# 1NC

## Off

### 1NC – T

#### Topical affirmatives must increase prohibitions on anticompetitive business practices by the private sector by at least expanding the scope of core antitrust laws.

#### The affirmative is not topical. “United States federal government” means the three branches of the central government – the affirmative does not advocate action by the USFG.

Organisation OECD for Economic Co-operation and Development Council ’87 “United States,” *The Control and Management of Government Expenditure*, p. 179]

1. Political and organisational structure of government

The United States of America is a federal republic consisting of 50 states. States have their own constitutions and within each State there are at least two additional levels of government, generally designated as counties and cities, towns or villages. The relationships between different levels of government are complex and varied (see Section B for more information).

The Federal Government is composed of **three branches**: the legislative branch, the executive branch, and the judicial branch. Budgetary decisionmaking is shared primarily by the legislative and executive branches. The general structure of these two branches relative to budget formulation and execution is as follows.

#### The Sherman, Clayton, and FTC act are the core antitrust laws.

Gibbs ‘ND [Gibbs Law Group; “The Sherman Antitrust Act”; https://www.classlawgroup.com/antitrust/federal-laws/sherman-act/; AS]

The Sherman Antitrust Act is one of three core federal antitrust laws, along with the Clayton Antitrust Act and the Federal Trade Commission Act.

#### Prohibitions are laws.

Dictionary.com ‘ND [Dictionary.com; “Prohibition” https://www.dictionary.com/browse/prohibition; AS]

a law or decree that forbids.

#### Their interpretation explodes predictable limits – non-topical advocacies encourage the affirmative to dodge negative strategies, which are all based on a predictable reading of the resolution. The negative requires pre-round research in order to stand a chance against the affirmative’s infinite preparation and use of traditional standards of debate such as permutations – including their affirmative makes negative research an impossibility, even if we have “ground” to debate them. It greenlights any methodology or orientation that is tangentially related to the topic – negative preparation requires in depth case negatives.

#### Two impacts:

#### Procedural fairness – debate is a game and we are all here to win – debate is a competitive activity and requires game values to function – this is the largest impact – we have all chosen to spend our weekend here in order to compete.

#### Clash – you should privilege debate over different political paradigms over endorsing any one political paradigm – unflinching commitments ignore the complexity and partiality of any political theory. Promoting clash is key to interrogate complex issues, problematize solutions, and actualize any benefits of debate

### 1NC – Sovereignty K

#### The aff treats blackness as in but not of world order. They pose a structural conflict between ordering and sovereignty, versus disordering, dispossession, and non-relationality. This narrative denies the world-making capacity of decolonization and the principle of self-determination.

Adom **GETACHEW** Poli Sci @ Chicago **’19** *Worldmaking after Empire* p. 14-18

Just three years after Ghana’s achievement of independence, seventeen African states joined the United Nations, marking the high point of decolonization in the Black Atlantic world. In what would come to be called the year of Africa, the newly constituted African bloc in the United Nations successfully led the effort to secure passage of General Assembly resolution 1514, titled “Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.” The declaration described foreign rule as a violation of human rights, reiterated the right to self-determination, and called for the immediate end of all forms of colonial rule.1 Resolution 1514 offered a complete repudiation of foreign rule and rejected any prerequisites for the attainment of independence. Soon after its passage, the resolution formed the basis of a new committee with broad powers to investigate colonial rule and hear petitions from colonial subjects, making colonial rule subject to international scrutiny and to the demands for self-determination. 2

While 1960 marked a radical rupture in the history of modern international society, it has largely been subsumed in a standard account of decolonization where the transition from empire to nation and the expansion of international society to include new states is a seamless and inevitable development. This account of decolonization is premised on the view that anticolonial nationalists appropriated the language of self-determination from the liberal internationalist tradition of Woodrow Wilson in order to secure independence from alien rule. In adopting the language of liberal self-determination, the nationalists of the colonized world are thought to have mimicked the existing institutional forms of the nation-state. And while decolonization is credited with universalizing this state system, its nationalist and statist premises are viewed as anachronistic in a postnational and increasingly cosmopolitan world order.

Recasting anticolonial nationalism as worldmaking disrupts the central assumptions of this standard account. First, it expands the account of empire beyond alien rule by illustrating the ways black anticolonial critics theorized empire as a structure of international racial hierarchy. Drawing on W.E.B. Du Bois’s famous diagnosis that the “problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line,” the central characters of this book drew critical attention to the enduring legacy of racial hierarchy and slavery in the making of modern international society. Second, in response to the political dilemmas international racial hierarchy posed, anticolonial nationalists in Africa and the Caribbean insisted that self-determination required a combination of nation-building and worldmaking. Their vision of a postimperial world order prompted nationalists to create international institutions that could secure the conditions of nondomination. This claim that national independence required international institutions was a key insight of the anticolonial account of self-determination. Finally, recovering their global aspirations highlights the persistence of international hierarchy and outlines new directions for contemporary debates about global political and economic justice. Together, the expanded account of empire, the rethinking of anticolonial nationalism, and the theorization of a postcolonial cosmopolitanism constitute elements of a political theory of decolonization.

Beyond Empire as Alien Rule

As postcolonial states worked to pass resolution 1514 in 1960, historians, philosophers, and political scientists offered their first interpretations of the unprecedented process of decolonization. That same year, the Oxford philosopher John Plamenatz published On Alien Rule and Self-Government, while, across the Atlantic, the Harvard political scientist Rupert Emerson published From Empire to Nation.3 Emerson and Plamenatz sought to explain how “alien rule” suddenly became illegitimate in the twentieth century, and they found their answer in the global diffusion of Western ideals. The delegitimation of alien rule in the mid-twentieth century, Plamenatz argued, was itself a product of the gradual Westernization of the world. European imperial expansion fueled the spread of principles like self-determination, democracy, and freedom and made possible anticolonial nationalists’ critique of alien rule.4 Emerson concurred, arguing that “through global conquest the dominant Western powers worked to reshape the world in their own image and thus roused against themselves the forces of nationalism which are both the bitterest enemies of imperialism and, perversely, its finest fruit.”5

Key tenets of these early interpretations—the emphasis on alien rule, the inattention to the international conditions and context of imperialism, the identification of decolonization with the globalization of the nation-state, and the expansion of international society—continue to shape our understanding of the collapse of territorial empires. From international relations to normative political theory, the recurring emphasis on alien rule conceives of empire as a bilateral relationship between metropole and colony. On this view, empire is a “a system of interaction between two political entities, one of which, the dominant metropole, exerts political control over the internal and external policy—the effective sovereignty—of the other, subordinate periphery.”6 Involuntary subjection, nonreciprocity, and inequality characterize this relationship between the colonized and colonizer. 7 The international component to alien rule is understood as exclusion of the colony from international society.8 Such exclusion differentiates alien rule from other forms of international hegemony that emerge within a rule-bound international order.9 As a result, the international order is conceived as a dual structure that grants metropolitan states membership as sovereign equals and excludes colonies outside of its boundaries. With this bilateral account of imperial domination and a bifurcated view of international society, the alien rule thesis understands self-determination as a double move of overcoming alien rule and achieving inclusion in international society. Empire comes to an end when formerly excluded colonies enter international society as full members, and central to this inclusion is the universalization of the nation-state as the accepted institutional form of self-determination. 10 Twentieth-century decolonization is thus viewed as the culmination of a long history in which the nation-state is progressively globalized and becomes the counterpoint to empire.11

While the empire-to- nation narrative appears to capture the transformations of the international order in the mid-twentieth century, this account of decolonization also obscures the more far-reaching efforts to remake rather than expand international society. Characterizing decolonization as a process of diffusion, in which a “gradual Westernization” of the world took place, blunts anticolonial nationalism’s radical challenge to the four-century- long project of European imperial expansion. Like British prime minister Harold Macmillan’s evocative phrase “the wind of change,” the diffusion narrative naturalizes decolonization, rendering it an irresistible development that necessarily follows from empire.12 Indeed, well before the rapid decline of the British Empire, interwar metropolitan intellectuals and elites coined and adopted the term decolonization to reconcile their imperial past and present with what they believed was an inevitable postimperial future.13 In this early articulation, decolonization was pictured as already immanent within the project of empire and did not signal imperial defeat. Decolonization thus “worked to absorb and deflect the phenomenon it ostensibly described.”14

Rather than a seamless and inevitable transition from empire to nation, anticolonial nationalists refigured decolonization as a radical rupture—one that required a wholesale transformation of the colonized and a reconstitution of the international order. For Kwame Nkrumah, decolonization was not a wind blowing over the African continent but instead a “hurricane of change . . . [that is] razing to the ground the many bastions of colonialism.” 15 From this perspective, “independence means much more than merely being free to fly our own flag and to play our own national anthem. It becomes a reality only in a revolutionary framework.”16 Nkrumah’s vision of decolonization as revolution was directed toward undoing the dependencies that colonial domination left behind. Dependence structured the condition of formerly colonized subjects as well as the relationship between the former colony and the international order. According to Nkrumah, a people “long subjected to foreign domination” become habituated to their dependence.17 The nationalist movement and postcolonial state would combat the economic, political, and moral-psychological forms of colonial dependence through an expansive politics of postcolonial citizenship. 18 This nation-building project, however, was insufficient in a context where dependence also characterized the new nation’s condition in the international order. The hoisting of national flags and singing of national anthems—the mere transfer of power—left intact the economic and political position of new states. Decolonization understood as a revolutionary project thus required remaking the international order that sustained relations of dependence and domination. Nation-building was to be situated and realized through worldmaking.

Nkrumah’s concern with the persistence of domination in the international sphere points to the ways that anticolonial accounts of empire extended beyond alien rule and homed in on the problem of international hierarchy. Anticolonial nationalists argued that a bifurcated system with sovereign and equal members and excluded colonies did not characterize the international order. Instead, colonies and peripheral states were internal to international society but appeared in that space as unequal and subordinated members. For instance, the colonization of Africa in the late nineteenth century was facilitated through international treaties and conferences. In those contexts, African states and political communities were endowed with an international personality that had made possible their domination. Viewed from this perspective, colonization was not experienced as exclusion from but as unequal integration into international society.

Unequal integration conceives of international society as an internally differentiated space that includes sovereign states, quasisovereigns, and colonies, which are organized through relations of hierarchy. The hierarchical ordering of international society ensured that non-European states were not afforded the full rights of membership in international society. The distribution of rights and obligations was such that non-European states and colonies were encumbered with onerous obligations and had only limited or conditional rights. In highlighting the ways that unequal integration is embedded in the formal institutions of international society, this account of hierarchy departs from theories that emphasize how dominant states exercise economic and military authority over states.19 Distinct from hegemony, unequal integration as a constitutive practice of international law produces differential legal and political standing in international society. This unequal international standing functioned as the enabling background of European imperialism. It coincided with and facilitated political and economic domination.

#### Bearing witness to the history of black sovereignty fights antiblack erasure. The Haitian Revolution demonstrates that even those deemed inhuman and unpolitical by others have the right to sovereignty.

Karen **SALT** Director Centre for Research in Race and Rights @ Nottingham **’19** *The Unfinished Revolution: Haiti, Black Sovereignty and Power in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World* p.12-35

In a recent, rousing, oft-quoted essay written just after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, Ulysse argues that Haitians have typically appeared in research as “fractures, as fragments—bodies without minds, heads without bodies, or roving spirits.”33 Turning her eye to the representations in the media of Haiti and Haitians that appeared after the earthquake, Ulysse reads and critiques them for their stereotypical portrayals.34 For Ulysse, these portrayals emerge from “the dominant idea” that “Haitians are irrational, devil-worshipping, progress-resistant, [and] uneducated.” These assumptions are not just a case of blatant primitivism and public disavowal. Too many entities, Ulysse laments, see “Haiti and Haitians [… as] a manifestation of blackness in its worst form.” Why? Its history and its politics. She continues: “The unruly enfant terrible of the Americas defied all European odds and created a disorder of things colonial” in the founding of its state.35 This declaration of independence provided a legible and visible challenge to colonialism and to articulations of whiteness (in its many fluctuations and permutations) that represented blackness (variously defined) and statehood as anathema. The message: blackness and sovereignty don’t mix. This is not just a disavowal of Haiti’s origins. As Dubois, Ulysse and others have extolled, Haiti continues to be portrayed as a politically wrong and even abhorrent thing.36

Although the surge in scholarship on Haiti and the Haitian Revolution has shifted some popular perspectives regarding Haiti, much of this work has provided little evidence of Haiti’s relationship to and influence on black statehood and political thought across the last two centuries. Trouillot picks up on this political silence, amongst other occlusions, in Silencing the Past. In one searing passage, Trouillot makes this link plain, charting the ways that the ontological world view held by many whites and non-whites in Europe and the Americas refused to include a vision of freedom for enslaved Africans and their progeny. He argues that it was not that freedom was imagined as impossible for enslaved Africans (and other people of African descent) as much as it was articulated as a state of being that slaves could never achieve. Even those who countered this world view with more radical and equitable articulations about people, politics, freedom and racial difference (and Trouillot acknowledges that there were some) struggled to imagine any world in which a slave uprising could ever lead to the formation of a black nation-state.37 Unthinkable revolution? Yes. Unthinkable revolution leading to an independent state? Just as impossible—and potentially more dangerous. Ulysse makes this point plain in her NACLA Report essay, “Why Representations of Haiti Matter Now More than Ever.” In assessing the pejorative imaging of Haiti from its origins to the twenty-first century, Ulysse argues that it “had to become colonialism’s bête noire [literally translated as “black beast”] if the sanctity of whiteness were to remain unquestioned.”38

As a nation formed through rebellion, violence and anti-colonialism, Haiti would represent the least “normal” nation in the nineteenth-century Atlantic world as it outlawed slavery from the beginning and articulated, at least on paper, that all of its citizens were politically equal and black. In one of Haiti’s earliest constitutions, all Haitian citizens were legally defined as black, regardless of skin-pigmentation or prior racial categorisation. These political moves and assertions put the nation at odds with the nation-states in the Atlantic that surrounded it. As historian Julia Gaffield succinctly notes in Haitian Connections in the Atlantic World, “the basis of the economic system of the Atlantic world was under attack” after Haiti’s 12-year battle for freedoms, rights and opportunities drew a successful slave revolution and violent anti-colonial struggle into a concentrated fight for independence that would, improbably, defeat the French—while also seeing off challenges from English and Spanish forces who saw an opportunity to take the island by force.39

Although often cast as a ragtag, untrained cadre of blood-thirsty agitators, especially by antagonists in France, England and the USA, Haitian revolutionary leaders (and their representatives) spent considerable time influencing foreign officials, developing new strategic governance models (or building upon older colonial models) and working out how to perform sovereign politics amongst other sovereign nations, while black. For these and other reasons, Haiti was and remains, due to its history, a vastly important political entity.40 As Malick Ghachem notes regarding Haiti’s official declaration of anti-colonial freedom, “the mere existence of Haiti, the very fact of its new ruling class, and the act of the declaration itself—all of these were momentously novel forces in the Atlantic World.”41

In short, it was led by people of African descent who declared in their performance of power and rights that black people could be racialised as black and political. In The Haitian Declaration of Independence: Creation, Context, and Legacy, David Armitage, Julia Gaffield, Laurent Dubois and Erin Zavitz make clear that what could be read as a singular “Declaration of Haitian Independence” should rightfully be seen as “acts” of becoming that took multiple forms and were performed on varied stages. Through song, oral history and in print forms that circulated the Atlantic world, Haitian leaders and Haitian people signalled a refusal to unbecoming.42 The new nation’s very existence ran counter to pejorative assumptions and increasingly vitriolic racist imaginings that systematically rejected the ability of people of African descent to be creative, exhibit intelligence or even understand politics, much less engage in political behaviour and activities. In asserting their rights to sovereignty and working with various tools and circuits of power and production to communicate those rights, Haiti and its officials rewrote the rules about who could and could not be a sovereign body, as well as how that sovereignty would be performed. This book explores that terrain. The Unfinished Revolution: Haiti, Black Sovereignty and Power in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World chronicles the ways that Haiti’s black sovereignty moved and morphed in the Atlantic world. Tethered, then, between a kind of “othered” space, Haitian officials would use whatever means were at their disposal to resist closure to and consumption of their independence and power, from letters, photographs, material objects, narratives, diplomatic missives, black and brown bodies, essays, newspaper articles to political performances on the world stage. What emerges from these oppositional, yet imploring demands is a sovereignty that celebrates, even as it rejects, its outlaw status.

In 1853, Benjamin C. Clark, Haitian Commercial Agent to the USA (more on him in later chapters), argues in A Plea for Hayti that Atlantic nation-states, specifically the USA and Britain, failed to recognise and adequately to engage diplomatically with Haiti not simply because the USA’s continued practice of Atlantic racial slavery was until the 1860s incompatible with the anti-slavery demands of the new Haitian nation-state. For Clark, at the heart of the antipathy toward Haiti was a deep resentment of its very existence. Haiti was not merely the product of a successful slave revolt: it was a black nation-state. And this identity made it an oddity within an Atlantic world that had no category for black political entities (in the form either of nations or citizens). Clark suggests that Haiti’s oddness was not just unthinkable: it was outside the bounds of custom and law. In a stirring passage, he stresses that the USA’s failure to engage with Haiti as a sovereign entity was at odds with its engagement with other independent Latin American countries. Clark argues that this differential diplomatic treatment was because “the horrors of St. Domingo were raked up and interposed, and it was contended that these Islanders having achieved their freedom by bloodshed, should forever be regarded as outlaws.”43 And they were not just any outlaws. They were self-avowed black ones who dared to perform their power on a global stage amongst an ocean of white nation-states and their official and unofficial representatives.

Nineteenth-century Haiti’s outward-facing officials and their cognates from various economic industries and artistic sectors performed a form of racial power that utilised older and newly formed networks of influence to reposition and rearticulate Haiti’s presence in the Atlantic world as a black space steeped in political power. Neither organised nor always coherent, this image-making of sovereignty assembled often unstable figurations of control and characterisations of power that when read together formulate a singular black political body that represented (and continues to represent) a sovereignty formed through encounters with and amongst other sovereign nation-states (more on this below). What has been gathered here in one text are the ways that a variety of agents and actants fought for, against, in tandem with and in praise of Haiti’s black sovereignty. Through this examination, what emerges is not a fight for a specific cause but a series of jumbled and, at times, competing strategies for state control.

These strategies (and the encounters that gave birth to them) illuminate the ways in which Haitian officials, their designated political and cultural attendants and external others would use various geopolitical and economic openings within a changing and volatile Caribbean region to configure Haiti. Many nineteenth-century Haitian leaders engaged in Haiti’s international work found their sovereignty consistently compromised by outside agents who treated the nation as an exception in need of external control. Sociologist Alex Dupuy, writing about power and class in twenty-first-century Haiti, provides a roadmap to these earlier sovereignty struggles in Haiti, suggesting that “if by sovereignty we mean the right and the ability of a people and their government to determine their agenda,” then this right and ability is compromised and undermined “when the state is subordinated to the dictates of foreign governments and international financial institutions, and/ or the interests of powerful private foreign and domestic actors who are not accountable to the people or their government.”44 Dupuy’s short list roughly captures the various interests exhibited by foreign officials, government agencies and financial organisations in their more than 200-plus-year encounters with Haiti.

Although nineteenth-century Haitian officials would court, entrap, ensnare, play with and even manipulate the terms of many of the diplomatic and economic state-crafting of their times, other nations also played key roles in these dramas. Here is a short list of some of these political “acts”: the USA engaged in trade embargoes against Haiti in the early 1800s in order to isolate the young nation; France levied a crippling indemnity in 1825 of 150 million francs that forced the former colony to pay its colonial masters for its independence; and US banks took over the nation at the end of the nineteenth century near the start of the US military’s occupation of Haiti that lasted, in total, almost 20 long and violent years.45 By the time the late twentieth-century structural adjustment programmes and internal coups brought Haiti under the protection (or, some would suggest, control) of the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (Mission des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en Haïti or MINU STA H) force and auspices of the US State Department, Haiti had lived through centuries of compromise and undermining—and responded to each episode with even more figurations of black sovereignty.

Some pundits, influenced by accounts in the media and international governance documents that frame Haiti as a failed state, may see my interrogation of sovereignty in Haiti as a naive dream that Haiti could instantiate its own political future. I can anticipate that many of these same people, critical of Haiti and the political aptitude of its leaders, will pick up this book and doubt if a failed state could ever be, or even had ever been, a sovereign one. This book responds to these and similar conjectures with a simple, but important, question: “What makes Haiti a failed state?” Some of those in the development world and within international relations circles point to Haiti’s poverty levels (perhaps reciting the mantra: Haiti is the poorest nation in the western hemisphere) or its lack of institutional infrastructures as examples of its failure. The issues of poverty and infrastructural collapse may be visible in Haiti, but other nations have significant poverty levels and little or no internally coordinated agencies or organisations. What makes Haiti so especially different, so critically difficult, that it merits a charge of failure at its roots or claims by the media of suffering from a “complex web of progress-resistant cultural influences”?46

This line of questioning is not about apportioning blame on others for the ways that various Haitian elites have amassed wealth and allocated resources within Haiti to the detriment of the masses. I raise the spectre of failure to make clear that in repeating Haiti’s purported failure and then reading that failure back into Haiti’s history, critics and supporters alike run the risk of never really understanding the routes that have brought various configurations of the nation into existence. In reading Haiti’s history as a narrative of declension, whose high point is the Haitian Revolution, critics (and even some supporters) repeat the very acts of erasure that many claim silenced the Haitian Revolution for so many years to those outside of Haitian studies.

We must do better by Haiti. We must challenge ourselves to witness Haiti’s history and see its many resistances to charges of “state failure” by its many presence(s) on the world stage. The Unfinished Revolution resists reifying the rhetoric of failure and instead lays bare the ways that its logics echo within criticism of Haiti’s history and its continued political existence. In drawing together a range of documents, actors, nations and entanglements, this book moves conversations about Haiti beyond the polarities that tend to constrain it—i.e., failed black nation on one side and idealised revolutionary spark of radical antislavery and anti-colonialism on the other.

It responds to historical anthropologist and Francophone political theorist Gary Wilder’s call for scholars to offer “clear” speaking about Haiti that attempts to chart its existence without resorting to “overdetermined poles of abject failure and audacious triumph.” Wilder stresses that circulating images of Haiti must be challenged if we—in the widest sense of community—ever hope to silence current articulations of Haiti as a “phantasmic object of fear and desire” that conjure fantastic notions of “political failure, social catastrophe, or natural disaster.”47 In many ways, this book charts the tensions that have emerged from Haiti’s unfinished project of creating a black sovereign nation-state under these conditions.

In a 2010 talk delivered to the United Nations on the international day of remembrance for people brutalised by slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, political theorist and Africana studies scholar Anthony Bogues turns his lens to Haiti and its “archive of freedom.” Bogues argues that in order for the wider public to reframe Haiti as a freedom land, the international community must recognise that Haiti’s revolutionary beginnings contained not one rebellion, but two. The first violent insurrection rejected slavery; the second, occurring years later, drew together a concentrated military force determined to fight against a return to colonialism and imperial control. In the pages that follow, I posit that there was—and remains—a third, and unfinished, revolution in Haiti: sovereignty. Although sovereignty has not emerged as a significant theme examined by scholars, Haitian politics, in general, has garnered critics’ attention. Notably, researchers have produced exceptional new readings of Haiti’s early constitutions (including Toussaint’s pre-Haiti Constitution of 1801).48 These new considerations sit alongside other examinations of diplomacy, such as texts by Ronald Johnson and Ashli White, that seek to understand the struggles of the burgeoning nation to set up and defend its right to existence.49 These works are joined by a wide and varied body of texts that focus on Haiti’s early political manifestations and its interactions with US literary history through examinations of such themes as the significance of the image and military acumen of Toussaint Louverture to black power in the Atlantic world and the writings of particular US authors who have written on or been influenced by Haitian culture and politics, such as Charles Brockden Brown, Herman Melville and Leonora Sansay, or the perspectives from some who spent considerable time in Haiti during the Haitian Revolution, including the British officer Marcus Rainsford.50 Francophone Caribbeanists have also considered the political world of Haiti. These scholars have offered new methods and new source materials that have helped document how the various figurations of early Haiti were rooted/routed through Haitian literature and the cultural and political worlds in the Americas and the wider French empire.51

The above thematic sets of work have been influenced (in some instances, quite noticeably) by additional scholarship on Haiti crafted by social scientists, including the works of David Nicholls, J. Michael Dash, Michel- Rolph Trouillot, Sidney Mintz, Alex Dupuy, Arthur Stinchcombe and Anthony Maingot, each of whom has painstakingly documented tensions around development and political economy with regards to Haiti and Haiti’s place within geopolitical structures of power.52 Aspects of these now classic texts can be found in newer pieces from interdisciplinary investigators, such as the work of Philip Kaisary, who moves within and between law, race and human rights, and Robbie Shilliam, who teases apart the entanglements between international politics, post-coloniality and global movements for decolonisation.53 Both Shilliam and Kaisary, alongside Matthew Smith, have produced nuanced texts focused on the Haitian Revolution, the early Haitian republic and later Haitian history that interrogate issues of Caribbean exile, capitalism, liberty and race. Although, as mentioned, aspects of politics or “the political” play a role in the above-mentioned texts and in the wider work of some of the authors identified, sovereignty—as a formative construction—remains undertheorised.54

The Unfinished Revolution grapples, cautiously, with race and sovereignty. It builds upon the scholarly openings provided by many of the above texts and projects, even as it amasses and assesses a new archive of nineteenthcentury and later materials that gesture toward the challenges, performances and articulations of nation-ness that contributed to (and may continue to shape) Haiti’s black sovereignty. Although focused primarily on the long nineteenth century, The Unfinished Revolution does venture into later periods in order to illuminate the continued significance of Haiti’s unfinished sovereign revolution to its current international battles—including those that focus on economic, political or cultural issues. As opposed to being a text about the past, I have been urged, by the material, to recognise that these are ongoing struggles and configurations that remain ever present in political dramas facing Haiti, today. I do not aim in these temporal moves to capture every manifestation of continued resistance or battles. What emerges are instances of forward shifts in the narrative that speak directly to particular instances, tropes or figurations that make clear that the unfinished nature of Haiti’s sovereignty will not be miraculously solved by some future form of political recognition. In weaving through time, I reconstruct the ways that these promises in the past have been laid out before—and have not come to fruition. Time here is not a panacea to political dispossession and challenge. In fact, what bubbles forth from the archive are the many spirals of form, thought and resistance that move through and against the unfinished project of black sovereignty.55

In what immediately follows, I offer up an expanded discussion of black sovereignty that makes clear the contours of the term, as articulated within these pages, and its use and relevancy as a framing device. In order to define the limits and potentials of this term, I first explore blackness in relation to sovereignty before tackling the exciting (yet, racially limited) field/debates within sovereignty studies. This discussion is finally followed by a detailed description of the chapters and themes contained within the text.

