# Neoliberalism K – TDI 2024

## 1NCs

### Big Stick

#### Neoliberalism expansion across the globe is unsustainable --- the ever-expanding globalization manifest illiberal politics as the idea of Liberal Peace turns into liberal war

Gonzalez-Vicente, R. (2020). The liberal peace fallacy: violent neoliberalism and the temporal and spatial traps of state-based approaches to peace. Territory, Politics, Governance, 8(1), 100-116. Accessed 7/1/2024 CSUF JmB TDI

The contemporary rise of illiberal politics, nationalism and partially mercantilist worldviews – with the governments of the United States, Russia and China, among others, reinvigorating national discourses and agendas, and unilaterally initiating military action or entertaining expansionist agendas; and with the rise of the far-right looming over Europe – has left liberal elites in apparent distress. As they contemplate the extensive rejection of many of the values that have underwritten the global liberal project since the 1980s and 1990s, these elites fear not only a potential retreat of the policies that facilitated globalized accumulation in the last decades but also the breakdown of the Liberal Peace, or the idea that economic interdependence between nation-states is paramount in containing international violence. This has been followed by a proliferation of cautionary tales against a ‘populist rise’, as institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) cling to market integration as the foremost recipe for prosperity and peace (Mayeda, 2016). Indeed, the clarion calls have resonated well beyond the liberal Atlantic heartland, as exemplified by the visit paid by Chinese President Xi Jinping to the World Economic Forum (WEF) in January 2017. There, the Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party attacked protectionism, promoted trade and investment liberalization, and cautioned that ‘no one will emerge as a winner in a trade war’, in a sui generis contribution to a long-standing narrative that couples anti-market resistance with international conflict (Xi, 2017). Yet, the contemporary ascension of nationalist and populist movements and leaders that herald deeply illiberal views (Xi included) must come as no surprise after decades of neoliberal triumphalism and the promotion of a transnational order that placed the crafting of a world market above the needs of societies themselves. In such a context, the contemporary rise of nationalism and populisms across the world is not some liberal order antithesis emerging from a vacuum, but rather a logical consequence of this liberal order, constituting an often reactionary ‘counter movement’ that cannot be tackled with liberal prescriptions for increased market globalization (Polanyi, 2001). This paper takes aim at the now long-held and recently revitalized argument for a liberal peace. While not attempting to predict any specific outcome regarding the future of global peace, it argues that the rise of illiberal and reactionary discourses that we now observe, and their potential corollaries, must be understood in a dialectical sense as the result of a liberal market-oriented inter-state order that failed to tackle the great social dislocation that it played a fundamental role in fomenting. To develop this critique, I draw upon three main bodies of literature that, despite their apparent affinities, are seldom brought together. These include Polanyi and Gramsci-inspired understandings of hegemonic crisis, counter-movements, and the rise of nationalism and populism (Gill, 2015; Gonzalez-Vicente & Carroll, 2017); critical political economies of social conflict within a context of neoliberal globalization (Harvey, 2005; Springer, 2015); and political geography analyses of international relations theory (IRT), and more specifically critical geographies of peace (Agnew & Corbridge, 1995; Flint, 2005; Koopman, 2016; McConnell, Megoran, & Williams, 2014; Megoran, 2011; Nagle, 2010; Williams & McConnell, 2011). Elaborating upon these, I contend that the methodological nationalism of the disciplines of economics and international relations – in which much of the liberal view is based – has left them in a sorry state in making sense of recent political development throughout the world, specifically when addressing the contemporary rise of reactionary forms of populism. In this sense, the high degrees of violence and vulnerability associated with processes of market integration have often escaped the radars of economics and IR analyses, fixated as they are with mono-scale scrutiny of national economies and state-to-state relations. Although some liberal IR scholars have laid the grounds for a less normative paradigm that incorporates domestic variables and bottom-up societal processes into the understanding of state action, the assumption remains that policy interdependence and compatibility between states, combined with the Pareto-efficient outcomes of globally integrated production and trade, result in ‘strong incentives for coexistence with low conflict’ (Moravcsik, 1997, p. 521; see also Oneal & Russett, 1997; McDonald & Sweeney, 2007). Recent developments suggest there are fundamental flaws with this largely deductive hypothesis. Whereas on aggregate terms, and according to some measurements, nation-states may have benefitted more or less from globalization, social conflict occurring at multiple scales – and indeed in a class-based dimension – is an undeniable constitutive element of state action, the latter reflecting and/or attempting to contain particular constellations of social forces and their interests. In this way, the damage inflicted upon many by increasingly disembedded markets and post-political states that shield policy from popular deliberation (both the products of the liberal agenda) are at the very root of the current crisis of liberal hegemony (Gonzalez-Vicente & Carroll, 2017). In what follows, I draw upon a variety of cases to explain how a dialectical approach to liberalism, neoliberalism and their illiberal responses,1 and a multi-scalar analysis of market violence are indispensable in explaining much of the turbulence that world politics faces today. To be clear, the paper’s goal is not to deny that state leaders factor in the economic repercussions of conflict when they contemplate its possibility – a logical assumption of liberal international relations scholarship. The aim is instead to argue that these calculations tell very little about the nature of peace and conflict as historically bounded processes that need to be studied in relation to broader transformations in the global political economy, the latter affecting state behaviour in terms of both economic policy and inter-state rivalry. In this way, and crucially, I also wish to refute the liberal argument that the pursuit of economic integration at any (social) cost will unequivocally lower the prospects for international conflict or, indeed, structural violence more broadly understood as a multi-scalar phenomenon. The paper is structured as follows. The next section problematizes the concept of peace in IRT, with a more detailed discussion of economic liberalism. The following section presents a temporal critique, contextualizing the contemporary rise of illiberal politics within the transformation of the global political economy under world market capitalism. After this, I build upon Agnew (1994) to develop a scalar critique and argue that liberalism’s methodological nationalism hampers a proper assessment of the transnational dimensions of processes such as development, violence or peace. I chart various scales of market-induced violence and vulnerability (as a form of economic violence) in the global era, tracing the rescaling of violence and risk from the interstate scale to the individual sphere. I conclude by discussing the transition from a ‘durable disorder’ (Cerny, 1998) to an emerging (albeit contested) new populist order under world market capitalism. To do so, I echo Polanyi and Marx in contending that processes of marketization, replete as they are with contradiction, cannot engender liberal or capitalist peace, but result instead in anti-liberal reactions of various kinds (what Polanyi called ‘counter movements’) to the violence of unrestrained markets. Importantly, these counter movements can often take reactionary characteristics, as people under threat or the perception of threat retreat into culture and nationalism against the ‘other’ and internationalism in all its variants. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND THE LIBERAL PEACE While the pursuit of peace is a central preoccupation for progressive IR scholarship, peace as a concept and as an actual manifestation is rarely discussed in the IR literature. Instead, peace often appears as a negative occurrence, intuitively understood as the avoidance of war or an absence of overt inter-state violence (Galtung, 1969; Richmond, 2016, p. 57). Thereby, most IR literature focuses on the challenges to state-based peace, with commentary typically dominated by the two main competing schools, realism and liberalism, both subdivided into further dissenting subcamps. Conventional realist approaches take the ‘anarchic’ or violent nature of international politics as a given and place their focus on states’ survival strategies. Offensive realists warn of the disruptive effects of ‘power transitions’ and in the contemporary context claim, for example, that as China grows economically and militarily, and as its interests expand and it seeks greater influence, tensions with other countries are certain to arise (Mearsheimer, 2014). Defensive neorealists hold similar assumptions about the foundations of the international system, yet contend that states privilege security over domination and that the incentives for conflict are contingent rather than endemic, with balances of power potentially keeping states at bay and preventing conflict (Waltz, 1979). Liberal theorists dispute these interpretations and reject that competition alone guides state behaviour. Elaborating on the Kantian ideal of ‘perpetual peace’, and drawing upon Adam Smith, David Ricardo or John Stuart Mill, liberal theories contend that economic integration and institutional enmeshment or socialization exercise a constraining force on conflict and are conductive to peaceful scenarios (Doyle, 1986; Howard, 1981; Johnston, 2008; Keohane & Nye, 1977). While there is no absolute agreement on the exact shape that such ‘interdependence’ should take (Mansfield & Pollins, 2001), liberal IR scholars often hold that large-scale conflict in the 21st century can be avoided if the liberal world order survives the relative decline of the United States and manages to assimilate rising powers such as China. The emphasis is placed both on institutions and norms of reciprocity, on the one hand, and on economic integration, on the other. Regarding the latter, and evoking Smithian language, the agenda for a ‘capitalist peace’ assumes that free markets represent ‘“a hidden hand” that … build(s) up irrevocable and peaceful connections between states’ (Gartzke, 2007; Richmond, 2008, p. 23), and that ‘put simply, globalisation promotes peace’ (Gartzke & Li, 2003, p. 562). The theory is in many ways deductive, but relies also on the statistical data that on aggregate tends partially to support the liberal peace argument (except for the period leading to the First World War; see also Barbieri, 1996) and on the ‘logic’ that national leaders are not expected to act irrationally or be insensitive ‘to economic loss and the preferences of powerful domestic actors’ (Hegre, Oneal, & Russett, 2010, p. 772). A more nuanced exposition of the liberal argument suggests that what brings nations together and heightens the opportunity cost of conflict is market integration according to a set of commonly devised regulations – rather than the realization of an ideal ‘free’ trade archetype (Moravcsik, 2005). This results in a sort of ‘embedded liberalism’, with the successful integration of postSoviet states and China in world market capitalism through World Trade Organization (WTO) membership and other liberalizing initiatives understood as a deterrent to military action and, hence, as an effective strategy for both global growth and security, particularly in the face of China’s rising economic and military might (Funabashi, Oksenberg, & Weiss, 1994). From this perspective, not only is violence avoidable but also peace may indeed be engineered with the creation of a world market society being key to this endeavour as well as to the broader goal of crafting a liberal hegemony able to deliver a veritable ‘end of history’ where markets and functioning liberal democracies prevail (Fukuyama, 1992). The engineering of market-orientated democracies has indeed often been the main task of liberal peace- and state-building operatives in post-conflict areas (Campbell, Chandler, & Sabaratnam, 2011). Yet, decades of neoliberal integration have not brought Fukuyama’s prophecy closer to its realization. Across the world, liberal market integration has facilitated convivial relations among key countries and paid important dividends to elites, yet it has also resulted in the concentration of wealth in ever fewer hands, rising inequalities within countries (although not between them) and higher concentration of wealth at the top, and increased risks and vulnerability as the logic of market competitiveness takes hold of many aspects of our lives (Anand & Segal, 2015; Lynch, 2006). The relation between the United States and China or the processes of economic integration in the European Union are clear examples of these trends. In these places as well as others, inequalities, precarization and economic insecurity have given way to a populist and nationalist momentum that can be interpreted both as a popular response to the extreme and diverse forms of violence engendered by processes of market integration, or as a manoeuvre to channel discontent towards the ‘other’ in order to protect elite interests (Gonzalez-Vicente & Carroll, 2017). By prescribing ever more market globalization to counter populist politics and avoid conflict, liberal elites add fuel to the fire as they sever the very conditions that led to the disfranchisement of significant segments of the population in the first place. Thereby, it is crucial to understand how the argument for capitalist peace fails to factor in the crisis-prone and socially destructive tendencies of capitalism, particularly in a context of unfenced global competitiveness along market lines. Two of the underlying problems in the liberal peace argument stand out. The first has to do with the statistical selection of fixed points in time that suggest correlations between growth in trade and diminished conflict – while failing to discern mechanisms of causation (Hayes, 2012). A wider temporal lens is needed to situate the contemporary rise of mercantilist and illiberal politics in the context of neoliberal globalization, representing the same sort of ‘counter movement’ that Polanyi had warned of in his reading of the 19th-century downward spiral towards war – aided in our contemporary case by the demise of the traditional left (Blyth & Matthijs, 2017; Carroll & Gonzalez-Vicente, 2017). The second problem relates to liberal international political economy and IRT’s scalar fixation on inter-state matters and hence their inability to factor in violence in the absence of war. I turn now to these two points. On paper, the two intertwined arguments for liberal peace would seem to make sense: if countries remove the barriers to trade and investment and choose to specialize in their comparative advantages, international productivity will be raised and we will enjoy a more prosperous global economy with satisfied consumers and states; also, if states develop close economic linkages, they will have important material incentives to avoid conflict with one another. In the real world, competition between jurisdictions and social groups implies often that the development and prosperity of some is based on the exploitation and vulnerability of others, as typically emphasized by the extensive literature on bifurcated economies, temporally constrained and contradictory growth patterns, and uneven and destructive forms of development. In this way, it is not that economic interdependence, when removed from its social context and put under the microscope, does not raise the costs of conflict. However, the political choices and social transformations needed to achieve interdependence are a key variable to understanding a state’s behaviour and predisposition to conflict. And while governments may in many junctures align with the interests of capital, they are not immune to crises of legitimacy, and will need to mediate issues of accumulation and social cohesion when people perceive the social transformations required to achieve interdependence to have a negative impact on their lives (Jessop, 2016, p. 189). This will reflect in a way or another on state behaviour as political elites, current and prospective, jostle for votes and/or legitimacy. A key problem with the argument for liberal peace lies in its emphasis on narrow temporal correlations between trade and (lack of) conflict, which removes interdependence from its broader political economic context, disembedding peace and conflict from the broader set of historically bounded and politically contingent social relations that underpin them. A widened analytical timeframe renders clear the dialectical relationship between (neo)liberal social projects and their social responses, both progressive and reactionary. Whereas high volumes of trade may coincide at a particular ‘optimal’ period of liberal expansionism with interstate peace, they may also transform societies in ways that engender the conditions for a potential ‘illiberal’ turn or counter movement resulting in a higher risk of conflict as beggar-thy-neighbour positions emerge and new enemies need to be sought by political elites to bind national-constrained constituencies to their agendas to maintain power. We can observe this temporal incongruity in the work of some of the key proponents of the capitalist peace. For example, Oneal and Russett (1999, p. 439) argue that trade ‘sharply reduces the onset of or involvement in militarized disputes among contiguous and major-power pairs’, which are identified by Maoz and Russett (1993) as the set of countries more likely to enter into conflict with each other. Despite Oneal and Russett’s sophisticated approach to the data (modelling, for example, to avoid ‘false negatives’ by factoring in geographic contiguity, or controlling for alliances) and the attention paid to statistical rejections of the liberal peace argument, trade interdependence and the occurrence of conflict are analyzed on a year-by-year basis (Oneal & Russett, 1999, p. 428). This is also the case with other comparable studies (Hegre, 2000; Oneal & Russett, 2001; Souva & Prins, 2006). This temporal frame is problematic, as inter-national conflict tends to build up over prolonged periods of time, and the adverse impacts of interdependence and liberal integration are more likely to result first in crisis and social dislocation, followed by some sort of economic distancing (perhaps under a new administration that replaces the one that embraced liberalization) and a wide range of policy measures, before leading to military conflict – underpinned either by the state that perceives that liberal integration is having negative impacts on socioeconomic development, or more often than not by the one which wants to prevent the deterioration of important trade and investment links. Here, one vital issue often left out of the liberal peace equations is the fact that most military interventions in the post-Second World War period were aimed at disciplining countries that opted out of the United States’ global liberalizing project and sought to pursue a variety of indigenous pathways to modernity, often including many that did so under the rubric of socialism, democratically achieved or otherwise. The reverse is also true, as countries that chose to ally with the United States during the Cold War were shielded from attacks, and in some cases given preferential trade access, technology transfer and allowed to engage in market protection. In this context, associating conflict with the lack of strong trade links, rather than to the meticulous unfolding of a market-based imperial agenda, would be tantamount to concluding that low opium consumption was responsible for British military expeditions in 19th-century China. While there is certainly a correlation between China’s ban on opium and British intervention, nobody could seriously suggest that opium consumption reduces interstate conflict. Similarly, in many of these cases, it is not that the absence of trade results in conflict, but on the contrary, that military intervention has often been aimed at expanding markets and protecting investment. This situation is aptly explained by Richmond (2006), who discusses ‘virtual’ peace and emphasizes how war and peace can be synonymous in countries subjected to military intervention in the name of liberal peace. Old examples of this practice would include the above-mentioned Opium Wars or indeed most colonial wars to open new market frontiers. Cold War examples abound, from the CIA-supported assassination of Salvador Allende following his policies of nationalization and collectivization in Chile, to the training of Contras to oust the Sandinista National Liberation Front in Nicaragua, or the perennial yoke on Cuba to seed the ground for a market-friendly regime.3 While these interventions were justified on the basis of dubious arguments regarding the national security of the attacking country, today these rationales cohabit with moral claims for ‘human security’ and humanitarian intervention in the target countries, although many authors have suggested that these moral arguments often conceal Realpolitik motivations (Chandler, 2004). The Iraq War is a case in point, having achieved a boom in trading links between Iraq and United States following the 2003 invasion, with a six-fold increase of trade between 2002 and 2008 that only started to decline following the discovery of shale oil reserves in the United States (United States Census Bureau, 2017), but having achieved very little in terms of curbing internal violence. The liberal peace fixation with short-term correlations between trade openness and the absence of grand inter-national conflict is particularly perplexing if one considers how the liberal argument for economic development dismisses the immediate social dislocations underpinned by market integration as tangential to longer term improvements for all segments of society (Garret, 1998, p. 796). Here, it would seem that liberal arguments for peace and development operate under different temporal logics. If liberalism’s positive impacts on peace are attested with a focus on yearly correlations between commerce and an absence of conflict, its alleged positive developmental impacts can often be supported only by eschewing the immediate social conflict and diminished living standards fomented by interdependence and marketization – see, for example, the arguments for structural adjustment throughout the developing world in the 1980s and 1990s or more recent austerity policies in Europe, which, incidentally, many authors have demonstrated to be also counterproductive for long-term development (Blyth, 2013; Chang, 2007). This last example brings one back to the contemporary juncture. Across the world, we are observing an emergence of illiberal politics in countries that have represented the backbone of neoliberal globalization, and indeed at its very Anglo-American core. In many places, reactionary politicians have been first to galvanize social discontent successfully by publicly condemning the negative social impacts of economic globalization, such as increased inequalities and growing insecurity. In the United States, the UK or France, for example, it has been the populist right that has more prominently hoisted the anti-globalization flag, even if its discourses place targets on ethnic minorities or national trade imbalances, rather than on class inequality or the increased leverage of businesses in processes of transnational integration. We can see, for example, how rising job insecurity and deteriorating living standards in the UK were mobilized by the Brexit campaign. While much of the ‘Leave’ discourse was problematic, and focused its anger towards European Union regulations and immigrants, Brexit advocates successfully tapped into a widespread sense of vulnerability and precarization throughout the isles that is intimately linked to neoliberal transformations at home and to the consolidation of the world market and its competitive pressures more broadly (Pettifor, 2017; The Guardian, 2016). Similarly, Donald Trump’s anti-China and anti-migrant rhetoric resonated with the experiences of many in the middle class who have been on the losing side of growing inequality and declining social mobility for decades, but also remarkably in the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis, with the top 1% capturing 85.1% of the country’s income growth between 2009 and 2013 (Economic Policy Institute, 2016). Indeed, there are striking similarities in the protestations of politicians at opposite ends of the spectrum, such as Trump and Bernie Sanders, despite proposing diametrically opposed treatments to the perceived problems, with Trump doing little to upset the business-centric order and only adding bigotry and defensive nationalism into the mix.4 In this way, this rise of illiberal positions and movements must not be seen as a diversion from the road to neoliberal globalization, but rather a direct consequence of the consolidation of the world market facilitated by neoliberal policy sets and the techno-logistical developments underpinning globalized forms of accumulation. The current illiberal rise is hence aptly interpreted both as a counter movement in the Polanyian sense, and as a dialectical relationship. Although the detrimental social impacts of liberal integration are often felt rather swiftly by many, their reverberations into politics take the shape of more prolonged reactions. Yet, there is a strong association between liberal integration, its social impacts and the rearticulations of politics that follow and that we currently experience in many parts of the world (Gonzalez-Vicente & Carroll, 2017). The current rise of various kinds of populism – in places as diverse as the United States, the UK, Indonesia, Russia, Turkey or the Philippines, to name a few– represents from this perspective a ‘counter movement’ following a ‘global organic crisis’(Gill, 2015), as people look beyond the mainstream for alternatives that explain and respond to the social dislocations brought about by the pursuit of transnational liberal integration. In this way, neoliberalism’s illiberal moment is in a dialectical relationship with the pursuit of a liberal utopia, mirroring the Polanyian counter movement that would put an end to the ‘Hundred Years Peace’ (1815–1914). Most importantly, the traditional centre left’s failure in many contexts to formulate viable responses to the current social dislocation has left it up to the reactionary right to devise a way out of the crisis.5 More often than not, the leaders of the new populist moment combine an enduring business- and market-centric approach to development with nationalist and reactionary discourse, resulting in a dangerous blend that is likely to perpetuate social discontent, but redirecting it not towards the policy and economic elites responsible of the current developmental impasse but towards countries that are increasingly perceived as rivals.

