to “illusory” drops in emissions, where the emissions associated with high-income country consumption are simply shipped overseas and no longer show up in territorial emissions accounting. There is some truth in this critique, as there was a large increase in emissions embodied in imports from developing countries between 1990 and 2005. After 2005, however, structural changes in China and a growing domestic market led to a reversal of these trends; the amount of emissions “exported” from developed countries to developing countries has actually declined over the past 15 years. This means that, for many countries, both territorial emissions and consumption emissions (which include any emissions “exported” to other countries) have jointly declined. In fact, on average, consumption emissions have been declining slightly faster than territorial emissions since 2005 in the 32 countries we identify as experiencing absolute decoupling. Figure 2, below, shows the change in consumption emissions (teal) and GDP (red) between 2005 and 2019. There is a pretty wide variation in the extent to which these countries have reduced their territorial and consumption emissions since 2005. Some countries — such as the UK, Denmark, Finland, and Singapore – have seen territorial emissions fall faster than consumption emissions, while the US, Japan, Germany, and Spain (among others) have seen consumption emissions fall faster. Figure 3 shows reductions in consumption and territorial emissions for each country, with the size of the dot representing the size of the population in 2019. Absolute decoupling is possible. There is no physical law requiring economic growth — and broader increases in human wellbeing — to necessarily be linked to CO2 emissions. All of the services that we rely on today that emit fossil fuels — electricity, transportation, heating, food — can in principle be replaced by near-zero carbon alternatives, though these are more mature in some sectors (electricity, transportation, buildings) than in others (industrial processes, agriculture).

#### Here's the math

Hausfather 21 – a climate scientist and energy systems analyst whose research focuses on observational temperature records, climate models, and mitigation technologies. He spent 10 years working as a data scientist and entrepreneur in the cleantech sector, where he was the lead data scientist at Essess, the chief scientist at C3.ai, and the cofounder and chief scientist of Efficiency 2.0. He also worked as a research scientist with Berkeley Earth, was the senior climate analyst at Project Drawdown, and the US analyst for Carbon Brief. He has masters degrees in environmental science from Yale University and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and a PhD in climate science from the University of California, Berkeley. (Zeke, "Absolute Decoupling of Economic Growth and Emissions in 32 Countries," Breakthrough Institute, 4-6-2021, https://thebreakthrough.org/issues/energy/absolute-decoupling-of-economic-growth-and-emissions-in-32-countries, Accessed 4-11-2021, LASA-SC)

Chart, line chart

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Emissions reductions in the US have been a result of a wide variety of factors; this includes the switch from coal generation to lower-carbon natural gas, the rapid expansion of wind and solar generation, reduced industrial energy consumption, reduced electricity use in buildings, and reductions in transportation emissions — particularly as a result of increased vehicle fuel economy and reduced miles driven per-capita. Since 2005, US territorial emissions have fallen around 15%, with consumption emissions falling around 18% (much larger reductions were seen in 2020, and some of this is expected to persist). At the same time, GDP has increased by around 29%.

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In the UK, territorial emissions have fallen by nearly 40% and consumption emissions have fallen by around 30%, while GDP has increased by 22%. Similar to the US, there are a wide variety of drivers of UK emissions reductions, though renewable energy generation, reductions in electricity use, and reductions in industrial and residential energy use are the largest contributors.

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In Germany, territorial emissions have fallen around 15%, and consumption emissions have fallen by around 20%, while GDP has increased by 24%

Chart, line chart

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In France, territorial emissions have fallen by around 25%, and consumption emissions have fallen by a similar amount, while GDP has increased by 16%. It is a bit notable that France has seen larger emission reductions — as a percentage of total emissions — than Germany over this period, likely due in part to Germany’s choice to prioritize shutting down nuclear power plants over coal ones.

#### Growth is sustainable, degrowth fails, and the alt collapses global living standards.

Noah Smith 9/6/21. Assistant Professor of finance @ SUNY Stony Brook, an economics PhD student at the University of Michigan, an academic editor in Japan, and a physics major at Stanford. “People are realizing that degrowth is bad.” https://noahpinion.substack.com/p/people-are-realizing-that-degrowth

I was going to write a lengthy post explaining why “degrowth” — the idea that we need to halt economic growth in order to save the planet — is a very bad idea. But in the meantime, other people have written that post, or recorded that podcast, and done it well. These include Branko Milanovic, Kelsey Piper, and Ezra Klein. So instead I’ll write a shorter post trying to catalog and boil down the arguments against degrowth.

But first, let’s go over the standard argument, so we can see why these new arguments are necessary.

The standard argument against degrowth

First, note that the typical argument against degrowth, which I laid out in a Bloomberg post a while back, is that we don’t need it; we can raise human living standards without exhausting the planet. This argument was capably put forward by Andy McAfee, in his excellent book More From Less, which you should buy and read. Essentially, the idea that economic growth requires growth in resource use is false; rich countries have started to grow while using less and less of the planet’s most important resources. For example, here is U.S. use of fresh water and various metals, as well as trade-adjusted carbon emissions:

[Chart, bar chart

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So the idea here is that we don’t need degrowth; instead, we can keep raising everyone’s standard of living without exhausting the planet’s resources. Because growth doesn’t just mean using more and more stuff; instead, it can mean finding more efficient ways to use the stuff we have.

Degrowthers have two counters to this. Their first counter, typically, is to show a graph of resource use for the entire world, and show that it’s correlated with global growth. This is a weak response, for two reasons:

1. Degrowthers have no idea how to combine various resources into an overall measure of resource use, so they typically go with gross weight. This is absurd, since some materials are recyclable and others are not — if you “use” a ton of copper you still have the copper, whereas if you “use” a ton of oil, your oil is gone. It’s also absurd because it doesn’t take into account the relative abundance of resources — if you figure out how to substitute 2 tons of sand for 1 ton of oil, you’re getting more efficient, since sand is much more plentiful than oil (and doesn’t pollute as much when you use it). A lot of growth is figuring out how to substitute plentiful resources for rare ones, and simply adding up gross tonnage ignores this.
2. Past trends are no guarantee of future trends. Until the 70s, for instance, U.S. economic growth was closely correlated with both energy use and carbon emissions; after the 70s, this correlation broke down completely and the lines started moving in opposite directions. Degrowthers present historical curves as if these are laws of nature, but we know that they are not. The trend is your friend only til the bend at the end. And the fact that rich countries have hit an inflection point where economic growth no longer depends on growing resource use is a strong indicator that industrializing countries like China will also hit this point as well. (And no, falling use in rich countries is mostly not due to outsourcing, as the emissions graph above illustrates.)

So this degrowther argument is just wrong. But degrowthers have a second, far better counter to McAfee’s notion that we can have our cake and eat it too: Decoupling isn’t happening fast enough. If we wait for China and India and all the countries of Africa to industrialize in a resource-intensive way like today’s developed countries did, and then to dematerialize their growth like today’s developed countries are doing now, it will be far too late and the planet will suffer ecological catastrophe.

This argument isn’t as strong as it sounds — China and India and the rest will be able to take advantage of the efficiency-inducing technologies created by the developed countries, like solar power (indeed, they are already doing so). And they will be able to embrace “dematerialized” goods and services like social networks and video games (sorry, Xi Jinping) very early in their growth path. So these countries’ resource use trajectories won’t look quite like the U.S.’ or Europe’s.

But this degrowther argument does contain a nugget of truth: Global resource use is currently on an unsustainable trajectory. Here, via Zeke Hausfather, are the current projections for global warming by century’s end, even with the advances in techologies like solar:

[CHART OMITTED]

Any one of these scenarios represents utter global catastrophe.

So even if there is a sustainable growth path, we are not currently on it. About this, degrowthers are right; a gentle, natural transition to green growth is possible, but is an unaffordable luxury. But degrowthers’ prescription is the wrong one.

The reason, in a word, is politics. The kind of massive intention reordering of global production and consumption that degrowthers fantasize about is not just pragmatically impossible to implement, it’s the kind of thing that essentially everyone in the world except for a few very shouty people in Northern Europe and the occasional Twitter activist is going to reject. To see why, let us turn to the excellent articles/podcasts by Milanovic, Piper, and Klein.

The political argument against degrowth

Milanovic actually has two excellent posts on the topic of degrowth. In the first one, he lays out why forcing developing countries to stay in poverty would be bad:

Let us suppose, for the sake of the argument, that we interpret “degrowth” as the decision to fix global GDP at its current level…Then, unless we change the distribution of income, we are condemning to permanent abject poverty some 15 percent of world population that currently earn less than $1.90 per day and some quarter of humankind who earn less than $2.50 per day…Keeping so many people in abject poverty so that the rich can continue to enjoy their current standard of living is obviously something that the proponents of degrowth would not condone.

Enforcing global degrowth would require freezing world income at about $17,000/year. That means that most people in the world would never even come close to current rich-world living standards — instead, they would at best only be able to reach the level currently enjoyed in China or Botswana. Perhaps that’s not such a horrible fate, but as Milanovic notes, this would require impoverishing most of the population of developed countries. He elaborates on this point in his new post, pulling no punches:

[In order to avoid keeping most of the world in poverty, degrowthers must] introduce a different [income] distribution (B) where everybody who is above the current mean world income ($PPP 16 per day) is driven down to this mean, and the poor countries and people are, at least for a while, allowed to continue growing until they too achieve the level of $PPP 16 per day. But the problem with that approach is that one would have to engage in a massive reduction of incomes for…practically all of the Western population. Only 14% of the population in Western countries live at the level of income less than the global mean…Degrowers thus need to convince 86% of the population living in rich countries that their incomes are too high and need to be reduced….It is quite obvious that such a proposition is a political suicide.

Milanovic quite rightly waves away degrowthers’ protestations that GDP is not a good measure of human welfare. GDP isn’t perfect, he notes, but it’s close enough where the basic point stands.

Demanding that people in rich countries accept absolutely catastrophic declines in their living standards is a political non-starter. Klein, on his podcast, tries to point this out as gently as possible:

I think that if the political demand of the [degrowth] movement becomes you don’t get to eat beef, you will set climate politics back so far, so fast, it would be disastrous. Same thing with S.U.V.s. I don’t like S.U.V.s. I don’t drive one. But if you are telling people in rich countries that the climate movement is for them not having the cars they want to have, you are just going to lose. You are going to lose fast…This is where the politics of [degrowth] for me fall apart…

I just don’t see the argument for degrowth as being anything but an extraordinarily slower way of approaching the politics, probably counterproductive compared to what we’re doing, which is I think you can make tremendous strides on climate change by deploying renewable energy technologies and giving people the opportunity to have a more materially fulfilling life atop those technologies.

Milanovic is less gentle, calling this “outright magical thinking”. He is correct. When you look at how much people in America are willing to sacrifice in terms of their material well-being in order to fight climate change, it’s far less than what Klein is talking about. And Klein is really softballing it here — it’s not just giving up beef and SUVs, it’s a dramatic reduction in the size of housing and the amount of food and the ease of transportation and the quality of medical care that people in rich countries enjoy. It is, frankly, not happening.

But even this vastly understates the political and practical difficulties of degrowth. Piper adds several key points. First of all, she notes, because developed countries have been decoupling resource use and growth for a while now, curbing resource use will actually cause a lot more restrictions on developing countries than Milanovic’s simple calculations would suggest:

From a climate change perspective, though, there’s a problem [with simply reducing rich-world living standards]. First, it means that degrowth would do nothing about the bulk of emissions, which are occurring in developing countries.

This is an incredibly important point. For example, China now produces more CO2 emissions than the U.S., the EU, and Japan combined:

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(And no, this is not because of outsourcing, as you can see by looking at the trade-adjusted emissions numbers.)

Another way of looking at this is that China’s CO2 emissions per dollar of GDP are more than twice America’s, and about five times that of the EU. Any global degrowth plan that actually reduces resource use is going to entail more pain for China than its GDP numbers would suggest, simply because China is at a more resource-intensive stage of growth.

Do you think China will accept a substantial diminution of its living standards, in order to satisfy the environmental-economic diktats of activists in Northern Europe? If so, you need to rethink a great many things.

Anyway, Piper makes a second crucially important point. So far we’ve been waving our hands and talking about lowering rich-world GDP while raising GDP for poor countries. In fact, economies don’t work like that:

Second, the global economy is more interconnected than Hickel implies. When Covid-19 hit, poor countries were devastated not just by the virus but by the aftershocks of virus-induced slowdowns in consumption in rich countries.

There’s some genuine appeal to the idea of an end to “consumerism,” but the pandemic offered a taste of how a sudden drop in rich-world consumption would actually affect the developing world. Covid-19 dramatically curtailed Western imports and tourism for a time. The consequences in poor countries were devastating. Hunger rose, and child mortality followed.

Degrowth would thus require deep changes in the entire way that the global economy works. Change happens, but not like that; implementing the kind of reallocation schemes that degrowthers throw around with abandon would require global economic planning that would put Gosplan to shame. Klein points this out, again rather gently:

Degrowth is, as its advocates understand it, a act of global economic planning really without equal anywhere in human history. It is an act of extraordinary central planning.

In other words, it is abject fantasy.

Taken together, these criticisms are utterly devastating to the entire degrowth project. In its current form, it will not advance beyond a media fad. No matter how shrilly degrowthers quote apocalyptic projections, the things they call for simply will not happen.