Black is a Country: The Blackness of Black Sovereignty

Although I use the term black sovereignty throughout the book, I do not deploy it lightly or use it without some trepidation. I recognise the vexed and problematic nature of reducing the complexities of sovereign power and the performances of it on the global stage into an amorphous (even as it may be generative and politically cohering), socially constructed racial category of distinction. For decades, critics have argued that blackness is “slippery,” often defying definition and eluding formal identification. As a result, it is often described as a signifying trope; a dynamic, conscious way of living; a forced conceptualisation; a mobilising idea; a social movement; a political demand; a creative impulse and (importantly) a socially constructed term that means (meant) none of the above.56 The field of black studies is enormous and constantly being reshaped by scholars around the globe who find within its generative space new forms of relationality and contestation. The deftness and nuance of performance artist and black queer theorist E. P atrick Johnson’s work perhaps best captures the vitality (and interdisciplinarity) of critical approaches to the study of blackness. As Johnson notes in Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity, “‘black’ culture” contains a “production of blackness” that involves a “mutual constructing/deconstructing, avowing/disavowing, and expanding/ delimiting dynamic.”57 In essence, it is a complex and charged figuration.

Of course, we know that any assertions about blackness’s essential qualities must be questioned. As scholars have argued for many decades within African diaspora studies, terms such as “black” may hold some set ideas and historical constructions even as they mutate others once black and blackness become global and situated within specific spaces and wielded by specific actors to describe specific entities—whether people, places or things. Deployed in different settings and at different times, these labels may enable, as well as constrain, certain conclusions about the performance of difference—and who can be configured within its sphere. As anyone who studies racialisation and racialisms in a global perspective knows, what constitutes hierarchies of being in one location does not have to be regarded the same way in another.58 New forms of difference, even when marked against the same body, may enable someone never to see race in their daily lives or be marked as different by others primarily through frameworks informed by that body’s immediate location. (Here I am thinking about friends from areas such as Bahia, in north-eastern Brazil, who see themselves one way and then travel to the USA or the United Kingdom and are marked differently by a new system of racialisation or difference.)

As we seek out ways to investigate the transnational vectors and cultural networks that mobilise blackness and the flows of blackness in particular ways, we must also develop methods that allow us to understand how specific political systems and institutions racialise, erase or even re-racialise specific bodies for political purposes. “Black” as a demarcation of a political body/nation, may operate in a similar manner. There is still more research needed in order fully to comprehend the ways that race and nation politically intersect at the international level and impact governance structures and relations between particular nation-states—especially nations such as Haiti, Abyssinia and Liberia—whose nineteenth-century exceptionalism marked them as different. Essayist and novelist Teju Cole makes clear the dilemma about the admiration (ostensibly on the part of white Americans and Europeans) of black exceptions: “In the presence of the admirable, some are breathless not with admiration but with rage. They object to the presence of the black body (an unarmed boy in a street, a man buying a toy, a dancer on the subway, a bystander) as much as they object to the presence of the black mind.” Cole frames these objections in ways similar to Trouillot’s silences, but notes something far more damning about the negation: it profits from “black labor and black innovation,” or what Cole describes as the “co-option of black life.”59 Although this refrain is not the main impetus for this book, there is an echo of it within the history of enforced labour, co-opted lands or meandering credit and inflated geopoliticking in the region. While some nations may have disavowed Haiti, still others courted the nation for its resources—be those people or material things.

Rather than an exercise in arguing for Haiti’s legitimacy within histories of dispossession, this book situates Haiti’s unfinished revolution as an ongoing project that continually produces, even as it recasts, black political thought and nation-state action. It takes the form of a standard academic monograph, but this final product sits uneasily in this form. This discomfiture is a testimony less to the prematurity of the investigation than the contrapuntal aspects of the terms of discovery, the slipperiness of statecraft and the difficulties in finding a point of origin.

In writing this text, I found myself immersed in what critical race theorist and cultural theorist Jared Sexton describes, in his musings on the political geography of black lives, as moments thinking “about the unspeakable, perhaps unimaginable ways that black lives have been devalued,” where you—as the crafter of this tale—“have trouble determining when to start the story—or history or mythology or fable—or how far afield to draw your sphere of concern.”60 This uncertainty adequately captures the dilemma of imagining and articulating Haiti’s black sovereignty as it has emerged within a consistently demeaning and delimiting political world quite often fuelled by racialisms and determinants of political impossibility for those of African descent. Balancing this searching for with a critique of the failings of the frames of race and international relations is a difficult—some would even argue impossible—task.

Yet, this work is more than just an act of recovery regarding Haiti’s political struggle. It is also a search for a framework that corresponds, in many ways, with writer, filmmaker and cultural critic Frank B. Wilderson III ’s call for a “conceptual framework, predicated not on the subject-effect of cultural performance but on the structure of political ontology, a framework that allows us to substitute a culture of politics for a politics of culture.”61 In order to recognise this framework, we—scholars, activists, critics and casual observers alike—must attune our instruments of knowing (spirit, critical thinking, rhythms, etc.) in order to bear witness to the power of black sovereignty and the stultifying aspects of negrophobia/black nullification that exist within transnational sovereignty’s roots and make the ontological struggle of black sovereignty so compelling. Forcing sovereignty to grapple with blackness offers up the chance to study black sovereignty’s many modes and practices: its power, and, to borrow from poet and cultural critic Fred Moten, its “thingliness, even as (absolute) nothingness, even as imprisonment in passage on the most open road of all, even as—to use and abuse a terribly beautiful phrase of [Frank] Wilderson’s (2010: ix)—fantasy in the hold.”62

Back in Haiti, though, blackness has had a long and contentious history as a demarcation of citizenship, an African ancestral-spiritual connector and as part of a movement (and a weapon in the hands of politicians such as François “Papa Doc” Duvalier) of power along class and colour lines—pivoting Haiti, at times, culturally between France and Africa. Cultural critic and critical legal scholar Colin Dayan notes how Haiti, “called variously ‘Black France’ by one nineteenth-century observer” and “a tropical dog-kennel and pestiferous jungle” by another, has always been “moved uneasily between the extremes of [black] idealization and [black] debasement.”63 Dayan continues by noting, “the business of being Haitian [as in the nation-state] was more complex” than these simple categories express.64

Dayan’s observations nod to the entangled racialisation and colourisation that divided Haiti in its colonial form in the eighteenth century. It also firmly rejects philosopher and historian Ernest Renan’s infamous suggestion that race matters only to historians interested in humanity and “has no applications, however, in politics.”65 Blackness mattered so much to Haiti’s revolutionary leaders that the very first constitution of the young nation declared that all Haitian citizens would be marked/coded as “black,” regardless of their previously applied, chosen or assumed racial category. While Haiti’s new leaders chose a name for the nation that forever linked it to its indigenous past (as “Ayiti” is a Taíno word that means mountainous land), they constitutionally cast their citizens as universally black, or what Doris Garraway describes as a “negative universalism.”66 These black citizens, even with their internal divisions in terms of status and wealth, charged into the Atlantic world and challenged—with their very presence and continued existence—that black people, , even those deemed inhuman and unpolitical by others have the right to sovereignty. This book assembles a rich and unexamined archive of power and political practice that provides the contours and evidence of political theorist Siba Grovogui’s claim that “sovereignty takes form through multiple, complex, and differentiated institutions that congeal into formal and informal regimes of authority and practices” that look vastly different when coded black or seen through the lens of race.67 As tempting as it might be to offer a list of patterns or definitive tropes, I have moved to resist the comfiture of the all-knowing intellectual. As a journey, what appears here is less the final word than an opening into a political terrain of discovery. There is, therefore, much to learn.

These racialised differences often erupted into challenges by foreign others to Haiti’s sovereignty that tended to carry within them certain thinly veiled racisms. The encounters often appeared within diplomatic and international circles, especially as nation-states discussed, negotiated, crafted or figured Haiti into their plans. Although external agents often played key roles in the narrativisation of Haiti as black and “other” in these encounters, Haitian politicians and their intermediaries did not sit by as silent actors in their own national/international dramatic story. Instead, many would insist on manipulating, curating, challenging or even assisting the terms used and the assumptions made during these negotiations—for their own political benefit and not necessarily those of the nation’s citizens. Recovering these narratives is important, but so too is understanding how this state-crafting has been and continues to be influenced by racial formations and the unfinished project that is Haiti’s revolutionary sovereignty.

The challenges encountered by Haiti’s founding band of agitators, activists, conspirators and freedom fighters still resonate today, as Haiti and its various leaders engage in battles and negotiations with (or, at times, abet) outside financiers, internal power brokers and international “keepers” of the peace over Haiti’s precarious labouring populace and the nation’s resources (including those found amongst its people and within its environment). Sociologist and Caribbeanist Mimi Sheller argues in an important essay on “Haitian Fear” that how and what we discuss about Haiti “will continue to have a significant impact on international relations and racial formations” in Haiti.68 What Sheller sees as Haitian impacts, I see as more Atlantic and global concerns. Motivated, in part, by the racial projects that attempt to categorise and de-limit the political and sovereign work of Haiti and its politicians, this book charts how this state-work would be cast and performed by Haitians.

Although significant things have been done to Haiti by external others, critics must begin to understand the ways that Haitian officials utilised various conduits of power and influence to craft their version of black statehood in the midst of these external pressures and tensions. What emerges from this multi-directional flow of narratives, counter narratives and cultural diplomacy is a dialogue of power brokering that forms a layered and racially charged conversation about politics and sovereignty—and which entities can embody or be recognised, externally, as having or expressing those characteristics. This is more than just a simple discussion about exclusion.

Constitutional law scholar Hent Kalmo and intellectual historian Quentin Skinner assert, in a critique of sovereignty’s purported obsolescence (amongst other topics), that sovereignty remains an important ambiguous term worth exploring for the very reason that in “answering the question as to what sovereignty is,” critics also have to deal with an additional linked question that cannot be separated from the first—namely, “who is thought to be its proper bearer.”69

Much of the recent political and development aid rhetoric regarding Haiti’s “failed state” status hinges on the premise that Haiti bears no resemblance to a functioning sovereign state. Although some critics point to various causes for Haiti’s perceived failures—such as foreign intervention, unequal power, corruption or political instability—this book asserts that any list of Haiti’s perceived “problems” must include the challenges and manipulations amongst international bodies and nation-states over Haiti’s sovereign existence. This is, as described above, an unfinished issue.

There are important reasons for revisiting Haiti’s unfinished sovereign revolution and its sovereign practices. One, the arrival of the new nation of Haiti in the Atlantic world brought with it sweeping political changes— especially regarding the ideation of freedom, liberty and power—and who had the rights to have, demand and exhibit any of these conditions. This demand, startling and ground-breaking in the nineteenth century, shook the foundations of difference, possession, rights-taking and capital accumulation that many European empires relied upon to build their colonial machines. The arrival of Haiti, and its revolutionary beginnings, would have profound impacts on later rebellions, uprisings, power demands and even national movements across the globe.

While Haiti’s revolution has been celebrated and remains a touchstone for various human rights campaigns because of its embodiment of anti-slavery and anti-colonialism, Haiti’s sovereign arrival—and the impact of its continued political existence—remain unexamined. And we know that its representation mattered and continues to matter in twenty-first-century rhetorics of aid and humanitarianism. Haiti’s name is invoked—especially in coverage in the media—as an anomaly. It may no longer be cast as a savage, violent country, but far too many identify it as a lawless, inept one.70 There is a second important reason to tread into this subject area. Haiti remains a nation caught between the tethers of neoliberalism and planetary sovereignty (although it could be argued that these terms describe similar motivations of control). More has to be done to disentangle these frames of relationality from old and new forms of racialisms (see Chapters 2 and 3 for more on these processes).71 And, finally, Haiti’s particular political situation provides substantive examples of the frames and possibilities of power and resistance for those engaged in global discussions and negotiations about dispossession, rights and environmental impact, such as the many conversations and agitations regarding the future of Kiribati and its people.72

Adding Haiti’s environmental crises into these larger global considerations of contested and racialised zones, such as Nauru, should enable scholars, critics, scientists, community groups, environmentalists and planners to recognise how, as Sheller asserts, “interpretations, representations, and explanations of Haiti continue to serve ongoing ‘efforts to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial [or colonial] lines.’”73 What Sheller illuminates and The Unfinished Revolution begins to chart are the ways that these economic and political redistributions and reorganisations hinge on the destabilisation of sovereignty and the currency of racialisation or difference.

In offering up the term “black sovereignty,” I recognise that I have set this text within a vexed area of scholarship regarding the black Atlantic, black politics and black nations in which blackness is neither easily nor often clearly defined in relation to territorially bounded political structures and institutions. (Of course, the same could be said for sovereignty and nationness, but let’s work through one theoretical battle at a time.) Although I have briefly argued above why Haiti’s sovereignty could be coded black, the question remains what is symbolised either about race or politics with or perhaps through this articulation. When we—as critics—configure blackness in association with political bodies, such as nation-states, public bodies or communities, does it describe shared experiences (such as Atlantic racial slavery or cultural connections to Africa); certain political imaginings and resistances (such as those espoused by Négritude, the African Blood Brotherhood or the Black Panthers); or is it merely the recognition of a majority or a minority population within a bounded territory (such as the “race” of the main population of Jamaica or the racio-cultural place-coding implied in the term “black America”)? These questions are not just about numbers, majority or minority status, political ties and cultural memory. What people are called, how they organise themselves through or against these designations, and the ways that other groups recognise or categorise them influences how they may mobilise or construct themselves—and how others may frame their existence.

From a political standpoint, these categorisations and recognitions may carry even greater weight during intergovernmental encounters, delimiting, constraining or even opening certain pathways and articulations of rights, freedoms and liberation strategies during various sensitive debates, negotiations and diplomatic encounters. Black may not be a country, but, for those who experience life as an “outsider” within, it may be the closest thing to a coherency that they have, even as the connective potential of “blackness” gets reshaped by some political agents as a weapon of control or difference.74

As suggested above, identifying a nation as a black nation-state may productively trouble the ways that populations utilise racial codes of distinction (such as the vexed role of “colour” in Haiti, more broadly) and the ways that racialised codes of aggregation may be utilised by internal and external others for political purposes. An example? When pundits in the USA talk about “black America” are they cohering a range of perspectives, people, experiences and ideas into something that is aligned with, but yet separate from, the generic USA? Does “black America” identify a cultural group only lightly and tangentially affiliated with the political entity that is “America”? Or does “black America” signal some entity or thing that manages to live in the land and within the imagination, as a lived theory that can buffer the struggles of existence facing many people of African descent in the USA? On a more personal point: what happens when a black American who identifies as female lives and works in the United Kingdom and encounters diversity information that labels her as black “Other”? In other words: what is blackness and what does it do to political entities, territories and bodies (in the collective sense) as they move and encounter new forms of legal entanglements and political challenges?

Returning to Haiti with these questions illuminates additional tensions. What are the dangers in investigating black sovereignty as a strategy of international power in a country where colourism politics have divided governmental bodies and citizens since its beginnings—reaching its most tragic juxtapositioning in the twentieth century’s “noirisme” movement and the rise and destructive power of François Duvalier?75

While these and similar questions push at the structure and foundations of this book, and keep me up most nights, they are not this book’s main focus. I raise these issues mostly to do battle with my own thoughts on race and national and international politics and openly to place on the table the difficult issues that trouble this research—even as I work to tackle them. As I grapple with “states” of blackness—in a political and global sense—I remain convinced that just as we need new narratives of Haiti and other self-avowed and internationally marked black nation-states we also need new frames of articulation that allow us to understand racialisms and politics even as we seek ways to redraw power within and outside of international systems of governance. These redrawings have taken on significant urgency as notable areas, such as the USA, the United Kingdom, France and Germany, confront shifting forms of racism (and fascism) within their political structures.76 These are elusive and slippery terms to quantify and capture. Refusing to try and understand black sovereignty, though, is something that we cannot continue to do. Lives, I believe, depend on our bearing witness to its moves and its continued work—positively and negatively—in shaping Haiti’s and other black nation-states’ futures. What I have written above, and what circles these pages, are difficult and contentious issues that have attracted political philosophers, activists and theorists to work through and on them.77 The reasons people turn to them are the very reasons that I have placed them for us to consider in this introduction: they impact on the “black” world and our figurations of it. As a singular body of work, this text does not aim to solve the problem of blackness within nation-state sovereignty but to highlight that it actually is a problem worth discussing. Although political theorists, such as Siba Grovogui, have written about blackness, race and sovereignty, much of the discussion on sovereignty and quasi-sovereignty focuses on indigenous sovereignty or the tumultuous mid-twentieth-century movements for decolonisation that reverberated around portions of what is often referred to as the Global South—movements that articulated a vastly different version of the “rising tide of color” that Lothrop Stoddard feared in the 1920s.78 Although indebted to Grovogui, and others, for their keen twentieth-century observations, this book places sovereignty and blackness into historical context by examining a challenge to sovereignty rooted much further back in time than the decolonisation movements of the twentieth century and grounded by figurations of race.79

The Unfinished Revolution, then, works consciously, to situate these processes within international relations, the performances of power and global politics. Even as it examines these considerations and gathers a heretofore unexplored and untheorised set of material objects associated with them, it remains committed to ensuring that additional work adds to this dialogue. And it is a dialogic exchange that is envisioned here as these objects speak to and from the times and situations that gave them meaning. The archive assembled for this project makes clear the precariousness of power as performed by particular racialised and politicised bodies—and the responses by multiple players to this precarity. It asks questions about the forms of this performance, its tropic dimensions and its responses (and adaptations) to the shifting dynamics of blackness and power in the nineteenth-century Atlantic world, even as it charts Haitian leaders’ and their representatives’ demands for reciprocity, sovereign equality and recognition from other sovereign entities. These demands, occurring in divergent circumstances and situations, such as private letters, diplomatic cables or cultural products, circulated through established capitalist flows of knowledge throughout the Atlantic world, drew together competing and, oftentimes, compelling figurations of black sovereignty and empire.

National leaders on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean struggled to recognise Haiti as an equal nation-state throughout the nineteenth century, especially one capable of engaging in sovereign decision-making. But this refusal and declared disavowal is only part of the story.80 Sources from the assembled archive within this volume amply demonstrate that many of the agents who refused politically to recognise Haiti encouraged—either directly or through various economic agents—commercial and military entanglements with Haiti. Although some media and political agents were quick to label Haiti’s entire machinery of state power as the “best burlesque” the world had ever seen, others sought ways to harness Haiti’s resources or direct its capital. And Haitian officials often fed off or even manipulated this “hunger” for their own means. Meanwhile, public discourses on both sides of the Atlantic grappled with how best to describe and deal with Haiti, the political entity.

US newspaper accounts from around the mid-nineteenth century routinely portray Haiti as a political absurdity.81 As a nation, Haiti was dubbed the Atlantic world’s foolish parody. Its monarchs, emperors and presidents represented the punchline of comical dark jokes—as if shades of colour and politics could never mix. Haiti’s attempts at engaging in statecraft were often mocked and its leaders recast in sketches as simian-like creatures ridiculously attempting to engage in politics. Critics have produced a body of literature that charts these caricatures and isolation—especially as they relate to the early years of Haiti’s existence.82 This text dives into this archive and begins to ask what Haiti’s black sovereignty is and how have the battles to be/ remain sovereign responded to racialisms and racisms within the sectors of politics and international relations. In considering this history, the text places these older battles for sovereignty within current transnational and extragovernmental initiatives and projects aimed at Haiti’s current economic and political future. The next section lays out some of the stakes of these battles for authority within sovereignty before turning to an overview of the book’s chapters.

Sovereignty without Power: The Role of Race in the Battle for Authority

As a text about Haiti and its articulation, construction and performance of sovereign power in the nineteenth century, The Unfinished Revolution does not simply argue that Haiti has been on the receiving end of ostracisation since its inception. Although non-recognition (at different times and within different contexts) from France, the United Kingdom and the USA carried with it significant penalties for Haiti, Haitian politicians, their official and unofficial designees and cultural representatives routinely staged oppositional performances of empowerment. By refusing politically to engage with Haiti, various international political actors (such as US President Thomas Jefferson, who was in office from 1801 to 1809) consciously deployed strategies of disengagement, or perhaps controlled engagement, that framed exchanges with Haitian officials and their intermediaries as variations of “not”—not politics, not recognition, not reciprocity and definitely not transnational exchanges as equal sovereign nations. In framing these diplomatic and quasi-diplomatic conversations and entanglements around “nots,” Jefferson and others stressed that they did not see people of African descent as beings capable of articulating, crafting or practising politics.83 Although many of these politicos rejected or outwardly struggled with the radical antislavery potential of the Haitian Revolution (and its violence), they also refused to assign political power to any entity—including nations—coded as black. The Haitian Revolution may have inspired fantasies and fuelled nightmares of a contagion of slave upheavals, but it also stirred up deep chasms between abstract notions and articulations of freedom and the type of people who had the right to claim those ideas for themselves on an individual, collective and nation-state level.

Political theorist Siba Grovogui traces some of this history, its impact on international relations and the role of sovereignty within these processes. In an important chapter discussing these issues, Grovogui examines the impact of the American, French and Haitian Revolutions on sovereignty’s contemporary construction. He concludes that “centuries before the modern Refugee Convention, the Helsinki Accords, and the philosophical treatises of Giorgio Agamben and Hannah Arendt, Haitian slaves had pondered bare existence and the right to those so reduced to such an existence to claim sovereign rights for themselves.” These rights-claimers, Grovogui continues, demanded in their continued national existence that people of African descent, including formerly enslaved persons, had “equal access to the resources of life” and power.84

Grovogui’s theoretical moves, above, suggest the tensions that exist within sovereignty studies between articulations about who has access to (or controls) the so-called “resources of life,” how power moves between the entities connected within sovereignty’s web and who ultimately wields sovereign authority. Political geographer John Agnew occupies a specific role within these debates. Rather than arguing the case for sovereignty’s elusiveness or its irrelevancy in our hyper-global world, Agnew takes aim at the artificial aspects of its supposed spatial demarcations. In other words, sovereignty can extend beyond state and territorial borders due to the networks that power uses to travel or the multiple outside entities that a sovereign state has to encounter. Agnew does not reject the state as superfluous. Instead, he reimagines state power as deterritorialised, setting his theories in opposition to critics who argue for either the centrality of globalisation (see sociologist Sassia Sassken for more on this) or the impact of liquid modernity upon the transnational circuits of power that fuel “extraction zones” and repeated cycles of dispossession.85

What Agnew stresses is the geography of sovereignty—and its unequal moves. In recognising the disparateness in which sovereignty can tether legitimacy to the wielding of state violence in the name of “defending the state,” Agnew draws attention to the ways in which sovereign claims or the practice of acting as a sovereign sets up a relational field in which only designated sets of actors are able to engage within certain political projects. This is a powerful situational field of engagement and disavowal that has significant domestic and international implications. As Agnew states, “claims to sovereignty provide the linguistic coin in which both domestic and international politics are transacted.”86 Although Agnew’s case studies are read through the lens of deterritorialisation and not race (in counterdistinction to my reading of black sovereignty), we nevertheless share a conviction that “sovereignty is made out of the circulation of power among a range of actors at dispersed sites rather than simply emanating outward from an original and commanding central point.”87 Agnew takes aim at the abstracted state, but his evaluations of sovereign practice involve little consideration of “race matters” within these processes.