#### [INSERT IMPACT]

#### [INSERT ALTERNATIVE]

## 1NC Theory of Power

### Liberal Peace Theory

#### Neoliberalism expansion across the globe is unsustainable --- the ever-expanding globalization manifest illiberal politics as the idea of Liberal Peace turns into liberal war

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The contemporary rise of illiberal politics, nationalism and partially mercantilist worldviews – with the governments of the United States, Russia and China, among others, reinvigorating national discourses and agendas, and unilaterally initiating military action or entertaining expansionist agendas; and with the rise of the far-right looming over Europe – has left liberal elites in apparent distress. As they contemplate the extensive rejection of many of the values that have underwritten the global liberal project since the 1980s and 1990s, these elites fear not only a potential retreat of the policies that facilitated globalized accumulation in the last decades but also the breakdown of the Liberal Peace, or the idea that economic interdependence between nation-states is paramount in containing international violence. This has been followed by a proliferation of cautionary tales against a ‘populist rise’, as institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) cling to market integration as the foremost recipe for prosperity and peace (Mayeda, 2016). Indeed, the clarion calls have resonated well beyond the liberal Atlantic heartland, as exemplified by the visit paid by Chinese President Xi Jinping to the World Economic Forum (WEF) in January 2017. There, the Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party attacked protectionism, promoted trade and investment liberalization, and cautioned that ‘no one will emerge as a winner in a trade war’, in a sui generis contribution to a long-standing narrative that couples anti-market resistance with international conflict (Xi, 2017). Yet, the contemporary ascension of nationalist and populist movements and leaders that herald deeply illiberal views (Xi included) must come as no surprise after decades of neoliberal triumphalism and the promotion of a transnational order that placed the crafting of a world market above the needs of societies themselves. In such a context, the contemporary rise of nationalism and populisms across the world is not some liberal order antithesis emerging from a vacuum, but rather a logical consequence of this liberal order, constituting an often reactionary ‘counter movement’ that cannot be tackled with liberal prescriptions for increased market globalization (Polanyi, 2001). This paper takes aim at the now long-held and recently revitalized argument for a liberal peace. While not attempting to predict any specific outcome regarding the future of global peace, it argues that the rise of illiberal and reactionary discourses that we now observe, and their potential corollaries, must be understood in a dialectical sense as the result of a liberal market-oriented inter-state order that failed to tackle the great social dislocation that it played a fundamental role in fomenting. To develop this critique, I draw upon three main bodies of literature that, despite their apparent affinities, are seldom brought together. These include Polanyi and Gramsci-inspired understandings of hegemonic crisis, counter-movements, and the rise of nationalism and populism (Gill, 2015; Gonzalez-Vicente & Carroll, 2017); critical political economies of social conflict within a context of neoliberal globalization (Harvey, 2005; Springer, 2015); and political geography analyses of international relations theory (IRT), and more specifically critical geographies of peace (Agnew & Corbridge, 1995; Flint, 2005; Koopman, 2016; McConnell, Megoran, & Williams, 2014; Megoran, 2011; Nagle, 2010; Williams & McConnell, 2011). Elaborating upon these, I contend that the methodological nationalism of the disciplines of economics and international relations – in which much of the liberal view is based – has left them in a sorry state in making sense of recent political development throughout the world, specifically when addressing the contemporary rise of reactionary forms of populism. In this sense, the high degrees of violence and vulnerability associated with processes of market integration have often escaped the radars of economics and IR analyses, fixated as they are with mono-scale scrutiny of national economies and state-to-state relations. Although some liberal IR scholars have laid the grounds for a less normative paradigm that incorporates domestic variables and bottom-up societal processes into the understanding of state action, the assumption remains that policy interdependence and compatibility between states, combined with the Pareto-efficient outcomes of globally integrated production and trade, result in ‘strong incentives for coexistence with low conflict’ (Moravcsik, 1997, p. 521; see also Oneal & Russett, 1997; McDonald & Sweeney, 2007). Recent developments suggest there are fundamental flaws with this largely deductive hypothesis. 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The theory is in many ways deductive, but relies also on the statistical data that on aggregate tends partially to support the liberal peace argument (except for the period leading to the First World War; see also Barbieri, 1996) and on the ‘logic’ that national leaders are not expected to act irrationally or be insensitive ‘to economic loss and the preferences of powerful domestic actors’ (Hegre, Oneal, & Russett, 2010, p. 772). A more nuanced exposition of the liberal argument suggests that what brings nations together and heightens the opportunity cost of conflict is market integration according to a set of commonly devised regulations – rather than the realization of an ideal ‘free’ trade archetype (Moravcsik, 2005). This results in a sort of ‘embedded liberalism’, with the successful integration of postSoviet states and China in world market capitalism through World Trade Organization (WTO) membership and other liberalizing initiatives understood as a deterrent to military action and, hence, as an effective strategy for both global growth and security, particularly in the face of China’s rising economic and military might (Funabashi, Oksenberg, & Weiss, 1994). From this perspective, not only is violence avoidable but also peace may indeed be engineered with the creation of a world market society being key to this endeavour as well as to the broader goal of crafting a liberal hegemony able to deliver a veritable ‘end of history’ where markets and functioning liberal democracies prevail (Fukuyama, 1992). The engineering of market-orientated democracies has indeed often been the main task of liberal peace- and state-building operatives in post-conflict areas (Campbell, Chandler, & Sabaratnam, 2011). Yet, decades of neoliberal integration have not brought Fukuyama’s prophecy closer to its realization. Across the world, liberal market integration has facilitated convivial relations among key countries and paid important dividends to elites, yet it has also resulted in the concentration of wealth in ever fewer hands, rising inequalities within countries (although not between them) and higher concentration of wealth at the top, and increased risks and vulnerability as the logic of market competitiveness takes hold of many aspects of our lives (Anand & Segal, 2015; Lynch, 2006). The relation between the United States and China or the processes of economic integration in the European Union are clear examples of these trends. In these places as well as others, inequalities, precarization and economic insecurity have given way to a populist and nationalist momentum that can be interpreted both as a popular response to the extreme and diverse forms of violence engendered by processes of market integration, or as a manoeuvre to channel discontent towards the ‘other’ in order to protect elite interests (Gonzalez-Vicente & Carroll, 2017). By prescribing ever more market globalization to counter populist politics and avoid conflict, liberal elites add fuel to the fire as they sever the very conditions that led to the disfranchisement of significant segments of the population in the first place. Thereby, it is crucial to understand how the argument for capitalist peace fails to factor in the crisis-prone and socially destructive tendencies of capitalism, particularly in a context of unfenced global competitiveness along market lines. Two of the underlying problems in the liberal peace argument stand out. The first has to do with the statistical selection of fixed points in time that suggest correlations between growth in trade and diminished conflict – while failing to discern mechanisms of causation (Hayes, 2012). A wider temporal lens is needed to situate the contemporary rise of mercantilist and illiberal politics in the context of neoliberal globalization, representing the same sort of ‘counter movement’ that Polanyi had warned of in his reading of the 19th-century downward spiral towards war – aided in our contemporary case by the demise of the traditional left (Blyth & Matthijs, 2017; Carroll & Gonzalez-Vicente, 2017). The second problem relates to liberal international political economy and IRT’s scalar fixation on inter-state matters and hence their inability to factor in violence in the absence of war. I turn now to these two points. On paper, the two intertwined arguments for liberal peace would seem to make sense: if countries remove the barriers to trade and investment and choose to specialize in their comparative advantages, international productivity will be raised and we will enjoy a more prosperous global economy with satisfied consumers and states; also, if states develop close economic linkages, they will have important material incentives to avoid conflict with one another. In the real world, competition between jurisdictions and social groups implies often that the development and prosperity of some is based on the exploitation and vulnerability of others, as typically emphasized by the extensive literature on bifurcated economies, temporally constrained and contradictory growth patterns, and uneven and destructive forms of development. In this way, it is not that economic interdependence, when removed from its social context and put under the microscope, does not raise the costs of conflict. However, the political choices and social transformations needed to achieve interdependence are a key variable to understanding a state’s behaviour and predisposition to conflict. And while governments may in many junctures align with the interests of capital, they are not immune to crises of legitimacy, and will need to mediate issues of accumulation and social cohesion when people perceive the social transformations required to achieve interdependence to have a negative impact on their lives (Jessop, 2016, p. 189). This will reflect in a way or another on state behaviour as political elites, current and prospective, jostle for votes and/or legitimacy. A key problem with the argument for liberal peace lies in its emphasis on narrow temporal correlations between trade and (lack of) conflict, which removes interdependence from its broader political economic context, disembedding peace and conflict from the broader set of historically bounded and politically contingent social relations that underpin them. A widened analytical timeframe renders clear the dialectical relationship between (neo)liberal social projects and their social responses, both progressive and reactionary. Whereas high volumes of trade may coincide at a particular ‘optimal’ period of liberal expansionism with interstate peace, they may also transform societies in ways that engender the conditions for a potential ‘illiberal’ turn or counter movement resulting in a higher risk of conflict as beggar-thy-neighbour positions emerge and new enemies need to be sought by political elites to bind national-constrained constituencies to their agendas to maintain power. We can observe this temporal incongruity in the work of some of the key proponents of the capitalist peace. For example, Oneal and Russett (1999, p. 439) argue that trade ‘sharply reduces the onset of or involvement in militarized disputes among contiguous and major-power pairs’, which are identified by Maoz and Russett (1993) as the set of countries more likely to enter into conflict with each other. Despite Oneal and Russett’s sophisticated approach to the data (modelling, for example, to avoid ‘false negatives’ by factoring in geographic contiguity, or controlling for alliances) and the attention paid to statistical rejections of the liberal peace argument, trade interdependence and the occurrence of conflict are analyzed on a year-by-year basis (Oneal & Russett, 1999, p. 428). This is also the case with other comparable studies (Hegre, 2000; Oneal & Russett, 2001; Souva & Prins, 2006). This temporal frame is problematic, as inter-national conflict tends to build up over prolonged periods of time, and the adverse impacts of interdependence and liberal integration are more likely to result first in crisis and social dislocation, followed by some sort of economic distancing (perhaps under a new administration that replaces the one that embraced liberalization) and a wide range of policy measures, before leading to military conflict – underpinned either by the state that perceives that liberal integration is having negative impacts on socioeconomic development, or more often than not by the one which wants to prevent the deterioration of important trade and investment links. Here, one vital issue often left out of the liberal peace equations is the fact that most military interventions in the post-Second World War period were aimed at disciplining countries that opted out of the United States’ global liberalizing project and sought to pursue a variety of indigenous pathways to modernity, often including many that did so under the rubric of socialism, democratically achieved or otherwise. The reverse is also true, as countries that chose to ally with the United States during the Cold War were shielded from attacks, and in some cases given preferential trade access, technology transfer and allowed to engage in market protection. In this context, associating conflict with the lack of strong trade links, rather than to the meticulous unfolding of a market-based imperial agenda, would be tantamount to concluding that low opium consumption was responsible for British military expeditions in 19th-century China. While there is certainly a correlation between China’s ban on opium and British intervention, nobody could seriously suggest that opium consumption reduces interstate conflict. Similarly, in many of these cases, it is not that the absence of trade results in conflict, but on the contrary, that military intervention has often been aimed at expanding markets and protecting investment. This situation is aptly explained by Richmond (2006), who discusses ‘virtual’ peace and emphasizes how war and peace can be synonymous in countries subjected to military intervention in the name of liberal peace. Old examples of this practice would include the above-mentioned Opium Wars or indeed most colonial wars to open new market frontiers. Cold War examples abound, from the CIA-supported assassination of Salvador Allende following his policies of nationalization and collectivization in Chile, to the training of Contras to oust the Sandinista National Liberation Front in Nicaragua, or the perennial yoke on Cuba to seed the ground for a market-friendly regime.3 While these interventions were justified on the basis of dubious arguments regarding the national security of the attacking country, today these rationales cohabit with moral claims for ‘human security’ and humanitarian intervention in the target countries, although many authors have suggested that these moral arguments often conceal Realpolitik motivations (Chandler, 2004). The Iraq War is a case in point, having achieved a boom in trading links between Iraq and United States following the 2003 invasion, with a six-fold increase of trade between 2002 and 2008 that only started to decline following the discovery of shale oil reserves in the United States (United States Census Bureau, 2017), but having achieved very little in terms of curbing internal violence. The liberal peace fixation with short-term correlations between trade openness and the absence of grand inter-national conflict is particularly perplexing if one considers how the liberal argument for economic development dismisses the immediate social dislocations underpinned by market integration as tangential to longer term improvements for all segments of society (Garret, 1998, p. 796). Here, it would seem that liberal arguments for peace and development operate under different temporal logics. If liberalism’s positive impacts on peace are attested with a focus on yearly correlations between commerce and an absence of conflict, its alleged positive developmental impacts can often be supported only by eschewing the immediate social conflict and diminished living standards fomented by interdependence and marketization – see, for example, the arguments for structural adjustment throughout the developing world in the 1980s and 1990s or more recent austerity policies in Europe, which, incidentally, many authors have demonstrated to be also counterproductive for long-term development (Blyth, 2013; Chang, 2007). This last example brings one back to the contemporary juncture. Across the world, we are observing an emergence of illiberal politics in countries that have represented the backbone of neoliberal globalization, and indeed at its very Anglo-American core. In many places, reactionary politicians have been first to galvanize social discontent successfully by publicly condemning the negative social impacts of economic globalization, such as increased inequalities and growing insecurity. In the United States, the UK or France, for example, it has been the populist right that has more prominently hoisted the anti-globalization flag, even if its discourses place targets on ethnic minorities or national trade imbalances, rather than on class inequality or the increased leverage of businesses in processes of transnational integration. We can see, for example, how rising job insecurity and deteriorating living standards in the UK were mobilized by the Brexit campaign. While much of the ‘Leave’ discourse was problematic, and focused its anger towards European Union regulations and immigrants, Brexit advocates successfully tapped into a widespread sense of vulnerability and precarization throughout the isles that is intimately linked to neoliberal transformations at home and to the consolidation of the world market and its competitive pressures more broadly (Pettifor, 2017; The Guardian, 2016). Similarly, Donald Trump’s anti-China and anti-migrant rhetoric resonated with the experiences of many in the middle class who have been on the losing side of growing inequality and declining social mobility for decades, but also remarkably in the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis, with the top 1% capturing 85.1% of the country’s income growth between 2009 and 2013 (Economic Policy Institute, 2016). Indeed, there are striking similarities in the protestations of politicians at opposite ends of the spectrum, such as Trump and Bernie Sanders, despite proposing diametrically opposed treatments to the perceived problems, with Trump doing little to upset the business-centric order and only adding bigotry and defensive nationalism into the mix.4 In this way, this rise of illiberal positions and movements must not be seen as a diversion from the road to neoliberal globalization, but rather a direct consequence of the consolidation of the world market facilitated by neoliberal policy sets and the techno-logistical developments underpinning globalized forms of accumulation. The current illiberal rise is hence aptly interpreted both as a counter movement in the Polanyian sense, and as a dialectical relationship. Although the detrimental social impacts of liberal integration are often felt rather swiftly by many, their reverberations into politics take the shape of more prolonged reactions. Yet, there is a strong association between liberal integration, its social impacts and the rearticulations of politics that follow and that we currently experience in many parts of the world (Gonzalez-Vicente & Carroll, 2017). The current rise of various kinds of populism – in places as diverse as the United States, the UK, Indonesia, Russia, Turkey or the Philippines, to name a few– represents from this perspective a ‘counter movement’ following a ‘global organic crisis’(Gill, 2015), as people look beyond the mainstream for alternatives that explain and respond to the social dislocations brought about by the pursuit of transnational liberal integration. In this way, neoliberalism’s illiberal moment is in a dialectical relationship with the pursuit of a liberal utopia, mirroring the Polanyian counter movement that would put an end to the ‘Hundred Years Peace’ (1815–1914). Most importantly, the traditional centre left’s failure in many contexts to formulate viable responses to the current social dislocation has left it up to the reactionary right to devise a way out of the crisis.5 More often than not, the leaders of the new populist moment combine an enduring business- and market-centric approach to development with nationalist and reactionary discourse, resulting in a dangerous blend that is likely to perpetuate social discontent, but redirecting it not towards the policy and economic elites responsible of the current developmental impasse but towards countries that are increasingly perceived as rivals.