### Sustainable – Dematerialization

#### Capitalism causes dematerialization which solves sustainability

Zitelmann 21 – studied history and political sciences, graduating with a doctorate “summa cum laude” in 1986. His dissertation was published in both German and English: Hitler. The Policies of Seduction. Rainer Zitelmann began his career lecturing history at the Freie Universität Berlin from 1987 to 1992. He then became chief editor at one of the leading and most prestigious publishing houses in Germany, Ullstein-Propyläen. He followed this with the role of section editor at the major German daily newspaper “Die Welt”, which he held until 2000. (Rainer, "Consumption Presumption: Are Human Beings Destroying the World?," National Interest, 2-12-2021, https://nationalinterest.org/feature/consumption-presumption-are-human-beings-destroying-world-178114)

Some people claim that we need to cut our consumption or there will be no hope for the planet. Such claims are based on the thesis that continued growth increases the rate at which the earth’s finite resources are consumed and, moreover, leads to irreversible climate change. And such warnings are by no means new. In 1970, for instance, the Club of Rome attracted a great deal of attention with the publication of The Limits to Growth. A Report for the Club of Rome’s Project on the Predicament of Mankind, which has to date sold more than thirty million copies in thirty languages. The book warned people to change their ways and had a clear message: the world’s raw materials, and in particular, oil would soon be used up. In twenty years, the scientists predicted, we would have used the very last drop of oil. Of course, the Club of Rome’s models for the depletion of oil—and almost all other major raw materials—were wrong. According to the scenarios presented in The Limits to Growth, we should now be living on a planet that has been devoid of natural gas, copper, lead, aluminum and tungsten for decades. And we were supposed to have run out of silver in 1985. Despite the bleak forecasts, as of January 2020, the United States Geological Survey estimated silver reserves worldwide at 560,000 tons. Employing an extensive array of data, the American scientist Andrew McAfee proves in his book More from Less that economic growth is no longer coupled to the consumption of raw materials. Data for the United States, for example, show that of seventy-two resources, from aluminum to zinc, only six are not yet post-peak. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the U.S. economy has grown strongly in recent years, consumption of many commodities is actually decreasing. Back in 2015, the American environmental scientist Jesse Ausubel wrote an essay, “The Return of Nature: How Technology Liberates the Environment,” showing that Americans are consuming fewer and fewer raw materials per capita. Total consumption of steel, copper, fertilizer, wood and paper, which had previously always risen in line with economic growth, had plateaued and was now in constant decline. Such across-the-board reductions in natural resource consumption are only possible because of much-maligned capitalism: companies are constantly developing more efficient production methods and reducing the amount of raw materials they consume. Of course, they are not doing this primarily to protect the environment but to cut costs. What's more, a constant stream of innovations has promoted the trend of miniaturization or dematerialization. Just think of your smartphone. How many devices has your smartphone replaced and how many raw materials did they use to consume? Nowadays, many people no longer have a fax machine or street atlas because they have everything they need on their smartphone. Some even use their phones instead of a wristwatch. You used to need four separate microphones in your telephone, cassette recorder, Dictaphone and video camera, today you just need one—in your smartphone. The finite nature of the world’s natural resources is one argument against growth, climate change is another. Let’s take China as an example: China currently emits more CO2 than any other country in the world and is building a number of new nuclear power plants in order to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. With the new build program well underway, China’s first new-generation nuclear power plant recently went into operation. In the very near future, China intends to start exporting power plants. The latest generation of nuclear power plants is much safer than earlier models—and can play a pivotal role in the fight against climate change. In the United States, Joe Biden is already evaluating the advantages of small modular reactor (SMR) nuclear power plants. As the name suggests, SMRs are smaller than traditional nuclear fission reactors and offer a maximum capacity of three hundred megawatts. In the United Kingdom, for example, a consortium led by Rolls-Royce has announced plans to build up to sixteen SMR power plants. So far, two reactors of this type are in operation, both onboard the floating nuclear power plant “Akademik Lomonosov, which supplies heat and electricity to the Siberian city of Pevec and its one hundred thousand inhabitants. Anticapitalists blame capitalism for resource consumption and climate change. But political decisions—such as Germany’s decision to phase out nuclear energy—frequently have a negative impact on climate change. Telling people to cut their consumption must seem like pure mockery to the hundreds of millions of people around the world who are still living in extreme poverty. What they need is more capitalism and economic growth. Just like in China, where the number of people living in extreme poverty has fallen from 88 percent in 1981 to less than 1 percent today. Andrew McAfee’s book has an optimistic message about how we don't have to turn back the clocks and cut our consumption: capitalism and technological progress are allowing us to steward the world’s resources, rather than stripping them bare.

### Tech Inev

#### The technology age is inevitable. Global capitalism, political momentum, and militarism prove.

Kelly ’16 (Kevin; 2016; Awarded author, founder of Wired Magazine, citing data from the past thirty years; Book*, The Inevitable: Understanding the 12 Technological Forces That Will Shape Our Future*)

In the three decades since then, this technological convergence between communication and computation has spread, sped up, blossomed, and evolved. The internet/ web/ mobile system has moved from the fringes of society (where it was pretty much ignored in 1981) to the center stage of our modern global society. In the past 30 years the social economy based on this technology has had its ups and downs and seen its heroes come and go, but it is very clear there have been large-scale trends governing what has happened. These broad historical trends are crucial because the underlying conditions that birthed them are still active and developing, which strongly suggests that these trends will continue to increase in the next few decades. There is nothing on the horizon to decrease them. Even the forces we might think could derail them, like crime, war, or our own excesses, also follow these emerging patterns. In this book I describe a dozen of these inevitable technological forces that will shape the next 30 years. “Inevitable” is a strong word. It sends up red flags for some people because they object that nothing is inevitable. They claim that human willpower and purpose can— and should!— deflect, overpower, and control any mechanical trend. In their view, “inevitability” is a free will cop-out we surrender to. When the notion of the inevitable is forged with fancy technology, as I do here, the objections to a preordained destiny are even more fierce and passionate. One definition of “inevitable” is the final outcome in the classic rewinding thought experiment. If we rewound the tape of history back to the beginning of time and reran our civilization from the start again and again, a strong version of inevitability says that, no matter how many times we reran it, every time we end up with teenagers tweeting every five minutes in 2016. That’s not what I mean. I mean inevitable in a different way. There is bias in the nature of technology that tilts it in certain directions and not others. All things being equal, the physics and mathematics that rule the dynamics of technology tend to favor certain behaviors. These tendencies exist primarily in the aggregate forces that shape the general contours of technological forms and do not govern specifics or particular instances. For example, the form of an internet— a network of networks spanning the globe— was inevitable, but the specific kind of internet we chose to have was not. The internet could have been commercial rather than nonprofit, or a national system instead of international, or it could have been secret instead of public. Telephony— long-distance electrically transmitted voice messages— was inevitable, but the iPhone was not. The generic form of a four-wheeled vehicle was inevitable, but SUVs were not. Instant messaging was inevitable, but tweeting every five minutes was not. Tweeting every five minutes is not inevitable in another way. We are morphing so fast that our ability to invent new things outpaces the rate we can civilize them. These days it takes us a decade after a technology appears to develop a social consensus on what it means and what etiquette we need to tame it. In another five years we’ll find a polite place for twittering, just as we figured out what to do with cell phones ringing everywhere. (Use silent vibrators.) Just like that, this initial response will disappear quickly and we’ll see it was neither essential nor inevitable. The kind of inevitability I am speaking of here in the digital realm is the result of momentum. The momentum of an ongoing technological shift. The strong tides that shaped digital technologies for the past 30 years will continue to expand and harden in the next 30 years. These apply to not just North America, but to the entire world. Throughout this book I use examples from the United States because readers will be more familiar with them, but for each I could have easily found a corresponding example in India, Mali, Peru, or Estonia. The true leaders in digital money, for example, are in Africa and Afghanistan, where e-money is sometimes the only functioning currency. China is way ahead of everyone else in developing sharing applications on mobile. But while culture can advance or retard the expression, the **underlying forces** are universal.

### Cap Solves War

#### Solves Nuclear War

Bedell, ‘21 (Denise Bedell has an Honors BA in Psychology at the University of Windsor and wrote a thesis, Peace Through Profit: How Capitalism Helps Restore and Revive Former Warzones, This is Capitalism presented by Stephens Inc., <https://www.thisiscapitalism.com/peace-through-profit-how-capitalism-helps-restore-and-revive-former-warzones/>, 2021)

Meet and Greet Looking more closely at the experiences of recent war zones makes clear how capitalism can bring together former opponents. By improving citizens’ quality of life through economic development, and by creating interdependency through trade, this can reduce the incentive for nations to take up arms against their neighbors. Take the Balkans. The Balkan peninsula is made up of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece and the European part of Turkey. This region was a hotbed of conflict when the former Yugoslavia broke up at the end of the cold war (and, in fact the region has a long history of armed conflict). The Kosovo War in 1998-1999, for example, was fought between the Serbian Yugoslav authority (by then, Yugoslavia was made up of Serbia and Macedonia) — which controlled Kosovo — and the rebel Kosovo Liberation Army (backed by NATO air support). The deadly conflict saw thousands massacred in what a U.N. court would later deem a “systematic campaign of terror.” Those dark days are far gone, however, and these neighbors now work together in a virtuous economic cycle. Early in 2018, Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, hosted a four-day trade fair — at which 70 of the 174 companies present were Serbian. “I hope we will send the signal that the cooperation is already there,” noted Marko Cadez of Serbia’s Chamber of Commerce and Industry. “The people are working, the people are employing, making products, making profits — and that is most important for our country.” Or consider relations between India and Pakistan — strategic and military rivals that have threatened nuclear war on numerous occasions. Despite these tensions, bilateral trade between the two countries was worth around $2.6 billion in 2016, according to Indian government figures. Unofficial estimates suggest that it is twice that amount — and that the potential for trade is many times greater yet. “Peace building and peacemaking will always be subject to the larger political issues between India and Pakistan,” according to a report in 2017 from the independent and non-partisan federally mandated United States Institute of Peace (USIP). But, according to USIP, economic and trade cooperation can offers a path toward greater stability and peace between the countries — and across South Asia as a whole. A research report titled “Pakistan-India Relations: Peace Through bilateral Trade” — by Muhammad Ali, Noreen Mujahid and Aziz ur Rehman of the University of Karachi — determined that by increasing bilateral trade, it can help resolve political issues between the two countries — and reduce poverty. The report, published in the European Scientific Journal, noted: “If Pakistan and India normalize their economic relations, it will enhance the formal trade — and as a result, both the countries will earn significant revenue, which is lost due to informal trade.” The authors stated that as formal trade volumes rise, “both governments will be compelled to normalize their political relations and resolve their border disputes in an amicable manner.” Hence — as trade increases, pressure mounts on the authorities to ensure nothing interferes with those economic ties. Internal Strength Capitalism not only facilitates peace between nations, but also within them. Rwanda experienced a horrific genocide in the 1990s. But since then, the country has undergone a dramatic transformation — in part, because of the hard work of companies that have partnered with the government and outside agencies to create sustainable businesses and industries that are building a stable and growing economy. One of the many companies that has helped engender peace and create stability since Rwanda’s darkest days is Westrock Coffee. CEO Scott Ford’s pioneering work has helped to build a sustainable, free-market system for independent coffee producers in the country. Ford espoused a direct trade model — paying local smallholder farmers a fair market value for their coffee beans. He also built an agricultural training institute for local farmers, many of whom are women. As Ford explained: “What we are trying to do in Rwanda is be the engine that helps them create their own [economic] ecosystem.” (read more of his story here). Another example in Rwanda is Africa Improved Foods, which specializes in fortified foods to combat malnutrition. At an event earlier this year to mark the genocide, AIF’s chief executive, Amar Ali, outlined how business can help prevent the divisions that lead to conflict. “At Africa Improved Foods, we want to be a flagship for Rwanda — not only in what we build and the products we produce, but also the way we treat each other,” he said. “Everybody is a human being first, and should be treated as such — irrespective of gender, race, religion, tribe, or any other categorization.” In September of 2018, AIF received an SDG award for sustainable consumption (based on the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals) from the Swiss Green Economy Symposium. The award recognized the company for its innovative joint venture in Rwanda, along with the government of Rwanda, a consortium of various banks, and the International Finance Corporation, for promoting local production by buying farmers’ maize and soy yields directly at competitive prices. AIF’s factory in Kigali, the Rwandan capital, provides work to some 300 people, and the local-sourcing program provides around 24,000 Rwandan farmers with stable, sustainable income. Capitalism not only creates an environment for peace but when capitalism stumbles, so do the prospects for international harmony. In 2016, more countries experienced violent conflict than at any time in nearly 30 years. Not coincidentally, trade growth has been in something of a rut for most of the period since the global financial crisis. In that calamitous year of 2016, trade growth fell below 3% for the fifth consecutive year.

#### Decline causes nationalism, scapegoating, and diversionary conflict. That turns their racism and inequality impacts.

Jomo Kwame Sundaram & Vladimir Popov 19. Former economics professor, was United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, and received the Wassily Leontief Prize for Advancing the Frontiers of Economic Thought in 2007. Former senior economics researcher in the Soviet Union, Russia and the United Nations Secretariat, is now Research Director at the Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute in Berlin “Economic Crisis Can Trigger World War.” <http://www.ipsnews.net/2019/02/economic-crisis-can-trigger-world-war/>.

Economic recovery efforts since the 2008-2009 global financial crisis have mainly depended on unconventional monetary policies. As fears rise of yet another international financial crisis, there are growing concerns about the increased possibility of large-scale military conflict.

More worryingly, in the current political landscape, prolonged economic crisis, combined with rising economic inequality, chauvinistic ethno-populism as well as aggressive jingoist rhetoric, including threats, could easily spin out of control and ‘morph’ into military conflict, and worse, world war.

Crisis responses limited

The 2008-2009 global financial crisis almost ‘bankrupted’ governments and caused systemic collapse. Policymakers managed to pull the world economy from the brink, but soon switched from counter-cyclical fiscal efforts to unconventional monetary measures, primarily ‘quantitative easing’ and very low, if not negative real interest rates.

But while these monetary interventions averted realization of the worst fears at the time by turning the US economy around, they did little to address underlying economic weaknesses, largely due to the ascendance of finance in recent decades at the expense of the real economy. Since then, despite promising to do so, policymakers have not seriously pursued, let alone achieved, such needed reforms.

Instead, ostensible structural reformers have taken advantage of the crisis to pursue largely irrelevant efforts to further ‘casualize’ labour markets. This lack of structural reform has meant that the unprecedented liquidity central banks injected into economies has not been well allocated to stimulate resurgence of the real economy.

From bust to bubble

Instead, easy credit raised asset prices to levels even higher than those prevailing before 2008. US house prices are now 8% more than at the peak of the property bubble in 2006, while its price-to-earnings ratio in late 2018 was even higher than in 2008 and in 1929, when the Wall Street Crash precipitated the Great Depression.

As monetary tightening checks asset price bubbles, another economic crisis — possibly more severe than the last, as the economy has become less responsive to such blunt monetary interventions — is considered likely. A decade of such unconventional monetary policies, with very low interest rates, has greatly depleted their ability to revive the economy.