The same is true of other international relations scholars who mostly resist discussing race. The potential importance of race to sovereignty lies just beneath the surface in many of these discussions. Take, for example, the work of international relations scholar Jens Bartelson, who, in writing about the indivisibility of sovereignty and its “symbolic form,” takes the reader through a historical reconceptualisation of early theorists of sovereignty—namely, Hobbes, Bodin and Grotius—while noting that even as scholars grapple with definitions of sovereignty and its legal and potentially extraterritorial contours, “sovereignty cannot simply be wished away, since it has been foundational to the differentiation of modern political life into a domestic and an international space.”88 If race and difference have played roles in domestic, military and imperial expansions, so too must they dance along the contours of sovereign articulations. We must not ignore sovereignty’s origins, its mutations over time as certain nation states have been absorbed within it—or distinguished as different—or the implications of these distinctions for exceptional nation-states. For the purposes of this book, it is clear that sovereignty’s nation-state beginnings do not include political bodies that represent people of African descent. By default, race must play a key role, as political entities demarcated as non-white would have been denied sovereign recognition at their conception.

Scholars such as Kevin Bruyneel have written extensively about indigenous or tribal sovereignty, especially as it relates to indigenous and aboriginal communities and First Nation peoples within North America, South America, Africa and the Pacific. Alongside work by Grovogui, these examinations within sovereignty studies have critiqued the limitations of tribal or quasi-sovereignty, including those within decolonised and paracolonial spaces still economically or politically tied (some would say controlled) by former imperial powers. These two strands of scholarship are extensive and growing and help support much of the considerations of race that inform my readings of sovereignty. Rather than read black sovereignty through a more Agambian notion of “bare life,” I read black sovereignty through the critical lens of blackness. This is not a sovereignty given meaning by enslavement, violence or the control of life, but a sovereignty given meaning through political struggle.

#### Blackness should be connected to the loss of sovereignty and statehood. The political history of African state destruction is erased by the paradigm of blackness in opposition to this world. Their paradigm naturalizes a liberal autonomous subject by treating blackness as a socio-cultural confrontation between slave and master. Affirmative struggle for self-expression replaces the political power of self-determination.

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Another way to approach the issue of a transformation is to focus on how contemporary theorists conceive of slavery. Clearly, a modern sensibility governs representations of early modern slavery, whereby the institution largely figures as an economic trope. The slave appears as an abject subject under dominion of the master but now untethered from the oikos, which characterized the ancient and medieval world 's instantiation of slavery. In place of dominion-which linked the slave and slavery to politics-the market and difference govern the institution. Through this prism, slavery no longer operated under the earlier formulation of power whose genealogy was traceable to the ancient world. For this reason, when theorists reference the slave, they depict modern relations in which both the master and the slave struggle for affirmation as liberal (individual) subjects. This very (modern) subjectivity informs the sociologist and social theorist Orlando Patterson's description of the slave. Indeed, Patterson's depiction already embodies the subjectivity of an individual on whom violence was continually enacted. In this respect, Patterson-despite his emphasis on enslavement as an act of natal alienation configured the slave as an Enlightenment subject-the individual-while also implicating the master-slave dialect in a drama cast and staged by the Enlightenment: beings conceiving of themselves, their autonomy, and freedom in terms that always already assumed a form rooted in the temporality associated with the Enlightenment. This obviously represents an ahistorical representation, which has accompanied our general embrace of Patterson's social death formulation. This realization may surprise-though curiously has attracted little attention-given that Patterson is also the scholar who long ago claimed that we needed to historicize our representations of slavery and freedom. Contrary to his insistence that we delineate the process of making chattel, Patterson's historicizing does not extend to the Enlightenment temporality that the slave inhabits. Since a subjectivity rooted in the late eighteenth century could not have served as the antithesis of the very categories engendered by the Enlightenment, which includes natal alienation, I would argue that the dynamic of making a slave in the early modern period demands a distinct history and still requires a theorization. In lieu of such a distinct historical logic with its accompanying social forms, the dispossessed, uprooted, and alienated individual-forged in the eighteenth century-remains the universal subject of the slave past. At its core, the project at hand points to an unacknowledged and unwritten history in which the subject, the individual, is seen as a process that involves uprooting persons from the only form of sociality, the polis however conceived-and thereby attending to how the making of a slave as the progenitor of the modern individual entails an engagement with a more nuanced story of power with which former selves were associated. To excavate this long-neglected history demands configuring slavery in relationship to sovereign power. Until such time, we will not have a complicated history of power in the framing of the African past and in the early modern African diaspora: such histories are of critical importance in narrating the story of power. For this reason, I have insisted on bringing sovereign power into our discussion of the African-European encounter and the history of the African diaspora, and also to suggest that this history of the state, as one instantiation of sovereign power, represents a foundational framing for understanding how the individual (but also the ethnic and the cultural) emerges. Here it might be useful to recall my earlier claim: the African diaspora has moved away from its conceptualization rooted in state destruction-an act whereby an external or imperial assault-destroys the polity of another people, thus rendering them stateless beings. The African diaspora, in turn, has become an analytical framing that varies on a continuum of shared consciousness, culture, and racial ancestry, while the state remains noticeably absent. Stated differently, slavery once figured prominently in the discourse on power, yet in its recent history, early modern political theorists conceived of slavery as an economic system and a means for coercing labor, thereby reducing its more complicated relationship to power; even Hegel who repositions the master-slave dialectic back into the realm of power does so around the modern abstraction of the individual embodied in the slave and the master. Early modern theorists and travelers, however, were not in a position to conceive of autonomous individuals and seemed not to have lost sight of the relationship between trade and sovereignty.

#### Tracing the world-making power of self-determination builds solidarity in the face of environmental injustice, global hierarchy, and exploitation.

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Getachew’s (2019: 2) book holds that while decolonization is seen as a moment of ‘nation-building [. . .] and the formation of nation-states’, instead, we ought to see anticolonial nationalism itself as an exercise in ‘worldmaking’. In other words, Getachew recasts anticolonial nationalism itself as a transnational process, seeking an equitable remaking of the world to overcome the injustices of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Getachew’s (2019: 5) book thus signals a gestalt shift in the way that she envisages anticolonial nationalism not as ‘marking the collapse of internationalism and the closure of alternative conceptions of a world after empire’, but instead as a direct, transnational confrontation to ‘the legacies of imperial hierarchy with a demand for the radical reconstitution of the international order’.

Through focusing explicitly on Nnamdi Azikiwe, W.E.B. Du Bois, Michael Manley, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, George Padmore, and Eric Williams, Getachew focuses on three forms of anticolonial worldmaking. Firstly, Getachew explores the anticolonial demand for the right to selfdetermination. Central to Getachew’s (2019: 75) argument is that anticolonial nationalists did not simply ‘take up’ the West’s discourse of self-determination and use it to secure their own independence, but – similarly to how Gopal (2019) looks at anticolonial iterations of liberty, freedom, and justice – through an ‘anticolonial appropriation’ such nationalists radically reconceptualised the meaning of self-determination. Thus, as it was first articulated by the League of Nations, self-determination involved ‘the consent of the governed and consultation with subject people’; however, this definition still allowed for colonialism given that ‘racially backwards people’ were said to not yet be capable of self-governance (Getachew, 2019: 42). Years after the League of Nations, the United Nations (UN) Charter of 1945 again evoked ‘human rights and equality of nations [. . .] as founding principles of a new world order’ despite the continuity of colonial rule (Getachew, 2019: 71). By contrast, anticolonial radicals – through forming organisations and conferences such as the League against Imperialism, and the Pan-African Congresses – directly highlighted the hypocrisy of the Westernized definition of self-determination. For instance, Nkrumah and Padmore organised the fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester, 1945, where the epistemic roots were planted for self-determination to be reconceptualised as a universalist issue of human rights. Through showing how colonialism itself was a violation of human rights, the work of anticolonial nationalists radically shifted the discourse of selfdetermination such that by 1960, when Nkrumah spoke to the UN as the president of Ghana, he was able to use the principle of self-determination to show how colonialism was directly against the UN’s principles, thus leading to the Article 1514 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Peoples and Countries.

Secondly, Getachew looks at anticolonial nationalist worldmaking through focusing on the formation of regional federations. As Getachew (2019: 113) shows, to such anticolonial nationalists, sovereignty granted through the right to self-determination was ‘meaningless in the context of international hierarchy and economic dependence’. This relates to Nkrumah’s critique of neo-imperialism, described as ‘the disjuncture between formal independence and de facto dependence’ (Getachew, 2019: 108), whereby nation states have ‘nominal freedom’ yet remain economically dependent on the Global North and thus vulnerable to political domination through financial control. In response to this neo-imperialism, radicals like Nkrumah and Eric Williams saw federations – such as the Union of African States or the West Indian Federation – as providing the potential for economic trade and development that did not require foreign intervention and reliance on the Global North. This is why, for instance, upon Ghana becoming a republic in 1960, Nkrumah’s nationalism also involved successfully advocating for a clause in the constitution that conferred on the parliament ‘the power to provide for the surrender of the whole or any part of the sovereignty of Ghana’ once a Union of African States was formed (Getachew, 2019: 107): national independence was thus connected to an embracing of anticolonial internationalism.

Connected to such building of federations, which ultimately failed, Getachew explores the final form of anticolonial nationalist worldmaking: the demand for a New International Economic Order (NIEO). Getachew thus shows how ‘second wave’ anticolonial nationalists, such as Michael Manley and Julius Nyerere, developed Nkrumah’s critique of neo-imperialism to show how formerly colonized nations were still vulnerable and exploited in an unequal global political economy – if not by other nations, then by private corporations. This meant that not only were the newly independent nations unequally integrated into the world economic system, but that their efforts of state building were also much more susceptible to the fluctuations of the international markets and private, corporate interests. Thus emerged the demands for a New International Economic Order (NIEO). The Declaration for the Establishment of an NIEO, put to the UN in 1974, challenged the way that the UN’s General Assembly – where each member has one vote – has the power to issue legally binding international economic policy. Anticolonial nationalists, such as Nyerere, pointed out that such formal, legislative equality that was granted to formerly colonized nations was not translated into a substantive equality – as Getachew (2019: 93) summaries: ‘to say that Jamaica or Tanzania and the United States were equal members of the international order obfuscated the outsized economic dominance that the United States exercised and could deploy to compel dependent states’. Thus, Nyerere argued that an NIEO was needed such that newly independent states could have the freedom to pursue their own economic programmes, including the ability to nationalize industries under private control. To such nationalists, this NIEO was in fact a necessary prerequisite to achieve the UN’s founding principle for international order: that of sovereign equality. In other words, anticolonial radicals used the principle of national sovereignty, and economic control over one’s own nation, again as a process through which we could achieve an anti-imperial world order.

At the heart of Getachew’s (2019: 2) book, therefore, is the principle that ‘decolonization was a project of reordering the world that sought to create a domination free and egalitarian international order’. Anticolonial nationalism, read through this lens, despite evoking principles of self-determination and national sovereignty, was always concerned with the grander transnational project of remaking the world in an equitable fashion.

Stretching the sociology of race across time and space

While my review of these three books’ arguments is fairly brief, I hope it is already apparent that despite making discrete arguments and contributions, they each share some fundamental similarities. Throughout the books, we see recurrent figures mentioned – from Du Bois, Padmore and Nkrumah, through to Gandhi, Churchill, and Woodrow Wilson – as well as analysis of key institutions and conferences – from the Gadar Party, based on the West Coast of the United States campaigning for Indian anti-colonialism, through to the League against Imperialism and the Pan-African Congresses. I want to now develop this review by focusing on three particular ways that these three books’ transnational and historical scopes push forward the sociology of race.

Racism at home, imperialism abroad

Firstly, each of these three books makes the point that there is an inherent connection between racism ‘at home’ in the West, with Western practices of colonialism, imperialism, and neo-colonialism ‘abroad’. Desai’s (2020) discussion, for instance, interrogates how Du Bois saw racialised capitalism as the binding factor between the United States’ exploitation of Black Americans with the British empire’s colonial apparatus, and how ‘whiteness’ offered a symbolic space of purity – a material and psychological wage – that impeded the white workers across the West to endorse an anti-imperialism. In his critique of racial capitalism, therefore, Du Bois argues that ‘the English working classes are exploiting India [. . .] and the working classes of America are subjugating Santo Domingo and Haiti [. . .] He is a co-worker in the miserable modern subjugation of over half the world’ (quoted in Desai 2020: 144). Similarly, Gopal (2019: 284) questions: ‘How could the problem of race in the context of global imperialism be addressed in its specificity and as it intersected with the question of class and the exploitation of labour?’ In exploring this question through the lens of dissent against the British empire, Gopal (2019: 441) presents the work of anticolonial Marxists – such as C. L.R James, Padmore, and Eric Williams – each of whom stressed that ‘if empire was to be left behind, then the buccaneering capitalism that it had propagated would also need to be replaced with a more radically egalitarian system’. In advocating for a new ‘radically egalitarian’ alternative to global capitalism, these radicals sought to not just free those newly independent nations from the Global North’s economic control, but also those ‘postcolonial citizens’ exploited in the metropoles itself. Lastly, Getachew (2019: 20–21) discusses the notion of a ‘global Jim Crow’, highlighting how rather than being an idiosyncrasy of the US South, ‘the color line was an international phenomenon of which segregation and racial domination in the United States were only a domestic iteration’.

Indeed, it may seem almost too obvious of a point to make that racism is connected to the processes of colonialism and neo-colonialism. After all, ‘the concept of race was thus the glue that stuck the colonial world order together, as it became common-sense knowledge that there was a global racial hierarchy which permitted the colonization of the “lesser” races by the dominant white Europeans’ (Meghji, 2020a: 4). Nevertheless, if we look at dominant approaches in the sociology of race, then such transnational connections tend to be elided. Instead, much sociology of race tends to be characterised by a methodological nationalism in which it becomes sociologically viable – and advisable – to study racism within the confines of particular, discrete nation states (Meghji, Forthcoming). However, such methodological nationalism is not analytically useful for our current predicaments. It is the same social system that exploits the labour of children in China to make electronic goods, that exploits the (disproportionately Black and Brown) zero-hour contracted truck driver who delivers this product to its eventual owner in the West; it is the same imperialised-racialised principle that Islam is opposed to modernity that justifies the state surveillance of Muslims under the Patriot Act in the United States and the Prevent counter-terrorism programme in Britain, that justifies Western military intervention in the Middle East under the guise of civilizing the backwards world. While neither Getachew, Desai, or Gopal’s books are explicitly about the links between racism and imperialism, they each highlight that there is a radical tradition of thought which has always analysed these two processes in tandem with one another. The fact that this tradition already exists pushes me to my next point, as I argue that the sociology of race needs to adopt a more historical approach.

Looking backwards to move forwards

While each of the three reviewed books use historical methods, each of them also reflects on our present conjunctures. Getachew (2019: 181) points out that the ‘worldmakers of decolonization’ offer an intellectual tradition through which to think about contemporary transnational movements such as ‘the Movement for Black Lives, the Caribbean demand for reparations for slavery and genocide, and South African calls for a social and economic decolonization’. Similarly, Gopal (2019: 448) argues the dispelling the myth of British colonial benevolence, and centering anticolonial agency, allows us to both move beyond the idea that Britain is a global superpower that has the legitimacy to intervene across the globe, as well as allowing ‘Britons to lay claim to a different, more challenging history [. . .] which can draw on multiple historical and cultural resources’. Lastly, Desai (2020) argues that his book highlights historical themes that still shape the present day, such as the United States’ claim of being the champion of liberalism and democracy while it still routinely kills many of its citizens (and those around the world).

In short, therefore, each of the three authors stress the necessity of having a historical sensibility to comprehend current situations and social processes. At the very same time as they are developing such temporal linkages, however, we are seeing increased attempts within the sociology of race to bifurcate the study of racism away from its historical roots in colonialism (and consequently, its contemporary basis in neo-colonialism). If we take critical race theory, for instance, Bonilla-Silva (2015: 74) even goes as far as to say that this paradigm ought to move beyond ‘the sins [of the] past (e.g., slavery, colonization, and genocide)’ in studying the ‘contemporary foundation’ of racism. Of course, Bonilla-Silva has apt reasons for his methodological scope – by reducing racism to being a consequence of past events, we lose sight of how racism continues because it still benefits people in the present day, who consequently maintain an interest in reproducing it. Nevertheless, we have to question whether being captured in a methodological ‘presentism’, which explicitly attempts to bifurcate the study of the present from its past, is analytically viable when it comes to the processes of racialisation and racism.

Very often, for instance, what we immediately think of as a social process specific to our present racialised social structure in fact has a much longer history informed by the logics of coloniality. For instance, consider the case of the militarisation of the police in the United States – a key issue in contemporary racism. As Go (2020) shows, such militarisation of the United States’ police started in the early 20th century primarily as a means of punitively surveying and controlling the racially subdominant. However, the tactics used by this police – such as the creation of mobile squads and intelligence divisions – derived from the United States’ military practices in their colonies (Go, 2020). In this regard, Go creates a temporal link between a contemporary issue of police militarisation with its historical origins, and also a transnational link between ‘racism at home’ with the US’ ‘imperialism abroad’ in a way that transcends bifurcated understandings of racialized processes.

Without necessarily having it as their primary focus, therefore, Getachew, Gopal, and Desai each show the possibilities for social analysis that can be opened up if we retain a historical focus when looking at contemporary society. Through appreciating the historical linkages with contemporary racism, we become better placed to connect with the various intellectual paradigms which dedicated themselves to dismantling this system in the fight for social justice. It is this theme of social justice that we now turn to.

Towards anti-racist, anti-colonial solidarities

A recurrent theme runs through each of the reviewed books: the importance of forging transnational solidarities. Gopal (2019) shows how anticolonial radicals in Britain centred solidarity – in the sense of multicultural, transnational, crossorganisational coalitions – in their struggles against the British empire, meaning that thinkers in the metropoles, such as Frederic Harrison and Arthur Ballard, came to argue that the British ruling class’ fascism in the colonies, in the name of capital accumulation, could be connected with their exploitation of white British workers. Similarly, Desai’s (2020: 45) concept of ‘transnational refraction’ was built around the premise that anti-imperialists thought about colonialism and racism through the sense of shared struggle and solidarity, citing, for instance Saint Nihal Singh’s argument that there was a fundamental ‘link between the Asian migrant laborer [in the United States], the African American subject, and the colonized Indian, each connected the other by the sheer fact of being on the wrong side of the color line’. Desai (2020: 199) even concludes his book with the assertion that such transnational refraction is a prerequisite for solidarity, when he comments that: ‘solidarity emerges only out of a wilful act of seeing through the eyes of another, whose life we can only understand in glimpses’. Lastly, Getachew (2019: 145) too notes that anticolonial nationalists ‘fashioned Third World solidarity as a form of international class politics, and demanded redistribution on the basis that postcolonial states had in fact produced the wealth the West enjoyed’.

Each of these authors focuses on transnational, multicultural, multiorganisational forms of solidarity not because it is historically interesting, but because history has shown us that these forms of solidarity are successful and necessary in the struggles for social justice. I make this point not because the sociology of race is wilfully ignoring the importance of such solidarity, but because the issues of racism facing us in the contemporary and future world need to replicate these forms of solidarity fostered by the anticolonial radicals recounted in these three books. When we think of the climate crisis, for instance, a solidarity needs to be forged between the poor workers across the West (many of whom areracialised as Black and Brown) who are disproportionately exposed to air pollution, with the environmental destruction faced by indigenous people across Latin America, Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand in the name of capital accumulation, who also in turn need to form a solidarity with those in South Asia facing starvation due to droughts, who in turn need to form solidarities with those in the Caribbean, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe, where cyclones and hurricanes have been creating humanitarian crises. When we think of Islamophobia, we need to form a solidarity between those campaigning against the punitive surveillance of, and state violence towards, Muslims in the West, with those campaigning against the Uyghur detention camps in China, and the Hindutva violence towards Muslims in Kashmir. When it comes to race and racism, we are always talking about transnational, historically, epistemically, and spatially connected social processes, and – as Getachew rightfully highlights – ‘worldmaking’ processes of inequality require equally global solidarities and projects of resistance.

#### Our alternative – We should adopt the principle of sovereignty as non-domination. Non-domination flips responsibility and accountability against powerful states. The alternative proves the international community has a responsibility to secure the background conditions that end neo-colonialism and indirect hierarchy.

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Toward a Postcolonial Cosmopolitanism

Theorizing from the specificity of the postcolonial condition also offers critical resources in normative debates about sovereignty and the international order. Against the backdrop of self-determination’s fall, political theorists and philosophers reframed their questions about justice and legitimacy from a global perspective. Historically, these disciplines viewed the domestic sphere and particularly the “sovereign state as the consummation of political experience and activity” and thus limited normative theorizing to questions of domestic politics.68 However, beginning in the 1970s and in a more sustained fashion after the end of the Cold War, the global turn in political theory questioned this disaggregation of the domestic and international and subjected the international to normative theorizing. Fueling this body of work was a confrontation with the nation-state’s empirical and normative limits. On the one hand, the stylized self-sufficient state, which served as the backdrop for John Rawls’s A Theory of Justice, appeared entirely out of sync with the growing interdependence wrought by economic globalization. In his early critique of Rawls’s assumptions about self-sufficient states, Charles Beitz drew on the growing role of multinational corporations and transnational capital flows to argue that “international economic cooperation creates a new basis for international morality.”69 For Beitz and the field of global justice that emerged in the wake of this intervention, this account of economic globalization made it possible to theorize redistributive obligations beyond the state.

By the end of the Cold War, the growing layers of international legal, political, and economic interdependence also opened up new possibilities for rethinking the political institutions of the international order. In this context, a “fortress-like conception of state sovereignty,” which historically gave states a monopoly on internal political and economic decision-making, was giving way to international institutions and particularly international human rights law that sought to limit and tame state action.70 According to Habermas, these developments signaled a growing transformation of “international law as a law of states into cosmopolitan law as a law of individuals.”71 In this context, Habermas and others have examined the prospects for a constitutionalization of international law that does not aim at the formation of a world state, but disaggregates sovereignty such that the limited functions of securing peace and protecting human rights are lodged in a supranational institution while intermediary and regional institutions address arenas of growing interdependence such as economic and environmental policy.72

While the field of cosmopolitan political theory includes debates that range from global distributional justice to the constitutionalization of regional and international organizations, a central assumption of this perspective is that we now occupy a post-Westphalian world order. On this view, an international order governed by the principles of state sovereignty, equality, and nonintervention can be dated to the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia and was progressively expanded and extended in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As noted above, decolonization is often viewed as the culmination of this process. At the same time, this moment of its universalization is said to coincide with economic and political transformations that chipped away at the normative model of the “self-determining sovereign national state.”73 Thus, while decolonization made the Westphalian model universal, it quickly became “an anachronism.”74

This invocation of “Westphalian sovereignty” is often taken to be a conceptual construct rather than a lived reality. But even when this is acknowledged, the division of Westphalian and post-Westphalian elides the continuities between our international past and present by obscuring the ways in which empire was and continues to be constitutive of international society. An expansive view of empire as a practice and structure of unequal integration rather than simply alien rule highlights the deep continuities between the Westphalian and post-Westphalian world orders. For instance, far from being unprecedented, contemporary economic globalization should be situated within a long history of an imperial global economy. The “density, the speed, and the impact of the global flows” that emerged from the first colonial encounters in the Americas were already planetary in the fifteenth century and restructured political and economic relations within and beyond the Atlantic world.75 This economic integration often took the form of a “non-colonial imperialism” that secured economic access and domination through indirect forms of coercion.76 Contemporary conditions—such as the outsized power of private corporations, the role of international institutions in ensuring the unfettered movement of capital, and the inequalities this era of globalization has generated—build on these imperial foundations and reproduce the logics of unequal integration.

And as was the case prior to decolonization, relations of economic dependence and inequality are often coupled with legal and political modes of unequal membership in international society. While decolonization is associated with the extension of formal rights to all states, legal handicaps written into the process of decolonization set limits on the sovereignty of postcolonial states.77 Thus, even at the moment associated with the culmination of Westphalian sovereignty, juridical equality was aspirational rather than fully realized. More recently, international lawyers and scholars of international relations have abandoned even the normative and aspirational commitment to sovereign equality, arguing for a return to modes of conditional and limited membership for states deemed outlaws, failed, or rogue.78 The explicit defense of a hierarchically organized international order coincides with the growing power of institutions like the UN Security Council and the unilateralism of the United States.79 Rather than view the international order through the dichotomy of Westphalian and post-Westphalian, we should understand it as an imperial world order that was challenged by projects of anticolonial worldmaking and was reconstituted.

The persistence of unequal integration and hierarchy calls for a postcolonial cosmopolitanism that recenters the problem of empire. Drawing on the critique of international hierarchy and the anticolonial efforts to build a world after empire, which are reconstructed in the following pages, this model of cosmopolitanism is less aimed at the limits of the nation-state and more concerned with the ways that relations of hierarchy continue to create differentiated modes of sovereignty and reproduce domination in the international sphere. As described above, hierarchy designates not hegemony, but processes of integration and interaction that produce unevenly distributed rights, obligations, and burdens. These processes of unequal integration are structural and embedded in the institutional arrangements of the international order. They create the international conditions of ongoing imperial domination.