### Generic

#### Neoliberalism is maintained and structured through the liberalization of the global south --- this form of colonization is manufactured and maintained through new tech drives as the need for resources ever expands in the drive to feed the machine of late stage capitalism

Grech, J. (2019) Nation: State//Technology: Biology Global Relations in an Age of Emerging Algorithms and the Logic of Late Capitalism. Nation:State//Technology:Biology (Draft only) Accessed 7/2/2024 CSUF JmB TDI

Evidence suggests seismic shifts may be taking place in the political as well as technological landscapes of the world today the likes of which have not been witnessed since the 17th and 18th centuries. Although it is foolish to try to predict the outcome of such changes, democratic societies founded on universal suffrage, human rights, and the rule of law definitely appear to be under threat (Levitsky & Ziblatt 2018; Rich 2017; MacLean 2017). In the shadow of these economic, political, and technological developments, the physical environment is itself becoming less hospitable to biological life and this trend looks likely to intensify as the present millenium progresses. In the context of global climate change, it is gradually becoming accepted that the very survival of humanity may actually be at stake although most writers, scientists and activists understandably choose to focus on the prospects of retrieving the situation before it is too late (Flannery 2010; Gibson, Rose & Fincher 2015; Kaku 2018; Akhavan 2017; Oreskes & Conway 2014).xxxvii Current debates concerning sapiens’ relationships with the natural world are many, however, and undercut many anthropocentric assumptions about the world that have consistently been pedalled by humans to justify our actions throughout history. What can definitely be agreed, at least for the moment, is that planet Earth is the only home humans – as well as every other life form that we know – have. It would be presumptuous to suggest that all life on Earth will cease as a result of human impact, but it is nevertheless reasonable to conclude that dramatic changes will significantly alter the planet’s capacity to maintain a sprawling human population of more than seven billion people as well as sustain the habitats of the vast majority of other living creatures. In the context of political and economic developments, the last century has seen the central role of the Nation-State appear to have been both reworked and eroded. For if at the end of the 19th century, the role of collectively representing individual as well as collective human interests had been assumed by the Nation-State, by the beginning of the 21st century, the interlocked relationship between State and Nation have become significantly weakened and the position of individuals and society as a whole no longer appear to be the primary focus. This is evident in war events and the rise of civilian targets as well as in the evolution of general economic, tax, social welfare, labour and corporate regulation. The instrumental power of the State now appears to privilege the interests of global capital and the large multinational corporations that articulate it rather than “the people’s”. In this emerging scenario, the needs and necessities of “the people”, as can be said also of the needs and necessities of the biosphere in general, are subsumed to the interests and logics of capital. This, however, is only the latest elaboration of the underlying philosophy enshrining “star” fixated economic liberalism (Das 2015:15) that Western culture has doggedly pursued throughout modernity. At national level, the “rugged individualism” of liberalism has realised enormous economic and technological development and innovation but it has come at the expense of ever greater concentrations of wealth and power, environmental and human exploitation. As well as entrenching systemic inequality, economic liberalism has maintain an outward appearance of a broad commitment to the betterment and freedom of humanity in general through the individual. Compounding this, the regulatory systems established for globalisation allows corporations to run up enormous debt in the pursuit of profit but then enables them to shed such debt onto society when the things go sour. The shedding of privately accumulated debt as collective responsibility during times of recession has become an unavoidable consequence of capitalism’s boom/bust cycles and is usually justified by statements that the consequences of allowing such large corporations to go bankrupt are worse than the cost of bailing them out. With privately oriented liberal economics adopted as social policy, communities bear the risks while profits are disbursed to corporate stakeholders, or as Veroufakis puts it, sharing the burden of venture capital at the same time as enabling “public investments” to prop up or become a part of ever growing corporate empires (Veroufakis 2017). The healthy profits private interests accumulate then encourages further risktaking ‘innovations’ and so the cycle continues until such innovations overstep the mark and stock exchange credibility disappears thus unleashing the next crash. Encouraging individual enterprise and greed is, according to Adam Smith and other liberal thinkers, the most efficient way to improve the economic well-being of the community. So large and very large corporations have become the beneficiaries of collective largesse as corporate welfare (though not general social security) has become more prevalent. In practice this means that average taxpayers help line the pockets of the already rich and powerful, bringing into higher relief the fact that many multinational corporations often pay no or negligible rates of tax on income. The global trend towards lower company tax contrasts with the rising tax burden ordinary individuals are being asked to bear in terms of health, education, and social welfare. This exacerbates the shift in tax regimes from income to consumption taxes which obscures how those earning on lower incomes end up paying higher proportions of their salaries on indirect consumption taxes because taxes on goods and services are charged at the same rate irrespective of how much one earns. Add to that the generous allowances and subventions National governments avail to corporations in contrast to the stringent tax enforcement regimes individuals are subjected to, and the imbalance between people and corporate’ tax burdens is even more apparent. Now lets concede that rich corporations and wealthy individuals are best positioned to take advantage of tax avoidance and minimisation accounting practices (West 2019xxxviii) and even the most partial commentator cannot avoid the honest conclusion that inequality is embedded in global regulation that promotes the growing gap between those who have and those who have not.