The implications beyond the economy of such developments and policy responses are already being seen. Prolonged economic distress has worsened public antipathy towards the culturally alien — not only abroad, but also within. Thus, another round of economic stress is deemed likely to foment unrest, conflict, even war as it is blamed on the foreign.

International trade shrank by two-thirds within half a decade after the US passed the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act in 1930, at the start of the Great Depression, ostensibly to protect American workers and farmers from foreign competition!

Liberalization’s discontents

Rising economic insecurity, inequalities and deprivation are expected to strengthen ethno-populist and jingoistic nationalist sentiments, and increase social tensions and turmoil, especially among the growing precariat and others who feel vulnerable or threatened.

Thus, ethno-populist inspired chauvinistic nationalism may exacerbate tensions, leading to conflicts and tensions among countries, as in the 1930s. Opportunistic leaders have been blaming such misfortunes on outsiders and may seek to reverse policies associated with the perceived causes, such as ‘globalist’ economic liberalization.

Policies which successfully check such problems may reduce social tensions, as well as the likelihood of social turmoil and conflict, including among countries. However, these may also inadvertently exacerbate problems. The recent spread of anti-globalization sentiment appears correlated to slow, if not negative per capita income growth and increased economic inequality.

To be sure, globalization and liberalization are statistically associated with growing economic inequality and rising ethno-populism. Declining real incomes and growing economic insecurity have apparently strengthened ethno-populism and nationalistic chauvinism, threatening economic liberalization itself, both within and among countries.

Insecurity, populism, conflict

Thomas Piketty has argued that a sudden increase in income inequality is often followed by a great crisis. Although causality is difficult to prove, with wealth and income inequality now at historical highs, this should give cause for concern.

Of course, other factors also contribute to or exacerbate civil and international tensions, with some due to policies intended for other purposes. Nevertheless, even if unintended, such developments could inadvertently catalyse future crises and conflicts.

Publics often have good reason to be restless, if not angry, but the emotional appeals of ethno-populism and jingoistic nationalism are leading to chauvinistic policy measures which only make things worse.

At the international level, despite the world’s unprecedented and still growing interconnectedness, multilateralism is increasingly being eschewed as the US increasingly resorts to unilateral, sovereigntist policies without bothering to even build coalitions with its usual allies.

Avoiding Thucydides’ iceberg

Thus, protracted economic distress, economic conflicts or another financial crisis could lead to military confrontation by the protagonists, even if unintended. Less than a decade after the Great Depression started, the Second World War had begun as the Axis powers challenged the earlier entrenched colonial powers.

They patently ignored Thucydides’ warning, in chronicling the Peloponnesian wars over two millennia before, when the rise of Athens threatened the established dominance of Sparta!

Anticipating and addressing such possibilities may well serve to help avoid otherwise imminent disasters by undertaking pre-emptive collective action, as difficult as that may be.

#### Decline causes dangerous multi-polarity and great power wars.

Evan HILLEBRAND AND Stacy CLOSSON 15. \*\*Professor of International Economics, Patterson School of Diplomacy. \*\*Distinguished Visiting Professor, Patterson School of Diplomacy. *Energy, Economic Growth, and Geopolitical Futures: Eight Long-Range Scenarios*. MIT Press. 43-4.

The second scenario is marked by low energy prices, weak economic growth, and global disharmony. The United States and the European Union falter because their macroeconomic policies never come to grips with unsustainable budget deficits caused by rising transfer payments in the face of declining working-age populations. Recurrent financial crises afflict the OECD countries and wreak havoc on the developing world. China is never able to establish the conditions of secure property rights, impartial rule of law, and transparent governance for modem economic growth.

The result is high volatility and low-trend economic growth in the world's biggest economies, which drives down growth abroad and has a debilitating effect on geopolitical stability. Illiberal trade policies are ramped up everywhere, which slows growth further and breeds ill-will and mistrust among nations. Weak economic growth leads to low energy demand, which, when combined with new supplies of conventional and unconventional energy sources, leads to a sharp drop in energy prices.

This is a tumultuous multipolar world. Oil producers in the Middle East resort to desperate policies to retain power, and Iran emerges as the regional power after a short but exceedingly violent regional war. After decades of economic decline and rising unrest, Russia experiences a revolution by disparate groups of aggrieved liberal parties. Asian countries form a new alliance to resist pressure from an aggressive China. Africa does not reap the expected rewards from oil production. Instead, poor governance leads to weak economic performance, and many African nations are mired in conflict over water resources and drought-induced famine. The international community fails to · adequately address the underlying problems.

#### Capitalism solves war on a massive scale – it creates lock-in mechanisms that bind countries together and economically dampens conflict – robust studies

Dafoe 14 (Allan Dafoe & Nina Kelsey; assistant professor in political science at Yale & research associate in international economics at Berkeley; Journal of Peace Research, “Observing the capitalist peace: Examining market-mediated signaling and other mechanisms,” http://jpr.sagepub.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/content/51/5/619.full)

Countries with liberal political and economic systems rarely use military force against each other. This anomalous peace has been most prominently attributed to the ‘democratic peace’ – the apparent tendency for democratic countries to avoid militarized conflict with each other (Maoz & Russett, 1993; Ray, 1995; Dafoe, Oneal & Russett, 2013).More recently, however, scholars have proposed that the liberal peace could be partly (Russett & Oneal, 2001) or primarily (Gartzke, 2007; but see Dafoe, 2011) attributed to liberal economic factors, such as commercial and financial interdependence. In particular, Erik Gartzke, Quan Li & Charles Boehmer (2001), henceforth referred to as GLB, have demonstrated that measures of capital openness have a substantial and statistically significant association with peaceful dyadic relations. Gartzke (2007) confirms that this association is robust to a large variety of model specifications. To explain this correlation, GLB propose that countries with open capital markets are more able to credibly signal their resolve through the bearing of greater economic costs prior to the outbreak of militarized conflict. This explanation is novel and plausible, and resonates with the rationalist view of asymmetric information as a cause of conflict (Fearon, 1995). Moreover, it implies clear testable predictions on evidential domains different from those examined by GLB. In this article we exploit this opportunity by constructing a confirmatory test of GLB’s theory of market-mediated signaling. We first develop an innovative quantitative case selection technique to identify crucial cases where the mechanism of market-mediated signaling should be most easily observed. Specifically, we employ quantitative data and the statistical models used to support the theory we are probing to create an impartial and transparentmeans of selecting cases in which the theory – as specified by the theory’s creators –makes its most confident predictions.We implement three different case selection rules to select cases that optimize on two criteria: (1) maximizing the inferential leverage of our cases, and (2) minimizing selection bias. We examine these cases for a necessary implication of market-mediated signaling: that key participants drew a connection between conflictual events and adverse market movements. Such an inference is a necessary step in the process by which market-mediated costs can signal resolve. For evidence of this we examine news media, government documents, memoirs, historical works, and other sources. We additionally examine other sources, such as market data, for evidence that economic costs were caused by escalatory events. Based on this analysis, we assess the evidence for GLB’s theory of market mediated costly signaling. Our article then considers a more complex heterogeneous effects version of market-mediated signaling in which unspecified scope conditions are required for the mechanism to operate. Our design has the feature of selecting cases in which scope conditions are most likely to be absent. This allows us to perform an exploratory analysis of these cases, looking for possible scope conditions. We also consider alternative potential mechanisms. Our cases are reviewed in more detail in the online appendix.1 To summarize our results, our confirmatory test finds that while market-mediated signaling may be operative in the most serious disputes, it was largely absent in the less serious disputes that characterize most of the sample of militarized interstate disputes (MIDs). This suggests either that other mechanisms account for the correlation between capital openness and peace, or that the scope conditions for market-mediated signaling are restrictive. Of the signals that we observed, strategic market-mediated signals were relatively more important than automatic market-mediated signals in the most serious conflicts. We identify a number of potential scope conditions, such as that (1) the conflict must be driven by bargaining failure arising from uncertainty and (2) the economic costs need to escalate gradually and need to be substantial, but less than the expected military costs of conflict. Finally, there were a number of other explanations that seemed present in the cases we examined and could account for the capitalist peace: capital openness is associated with greater anticipated economic costs of conflict; capital openness leads third parties to have a greater stake in the conflict and therefore be more willing to intervene; a dyadic acceptance of the status quo could promote both peace and capital openness; and countries seeking to institutionalize a regional peace might instrumentally harness the pacifying effects of liberal markets. The correlation: Open capital markets and peace The empirical puzzle at the core of this article is the significant and robust correlation noted by GLB between high levels of capital openness in both members of a dyad and the infrequent incidence of militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) and wars between the members of this dyad (Gartzke, Li & Boehmer, 2001). The index of capital openness (CAPOPEN) is intended to capture the ‘difficulty states face in seeking to impose restrictions on capital flows (the degree of lost policy autonomy due to globalization)’ (Gartzke & Li, 2003: 575). CAPOPEN is constructed from data drawn from the widely used IMF’s Annual Reports on Exchange Arrangements and Exchange Controls; it is a combination of eight binary variables that measure different types of government restrictions on capital and currency flow (Gartzke, Li & Boehmer, 2001: 407). The measure of CAPOPEN starts in 1966 and is defined for many countries (increasingly more over time). Most of the countries that do not have a measure of CAPOPEN are communist.2 GLB implement this variable in a dyadic framework by creating a new variable, CAPOPENL, which is the smaller of the two dyadic values of CAPOPEN. This operationalization is sometimes referred to as the ‘weak-link’ specification since the functional form is consonant with a model of war in which the ‘weakest link’ in a dyad determines the probability of war. CAPOPENL has a negative monotonic association with the incidence of MIDs, fatal MIDs, and wars (see Figure 1).3 The strength of the estimated empirical association between peace and CAPOPENL, using a modified version of the dataset and model from Gartzke (2007), is comparable to that between peace and, respectively, joint democracy, log of distance, or the GDP of a contiguous dyad (Gartzke, 2007: 179; Gartzke, Li & Boehmer, 2001: 412). In summary, CAPOPENL seems to be an important and robust correlate of peace. The question of why specifically this correlation exists, however, remains to be answered. The mechanism: Market-mediated signaling? Gartzke, Li & Boehmer (2001) argue that the classic liberal account for the pacific effect of economic interdependence – that interdependence increases the expected costs of war – is not consistent with the bargaining theory of war (see also Morrow, 1999). GLB argue that ‘conventional descriptions of interdependence see war as less likely because states face additional opportunity costs for fighting. The problem with such an account is that it ignores incentives to capitalize on an opponent’s reticence to fight’ (Gartzke, Li & Boehmer, 2001: 400.)4 Instead, GLB (see also Gartzke, 2003; Gartzke & Li, 2003) argue that financial interdependence could promote peace by facilitating the sending of costly signals. As the probability of militarized conflict increases, states incur a variety of automatic and strategically imposed economic costs as a consequence of escalation toward conflict. Those states that persist in a dispute despite these costs will reveal their willingness to tolerate them, and hence signal resolve. The greater the degree of economic interdependence, the more a resolved country could demonstrate its willingness to suffer costs ex ante to militarized conflict. Gartzke, Li & Boehmer’s mechanism implies a commonly perceived costly signal before militarized conflict breaks out or escalates: if market-mediated signaling is to account for the correlation between CAPOPENL and the absence of MIDs, then visible market-mediated costs should occur prior to or during periods of real or potential conflict (Gartzke, Li & Boehmer, 2001). Thus, the proposed mechanism should leave many visible footprints in the historical record. This theory predicts that these visible signals must arise in any escalating conflict, involving countries with high capital openness, in which this mechanism is operative Clarifying the signaling mechanism Gartzke, Li & Boehmer’s signaling mechanism is mostly conceptualized on an abstract, game-theoretic level (Gartzke, Li & Boehmer, 2001). In order to elucidate the types of observations that could inform this theory’s validity, we discuss with greater specificity the possible ways in which such signaling might occur. A conceptual classification of costly signals The term signaling connotes an intentional communicative act by one party directed towards another. Because the term signaling thus suggests a willful act, and a signal of resolve is only credible if it is costly, scholars have sometimes concluded that states involved in bargaining under incomplete information could advance their interests by imposing costs on themselves and thereby signaling their resolve (e.g. Lektzian & Sprecher, 2007). However, the game-theoretic concept of signaling refers more generally to any situation in which an actor’s behavior reveals information about her private information. In fact, states frequently adopt sanctions with low costs to themselves and high costs to their rivals because doing so is often a rational bargaining tactic on other grounds: they are trying to coerce their rival to concede the issue. Bargaining encounters of this type can be conceptualized as a type of war-of-attrition game in which each actor attempts to coerce the other through the imposition of escalating costs. Such encounters also provide the opportunity for signaling: when states resist the costs imposed by their rivals, they ‘signal’ their resolve. If at some point one party perceives the conflict to have become too costly and steps back, that party ‘signals’ a lack of resolve. Thus, this kind of signaling arises as a by-product of another’s coercive attempts. In other words, costly signals come in two forms: self-inflicted (information about a leader arising from a leader’s intentional or incidental infliction of costs on himself) or imposed (information about a leader that arises from a leader’s response to a rival’s imposition of costs). Additionally, costs may arise as an automatic byproduct of escalation towards military conflict or may be a tool of statecraft that is strategically employed during a conflict. The automatic mechanism stipulates that as the probability of conflict increases, various economic assets will lose value due to the risk of conflict and investor flight. However, the occurrence of these costs may also be intentional outcomes of specific escalatory decisions of the states, as in the case of deliberate sanctions; in this case they are strategic. Finally, at a practical level, we identify three different potential kinds of economic costs of militarized conflict that may be mediated by open capital markets: capital costs from political risk, monetary coercion, and business sanctions.

### Good - Space Col

#### Rapid growth key to space colonization---extinction.

Kovic '19 [Marko; March 2019; co-founder president of the Zurich Institute of Public Affairs Research; "The future of energy," https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/aswz9/download]

Ideally, the mitigation of climate risks will coincide with and contribute to the development of improved or even entirely novel sources of energy that will increase the long-term chances of humankind’s survival by means of space colonization. This is not an unrealistic expectation, given that the mitigation of climate risks consists, to a large degree, of replacing fossil fuels with other, less harmful sources of energy. However, some climate change mitigation strategies might actually harm the long-term prospects of humankind.