With its critical and diagnostic orientation focused on the present configurations of international hierarchy, the normative and utopian core of a postcolonial cosmopolitanism remains the principle of nondomination at the center of anticolonial worldmaking.80 Nondomination recasts the current configurations of international hierarchy as infringements on collective projects of self-government. This approach contrasts with an account of the injustices of the international sphere that is primarily concerned with the violation of individual human rights. While international human rights protections have provided important resources in challenging international hierarchy and can be combined with collective claims for self-government, on their own they offer a limited account of the wrongs involved.81 For instance, the expansive claims of private corporations not only undermine individual human rights but also threaten the capacity of self-government insofar as corporate prerogatives erode guarantees secured through state constitutions and national legislation. An emphasis on nondomination thus broadens our account of the injustices that unequal integration and international hierarchy engender. Moreover, as the examples of anticolonial worldmaking suggest, realizing the international condition of nondomination necessary to self-government can extend beyond a defense of the state to include more demanding internationalisms.

In this dual focus on hierarchy and nondomination, a postcolonial cosmopolitanism offers a more circumspect approach to the antistatist orientation of the cosmopolitan turn in political theory. In championing the equal moral worth of persons against the morally arbitrary nature of nation-states, cosmopolitan theorists have advocated taming the state through international law and have expanded the reach of our political and moral obligations. However, this privileging and prioritization of the moral worth of individuals coincides with the normative diminution of collective claims to sovereignty and self-determination, which have historically served to restrain imperialism. As Jean Cohen has argued, in “prematurely drop[ping] the concept of sovereignty” and “assum[ing] that a constitutional cosmopolitan legal order already exists which has or should replace international law,” cosmopolitans risk “becoming apologists for neo-imperial projects.”82 Viewing sovereignty as primarily an impediment to securing the rights of individuals provides cover for imperial practices cynically masked as humanitarian efforts and leaves insufficient normative resources to distinguish and critique imperial and hierarchical curtailments of sovereignty.

This is not an argument for retreating into a defensive sovereigntist position, which cannot provide adequate critical and normative resources to address the contemporary dilemmas of the international order, and it should be clear that the postcolonial approach outlined here does not offer an exhaustive theory of the international order. But in returning to the problem of empire, it provides a readjustment of what we take to be the central conundrums and predicaments of international politics. Moreover, it reminds us that claims of sovereignty and sovereign equality not only have preserved the state against claims of international justice by creating a hermetic seal but also have served as the foundation of anti-imperial visions of international justice. These principles provide bulwarks against hierarchy and resources for resisting domination in the international sphere, while also making possible ambitious visions of the international redistribution of political and economic power.

### 1NC – Green New Deal CA

#### We advocate that the United States federal government adopt the Green New Deal.

#### Green New Deal framework unites policy vision, moral framework, and power analysis to address climate change, racial injustice, and economic deprivation. The racist legacy of environmental injustice proves the need to craft a new vision rather than give in to inevitability of failure.

Rhiana **GUNN-WRIGHT** Climate Policy Director @ Roosevelt Inst. ‘**20** in *Winning the Green New Deal* eds. Prakash & Guido Girgenti p. ecopy not paginated

People often ask me why I decided to help develop the Green New Deal. Why did I, a twentysomething black woman, think I could help develop a policy proposal to address something as big as climate change? Often, I think they expect some grand story: about incredible courage or deep ambition or a master plan for the revolution. The truth is that I was scared—and I really needed a job.t

I grew up, raised by my mother and grandmother, in the same house that my mother grew up in, in a neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago called Englewood. In the thirty years between my grandparents moving in with their three babies and me being born, Englewood had gone from being a (mostly) middle-income community, close-knit and quiet, to one of the poorest, most barren parts of the city. My neighborhood had so many problems: poverty, unemployment, underfunded schools, police brutality, pollution, violence. And those were just the big ones. I rarely saw anyone in power try to solve the problems in Englewood. And when they did try, it seemed to make things worse.

When I asked my mom and grandma why Englewood looked like this, they didn’t tell me about guns or drugs or gangs. They told me about the government. About how the highway system had been built through black neighborhoods, destroying communities that would never be rebuilt. About the public housing authority razing public housing and scattering families in the name of “urban development,” only for city officials to turn around and sell the land to developers on the cheap, now that the projects sat on prime real estate. About the city underfunding black schools and then shutting them down because of “underperformance.” And that’s just what happened to my neighborhood—not even what happened to my family. At the time I’m writing this, I now know that:

My grandmother’s family was not eligible for Social Security for at least fifteen years because her mother was a washerwoman, and the New Deal excluded agricultural and domestic workers (nearly all black at the time) from Social Security—President Roosevelt needed to secure votes from Southern Democrats and Southern Democrats needed cheap labor from economically vulnerable black people.

My grandfather bought our house without any help from the GI Bill, despite being a veteran of the Korean War. My mother told me that he was too proud to apply. The truth is, pride or not, the government denied home loans to black veterans, and the notorious redlining in Chicago meant that he wouldn’t have been approved anyway.

I grew up in a frontline community—meaning that I lived in an area close to a pollution source and with high levels of air pollution. I developed asthma, like most of my friends in my neighborhood. I could barely run until I was in my late teens, and I regularly missed school, which, in turn, meant that my self-employed mother had to miss work. My mother and I had no idea that I was sick because of where we lived. My lungs are weakened to this day.

Progress came with a price, and the price was us. And by the time the Green New Deal came into my life, I would be damned before I paid another dime.

WHAT IS POLICY?

I have spent my life trying to rewrite systems of power, and policy is nothing if not a system for creating and distributing power**.** This is, of course, not how most people think of public policy. In fact, most “official” definitions of policy say something like this:

Policy [is] a statement by government—at whatever level, in whatever form—of what it intends to do about a public problem. Such statements can be found in the Constitution, statutes, regulation, case law (that is, court decisions), agency or leadership decisions, or even in changes of the behavior of government officials at all levels. For example, a law that says that those caught driving while intoxicated will go to jail for up to one year is a statement of governmental policy to punish drunk drivers. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is a statement of government policy toward the environment….

And: “Policy is what the government chooses to do or not to do” about a public problem.

This is all true. But definitions like this make policy design sound like it’s orderly and contained—much like going to the doctor. You have a problem; the doctor diagnoses it; you two find the best treatment. Creating policy is more like going to the doctor with a problem, having fifteen people argue about if it’s a “real” problem that requires a doctor to begin with, then having five of those people (plus some new strangers!) start arguing anew about what the cause of the problem is, only to be interrupted by the doctor’s boss coming in to tell them that they can only choose two of five possible treatment options because the other three would hurt the hospital’s bottom line. And once treatment begins, people argue over how to determine whether it’s successful and if it should be reversed to save money or time.

Policymaking is not a science. It is a fight over whose problems get addressed, how those problems are addressed, and how public power and resources are distributed. If politics is a fight to elect people who reflect and share our values, policy is a fight to actually enact those values—to mold the world, through the work of government, into what we think it should be.

That is why, contrary to popular belief, the most important part of a policy proposal is not the details—at least at the beginning. It’s the vision that the policy presents. As a statement about what the government is going to do, policy inherently tells a story about what went wrong, how the government can fix it, and who has power to shape society—whether it’s the state or the public or corporations. The best policies tell compelling stories, galvanizing legislators and citizens to fight for them, and provide public servants with a clear purpose when they sit down to implement the details. The stories may shift as opponents pick new battles; the details may need tweaks or overhauls as unexpected challenges emerge. A coherent policy vision provides the foundation that both the stories and the details draw upon. Three pillars—the problem, principles, and power—form that foundation, and anchor policymaking from conception to execution.

Problems are the center of any public policy. Because policy is the government’s response to a problem, policy can only be created if we agree that an issue constitutes not just a problem but a public problem—that is, a problem that affects the public that cannot be solved without the government. How we define the scope and origin of the problem determines how we’ll craft a solution. That’s why fossil fuel companies spend millions to sow doubts about the urgency of the climate crisis and cover up their culpability. It’s not just about saving face; it’s about changing our understanding of the problem and preventing government action.

Principles. Policymakers need a compass to navigate the near-infinite variety of policy designs, and principles— which include both our moral values and our theories of government—provide that compass. Remember, policymaking is collective problem-solving—not an objective “science.” Policymaking, like all decision-making, is guided not only by facts but by our values—about freedom and justice, about what we deserve, about what “other people” deserve and, perhaps most crucially, about what the government should and should not do. Principles are, in short, the moral and intellectual core of a policy. They define not only how we engage with a problem but what solutions we consider at all.

Problems in our society are rooted in power. Asking why a problem remains unresolved leads to questions of power: Who wields it and to what end? Are the powerful negligent or malevolent? By directing and entrenching flows of government resources and attention, policy always shapes the distribution of power. Effective, lasting policy changes must change the distributions of power that led to the problem initially, or else the old malefactors will undermine any success. When selecting the mechanisms a policy will use (a loan; a new legal protection; a direct public investment; a new federal agency), policymakers are deciding how to maintain or disrupt the balance of power. And this is not limited to power in the public sector. Governments write the laws, enforce the contracts, and build the infrastructure that make a society and economy possible. Policy changes reverberate beyond the public sector into every domain of our lives.

Problems, principles, and power are the pillars of any policy vision. Together, they animate the policymaking process, guiding not just the story policymakers tell but the decisions they make about what should (or should not) be included in a given proposal.

IS THE GREEN NEW DEAL A POLICY?

The Green New Deal is a proposal for a ten-year economic mobilization to rapidly transition the US to a zero-carbon economy and, in so doing so, regenerate and reorganize the US economy in ways that significantly reduce inequality and redress legacies of systemic oppression. The congressional Green New Deal (“GND”) resolution has five goals:

1. Achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions through a fair and just transition for all communities and workers.

2. Create millions of good, high-wage jobs and ensure prosperity and economic security for all people of the United States.

3. Invest in the infrastructure and industry of the United States to sustainably meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

4. Secure clean air and water, climate and community resilience, healthy food, access to nature, and a sustainable environment for all.

5. Promote justice and equity by stopping current, preventing future, and repairing historic oppression of frontline and vulnerable communities, including Indigenous peoples, communities of color, migrant communities, deindustrialized communities, depopulated rural communities, the poor, lowincome workers, women, the elderly, the unhoused, people with disabilities, and youth.

The GND resolution proposes to achieve these goals in two ways. The first is through a set of “projects” that, if completed, would nearly eliminate carbon emissions in the US. The second is through a set of policies that aim to protect Americans from the disruption and instability that transitioning away from fossil fuels will create and reduce inequity. Some people like to refer to the first set of projects as the “Green” part of the GND and the second as the “New Deal” part. While this may be a helpful rhetorical device, it is a dangerous way to conceptualize the GND. All parts of the GND advance decarbonization—even the “non-climate” policies like universal health care, education, and job training. Similarly, the “green” projects can help reduce inequity if they are designed to create millions of wellpaying jobs, bolster worker power, invest in local communities, and strengthen the social safety net—all of which the Green New Deal proposes to do. Addressing decarbonization and inequality simultaneously has prompted critics to accuse the GND of being a “progressive wish list,” not a policy. Their criticism often reveals a narrow policy vision guiding their thinking. The problem is simply the carbon in the atmosphere; Mr. Policy Doctor will prescribe the correct solution based on science; imbalances of power are mostly irrelevant, too difficult to disrupt when an urgent crisis needs solving. This is a compelling story. But it cannot guide policymakers tasked with averting catastrophic warming, as many authors in this book show.

The Green New Deal is a new policy vision—one that will guide government and society through the biggest task in modern history: decarbonizing our global economy within the next ten to twenty years. The stories and details of GND policy will undoubtedly change in the coming years, but they will be anchored by the vision—a conception of the problem, a set of principles, and an analysis of power—that the GND provides. Vision, however, is not enough. The GND also establishes a framework for a national economic mobilization and a set of ever-evolving and specific policies that fit within this vision and framework.

#### Only the state, not anarchist militancy, can transform society in time to avoid worst impacts of climate change

Beardsworth, PhD, 20

(Richard, Politics@Leeds, Climate science, the politics of climate change and futures of IR, *International Relations*, https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117820946365)

Climate action requires political action simply because, without political action, the scale of the challenge as well as the time within which this action must be achieved cannot be met. If the shutting down of the global economy during the first 4 months of COVID-19 led to an 8 percent annual decrease in carbon emissions, and this decrease is required yearly for the next 10 years, nothing short of coordinated national and international action can be effective. As the logic behind the CoP15 Paris Agreement understood, in a world structured by a system of states, the state remains, in relation with other states, the effective focus for these national and international acts of coordination. One can maintain, of course, that concerted reflection on goals and their practice cannot be rehearsed within the same state system that, in co-evolution with capitalism, has produced the climate problem in the first place.24 Yet, my argument here is simple: (1) climate action must be of a political kind if this action is to be coherent and effective, and the horizon of this understanding of the political (comprehensive and effective action) is in a vital sense defined by the state; (2) this political action redounds above all to the agency and responsibility of the state both in relation to its own citizenry and in relation to other states and their citizenry. In response to the challenge of time and scale, I argue we should turn to, not turn away from, the state as an agent of change. Only if one renounces the potential of political action today through historically constituted practices of political efficacy does one shun this kind of conclusion. In which case, I would argue, one has renounced politics for our age, as well as the major emotion on which politics is based, hope.25 Since Max Weber, the state is sociologically defined by the legitimate monopoly of violence that it holds over all other forms of force within a nationally determined territory.26 There are many ways in which this monopoly is contested today. The description of a state as ‘vulnerable’ is nothing but the indication that a particular state does not hold the monopoly of violence within its territory. Prior to questions of political authority and legitimacy, all states are today vulnerable in this sense given the nature of global challenges that follow intended and unintended processes of interdependence (global financial instability, global terrorism, migration flows, pandemics, climate change, etc.). That said, the responses both to the financial crisis of 2008 and (much more so) to the present COVID-19 crisis testify to the fact that the monopoly of violence particular to the effectiveness of state governance remains in place. Among an increasing complexity of social actors, the state still holds the levers of power that are decisive in effecting social transformation. Consequently, to one side of the empirical fact that countries constitute the beef of the UNFCCC climate regime, I am arguing that the state remains the primary vehicle of a politics of climate change. As the emerging literature on the Green New Deal implies, the state can do the following. At a national level, it can organize and steer fiscal, monetary and sector-policies like those of energy, transport, agriculture, the communications industry and housing in such a way that both businesses and consumers are motivated to shift behaviour towards a carbon-neutral society. This model of the state is one of a regulated market economy that uses the coordination of state direction with market dynamism to effect broad social change. Governments respond to markets as they plan ahead with regard to climate change (the rapid fall in the price of solar and wind energy, for example), and much of the new green infrastructure is/will be locally distributed and assembled (no ‘giant public works’ given that contemporary technology is smart).27 That said, governments are the sole governance body with appropriate fiscal and monetary tools (1) to set up the rebuilding of national economies with new strategic priorities; (2) to steer and to guarantee concerted action across sectors; and (3) to guarantee, in turn, that this action is underpinned by the principles of ‘a just transition’.28 If the timeline to a 50 percent reduction of carbon emissions is 2030, then the state must so organize and steer that solutions to climate change are integrated. Attention to ‘the climate emergency’ alone will not lead to the necessary change. This last point is important and suggests why the idea of the Green New Deal, whether one is on the Left or Right, harbours the appropriate response. The integration of climate policy with radical policies for poverty alleviation and re-employment in sustainable industries and commerce provides the only way in which the shift from an extractive to a regenerative economy and society is possible in the first place. Without this convergence of solutions, practical solutions to climate change will not only tackle the scale and timeline of the problem; they will re-create a deeply divided polity of the employed and unemployed that could lead to ever-worse scenarios of a politics based on division and fear, not community and hope. It is the state alone – in conjunction with the forces of the market and civil society – that can provide the vision, the terms of execution of this vision (organized integration) and, critically, the policy-leverage that can bring about economic and social convergence.

#### Scale and rate of climate change mean there is no time for pessimism, only state focused political action can stop extinction. This isn’t naïve liberal belief in progress, the SQ has already incorporated insights from their critique

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(Richard, Politics@Leeds, Climate science, the politics of climate change and futures of IR, *International Relations*, https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117820946365)

The politics of climate change and the futures of IR What are the implications of the argument of the last two sections for the discipline of International Relations and its futures? I have argued, first, that climate change presents an empirical global challenge that necessitates not only a normative response, but a normative response through politics if this change is not, at worst, to obliterate human possibility, human time and human space. This political response requires, second, comprehensive, integrated political action on a scale and within a timeline that is historically unprecedented. Given both the nature of the response needed and the scale and time within which this response must work, this politics must be structured, third, through the modern state system and through the economic system upon which this system was built (capitalism). In contradistinction to sub-national and post-national forms of governance, it is only the state that has the power and leverage to organize, steer and enable concerted, coordinated, intersectoral action so that a just transition to a carbon-neutral, indeed carbon-negative society is in the least possible by 2050. If it is only the state in principle that can do this, the success of its action will, at the same time, only happen through enabling other actors across society (both domestic and global) to work to the end of transition more effectively than itself – in energy markets, in local areas, in financial investment strategies for nature-based solutions, in behavioural change towards a society of limits and so forth. The argument is, consequently, not state-centric; it posits that the state, within processes of social agency and social transformation, is the sole political instance of governance, at the same time, to enable and steer in an integrated, comprehensive manner. Fourth, I argue, therefore, that, against the background of faltering global governance regimes and a renewed nationalist mindset, it is the state that bears the responsibility, both towards its own citizens and towards those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, to respond to climate change and lead, with international institutions, climate alliances among states. Finally, fifth, I have intimated that it is through these alliances that coordinated global climate action will emerge that reorganizes the development agenda beyond the distinction between North and South. A new global order could emerge from this reorganization, in response to climate change. This sequence of points means that a state-focused perspective on international politics must continue to be embraced in the discipline of IR for the coming decades. In the last 40 years, and partly as a healthy intellectual reaction against the supposed domination of state-centred realism and inter-state liberalism in the discipline, there have been multiple initiatives in IR to step to one side of the state and seek the grain of international politics in other actors and processes (from Susan Strange’s Retreat of the State41 to recent critical theoretical interest, as also exemplified in this SI, in the ‘posthuman’). These diverse initiatives have made the discipline intellectually richer and more inter- and pluri-disciplinary. They have, I would suggest, come at the cost, however, of losing grasp of the state where and when the state remains a necessary agent of change. This article has argued that this is foremostly the case when it comes to responding to climate change. From this perspective, continued engagement with the state as an agent of change requires that the discipline as a whole re-engages with the legacy of Weberian realism (the state and the state system), the legacy of classical realism (the ethics of the lesser violence in world of limitation) and the legacy of the English School (state responsibility and state leadership), together with the insights of constructivism, in order to reconstruct domestic and foreign policies in tight relation to climate change and its effects.42 Only, perhaps, as a result of this reconstruction can something like a reinvigorated liberal internationalism emerge that has authentically cosmopolitan aspirations: that is, aspirations that do not redound to the national interests of the more powerful states, but seek to organize, amid the risks of regression, conflict and the greater violence, a global order of sustainable development and sustainability that transcends the conceptual and practical ‘North/South’ divide. A great deal needs to be unpacked in the suggestions of the last paragraph in order to map how the various theoretical legacies in IR can be turned to the most complex human interconnection at hand: climate change. Suffice it to add here three things of import. First, the discipline’s response to climate change must work across its various traditions and ‘schools’ to have ontological, epistemological, ethical and political traction upon it. I have maintained that the state must be foregrounded in this response, but this foregrounding can only make sense if the state is seen to be working in, through, and for a larger environment of actors and their practices. The discipline of IR needs to provide normative vision for, and empirical analysis of, this coordinated set of arrangements. Second, the move to deepen and reconfigure the sustainable development agenda in the light of response to climate change should, I have suggested several times, be far-reaching. Vision for, and analysis of, the ever-closer connections between the disciplines of International Relations and International Development must be forged; for example, connections based not on conflict and post-conflict scenarios, but primarily on what sustainable resilience means conceptually and policy-wise across all states and their populations. Third, and finally, a new academic mindset in the discipline may be required; or it should at least be fostered through the discipline. At a theoretical level, liberalism is considered the one ‘optimistic’ tradition within IR, a tradition predicated on belief in rational politics and cooperation, progress and embetterment. Liberalism harbours an optimism the very critique of which often defines the respective critical mindsets of realism, Marxism, feminism, post-colonialism (and) IR critical theory. These critiques have again been very rich for the discipline of IR over the last 40 years, perhaps, most tellingly for the contemporary student with regard to the hubris of post-Cold War liberalisms. In the context of climate change’s challenge for IR, a fierce optimism is nevertheless now required: an optimism no longer harnessed to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century terms of liberal progress, but a mindset of purpose that is focused, deftly aggressive and sustained within the logics of sustainable resilience. Given both the time and the scale of political action required for net-zero national and global societies to emerge by 2050, there is, in essence, no time to be pessimistic or sceptical; whatever happens empirically in the next 30 years, there is the time to place sustained, focused pressure on political institutions and their leaders so that social transformation towards a national and global society of limits is brought about. In this sense, fiercely optimistic, bearers of the discipline of IR should assume a strong intellectual, pedagogical and social role in the three coming decades.

## Case

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#### Calls for surrendering to blackness lead to elite capture.

Táíwò, 20—assistant professor of philosophy at Georgetown University (Olúfémi, “Being-in-the-Room Privilege: Elite Capture and Epistemic Deference,” The Philosopher, vol. 108, no. 4, dml)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But probably not.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Complicity of civil society proves the need for a strong re-distributionist federal state – the state’s need for legitimacy creates leverage for neo-abolitionism.

Robin **BLACKBURN** Sociology @ Essex **’17** in *Feminism, Capitalism, and Critique* eds. Bottici & Bargu p. 57-62

In the conclusion of her response to Dawson, Fraser argues that the state played a key role in promoting colonial slavery and the plantation system. It was the state, she explains, which validates expropriation and which is responsible for a “political subjectivation” (2016). While this may have been the case in other social regimes, the state played a surprisingly modest role in the running of plantation slavery in the Americas, from its seventeenth-century origins to its nineteenth-century climax. The colonial state did recognize plantation wealth, but it was the competitive Atlantic context which gave freelance merchants and bankers their chance and which they perfected with the “Second Slavery” of the nineteenth century (Tomich 2004; Johnson 2013; Baptist 2014). The colonial trading companies failed in the Americas. The plantation boom was the work of independent planters and traders, beginning as “interlopers,” practicing de facto free trade. These classic entrepreneurs carried millions of captives across the ocean. Traders, planters and factors learned from one another and devised many of their own laws in their own assemblies. The French colonial merchants insisted that they must have unfettered access to European markets and one of them - the merchant economist Thomas Le Gendre - invented the slogan laissez faire, laissez passer. The French royal authorities drew up the Code Noir, but colonial proprietors simply ignored any regulations they disliked. Racial slavery in the English American colonies was very much a product of civil society, not the state. John Locke was responsible in the 1690s for revising or approving colonial laws as director of the Southern department of the Board of Trade. But the great philosopher thought the colonial slaveholders were a valuable check on royal power so did nothing to weaken their position. This foundational moment saw a colonial institution - chattel slavery - accepted by the metropolis, not imposed by the metropolis on the colonies.

The US Constitution, in deference to planter wishes, provided for a minimal state with the lowest possible taxes (Einhorn 2008), with law and order being guaranteed by local militia and patrols not federal troops. The US Army numbered 18,000 in 1820, compared with over 400,000 state militia. And the Militia Act of 1792 explained that all “white men” were to be enrolled in it, an injunction that applied to the North as well as South. (The African American “pessimists” argue that the North/South “binary” on race is generally misleading.) The planters faced varied resistance but made their own security arrangements, which were quite effective down to 1860 - and again after 1877. Slaveholders everywhere in the Americas had a lively fear of meddling by metropolitan philanthropists and ignoramuses. In the United States in the 1850s, the Southern slaveholders were so alarmed by the prospect of a Republican president that they took the huge gamble of secession to avoid it. The slaveholders could maintain dominance within their own areas, but they had a horror of unreliable federal office-holders, of anti-slavery propaganda and of a fickle Northern public opinion. Fraser’s argument that the slaveholders needed the state because they needed “political subjectivation” would be very relevant here.

If we look at Jim Crow and the reconstruction of white supremacy in the US South, it showed similar ambivalence and was anchored in civil society not the federal state. The main Southern demand was for “states rights” and Southern autonomy. The “expropriation” and terrorization of the former slave were guaranteed by patrols and militia organized by the slaveholders themselves. In some parts of the South, US occupation saw a challenge to planter power in 1868-77 but almost immediately the planter militias and patrols morphed into white vigilante groups, which reflected local white power structures.

Frank Wilderson is right to locate the racial dynamic of domination and capitalism close to the ground level. The subtitle of his article is “Whither the Slave in Civil Society?” (Wilderson 2003). Slaveholders needed the state, and they needed allies, but they were not confident that they could rely on either in a crisis. Wilderson draws attention to the ubiquity of planter patrols and militias in slave societies. After the failure of Reconstruction, the disciplinary function belonged to the local state. In more recent times the National Guard, police and vigilante groups directly inherit the role of enforcer of the racial order.

Yet, Radical Reconstruction bequeathed more of a legacy of autonomy and resistance than the “pessimists” allow. The freedmen and -women had participated in Black Conventions and endorsed a Declaration of Rights and Wrongs. They fought against lynch mobs and, in an innovative move, campaigned for the “public right” of equal access to public accommodation and transport. This approach was to overcome the abstraction and passivity of some varieties of “rights-bearing.” African Americans created schools, colleges, choirs and churches where a black community could take shape (Scott 2006).