## Links

### L – China

#### Securitizing against the China threat is reductive and self-defeating—‘China threat’ paradigm risks overreaction.

Shah, A. R. (2023). Revisiting China threat: The US’ securitization of the ‘belt and road initiative’. Chinese Political Science Review, 8(1), 84-104. Accessed 7/3/2024 CSUF JmB TDI

The National Defence Strategy (2018, p. 2) cautioned that China (along with Russia) is “now undermining the international order from within the system by exploiting its benefits while simultaneously undercutting its principles and “rules of the road””. According to this line of argument, Beijing’s policies—including its Belt and Road project—are antithetical and harmful to American vision, values and interests at global level (White House 2019; US Department of State 2019b). Simultaneously, the Trump administration insisted that China seeks global predominance by displacing the US as a sole super power (National Defence Strategy of the US 2018; Lynch 2019). Beijing does so by promoting its “repressive vision of world order” (White House 2017, p. 45) and model of “authoritarian capitalism” (Director of National Intelligence 2019, p. 25) as “a “new type” of global governance” even if “the existing system has served the world—China included—very well in the seven decades since World War II” (US Embassy & Consulate in South Korea 2019). In retrospective sense, the US’ portrayal of China’s ambitions under the Trump administration is a revisit to decades-old ‘China threat’ paradigm thriving in the US from time to time. An analysis of the narratives of Trump administration vis-a-vis BRI reveals that the US’ approach actually reflected the ‘China threat’ mindset (Interviews with diplomats from Central Asia and South Asia, June–July 2019, researchers working for Pakistan government, July–December 2019, Douglas Paal, July 2019, Eyck Freymann, August 2019, Li Xing, August 2019, Yiwei Wang, November 2019). Chengxin Pan (2012, p. 23) aptly explains the paradigm. The ‘China threat’ is a fundamental image that casts China’s rise and its international implications primarily in a negative, alarming, and threatening light. It is more than a particular argument, or a singular ‘China threat theory’, as many of its Chinese critics often call it. Rather, it represents a paradigm that, as a lasting normative concern and cognitive habit, both informs and lends coherence to otherwise divergent ways of looking at China in scholarly analysis, government documents, popular culture and mass media. Eminent analysts, researchers, and academics (i.e. Kishore Mahbubani, Fareed Zakaria, Suzan L. Shirk, Danial Drezner, Taylor Fravel et. al., Stapleton Roy, Michael D. Swaine, Susan A. Thornton and Ezra Vogel etc.) believed that under Donald Trump administration, American perceptions of and actions towards the challenge posed by China were increasingly guided by the ‘China threat’ or ‘China scare’ or ‘Red scare’ thinking (Economist 2020; Swanson 2019; Fravel et al. 2019; Waldman 2019; Wong 2019a; Zakaria 2020). There was a palpable understanding running across both the parties (Republicans and Democrats) in Congress and all the departments of government (the State Department, Department of Defence, Department of Justice, Pentagon, FBI and other spy agencies etc.) in Washington concurring that China poses a threat to US on multiple fronts (Reuters 2019b; Economist 2019a, b, c). The Trump administration was at the forefront of stimulating and building on this thinking both at discursive and policy levels. The threat personification at this level was rather sweeping and oscillating and any pattern of China’s foreign policy behaviour could be interpreted as an ultimate threat. Accordingly, a diverse range of China’s policies and initiatives were identified as part of the broader China problem: unfair trade practices; subsidising Chinese businesses and state owned enterprises; 5G technology and risk of espionage; theft of intellectual property and trade and corporate secrets; ‘Made in China 2025’; and off course the BRI reify the threat posed by China to US’ interests. Policy Responses to Counter the Threat BRI The discourse of BRI securitisation was complemented by a set of policy actions adopted by the US government aimed clearly at the containment of expanding Chinese footprints and influence. First, the Trump administration employed the policy of diplomatic and rhetorical dissuasion to cajole and pressurise other countries not to join the BRI (Wong 2019b). Washington’s warnings against the negative consequences of BRI’s infrastructure-based investments aimed to deter the states like Ukraine, Italy, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Kazakhstan from opting for Chinese money. Besides this direct pressure, discursive characterisation of the project itself has profound repercussions on the potential appeal of BRI investments to other countries. As a consequence, China’s soft power image, which is an important component of BRI (Li 2019, p. 42), is time and again put to the test to convince international community that Beijing does not harbour any malign designs with regard to BRI. At second level, the US tried to tackle this challenge through acts of institutional balancing. Washington came up with its own aid programs to outcompete the reach of BRI. In 2018, the US government increased the portfolio of its development finance institution Overseas Private Investment Corporation from $30 billion to $60 billion and passed the Better Utilisation of Investments Leading to Development (BUILD) Act as counter response to China’s Belt and Road project. A new US aid agency International Development Finance Corporation with $60 billion funding was launched to counter BRI in Asia (Lo 2020). Similarly, the US reached out to like-minded countries in the Asia–Pacific to balance China’s increasing influence across the region. Hence, US, India, Australia and Japan revived the “Quad” with this particular policy objective. Finally, Trump officials incessantly tried to undermine China’s BRI diplomacy at the international fora such as the United Nations (Lynch 2019), Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Guardian 2018) and as recently as Munich Security Conference in February 2020. How Far is the Securitisation of BRI Warranted? During the last six years of its implementation, BRI has exhibited ample reasons to question different aspects of this initiative and its methods of functioning. From ballooning debts to unviable projects etc., a familiar pattern of undesirable outcomes has trailed the BRI projects across many of the countries. The US’ viewpoint does identify these issues with BRI rightly but only partially. A critical cross-examination of securitisation approach towards the BRI and ultimately China’s international role as adopted stridently by the Trump administration shows that American approach is far-fetched on many counts across conceptual, empirical and policy spectrums. In addition to general observations, discussions and communications with diplomats, academics, researchers and analysts from a range of countries with links to Belt and Road project help develop the following critique of the US’ approach. Unlike the American Perspective of Zero-Sum Game, BRI is Generally Viewed as an Opportunity by Many, Though Not Without Concerns for Some Strategic, Political and Economic Implications Most of the countries view BRI investments as opportunity to develop critical infrastructure so direly needed across the Asian countries (Interviews with diplomats from Central Asia and South Asia, June–July 2019, researchers working for Pakistan government, July–December 2019, Ngeow Chow Bing, August 2019, Harris Zainul December 2019). In response to American assertions that BRI holds grave risks to the sovereign integrity and economic development of recipient countries and should therefore be shunned, a Central Asian diplomat (2019) observed. Geography is an unalterable force for states. We cannot change our neighbours and the geopolitics of surrounding states even if the US wants us to do so. So we have to work with this OBOR model…The potential significance of OBOR for regions like Central Asia and South Asia is undeniable for us. This thinking stands diametrically opposite to American narratives proclaiming the BRI as ‘predatory economics’ and ‘debt-trap’ diplomacy. There is a genuine reason for that: Most of the BRI members suffer from acute deficit of development infrastructure. According to a much-cited report by the Asian Development Bank (2017), Asia needs whopping annual $1.7 trillion investments in infrastructure through 2030 or $26 trillion from 2016 to 2030 in order to maintain its growth momentum, tackle poverty and respond to climate change. American observers also agree that BRI investments have the potential to bring ‘win–win’ outcomes for both the parties (Interviews with Douglas Paal, July 2019, Joshua Kurlantzick, July 2019, Eyck Freymann, August 2019, James Schwemlein, September, 2019). However, there is an understanding that BRI with all its promising prospects might also hold some economic and strategic implications. Member countries are conscious of the fact that China has likely pinned strategic interests and goals with certain BRI investments in South Asia (Interviews with South Asian diplomat, August 2019, researcher working for Pakistan government, August 2019) or the BRI might further tip the trade balance in favour of China (Interviews with a Central Asian diplomat, June 2019). Still these countries perceive the project primarily as an economic opportunity. The ‘agency’ of Member Countries and Their Domestic Politics has Played Key Role in Evolution and Dynamics of the BRI. The US’ Perspective Ignores that The US’ perspective stands on the assumption that China holds predominant position of “dictating” (Hindustan Times 2017) and “leveraging” (US Senate 2019) its model “in a more muscular manner, demanding other nations become tribute states kowtowing to Beijing” (U.S. Department of Defense 2018b). This notion is flawed both on conceptual and empirical bases. First, the argument that China unilaterally dictates the BRI reduces the ‘agency’ of member countries and their domestic politics to that of a ‘black box’ playing to the sweet wills of Beijing. The argument therefore is reductive at best. In fact, in many cases the incumbent governments of the member countries approach China for investments and assistance. The cases of Pakistan’ Gwadar port and Sri Lanka’s Hambantota port are notable in this respect. In addition, these governments are quite egoistic in assessing the costs and benefits of Chinese money though their interests are more likely parochial in the sense they prioritise their own political capital or survival (Interviews with Eyck Freymann, August 2019, researchers working for Pakistan government, July–December 2019 and Harris Zainul, December 2019; Brautigam 2019). Therefore, it also depends a lot more on the ruling government’s priorities while discussing the terms and conditions of BRI projects with Chinese. (Interviews with a Central Asian diplomat, June 2019, Hong Zhang, December 2019). In similar vein, these countries have adroitly manoeuvred relations with both China and its rival powers, seeking to get aid form both groups while they compete against each other (Markey 2020). Sri Lanka opened its arms to Indian and Japanese offers in the aftermath of Hambantota port deal. Similarly, Pakistan has been warming lately to US and even reportedly tried to assure the latter that Islamabad attaches great significance to ties with Washington and will not allow Beijing to use Gwadar port for strategic purposes (Siddiqa 2019a, b). On the empirical side, BRI does not function as a linear model steered or imposed all the way from Beijing. Member countries enjoy great deal of leeway in implementing, delaying and even leveraging the Belt and Road projects. Domestic politics are a complex of changing regimes, different interest and pressure groups vying for their respective political agendas and interests. The evidence shows that BRI is not immune to vagaries of domestic politics. One of the top officials of China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) confided that after daily Dawn divulged the details of CPEC ‘master plan’ (Husain 2017), the erstwhile government had to downsize considerably parts of the actual plan due to harsh outcry from media and the public (Interview, December 2019). Changes of governments after elections in Malaysia, Pakistan and Maldives had a great deal of impact on the implementation of BRI projects across these countries. Malaysia even halted the BRI projects and then renegotiated the deals with China. In Pakistan, the government of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) explicitly questioned the terms of CPEC deals signed by the previous government of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (Anderlini 2018). The Chinese side developed many apprehensions and grievances with regard to PTI’s approach towards the CPEC (Interviews with researchers working for Pakistan government, July–December 2019). Unlike the American assertion that China beguiles other countries into trap, member countries are mindful of ceding too much control to China as a result of BRI projects. For example, Pakistan’s invitation to Saudi Arabia to become the third partner in the CPEC (that some thought was done without taking China into confidence) and its withdrawal of Diamer-Bhasha dam from CPEC in November 2017 were motivated by strategic considerations (Interview with a government researcher).Footnote2 Similarly, the newly elected President of Sri Lanka Gotabaya Rajapaksa said (Xinhua 2019) that his government is “not worried about the commercial aspect” of the Hambantota port deal but is “concerned about the security aspect as to whether there are any security lapses. That is what I am discussing with China.” Many of the intricate details of the Belt and Road falls beyond the tight control of China even if the latter would desire to be on the top of everything. In this way the progression and ultimate success of BRI hinges in many ways on the agency of member countries and their domestic politics. Securitising BRI Outrightly is Erroneous and Self-Contradictory for Many Reasons China’s BRI approach has many limitations but the way Trump administration securitised the subject is questionable for some reasons. To begin with, the US hyped and overstated the challenge of BRI and China’s role (Interviews with a South Asian diplomat, August 2019 and researchers and government officials of Pakistan, July–December 2019). The argument that BRI is “predatory” or “debt trap” is not persuasive as it draws its reasoning from a singular case of Hambantota port deal which is more of an exception than a pattern (Interviews with Douglas Paul, July 2019, Eyck Freymann, August 2019, Ngeow Chow Bing, August 2019 and Harris Zainul, December 2019; Freeman Jr. 2019; Swaine 2019). The facts related to that debt-to-equity swap deal are far more complex than the US or other conventional sources have asserted so far (Moramudali 2020). According to Yiwei Wang (Interview, November 2019), “it is a problem but this is the case of a debt not necessarily a trap.” For others, rather than being a debt-trap diplomacy, BRI is “just globalisation with Chinese characteristics” (Brautigam 2019). The notion that China gains influence over other countries by miring them in massive debts stands on self-contradictory footing. Each failing project brings China profound economic and diplomatic liabilities. After all the China’s BRI mantra is based on ‘win–win’ narratives. Hence, this kind of approach would be self-defeating and unsustainable in the long run. The fallouts of Hambantota port deal—in the form of international backlash—for China’s soft image are too enormous to be ignored. As massive debts and unsustainable projects can make China “a victim of its own lending practice and hubris”, the reasoning of the ‘debt-trap diplomacy’ would be a “misreading” of a complex phenomenon (Ferchen 2018). Patronising behaviour of the US’ approach is another issue. The Trump administration presented countries with a binary proposition that China is an imminent threat and the US is the saviour hence they should forsake China for the US. Even though many of the countries have resisted and countered American assertion with argument that BRI is not a debt trap, the US insists otherwise. For instance, Pakistan and Sri LankaFootnote3 have repeatedly tried to dispel the notion that BRI investments are a trap yet the US is parroting the same line with a missionary zeal. Instead of successfully convincing others to eschew the BRI or Chinese assistance, the US risks overreacting to the issue at hand. Finally, the Trump administration’s policy to identify and counter China threat is regressive and counter-productive. The US approach, according to Chas Freeman Jr. (2019), seems to be influenced by Cold War thinking wherein two superpowers could force other countries to take side with either the US or its rival. A broad range of prominent scholars, analysts, and experts agree that the approach to characterise China as an outright threat and consequently counter it is far-fetched and based on overreaction to the so-called threat of China (Beckley 2019; Feigenbaum 2018; Johnston 2019; Joshua 2019; Swaine 2019; Swanson 2019; Fravel et al. 2019; Zakaria 2020; Interviews with Douglas Paul, July 2019, Eyck Freymann, August 2019 and James Schwemlein, September, 2019).

#### The desire to perpetuate the hegemonic identity seeks to construct false threats for the justification of retaliatory and pre-emptive action

Yuan, Z., & Fu, Q. (2020). Narrative framing and the United States’ threat construction of rivals. The Chinese Journal of International Politics, 13(3), 419-453. Accessed 7/2/2024 CSUF JmB TDI