First, it is possible that dominant climate change mitigation strategies will actively exclude any form of nuclear energy from the repertoire of climate-friendly energy sources. Existing and experimental (molten salt) fission reactors could play a significant role in replacing carbon-heavy energy sources, but pro-environmental attitudes often overlap with anti-nuclear sentiments [65]. As a result, and in combination with other problems such as large-scale market failures of existing fission reactors (one of the reasons being that generating electricity from fossil fuels is cheaper) [66], nuclear fission does not currently have significant standing as a “cleantech” contribution to climate change mitigation. From a long-term perspective, an unfavorable view of nuclear energy in the context of climate change might mean that technological progress in the areas of nuclear fission and fusion might come to a halt (for example, due to explicit bans or implicit disincentives). If such a scenario came to be, our attempts at colonizing space would almost certainly fail: There are currently no alternatives to fission and fusion, and it is highly improbable that Solar power alone could suffice for sustaining extraterrestrial habitats.

Second, there is some probability that climate change mitigation strategies will change the social order towards a degrowth philosophy. Degrowth is a vague socio-economic concept and social movement that, in general, calls for a contraction of the global and national economies by means of lower production and consumption rates, and, to some degree, to more profound changes to the “capitalist” system of economic production [67]. Degrowth or degrowth-like approaches are being actively considered as climate risk mitigation strategies [68, 69], and degrowth would almost certainly be a highly effective measure for mitigating climate change. After all, if we were to drastically reduce or even completely eliminate the (industrial) sources of greenhouse gases, the amount of greenhouse gases that are being emitted would accordingly drastically sink. From the long-term perspective of humankind’s survival, degrowth is problematic in at least two ways. First, there is a risk that the general contraction of economic activity would also slow or eliminate progress in the domain of energy, which would, in turn, reduce the probability of successful space colonization due to an absence of suitable energy sources. Second, and more fundamental: If degrowth were to become a dominant societal paradigm, it is uncertain whether the long-term survival of humankind by means of space colonization would be regarded a desirable goal. In a literal sense, establishing extraterrestrial colonies would mean growth; the size of the total human population would grow, and the area of space-time that humans occupy would grow.

In a more philosophical sense, degrowth might even be antithetical to space colonization. Even though both degrowth and space colonization have a similar moral goal – increasing wellbeing – , the ends to that goal are very different. Within degrowth philosophy, the goal is, metaphorically speaking, not to “live beyond our means”: We should strive for “ecological balance”, and such a state should increase the average wellbeing. But the frame of reference is the status quo; Earth and humankind as we know it today. Space colonization, on the other hand, operates with a much larger frame of reference: All the future generations of humans (and other sentient beings) who could enjoy wellbeing if we succeed in colonizing space – and who will categorically be denied that wellbeing if we fail to colonize space [70]. The goal of space colonization as a moral project is not to live beyond our means, but to actively redefine and expand what our means are through scientific and technological progress.

#### Cap gets us off the rock and solves every impact.

Thiessen ‘20 – writes a twice-weekly column for The Post on foreign and domestic policy. He is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, and the former chief speechwriter for President George W. Bush. (Marc A., "SpaceX’s success is one small step for man, one giant leap for capitalism," Washington Post, 6-1-2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/06/01/spacexs-success-is-one-small-step-man-one-giant-leap-capitalism/)

It was one small step for man, one giant leap for capitalism. Only three countries have ever launched human beings into orbit. This past weekend, SpaceX became the first private company ever to do so, when it sent its Crew Dragon capsule into space aboard its Falcon 9 rocket and docked with the International Space Station. This was accomplished by a company Elon Musk started in 2002 in a California strip mall warehouse with just a dozen employees and a mariachi band. At a time when our nation is debating the merits of socialism, SpaceX has given us an incredible testament to the power of American free enterprise. While the left is advocating unprecedented government intervention in almost every sector of the U.S. economy, from health care to energy, today Americans are celebrating the successful privatization of space travel. If you want to see the difference between what government and private enterprise can do, consider: It took a private company to give us the first space vehicle with touch-screen controls instead of antiquated knobs and buttons. It took a private company to give us a capsule that can fly entirely autonomously from launch to landing — including docking — without any participation by its human crew. It also took a private company to invent a reusable rocket that can not only take off but land as well. When the Apollo 11 crew reached the moon on July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong declared “the Eagle has landed.” On Saturday, SpaceX was able to declare that the Falcon had landed when its rocket settled down on a barge in the Atlantic Ocean — ready to be used again. That last development will save the taxpayers incredible amounts of money. The cost to NASA for launching a man into space on the space shuttle orbiter was $170 million per seat, compared with just $60 million to $67 million on the Dragon capsule. The cost for the space shuttle to send a kilogram of cargo into to space was $54,500; with the Falcon rocket, the cost is just $2,720 — a decrease of 95 percent. And while the space shuttle cost $27.4 billion to develop, the Crew Dragon was designed and built for just $1.7 billion — making it the lowest-cost spacecraft developed in six decades. SpaceX did it in six years — far faster than the time it took to develop the space shuttle. The private sector does it better, cheaper, faster and more efficiently than government. Why? Competition. Today, SpaceX has to compete with a constellation of private companies — including legacy aerospace firms such as Orbital ATK and United Launch Alliance and innovative start-ups such as Blue Origin (which is designing a Mars lander and whose owner, Jeff Bezos, also owns The Post) and Virgin Orbit (which is developing rockets than can launch satellites into space from the underside of a 747, avoiding the kinds of weather that delayed the Dragon launch). In the race to put the first privately launched man into orbit, upstart SpaceX had to beat aerospace behemoth Boeing and its Starliner capsule to the punch. It did so — for more than $1 billion less than its competitor. That spirit of competition and innovation will revolutionize space travel in the years ahead. Indeed, Musk has his sights set far beyond Earth orbit. Already, SpaceX is working on a much larger version of the Falcon 9 reusable rocket called Super Heavy that will carry a deep-space capsule named Starship capable of carrying up to 100 people to the moon and eventually to Mars. Musk’s goal — the reason he founded SpaceX — is to colonize Mars and make humanity a multiplanetary species. He has set a goal of founding a million-person city on Mars by 2050 complete with iron foundries and pizza joints. Can it be done? Who knows. But this much is certain: Private-sector innovation is opening the door to a new era of space exploration. Wouldn’t it be ironic if, just as capitalism is allowing us to explore the farthest reaches of our solar system, Americans decided to embrace socialism back here on Earth?

#### Cap is key to space col

Spring 16 (Todd, Writer, "A Case for Capitalism, In Regards to Space Travel – The Policy", Policy, 6-3-2016, https://thepolicy.us/a-case-for-capitalism-in-regards-to-space-travel-d77e50f8116e, DOA: 7-28-2017) //strikethrough on gendered language

As of now, N.A.S.A. does not plan on sending a ~~manned~~ mission to Mars until the 2030s — assuming, of course, they get the government funding they need to undertake such a massive project. Considering the recent cuts to deep space exploration, down nearly $300 million from 2016, I am not certain what the condition of the program will look like in another two years…much less the gap between now and the 2030s.

Where, then — if the government and its agencies will not provide us with the money for exploration — will we turn to slake our thirst for cosmic space travel?

SpaceX. Private corporations. Capitalism.

Seeing this article in the news, reading day after day the story of budget cuts to N.A.S.A. in regards to deep-space exploration and other related programs, got me thinking about just how important it will be for private companies and corporations to undertake these projects…such as Elon Musk’s SpaceX, and countless others (read the full list here).

The problem is that we have gotten it into our heads that Capitalism is the root cause of our economic woes in the United States, perhaps failing to understand that such policies are something like a double-edged sword: they could also be our salvation.

This article provides a great list of the pro’s and con’s of Capitalism. I would recommend you take the short passing of time it requires to read it through-and-through before continuing.

Now then.

I have never been for for fully-unhindered Capitalism. I do not believe that the government should stay out of economic affairs entirely, for as provided in the article many of the con’s relate to improper regulation (monopolization) as opposed to something fundamentally wrong, but I do not believe that any government should be going about shoving their claws into every economic affair either. There must be a healthy balance, especially if Capitalism is to work as it is supposed to work. The same goes for any policy. The government should be there to bolster competition between businesses…not favor one or bail-out the other. The more regulation, the more interference or amendment, the less it works…but this mix of regulation and free market must fall in the “goldilocks zone” if the citizens of said society are to reap its full benefit.

If not, like planets about a star, the society shall either burn or freeze.

One of those benefits is highlighted by Elon Musk’s SpaceX: the intervention of privately-funded companies to do things that a traditional government agency cannot. Namely, the exploration and eventual colonization of Mars in a reasonable, step-by-step timeframe…unlike the “we will get to it eventually” mindset plaguing the bowels of the United States government. Were not the policies in place to foster the growth of private companies, our best chance at getting people out of Earth-orbit — the Bush-approved, now-cancelled, insanely-expensive Constellation program — would have gone the way of promises and well-wishes.

It is my hope that Elon Musk and space entrepreneurs like him are not simply blowing steam, and that one day — perhaps even within my lifetime — I could be on my way to a space hotel on the Moon, flying aboard a space airliner with the name of a private company plastered across the side.

Regardless, if we humans are to truly become a multi-planet species we must not hinder economic growth with narrow thoughts. We must not become confused that the “problems down here” and the “problem of getting out there” must be in conflict; they do not need to, and we must not suppose they should. They are two separate issues with two unique sets of problems, and thus this policy of taking resources from one to give to the other will only ensure that neither issue is given that which it needs, or enough to fix what must be solved.

### Good – Warming

#### Cap solves warming – sustainable, private-industry tech key, alt fails and results in transition wars.

Smith 19 (Noah Smith; PhD in economics from the University of Michigan and Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He was an assistant professor of finance at Stony Brook University; 4/5/19; "Dumping Capitalism Won’t Save the Planet"; https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-04-05/capitalism-is-more-likely-to-limit-climate-change-than-socialism; Bloomberg)

It has become fashionable on social media and in certain publications to argue that capitalism is killing the planet. Even renowned investor Jeremy Grantham, hardly a radical, made that assertion last year. The basic idea is that the profit motive drives the private sector to spew carbon into the air with reckless abandon. Though many economists and some climate activists believe that the problem is best addressed by modifying market incentives with a carbon tax, many activists believe that the problem can’t be addressed without rebuilding the economy along centrally planned lines. The climate threat is certainly dire, and carbon taxes are unlikely to be enough to solve the problem. But eco-socialism is probably not going to be an effective method of addressing that threat. Dismantling an entire economic system is never easy, and probably would touch off armed conflict and major political upheaval. In the scramble to win those battles, even the socialists would almost certainly abandon their limitation on fossil-fuel use — either to support military efforts, or to keep the population from turning against them. The precedent here is the Soviet Union, whose multidecade effort to reshape its economy by force amid confrontation with the West led to profound environmental degradation. The world's climate does not have several decades to spare. Even without international conflict, there’s little guarantee that moving away from capitalism would mitigate our impact on the environment. Since socialist leader Evo Morales took power in Bolivia, living standards have improved substantially for the average Bolivian, which is great. But this has come at the cost of higher emissions. Meanwhile, the capitalist U.S managed to decrease its per capita emissions a bit during this same period (though since the U.S. is a rich country, its absolute level of emissions is much higher). In other words, in terms of economic growth and carbon emissions, Bolivia looks similar to more capitalist developing countries. That suggests that faced with a choice of enriching their people or helping to save the climate, even socialist leaders will often choose the former. And that same political calculus will probably hold in China and the U.S., the world’s top carbon emitters — leaders who demand draconian cuts in living standards in pursuit of environmental goals will have trouble staying in power. The best hope for the climate therefore lies in reducing the tradeoff between material prosperity and carbon emissions. That requires technology — solar, wind and nuclear power, energy storage, electric cars and other vehicles, carbon-free cement production and so on. The best climate policy plans all involve technological improvement as a key feature. Recent developments show that the technology-centered approach can work. A recent report by Bloomberg New Energy Finance analyzed about 7000 projects in 46 countries, and found that large drops in the cost of solar power from photovoltaic systems, wind power and lithium-ion batteries have made utility-scale renewable electricity competitive with fossil fuels. A 76 percent decline in the cost of energy for short-term battery storage since 2012 is especially important. In a blog post, futurist and energy writer Ramez Naam underscores the significance of these developments. Naam notes the important difference between renewables being cheap enough to outprice new fossil-fuel plants, and being inexpensive enough to undercut existing plants. The former is already the case across much of the world, which is among the reasons for an 84 percent decrease in the number of new coal-fired plants worldwide since 2015. But when it becomes cheaper to scrap existing fossil-fuel plants and build renewables in their place, it will allow renewables to start replacing coal and gas much more quickly. Naam cites examples from Florida and Indiana where this is already being done. He cites industry predictions that replacing existing fossil-fuel plants with renewables will be economically efficient almost everywhere at some point in the next decade. Electricity is far from the only source of carbon emissions — there’s also transportation, manufacturing (especially of steel and cement), home and office heating, and agriculture to worry about. But the rapid advance of solar technology is a huge victory in the struggle against climate change, because it will allow people all over the world to have electricity without cooking the planet. And how was this victory achieved? A combination of smart government policy and private industry. Massachusetts Institute of Technology researchers Goksin Kavlak, James McNerney and Jessika Trancik in a recent paper evaluated the factors behind the solar-price decline from 1980 to 2012. They concluded that from 1980 to 2001, government-funded research and development was the main factor in bringing down costs, but from 2001 to 2012, the biggest factor was economies of scale. These economies of scale were driven by private industry increasing output, but with government subsidies helping to increase the incentive to ramp up production. It’s apparent, therefore, that both government and profit-seeking enterprises have their roles to play. Government funds the development of early-stage technology and then helps push the private sector toward adopting those technologies, while private companies compete to find ever-cheaper methods of implementation. Instead of eco-socialism, it’s eco-industrialism. If there’s any system that can beat climate change, this looks like it.

### AT: Inequality

#### Inequality is decreasing at unprecedented rates by every metric.

McAfee, 19—cofounder and codirector of the MIT Initiative on the Digital Economy at the MIT Sloan School of Management, former professor at Harvard Business School and fellow at Harvard’s Berkman Center for Internet and Society (Andrew, “The Global Gallop of the Four Horsemen,” *More from Less: The Surprising Story of How We Learned to Prosper Using Fewer Resources—and What Happens Next*, Chapter 10, pg 235-240, Kindle, dml)

In 2016 the economist and columnist Noah Smith reviewed the evidence on poverty around the world, and his conclusion was notably exuberant: "This is incredible—nothing short of a miracle. Nothing like this has ever happened before in recorded history." A graph created by Max Roser clearly reveals the "miracle" Smith was talking about, and how right he was that the improvement is without precedent. The graph doesn't show the percentage of people living in poverty, but instead something even more important: the total number of extremely poor people on earth.