When Reconstruction collapsed with the withdrawal of federal forces from the South, it was replaced by a decentralized regime of terror, which combined elements of spontaneity with the backing of former Confederate officers. The willingness of the authorities in Washington, DC, went along with Southern lynching and segregation from a mixture of fear and fellow feeling. Intervening in the South would be expensive and unpopular. The initiative still lay with such civil society actors as planters, landlords, storekeepers and bankers.

Fraser writes that “the United States perpetuated its ‘internal colony’ by transforming recently emancipated slaves into debt peons through the share-cropping system” (Fraser 2016). The way this is phrased does not sufficiently acknowledge the role of the Southern elite, which had its own agenda that it was often able to impose on Washington. It was a junior partner nationally but exercised a monopoly of power in its own region. Moreover, its very existence rendered racism respectable throughout the Union. The North made huge concessions to the South because Northern Republicans feared the Southern elite and often shared their contemptuous views about blacks. Racism, like patriarchy, thrived because of its roots in civil society and the continuing weakness of the federal state. White supremacy was based on the facts on the ground, on armed bodies of white men.

Where Does Anti-Racism Come From?

In her fascinating concluding sketch, Fraser has little to say about the historic defeats inflicted on racism in the mid-twentieth century - the defeat of Nazi Germany, the rise and fall of Imperial Japan, the founding of the United Nations, the Chinese Revolution, the anti-colonial revolutions, the civil rights struggle in the United States and the downfall of apartheid. Racism stubbornly survives, and the successes and failures of capitalism generate new varieties of racial oppression. But nevertheless, white supremacy and other forms of institutional racism have been deeply discredited. Indeed, the glaring contradiction between racial regimes and their official demise contributes greatly to the “legitimacy crisis” of today’s still-racialized capitalism.

The word “racism” acquired negative and critical connotations only very recently. As a critical concept it dates from the twentieth century and was only widely adopted in the anti-colonial and anti-fascist movements. The defeat of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan did much to discredit racism, an ideology and practice that imbued European colonialism, US segregation and South African apartheid (Cox 1949; Kovel 1970). W. E. B. Dubois, the NAACP and the Haarlem Renaissance helped to renew the tradition of black abolitionism and to transmit it to new generations. The emergent post-war world saw East and West competing for influence. According to the new human rights doctrine,white racists were enemies of progress because they denied the respect due to all members of the human race. The US tolerance of segregation and apartheid seriously weakened its international standing.

If we ask where the new anti-racist norms come from, then part of the answer would be, as Lynn Hunt has shown, the abolitionist and neo- abolitionist movements (Hunt 2007). They challenged racist doctrines and practices and fostered an alliance between anti-colonial and antiapartheid movements and the struggle for racial justice in the United States. The emergence of national liberation movements and the emergence of the “third world” directly inspired - and were inspired by - the indictment of racism found in the writings of W. E. B. Du Bois, Ruth Benedict, Oliver Cromwell Cox, Claude Levi-Strauss, Franz Fanon, Jean-Paul Sartre, Joel Kovel, and the work and the testimony of many other writers and activists. The rejection of Western racism and colonialism was an intellectual, cultural and political achievement of anti-colonial, anti-fascist, anti-apartheid and black liberation movements, each of which helped anti-racism to avoid false universalism and empty formalism. Western capitalism was nourished by a host of expropriations, but some currents of liberal and bourgeois thought and politics broke with colonial and racial paternalism and welcomed the UN General Declaration of Human Rights, the latter inspired by the neo-abolitionist NAACP.

While incomplete and flawed in various ways, the General Declaration furnished a key reference point for anti-racist mobilization. Attempts to portray the discourse of “human rights” as a purely bourgeois construction, as is sometimes claimed by both partisans and critics, are misguided. But the sorts of class struggle typically provoked by capitalist accumulation and appropriation - and most particularly by “expropriation” - often strive to combine anti-racist and anti-capitalist themes. Thomas Haskell claimed that “humanitarianism” was the result of horizons gradually enlarged by the spread of market relations (Bender 1992). There is a grain of truth in this, yet real advances arose at times of rupture and class struggle, and they reflected fear of markets as well as the broader connections they reveal. Anti-racism arose in the 1930s and registered few solid gains prior to the UN General Declaration of 1948. Prior to this, US New Dealers and European Liberals and Socialists were typically complicit with Southern or colonial racism. During the interwar period the international Communist movement was almost alone in campaigning against white racism and colonialism. The UN General Declaration arose from Eleanor Roosevelt’s response to the initiatives ofW. E. B. Du Bois and the Soviet delegation (Hunt 2007, Blackburn 2011).

Fraser powerfully advances our understanding of the ways in which capitalism generates inequality and exclusion, thereby fostering and feeding racialization. The impetus here derives from civil society. However, the state certainly furnishes guarantees, legitimacy and powers to these social relations, a fact that becomes very visible at times of general crisis, war and revolution. At such times the ruling order was divided and the oppressed and excluded could make their presence felt. The test of war and revolution generates a need for mobilizing appeals that could challenge oppression and gain wide acceptance. It furnishes points of rupture. However, vigilance is in order because state elites can be easily distracted and forces within civil society inimical to racial equality will undermine and falsify prior gains.

#### Black anarchism fails – black power was easily coopted into patronage-client style politics.

Cedric **JOHNSON** Poli Sci @ Hobart and William Smith Colleges **’17** “The Panthers Can’t Save Us Now” *Catalyst* 1 (1)

In early December 2013, Senegalese artist Issa Samb donned a black leather jacket and beret, grasped a spear in his left hand and a M1 carbine rifle in his right, and settled into a rattan throne. Samb’s live performance replicated the 1967 photo of Huey Newton, carefully staged by Eldridge Cleaver in the Ramparts magazine office, that would become the most iconic representation of Black Panther Party militancy and internationalism. Samb chose to recreate the famous image in an abandoned storefront that had previously housed a Harold’s Chicken restaurant, along Chicago’s Garfield Boulevard. His performance was part of a weeklong series of events hosted by the University of Chicago to commemorate the 1969 police killings of Illinois Panthers Mark Clark and Fred Hampton and to encourage reflection on the party’s legacy. Titled “The Best Marxist is Dead,” Samb’s performance might be read as a commentary on the perils of Black Power nostalgia and as a call for the renewed critique of capitalism within black public life and a radical left politics keenly attuned to new historical conditions.

Samb’s performance is an homage that evokes Newton’s notion of revolutionary suicide — the true show of radical commitment is the willingness to dedicate one’s full energy and time, and potentially one’s life, to revolutionary struggle. The performance title and Newton’s radical pledge are both in keeping with the Panther quip, “The only good pig is a dead one.” If the police constituted an “occupying army,” then liberating the ghetto from their grip would require an equal magnitude of force and sacrifice.

Samb’s performance recalled Newton, but it did not copy him. Samb’s grey beard and locks contrasted sharply with Newton’s clean-shaven, youthful appearance. And where Newton sits with his feet firmly planted, meeting his onlookers with a militant, unflinching gaze, Samb’s legs were crossed and his countenance was more introspective, his eyes sullen. He was the old man who has outlived the revolution, or maybe he’s a ghost. We worship long-dead heroes because they are no longer a part of the difficult tug and pull of historical forces that make our own world. Samb presented us with the revolutionary in the glass case — perhaps a reference to the macabre practice of embalming state socialism’s founders in perpetuity. The revolutionary is entombed, walled off from our own cultural and social world, no longer a part of our sense of living political possibilities.

Sitting on the edge of some of Chicago’s most impoverished and violent neighborhoods, the abandoned storefront itself signals death — yet another casualty in the cycles of divestment, real estate speculation, and displacement afflicting central cities across the United States. Not long into Samb’s performance, these looming urban realities interrupted the celebration, after a scuffle broke out between groups of young men assembled in an upstairs art gallery for the opening reception. Within minutes, police cruisers careened onto the sidewalk, flak-jacketed officers rushed inside to quell the disturbance, and many attendees, some of them Panther veterans, were left shaking their heads in disbelief. In its juxtaposition of movement nostalgia and lingering urban misery, Samb’s performance inspired revival, the revolutionary apparition staring back once again from a blighted corner of the ghetto.

The slogan “Black Lives Matter” rose to prominence the summer before Samb’s storefront performance. Three black feminist activists created the Twitter hashtag after the 2012 vigilante killing of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed black teen in Sanford, Florida. Over the past few years thousands have embraced the slogan, protesting sporting events, staging die-ins on sidewalks, occupying public offices, and shutting down highways. Such actions have forced the undeserved deaths of black civilians into the public conscience and created a crisis of legitimacy for the dominant approaches to urban policing. Although struggles against policing have a much longer lineage, the current renewal of anti-racist organizing crystallized out of discrete historical conjunctures — the comprehensive surveillance of society through private and public security video feeds and smartphone cameras, the advent of social media networks that connect millions of users worldwide and enable instantaneous circulation of information, the hollowing out of the social welfare state and further deterioration of inner-city life in the wake of the subprime mortgage crisis and ensuing recession, and the debates over post-racialism that accompanied the Obama presidency.

Despite the frequency and power of mass demonstrations, at the time of this writing, we are no closer to achieving concrete, substantive reform that might curtail police violence and ensure greater democratic accountability. To be frank, if we are going to end this crisis and achieve genuine public safety and peace, the current struggles must grow beyond street demonstrations to build popular consensus and effective power. The road to reaching those ends is currently blocked. Part of the problem resides in the prevailing nostalgia for Black Power militancy and the continued pursuit of modes of black ethnic politics. Such nostalgia is underwritten by the vindicationist posture of recent scholarly writing on the subject and is abetted by the digital afterlife of movement imagery, which preserves the most emotionally impactful elements of the movement but is consumed in ways that forget Black Power’s historical origins and intrinsic limitations.

At the heart of contemporary organizing is the notion of black exceptionalism. Contemporary Black Lives Matter activists and supporters insist on the uniqueness of the black predicament and on the need for race-specific remedies. “Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise,” #BlackLivesMatter co-founder Alicia Garza explains. “It is an affirmation of Black folks’ contributions to this society, our humanity and our resistance in the face of deadly oppression.”1 “When we say black lives matter,” Garza continues, “we are talking about the ways in which Black people are deprived of our basic human rights and dignity. It is an acknowledgement [that] Black poverty and genocide [are] state violence.” This essay takes aim at this notion of black exceptionalism and lays out its origins and limits as an analysis of hyperpolicing and, more generally, as an effective political orientation capable of building the popular power needed to end the policing crisis.

We begin by revisiting the social and ideological roots of black ethnic politics as we know it. Black Power unfolded within a context of class fragmentation; the decline of the left-labor militancy of the Depression, wartime, and the post–World War II years; and the transformation of metropolitan space after the 1949 Housing Act, which produced suburban homeownership and upward mobility for many whites and inner-city ghettoization and exploitation for the black poor. The combination of shifting urban demography, rising black political efficacy created by the Southern civil rights/desegregation campaigns, and the liberal statecraft of Lyndon B. Johnson’s administration framed the turn to Black Power and associated demands for black control of political and economic institutions. In the Black Power era, we can see the origins of contemporary hyper-ghettoization and intensive policing of the black poor as well as the ascendancy of post-segregation patron-client relations between an expanding black professional-managerial class and the mainstream parties, corporations, and private foundations. This evolution of Black Power as an elite-driven ethnic politics ultimately negated and transcended the revolutionary potential implied in calls for black self-determination and socialist revolution. If you believe that the “Movement for Black Lives” is the second coming of Black Power, this historical process may give us some sense of where it is going.

The notion of black ethnic politics remains at the heart of Black Lives Matter protests and falsely equates racial identity with political constituency. Black Power and Black Lives Matter as political slogans are rooted in racial-standpoint epistemology — that is, the notion that, by virtue of the common experience of racism, African Americans possess territorial ways of knowing the world and, by extension, deeply shared political interests. This commonsensical view is a mystification that elides the differing and conflicting material interests and ideological positions that animate black political life in real time and space.

The second part of this essay examines these differences and conflicts in light of the celebrated release of the Vision for Black Lives agenda, which contains a set of progressive policy demands but is guided by the counterproductive assumptions of black unity politics, which have historically facilitated elite brokerage dynamics rather than building effective counterpower. Just as readily as it can be used to advance left social justice demands, the Black Lives Matter slogan can — and on occasion already has — become a vehicle for entrepreneurial branding and courting philanthropic foundations. Similarly, it can express bourgeois interests (e.g., “Black Wealth Matters”) and education-privatization agendas just as easily as it can express working-class interests and the promotion of public education.

The third section of this essay develops a critique of black exceptionalism, the central premise of contemporary discussions of inequality and campaigns against police violence. The current policing crisis and carceral state are not a reincarnation of the Jim Crow regime. They are, rather, core features of post-welfare-state capitalism, where punitive strategies for managing social inequality have replaced benevolent welfare-state interventions and where managing the surplus population has become a key function of law enforcement and the prison system. Allusions to a new Jim Crow racism continue to have moral sway in some corners and retain the capacity to mobilize citizens in large numbers, but the analysis that underpins them is inadequate to provide the foundations for building left politics. If the current struggles are to become an aggregate force powerful enough to win concrete gains in terms of social justice, a critical first step is for activists to abandon this tendency to substitute analogy for analysis. The premise of black exceptionalism obscures contemporary social realities and actual political alignments and forestalls honest conversations about the real class interests dominating today’s neoliberal urban landscape.

The Roots of Black Ethnic Politics

The familiar leftist lore of Black Power is one of a heroic movement, a time when black denizens rose up in insurrection against imperialism on foreign shores and in the heart of the nation’s cities, a movement where revolutionary dreams of black liberation were crushed by state repression. The broad outlines of this story are true, but the history of Black Power is more complex. The origins of Black Power rest in the unique social and demographic realities of black urban life after World War II and, equally, in the social consequences and limits of the Second Reconstruction: liberal policy reforms produced by the interplay of civil rights movement pressure and the presidential administration of Lyndon B. Johnson, which abolished legal segregation in the South and integrated blacks as consumer-citizens.

Black mass migration after World War II and the segregative dynamics of housing policy under the Harry Truman presidency created the social preconditions for this era of reform and black urban empowerment. A manifestation of real estate industry power, the 1949 Housing Act set in motion the radical spatial transformation of American cities, earmarking funds for urban renewal and public housing construction and creating federally insured mortgages for suburban single-family-home purchases — measures that combined to produce the urban-suburban wealth inequality that would define American public life for more than a half-century.

Housing discrimination and ethnic-enclave settlement patterns limited most blacks to the same proximal urban neighborhoods, even though those black ghettos were internally stratified along class lines, with the black middle class occupying better, safer housing stock.2 Postwar urban renewal further concretized this residential apartheid, as federal interstate highways and other massive public projects bisected black neighborhoods, dispersing residents, destroying the urban fabric, devaluing adjacent property, and often serving as physical walls dividing black areas from those of other ethnicities. Slum clearance and the construction of tower-block housing, which were widely supported by downtown commercial interests and social reformers, momentarily improved the environs of those previously relegated to dangerous, unsanitary tenement conditions, but these developments were in effect a form of vertical ghettoization.

During the same epoch, the peacetime industrial demobilization undermined many black workers’ attempts to find gainful employment and earn a living wage. Given their status as newcomers in many industries, they were among the first to be handed pink slips during cyclical downturns. The relocation of manufacturing facilities from city centers to suburban greenfields and the ongoing adoption of labor-saving production technology further diminished job prospects for less skilled and less educated black urban newcomers. Chrysler autoworker James Boggs was among the first black intellectuals to offer a critical left perspective of industrial automation, cybernetics, and their political implications within and beyond the factory gates.3 Boggs referred to the black men he increasingly saw standing idle on Detroit street corners as “outsiders,” “expendables,” and “untouchables,” those who were among the first to experience technological obsolescence and had little hope of industrial integration. This figure of black unemployed youth during the late fifties and early sixties should have served as a miner’s canary, a harbinger of the precarious conditions produced by labor arbitrage and technology-intensive production, as well as plain and simple prolonged recession and rationalization of the work force by way of speedup. But their plight was drowned out in the high tide of postwar economic prosperity during the sixties and early seventies; in liberal circles, their condition was explained in a manner that disconnected the black urban poor from the rest of the working class. Black Power militants would speak directly to these conditions of unemployment and ghetto isolation, but their movement did not only emerge from below in response to the oppressive conditions facing the ghetto/black urban population, as is commonly asserted. Rather, it was also encouraged by liberal statecraft from above.

Historians of the Black Power era tend to neglect the relationship between its popular manifestations and Johnson’s War on Poverty initiative. This is an unfortunate oversight that may stem in part from the desire of some scholars to valorize black self-activity. But the resulting interpretive bias has no doubt stalled the development of analyses that fully appreciate the complex origins and built-in limitations of Black Power as a sociopolitical phenomenon. Even before “Black Power” became a popular slogan, one that was simultaneously edifying to many blacks who desired real self-determination and frightening to some whites who associated it with violent retribution, liberals in the Johnson White House were retailing their own version of black empowerment: one that addressed class inequality, but in a language of ethno-cultural exceptionalism.

Johnson’s assistant secretary of labor, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, took the lead in this regard, authoring his report The Negro Family: The Case for National Action to build support for progressive legislation addressing urban poverty. In his 1965 Howard University commencement address, Johnson best summed up the core assumption of the Moynihan report when he asserted, “Negro poverty is not white poverty.”4 Working under this notion of Negro exceptionalism, Moynihan argued that black poverty amid white prosperity was due to a combination of institutional racism and the alleged cultural pathology of the black poor themselves. This “culture of poverty” sentiment was widely embraced by Moynihan’s contemporaries, including such diverse figures as anthropologist Oscar Lewis, sociologist Kenneth Clark, and even democratic socialist Michael Harrington.5 Yet some Black Power elements would also accept this culturalist argument, even if their politics were more radical — recall the Black Panthers’ formative position on the lumpenproletariat, which cast this substratum as dysfunctional but potentially revolutionary. This Cold War turn toward cultural explanations of minority poverty within the liberal wing of the New Deal coalition marked a rejection of the class-centered politics that had defined both the labor militancy of the interwar period and the political orientation of the postwar civil rights movement.

The shifting terrain of working-class consciousness and politics within American life during the sixties was the direct result of decades-long interrelated processes. Progressive labor activism was undermined in part by the rise in wages and benefits that resulted from the high levels of investment and employment that came with the long postwar boom, and which provided the basis for the expansion of a normative middle-class ideal of homeownership and leisure consumption. It was tamed, too, by the anticommunist witch-hunts that targeted unions, left parties, civil rights organizations, and Hollywood. Reflecting the balance of class forces during the 1930s, the New Deal was a tangible expression of the interests of particular blocs of capital as well as the outcome of constraints that workers and popular movements imposed on capitalism.6 The National Recovery Administration sought to address the capitalist contradictions that led to the 1929 stock-market crash and ensuing crisis, the weak regulation of the financial markets, and the surplus-absorption problem stemming from the lack of effective demand for manufactured goods. The 1935 Wagner Act’s formal recognition of the right to organize was intended to stabilize labor-management relations and provide a means for resolving disputes in a manner that did not disrupt production and capital flows. This legislation responded to the massive pressure from below that came with the explosion of labor militancy that culminated in three great urban general strikes in 1934. Those strikes had the effect of stimulating a wave of shop-floor organizing led by the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), which was founded in 1935 as a breakaway from the more conservative, craft-oriented American Federation of Labor. Through militant tactics and vigorous organizing, the CIO succeeded in unionizing workers in factories, steel mills, shipyards, docks, and packinghouses throughout the United States and Canada. In response to a wave of CIO-led strikes after the war, Congress passed the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, which criminalized solidarity and the general strike, signaling the effective end of the era of CIO militancy — the organization was reunited with the AFL in 1955 — and ushering in a period of mostly business-centered labor relations.7

Contrary to the popular view of the fifties as an era of mass quiescence, labor unrest continued through the decade, but the expansion of the consumer society and the growth of suburbia weakened progressive unionism. The hearts and minds of many American workers were won over to capitalist growth imperatives through the promise of rising wages, spacious tract housing, the personal mobility of automobile culture, and the enlarged leisure industries reflected in television, drive-in theaters, and shopping malls. The pastoral and technological comforts of suburbia reminded Americans of capitalism’s virtues, while active state repression prescribed clear social consequences to those who dared openly criticize the system’s contradictions and faults.

Beginning with the Palmer Raids of 1919 and 1920, where socialists and anarchists were rounded up, arrested and deported, the US state and local police took a more prominent role in repressing workplace organizing. With the creation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the national state consolidated, enlarged, and rationalized the policing of working-class militancy that in earlier moments of class struggle had been undertaken by Pinkerton saboteurs and hired guns. Reliance on repressive forces at the state and local level played an important part in limiting the impact of workers’ mass militancy in the early New Deal years. After World War II and as US–Soviet tensions sharpened with the instigation of Truman, the ruling class undertook a concerted campaign to extinguish Communist influence within domestic trade unions. The campaign against the radical left, led by the House Committee on Un-American Activities, blacklisted and harassed scores of citizens suspected of Communist sympathy and took an obsessive interest in rooting out reds in the Screen Actors Guild, given the enlarged role of television and movies in shaping American leisure culture, romantic sentiments, and political dispositions.

McCarthyism was especially consequential for the struggle to defeat Jim Crow, since the Communist Party (CP) had played a pivotal role in addressing the “Negro question” during the interwar period through the Scottsboro Boys trials, the formation of the National Negro Congress (NNC), and organizing black sharecroppers in the Deep South. Black and white leftists with ties to the CP and the union movement also built powerful support networks and activist training programs, such the Highlander Folk School. Red-baiting destroyed careers and reputations, bred suspicion and distrust within the Left, and had a chilling effect on the postwar civil rights movement, bolstering liberal integration as the most viable option for black emancipation within the Cold War context. Liberal anti-racism found traction in this context of defeated labor militancy, one where open class analysis and commitment to socialist revolution often spelled financial and personal ruin for those who dared stray from the emergent Cold War rules of acceptable political discourse.

In his analysis of how liberals like Moynihan came to separate race and class, historian Touré Reed reminds us that during the interwar period, through World War II, and well after, organizing based on class was widely accepted as an effective way for blacks to amass power and secure economic gains — specifically participation in the dynamic labor movement of the era. Civil rights leaders like A. Philip Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters union and the wartime March on Washington Movement, Lester Granger of the National Urban League, Walter White of the NAACP, and John P. Davis of the NNC all “frequently argued that precisely because most blacks were working class, racial equality could only be achieved through a combination of anti-discrimination policies and social-democratic economic policies.”8 Some latter-day Black Lives Matter activists, Reed notes, might well reject such a position, which was commonly held by labor and civil rights veterans during the sixties, as “vulgar class reductionis[m].” Although he would increasingly embrace a politics of insider negotiation during the sixties, veteran activist Bayard Rustin insisted that black progress could only be achieved through the development of broad, interracial coalitions dedicated to social democracy, a position that drew the ire of some Black Power radicals.9 The social-democratic perspective touted by Randolph, Rustin, and others was clearly expressed in their 1966 Freedom Budget and actually continued to resonate throughout the decade — perhaps most famously in the 1963 March on Washington but also, for example, in the Memphis sanitation workers’ strike actively supported by Martin Luther King Jr. But this political tendency was ultimately eclipsed by the liberal Democratic focus on racial discrimination and the culture of poverty as distinct problems, separate from the labor-management accord, unionization, and matters of political economy.10

The liberal decoupling of race and class supplanted more radical versions of working-class left politics with far-reaching political consequences, operating now as a form of common sense. During the sixties, this view of Negro exceptionalism filled the vacuum left by interwar labor militancy. It gained traction with the deepening physical separation of black and white workers, which came with the spatial transformation of cities that sent white workers and much industry to the suburbs and left blacks in the urban ghettos. Moreover, by framing the problem of black poverty in terms of discrimination and alleged cultural pathology, liberals, who were now strongly allied with capital, systematically failed to address structural unemployment and the prevalence of nonunion, unprotected employment, two of the root causes of durable poverty among urban blacks. Liberal anti-poverty efforts were limited, as many black activists readily pointed out at the time. Unlike the New Deal legislation, which expanded collective bargaining rights and public works, the Johnson administration’s Great Society legislation took care not to upset the lucrative patronage relations between the federal government and private contractors in the construction and defense sectors, central motors of the postwar economic boom. The Great Society was limited in its capacity to end black urban poverty but powerful in terms of its political impact, as it subsidized and legitimated the expansion of a postsegregation black political elite.

The Johnson administration oversaw a period of domestic social reform that restored black civil rights and went a step further in providing various forms of targeted aid to address racial and urban inequality. Historian Kent Germany examines how War on Poverty reforms were implemented in New Orleans and their consequences for the growth of the black professional-managerial class there. He characterizes the War on Poverty approach as a soft state, “a loose set of short-term political and bureaucratic arrangements that linked together federal bureaucracies, neighborhood groups, nonprofit organizations, semipublic political organizations, social agencies, and, primarily after 1970, local government” to distribute federal funding to predominantly black neighborhoods.11 The Community Action Program, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), Head Start, and Job Corps, as well as the 1966 Demonstration Cities legislation, were especially supportive of Black Power’s genesis and evolution.