American hawks, especially those of the ‘deep state’ intelligence and defence community, advocate a new Cold War script where China constitutes a progressively serious political threat. This rhetoric has been on the rise over the last couple of years. In the first place, an existential threat is the ideologically and politically antithetical Other. To American hawks, China is an authoritarian regime under Communist one-party rule, which in itself constitutes an existential threat to the free democracy of the United States. For example, the 2017 US National Security Strategy states that China ‘spreads features of its authoritarian system’.115 This mindset is even more apparent in an open letter from former military officials, scholars, and other conservative China watchers to President Trump in 2019, in which they emphasise that China and its Communist party are an existential threat to US values and the US-led world order.116 Meanwhile, it should be noted that although there is a rising rhetoric on ideological differences, it is more about China’s political system itself than the expansive nature of communism so often promoted in the Soviet threat story. In the second place, there is the China Model. In this frame, China represents an authoritarian capitalism, and its great economic success offers other countries an alternative model. This constitutes a challenge to the United States’ free democratic market economy model in the global order. The Worldwide Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community released by the Director of National Intelligence Daniel Coats in 2019 bluntly points out that China will more actively ‘seek to assert China’s model of authoritarian capitalism as an alternative’ for other countries to the Washington Consensus, which may ‘threaten international support for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law’; also that China’s Belt and Road Initiative is a platform to expand China’s ‘global economic, political, and military reach’ and ‘diminish US influence’.117 In the third place is the whole-of-society threat. In this hawkish portrayal, China is taking advantage of the United States’ open environment and political loopholes to gain economic, political, and military benefits, thus threatening US security from the inside. Although this mode of thought has long existed in the China threat discourse, the ‘whole-of-society threat’ concept was coined by FBI Director Christopher Wray during a Senate hearing in February 2018. He said that, in order to replace the United States’ global leadership, China employs not only state institutions but also non-traditional collectors like students and professors to amass intelligence and steal intellectual property rights, so this is ‘not just a whole-of-government threat, but a whole-of-society threat’.118 This narrative template was reinforced in Vice President Pence’s China policy speech in October 2018, in which he said China was attempting to ‘shift American public opinion and public policy’, influence US elections, and fragment domestic interest groups by ‘rewarding or coercing’ agents of influence, such as students, scholars, journalists, and think tanks in the United States.119 One month after the Pence speech, a report from the Hoover Institution echoed this frame by detailing how China has employed agents of influence to influence American domestic politics and policies towards China.120 This narrative was rapidly transposed into government policy. Over the last two years, the visas of certain Chinese scholars have been withdrawn, a number of Chinese Confucius Institutes closed, and the enrolment of Chinese students in certain key areas has also clearly been affected. Military Threat While both China and the Soviet Union are narrated as a military threat, China is largely framed as a regional one rather than a global one. Admiral Philip. S. Davidson, the Commander of US Indo-Pacific Command said in his statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee on US Command Posture on 12 February, 2019: ‘The PLA is the principal threat to US interests, US citizens, and our allies inside the First Island Chain’.121 It should be noted that China’s so-called military threat does not signify that China’s forces have surpassed or actively challenged US military power but rather that China’s military threat arises as long as China can potentially pose a challenge to US military predominance. In this narrative logic, China’s increased military spending, upgrading and expanding of weapons systems and technologies, and overseas deployments to protect its commercial interests, or even the limited access to information on China’s military planning are taken as evidence of China’s rising military threat. This kind of hawkish rhetoric is widespread in annual Department of Defense reports to Congress on China’s military power and in US Defense Intelligence Agency reports on China’s Military Power. One notable feature of the evolving discourse is the growing attention the United States is paying to the PLA’s cyber and nuclear warfare capabilities. Conclusion Rather than the rationalist approach to national security, we adopt a narrative approach to unravelling the narrative process whereby national threats are constructed. Having encountered three successive national rivals since WWII, the United States has constructed three distinctive threat stories to safeguard its hegemonic identity. The Soviet threat consists in the story of two ideologically opposed rivals competing for world domination; the Japan-bashing narrative tells a victimhood story stemming from Japan’s unfair competition. China threat stories, however, are now more complex,conflating a story of US victimhood at the hands of China’s unfair competition, advocated by President Trump,with a widely embedded but malleable epic tale of power competition between a rising power and the ruling power, and a new, ‘deep state’ defence community-propagated Cold War script. All these threat stories have framed what is perceived and what should be done, but they are merely those from among other alternative narratives that eventually gained a dominant position at critical junctures. These socalled national threats are hence no more than narrative constructs in a self-other manner of articulation rather than one of objective existence. Upon examining the narrative templates of US threat stories, we find striking differences among them. The Soviet threat spectrum ranges from the ideological to the political and military domains, and economic challenge is the focus of the Japan threat. But China represents the full spectrum of threats that previously featured in both the Soviet threat story and the Japan-bashing narrative. Upon zooming in, we further find that an ideological conflict constitutes the main thread of the Soviet threat storyline, but that the economic challenge of the China threat outweighs the ideological and political ones. On the political front, the Soviet Union’s totalitarian dictatorship is the polar opposite of liberal democracy, while China is often styled as an authoritarian state—a far less antagonistic wording. As to military threats, the Soviet threat is urgent and global, but the China threat is only a rising and regional one. To counter the economic challenge emanating first from Japan and then from China, the United States adopted different strategies to construct its victimhood story, namely, coining new concepts for Japan, and cashing in on stereotypes for China. In spite of the above-marked differences, however, we can also clearly discern continuity in the United States’ national threat stories. This is reflected not only in the United States’ consistently resorting to the victimhood narrative to counter economic challenges from both Japan and China, and unremittingly cashing in on its widely-shared mythologies and images regarding the Self and Others to achieve resonance, but also, more revealingly, in the underlying logic of US national threat-making. The United States will invariably adopt a zero-sum mindset in making a diametrical self-other story for any country—be it a formidable power with an antagonistic ideology like the Soviet Union, an ally like Japan, or a rising peer competitor like China—that might threaten its hegemonic identity. According to this logic, the American Self is always superior to Others, and articulating the threat confirms its superiority. Not surprisingly, when Others, like Japan or China, challenge its economic primacy, the United States, rather than examining its own problems, will always blame such others for playing an ‘unfair game’. This paper also provides us with a vantage point to appreciate the current debate on Sino–US relations. Clearly, we are in the second half of the critical juncture wherein the question is not whether the United States and China will compete with each other but in which way the competition will unfold, for the bankruptcy of the liberal international order discourse makes it unlikely to revert to yesteryear’s policy of engagement. As the three narrative threads of the China threat stories all point to competition and conflict, and can be self-fulfilling, we may witness increasing tensions between them. Specifically, the Japan-bashing victimhood story can shed considerable light on our understanding of Trump’s China policy. We find that the story President Trump advocates to a large extent matches the victimhood story that the revisionists concocted to deal with Japan in the 1980s. Trump’s rhetoric regarding unfair trade and industry targeting, slapping of trade tariffs amounting to blackmail on both China and US allies, results oriented approach to trade negotiation, and the US high-tech stranglehold that curbs or bars investment in the industry by US competitors can all be found in the Japan threat story toolbox. Having pivoted China policy towards conflict, however, there are few indications that Trump wants to act out a Cold War script. In accordance with the storytelling logic, should Trump retain his presidency in the coming election, the trade war will probably not end in a ‘fair’ trade agreement until such time as the US economy far outperforms China’s, because US superiority entails outperformance, failing which the blame must go on unfair play. That is what happened to Japan, that is to say, successive rounds of sanctions and negotiations until Japan drifted into the Lost Decade. China may, moreover, face even greater US hostility to its high-tech industry and investment, as happened in 1980s. These are issues that China’s political nature and growing military may further complicate. But it should be noted that China is not Japan and will neither give in easily as Japan did nor pose a solely economic challenge to the United States. The Soviet threat story also offers insight. Indeed, a new Cold War rhetoric is rising in Sino–US relations narratives in the United States. Hawks in the US defence community, among them congressman like Senators Rick Scott and Marco Rubio, former officials like John Bolton, and to some extent even Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, have all contributed to the rise of a Cold War mentality. The effect of this Cold War rhetoric is apparent in government policy, such as the barring of visits from certain Chinese scholars and treating Chinese news media as ‘foreign missions’. Although this new Cold War script may sensationalise and aggravate the already deteriorated Sino–US relations, unless major events or crises occur, it seems unlikely to become a grand dominant narrative in the near future. This is partly due to the fact that China, unlike the Soviet Union, does not export Communism, so what Americans are agonising most about now is China’s catching up and the United States’ relatively underperforming economy. Moreover, quite apart from China’s refusal to accept and act on such a script, China has become deeply embedded in the world economy, and its trading partners have little incentive to contain China. The future dominant threat story is hence likely to be a hybrid one that allows cooperation while being open to confrontation.

### L – Hegemony

#### **The US failures in Iraq and Afghanistan have prompted the US to look for other measures to intervene in areas of interest – their weapon of choice becomes economic war – where the affs sanction removal props up pro-American dictators that replicate the soft imperialism of the 1980s**

Kohli, A. (2020). Imperialism and the developing world: How Britain and the United States shaped the global periphery. Oxford University Press. Accessed 7/2/24 CSUF JmB TDI

The debt crisis in Latin America threatened the solvency of major American banks. The United States intervened, both directly and via multilateral organizations in which the United States was a dominant force, to ensure that Latin American countries paid back their debts to US banks. The crisis also provided an occasion to further open up Latin American economies to US goods and capital. While the avowed goal of structural reform in Latin America was to promote development, it is more likely that US decision-makers understood, or at least had an inkling, that policies associated with the Washington Consensus would hurt economic growth in Latin America but still pushed them because they served American economic interests. As we have seen, the US intervention in Latin America during the 1980s was part of a long pattern of soft economic imperialism (discussed in earlier chapters under the rubric of informal empire) to forcibly open doors the world over to sustain and enhance American prosperity. Economic motives were also behind the US military intervention in Iraq, but in less obvious ways than in Latin America. Among the factors that make the Middle East of great strategic importance to the United States is the concentration of world’s oil resources in the region. Whether friends or foes control the production, distribution, and pricing of oil is, then, a matter of considerable US concern. As noted in chapter 5, the US was party to the overthrow of Muhammed Mossadegh in the 1950s in order to deny Iran national control over its own oil. The client status of the Saudi monarchy serves American regional interests well. Ever since the overthrow of the pro-American Shah, the US has sought to deny Iran a significant regional role. It even supported Saddam Hussein against Iran during the prolonged Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s. No one doubts that the US intervened to liberate Kuwait from Iraq in 1991 because Kuwait swims in oil. The motives behind the Second Iraq War—the focus of the present chapter—need to be understood within this historical and regional context. I argue that the United States went to war in Iraq the second time as a first step in a grander design to further incorporate the oil-rich Middle East within the American orbit. The fact that it may not work out that way does not take anything away from the original motives. Intervention in Iraq also fits a century-long pattern of hard military imperialism: the pattern began with the United States’ smashing Filipino nationalists at the turn of the twentieth century to control the Philippines as a stepping-stone to the giant China market; it continued in Vietnam as a way to stop the spread of communism and to maintain open economies in the region; and is now playing itself out in the oil-rich Middle East that the United States hopes to dominate. Judged from the standpoint of whether America’s imperial interventions bring it benefits, the evidence from the most recent period again suggests that the United States does economic imperialism better than military imperialism. The US efforts to deal with the Latin American debt crisis of the 1980s supports the first part of this conclusion. As we have seen, the United States used economic coercion to ensure cooperation by Latin American elites, who were willing to pass on the costs of policy reform to both the lower strata and the future generations of Latin America. The costs of American intervention to Americans were minimal, except for the loss of some international goodwill. In turn, the US government and US-dominated multilateral institutions helped to maintain the profits and solvency of major American banks. Latin American markets were opened up further to American goods and capital. By contrast, US-military intervention in Iraq has cost the Americans dearly and the rewards remain uncertain. Since the goals of US intervention were murky to begin with, it is difficult to assess whether any of them have been met or are likely to be met. If the goals had been minimal—namely, to get rid of a thuggish, possibly anti-American dictator with access to oil wealth—that much the Iraq War certainly achieved. However, much of this goal was already accomplished after the first Gulf War, after which Saddam was still in power but well contained, and even willing to allow foreign oil companies to invest in Iraqi oil. The grander goal of remaking Iraq in America’s image, and then going beyond to impose an American peace on the entire region, remains, at best, illusive, and more likely, with growing anti-Americanism and the spread of militancy, even more distant than before the second war. The impact of American interventions on developing countries—both economic and military—has been negative. As to economic imperialism, I document below that American efforts to ensure that banks were repaid their debts contributed to a lost decade of growth in Latin America. Beyond the lost decade, moreover, forced economic openness reinforced economic dependency of Latin American countries on their northern giant. The consequences are evident if one juxtaposes the experience of Asian countries during the same period (say, from 1980 to 2005), with that of Latin America. Asian countries pursued a more autonomous development path in which national states directed their respective economies. This pattern of development—the Asian financial crisis notwithstanding—produced high growth rates, modest inequalities, industrial development, and high value-added exports. By contrast, economic growth in Latin American countries remained sluggish, with sharp income inequalities. Most Latin American countries also continued to export commodities in exchange for manufactured goods. The negative impact of America’s war in Iraq is there for anyone to see. What makes a moral judgment a little complicated is the fact that Saddam Hussein was a despotic, ruthless dictator who killed many of his own citizens, probably close to a quarter million over a period of twenty-five years.2 By contrast, as noted, nearly a half million Iraqis died under American occupation between 2003 and 2011, the year most American troops left Iraq. Since then, US troops have had to return to deal with militancy. The Iraqi state remains weak and corruption and poverty remain endemic, even as oil extraction continues to grow. What follows is a brief overview of the political and economic context within which America’s most recent interventions have unfolded, and my discussion of the cases of the Latin American debt crisis and the war in Iraq.

#### Their concerns of great power competition overlook that hegemony is threatened not due to the actions of individual nations, but as an inevitable symptom of the emergence of Empire

Hardt and Negri 2019 "Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, Empire, Twenty Years On, NLR 120, November–December 2019", [https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii120/articles/empire-twenty-years-on Accessed 7/2/](https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii120/articles/empire-twenty-years-on%20Accessed%207/2/)2024 CSUF JmB TDI

The fact that the two spheres are increasingly out of joint, however, is only part of the story. We need to look more closely at the composition of each sphere, to gauge its powers and estimate its prospects. We begin by taking a step back to register how the structures of global order have changed in the last twenty years, with an eye to how potential avenues have opened there today for the multitudes that resist and challenge them. At the beginning of the 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and as economic, political and cultural relations were extending in novel ways beyond the reach of national sovereign powers, the us President proclaimed the dawn of a new world order. At the time, most supporters and critics alike took for granted that the United States, having emerged ‘victorious’ from the Cold War as sole remaining superpower, would exert its unparalleled hard and soft power, shouldering ever-more responsibility while exercising increasingly unilateral control over global affairs. A decade later, as victorious us troops rolled into Baghdad, it appeared that the new world order announced by Bush Senior was being realized in concrete form by Bush Junior. American occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan promised to ‘remake the Middle East’ while creating pure neoliberal economies from the ashes of invasion. As neoconservatives flexed their muscles, critics denounced a new us imperialism. From today’s vantage point, it is obvious that unilateralist us power was already limited, and Washington’s imperialist ambitions were in vain. us imperialism had been undermined not by the enlightened virtue of its leaders or the republican righteousness of its national spirit but simply by the insufficiencies of its economic, political and military strength. The United States could topple the Taliban and Baathist regimes (and, indeed, wreak tragic destruction), but it could not achieve the stable hegemony required of a true imperialist power. Now, after decades of failure in Afghanistan and Iraq, waging the ‘war on terror’, few can muster much faith in the benefits of a us-led global system or its ability to create a stable order.4 Since Trump’s election there has been considerable hand-wringing by commentators about whether the liberal international order can survive. In truth, the Pax Americana, and the moment when the us could unilaterally anchor a global institutional order, passed long before Trump crashed onto the scene.5 This new situation pertains not only to the United States: no nation-state today is able to organize and command the global order unilaterally. Those who diagnose the waning of us global hegemony—Giovanni Arrighi was one of the first and most insightful—generally project another state as successor in that hegemonic role: just as the mantle of the global hegemon passed in the early 20th century from Britain to the us, they reason, so too today, as the star of the us wanes, that of another state must rise, with China the prime candidate.6 In contrast, liberal institutional commentators cling to the belief that, despite the international disorder sown by Trump, the star of the United States still shines over the world, and talk of the relative decline of its military, economic and political powers is exaggerated. It remains, for them, the only contender for global hegemon.7 There is some truth in these arguments; but the more important point is that the role of the us, as well as that of rising powers like China, must be understood not in terms of unipolar hegemony but instead as part of the intense jockeying among nation-states on the rungs of Empire’s mixed constitution. The fact that no nation-state is able to fill the hegemonic role in the emerging global order is not a diagnosis of chaos and disorder, but rather reveals the emergence of a new global power structure—and, indeed, a new form of sovereignty.