Chart

Description automatically generated

The World's War on Poverty

The total number of poor people in the world peaked right at the time of the first Earth Day in 1970, then started to slowly decrease. But the real miracle came when this happy decline accelerated during the twenty- first century. In 1999, 1.76 billion people were living in extreme poverty. Just sixteen years later, this number had declined by 60 percent, to 705 million. Hundreds of millions fewer people are living in poverty now than in 1820, when the world's total population was seven times smaller than it is today.

Much of this decline is reflective of what occurred in China, which, as we saw in the previous chapter, threw off economic socialism beginning in 1978 and let capitalism work its poverty-reducing miracles. But the story of global poverty reduction isn't a purely Chinese one. As the graph below shows, every region around the world has seen large poverty reductions in recent years. The speed of the recent decline indicates that it's no longer ridiculous to talk about completely eliminating extreme poverty from the planet. The World Bank thinks this might be possible by 2030.

It's not just incomes that have improved. As I consult Our World in Data and other comprehensive sources of evidence, I struggle to find even a single important measure of human material well-being that's not getting better in most regions around the world.

Here are recent trends in a few key areas.

Daily Bread

Chart, diagram

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

As recently as 1980, the global average number of available daily calories wasn't enough to permit an active adult male to maintain his body weight. Less than thirty-five years later, however, every region in the world met this standard of twenty-five hundred daily calories.

Clean Living

Chart, line chart

Description automatically generated

More than 90 percent of the world's people now have access to improved water;VII in 1990 only a bit more than 75 percent did. The situation is similar for sanitation: in 1990 only a bit more than half of the world's people had it; now, more than two-thirds do.

Young Minds

Chart, line chart

Description automatically generated

The trend in secondary education enrollment around the world is similar to the one for sanitation, but even sharper: in 1986 fewer than half of the world's teenagers were in school; at present, more than 75 percent are.

One Thing We Say to Death: Not Today

By now the pattern should be familiar: life expectancy at birth has gone up around the world in recent decades:

Diagram

Description automatically generated

As we saw in chapter 1, global life expectancy was about 28.5 years in 1800. Over the next 150 years, that number increased by 20 years. Then, in the years between 1950 and 2015, it increased by 25 more. These gains are now universal; Southern Africa has regained the 10 years of expected life lost during its terrifying AIDS crisis.

One of the reasons life expectancy has gone up so quickly is the collapse in both child and maternal mortality around the world:

Chart, line chart

Description automatically generated

I find these mortality declines especially fast, large, and broad. Today, we still have desperately poor regions, failed states, and the decimations of war. But in no region today is the child mortality rate higher than the world's average rate was in 1998.

Convergent

Trends in maternal and child mortality highlight a critical fact that's often overlooked: around the world, inequality in most important measures of human material well-being is decreasing. Poor countries are catching up to rich ones, and gaps that were once large are shrinking. Inequalities in income and wealth dominate the news, and in many places these gaps are large and growing. They re also important, so well look at economic inequality in the next two chapters.

But it's true, too, that there are other kinds of inequality that we should care about as we examine the human condition: inequalities in health, education, diet, sanitation, and other things that matter deeply for the quality of a person's life. Here the news is profoundly good; these inequalities are collapsing. As the four horsemen have galloped around the world in recent decades, they've made life better not only for those people and countries that were already rich but for just about everyone else. Everywhere, fewer mothers and babies are dying, more kids are getting an education, more people have adequate nutrition and sanitation.

It's essential to acknowledge these global victories because they show us that what we're doing is working. Tech progress, capitalism, public awareness, and responsive government are spreading around the world and improving it. It's often said that insanity is doing the same thing over and over but expecting different results. The corollary might be that ignorance is not examining the results of what's being done. Over and over, when we look at the evidence, we see that the four horsemen are improving our world.

## Link Defense/Turns

### Permutation

#### The perms solve best – restructuring capitalism is possible

Mazzucato ’21 [Mariana; Jan 28; Professor in the Economics of Innovation and Public Value at University College London where she is the founding director of the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose; “Mission Economy: A Moonshot Guide to Changing Capitalism,” p. 204-10]

This book has applied what I believe is the immensely powerful idea of a mission to solving the ‘wicked’ problems we face today. In it, I have argued that tackling grand challenges will only happen if we reimagine government as a prerequisite for restructuring capitalism in a way that is inclusive, sustainable and driven by innovation.

First and foremost, this means reinventing government for the twenty-first century – equipping it with the tools, organization and culture it needs to drive a mission-oriented approach. It also means bringing purpose to the core of corporate governance and taking a very broad stakeholder position across the economy. It means changing the relationship between public and private sectors, and between them and civil society, so they all work symbiotically for a common goal. The reason for the emphasis on rethinking government is simple: only government has the capacity to bring about transformation on the scale needed. The relationship between economic actors and civil society shows our problems at their most profound, and this is what we must unravel.

We can start by recognizing that capitalist markets are an outcome of how each actor in the system is organized and governed, and how the different actors relate to one another. This holds for the private and public sectors and for other sectors such as non-profits. No particular kind of market behaviour is inevitable. For example, the market pressure often cited as forcing a business to neglect the long term in favour of the short term, as too many companies do today, is the product of a particular organization of the market. Nor is there anything inevitable in government bureaucracies being too slow to react to challenges such as digital platforms and climate change. Rather, both are outcomes of agency, actions and governance structures that are chosen inside organizations, as well as the legal and institutional relationships between them. It is all down to design within and between organizations.

Capitalism is, indeed, in crisis. But the good news is that we can do better. We know from the past that public and private actors can come together to do extraordinary things. I have reflected on how, fifty years ago, going to the moon and back required public and private actors to invest, to innovate and to collaborate night and day for a common purpose. Imagine if that collaborative purpose today was to build a more inclusive and sustainable capitalism: green production and consumption, less inequality, greater personal fulfilment, resilient health care and healthy ageing, sustainable mobility and digital access for all. But small, incremental changes will not get us to those outcomes. We must have the courage and conviction to lift our gaze higher – to lead transformative change that is as imaginative as it is ambitious, aiming for something far more ambitious than sending a man to the moon.

To do this successfully, governments need to invest in their internal capabilities – building the competence and confidence to think boldly, partner with business and civil society, catalyse new forms of collaboration across sectors, and deploy instruments that reward actors willing to engage with the difficulties. The task is neither to pick winners nor to give unconditional handouts, subsidies and guarantees, but to pick the willing. And missions are about making markets, not only fixing them. They’re about imagining new areas of exploration. They’re about taking risks, not only ‘de-risking’. And if this means making mistakes along the way, so be it. Learning through trial and error is critical for any value-creation exercise. Ambitious missions also have the courage to tilt the playing field.

If government is indeed a value creator that is driven by public purpose, its policies should reflect and reinforce that. Too many green policies today are just minor adjustments to a trajectory that still favours the old waste-prone behaviours and the financial casino that worsens inequality. A healthy economy that works for the whole of society must tilt the playing field consistently to reward behaviours that help us achieve agreed and desirable goals. That means achieving coherence in a multiplicity of fields, from taxes to regulation, from business law to the social safety net.

As emphasized throughout the book, it is key to not pretend that social missions are the same as technological ones. With challenges that are more ‘wicked’ it is essential that moonshot thinking is linked with support to underlying government systems. For example, a moonshot around disease testing or health priorities must interact closely with the public-health system, not replace or circumvent it. Similarly, a moonshot around clean growth must interact with transport systems and planning authorities and understand behavioural change. Thus it is critical to perceive missions not as siloed projects but as being intersectoral, bottom-up, and building on existing systems (such as innovation systems, among others).

Governments cannot pursue missions alone. They must work alongside purpose-driven businesses to achieve them. As I’ve argued in this book, this requires addressing one of the biggest dilemmas of modern capitalism: restructuring business so that private profits are reinvested back into the economy rather than being used for short-term financialized purposes. Missions can accelerate this shift by shaping expectations about where business opportunities lie and also getting a better return for public investment. In this sense they can begin to walk the talk of stakeholder value. This means creating a more symbiotic form of partnership and collaboration in different sectors, whether in health, energy or digital platforms. A market-shaping perspective requires governing these interactions so that intellectual property rights, data privacy, pricing of essential medicines and taxation all reflect what needs to happen to reach the common objective. In health that must mean health innovation driven by the mission of better health care for all; in energy it must mean divestment from fossil fuels and the creation of public goods like green infrastructure and green production systems that protect the earthly oasis that Armstrong referred to; and in the digital domain it must mean the use of digitalization to improve the access of all people to the power of the technologies of the twenty-first century – while ensuring both data privacy and that our welfare states are strengthened, not weakened, by digital platforms.

Doing capitalism differently requires reimagining the full potential of a public sector driven by public purpose – democratically defining clear goals that society needs to meet by investing and innovating together. It requires a fundamentally new relationship between all economic actors willing and able to tackle complexity to achieve outcomes that matter.

#### Capitalism’s not monolithic---regs solve their impacts and preserve positives.

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Growing distrust of capitalism follows from its failure to address major socioeconomic challenges, not least climate change and inequalities in opportunity, income, and wealth. While private incentives under capitalism are good at stimulating efficiency, growth, and innovation, they also generate unequal income and wealth distributions (even in a context of intense competition), often at odds with social norms of fairness. Moreover, capitalist systems tend to underinvest in public goods like education, health care, and social insurance – all critical factors in the pandemic response – while also discounting negative externalities such as greenhouse-gas emissions.

These shortcomings of capitalism are predictable, but they are remediable through public policies and institutions. Tax and transfer policies and minimum wages can reduce income and wealth disparities, just as public investment in education, training, and health care can enhance opportunity by providing access to good jobs and fostering the creation of new enterprises. Likewise, a price on carbon dioxide and regulations limiting or banning carbon emissions can help the world avert the existential threat of climate change.

Critics of capitalism often miss (or choose to ignore) that there is no single canonical model. Europe’s various “social market” models differ significantly from the neoliberal variant in the US. And even within the US, there are important differences between states and localities.

Some of these distinctions have been highlighted in the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and recession. All advanced economies have deployed unprecedented levels of fiscal and monetary stimulus in the face of “K-shaped” or “dual” recessions in which lower-wage workers have suffered disproportionately more than other cohorts. Unlike the US, Germany and several other European countries have deployed measures specifically designed to keep as many workers as possible in their jobs. Because these countries have generous social insurance and benefits, including sick leave and family leave, workers and their families have been able to cope with both COVID-19 and sudden drops in their incomes.

Differences in national health-care models have also become more apparent. Unlike European capitalist systems that provide universal coverage, 14.5% of America’s non-elderly population (ages 18-64) remains uninsured. Moreover, owing to America’s heavy reliance on employer-based insurance, the pandemic has pushed at least 15 million more workers at least temporarily into the uninsured pool.

With their strong public-health systems, many European countries were also better equipped to carry out widespread testing and vaccine distribution. The US, meanwhile, has utterly failed to contain the virus, and is now delegating the vaccination campaign to under-resourced state and local authorities.

In another contrast with the US, Europe has dedicated about one-third of its massive stimulus program to investments aligned with its commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by mid-century. America’s federal stimulus measures have been silent on climate with few conditions of any kind.

Within the US, individual states’ responses to the COVID-19 crisis reflect different variants of capitalism. In California, Governor Gavin Newsom’s recent 2021-22 budget proposal reveals some distinctive features. In terms of health-care coverage, California remains a national leader with a Medicaid program covering more than 13 million people. Despite the pandemic-induced recession, the state is increasing its minimum wage to $14 per hour in 2021, on track to realize the target of $15 per hour in 2022 for all businesses employing 26 or more workers; many municipalities, including Los Angeles and San Francisco, have already achieved or exceeded the $15 target. (On January 1, 2021, 20 other states also raised their minimum wages, whereas the US federal minimum wage has remained unchanged at $7.25 per hour since 2009.)

California has also expanded coverage of its Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Young Child Tax Credit to include undocumented workers who are otherwise denied the benefits of federal stimulus packages. Together, these tax credits applied to 3.6 million California households in 2020, adding $1 billion in total income. The state also passed new legislation significantly expanding unpaid family-leave rights. Employers with as few as five employees now must provide this option as well as more time for paid sick leave for workers forced to self-isolate or quarantine as a result of COVID-19 exposure or diagnosis.

Looking ahead, Newsom has proposed an additional $600 one-time cash payment to all taxpayers who are eligible for the state’s EITC in 2021. His proposed 2021-22 budget also earmarks $372 million to expedite the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, and includes $4.5 billion for programs to drive economic growth and job creation once restrictions on normal activities have been lifted. These programs include $575 million in grants to small businesses and nonprofits, in addition to the $500 million for such grants implemented in late 2020 amid forced business closures. The proposal also allocates up to an additional $50 million for the California Rebuilding Fund, a public-private partnership, to support up to an additional $125 million of low-interest loans to underserved small businesses throughout the state.

California’s distinctive approach to market capitalism also emphasizes climate sustainability, using both carbon pricing and efficiency standards to achieve ambitious decarbonization targets. Under a 2018 state law, 60% of electricity must come from renewable resources by 2030, and 100% by 2045. California runs the world’s fourth-largest cap-and-trade system and will be setting even lower caps (and thus a higher carbon price) next month. In September 2020, Newsom announced an executive order requiring that zero-emission vehicles account for 100% of new car sales by 2035. His proposed budget seeks $1.5 billion to accelerate the infrastructure investment needed to achieve this goal.

President-elect Joe Biden has just announced a $1.9 trillion emergency rescue plan to counter the pandemic’s surge and provide substantial relief to workers, families, small businesses, and state and local governments. Prompt congressional passage of this plan is a critical first step in the renovation of America’s outdated neoliberal version of capitalism. As the economy recovers from the deep and uneven COVID-19 recession, the US must “build back better” by strengthening its social safety net, increasing public investment in education, health care, and other public goods, and rejoining the global charge against climate change. Lessons from the more successful variants of market capitalism in Europe and California point the way forward.