These various programs of the War on Poverty encouraged black political incorporation along the established lines of ethnic patron-clientelism and nurtured a discrete form of bourgeois class politics, one that mobilized and rewarded the most articulate elements of urban communities of color. The Community Action Program sought the “maximum feasible participation” of the urban black and brown poor in devising solutions to their collective plight. The result was a form of ethnic empowerment that eventually enabled black constituencies to wrest control from white ethnic-dominated governments in many cities, but which also averted a working class-centered politics by institutionalizing the view that racial identity and political constituency were synonymous.

As it turned out, Black Power militancy and the managerial logic of the Great Society were symbiotic. Figures as diverse as Newark mayor Kenneth Gibson and Black Panther Party co-founder Bobby Seale participated in and led anti-poverty programs. The Community Action Agencies provided established black leadership, neighborhood activists, and aspiring politicos with access, resources, and socialization into the world of local public administration. Moynihan later claimed that “the most important long-run impact” of the Community Action Program was the “formation of an urban Negro leadership echelon at just the time when the Negro masses and other minorities were verging towards extensive commitments to urban politics.” Recalling the quintessential political machine of Gilded Age New York, Moynihan concluded that “Tammany at its best (or worse) would have envied the political apprenticeship provided the neighborhood coordinators of the anti-poverty programs.”12 Although Black Power evocations of Third World revolution and armed struggle carried an air of militancy, the real and imagined threat posed by Black Power activists helped to enhance the leverage of more moderate leadership elements, facilitating integration and patronage linkages that delivered to them urban political control and expanded the ranks of the black professional-managerial stratum. The threat of black militancy, either in the form of armed Panther patrols or the phantom black sniper evoked by public authorities amid urban rioting, facilitated elite brokerage dynamics and political integration. Instead of abolishing the conditions of structural unemployment, disinvestment, and hypersegregation that increasingly defined the inner city, Black Power delivered official recognition and elite representation.

Two of the most influential texts of the period, Harold Cruse’s The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual and Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton’s Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America, both published in 1967, naturalized the rise of Black Power as entailing the black electoral takeover of urban politics by interpreting it in terms of the so-called ethnic framework, which saw the integration of successive waves of immigrants into American life by way of city government and its fruits.13 In his opening chapter, “Individualism and the Open Society,” Cruse, implicitly adopting a liberal pluralist perspective, argued that American society was essentially organized through various social groups, with “ethnic blocs” being the most powerful.14 He claimed that civil rights were a meaningless abstraction outside of the formal, influential political groups that could give them material and practical force. Following this logic, blacks possessed few rights, according to Cruse, because black leadership had failed to act in the nationalistic manner historically pursued by other ethnic groups. Carmichael and Hamilton concluded, in a similar vein, that “group solidarity is necessary before a group can operate effectively from a bargaining position of strength in a pluralistic society.”15 Many argue that the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense represented a more revolutionary alternative to this more conservative black ethnic politics, and to a considerable extent it did. But it must be pointed out that the embrace by some Panthers and other black radical organizations of the colonial analogy and other versions of black exceptionalism abided the same logics.

Organizations like the Black Panther Party fought against police violence, hunger, and slum landlords and mobilized local communities in solidarity with Third World liberation struggles. Creative intellectuals, artists, and musicians affiliated with the Black Arts Movement also unleashed a short-lived urban renaissance in which local black communities dreamed of a world where ghettos were seen not as zones to be escaped and abandoned, but as spaces that might be reborn, giving rise to a popular democratic urbanism not possible under the segregation and exploitation most blacks endured. Unlike the civil rights movement, however, which over the course of decades amassed the resources and popular support needed to wage a successful fight to defeat Jim Crow segregation, Black Power’s radical tendencies attained mass resonance but never achieved truly national popular support for the revolutionary projects they advocated.

#### Democracy is an unfinished project – institutional battles are valuable, and defeatist attitudes ensure the world remains as it is.

Glaude 16 (Eddie S., Jr., Professor of African American Studies and Religion @Princeton and a PhD in Religion @Princeton, *Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves*, p. 185-197, Print)

CHANGE HOW WE VIEW GOVERNMENT

For more than three decades, we have been bludgeoned with an idea of government that has little to no concern for the public good. Big government is bad, we are told. It is inefficient, and its bloated bureaucracies are prone to corruption. Even Democrats, especially since Bill Clinton, have taken up this view. For example, Obama says, "We don't need big government; we need smart government."

For some on the right, big government is bad because it aims to distribute wealth to those who are lazy and undeserving. "Big government" is just a shorthand for dreaded entitlement programs-all too often coded language for race. In this view, "big government" is the primary agent of enforcing racial equality, taking hard-earned stuff from white Americans and giving it to undeserving others. Government cannot do such a thing, they argue, without infringing on the rights of white Americans. And even government-mandated redistribution will not solve the problem. As Barry Goldwater put the point in 1964, "No matter how we try, we cannot pass a law that will make you like me or me like you. The key to racial and religious tolerance lies not in laws alone but, ultimately, in the hearts of men." From this perspective, government plays no role in changing our racial habits. Why would we want to make it bigger?

But Goldwater failed to realize that governmental indifference can harden hearts, and government action can create conditions that soften them. **People's attitudes aren't static or untouchable**. They are molded by the quality of interactions with others, and **one of the great powers of government involves shaping those interactions-not determining them in any concrete sense, but defining the parameters within which people come to know each other and live together**. Today, for example, most Americans don't believe women should be confined to the home raising children, or subjected to crude advances and sexist remarks by men. The women's-rights movement put pressure on the government, which in turn passed laws that helped change some of our beliefs about women. Similarly, the relative progress of the 1960s did not happen merely by using the blunt instruments of the law. **Change emerged from the ways those laws, with grassroots pressure, created new patterns of interactions, and ultimately new habits**. Neither Obama's election to the presidency nor my appointment as a Princeton professor would have happened were it not for these new patterns and habits.

None of this happens overnight. It takes time and increasing vigilance to protect and secure change. I was talking with a dose friend and he mentioned a basic fact: that we were only fifteen years removed from the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 when Ronald Reagan was elected president and Republicans began to dismantle the gains of the black freedom struggle. Civil rights legislation and the policies of the Great Society had just started to reshape our interactions when they started to be rolled back. We barely had a chance to imagine America anew-to pursue what full employment might look like, to let the abolition of the death penalty settle in, to question seriously the morality of putting people in prison cells, and to enact policies that would undo what the 1968 Kerner Commission described as "two Americas"­ before the attack on "big government" or, more precisely, the attack on racial equality was launched. The objective was to shrink the size of government ("to starve the beast") and to limit its domestic responsibilities to ensuring economic efficiency and national defense. Democrats eventually buckled, and this is the view of government, no matter who is in office, that we have today. It has become a kind of touchstone of faith among most Americans that government is wasteful and should be limited in its role-that it shouldn't intrude on our lives. Politicians aren't the only ones who hold this view. Many Americans do, too. **Now we can't even imagine serious talk of things like full employment or the abolition of prisons**.

**We have to change our view of government, especially when it comes to racial matters**. Government policy ensured the vote for African Americans and dismantled legal segregation. Policy established a social safety net for the poor and elderly; it put in place the conditions for the growth of our cities. **All of this didn't happen simply because of individual will** or thanks to some abstract idea of America. **It was tied up with our demands and expectations**. Goldwater was wrong. So was Reagan. And, in many ways, so is Obama. Our racial habits are shaped by the kind of society in which we live, and our government plays a big role in shaping that society. As young children, our community offers us a way of seeing the world; it lets us know what is valuable and sacred, and what stands as virtuous behavior and what does not. When Michael Brown's body was left in the street for more than four hours, it sent a dear message about the value of black lives. When everything in our society says that we should be less concerned about black folk, that they are dangerous, that no specific policies can address their misery, we say to our children and to everyone else that these people are "less than"-that they fall outside of our moral concern. We say, without using the word, that they are niggers.

**One way to change that view is to enact policies that suggest otherwise**. Or, to put it another way, to change our view of government, we must change our demands of government. For example, for the past fifty years African American unemployment has been twice that of white unemployment. The 2013 unemployment rate for African Americans stood at 13.1 percent, the highest annual black unemployment rate in more than seventy years. Social scientists do not generally agree on the causes of this trend. Some attribute it to the fact that African Americans are typically the "last hired and first fired." Others point to changes in the nature of the economy; still others point to overt racial discrimination in the labor market. No matter how we account for the numbers, the fact remains that most Americans see double-digit black unemployment as "normal." However, a large-scale, comprehensive jobs agenda with a living wage designed to put Americans, and explicitly African Americans, to work would go a long way toward uprooting the racial habits that inform such a view. It would counter the nonsense that currently stands as a reason for long-term black unemployment in public debate: black folk are lazy and don't want to work.

**If we hold the view that government plays a crucial role in ensuring the public good**-if we believe that all Americans, no matter their race or class, can be vital contributors to our beloved community-**then we reject the idea that some populations are disposable**, that some people can languish in the shadows while the rest of us dance in the light. The question ''Am I my brother's or my sister's keeper?" is not just a question for the individual or a mantra to motivate the private sector. It is a question answered in the social arrangements that aim to secure the goods and values we most cherish as a community. In other words, we need an idea of government that reflects the value of all Americans, not just white Americans or a few people with a lot of money.

We need government seriously committed to racial justice. As a nation, we can never pat ourselves on the back about racial matters. We have too much blood on our hands. Remembering that fact-our inheritance, as Wendell Berry said-does not amount to beating ourselves over the head, or wallowing in guilt, or trading in race cards. Remembering our national sins serves as a check and balance against national hubris. We're reminded of what we are capable of, and our eyes are trained to see that ugliness when it rears its head. But when we disremember-when we forget about the horrors of lynching, lose sight of how African Americans were locked into a dual labor market because of explicit racism, or ignore how we exported our racism around the world-we free ourselves from any sense of accountability. Concern for others and a sense of responsibility for the whole no longer matter. Cruelty and indifference become our calling cards.

We have to isolate those areas in which long-standing trends of racial inequality short-circuit the life chances of African Americans. In addition to a jobs agenda, **we need a comprehensive government response to the problems of public education and mass incarceration**. **And I do mean a government response**. Private interests have overrun both areas, as privatization drives school reform (and the education of our children is lost in the boisterous battles between teachers' unions and private interests) and as big business makes enormous profits from the warehousing of black and brown people in prisons. Let's be clear: private interests or market-based strategies will not solve the problems we face as a country or bring about the kind of society we need. We have to push for massive government investment in early childhood education and in shifting the center of gravity of our society from punishment to restorative justice. We can begin to enact the latter reform by putting an end to the practice of jailing children. Full stop. We didn't jail children in the past. We don't need to now.

In sum, government can help us go a long way toward uprooting racial habits with policies that support jobs with a living wage, which would help wipe out the historic double-digit gap between white and black unemployment; take an expansive approach to early childhood education, which social science research consistently says profoundly affects the life chances of black children; and dismantle the prison-industrial complex. We can no longer believe that disproportionately locking up black men and women constitutes an answer to social ills.

**This view of government cannot be dismissed as a naive pipe dream**, because political considerations relentlessly attack our political imaginations and limit us to the status quo. We are told before we even open our mouths that this particular view won't work or that it will never see the light of day. We've heard enough of that around single payer health care reform and other progressive policies over the Obama years. **Such defeatist attitudes conspire to limit our imaginations and make sure that the world stays as it is**. But those of us who don't give a damn about the rules of the current political game must courageously organize, advocate, and insist on the moral and political significance of a more robust role for government. We have to change the terms of political debate.

Something dramatic has to happen. American democracy has to be remade. John Dewey, the American philosopher, understood this:

The very idea of democracy, the meaning of democracy, must be continually explored afresh; it has to be constantly discovered and rediscovered, remade and reorganized; while the political and economic and social institutions in which it is embodied have to be remade and reorganized to meet the changes that are going on in the development of new needs on the part of human beings and new resources for satisfying these needs.

Dewey saw **American democracy as an unfinished project**. He knew that the aims and purposes of this country were not fixed forever in the founding documents, but the particular challenges of our moment required imaginative leaps on behalf of democracy itself. Otherwise, undemocratic forces might prevail; tyranny in the form of the almighty dollar and the relentless pursuit of it might overtake any commitment to the idea of the public good; and bad habits might diminish our moral imaginations.

The remaking of America will not happen inside the Beltway. Too many there have too much invested in the status quo. A more robust idea of government will not emerge from the current political parties. Both are beholden to big money. **Substantive change will have to come from us**. Or, as the great civil rights leader Ella Baker said, "we are the leaders we've been looking for"-a model of leadership that scares the hell out of the Reverena Sharpton. We will have to challenge the status quo in the streets and at the ballot box. In short, it will take a full-blown democratic awakening to enact this revolution.

1. **Ethical commitment requires relentless self-criticism and dialectics**

**Griffin, PhD Candidate, 16**

(Thabisile, <http://bostonreview.net/forum/black-study-black-struggle/thabisile-griffin-thabisile-griffin-responds-robin-kelley>, 3-7)\*A-ARP=All-African People’s Revolutionary Party

A decade on, what most resonates from my experiences in the A-APRP is the organization’s commitment to constant study and criticism. Our organizing was always fueled by our reading list and discussions, which were crucial to our understanding of systems of oppression and how we might dismantle them. Reading was central to the revolution: it was **not an extension of bourgeois university labor**, but a critical way of acquiring tools for effective action. **Collective and self-criticism were also paramount**. The members of our work-study group ranged in age from eighteen to thirty, with folk from different classes, regions, and backgrounds. Needless to say, there was conflict. Meetings would end with efforts toward constructive criticism, both of self and of the collective. In the often-complicated organizing toward freedom, the **conflict and contradictions proved to be perhaps the most generative**. It was through these **uncomfortable frictions** that we came to understand the **vital role of dialectics.** Studying and discussing led to **indispensible debates** about how to conceptualize and create freedom. I would suggest that dialectics is still how we need to seek answers, **within and beyond the university**. Although neoliberal logic would lead us to believe otherwise, there is **no fundamental divide** between scholars and “the street.” This belief is inaccurate and destructive; we both affect and are affected by each other. Many of us are from the streets and return there with each birthday and funeral, and many of us still call it home. The intellectual relationship between academics and non-academics serves as another type of integral exchange, and ushers in more of a critical dialectic. **In the academy, the access students have to particular types of resources comes with the great responsibility of building on existing discourses in new and emancipatory ways—for all of humanity.** In his essay, Kelley reminds us that students’ efforts at self-radicalization are nothing new, and such struggles are often both complicated and beautiful. He evokes the mantra of “love, study, struggle” as a fundamental guideline for our spaces. To struggle outside of institutional constraints, to study rigorously, and to practice a collective love that engulfs individualized fear and trauma. Enslaved people in the Americas did not find themselves fixed in the muddy vestiges of trauma and destruction; instead, they created explosive and beautiful means toward freedom. Kelley reminds us that it is our duty to do so as well. At UCLA—but not affiliated with the university—we founded a group called The Undercommons in January of 2016. It is a freedom school that challenges and contests not just the legitimacy of the university, but the violence of the state. The Undercommons operates horizontally, lovingly and collectively, to disrupt the professional hierarchy that is endemic to the university system, and toxic to learning spaces. Our weekly sessions strive against neoliberal competitiveness and reaffirm the capacity of anyone—community members, faculty, graduate students, undergraduates, anyone—to teach, learn, and study. However most importantly, as we respond to university and state violence, we also are creating beloved community, and eventually an international community. We seek to create the world we want to live in. The Undercommons is a celebration of insurrection, struggle, and love. We are a group of dedicated students descended from a long line of living, struggling, and laughing people. And we are living fiercely.

#### Presumption of black unity is ahistorical racial essentialism – stifling debate turns black politics into elite power brokering.

Cedric **JOHNSON** Poli Sci @ Hobart and William Smith Colleges **’17** “The Panthers Can’t Save Us Now” *Catalyst* 1 (1)

With some exceptions, the Movement for Black Lives more generally is guided by an understanding of political life that sees racial affinity as synonymous with constituency. This much is clear when the authors of the Vision agenda declare, “We have created this platform to articulate and support the ambitions and work of Black people. We also seek to intervene in the current political climate and assert a clear vision, particularly for those who claim to be our allies, of the world we want them to help us create.” This passage assumes a rather simplistic view of black people’s ambitions and interests and draws a false dividing line between the interests of blacks and non-blacks — “those who claim to be our allies.” clearly descendant from Black Power thinking, this statement presumes a commonality of interests among blacks and claims authority to speak on behalf of those interests with little sense of irony. Broad acceptance of the myth of a corporate black body politic authorizes the very elite brokerage dynamics that many younger activists dislike about established civil rights organizations.

Despite the insistence of some supporters that there is a progressive pro-working-class politics at the heart of Black Lives Matter activism, the rapture of “unapologetic blackness” and the ethnic politics that imbues various programmatic efforts will continue to lead away from the kind of cosmopolitan, popular political work that is needed to end the policing crisis. There are, of course, different ideological tendencies operating within the Movement for Black Lives: radical, progressive, bourgeois and reactionary. The spats between Black Lives Matter’s founders and those who sought to use the hashtag without their permission reflected a proprietary sensibility more suited to product branding and entrepreneurship than to popular social struggle. If the Gary Convention experience is the model here, then what we might expect is the fracturing of the Movement for Black Lives into different brokerage camps, each claiming to represent the “black community” more effectively than the other but none capable of amassing the counterpower necessary to have a lasting political impact.

Black Lives Matter co-founder Patrice Cullors gives a sense of this problem when she says that she will continue to work with black neoliberals because of their common racial affinity. “That I don’t agree with neoliberalism doesn’t encourage me to launch an online assault against those who do. We can, in fact, agree to disagree. We can have a healthy debate. We can show up for one another as Black folks inside of this movement in ways that don’t isolate, terrorize, and shame people — something I’ve experienced firsthand.”23 Cullors is right when she asserts that political work involves building bonds of trust and a willingness to respect different opinions. But such work is best undertaken outside the echo chambers of social media, which most often encourage irresponsible rhetoric, amplify identitarian assumptions, and suffocate public spiritedness. Cullors mistakes the core basis of political life, however. Sustained political work is held together by shared historical interests, especially those that connect to our daily lives and felt needs, not sentimental “ties of blood.”

Cullors and many other activists embrace the Black Power premise of the necessity of black unity, once expressed in phrases like “operational unity” and “unity without uniformity” and in familial metaphors about “not airing dirty laundry” and settling disputes “in-house.” The problem with this sentiment is that it reduces the divergent political interests animating black life at any given historical moment to happenstance, external manipulation, or superficial grievance. As well, this call for black unity is always underwritten by the fiction that other groups have advanced through the ethnic paradigm, a view that is patently ahistorical and neglects the role of interracial alliances in creating a more democratic, just society. This line of thinking always assumes that there is something underneath it all that binds black people together politically, but that reasoning must always rely on some notion of racial essentialism and a suspension of any honest analysis of black political life as it exists.

#### Surrendering to blackness essentializes and depoliticizes through deference to standpoint epistemology.

Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor 16, assistant professor in Princeton University's Center for African American Studies, Ch. 7 in From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation, p. 211-216

Far and away, African Americans suffer most from the blunt force trauma of the American criminal justice system, but the pervasive character of law-and-order politics means that whites get caught up in its web as well. African Americans are imprisoned at an absurd rate of 2,300 for every 100,000 Black people. White people, on the other hand, are incarcerated at a rate of 450 people per 100,000. The difference speaks directly to the racial disparities that define American criminal justice, but it is worth noting that the rate at which white people in the United States are incarcerated is still higher than the incarceration rates of almost every other country in the world.33 It’s also unquestionable that Blacks and Latino/as experience death at the hands of police at much greater rates than whites, but thousands of white people have also been murdered by the police. This does not mean the experiences of whites and people of color are equal, but there is a basis for solidarity among white and nonwhite working-class people.

This more complicated picture of the material reality of white working-class life is not intended to diminish the extent to which ordinary whites buy into or accept racist ideas about Blacks. It is also true that, by every social measure, whites do better than African Americans on average, tchabut that does not say much about who benefits from the inequality of our society. For example, in a country with four hundred billionaires, what does it mean that 43 percent of white households make only between $10,000 and $49,000 a year?34 Of course, an even larger number of Black people make this pitiful amount—65 percent—but when we only compare the average incomes of working-class Blacks and whites, we miss the much more dramatic disparity between the wealthiest and everyone else.

If it isn’t in the interest of ordinary whites to be racist, why do they accept racist ideas? First, the same question could be asked of any group of workers. Why do men accept sexist ideas? Why do many Black workers accept racist anti-immigrant rhetoric? Why do many Black Caribbean and African immigrant workers think that Black Americans are lazy? Why do most American workers of all ethnicities accept racist ideas about Arabs and Muslims? In short, if most people agree that it would be in the interest of any group of workers to be more united than divided, then why do workers hold reactionary ideas that are an obstacle to unity?

There are two primary reasons: competition and the prevalence of ruling-class ideology. Capitalism creates false scarcity, the perception that need outstrips resources. When billions are spent on war, police-brutality settlements, and publicly subsidized sports stadiums, there never seems to be a shortage of money. But when it comes to schools, housing, food, and other basic necessities, politicians always complain about deficits and the need to curb spending and cut budgets. The scarcity is manufactured, but the competition over these resources is real. People who are forced to fight over basic necessities are often willing to believe the worst about other workers to justify why they should have something while others should not.

The prevailing ideology in a given society consists of the ideas that influence how we understand the world and help us make sense of our lives—through news, entertainment, education, and more. The political and economic elite shape the ideological world we all live in, to their benefit. We live in a thoroughly racist society, so it should not be surprising that people have racist ideas. The more important question is under what circumstances those ideas can change. There is a clash between the prevailing ideology in society and people’s lived experience. The media may inundate the public with constant images and news stories that describe Blacks as criminals or on welfare, but an individual’s experience with Blacks at work may completely contradict the stereotype—hence the insistence from many whites that they are not racist because they “know Black people.” It can be true in that person’s mind. People’s consciousness can change and can even contradict itself.

This is also true for African Americans, who can harbor racist ideas about other Black people while simultaneously holding antiracist ideas. After all, Black people also live in this racist society and are equally inundated with racist stereotypes. The development of consciousness is never linear—it is constantly fluctuating between adhering to ideas that fit a “common sense” conception of society and being destabilized by real-life events that upend “common sense.” The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci explains the phenomenon of mixed consciousness this way:

The active man-in-the-mass has a practical activity but has no clear theoretical consciousness of his practical activity which nonetheless involves understanding the world in so far as it transforms it. His theoretical consciousness can . . . be historically in opposition to his activity. One might almost say that he has two theoretical consciousness[es] (or one contradictory consciousness): one which is implicit in his activity and which in reality unites him with all fellow workers in the practical transformation of the real world; and one superficially explicit or verbal, which he has inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed. The person is strangely composite: it contains Stone Age elements and principles of a more advanced science, prejudices of all past phases of history at the local level and intuitions of a future philosophy which will be that of a human race united the world over.35

Whether or not a group of workers has reactionary, mixed, or even revolutionary consciousness does not change its objective status as exploited and oppressed labor. The achievement of consciousness is the difference between the working class being a class in itself as opposed to a class for itself. It affects whether or not workers are in a position to fundamentally alter their reality through collective action. As one writer observed, “Only a collective can develop a systematic alternative world view, can overcome to some degree the alienation of manual and mental work that imposes on everyone, on workers and intellectuals alike, a partial and fragmented view of reality.”36

Just because white workers, to take a specific example, may at times fully accept reactionary ideas about African Americans does not change the objective fact that the majority of the US poor are white, the majority of people without health insurance are white, and the majority of the homeless are white. It is true that Blacks and Latino/as are disproportionately affected by the country’s harsh economic order, but this is a reality they share with the majority of white workers. The common experience of oppression and exploitation creates the potential for a united struggle to better the conditions of all. This is obviously not an automatic process, nor is it a given that essentially economic struggles will translate to support or struggle for the political rights of Blacks to be free of discrimination and racism. Political unity, including winning white workers to the centrality of racism in shaping the lived experiences of Black and Latino/a workers, is key to their own liberation.

Tim Wise’s observations reduce these real issues to an abstract accusation of “privileging” class over race. But our movement has to have theoretical, political, and strategic clarity to confront challenges in the real world. When, in 2012, Chicago’s Black public school CEO Barbara Byrd Bennett was scheming with mayor Rahm Emanuel to close more than fifty schools located exclusively in Black and Latino/a neighborhoods, should Black teachers, students, and parents have united with Bennett, who has certainly experienced racism and sexism in her life and career, but who was also leading the charge to undo public education in Chicago? Or should they have united with the thousands of white teachers in Chicago schools and the vice president of the Chicago Teachers Union, a white, heterosexual man, to build the movement to save public education in the city?

Probably very few people in history have had as much racist invective directed at them as Barack Obama has—hating him is basically shorthand for racism now. But he has also championed policies that absolved the banks and Wall Street of any responsibility for crashing the economy; as a result, since 2007 ten million people have been displaced from more than four million homes by the foreclosure crisis.37 Should Black workers put that aside and unite with Obama out of racial solidarity and a shared “lived experience,” or should they unite with ordinary whites and Latino/as who have also lost their homes to challenge a political program that regularly defends business interests to the detriment of all working-class and poor people? In the abstract, perhaps these are complicated questions. But in the daily struggles to defend public education, fight for real healthcare reform, or stop predatory foreclosures, these are the concrete questions every movement faces.