### L – Iran

#### The affs politics is a façade – they are not invested in imperial sanction relief but rather use the lifting of sanction as a liberalization factor – a means to bring Iran into the western SOI

Valadbaygi, K. (2022). Neoliberalism and state formation in Iran. Globalizations, 1-15. Accessed 6/28/2024 CSUF JmB TDI

As an instance of state capitalism, the Shah’s modernization project of the 1970s geared towards building up a heavy industrial base that relied on Western financial and technological resources and machinery. Although the 1979 revolution replaced the old ruling class with a new one, it did not destroy this socioeconomic foundation of the society. Therefore, the ISI state-led development even expanded in the first decade of the revolution (1979–89), albeit against the backdrop of US hostility and under the banner of the ‘downtrodden’ state. Accordingly, because of struggle and demands from below, the revolutionary state took a range of measures in favour of the poor and the working class, including the provision of subsidies for essential goods and job security. Nonetheless, these measures were secondary to the interests of the new ruling class with two fractions that emerged following the confiscation of the assets of the old ruling class. Shortly after the revolution, some of these assets came under the control of the government and were categorized as being under ‘government ownership’ (bakhsh-e dolati). This led to the emergence of the stratum of government managers that administered these enterprises and most of the state bureaucracy and which advocated a radical interventionist approach to the economy. On the other hand, the remaining expropriated assets and enterprises were handed to newly created revolutionary foundations (bonyads) such as the Mostazafan Foundation by classifying them as being under ‘public non-governmental ownership’ (bakhsh-e omumi-e ghare dolati). Directly under the control of the Imam,5 these enterprises were exempted from the government’s regulation and taxation to distribute wealth among the ‘downtrodden’. 6 With close ties between these revolutionary foundations and the mercantile class that controlled the operation of the traditional marketplace (bazaar), the bonyad-bazaar nexus thus emerged as the second wing of power (Valadbaygi, 2021, p. 317). Financing a developmental project through importing intermediate and capital goods proved to be difficult not only because of the ISI-associated debt crisis of the 1980s in the global South, but also because of the US sanctions and the damage to oil infrastructure during the war with Iraq. These external and internal factors generated a major economic crisis, therefore making a fundamental restructuring of the economy inevitable by the late 1980s. Some influential members of the stratum of government managers viewed integration into the new global economy through exportoriented industrialization a viable developmental strategy. They strategically allied with the bonyad-bazaar nexus to marginalize those within the government who still adhered to the statist approach and ISI (Ehteshami, 1995, p. 102; Hamshahri, 1996). This resulted in the instigation of neoliberalism after the approval of the First Five-Year Development Plan in June 1990. Consequently, the two successive governments of Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (president from 1989 to 1997) and Mohammad Khatami (president between 1997 and 2005) implemented a series of neoliberal reforms (phase I of neoliberalization). These policies continued during the Ahmadinejad presidency between 2005 and 2013 (phase II of neoliberalization), albeit with different rhetoric and objectives. These two phases of neoliberalization have drastically changed the process of capital accumulation and consequently restructured the composition of the two fractions of the ruling class. Recalling the conceptual discussion, this means that Iranian neoliberalization and the new class formation must not be interpreted with reference merely to the national scale. Equally, we need to acknowledge that the imperative of capital has largely driven these policies rather than the motivations of ‘elites’ for reorganizing the post-revolutionary patronage networks. Lastly, as discussed in the theoretical section, we should pay attention to the ways in which the particularity of the Iranian post-revolutionary class structure and balance of class forces have affected the upshot of the reforms. The principal outcome of the first phase of neoliberalization under Rafsanjani and Khatami from 1989 to 2005 was the metamorphosis of the stratum of government managers into the internationally-oriented capital fraction. This began with the privatization of 391 government-owned enterprises (Khalatbari 1994, pp. 188–189) and handing many other similar enterprises to newly created large conglomerates in the name of self-sufficiency during the Rafsanjani administration. As a result of being recognized as non-governmental business groups, investment companies of the banking system and pension fund investment companies acquired many government-owned enterprises. For instance, the National Development Group Investment Co., the Social Security Investment Co., and the Civil Servants Pension Fund are currently among the largest diversified business conglomerates of the country with dozens of holdings and hundreds of subsidiaries. Moreover, the Khatami government privatized further 339 government-owned enterprises (Iranian Privatization Organization Website, n.d.) and granted licenses for the establishment of new private companies in sectors permitted by the law (Harris, 2013, p. 53). During this period, more than 100 National Iranian Oil Company spin-off firms with state capital operating as private firms were also created (Maloney, 2015, pp. 394–96). Along with some private owners, this capital fraction is comprised of many ‘semi-private’ firms that are in reality the subsidiaries of various government ministries and organizations including some bureaucrats and their relatives. In the second phase under the Ahmadinejad presidency 2005–2013, the neoliberalization process shifted in favour of the revolutionary foundations (bonyads) and military forces. Following the 2006 executive decree of the Supreme Leader that permitted the transfer of governmentowned enterprises to ‘public, non-governmental entities and organs’, under the scheme of privatization, the shares of many large government-owned enterprises were handed to contractor firms, cooperatives, banks, and investment companies of financial groups and pension funds affiliated to the Revolutionary Guards, the Basij, and other armed forces. The Mostazafan Foundation, the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam (Setad), the Imam Reza Shrine Foundation, and the Martyrs’ Foundation similarly expanded their economic activities by acquiring shares of large government-owned enterprises (ICCIMA, 2012, pp. 39–40). Ghorb, the engineering firm of the Revolutionary Guards, also increased its presence by granting lucrative no-bid contracts following the exit of foreign firms due to the nuclear-related international sanctions. The total market share of the affiliated conglomerates of the armed forces and the bonyads are estimated to be at least 40 per cent of the country’s GDP (Valadbaygi, 2021, p. 321). During the second phase of neoliberalization, with the ascendency of military forces in the economy, the bazaar was further marginalized. As a result of these transformations, the structure of the bonyad-bazaar nexus eventually evolved to what I call the military-bonyad complex. Let us now examine the accumulation strategy of each capital fraction. With close ties to various ministries and governmental organizations for oil rent and securing contracts, the continual existence of the internationally-oriented capital fraction is deeply dependent on the control of the executive body of the state, i.e. the government. However, the control of the government has proved to be difficult for this fraction since it is subject to a popular vote. This fraction has some degree of power to compete with the military-bonyad complex in the national market, but, in line with the export-oriented industrialization, it views integration into global value chains of Western capital, particularly European capital, as a guarantor of its long-term existence. To this end, whenever in control of the government, it pursues a conciliatory foreign policy towards the US and the EU. This fraction was the major force behind the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between Iran and P5+1 that assured long-term foreign investment in Iran. Importantly, knowing that many large government-owned enterprises have not yet been ‘privatized’, the internationally-oriented capital fraction envisages the incorporation of these firms along with their existing businesses into Western companies (Valadbaygi, 2021, pp. 321–2). On the other hand, whilst the economic machine of military forces and bonyads embraces the deregulation of the labour market and exploits the privatization mechanism to control some large government-owned enterprises, it rejects the policy of the incorporation of transnational corporations (TNCs) into state industries by blocking foreign takeovers. In line with this policy, the military-bonyad complex has consistently sabotaged the rapprochement with the West, in particular the United States. By initially prioritizing its advancement in the national market under the name of ‘economic resistance’ and ‘self-reliance’, the military-bonyad complex utilized Ahmadinejad’s aggressive foreign policy towards the West to justify its economic expansion into all economic sectors as a response to international pressure over nuclear capabilities. The economic rise of China and Russia’s re-emergence of geopolitical power have also aided its attempts to halt further the integration of Iran into the Western-dominated world order. The aggressive Trump administration’s policy, which threatened the integrity of the state by blocking Iran’s oil exports and forcing the withdrawal of European capital from Iran, further put Iran on the side of China and Russia in the last few years (Valadbaygi, 2021, pp. 322–3). The above discussion challenges the conventional Marxist definition of a capitalist class as the ‘legal’ owners of the means of production (Ollman, 2003, p. 199). It also refutes a sharp dichotomy between ‘private’ capital and ‘state’ capital.7 With this in mind, I argue that the internationally-oriented capital fraction and the military-bonyad complex are the fractions of the Iranian capitalist class. Both are in the service of the expansion of surplus value by exploiting the working class as the rampant expansion of short-term contracts, the exclusion of small-sized enterprises from the provision of the labour law and the widespread use of child labour in recent decades have indicated (Valadbaygi, 2021, p. 324). What divides them is different strategies for accumulation. And these accumulation strategies cannot be fully grasped without situating them in relation and response to the advance of the international movement of capital and associated geopolitical tensions and global dynamics. In light of this, the model of development in Iran is the amalgamation of the two contending accumulation strategies, which are influenced by import-substitution industrialization and export-oriented industrialization. I call this particular form of development ‘hybrid neoliberalism’. That is to say, recalling the theoretical section, the interaction of global capitalism with the Iranian class structure in recent decades has produced a particular form of neoliberalism. So far, I have shown that the process of neoliberalization has altered the nature of capital accumulation and restructured the class basis of the state in Iran. In the next section, I shall scrutinize the reorganization of the institutional makeup of the Iranian state in recent decades. The objective is to document the internal links between this reorganization of the state form and neoliberalism. Institutional reorganization of the Iranian state The state is a set of institutional forms, which is internally related to the process of capital accumulation as well as capitalists’ class interests. Any restructuring of the economic sphere and the subsequent reconfiguration of the capitalist class is thus reflected in state institutions. As seen above, the Iranian neoliberalization as the product of the interaction of global and local dynamics has fundamentally reshuffled the composition of the ruling class, generating two competing capital fractions. In the course of realizing their interests, the internationally-oriented capital fraction and the military-bonyad complex have been involved in the reorganization of state institutions, as I will show shortly. This implies that the post-1990 state form in Iran is reflective of the process of neoliberalization and its associated class formation rather than the outcome of contingent factors such as patronage networks, resource endowment and leadership styles. Since the Iranian neoliberalization is not an internally-generated phenomenon, the change in the form of the state also cannot be solely reduced to internal factors and local dynamics. The most powerful institutions of the state are the office of the Supreme Leader, the presidency, and the Majles (Parliament). The Supreme Leader enjoys life tenure8 with extensive power, including appointing and dismissing many crucial unelected offices such as the commanders of armed forces, the heads of the revolutionary foundations (bonyads), the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, and the six Islamic jurisprudent members of the Guardian Council,9 among others (Article 110 of the Constitution, 2010). On the other hand, the presidency (in charge of government) and the Majles are subject to general elections once every four years. Broadly speaking, the military-bonyad complex controls mostly unelected institutions due to the Supreme Leader’s close ties with this fraction, whereas the internationally-oriented capital fraction is left to struggle for the elected institutions. During the first decade of the revolution, the Bureau of the Supreme Leader often acted as an arbiter between the wings of power. The current Supreme Leader was a key member of the bonyad-bazaar nexus. With the gradual metamorphosis of the nexus into the military-bonyad complex since the 1990s, the Office of the Supreme Leader has been vital for this fraction. In fact, by being in charge of appointing the heads of almost all unelected institutions, the Supreme Leader is the embodiment of the interests of the military-bonyad complex. The Guardian Council also has been crucial for the realization of the interests of the military-bonyad complex by making the control of the presidency and the Majles more difficult for the internationally-oriented capital fraction. Besides screening the qualifications of all candidates in presidential, parliamentary, and assembly elections, the Guardian Council enjoys an exclusive power over detecting the compatibility of all proposed legislation by the government and the Majles with Islam and the Constitution (Thaler et al., 2010, pp. 29–30; Yeganeh, 2015, p. 78). Despite these difficulties, the internationally-oriented capital fraction has managed to control the government (the executive body) for most of the time since 1989, except for the two-term presidency of Ahmadinejad. Once in power, this fraction has altered the function and character of many ministries and governmental organizations such as the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, the Central Bank, and the Management and Planning Organization by hailing the importance of the so-called ‘non-political’ technocrats. It also created new institutions, such as the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran and the Iranian Privatization Organization, and reopened the Tehran Stock Exchange. Unsurprisingly, during the Ahmadinejad presidency, the bureaucracy associated with the Rafsanjani and Khatami administration came under relentless attack. In defiance of the rule of ‘independent experts’, Ahmadinejad brought the powerful Management and Planning Organization under the control of the president’s office (Harris, 2017, p. 193). More importantly, throughout his presidency, the operation and function of the revolutionary foundations and military forces have changed to facilitate the entry and expansion of their economic activities. Considering the unfeasibility of seizing the appointed institutions by the internationallyoriented capital fraction and their fragile control over the elected institutions, it should be easy to comprehend why one of the major political disputes in recent decades in Iran has been over electoral fraud and the legality of the preselection process. This intense political struggle over the electoral system is a clear indication of the difference between the first decade of the revolution and the post-1989 era, illuminating how state institutions are subject to the onslaught of fractions of the ruling class as a result of the reorganization of capital accumulation and not vice versa. The central role of the Guardian Council in elections by confirming or rejecting the qualifications of candidates began to take real shape after the revision of the Constitution in 1989 (Iran Data Portal, 1991; Papan-Matin, 2014). This institutional amendment has to be seen in relation to the attempts for the marginalization of ‘Islamist leftist militants’ inside the state who opposed the instigation of neoliberal reforms. Likewise, the abolition of the Office of Prime Minister in the 1989 revision of the Constitution was part of the efforts for the facilitation of restructuring of the economy to revive capital accumulation. However, with the gradual intensification of the struggles between the two fractions of capital over the process of neoliberalization, the proactive supervision of the Guardian Council has widely been used to justify the disqualification of the political representatives of the internationally-oriented capital fraction, most notably the disqualification of 3500 candidates for the Seventh Majles, including 80 prominent incumbent members of the Sixth Majles (BBC News, 2004; Rasa, 2016). The internationally-oriented capital fraction had attempted twice in 1999 and 2010 to abolish the supervisory power of the Guardian Council over elections through the Ministry of the Interior and the Expediency Discernment Council. Nevertheless, the Supreme Leader’s defence of the Guardian Council stopped the advance and choked these bills altogether (Aftab-E Yazd, 2010; Arjomand, 2000; Iran, 2010; Khordad, 1999; Khuzestani, 1999). The Council has also blocked countless bills in favour of the internationally-oriented capital fraction. This included blocking foreign capital inflow and the rejection of the privatization of over 1000 public non-governmental enterprises in control of the bonyads, which was proposed by the Khatami government (Khajehpour, 2000, p. 590; Namazi, 2000, p. 23). Two state institutions have been vital for mediating tensions between these fractions in order to preserve the integrity of the state, namely, the Expediency Discernment Council and the Supreme National Security Council. Both were established after the 1989 revision of the Constitution and took real shape in the following decades with the intensification of the intra-class struggles. The thirty-nine members of the Expediency Discernment Council are constitutionally appointed by the Supreme Leader, but the balance of power between the two fractions of the ruling class is to a large extent well-maintained. The Supreme National Security Council has also been populated with representatives of both fractions. With the key mission of drafting strategic-level policies, the Council ‘plays a crucial role in encouraging collective decision-making and also an unbiased examination of issues of concern to the country’ (Ehteshami, 2017, p. 27). As well as the struggle over formal institutions, civil society organizations have been either created, attacked, or banned in line with the realization of the interests of the internationally-oriented fraction of capital and the military-bonyad complex. On the one hand, since the early 1990s, the internationally-oriented capital fraction has approved and financed the creation of ‘non-state’ press, political parties and civil society organizations for advocating the ‘democratic/liberal’ interpretation of Islam and the compatibility of Islam with liberalism.10 This interpretation is essential for the realization of the interests of the internationally-oriented capital fraction because it allows arguing for the affinity and congruity between the Islamic Republic and ‘the international community’, i.e. the (Western-dominated) world order. Initially, an increase in the number of publications as a result of the partial liberalization of the press by the Rafsanjani government, as well as the establishment of the President’s Centre for Strategic Research, was instrumental in the realization of this ‘liberal’ version of Islam (Mohebi, 2014, pp. 71–4; Tarock, 2001, p. 588). The real ascendancy of this new narrative materialized with the formation of a new centrist political party with a tight bond to the Rafsanjani government under the name of the Executives of Construction (Kargozaran) in November 1995 (Ashraf & Banuazizi, 2001, p. 251). The support of the Executives of Construction Party and other newly-established concurring political groups led to the sweeping victory of Khatami in the 1997 presidential election (Moslem, 2002, p. 253). With the military-bonyad complex being in control of national broadcasting, Khatami made the building of a ‘vibrant civil society’ the centrepiece of his political agenda to confront the media power of the rival fraction (Hamshahri, 1997; Hamshahri, 1998). This promotion of civil society served as an essential means for the dissemination of liberal interpretation of Islam and a source of influence among the electorate. Hence, the reformist government of Khatami with close ties with the internationally-oriented capital fraction had fostered the conditions for the mushrooming of political groups and NGOs. While already witnessing a gradual increase since the early 1990s, the number of political parties and organizations reached 95 in 2000. There were also around 1500 student organizations in the universities in 2001 (Bayat, 2013, p. 43 and 60). More importantly, with the backing of the government, the number of newspapers, magazines and literary journals proliferated astronomically, surpassing 1000 publications in 2000. As a vital means for the internationally-oriented capital fraction, the number of daily newspapers increased to 34 in 1993, 62 in 1996, and 112 by the end of the 1990s whereas there existed only seven newspapers in the 1980s (Kamrava, 2001, p. 171; Mohebi, 2014, p. 89). On the other hand, the military-bonyad complex has considered the development of civil society and the expansion of the press as Western (U.S.) tools for threatening ‘Islamic revolutionary values’ (Hovsepian-Bearce, 2015, p. 196; Mohebian, 1998). By advocating a nativist, conservative interpretation of Islam with an emphasis on the importance of independence and cultural purity in line with its structure and accumulation strategy, the military-bonyad complex has routinely employed force to close down civil society organizations and newspapers, owing to its monopoly over the coercive apparatuses of the state. For instance, after General Safavi (the then-commander of the Revolutionary Guards) promised to ‘cut the throats and tongues’ of liberal journalists (Arjomand, 2000, p. 289) and the Supreme Leader labelled reformist newspapers ‘the bases of the enemies’, 40 newspapers were shut down, and a dozen journalists were jailed in April 2000 (Tarock, 2001, p. 586). In addition, the military-bonyad complex has propagated its nativist and anti-Western narrative not only through the official organizations such as national broadcasting with its numerous TV channels and radio stations, several newspapers and national-wide Basiji branches, but also traditional community-based organizations (Mohebi, 2014, pp. 127–146).