### AT: Cyber

#### Cyber threat is legitimate---means and motive exist.

Wintch ’21 [Timothy; April 30; active-duty major in the United States Air Force, M.A. in Military Studies from the American Military University; Homeland Security Today, “Perspective: Cyber and Physical Threats to the U.S. Power Grid and Keeping the Lights on,” <https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/perspective-cyber-and-physical-threats-to-the-u-s-power-grid-and-keeping-the-lights-on/>]

Among critical infrastructure sectors in the U.S., energy is perhaps the most crucial of the 16 sectors defined by the Department of Homeland Security. This sector is so vital because it provides the energy necessary to run every other critical infrastructure sector. However, the U.S. power grid, the backbone of the energy sector, is built upon an aging skeleton that is becoming increasingly vulnerable every day. Whether from terrorists or nation-states like Russia and China, the power grid is susceptible to not just physical attacks, but also to cyber intrusion as well. However, much of this threat can be mitigated if the U.S. takes the appropriate steps to safeguard the power grid and avoid a potential catastrophe in the future.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, terrorism on U.S. soil has been at the forefront of American consciousness. Critical infrastructure provides an appealing target because of the disproportionally large impact even a small attack can have on the sectors. In particular, the power grid represents a particularly lucrative target, both in terms of the ease of access and the large impact it can make. The National Research Council stated that the U.S. power grid is “vulnerable to intelligent multi-site attacks by knowledgeable attackers intent on causing maximum physical damage to key components on a wide geographical scale.”[[1]](https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/perspective-cyber-and-physical-threats-to-the-u-s-power-grid-and-keeping-the-lights-on/" \l "_ftn1) Additionally, the physical security of transmission and distribution systems is difficult due to the dispersed nature of these key components, which in turn is advantageous to attackers as it reduces the likelihood of their capture.[[2]](https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/perspective-cyber-and-physical-threats-to-the-u-s-power-grid-and-keeping-the-lights-on/" \l "_ftn2) From 2002-2012, approximately 2,500 physical attacks occurred against transmission lines and towers worldwide and approximately 500 attacks against transformer substations.[[3]](https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/perspective-cyber-and-physical-threats-to-the-u-s-power-grid-and-keeping-the-lights-on/" \l "_ftn3) Terrorists have the motivation to attack the U.S. power grid but the very nature of the grid makes it highly vulnerable. The power grid is not only at risk from physical attacks, but also nation-state cyberattacks.

One nation that has shown both the capability and intent to use attacks against critical energy infrastructure is Russia, as demonstrated in their 2015 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine. A Russian cyber threat group known as Sandworm, which used its BlackEnergy malware, attacked Ukrainian computer systems that provide remote control of the Ukraine power grid.[[4]](https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/perspective-cyber-and-physical-threats-to-the-u-s-power-grid-and-keeping-the-lights-on/" \l "_ftn4) This attack, and another in 2016, each left the capital Kiev without power, prompting cyber experts to raise concern about the same malware already existing in NATO and the U.S. power grids.[[5]](https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/perspective-cyber-and-physical-threats-to-the-u-s-power-grid-and-keeping-the-lights-on/" \l "_ftn5) In any conflict between Russia and NATO, not only would similar cyberattacks pose a threat, but so would potential physical attacks severing fuel oil and natural gas lines to Western Europe. Russia has both the capability and intent to attack critical infrastructure, particularly power grids, during future conflicts in their “hybrid warfare” approach.

Another nation that has the capability to attack critical energy infrastructure is China, representing a threat to not just the U.S. energy infrastructure but also that of our allies whose support would be vital in a major conflict. A recent NATO report highlighted this threat from China’s Belt and Road Initiative, stating that “[China’s] foreign direct investment in strategic sectors [such as energy generation and distribution] …raises questions about whether access and control over such infrastructure can be maintained, particularly in crisis when it would be required to support the military.”[[6]](https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/perspective-cyber-and-physical-threats-to-the-u-s-power-grid-and-keeping-the-lights-on/" \l "_ftn6) Like Russia, China has been active with cyber intrusions in U.S. energy infrastructure. The Mission Support Center at Idaho National Laboratory characterized these as attacks as “multiple intrusions into US ICS/SCADA [Industrial Control Systems/Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition] and smart grid tools [that] may be aimed more at intellectual property theft and gathering intelligence to bolster their own infrastructure, but it is likely that they are also using these intrusions to develop capabilities to attack the [bulk electric system], as well.”[[7]](https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/perspective-cyber-and-physical-threats-to-the-u-s-power-grid-and-keeping-the-lights-on/" \l "_ftn7) China, therefore, has both the capability and intent to conduct cyber intrusions and attacks for myriad reasons.

Another arm of this threat is the reliance the U.S. energy industry has on imports from China, especially transformers. In early 2020, federal officials seized a transformer in the port of Houston that had been imported by the Jiangsu Huapeng Transformer Company before sending it to Sandia National Laboratory in Albuquerque. Sandia is contracted by the U.S. Department of Energy for mitigating national security threats.[[8]](https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/perspective-cyber-and-physical-threats-to-the-u-s-power-grid-and-keeping-the-lights-on/" \l "_ftn8) The Wall Street Journal reported that “Mike Howard, chief executive of the Electric Power Research Institute, a utility-funded technical organization, said that the diversion of a huge, expensive transformer is so unusual – in his experience, unprecedented – that it suggests officials had significant security concerns.”[[9]](https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/perspective-cyber-and-physical-threats-to-the-u-s-power-grid-and-keeping-the-lights-on/" \l "_ftn9) Previously destined for the Washington Area Power Administration’s Ault, Colo., substation, the transformer is believed to have been seized due to “backdoor” exploitable hardware emplaced by the Chinese prior to shipment.[[10]](https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/perspective-cyber-and-physical-threats-to-the-u-s-power-grid-and-keeping-the-lights-on/" \l "_ftn10) Shortly after these events, President Trump issued Executive Order 13920, “[Securing the United States Bulk-Power System](https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-securing-united-states-bulk-power-system/),” essentially limiting the import of Chinese-built critical energy infrastructure components due to concerns about cybersecurity.[[11]](https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/perspective-cyber-and-physical-threats-to-the-u-s-power-grid-and-keeping-the-lights-on/" \l "_ftn11) Interestingly, Jiangsu Huapeng “boasted that it supported 10 percent of New York City’s electricity load.”[[12]](https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/perspective-cyber-and-physical-threats-to-the-u-s-power-grid-and-keeping-the-lights-on/" \l "_ftn12)

Franklin Kramer, the former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, testified before a U.S. House of Representatives Energy and Commerce subcommittee during an energy and power hearing in 2011 and said that a “highly-coordinated and structured cyber, physical, or blended attack on the bulk power system, however, could result in long-term (irreparable) damage to key system components in multiple simultaneous or near-simultaneous strikes.” He added that “an outage could result with the potential to affect a wide geographic area and cause large population centers to lose power for extended periods.”[[13]](https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/perspective-cyber-and-physical-threats-to-the-u-s-power-grid-and-keeping-the-lights-on/" \l "_ftn13) Even the inclusion of features such as smart grids to the overall grid structure poses new vulnerabilities through their connectivity. Kramer stated that “such connectivity means that the distribution system could be a key vector for a national security attack on the grid.”[[14]](https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/perspective-cyber-and-physical-threats-to-the-u-s-power-grid-and-keeping-the-lights-on/" \l "_ftn14)

### AT: Biotechnology

#### Biomedical innovation solves all sustainability warrants---that’s a defense of our methodology and a disad to theirs.

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New biological capabilities have the potential to bring sweeping change to economies and societies. The effects will be felt across value chains, from how R&D is conducted to the physical inputs in manufacturing to the way medicines and consumer products are delivered and consumed. These capabilities include the following: — Biological means could be used to produce a large share of the global economy’s physical materials, potentially with improved performance and sustainability. Significant potential exists to improve the characteristics of materials, reduce the emissions profile of manufacturing and processing, and shorten value chains. Fermentation, for centuries used to make bread and brew beer, is now being used to create fabrics such as artificial spider silk. Biology is increasingly being used to create novel materials that can raise quality, introduce entirely new capabilities, be biodegradable, and be produced in a way that generates significantly less carbon emissions. Mushroom roots rather than animal hide can be used to make leather.11 Plastics can be made with yeast instead of petrochemicals. — Increased control and precision in methodology is occurring across the value chain, from delivery to development and consumption with more personalization. Advances in biological sciences have made R&D and delivery processes more precise and predictable; the character of R&D is shifting from discovery by accident to rational design. Increasing knowledge of human genomes and the links between certain genes and diseases is enabling the spread of personalized or precision medicine, which can be more effective than the one-size-fits-all therapies of the past.12 Precision also applies to agriculture, where insights from a plant or soil’s microbiome increasingly can be used to optimize yield as well as to offer consumers with, for instance, personalized nutrition plans based on genetic tests.13 — The capability to engineer and reprogram human and nonhuman organisms is increasing. Gene therapies could offer complete cures of some diseases for the first time. The same technical advances that are driving capabilities that improve human health can be used to introduce valuable new traits that, for instance, improve the output or yield of nonhuman organisms like microbes, plants, and animals. Crops can be genetically engineered to produce higher yields and be more heat- or drought-resistant, for instance. By permanently genetically altering the vectors spreading disease (such as mosquitoes), gene drives could be used to prevent vector-borne diseases, including malaria, dengue fever, schistosomiasis, and Lyme disease, although they also come with ecological risks.14 — New methodologies using automation, machine learning, and proliferating biological data are enhancing discovery, throughput, and productivity in R&D. Biology and computing together are accelerating R&D, thereby addressing a productivity challenge. McKinsey analysis in 2017 found that the ratio of revenue to R&D spending in the biopharmaceutical industry hit a low point in productivity between 2008 and 2011.15 An explosion of biological data due to cheaper sequencing can be used by biotech companies and research institutes that increasingly are using robotic automation and sensors in labs that could increase throughput up to ten times.16 Further, advanced analytics, more powerful computational techniques, and AI can be leveraged to provide better insights during the R&D process. — Potential is growing for interfaces between biological systems and computers. A new generation of biomachine interfaces relies on close interaction between humans and computers. Such interfaces include neuroprosthetics that restore lost sensory functions (bionic vision) or enable signals from the brain to control physical movement of prosthetic or paralyzed limbs. Biocomputers that employ biology to mimic silicon, including the use of DNA to store data, are being researched. DNA is about one million times denser than hard-disk storage; technically, one kilogram of DNA could store the entirety of the world’s data (as of 2016).17 While these are early days, the scope and scale of these emerging capabilities could have a broad impact on economies and societies, touching multiple domains both directly and indirectly. These applications may change everything from the food we consume to textiles to the types of health treatments we receive and how we build our physical world. The potential value is vast. As noted, as much as 60 percent of the physical inputs to the global economy could be produced biologically, and even modest progress toward that 60 percent number could be transformative. Beyond the physical world, innovations could transform prevention, diagnostics, and treatment of disease. At least 45 percent of the global disease burden could be addressed with capabilities that are scientifically conceivable today, according to our analysis. Bio innovations, such as high-throughput screening, CRISPR, and machine learning for analyzing large and complex biological data, have also begun to shape R&D. We estimate that roughly 30 percent of private-sector R&D in major economies is in industries where biological data, biological inputs, or biological means of production could be used.18

### AT: Artificial Intelligence

#### AI regulation is good! Positive benefits solve extinction.

Tzimas ’21 [Themistoklis; 2021; Faculty of Law at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki; Legal and Ethical Challenges of Artificial Intelligence from an International Law Perspective, “Chapter 2: The Expectations and Risks from AI,” p. 9-32]

Therefore, it is only natural to be at least skeptical towards a future with entities possessing equal or superior intelligence and levels of autonomy; the prospect even of existential risk looms as possible.7

AI that will have reached or surpassed our level of intelligence make us wonder why would highly autonomous and intelligent AI want to give up control back to its original creators?8 Why remain contained in pre-deﬁned goals set for it by us, humans?

Even AI in its current form and narrow intelligence poses risks because of its embedded-ness in an ever-growing number of crucial aspects of our lives. The role of AI in military, ﬁnancial,9 health, educational, environmental, governance networks-among others—are areas where risk generated by AI—even limited— autonomy can be diffused through non-linear networks, with signiﬁcant impact— even systemic.10

The answer therefore to the question whether AI brings risk with it is yes; as Eliezer Yudkowski comments the greatest of them all is that people conclude too early that they understand it11 or that they assume that they can achieve it without necessarily having acquired complete and thorough understanding of what intelli- gence means.12

Our projection of our—lack of complete—understanding of the concept of intelligence on AI is owed to our lack of complete comprehension of human intelligence too, which is partially covered by the prevalent and until now self- obvious, anthropomorphism because of which we tend to identify higher intelligence with the human mind.

Yudkowski again however suggests that AI “refers to a vastly greater space of possibilities than does the term “Homo sapiens.” When we talk about “AIs” we are really talking about minds-in-general, or optimization processes in general. Imagine a map of mind design space. In one corner, a tiny little circle contains all humans; within a larger tiny circle containing all biological life; and all the rest of the huge map is the space of minds-in-general. The entire map ﬂoats in a still vaster space, the space of optimization processes.”13

Regardless of what our well-established ideas are, there are many, different intelligences and even more signiﬁcantly, there are potentially, different intelli- gences equally or even more evolved than human.

From such a perspective, the unprecedented—ness of potential AI developments and the mystery surrounding them emerges as not only the outcome of pop culture but of a radical transformation of our—until recently—self—obvious identiﬁcation of humanity with highly evolved and dominant intelligence.14

The lack of understanding of intelligence and therefore of AI may be frightening but does not lead necessarily to regulation—at least to a proper one. We could even be led into making potentially catastrophic choices, on the basis of false assumptions.

On top of our lack of understanding, we should add a sentiment of anxiety as well as of expectations, which intensiﬁes as an atmosphere of emergency and of expected groundbreaking developments grows. The most graphic description of this feeling is the potential of a moment of singularity, as mentioned above according to the description by Vinge and Kurzweil.