The “blind spot” of class within the framework of people like Tim Wise not only leaves them incapable of explaining class division among the oppressed, it also underemphasizes the material foundation for solidarity and unity within the working class. Instead, the concepts of solidarity and unity are reduced to whether or not one chooses to be an “ally.” There’s nothing wrong with being an ally, but it doesn’t quite capture the degree to which Black and white workers are inextricably linked. It’s not as if white workers can simply choose not to “ally” with Black workers to no peril of their own. The scale of attack on the living standards of the working class is overwhelming. There is a systematic, bipartisan effort to dismantle the already anemic welfare state. When, in 2013, $5 billion cut was cut from food stamps, it had a direct and deleterious impact on the lives of tens of millions of white working-class people.

In this context, solidarity is not just an option; it is crucial to workers’ ability to resist the constant degradation of their living standards. Solidarity is only possible through relentless struggle to win white workers to antiracism, to expose the lie that Black workers are worse off because they somehow choose to be, and to win the white working class to the understanding that, unless they struggle, they too will continue to live lives of poverty and frustration, even if those lives are somewhat better than the lives led by Black workers. Success or failure are contingent on whether or not working people see themselves as brothers and sisters whose liberation is inextricably bound together.

Solidarity is standing in unity with people even when you have not personally experienced their particular oppression, The reality is that as long as capitalism exists, material and ideological pressures push white workers to be racist and all workers to hold each other in general suspicion. But there are moments of struggle when the mutual interests of workers are laid bare, and when the suspicion is finally turned in the other direction—at the plutocrats who live well while the rest of us suffer. The key question is whether or not in those moments of struggle a coherent political analysis of society, oppression, and exploitation can be articulated that makes sense of the world we live in, but that also champions the vision of a different kind of society—and a way to get there.

1. **Democratic faith discloses alternatives to anti-blackness – democratic faith in renewal gives life meaning.**

Melvin **ROGERS** Poli Sci @ Brown **’18** “Delany, Douglass, and the Danger of Political Pessimism” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84bw3hSu9Hw> Transcribed by Victor Wu & John Turner 0:05 – 12:38

In *Dark Water* of 1920, W.E.B. DuBois offers an incisive commentary on the meaning of democracy. “Against those who would restrict the franchise,” he remarks, quote, “Such arguments show so curious a misapprehension of the foundation of the argument for democracy, that the argument must be continually restated and emphasized,” says DuBois. The statement is arresting, given the historical setting these words were penned, by an African American in the 1920s at a time when the insecurity of black life, the insecurity of black life was constantly on display – a period in which despite the Civil War amendments, Jim and Jane Crow were the law of the land and lynching was a daily reminder of how easily one could be disposed of with impunity. That the case for democracy must be restated amid its distorted expression raises an important question that I think haunts the struggle for racial equality, and indeed the very legitimacy of the American polity. What is it about democracy that justifies our faith, especially the faith of African Americans in it? Given the frequency with which African Americans are killed by police, the ongoing problems of economic inequality they experience, and the general sense that from city to city and state to state black people are subject to a fundamental insecurity not chiefly of their own making, it is difficult to suggest that commitment is or has been justified at all. It may seem more appropriate to interpret the United States as working according to plan, connecting the horror of the earliest periods of African-American life to the present moment and one story about the nation’s presumed foundational commitment to antiblackness.

Writing, for example, in response to the 2012 killing of Trayvon Martin, journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates describes Martin’s killing as the natural consequence of the functioning of American society. This is what Coates writes: “When you have a society that takes as its founding the hatred and degradation of a people, when the society inscribes the degradation in its most hallowed document and continues to inscribe hatred in its laws and policies, it is fantastic to believe that its citizens will derive no ill messaging. It is painful to say this: Trayvon Martin is not a miscarriage of justice, but of American justice itself. This is not our system malfunctioning, this is our system working as intended.” End quote.

You just gotta sit with that for a minute, right? Little can be denied, in this, I think, and we might add other voices who are trying to get us to see that antiblackness functions as a precondition for American progress. As philosopher Calvin Warren tells us, quote, “It is the humiliated, incarcerated, mutilated, and terrorized black body that serves as the vestibule for the democracy to come.” End quote. Warren stands in a tradition of thinking known as afro-pessimism, that includes scholars such as Jared Sexton and Frank Wilderson and I think more recently Christina Sharpe, all view the persistence of racial inequality and the vulnerability of black life as the **inescapable afterlife of slavery.** They raise the haunting suggestion that modernity, by which is meant that period running roughly from the Glorious Revolution to the American and French Revolutions, that modernity specifies what they call an ontology – that requires a referent outside itself for its conceptualization of identity, freedom, and progress, that requires an Other for freedom, equality, and progress to be realized. This ontological framework in which African Americans work, live, and struggle leads, as Juliet Hooker and Barnor Hess tell us, to a fundamental conundrum. This is their words, quote “One of the fundamental paradoxes of black politics is the invariable futility of directing activism towards a racially governing regime, historically founded on the constitutive exclusion and violation of blackness.” End quote.

Now, it is fashionable these days, and understandably so, to wear one’s despair on one’s sleeve. If we are honest with ourselves, if we are honest, how could we do otherwise? Moments of hope have often been dashed by the cold and cruel reality of American life. It is no wonder we find it hard to stabilize our faith in a racially just society. Here in brief is the sample of this history: In the wake of black American’s participation in the American Revolution, the nation witnessed a slow denial of their standing and contribution to the polity. With the ongoing development of slavery in the South, northern states in the 19th century slowly rescinded rights that had previously been extended to African American, African American men. Although the Civil War amendments sought to recognize the equal status of blacks, that recognition was effectively denied by the ascendancy of debt peonage, economic exploitation, lynching, and Jim and Jane Crow. The civil rights movement killed Jim and Jane Crow, but the policing and subordination of blacks was reconstituted through the rise of the carceral state, the underdeveloped welfare state, and the underfunded public education system that has been exacerbated by residential segregation. Whatever one might think of his success, the fact remains that the election of the first black president has been followed by Donald Trump, who defines his success based on removing any trace of its previous occupant. Trump’s success was, without exaggeration, cultivated through the tropes of white supremacy nativism and the commitment to police black and brown populations. Claims of white supremacy’s death of the post-racialism supposedly evidenced by the ascendancy of Barack Obama to the presidency have proven premature, yes?

At precisely this moment, however, we must confront some crucial questions. Is American democracy constitutionally at odds with our goals, or might it be conducive to building a society in which we all can live equally and at peace with one another? Are there normative resources on which one can rely to advance affirmative claims regarding racial equality, resources that are distilled not by, **not by denying the ontology specified above, but by disclosing its competing alternative?** Or must the resources of modern democracy remain forever premised on anti-blackness?

Admittedly, these appear to be empirical questions that depend on history. Or do they? In our historical calculus, we might emphasize the reconstitution of white supremacy. But we could just as easily emphasize the ways in which it has been **foiled through multiple waves of racial inclusion**. Those who embrace the former as our true racial reality find themselves trying to prove to those of us who have benefited from racial struggle why our success is illusory or at best temporary. But those who locate America’s identity in its resistance to white supremacy have another problem. They are often unable to see the evidence of systemic racism, or they readily describe it as anomalous foreign to the structure of our institutions and culture. If the first position seems unsatisfying because it denies human agency and gives the past too much power over the present and future, the second risks turning a blind eye to the ways white supremacy is often bolstered by institutional support and state-sanctioned violence that emanate from a culture that disregards again and again black life.

Both sides, I think, fail to distinguish between the somewhat different task of studying the past and narrativizing the past in a way that is useful for moving society in an auspicious direction, and Frederick Douglass’s felicitous formulation of the matter, quote “We have to do with the past only as we can make it useful to the present and to the future.” End quote.

These words come from Douglass’s famous 1852 address, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” And in that address he does not dismiss the past, rather he stands in a line of thinkers who see in America’s past a vital principle that is both visionary and realistic. Similar to early 19th century abolitionist David Walker before him and James Baldwin well after him, Douglass deploys the principle of making and remaking that underwrites the American polity what we political theorists call the constituent power of the people that is part and parcel of the central properties of democracy. The idea of the people, Douglass knows all too well, form part of the tradition of American life, sitting alongside and often used to combat the white supremacist tendencies of the American polity. And Douglass, I think, retrieves this principle from the past and he counsels his fellows to place it in the service of the present and the future.

Now, for Douglass, African-Americans may often be alienated from American society, but they are **not alien to it**. This point is of great significance when you consider the thread running through much of African American thinking as struggle, that seeks to make America racially just polity. They see their efforts emerging from within and forming part of the very complex traditions of America’s moral and political language. Like them, Douglass’s aim is to emphasize those portions of the tradition that might yet deepen and extend democracy against those portions that will constrain democracy’s meaning and reach. The meaning of America, its past, and its future, is, for Douglass, something over which to struggle. But he sees struggle as an **emergent property** of the **contested notion** of **who comprises the people** that is **central to democracy’s self-understanding**.

So the question of what America really is, it seems to me, defies articulation even as we struggle to say something substantive about our ethical and political identities. This is simply because we cannot get on with figuring out where we should go and who we ought to be without narrating in the past to which we belong. But worry and I think too much about offering the true description or final narrative of that past may miss the point. We ask questions of the past, “Who are we really?” less to understand our identity once and for all, and more to aid in us making decisions about who we should become. This is the aspirational quality of the American imagination, indeed the aspirational core on which African Americans have often relied to make sense of their appeals to the nation. This is, as I believe, the perfectionist or romantic register on which many in this tradition have often worked, including Douglass himself.

So for the remainder of my remarks, I want to spend some time trying to retrieve the meaning and complex power of this aspirational vision. Believing that it is during moments of dark times, such as our current moment (at least for me, I think) that we need to recall the faith of those that came before. But just as we have in our current moment powerful reasons to lose faith and powerful reasons to believe in what the afro-pessimists offer us, Douglass had in his time a powerful alternative vision confronting his own, it’s with that vision we must now begin.

# 2NC

## GND

#### GND stops capitals geoengineering plans

Surprise, PhD, 20

(Kevin Surprise (@KevinSurprise) is a Visiting Lecturer in Environmental Studies at Mount Holyoke College. https://mronline.org/2020/07/30/solar-geoengineering-is-incompatible-with-a-radical-green-new-deal/)

Solar geoengineering, specifically Stratospheric Aerosol Injection (SAI), is a proposed climate technology that could cool the planet—quickly and cheaply—by continually spraying megatons of sulfur dioxide into the lower stratosphere to reflect some incoming solar radiation back to space. In climate policy, solar geoengineering has long been considered fringe, at best a last-ditch “plan B” in the event of a climate emergency. But recent activity around the technology compels a shift in perspective: solar geoengineering is not a futuristic “plan B,” but a rapidly developing pillar of capital’s climate “plan A.” Solar geoengineering is receiving renewed discussion because of brief mention in the House Select Committee’s Climate Action Plan. The plan recommends following guidance from the National Academies of Sciences’ forthcoming report on “reflecting sunlight to cool earth” (two briefings from this committee were released in June). Other recent moves include steps taken by the Harvard Solar Geoengineering Research Program (HSGRP) to advance outdoor SAI field-experiments, Congressional appropriation of $4 million to NOAA to support federal solar geoengineering research, and release of a report by the Union of Concerned Scientists endorsing cautious research. In the midst of rising emissions and climate inaction, many scientists and policymakers are coming to the conclusion that cheap, fast-acting technologies require research and investment. Moreover, a budding consensus is emerging around key norms and best-case scenarios: solar geoengineering research should proceed cautiously, cooperatively, and transparently. Governance should be internationally coordinated and include input from publics and civil society, particularly from the Global South. If deployed, it should be gradual, moderate, and temporary, with the aim of “buying time” for emissions cuts, and providing “humanitarian” relief to those vulnerable to near-term climate risks. This is powerful narrative. Yet, even if such extremely optimistic scenarios were to obtain—a highly dubious prospect—solar geoengineering would remain antithetical to ecosocialism and to a radical GND. There are four key reasons for this: the research is largely funded by billionaires and wealthy philanthropic organizations with ties to finance and technology capital; solar geoengineering is being designed to “buy time” for market-driven decarbonization (to explicitly avoid revolutionary change); the “humanitarian” discourse around the technology represents a form of technocratic, liberal paternalism; and, as states will have ultimate control over deployment, the prospect of militarization cannot be ruled out

## K

#### Blackness and citizenship both possible to re-signify. Haitian sovereignty re-articulated blackness as a political category dedicated to the end of slavery.

Adom **GETACHEW** Poli Sci @ Chicago **’16** “Universalism After the Post-colonial Turn: Interpreting the Haitian Revolution” *Political Theory* 44 (6) p. 835-837

Racial hierarchy was also the target in Article 14 of the constitution, which abolished “all distinctions of color” and declared “Haitians shall be known from now on by the generic denomination of blacks.”76 Prior to its independence, Haiti was governed by a taxonomy of race that identified more than a hundred categories of racial difference, which organized free and enslaved people of color hierarchically. By abolishing this hierarchy, the constitution hoped to overcome the racial distinctions that had facilitated colonial slavery. Moreover, by elevating blackness into the general category to which all Haitians belonged, the racial category once located at the bottom of the colonial hierarchy was resignified**.**77 It would be freed from its historical association with slavery and celebrated as the marker of citizenshi**p**.

In highlighting the effort to institutionalize individual and collective autonomy, I have called attention to precisely those elements of Haitian independence in 1804 that Buck-Morss finds to be anti-universal. The prohibitions against white property owners and the renaming of all citizens as black appear to be exclusionary, while the appeal to Empire suggests a mimicry of the imperial ambitions that characterized European states of the time. There are reasons to doubt this reading, however. Take for instance the exclusion of white property owners in Article 12 of the 1805 constitution. In the subsequent article, naturalized white women who were married to Haitians, as well as Germans, Poles, and their descendants are exempted from the prohibition on property ownership.78 The redescription of all Haitians as black requires rethinking in light of this exemption. It cannot be read as an exclusionary measure that reduced citizenship to a nativist or racialist entitlement. Blackness was reconceived as a political category that signaled “historical or potential resistance” to slavery and colonial domination.79 It was the contributions of Germans and Poles to the revolutionary war that allowed them to become Haitian citizens and therefore black.

This redefinition of blackness also made it possible to extend Haitian citizenship beyond its territorial confines. Revolutionary leaders acknowledged that ending slavery and creating the first black nation-state were not local events but would have reverberations throughout the Atlantic world. Even before independence and as the transatlantic slave trade continued, Toussaint planned to set free all Africans who landed in Haiti. Moreover, he outlined plans to sail to Africa in an effort to end the slave trade and extend freedom and French nationality to millions.80 Like Toussaint, Dessalines projected the universalism of the Haitian Revolution. Linking his victory over France in Haiti to the salvation of the entire Western Hemisphere, he proclaimed, “I have saved my country; I have avenged America.”81 He indicated that this link would be realized by spreading the revolution against slavery and colonial rule throughout the Atlantic world.82

While Toussaint’s and Dessalines’s early aims of exporting the revolution through military expansion were not feasible, their successors sought to make Haiti a refuge for slaves and colonial subjects throughout the Americas. As Ada Ferrer notes, in the 1810s, Haitian vessels stopped slave ships, freeing the slaves and providing them rights of residency in Haiti.83 Moreover, Sybille Fischer documents how the 1816 constitution of the southern republic constitutionally guaranteed the right of asylum to “all Africans and Indians, and those of their blood” and promised naturalization after a year of residency.84 This constitutional clause established Haiti as “a free soil” territory where slaves and colonial subjects from across the region could be free and gain citizenship. 85 With the reunification of the north and south in 1820, this asylum provision was extended to the entire country and led to an increase in the number of fugitive slaves requesting asylum.86

These provisions of asylum suggested that while the claim “all Haitians are black” could not be reversed to read “all blacks are Haitians,” the Haitian state opened up the possibility for all blacks in the region to become Haitian.87 Unlike the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, which made an abstract claim that “all men are born free and equal in rights,” the early Haitian constitutions tied freedom to the territory of Haiti where slavery was concretely abolished. The asylum clause made this concrete freedom accessible to those that lived beyond its borders. The “territory without slavery [was] now expressly and legally available to outsiders, to slaves of foreign masters, subjects of foreign kings, and outcasts of other governments.”88 Of those who took advantage of asylum in Haiti were about six to thirteen thousand African Americans. Haitian citizenship was thus transnational and promised autonomy to those who were denied even the smallest modicum of liberty and independence throughout the Americas.89

The asylum provision not only made possible transnational citizenship but also afforded Haiti a way of expanding its anti-slavery and anti-colonial project beyond its territorial confines. Simón Bolívar and his generals were twice granted exile during their efforts to liberate Venezuela. Moreover, Alexandre Pétion, the president of the southern republic, provided ammunitions and soldiers to Bolívar on two conditions: that he emancipate all slaves in liberated territories and that all captive Africans taken from slave ships be turned over to Haiti where they would qualify for citizenship.90 These conditions allowed Pétion to continue the project of avenging America by spreading emancipation and independence beyond Haiti’s territorial boundaries and securing citizenship for the formerly enslaved who were denied membership elsewhere.

### 2NC – L – States

#### The demand for a politics beyond the nation-state denies the world-making power of decolonization.

Adam **DAHL** Poli Sci @ UMASS Amherst **’20** “Self-Determination between World and Nation” *Comparative Studies of South Africa, Africa, and the Middle East* 40 (3) p. Duke Press Online

It has become a kind of contemporary doxa among political theorists to say that we live in an age of “postnational constellations” of power that require moving beyond the nation-state.1 In response to the problems of globalization in the twentieth century, scholars have sought to uncover post-Westphalian forms of political association that envision civic membership beyond the territorial sovereignty of the nation-state. This has special salience in postcolonial theory, where the question of whether the nation-state is the necessary objective of anticolonial struggles against the rule of European colonial empires is paramount. Of course, this tension between postnational forms of association and the nation-state as the necessary vehicle of anticolonial liberation is nothing new. As Leela Gandhi has productively explored, this tension between postnational solidarities and anticolonial nationalism is a defining feature of postcolonial theory.2 Yet evident in the pioneering work of scholars like Frederick Cooper and Gary Wilder, who have uncovered critiques of the nation-state as the primary vehicle of decolonization and calls for federative alternatives to empire in twentieth-century anticolonial politics, the pendulum has undoubtedly swung toward postnationalism.3

Adom Getachew's pathbreaking book, Worldmaking After Empire, both contributes to yet fundamentally challenges the terms of these debates.4 Where previous scholars have seemingly posed anticolonial nationalism and postnational solidarity as mutually exclusive, incompatible alternatives, Getachew provocatively argues that anticolonial nationalists like W. E. B. Du Bois, George Padmore, Eric Williams, Kwame Nkrumah, and Julius Nyerere, among others, did not outright reject the nation-state in their quest for self-determination. Instead, they internationalized the nation-state through the construction of new constituted powers that linked national sovereignties together in global juridical, political, and economic bodies. Specifically, Getachew explores how these anticolonial nationalists pursued self-determination not simply through national independence, but by constructing new international institutions such as the right of self-determination, regional federations in the West Indies and Africa, and the New International Economic Order (NIEO).

Central to Getachew's account is a redefinition of empire as a global network of power marked by unequal international integration and racialized hierarchy. Rather than a dyadic relationship between colonizer and colonized, empire represents an inter-imperial order marked by European domination over the non-European world. In this conceptual redefinition**,** Getachew reveals how slavery was not simply a metaphor for imperial domination. Rather, political thinkers like Du Bois, James, and Williams developed a thoroughgoing critique of “empire as enslavement” in which twentieth-century colonialism was an extension of modern racial slavery by other means (78–79). Just as plantation slavery morphed into colonial imperialism, international hierarchies would continue after formal decolonization in the guise of neocolonialism if self-determination was not envisioned as something more than freedom from the interference of alien rule. Without addressing the despotic and arbitrary power of the inter-imperial system, which persisted in informal economic relations, the racial hierarchies of international order would persist.

Within this distinct understanding of empire resides Getachew's central innovation, a notion self-determination understood as freedom as nondomination. For neorepublican political theorists like Philip Pettit and Quentin Skinner, freedom properly understood is a form of nondomination rather than noninterference. While noninterference implies that one is free insofar as they do not face external coercion or constraint in their choices, nondomination suggests that an individual can be unfree even in the absence of overt constraint and coercion. For Getachew, the paradigmatic case of slavery as domination captures something essential about the modern imperial order, which significantly complicates the pursuit of freedom as self-determination through national independence. While a former colony may attain national independence and end formal imperial control, a condition of domination in the international order persists as a result of entrenched racial, political, and economic hierarchies that disproportionately distribute rights and obligations.

From this perspective, the revolutionary nature of anticolonial worldmaking was the radical rupture it posed, not in the authority of singular imperial formations (e.g., the British or French empires), but in the European-dominated, inter-imperial order marked by entrenched racial and colonial hierarchies. As Getachew puts it, European imperialism was “itself a world-constituting force that violently inaugurated an unprecedented era of globality” (3). As such, the attainment of nation-state sovereignty alone was insufficient to secure nondomination. What was needed was the reconstruction of international order. Getachew writes, “Thus the worldmaking of decolonization should be understood as an internationalism of the nation-state” (25). For these anticolonial nationalists, colonial peoples could not simply be included into an already constituted international society. Rather, global order would need to be remade if they were to secure freedom as nondomination.

What is so compelling about Getachew's account is the way she traces how these figures refused the binary choice between national sovereignty and postnational solidarity. To be sure, anticolonial nationalism was necessarily “bound to the institutional form of the nation-state**”** (25). But anticolonial nationalists rejected the premise that national independence could be realized without post-national institutions. In this way, they did not so much move “beyond the nation-state” as they did reside in the interstices between nation and world. In what remains of this essay, I want to pose an interrelated set of questions that stem directly from these conceptions of decolonization as worldmaking and the internationalization of the nation-state, but that also move beyond Getachew's immediate concerns. In posing these questions, I do not intend to expose limitations of her already comprehensive account. Rather, I hope to demonstrate the richness of her analysis by pointing to a set of questions for further research.

#### A vision for a different order is vital. No political vision comes ready-made with the agent capable of enacting it. Decolonization and the New International Economic Order demonstrate the world-making capacity for re-ordering an egalitarian and domination-free world.

Adom **GETACHEW** Poli Sci @ Chicago **’19** *Worldmaking after Empire* p. 180-181

Owing to these political crises and the shifting coordinates of international politics, which were only magnified with the fall of the Soviet Union, the language of self-determination and the institutional form of the state appeared to no longer animate political visions within the postcolonial world. Self-determination as worldmaking and nation-building and the postcolonial state imagined as the agent of international and domestic transformation were central to building a world after empire. As the conditions that had made these commitments viable dissipated, their political purchase also declined. Emblematic of this emptying of the promise of self-determination was Michael Manley’s return to the position of prime minister.12 Having lost his 1980 reelection as Jamaica still reeled from the consequences of the debt crisis and structural adjustment, Manley assumed the office again in 1989. Converted to the neoliberalism he had resisted in the late 1970s, the erstwhile democratic socialist now insisted, “If you want a really dynamic, effective economy, the only damn thing you can do is to pursue the market logic completely. . . . That means you have to divest what was brought under state control . . . and [expose] the economy to the shock of competition, knowing full well that some of what has been built up will be lost in order to create a leaner but more enduring process of development.”13

While Manley himself maintained that he was rethinking and not abandoning democratic socialism, the about-face was undeniable and exemplified the political closure that characterized the fall of self-determination. In a revealing correspondence with Kari Polanyi Levitt, a member of the New World Group at the University of West Indies, Manley reflected on the tragedy this closure entailed.14 At the height of his despair, he concluded that the NIEO was “predicated on a fantasy—namely that anyone in international politics will respond to an argument built on ethics.”15 When Levitt reminded him, “The NIEO agenda was not based on ‘ethics’ but on the sovereign rights of developing countries over natural resources, on the need for codes of conduct for transnationals, and international measures to stabilize commodity prices,” Manley changed his tune.16 In response, he argued that the “failure to unite OPEC and other developing countries,” which he called the “real tragedy,” and the rise of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, who “buried” the Third World’s demands for equality, had led to the collapse of the NIEO.17 But if this second assessment captured the contingent political conditions that contributed to the NIEO’s displacement, it did not give Manley any hope that anticolonial worldmaking might be resuscitated.

Like the Manley of the 1990s, we live in the shadow of self-determination’s fall. The vision of a postimperial world order that gave rise to three decades of anticolonial worldmaking appears far removed from our political present. Looking back from our vantage point and with a clear view of the forces arrayed against this project, the fall of self-determination might appear inevitable. We might even believe, as Manley briefly did, that those projects were fantastical and unrealistic. But to come to this set of conclusions is to evade reckoning with the ways that we inhabit as our present the promises and ruins of anticolonial worldmaking. The incomplete decolonization that culminated in a world of unequal nation-states, the regional organizations that emerged from the dream of federation, and the visions of global justice that stand in the place of the NIEO’s welfare world indicate the scale of both expectations and disappointments that characterized anticolonial worldmaking. Examining this present, it would be a mistake to collapse the partiality and eventual decline of a set of languages and strategies for making a world after empire with the demise of the moral and political vision that looked forward to an egalitarian and domination-free world.