#### Sanction relief results in the Westernization of Iran --- a multibillion dollar opportunity for US companies in their ever expansion of globalization and neoliberalism

Amin Mansouri 15 9-14-2015 Telos Press After the Deal: Resistance in Iran <https://www.telospress.com/after-the-deal-resistance-in-iran/> Accessed 6-27-2024 CSUF JmB TDI

“What appears to be a new Iran”: the ABC News host takes us inside Iran with these words, while the ABC News reporter in Iran is ready to match him with the following: “We needed a permit, but once we got it, the city opens up to all kinds of surprises.”[1] Meanwhile, the reporter spills the end of her report reassuring us that changes are on their way but not overnight, and a new Iran is embracing pop music, iPhones, Steven Jobs, and most importantly, nose jobs so that Iranians can look more Western. This overtly Orientalist narrative presents Iran as a new and young country, in contrast to an ancient, old, mystic, and mysterious Iran that has captured and mesmerized the Western unconscious for centuries. The reporter finishes her report by conditioning these changes on the nuclear deal that will facilitate all these sweeping shifts and alterations. Not everybody shares this Orientalist narrative, but the promising economic market in the near future of Iran is what focuses many analysts’ ample attention. Richard Javad Heidarian, a specialist in geopolitical and political affairs, unveils another aspect of this ubiquitous hope: “And similar to the case of China, an Iran–West rapprochement holds the promise of unlocking one of the world’s most promising markets, with broad implications for the global economy.” Regardless of all these cost-benefit driven analyses, the deal generated two opposing queues of political observations, rotating around a simple “yes” or” no” response to the deal. John Bell, the director of the Middle East program at the Toledo International Peace Centre in Madrid, provides us with a snapshot of all the debates over the deal: “The debate over the Iran nuclear agreement has been vibrant and will continue all the way up to the American Congressional vote. Progressives have lined up with the deal, as has most of the world. However, there are many voices in the U.S., Israel, and the region lined up against it.” Yet, all these narratives, based on Rouhani’s take-over, are less interested in the Iranian people and how they are entitled to choose their destiny, and thus they reduce politics to horse trading, at the center of which lies the nuclear deal and a possible change in political relations with Western countries. The Iranian people are pariahs in these new narratives that subordinate possible progressive changes in Iran to political deals between Western powers and the Iranian regime, that is, to what would be decided out of the public spotlight, away from the streets and the people’s quest. This is a top-down perspective on the future of the Iranians. Despite all of this media-incited optimism to present Iran as a fertile ground for Western investment, I remain skeptical about this excessively hopeful climate. While all of these narratives point us to the new face of a young Iran, and amid all the shifts in the discourse of the media, we need to pause and reflect. Is everything on the right track? Has Iranian civil society been empowered in the last three years? Is it recovering its former significance? What is the right perspective to understand what is going on in today’s Iran? While many analysts have concentrated on the political battles over leverage, which have made their way into the media on a daily basis, I want to connect this surface of political changes to an analysis of how supporters of Rouhani’s office, many of whom are respected political figures of our civil society, have chosen this path to bring changes and step-by-step reforms in Iran through Rouhani’s policies of fostering political relations with the Western powers. How can these progressives be so sure that a better future will come from a deal between Western capitalism and Iranian conservatives? The Nights of the Pariahs We think of the media and its ideological propaganda and apparatuses as a light that makes our complex world clear and visible for us. But in reality they induce a habit of laziness in our eyes so that we are unable to penetrate into the darkness and establish our own narratives. Instead, the media always comes up with narratives for us and generously instill and inculcate them into our minds. That is why we need night and darkness, in which we renew ourselves with our own looking and thinking; the metaphor of night and darkness clarifies how we should individually develop our own critical perspectives. Darkness is a boon for us if we learn how to wrest back our individuality in and through it. This metaphor of night and darkness has long been embedded in philosophy and, for example, is well portrayed at the beginning of Deleuze and Guattari’s What Is Philosophy? Aptly beginning their work with the following words, Deleuze and Guattari signal that philosophers love night contemplations, for this is the moment of intellectual rest for their minds: The question what is philosophy? can perhaps be posed only late in life, with the arrival of old age and the time for speaking concretely. In fact, the bibliography on the nature of philosophy is very limited. It is a question posed in a moment of quiet restlessness, at midnight, when there is no longer anything to ask.[2] Nights and darkness are the moments in which we rediscover our individuality, potentialities, ontological loneliness, and homelessness, and the feeble echoes of our disparate souls waiting to be put into words and worlds. When we are all by our selves, we can put more visibility into our eyesight and thus see what remains behind the shell of appearances, because there is nobody around to guide us but ourselves. This is an ongoing battle over our individuality and independence that media—and, by extension, society, masses, and all external forces—deprive us of. Darkness assists us in vanquishing kitsch. But what is kitsch? When Politics Turns out to Be Vanity Kitsch Milan Kundera, in his Unbearable Lightness of Being, astutely describes “kitsch” through the example of attending a communist political march, in which, as Sabina recalls, people were apparently all celebrating life together but were actually painting their own individualities with the color of the state-formed masses. That is why Sabina was not willing to attend the march and could not find her own voice amid all the collided voices of the people. As Kundera concludes: When I say “totalitarian” what I mean is that everything that infringes on kitsch must be banished for life: every display of individualism (because a deviation from the collective is a spit in the eye of the smiling brotherhood); every doubt (because anyone who starts doubting details will end by doubting life itself); all irony (because in the realm of kitsch everything must be taken quite seriously.[3] Let’s evoke the famous Cartesian phrase in order to reformulate Kundera’s description of kitsch; the kitsch that dissolves our individual and critical thinking into the storm of totalitarian state–guided masses. “I think therefore I am” has been a touchstone of philosophers since the beginning of modernity, if we assume any beginning for it. The art of totalitarian kitsch is to transform individual, creative, independent, and critical subjects into homogenized, passive, dependent, and submissive masses through grand marching, pre-constructed ideologies, and monitoring a big radar screen on which every movement is to be engineered and turned into a controllable blip that fades away soon. What Kundera signals is not a fear of any collective activities and joint political struggles for the better future, but he alludes to the unimaginable jeopardy of distorted political ideas that seek to salvage us and our world, but in their corrupted forms, only bring more misery and plight into our lives. The hatred that Sabina feels toward Grand Marching in occupied Czechoslovakia was not a bourgeois liberal phobia of anything that bears a leftist mark on itself. She was not a typical snobbish liberal who, by default, opposes any independent collective demand for basic and radical changes outside the step-by-step box and electoral myths. Her unsettling fear reflects the legitimate and decent concerns of an individual who knows that when radical ideas are turned upside-down, they only cater to the market of fascist, totalitarian regimes, apparatchiks of the horror screen, and terror-mongers. Amid all the fanfare and fracas of the media that manipulate our minds in order to shed their “light” upon the reality of our world, which is not the case as discussed, we need to strip off the illuminating lens of the media, the lens that has spoiled our eyes, so as to permeate reality and articulate our own narratives. We need to be isolated and alone in our composure-generating nights in order to be able to separate the wheat from the chaff. Slippery Slope Iran is on the verge of a state- and media-orchestrated mania designed to subvert and undermine our collective struggle for real changes inside our country. Only five years after the Green movement, this movement and the way we occupied the streets seem like a far-off countryside from our childhood days, when we had the Benjaminian power of infants, the power to do magic and make the impossible possible in the streets. Now, our collective struggle finds itself on the horn of a saddening dilemma: Regime change through continued sanctions or even foreign intervention or, alternatively, subordination to the regime and its ritual of presidential elections every four years, in which we are permitted to choose one of the already sifted and pruned candidates, whose pledge and loyalty to the regime’s political platform has been proven in advance. In Iran we have a voice only as a cog in the propaganda machine of the regime and if we concede to its political platform for change. In recent years, Iranian civil society has become traumatized and vulnerable due to harsh sanctions. People are eager to end them because of their unbearable economic status, but they also remember their terrifying experience with the hardliners of Ahmadinejad’s sort. These two internal causes have given the Rouhani administration, and indeed the whole conservative line of thinking, more currency, which crystalized in the last presidential election in Iran. Those conservatives in Iran have benefitted from the regional context, as the Middle East has plunged into proxy wars, and ISIS with its genocidal ambitions has become a threat in neighboring countries. This geopolitical and strategic picture in the Middle East has given Rouhani’s conservatives a chance to present themselves as the only viable alternative for the people. Thus, the regime succeeded in managing the situation for its own good, presenting any demand for radical, revolutionary, and basic changes in Iran as equivalent to the real regional threats, such as ISIS. This is why many activists and analysts have turned into the conservatives’ apologists and advocates, without keeping a critical stance or articulating the failure to advance human rights inside the country. This identification with conservatives was not because these activists and intellectuals believe in the platform of the conservatives represented by Rouhani, but it was because these supporters have found Rouhani’s sanctuary the safest among others: better than ISIS, sanctions, or war. When our civil society—which is traumatically pitched on the verge of war, sanctions, and hardliners such as Ahmadinejad—seldom raises its fingers to organize an independent domestic struggle; when many activists, intellectuals, and analyzers have, in the past three years, turned to the propaganda machine by supporting all of Rouhani’s tears and blood to achieve the deal (many of them taking less and less interest in human rights and in finding alternative ways of independent domestic struggle for radical change); and finally, when imperial superpowers have evolved from warmongers to peace-mongers, whose only concern is bringing their multibillion dollar companies into an Iran of millions of hungry consumers, we need to keep our critical distance from all who slip into either pro-war or pro-peace categories, and instead describe a third way: about radical changes, but a radicalism that does not dissolve our heterogeneous masses into conformist homogeneity. Should we want to lay out the foundation of “us” again with no avail from “top-to-bottom” management, this “us” must not be kitsch, and should be formed and entrenched in nights, when we are left alone to discover ourselves, each other, and our real power to do magic. Unstaged People Jacques Rancière, a radical philosopher and historian, proposes in his Proletarian Nights the idea of worker-intellectuals, worker-poets, and worker-activists as opposed to intellectuals who observe a phenomenon without being directly engaged with any political activity. As he argues, these worker-intellectuals, during the July Monarchy, were the ones who staged and commenced political unrest by appropriating the intellectual discourse through arts, philosophy, writing, and other sorts of intellectual production. As Rancière states: But their solicitude is in vain when they try to warn these workers against those who would like to wrest from them the well-earned quietude of their night. If they speak, it is to say that they don’t have any night of their own because night belongs to those who order the labors of the day. They speak to win the night of their desires: not their night, the “brutalizing night of sleep” that joiner Gauny sees approaching, but our night, the kingdom of shadows and appearances reserved for those who can stay awake instead of sleeping.[4] As Rancière articulates, working-class people could appropriate this political and social awareness through their sleepless nights in which they, instead of taking rest, would devote their time to recuperate their individuality stemming from their independence from the state apparatuses, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois discourse, and all the ideas that had sought to absorb these workers into the dominant discourse so as to dismantle their possible threats. Nights, in Kundera’s words, could make kitsch disappear into the air and detach those avant-garde workers from the state-established and state-entrenched workers/masses, whose vexation and frustration of the system never turned to the formation of a new intellectual discourse and, consequently, appropriated the bourgeois discourse. When these worker-intellectuals became alone in the nights, and became detached from other people, they could form an independent identity that rendered new theoretical, artistic, and political configurations that aimed to change the dominant discourse and build up a new intellectual world. They discovered how to think and unite themselves at night when, exactly as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, philosophy, and thus thinking, can occur and materialize. They had snapped back into darkness, into their individuality, and into staging historical changes. Their destiny was not chosen; instead, they did chose it. Once an erudite friend of mine brought up a striking example to illustrate our locked and doomed political time and tide. He suggested imagining a person who is stuck in his room while everything around him is burning and he knows that fire could catch him any second. Suddenly, he notices the window and finds himself on the horn of his fate: either jumping out the window to escape the excruciating agony and pain of being burned alive in the room, or remaining in it while waiting for his final minutes in the fire. My friend turned to me and, in a very low voice, as if either his catatonic paranoia or past traumatic experience made him feel we may be bugged, told me that we have freedom to choose how we die, not to choose how we live. His striking words emanated from his bones and veins and thus, as a Persian saying goes, whatever comes from your heart, pushes its way to the hearts of others. His example describes well our political climate in which activists, workers, intellectuals, and ordinary citizens are assigned to choose whether to be ruined and devastated under severe international sanctions, with a future in limbo; or to perish in another forged war on terror; or to turn themselves into the advocates of the regime and therefore be more oppressed and stifled on a daily basis by it. As our political alternatives dwindle away, as the deal benefits both Western capital and the regime, we need to pursue a third way: appropriating our own ideology that keeps its critical distance from the state-sponsored one (which caters to the conservatives’ market); staging people to air their own voice through arts, poetry, cinema, music, and eventually occupying streets; and never allowing ourselves to evolve into any state propaganda, because, at the end of the day, we turn out to be the most wanted enemies of the regime. While many activists, thinkers, and ordinary people put all their eggs in the basket of Western saviors, and others choose the other basket, Rouhani and the regime, we should emphasize that our emancipation does not depend on any of these powers, whose only concern is patrolling and surveilling our unlimited power and reassuring themselves that the people lack power and will not call the shots in the streets, in newspapers and magazines, in academia, and in their nights. Our third way is to prove them wrong. Although I support the deal because it may alleviate the suffering of the Iranian people, I do not see any reason to celebrate it. There is no salvation in choosing the way we can perish, but only when we choose our way to live, only when we have occupied our own words, discourse, and political climate, and only when we have retrieved our nights and our individuality—only then can real celebration begin, in our hearts, in our streets, and on the faces of all the dear friends we have lost.