As the mathematician I. J. Good–Alan Turing’s colleague in the team of the latter during World War II—has put it: “Let an ultraintelligent machine be deﬁned as a machine that can far surpass all the intellectual activities of any man however clever. Since the design of machines is one of these intellectual activities, an ultraintelligent machine could design even better machines; there would then unquestionably be an “intelligence explosion,” and the intelligence of man would be left far behind. Thus the ﬁrst ultraintelligent machine is the last invention that man need ever make, provided that the machine is docile enough to tell us how to keep it under control.”15 This is in a nutshell the moment of singularity.

The estimates currently foresee the emergence of ultra or super intelligence—as it is currently labelled—or in other words of singularity, somewhere between 20 and 50 years from today, further raising the sentiment of emergency.16 We cannot even foretell with precision how singularity would look like but we know that because of its expected groundbreaking impact, both states and private entities compete towards gaining the upper hand in the prospect of the singularity.17

Despite the fact that such predictions have been proven rather optimistic in the past18 and therefore up to some extent inaccurate, there are reasons to assume that their materialization will take place and that the urgency of regulation will be proven realistic.

After all, part of the disappointments from AI should be blamed on the fact that certain activities and standards, which were considered as epitomes of human intelligence have been surpassed by AI, only to indicate that they were not eventu- ally satisfactory thresholds for the surpassing of human intelligence.19 Partially because of AI progress we realize that human intelligence and its thresholds are much more complicated than assumed in the past.

The vastness’s of deﬁnitions of intelligence, as well as its etymological roots are enlightening of the difﬁculties: “to gather, to collect, to assemble or to choose, and to form an impression, thus leading one to ﬁnally understand, perceive, or know”.20

As with other relevant concepts, the truth is that until recently our main way to approach intelligence for far too long was “we know it, when we see it”. AI is an additional reason for looking deeper into intelligence and the more we examine it, the most complicated it seems.

The combination of lack of complete understanding of intelligence, the unpredictability of AI, its rapid evolution and the prospect of singularity explain both the fascination and the fear from AI. Once the latter emerges, we have no real knowledge about what will happen next but only speculations, which until recently belonged to the area of science ﬁction.

We are for example pretty conﬁdent that the speed of AI intelligence growth will accelerate, once self—improvement will have been achieved. The expected or possible chain of events will begin from AI capacity to re-write its own algorithms and exponentially self—improve, surpassing human intelligence, which lacks the capacity of such rapid self—improvement and setting its own goals.21

We can somehow guess the speed of AGI and ASI evolution and possibly some of its initial steps but we cannot guess the directions that such AI will choose to follow and the characteristics that it will demonstrate. Practically, we credibly guess the prospects of AI beyond a certain level of development.

Two existential issues could emerge: ﬁrst, an imbalance of intelligence at our expense—with us, humans becoming the inferior species—in favor of non-biological entities and secondly a lack of even fundamental conceptual communication between the two most intelligent “species”. Both of them heighten the fear of irreversible changes, once we lose the possession of the superior intelligence.22

However, we need to consider the expectations as well. The positive side focuses on the so-called friendly AI, meaning AI which will beneﬁt and not harm humans, thanks to its advanced intelligence.23

AI bears the promise of signiﬁcantly enhancing human life on various aspects, beginning from the already existing, narrow applications. The enhanced automation24 in the industry and the shift to autonomy,25 the take—over by AI of tasks even at the service sector which can be considered as “tedious”—i.e. in the banking sector—climate and weather forecasting, disaster response,26 the potentially better cooperation among different actors in complicated matters such as in matters of information, geopolitics and international relations, logistics, resources ex.27

The realization of the positive expectations depends up to some extent upon the complementarity or not, of AI with human intelligence. However, what friendly AI will bring in our societies constitutes a matter of debate, given our lack of unanimous approach on what should be considered as beneﬁcial and therefore friendly to humans—as is analyzed in the next chapter.

Friendly AI for example bears the prospect of freeing us from hard labor or even further from unwanted labor; of generating further economic growth; of dealing in unbiased, speedy, effective and cheaper ways with sectors such as policing, justice, health, environmental crisis, natural disasters, education, governance, defense and several more of them which necessitate decision-making, with the involvement of sophisticated intelligence.

The synergies between human intelligence and AI “promise” the enhancement of humans in most of their aspects. Such synergies may remain external—humans using AI as external to themselves, in terms of analysis, forecasts, decision—making and in general as a type of assistant-28 or may evolve into the merging of the two forms of intelligence either temporarily or permanently.

The second profoundly enters humanity, existentially—speaking, into uncharted waters. Elon Musk argues in favor of “having some sort of merger of biological intelligence and machine intelligence” and his company “Neuralink” aims at implanting chips in human brain. Musk argues that through this way humans will keep artiﬁcial intelligence under control.29 The proposition is that of “mind design”, with humans playing the role that God had according to theologies.30

While the temptation is strong—exceeding human mind’s capacities, far beyond what nature “created”, by acquiring the capacity for example to connect directly to the cyberspace or to break the barriers of biology31—the risks are signiﬁcant too: what if a microchip malfunction? Will such a brain be usurped or become captive to malfunctioning AI?

The merging of the two intelligences is most likely to evolve initially by invoking medical reasons, instead of human enhancement. But the merging of the two will most likely continue, as after all the limits between healing and enhancement are most often blurry. This development will give rise, as is analyzed below, to signif- icant questions and issues, the most of crucial of which is the setting of a threshold for the prevalence of the human aspect of intelligence over the artiﬁcial one.

Human nature is historically improved, enhanced, healed and now, potentially even re-designed in the future.32 Can a “medical science” endorsing such a goal be ethically acceptable and if yes, under what conditions, when, for whom and by what means? The answers are more difﬁcult than it seems. As the World Health Organi- zation—WHO—provides in its constitution, “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or inﬁrmity”.33

Therefore, why discourage science which aims at human-enhancement, even reaching the levels of post-humanism?34 Or if restrictions are to be imposed on human enhancement, on what ethics and laws will they be justiﬁed? How ethically acceptable is it to prohibit or delay technological evolution, which among several other magniﬁcent achievements, promises to treat death as a disease and cure it, by reducing soul to self, self to mind, and mind to brain, which will then be preserved as a “softwarized” program in a hardware other than the human body?35

After all, “According to the strong artiﬁcial intelligence program there is no fundamental difference between computers and brains: a computer is different machinery than a person in terms of speed and memory capacity.”36

While such a scientiﬁc development and the ones leading potentially to it will be undoubtedly, groundbreaking technologically-speaking, is it actually—ethically- speaking—as ambivalent as it may sound or is it already justiﬁed by our well— rooted human-centrism?37

Secular humanism may have very well outdated religious beliefs about afterlife in the area of science but has not diminished the hope for immortality; on the contrary, science, implicitly or explicitly predicts that matter can in various ways surpass death, albeit by means which belong in the realm of scientiﬁc proof, instead of that of metaphysical belief.38

If this is the philosophical case, the quest for immortality becomes ethically acceptable; it can be considered as embedded both in the existential anxiety of humans, as well as in the human-centrism of secular philosophical and political victory over the dei-centric approach to the world and to our existence.

From another perspective of course and for the not that distant philosophical reasons, the quest for immortality becomes ethically ambiguous or even unacceptable.39 By seeking endless life we may miss all these that make life worth living in the framework of ﬁniteness. As the gerontologist Paul Hayﬂick cautioned “Given the possibility that you could replace all your parts, including your brain, then you lose your self-identity, your self-recognition. You lose who you are! You are who you are because of your memory.”40

In other words, once we begin to integrate the two types of intelligence, within ourselves, until when and how we will be sure that it is human intelligence that guides us, instead of the AI? And if we are not guided completely or—even further—at all by human intelligence but on the contrary we are guided by AI which we have embodied and which is trained by our human intelligence, will we be remaining humans or we will have evolved to some type of meta-human or transhumant species, being different persons as well?41

AI promises tor threatens to offer a solution by breaking down our consciousness into small “particles” of information—simplistically speaking—which can then be “software-ized” and therefore “uploaded” into different forms of physical or non-physical existence.

Diane Ackerman states that “The brain is silent, the brain is dark, the brain tastes nothing, the brain hears nothing. All it receives are electrical impulses--not the sumptuous chocolate melting sweetly, not the oboe solo like the ﬂight of a bird, not the pastel pink and lavender sunset over the coral reef--only impulses.”42 Therefore, all that is needed—although it is of course much more complicated than we can imagine—is a way to code and reproduce such impulses.

Even if we consider that without death, we will no more be humans but something else, why should we remain humans once technologies allow us be something “more”, in the sense of an enhanced version of “being”? Why are we to remain bound by biological evolution if we can re-design it and our future form of existence?

Why not try to achieve the major breakthrough, the anticipated or hoped digita- lization of the human mind, which promises immortality of consciousness via the cyberspace or artiﬁcial bodies: the uploading of our consciousness so that it can live on forever, turning death into an optional condition.43

Either through an artiﬁcial body or emulation-a living, conscious avatar—we hope—or fear—that the domain of immortality will be within reach. It is the prospect of a “substrate-independent minds,” in which human and machine consciousness will merge, transcending biological limits of time, space and mem- ory” that fascinates us.44

As Anders Sandberg explained “The point of brain emulation is to recreate the function of the original brain: if ‘run’ it will be able to think and act as the original,” he says. Progress has been slow but steady. “We are now able to take small brain tissue samples and map them in 3D. These are at exquisite resolution, but the blocks are just a few microns across. We can run simulations of the size of a mouse brain on supercomputers—but we do not have the total connectivity yet. As methods improve, I expect to see automatic conversion of scanned tissue into models that can be run. The different parts exist, but so far there is no pipeline from brains to emulations.”45

The emulation is different from a simulation in the sense that the former mimics not only the outward outcome but also the “internal causal dynamics”, so that the emulated system and in this particular case the human mind behaves as the original.46 Obviously, this is a challenging task: we need to understand the human brain with the help of computational neuroscience and combine simpliﬁed parts such as simulated neurons with network structures so that the patterns of the brain are comprehended. We must combine effectively “biological realism (attempting to be faithful to biology), completeness (using all available empirical data about the system), tractability (the possibility of quantitative or qualitative simulation) and understanding (producing a compressed representation of the salient aspects of the system in the mind of the experimenter)”.47

The technological challenges are vast. Technologically speaking, the whole concept is based on some assumptions which must be proven both accurate and feasible.48 We must achieve technology capable of scanning completely the human brain, of creating software on the basis of the acquired information from its scanning and of the interpretation of information and the hardware which will be capable of uploading or downloading such software.49 The steps within these procedures are equally challenging. Their detailed analysis evades the scope of this book.

Some critical questions—they are further analyzed in the next chapters—emerge however: how will we interpret free will in emulation? What will be the impact of the environment and of what environment? How will be missing parts of the human brain re-constructed and emulated? What will be the status of the several emulations which will be created—i.e. failed attempts or emulations of parts of the human brain—in the course of the search for a complete and functioning emulation? Will they be considered as “persons” and therefore as having some right or will they be considered as mere objects in an experimental lab? How are we going to decode the actual subjective sentiments of these emulations? Essentially, are emulations the humans “themselves” who are emulated or a different person? Even further what will human and person mean in the era of emulation?

From a different perspective, the victory over death may be seen as a danger of mass extinction, absorption or de-humanization. In this new, vast universe of emulations will there be place for humans?50

From the above—mentioned discussion, it becomes obvious that at a large extent, the prospect of risk or of expectation is a matter of perspective, for which there is no unanimous agreement in the present. This may be the greatest danger of all, for which Asimov warned us: unleashing technology while we cannot communicate among us, in the face of it.

The existential prospect as well as the risks by AI may self-evidently emerge from technological advances but are determined on the basis of politico—philosophical or in the wider sense, ethical assumptions. This is where the need for legal regulation steps in. Such a need was often underestimated in the past in favor of a solely technologically oriented approach—although exceptions raising issues other than technological can be found too.51 The gradual raising of ethic—political, philosoph- ical and legal issues constitutes a rather recent development, partially because of the realization of the proximity of the risks and of the expectations.

The public debate is often divided between two “contradictory” views: fear of AI or enthusiastic optimism. The opinions of the experts differ respectively.

Kurzweil, who has come with a prediction for a date for the emergence of singularity—until 2045—expects such a development in a positive way: “What’s actually happening is [machines] are powering all of us,” Kurzweil said during the SXSW interview. “They’re making us smarter. They may not yet be inside our bodies, but, by the 2030s, we will connect our neocortex, the part of our brain where we do our thinking, to the cloud.”52

In a well-known article—issued on the occasion of a ﬁlm—Stephen Hawking, Max Tegmark, Stuart Russell, and Frank Wilczek shared a moderate position: “The potential beneﬁts are huge; everything that civilization has to offer is a product of human intelligence; we cannot predict what we might achieve when this intelligence is magniﬁed by the tools AI may provide, but the eradication of war, disease, and poverty would be high on anyone’s list. Success in creating AI would be the biggest event in human history. . . Unfortunately, it might also be the last, unless we learn how to avoid the risks.”53

## Alt

### Environment/Sustainability – Alt

#### Even if growth is imperfect, the transition away fails.

Hubert Buch-Hansen 18. Associate Professor, Department of Business and Politics, Copenhagen Business School. “The Prerequisites for a Degrowth Paradigm Shift: Insights from Critical Political Economy.” *Ecological Economics* 146: 157-63. Emory Libraries.

Still, the degrowth project is nowhere near enjoying the degree and type of support it needs if its policies are to be implemented through democratic processes. The number of political parties, labour unions, business associations and international organisations that have so far embraced degrowth is modest to say the least. Economic and political elites, including social democratic parties and most of the trade union movement, are united in the belief that economic growth is necessary and desirable. This consensus finds support in the prevailing type of economic theory and underpins the main contenders in the neoliberal project, such as centre-left and nationalist projects. In spite of the world's multidimensional crisis, a pro-growth discourse in other words continues to be hegemonic: it is widely considered a matter of common sense that continued economic growth is required.

It is also noteworthy that economic and political elites, to a large extent, continue to support the neoliberal project, even in the face of its evident shortcomings. Indeed, the 2008 financial crisis did not result in the weakening of transnational financial capital that could have paved the way for a paradigm shift. Instead of coming to an end, neoliberal capitalism has arguably entered a more authoritarian phase (Bruff, 2014). The main reason the power of the pre-crisis coalition remains intact is that governments stepped in and saved the dominant fraction by means of massive bailouts. It is a foregone conclusion that this fraction and the wider coalition behind the neoliberal paradigm (transnational industrial capital, the middle classes and segments of organized labour) will consider the degrowth paradigm unattractive and that such social forces will vehemently oppose the implementation of degrowth policies (see also Rees, 2014: 97).