Emerging from the imperial integration and differentiation that has structured the modern world, this vision of an anti-imperial world had different articulations before the rise of self-determination and might yet be remade in new languages and modes. Part of the task of this book has been to show that even instances that appeared as moments of closure—first the decline of interwar internationalisms and the consolidation of a system of nation-states, and later the political and economic limits of the postcolonial state—were occasion for reformulating the contours of an anti-imperial future and enacting new strategies to realize this vision. On this view, the fall of self-determination marks not only a dead end but also a staging ground for reimaging that future. In the Black Atlantic world, from which the worldmakers of this book emerged, intimations of a new language are afoot in the Movement for Black Lives, the Caribbean demand for reparations for slavery and genocide, and South African calls for a social and economic decolonization. Like the worldmakers of decolonization, these political formations have returned to the task of rethinking our imperial past and present in the service of imagining an anti-imperial future.

#### Claims of ontological and grammatical closure play into the hands of the powerful. Each alternative fails and inevitability argument from the 2AC proves the need for a different story. Treating Southern projects of sovereignty as failure delegitimizes resistance and reinforces Eurocentrism.

Sundya **PAHUJA** Institute for International Law and the Humanities, Melbourne Law School **’20** “Disclosing New Political Forms: Symposium on Adom Getachew, Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination” *Political Theory* 48 (6) p. SAGE

But the question then arises of what happens when such struggles are seen to fail. What are we to make, politically, of the history Getachew recounts? The same confident narratives that assert the world could never be otherwise are fond of ascribing the “failures” of Southern initiatives to the fundamental unsustainability of an equitable world. These dreams all failed, the argument goes, because they could never have succeeded. Getachew’s argument comes closer to this ending than it should in both historical and political terms. Her account of the “fall” of self-determination is brief.16 Historically, it is rooted in the end of a “moment.” Key to the fall seems to be the idea that it was the internal limitations of anticolonial nationalism that brought its downfall.17 But it is here that I would urge readers to supplement the reading of Getachew’s excellent book with works more directly focused on (the political economy of) the 1970s, works that attend more precisely to what happened to the initiatives that she is describing, as well as to many others like it. Many have shown that any number of third-world initiatives being asserted during the twentieth-century phase of decolonization—including projects of anticolonial nationalism—were less a series of spontaneous “falls” generated by internal contradictions than the result of a series of hard and sharp pushes, many from the United States.18 Understanding that the suite of institutional legal, political, and economic struggles of the Third World in the 1970s failed because they were battles lost in a war against powerful interests gives a different valency to many founding myths of the post–Cold War order. These include the idea that there was a radical break with practices of imperialism. This is a mythic caesura crucial to the claim of the “developed” world to be a benevolent bringer of the gift of reason. The book itself exemplifies the way that history-telling is always a political battleground, never more so in the narration of failure and success, victory and defeat. But understanding that the project failed because it was murdered, rather than having died a natural death, is important in the way we return to such histories.19 The particular suite of strategies needed in the ongoing struggle for justice includes recognizing the tendency of the powerful to ontologize the failure of projects of resistance**.**20

But this caveat about the interpretation of the failure of the worldmaking project does not negate the achievement of this masterful volume. Its insistence on revealing the centrality of racism to patterns of global ordering is a key element of its importance. And although many of the materials will not be new to most scholars of the postcolonial, the particular emphasis on international relations, institutions, and law is a useful way to introduce the thought of black anticolonial intellectuals to new audiences in disciplines where those figures have been absent for too long. From my own experience as an international lawyer, by and large we continue to do research that starts in Europe on the basis that it simply “is” where international law began.21 We push back against the critique of Eurocentrism with “history.” Eurocentricity, we say, is historical fact. It’s Eurocentrism that is ideological. But even if we are interested in the global South, many of us educated in the West make, and transmit, this assumption in conditions of received ignorance about the non-West. And certainly, in the discipline of international law, many students in the South are taught to walk in these same patterns. We all know by now that international law has both imperial and counter-imperial dimensions. But Getachew joins the growing body of literature that shows us that much of what is progressive about international law and institutions is less the infrastructure of reason and more the result of the struggle of the oppressed and its double-edged translation into an “enlightenment” vernacular.

# 1NR

#### Both examples of prohibition in their evidence are legal acts, not “black anarchism”

2AC Cambridge, 21 (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/prohibition)

Prohibition: the act of officially not allowing something, or an order that does this: New York City has announced a prohibition on smoking on buses./ The environmental group is demanding a complete prohibition against the hunting of whales.

#### Here are examples – aff changes none of them – “ending white supremacy” does not end any anticompetitive practice.

Gibbs ‘ND [Gibbs Law Group; “Anticompetitive Practices”; https://www.classlawgroup.com/antitrust/unlawful-practices/; AS]

Federal and state antitrust laws prohibit anticompetitive behavior and unfair business practices that harm other businesses and consumers.

Examples of these unlawful, anticompetitive practices include:

Price Fixing – an agreement among competitors to raise, fix, or otherwise maintain the price at which their goods or services are sold.

Pay-for-Delay – an agreement between a brand drug manufacturer and a would-be generic competitor to delay the release of a generic version of the branded drug, depriving consumers of lower-priced generics.

Bid-Rigging – competitors agree in advance who will submit the winning bid during a competitive bidding process. As with price fixing, it is not necessary that all bidders participate in the conspiracy.

Monopolization – one or more persons or companies totally dominates an economic market.

Unfair Competition – an attempt to gain unfair competitive advantage through false, fraudulent, or unethical commercial conduct.

Market Division – an agreement between competitors not to compete within each other’s geographic territories.

Group Boycotts – two or more competitors agree not to do business with a specific person or company.

Exclusive Dealing Arrangements – an agreement that a buyer will only buy exclusively from the supplier.

Price Discrimination – charging different prices to similarly situated buyers. Certain types of price discrimination may be illegal under the Robinson-Patman Act.

Tying – when a company makes the purchase of an item conditioned on buying a second item.

#### Essentializing indigeneity turns the case. Presumes they stand-in for all indigenous people – their posture produces depoliticizing white-spectatorship.

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Barkley Brown draws attention to the centrality of experience in the classroom. While this is an issue that merits much more consideration than 1 can give here, a particular aspect of it ties into my general argument. Feminist pedagogy has always recognized the importance of experience in the classroom. Since women's and ethnic studies programs are fundamentally grounded in political and collective questions of power and inequality, questions of the politicization of individuals along race, gender, class, and sexual parameters are at the very center of knowledges produced in the classroom. This politicization often involves the "authorization" of marginal experiences and the creation of spaces for multiple, dissenting voices in the classroom. The authorization of experience is thus a crucial form of empowerment for students – a way for them to enter the classroom as speaking subjects. However, this focus on the centrality of experience can also lead to exclusions; it often silences those whose “experience” is seen to be that of the ruling-class groups. This more-authentic-than-thou attitude to experience also applies to the teacher. For instance, in speaking about Third World peoples, I have to watch constantly the tendency to speak "for" Third World peoples. For 1 often come to embody the "authentic" authority and experience for many of my students; indeed, they construct me as a native informant in the same way that left-liberal white students sometimes construct all people of color as the authentic voices of their people. This is evident in the classroom when the specific "differences" (of personality, posture, behavior, etc.) of one woman of color stand in for the difference of the whole collective, and a collective voice is assumed in place of an individual voice. In effect, this results in the reduction or averaging of Third World peoples in terms of individual personality characteristics: complex ethical and political issues are glossed over, and an ambiguous and more **easily manageable ethos** of the “**personal” and the “interpersonal**” takes their place. Thus a particularly problematic effect of certain pedagogical codifications of difference is the conceptualization of race and gender in terms of personal or individual experience. Students often end up determining that they have to “be more sensitive” to Third World peoples. The formulation of knowledge and politics through these individualistic, attitudinal parameters indicates an erasure of the very politics of knowledge involved in teaching and learning about difference. It also suggests an erasure of the structural and institutional parameters of what it means to understand difference in historical terms. If all conflict in the classroom is seen and understood in personal terms, it leads to a comfortable set of oppositions; people of color as the central voices and the bearers of all knowledge in class, and white people as ‘observers’ with no responsibility to contribute and/or nothing valuable to contribute. In other words, white students are constructed as marginal observers and students of color as the real “knowers” in such a liberal or left classroom. While it may seem like people of color are thus granted voice and agency in the classroom, it is necessary to consider what particular kind of voice it is that is allowed them/us. It is a voice located in a different and separate space from the agency of white students. Thus, while it appears that in such a class the histories and cultures of marginalized peoples are now “legitimate” objects of study and discussion, the fact is that this legitimation takes place purely at an attitudinal, interpersonal level rather than in terms of a fundamental challenge to hegemonic knowledge and history. Often the culture in such a class vacillates between a high level of tension and an overwhelming desire to create harmony, acceptance of “difference,” and cordial relations in the classroom. Potentially this implicitly binary construction (Third World students vs. white students) undermines the understanding of complication that students must take seriously in order to understand "difference" as historical and relational. Coimplication refers to the idea that all of us (First and Third World) share certain histories as well as certain responsibilities: ideologies of race define both white and black peoples, just as gender ideologies define both women and men. Thus, while "experience" is an enabling focus in the classroom, unless it is explicitly understood as historical, contingent, and the result of interpretation, it can coagulate into frozen, binary, psychologistic positions.53 To summarize, this effective separation of white students from Third World students in such an explicitly politicized women's studies classroom is problematic because it leads to an attitudinal engagement that bypasses the complexly situated politics of knowledge and potentially shores up a particular individual-oriented codification and commodification of race. It implicitly draws on and sustains a discourse of cultural pluralism, or what Henry Giroux (1988) calls "the pedagogy of normative pluralism" (95), a pedagogy in which we all occupy separate, different, and equally valuable places and where experience is defined not in terms of individual qua individual, but in terms of an individual as representative of a cultural group. This results in a depoliticization and dehistoricization of the idea of culture and makes possible the implicit management of race in the name of cooperation and harmony.

#### Treating race war as inevitable aligns us with the alt right at the most politically inopportune time. The aff supports fascism.

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'Humanity as Such Does Not Exist’: Survival, Identity and Time

The radical departure from liberalism is clearest when it comes to identity. The rejection of liberal common sense is heavily invested in the rejection of the modernist ‘superstition-belief’ in a subjective ‘tabula rasa’, by which subjects are viewed as constituted by and adaptive to their lived environment. As De Benoist, a leading thinker in the New Right whose work is widely read in the US Alt-Right, postulates ‘Man is not born like a blank page. Every single individual bears the general characteristics of the species, to which are added specific hereditary predispositions to certain particular aptitudes and modes of behaviour. The individual does not decide this inheritance, which limits his autonomy and plasticity but also allows him to resist political and social conditioning’. In this logic, rejecting the universality of humanity reframes universalist norms as treacherous betrayal of the identity defined by ‘specific hereditary predispositions’.23

The Alt-Right assumes the reality of, and need for, subjective agency and adaptivity but views it as determined by biological boundaries that in turn produce culture. Man can only ‘construct himself historically and culturally on the basis of the presuppositions of his biological constitution, which are his human limitations’24 Thus, the French New Right proposed a vision of a well-balanced individual, taking into account both inborn, personal characteristics and the social environment. It rejects ideologies that emphasise only one of these factors, be it biological, economic or mechanical. Because in this frame culture is held up as the key differentiation while remaining determined by racial biology, we refer to this influential conceptualisation of identity as birth-culture.25 In other words, human subjectivity is a matter of indigenous qualities mediated through engagement with history.

-This account of agency as adaptive but not plastic is what is at stake in the claim that ‘different cultures provide different responses to essential questions’, and that ‘man is by nature rooted in his culture [...] at the interface of the universal (his species) and the particular (each culture, each epoch)’. In this reading, projects of universalism are always necessarily totalitarian, inasmuch as they seek to efface or ignore the rooting of agency in determined biological particularity26 Programmatically, rather than treating biocultural diversity as a ‘burden’ to be reduced, ‘diversity is to be welcomed, and should be maintained and cultivated’. Indigenous diversity is what is placed at fatal risk by modernity, calling for political action to sustain the particular against universalist indifference.27

The birth-cultural bind grounds arguments for indigeneity and therefore pessimistic views of impurity. In the discourses of the white nationalists of the US Alt-Right, the refusal to ‘negate the concept of races’ is derived from the refusal ‘to blend all races into an undifferentiated whole’, or what the European New Right youth movement Genération Identitaire calls ‘forced interbreeding’ or ‘replacement’. The right to preserve (white European) indigenous particularity is claimed as already extended to other indigenous identity groupings. This requires that ‘ethno-cultural identity’ ‘should be acknowledged and recognised in the public sphere’.28 The incorporation of white ethnic identities into a generic argument for indigeneity is architectural to most strands of the Alt-Right.

It sustains their calls for ‘white civil rights’ and segregation, which are integrated into the ‘natural conservativism [‘by which any group is’] ‘inclined to prioritise the interests of their tribe’, which logically entails that ‘separation is necessary for distinctiveness’.29 This Darwinian surviv- alism grounds Alt-Right pessimism as to rights-based civil society, implying that some identities hold back or abuse hard-working members of the community. The white phenotype birth-culture is framed as under threat by liberal-induced intermingling and resource distribution—both seen as identity sabotage. This framing of identity is simultaneously an articulation of inherent historically encoded privilege and of vulnerability, since the white race is deemed the most delicate and in need of political help to survive, potentially in the form of violent segregation.

The project to re-gender politics plays a critical role alongside the discourse of race war. A common articulation on the Alt-Right is that ‘traditional gender roles are better for society’ and that sexual hierarchy must be allowed to return as legitimate politics. This approach to gender shares the same logic as that of identity, claiming a ‘natural’ biological order that must be reintroduced into politics to enable identity to thrive. As with all identities, gender is subsumed into the necessities of the struggle for survival among identities, which means that for the Alt-Right feminism and women’s control of their own bodies comes to represent an ‘unnatural’ threat to the reproduction of identity. In this view, inurement to the mythos of modernity, particularly gender and identity equality, only exposes the value of ethnocultural ‘natural’ norms. Mastery over gender and economics are themselves, in turn, key conditions for survival in the upcoming race war.

In Alt-Right thought, time itself is defined by racial survival. In their biological conceptualisation of culture, which draws on nineteenth- century ethnonationalist theory, identity is ‘eternal’ and unchanging.30 ‘Natural’ identity should not develop, \yhich means that Alt-Right conceptualisations of temporality refer to life and death rather than progress. This temporal stillness means that history is defined by existentialist struggles for survival and the possibility of future extinction, instead of change in and to oneself. Change over time—particularly liberal progress—is considered an attack that weakens the atemporal stillness of race and culture, limiting its capacity to survive. To be able to ‘think against modernity’ is precisely to stop the advance of liberal time as progress, making it possible to rescue cultural traditions from amidst modernity’s ruins, by returning them to their timeless ‘eternal’ nature.

This pessimist account of humanity and its identities is grounded on the inevitability of racial struggle**,** the product of bringing different birth-cultures together in unnatural multiculturalism. For the Alt-Right, politics has to admit that a race war is forthcoming, and that it is natural, not unethical, and must be prepared for as the only path to survival. For this, a return to violence—gendered and identitarian—must become once again a legitimate and natural form of politics, as they perceive it to have been in the nineteenth century, particularly with reference to European expansion in America and colonialism. Indeed, the first conflict is over the right to fight back against liberal mind-control, so as to prepare for it.

Embracing the Apocalypse?

This contemporary formulation of pessimism has clear epistemologi- cal and apocalyptic inflections. Together, they create a potent capacity to mobilise those disaffected with the promise of modern progress. Race war is a key operator in narratives on the Alt-Right: it represents the coming crisis and needs to be prepared for, and solutions advanced on its assumption. Having abandoned high-modern solutions such as the race-supercharging ambitions of 1930s Fascists, these actors confront their visions of a bleak future without grand programmatic solutions. Having abandoned the emancipatory promise of the Enlightenment and modernity, they seek only the elimination of norms and structures preventing the natural flow of history and identity politics through violence. Their response takes shape in two forms, both of which rely on pessimistic readings of history and progress to propose accelerationist solutions: help unleash the inevitable race war, or hasten an exit from modern democracy and statehood altogether.

The first is the most common: embrace the necessity of race war by ending the repression of identity violence and allowing it to occur as a natural political expression. The only limitation to this ‘natural’ human struggle is liberal universalism, which is blamed for conspiring against the white race by promoting ‘malicious population replacement at the hands of a government’, explaining the chants of ‘you will not replace us’ at Charlottesville.31 Liberals emerge as ‘anti-white’ traitors to their own birth-culture, which necessitates greater protection due to its ‘excessive hospitality, trust’ and ‘recessive genes supporting fragile Aryan phenotypes’—linking back to its need to control women.32 Consequently, the destruction of the white race is seen to sabotage ‘western civilisation’ or ‘culture’, because whiteness is its biological condition of possibility.33 Because birth into the race is the, condition of possibility for civilisation and culture, the Alt-Right and European New Right (Matteo Salvini and Marine Le Pen are prominent examples) can publicly frame migration and multiculturalism as existential threats without overtly mentioning race, while contemporarily promoting a ‘rapid acceleration to a state of extreme alarm, or racial panic’.34

The trajectory towards apocalyptic racial struggle is refracted in Alt-Right readings of globalisation. Global liberal norms are deemed to instrumentally mask or obfuscate the exercise of elite power, whence Trump’s calls to ‘drain the swamp’.35 Yet the rejection of their underlying modernist ideology underpins a more categorical rejection of a modernist globalism defined by an ‘inherent trend to degeneration or self-cancellation, rooted in the idea that [it] came from somewhere and is imposed on the rest’.36 This is, crucially, the logic that feeds the search for conspiratorial culprits, of which George Soros is often held up as a key example.37 Universalism, they argue, is a cipher for colonial imposition, ‘fed by the desire to erase all otherness by imposing on the world a supposedly superior model invariably presented as “progress’”.38 As Trump put it at the UN, the struggle of our time pits universalism against ethnocultural sovereignty.39

The destruction wrought by modernisation and development theory can only be addressed, for either the New or Alt-Right, following Schmitt, by the emergence of a new ‘nomos of the earth: a new organisation of international relations [as] a multipolar world of emerging civilisations’, where ‘power is defined as the ability to resist the influence of others rather than to impose one’s own’.40 A project of fostering resistance to universalist readings of global time is central to the pessimism that frames the Alt-Right. This is why cognitive resilience to modernist universalism, in nurturing the capacity to say ‘no’ to the erasure of particularity under a logic of progress, underpins the capacity of birth-cultures to endure.41 Liberal-globalist norms erode the capacity of the indigenous population to maintain themselves, to compete, but also to simply subsist in their autonomous particularity. Paternalistic aid and knowledge transfer are to be rejected in favour of each particularism becoming free to actualise their potential. For when the Cathedral of liberal ideology imposes a requirement to provide development assistance to others, it precludes all futures but ruin.

The future, faced by a crisis integral to global modernity, can only be saved from nihilism by re-articulation through remembrance of race and its particular culture. Opposition to globalism as universalist imperialism requires the re-interpolation of the future with the past, a new mnemo- technics that frame and explain all history as an identity struggle: ‘the New Right has a very long memory: it maintains a relation to the beginning that harbours a sense of what is coming’.42 Such mnemotechnics, being devices that construct historical memory rather than history, produce two distinct temporal perspectives. Looking back to history, they make it possible to reinterpret the identity violence of the past as natural, jettisoning ‘white guilt’,43 and embracing the naturality and necessity of coming interethnic conflict. The same mnemotechnics project a future where, if freed from liberal universality, unconstrained white identity will be able to throw itself into surviving the racial apocalypse and, presumably because of its natural superiority, enjoy the fruits of its survival (space, resources, women) in the post-apocalyptic aftermath.44

Just as white identity politics tip invariably into a logic of racial purification and segregation, so too the pursuit of a pessimistic politics of the particular against the universal is prone to an accelerationary dynamic underpinned by the certainty of a descent into apocalyptic crisis. Opposition to universalism champions free adaptation, so as to allow for those who remember to determine right. This explicitly Darwinian conceptualisation is what allows for ethnocultural diversity in the reactionary internationalist assemblage, including, for example, European, American, Russian and Indian movements. Nationalists from any racial and cultural particularism can believe themselves the ‘fittest’ to survive in a world cured of the oppressions of liberal globalism. The resilience of the particular is self-evident, since it follows from the value of indigeneity’s tradition. The pessimism of interethnic struggle and destruction is projected onto others, making it possible to believe in one’s own race surviving the apocalypse.

This prospect gives rise to the second solution: accelerating institutional decay. It side-steps race, incorporating it as one of the central issues to be resolved through the dismanding of the modern state which has become the vessel for liberal mind control. As Peter Thiel, founder of PayPal and CIA data-mining firm Palantir, explains: ‘the great task for libertarians is to find an escape from politics in all its forms’ 45 Trump spent much of his election campaign arguing that he could act unencumbered and uncorrupted by the influence of‘special interests’: he was already too wealthy to be bribed.46 The anarcho-capitalist or paleoliber- tarian strands on the Alt-Right, to which this argument seems to have appealed, can sit in some tension with the identitarian ideologues. In particular, their Randian elitisfn seems diametrically counter-poised to de Benoist’s or Bannon’s calls to defend populist democracy through separation between wealth and power.47 These positions are clearly linked in Alt-Right debates, particularly the reactionary critique of liberal universalism and its protection of the undeserving weak through welfare or equality. This is why anarcho-libertarians of the New and Alt-Right like Land discuss identitarianism in detail and conceive solutions that can address all their concerns.

Alt-Right accelerationists embrace the apocalyptic racial and economic crisis so that it might lead to the dissolution of liberal institutions. They too begin with cognitive resistance and resilience to liberal democracy, ‘[sjince winning elections is overwhelmingly a matter of vote buying, and society’s informational organs (education and media) are no more resistant to bribery than the electorate’. Democracy is here defined as a ‘parasite’ that has transformed ‘local, painfully dysfunctional, intolerable’ behaviour ‘into global, numbed, and chronic socio-political pathologies’. Its death is judged to be an inevitable consequence of its globalisation, whence the call to accelerate its demise. Acknowledging the inherently mythic nature of democracy is an irreversible pessimist position that leads them to advocate ‘something else entirely: an exit’.48 This takes the form of ‘neocameralism’: a surrender of society to those who already control the actual levers of power, a corporate state legitimised by technocratic efficacy in delivering value to shareholders. Land suggests that the closest contemporary examples are Hong Kong, Singapore or Dubai, which ‘appear to provide a very high quality of service to their citizens, with no meaningful democracy at all. They have minimal crime and high levels of personal and economic freedom. They tend to be quite prosperous. They are weak only in political freedom, and political freedom is unimportant by definition when government is stable and effective’.49

Conclusion

All that remains in question is how much particularity will be left after the crash of modernity into racial conflict. It is easy to see how, across the Alt-Right, a Trumpian or Orbanian anti-liberal populist authoritarianism is agreed upon as a possible ‘escape route’.50 Fostering resilience to the ideology of modernity reconstitutes the political aesthetic of tradition as the means to popular mobilisation. The trend to degeneration identified with liberal modernity necessitates the dismantling of all obstacles to survival, including democracy.

This chapter has explored the pessimistic Alt-Right view of truth and knowledge in the contemporary world, which is seen as dominated by liberal dogma. It then discussed its view of identity, which is dominated by a rejection of universalist frames of reference and the desirability of promoting Darwinian struggle among races as a form of social and identitarian justice. Finally, it engaged with how this way of understanding knowledge about the world and identity constructs the inevitability of a social rupture into racial conflict or, side-stepping race, anarcho-capitalist visions of post-democratic governance. This rupture, and especially the conceptualisation of history as defined by existentialist struggles for survival, reveal that in Alt-Right thinking political temporality is but the time left to prepare for the next survivalist struggle. This apocalypse is not only inevitable for the Alt-Right but also desirable.51 Only the destruction of The Cathedral can bring about normative, statal and social change, specifically the opportunity to reconstruct the world on the basis of‘natural’ norms after the racial apocalypse.

Denoting the heterogeneity of Alt-Right thought, these pessimistic temporal visions are often conflicting. It is, however, important to conclude by highlighting that they cohere around a deeply pessimistic account of human nature and a sense that struggle is necessary at the level of culture as well as politics. This frame leaves biological ideas, inevitably ethnonationalist and apocalyptic when it comes to any racially impure society, as the only dependable, believable and ultimately just way to understanding politics. This is an embrace of biologically determined birth-cultures struggling among themselves to survive. Denoting pessimism as to human agency, even their own, this account rejects politics in favour of struggle for which all must, instead, prepare. In this new nomos of the earth, the descent of politics into racial and economic survivalist struggle is to be embraced as a decisive and necessary event from which the deserving will emerge triumphant and the underserving and unfit will die. Conversely, any politics where knowledge, power and time are not defined by racial, cultural and identitarian struggle is to be rejected as a betrayal of nature.