While degrowth advocates envision a future in which market forces play a less prominent role than they do today, degrowth is not an antimarket project. As such, it can attract support from certain types of market actors. In particular, it is worth noting that social enterprises, such as cooperatives (Restakis, 2010), play a major role in the degrowth vision. Such enterprises are defined by being ‘organisations involved at least to some extent in the market, with a clear social, cultural and/or environmental purpose, rooted in and serving primarily the local community and ideally having a local and/or democratic ownership structure’ (Johanisova et al., 2013: 11). Social enterprises currently exist at the margins of a system, in which the dominant type of business entity is profit-oriented, shareholder-owned corporations. The further dissemination of social enterprises, which is crucial to the transitions to degrowth societies, is – in many cases – blocked or delayed as a result of the centrifugal forces of global competition (Wigger and Buch-Hansen, 2013). Overall, social enterprises thus (still) constitute a social force with modest power.

Ougaard (2016: 467) notes that one of the major dividing lines in the contemporary transnational capitalist class is between capitalists who have a material interest in the carbon-based economy and capitalists who have a material interest in decarbonisation. The latter group, for instance, includes manufacturers of equipment for the production of renewable energy (ibid.: 467). As mentioned above, degrowth advocates have singled out renewable energy as one of the sectors that needs to grow in the future. As such, it seems likely that the owners of national and transnational companies operating in this sector would be more positively inclined towards the degrowth project than would capitalists with a stake in the carbon-based economy. Still, the prospect of the “green sector” emerging as a driving force behind degrowth currently appears meagre. Being under the control of transnational capital (Harris, 2010), such companies generally embrace the “green growth” discourse, which ‘is deeply embedded in neoliberal capitalism’ and indeed serves to adjust this form of capitalism ‘to crises arising from contradictions within itself’ (Wanner, 2015: 23).

In addition to support from the social forces engendered by the production process, a political project ‘also needs the political ability to mobilize majorities in parliamentary democracies, and a sufficient measure of at least passive consent’ (van Apeldoorn and Overbeek, 2012: 5–6) if it is to become hegemonic. As mentioned, degrowth enjoys little support in parliaments, and certainly the pro-growth discourse is hegemonic among parties in government.5 With capital accumulation being the most important driving force in capitalist societies, political decision-makers are generally eager to create conditions conducive to production and the accumulation of capital (Lindblom, 1977: 172). Capitalist states and international organisations are thus “programmed” to facilitate capital accumulation, and do as such constitute a strategically selective terrain that works to the disadvantage of the degrowth project.

The main advocates of the degrowth project are grassroots, small fractions of left-wing parties and labour unions as well as academics and other citizens who are concerned about social injustice and the environmentally unsustainable nature of societies in the rich parts of the world. The project is thus ideationally driven in the sense that support for it is not so much rooted in the material circumstances or short-term self-interests of specific groups or classes as it is rooted in the conviction that degrowth is necessary if current and future generations across the globe are to be able to lead a good life. While there is no shortage of enthusiasts and creative ideas in the degrowth movement, it has only modest resources compared to other political projects. To put it bluntly, the advocates of degrowth do not possess instruments that enable them to force political decision-makers to listen to – let alone comply with – their views. As such, they are in a weaker position than the labour union movement was in its heyday, and they are in a far weaker position than the owners and managers of large corporations are today (on the structural power of transnational corporations, see Gill and Law, 1989).

6. Consent

It is also safe to say that degrowth enjoys no “passive consent” from the majority of the population. For the time being, degrowth remains unknown to most people. Yet, if it were to become generally known, most people would probably not find the vision of a smaller economic system appealing. This is not just a matter of degrowth being ‘a missile word that backfires’ because it triggers negative feelings in people when they first hear it (Drews and Antal, 2016). It is also a matter of the actual content of the degrowth project.

Two issues in particular should be mentioned in this context. First, for many, the anti-capitalist sentiments embodied in the degrowth project will inevitably be a difficult pill to swallow. Today, the vast majority of people find it almost impossible to conceive of a world without capitalism. There is a ‘widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible to even imagine a coherent alternative to it’ (Fisher, 2009: 2). As Jameson (2003) famously observed, it is, in a sense, easier to imagine the end of the world than it is to imagine the end of capitalism. However, not only is degrowth – like other anti-capitalist projects – up against the challenge that most people consider capitalism the only system that can function; it is also up against the additional challenge that it speaks against economic growth in a world where the desirability of growth is considered common sense.

Second, degrowth is incompatible with the lifestyles to which many of us who live in rich countries have become accustomed. Economic growth in the Western world is, to no small extent, premised on the existence of consumer societies and an associated consumer culture most of us find it difficult to completely escape. In this culture, social status, happiness, well-being and identity are linked to consumption (Jackson, 2009). Indeed, it is widely considered a natural right to lead an environmentally unsustainable lifestyle – a lifestyle that includes car ownership, air travel, spacious accommodations, fashionable clothing, an omnivorous diet and all sorts of electronic gadgets. This Western norm of consumption has increasingly been exported to other parts of the world, the result being that never before have so many people taken part in consumption patterns that used to be reserved for elites (Koch, 2012). If degrowth were to be institutionalised, many citizens in the rich countries would have to adapt to a materially lower standard of living. That is, while the basic needs of the global population can be met in a non-growing economy, not all wants and preferences can be fulfilled (Koch et al., 2017). Undoubtedly, many people in the rich countries would experience various limitations on their consumption opportunities as a violent encroachment on their personal freedom. Indeed, whereas many recognize that contemporary consumer societies are environmentally unsustainable, fewer are prepared to actually change their own lifestyles to reverse/address this.

At present, then, the degrowth project is in its “deconstructive phase”, i.e., the phase in which its advocates are able to present a powerful critique of the prevailing neoliberal project and point to alternative solutions to crisis. At this stage, not enough support has been mobilised behind the degrowth project for it to be elevated to the phases of “construction” and “consolidation”. It is conceivable that at some point, enough people will become sufficiently discontent with the existing economic system and push for something radically different. Reasons for doing so could be the failure of the system to satisfy human needs and/or its inability to resolve the multidimensional crisis confronting humanity. Yet, various material and ideational path-dependencies currently stand in the way of such a development, particularly in countries with large middle-classes. Even if it were to happen that the majority wanted a break with the current system, it is far from given that a system based on the ideas of degrowth is what they would demand.

#### No transition---degrowth assumes magic!

Branko Milanovic 2/3/21. Visiting Presidential Professor at the Graduate Center City University of New York and Senior Scholar at the Stone Center for Socio-economic Inequality. "Degrowth: Solving the Impasse by Magical Thinking". No Publication. 2-23-2021. https://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/blog/23/02/2021/degrowth-solving-impasse-magical-thinking

The difficulty of discussion with degrowers comes from the fact that they and the rest of us live in two different ideological worlds. Degrowers live in a world of magic, where merely by listing the names of desirable ends they are supposed to somehow happen. In that world, one does not need to bother with numbers or facts, trade-offs, first or second bests; one merely needs to conjure up what he/she desires and it will be there.

Now degrowers are not irrational people. The reason why they are pushed in this magical corner is because when they try to “do the numbers” they are led to an impasse. They do not want to allow for significant increase in world GDP because it will, even if decoupling (of which they are skeptical) happens, drive energy emissions too high. If one wants to keep world GDP more or less as now one must (A) “freeze” today’s global income distributions so that some 10-15% of the world population continue to live below the absolute poverty line, and one-half of the world population below $PPP 7 dollars per day (which is, by the way, significantly below Western poverty lines). This is however unacceptable to the poor people, to the poor countries, and even to degrowers themselves.

Thus they must try something else: introduce a different distribution (B) where everybody who is above the current mean world income ($PPP 16 per day) is driven down to this mean, and the poor countries and people are, at least for a while, allowed to continue growing until they too achieve the level of $PPP 16 per day. But the problem with that approach is that one would have to engage in a massive reduction of incomes for all those who make more than $PPP 16 which is practically all of the Western population. Only 14% of the population in Western countries live at the level of income less than the global mean. This is probably the most important statistic that one should keep in mind. Degrowers thus need to convince 86% of the population living in rich countries that their incomes are too high and need to be reduced. They would have to preside over economic depressions for about a decade, and then let the new real income stay at that level indefinitely. (Even that would not quite solve the problem because in the meantime, many poor countries would have reached the level of $PPP 16 per day and they too would have to be prevented from growing further.) It is quite obvious that such a proposition is a political suicide. Thus degrowers do not wish to spell it out.

#### You can’t just wish away the current system.

Andrew SAYER 95, Reader in Social Theory and Political Economy at Lancaster University [*Radical Political Economy: A Critique*, 1995, p. 33-34]

Any criticism presupposes the possibility of a better way of life; to expose something as illusory or contradictory is to imply the possibility and desirability of a life without those illusions and contradictions. This much has been established by critical theorists such as Habermas and Apel. Yet the notion that critique implies a quest for the good is a highly abstract one. Up to a point, particular critiques do imply something a little more specific than the standpoint of a better life. The critique of capitalism's anarchic and uneven development implies a critical standpoint or contrast space of an imagined society with a rationally ordered and even process of development. The critique of class points to the desirability of a classless society. Naturally, society would be better if its illusions, conflicts and contradictions were reduced, but we naturally want to know how this could be achieved. The desirability of a life without contradictions or illusions does not make it feasible.

Critical social science does not merely identify illusions, irrationality or contradictions but attempts to provide explanations of their sources, locating the 'unwanted determinations' of behaviour, as Bhaskar (1989) puts it. It would be strange, to say the least, if an analysis of the causes of problems such as hunger and exploitation were unable to indicate anything about alternatives which would eliminate them. If a critical theory cannot begin to indicate how to eliminate problems we must inevitably be suspicious of its claims to have identified their causes. If the alternative implied by a critical standpoint is not feasible, then any critique made from that standpoint is thereby seriously weakened. Not to put too fine a point on it, the critique of, say, capitalism's anarchic and uneven development would lose much of its force if all [END PAGE 33] advanced economies were necessarily anarchic and uneven in their development, though one could still criticize advanced economies - not just capitalist ones - from the very different standpoint of a 'deep ecology', calling for a return to small-scale, more primitive economies (Dobson, 1990).

We need to know enough about the critical standpoint and the implied alternative to be able to judge first whether it really is feasible and desirable. Since knowledge is 'situated' and bears the mark of its author's social position, this includes assessing whose standpoint it is made from. Does it privilege the position of a particular group (e.g. male workers, advanced countries)? Does it imply a society without difference? If it suggests greater equality on whose terms is equality to be defined?7 We have also to ask whether remedying one set of problems would generate others (it usually does), and whether these would be worse than the original problems. This is rarely considered in radical political economy, the usual implicit assumption being that all bad things go together in capitalism and all good things under socialism/communism. Yet it is possible that some of the 'contradictions' involve dilemmas which can't be eliminated along with capitalism. Evaluations in terms of desirability therefore need to be cross-checked with assessments of feasibility, and optimistic assumptions of inevitable improvement suspended.

There are two kinds of feasibility which might be considered:

1 whether a certain desired end-state or goal can be realized - for example, how people can be politically mobilized to make it happen; and

2 whether, assuming enough people are willing to try to make it happen, the goal or end-state is feasible in itself, e.g. could one have an advanced economy without money?

It is usually only the first of these questions that radicals address, the standard response to utopian discussions being not 'would it work?' but 'yes but how are you going to get from here to there?' But while many might think it idle to ignore (1), it is surprising how little attention is given to (2), as if the journey mattered more than the destination. I fully accept that I am not offering suggestions on (1) in this book, and only ideas pertinent to (2): but then I don't see how large-scale political mobilization can precede a well-worked out conception of a feasible alternative.

### Transition Wars – Alt

#### Alt fails---transition wars and domestic pressure means the alt abandons fidelity to the environment.

Smith '19 [Noah; 4/5/19; Bloomberg Opinion columnist, former assistant professor of finance at Stony Brook University; "Dumping Capitalism Won’t Save the Planet," https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-04-05/capitalism-is-more-likely-to-limit-climate-change-than-socialism]

It has become fashionable on social media and in certain publications to argue that capitalism is killing the planet. Even renowned investor Jeremy Grantham, hardly a radical, made that assertion last year. The basic idea is that the profit motive drives the private sector to spew carbon into the air with reckless abandon. Though many economists and some climate activists believe that the problem is best addressed by modifying market incentives with a carbon tax, many activists believe that the problem can’t be addressed without rebuilding the economy along centrally planned lines.

The climate threat is certainly dire, and carbon taxes are unlikely to be enough to solve the problem. But eco-socialism is probably not going to be an effective method of addressing that threat. Dismantling an entire economic system is never easy, and probably would touch off armed conflict and major asdasd upheaval. In the scramble to win those battles, even the socialists would almost certainly abandon their limitation on fossil-fuel use — either to support military efforts, or to keep the population from turning against them. The precedent here is the Soviet Union, whose multidecade effort to reshape its economy by force amid confrontation with the West led to profound environmental degradation. The world's climate does not have several decades to spare.

Even without international conflict, there’s little guarantee that moving away from capitalism would mitigate our impact on the environment. Since socialist leader Evo Morales took power in Bolivia, living standards have improved substantially for the average Bolivian, which is great. But this has come at the cost of higher emissions. Meanwhile, the capitalist U.S managed to decrease its per capita emissions a bit during this same period (though since the U.S. is a rich country, its absolute level of emissions is much higher).

In other words, in terms of economic growth and carbon emissions, Bolivia looks similar to more capitalist developing countries. That suggests that faced with a choice of enriching their people or helping to save the climate, even socialist leaders will often choose the former. And that same political calculus will probably hold in China and the U.S., the world’s top carbon emitters — leaders who demand draconian cuts in living standards in pursuit of environmental goals will have trouble staying in power.

The best hope for the climate therefore lies in reducing the tradeoff between material prosperity and carbon emissions. That requires technology — solar, wind and nuclear power, energy storage, electric cars and other vehicles, carbon-free cement production and so on. The best climate policy plans all involve technological improvement as a key feature.