#### The affs attempt to integrate Iran into its sub-imperialist agenda – the growing threat of Russia and China in the middle east and elsewhere have prompted the US to act in accordance to save its hegemonic power by including a power that has become friendly with the Russia-China axis of power

Morady, F. (2020). Imperialism and sub-imperialism in the Middle East: US sanctions and their consequences for Iran. GENDER & IMMIGRATION, 17. Accessed 7/1/24 CSUF JmB TDI

The contemporary crisis in the Middle East is a product of the transition of the region’s countries to capitalism and their growing influence in the international political economy that has come with it. This development is associated with the influence of (colonial and post-colonial economic) imperialism, especially since the discovery of oil in Iran in 1908 and subsequently elsewhere in the Gulf region. The growing importance of energy in the world since the 1970s has provided these countries with a huge source of income, enabling them to embark on capitalist development and giving them the financial muscle to wield influence in the region and beyond. What is sometimes called “sub-imperialism” is a product of this transformation, which occurred as centres of capital accumulation ceased to be concentrated only in core countries and shifted to include nations in the periphery, such as China, India, Brazil, the GS, and, indeed, Iran. In consequence, the dynamics of the states in the Middle East and their relationships to the great powers have changed. No longer passive actors, they have played a crucial role in the world economy. This paper will argue that the tensions in the region between imperialist and emerging forces such as Iran is a result of capitalist development, and the attendant rivalries for influence and hegemony in one of the most important geo-political hot spots in the world. Both the confrontation between the US and the Islamic Republic and the latter’s close relations with Russia and China can be seen to reflect a rivalry between imperialist and sub-imperialist forces. The US-imposed sanctions on Iran are an effect of the intense efforts of the US in the face of competition to maintain its hegemony in the region and bring disobedience states under its authority (Callinicos, 2009; Morady, 2020). Certainly, I argue that imperialism continues to play a major role in the Middle East, using a combination of methods, including sanctions and when possible direct intervention, as in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq 2003. The paper is divided into three parts: (a) an assessment of the concepts of imperialism and sub-imperialism; (b) a brief narrative of the transition to capitalism in the GS and Iran, and their emergence as powerful regional actors; (c) a discussion of the militarisation of the region as a consequence of the rise of these regional powers; and (d) the consequences of the sanctions imposed on Iran since the 1979 Revolution, particularly in shifting the balance of power away from the US and its allies in the region. 2. Theories of Imperialism The term ‘imperialism’ is generally used in Marxist political economy and variants of it like world-systems and development theory (Wallerstein, 1979; Lenin. 1981; Frank, 1982; Bukharin, 1983; Harvey, 2003; Callinicos, 2009). Its most common use is to refer to the economic and political relationship (one of ‘domination’) between the advanced capitalist countries and less developed countries. Imperialism refers to the process of capital accumulation on a world scale in the era of monopoly capitalism, and the theory of imperialism is an attempt to explain accumulation in the context of a world market. Most theorists of imperialism, including Hobson (1858-1940), Lenin (1870-1924), and Bukharin (1888- 1938), identify it in terms of three component features: the analysis of capitalist accumulation, the periodisation of capitalism, and the location of imperialism in the context of the political division of the world among nation-states. This analysis attempts to describe: (1) the relationships among advanced capitalist countries (rivalry between imperialist nations), and (2) the impact of capitalism on non-capitalist social formations (articulation between modes of production) (Bukharin, 1983; Harvey, 2003; Callinicos, 2009). Hardt and Negri (2001) offer a new theory of post-imperialistic empire, claiming that the globalization of the world economy has brought about a new world order with interstate rivalries and global social and political integration. For them, capital is able to move freely to different parts of the world regardless of the rivalries of states. They reject Lenin and Bukharin’s analysis of capitalist interests leading to inter-imperialist rivalries and conflicts. Instead, they offer a new theory of a post-imperialistic ‘empire’, claiming that the globalization of the world economy has brought about a new world order defined by global social and political integration. They argue that capital is able to move freely to different parts of the world regardless of the rivalries between states. Transnational companies that operate on a global scale dominate in such a way that they need no allegiance to any particular nation-state. Michael Ignatieff (2002) identifies imperialism in the post-Cold War era as a new phase, which allows intervention to bring progressive transformations to failed states such as Afghanistan and Iraq: Nation-building is the kind of imperialism you get in a human rights era, a time when great powers believe simultaneously in the right of small nations to govern themselves and in their own right to rule the world. Thomas Friedman (2006) emphasizes that the world has become ‘flat’ as improvements in informational communications and economic organization have levelled the global economic playing field, including that of hierarchical economic organizations, as states are now being replaced by the market alone. He goes as far as to suggest that that this leads inevitably to wealth creation and progressive change throughout the world. Callinicos and Harvey conceptualize imperialism as involving the intersection of geopolitical and economic logics of power. Economic competition—rivalries between capitalist firms—drives the whole dynamic of capitalism as a system and leads to geopolitical competition as competing states look for resourceful territories in which to exercise influence (Harvey, 2003 and Callinicos, 2009). Harvey uses the term ‘new imperialism’, referencing US global domination, suggesting that it ‘appears as nothing more that the revisiting of the old, though in a different place and time’ (Harvey, 2003: 182). They argue that the US does not enjoy complete domination, highlighting actual potential conflicts between leading capitalist states, especially China and the US. Harvey notes that the outcome of such a rivalry would be, ‘increasing fierce international competition as multiple dynamic centres of capital accumulation compete on the world stage’ (Harvey, 2003:124). Harvey, Callincos, and Arrighi emphasise that this global shift is the result of the decline in US hegemony since WWII. In an attempt to preserve its power, the US used its military strength and economic power. This was certainly the case in the Middle East, where the US has continued to use its military and diplomatic power to maintain its hegemony economically. China and Russia, without resorting to direct military confrontation, so far have been building up their own bargaining power in the world, even occasionally challenging the US, over Georgia, Iran and Syria. Hore (2004) claims: As economic ties deepen between the US and China, so too will political and military tensions. It is glaringly obvious that the neo-liberals’ dream of global economic integration leading to a decrease in military competition is precisely the reverse in reality (p. 24). China’s search for raw materials, especially oil in the Middle East and Africa (Algeria, Angola, Sudan) is a necessity for it to ensure its energy security in the long run. Indeed, the US’s continuing pressure on Iran may force it to open up space for the Chinese to extend their influence there as well. So far, the US has used its economic power to force Islamic Republic of Iran to conform to the US line, recently by imposing sanctions. This has included imposing hefty fines on countries and organisations having commercial activities with Iran. 3. Sub-Imperialism The emergence of sub-imperialism is associated with the process of development, which has greatly facilita ted the industrialisation of the ‘third world.’ As a result of this, new centres of capital accumulation outside the imperialist core have emerged. In this way, countries such as China, India, Brazil, and the GS have all come to play a significant role in the world economy (Callinicos, 1991; Halliday, 1971; Marini, 1965). Bill Warren, in his book, Imperialism: The Pioneer of Capitalism (1980), suggests that imperialism has been fundamental in facilitating industrialisation in less developed countries. Warren challenges the dependency school’s belief that imperialism held back the productive forces in the less developed countries (Amin, 1976; Frank, 1969, 1982). Warren defines imperialism as “the penetration and spread of the capitalist system into non-capitalist or primitive capitalist areas of the world” (Warren, 1980: 60). Jazani, focusing on Iran’s development in the post- WWII period, recognises the development of capitalism, and unlike Warren, goes on to suggest that the character of dependency is inseparable from the capitalist system, foreign exploitation, and imperialist domination (Jazani, 1980). Fred Halliday (1974), focusing on capitalism and its impact, uses the term sub-imperialism2 to characterise sthe relationship between imperialism and the Middle Eastern countries: The continued and altered relationship between imperialism and the Middle Eastern ruling classes is equally visible in the military field. The stability of the imperialist system in the area has rested on building up a set of intermediate capitalist states which are in general populous and strong enough to play a major regional role (p. 500-502). Sub-imperial powers are wielded by states that are incorporated into the world system, and that can also act as regional agents of imperialism (Halliday, 1971: Marini, 1965). It is inaccurate to suggest that they are simply client states of the larger imperialist forces, as they enjoy a degree of autonomy from them (Desai 2013, Escobar 2013; Martin 2013, Shubin 2013). Iran before and after the Revolution is an example of this. It has posed a challenge to the US role in the region on a number of occasions, even when it was under considerable pressure. Although the cost to the Islamic Republic of taking a radical approach has been huge economically, as I will discuss later, Iran has managed to maintain degree of influence in the region and even expand it. The Islamic Republic, like the monarchies in the GS, has been determined to protect its own economic and political interests. These states, like most others, have ensured and guaranteed the prevailing forms of property under capitalism. They have relied on their armed forces and engaged in dictatorial behaviour when it seemed necessary, because they wished to exercise control over the society and its economy. Indeed, the character of the state is capitalist, with the government guaranteeing the conditions for the reproduction and expansion of capitalist ownership. The Islamic Republic has always looked to other nations as potential friends, including those that were ‘Communist’, not to mention ‘secular’. These allies have included China, Russia, India, Cuba, Brazil, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia. Two important factors in this have been the global rivalry between the US and the emerging economic powers of China, India, and Russia, which Iran has tried to get to outmanoeuvre each other, as well as to build alliances with countries that have an anti-imperialist Or ideology, regardless of its specific character. Although all of the countries in Latin America are secular and some have leaned socialist, and thus are very different from the Islamic Republic ideologically, their being socialist and so against the hegemony of the US and its European and East Asian allies has created a space for an alliance between ‘Islam’ and socialism. Iran, Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia (until recently), Ecuador, and Nicaragua all have shared the same anti-US sentiment. They are all hoping for a new global power structure free of the dominance of the US. This shared opposition to the US began in 1982, when Cuba became the first country to recognize the Islamic Republic formed three years before. Fidel Castro kept Cuban foreign policy favouring Iran, visiting the country in 2001 and supporting its right to access nuclear energy. In 2006, Cuba along with Venezuela and Syria voted against a resolution in the UN Security Council against Iran because of its nuclear program (Morady, 2012b). 4. Capitalist Development in the Middle East Capitalist development in general is not uniform, but varies with specific features of time and place. It is characterized not only by economic growth and sometimes stagnation, but also various forms of resistance. The contradictions of capitalism can be expressed in various ways. As Halliday (2001) puts it: Capitalism unifies the world into a single market and into a system of political dominations; yet the different subsections of this world system remain distinct. In many cases the differences between them are accentuated by incorporation into a single system. It is because of this unevenness that the weakest links in capitalism as a whole may be found not in the most developed countries but those countries where the retarded impact of capitalism creates contradictions that are all the sharper because the developments carried through elsewhere have not yet been completed. The expansion of the European capitalist mode of production in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries promoted the transition in the developing world to capitalism, with such changes as the generalisation of the commodity market, the growth of wage labourers and the capitalist class, urbanisation, the development of a modern nation-state with a modern bureaucracy, army, and educational system, and the emergence of political institutions such as a parliament. In the GS and Iran these transformations were due to the internal logic of pre-capitalism nationally as well as the impact of Western imperialism and capitalism. This did not necessary lead to a progressive erosion of pre-capitalist economic and social relations, as the case of the Islamic Republic in Iran and the persistence of monarchy in various GS demonstrate. In the first half of the twentieth century, the UK and France dominated the Middle East, while later, and especially with the end of the Cold War, the US became the undisputed superpower. In this role, it has relied on allies in the region, including Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and until 1979, Iran. Capitalism in the Middle East developed at different speeds, as nations and sectors came into contact with each other, and the global economic system incorporated even the remotest areas of the region into its division of labour. The process has thus involved a plurality of dynamics, including specific contradictions within and between society’s economic, political, and cultural spheres (Callinicos and Rosenberg, 2008; Harvey, 2003; Trotsky, 1977; Weeks, 2001). In GS and Iran this development has been concentrated around the oil industry. While the impact of energy was slight before the 1970s, it has grown as the world production of oil had increased tenfold (BP 2007). The GS and Iran have benefitted handsomely with growing income from oil. The impact of energy accelerated since 1945, the income paved the way for the economic integration of the GS and Iran into the global system as well as the political transformations of subsequent decades. It has enhanced the geopolitical importance of GS and Iran, making it a centre of attention for the great powers. By the 1970s, Iran had become one of the world’s fastest-growing economies, with oil revenues accounting for 90 per cent of Iran’s total exports, up from 77 per cent in 1964. As a result of this increase, the government’s total expenditure increased by 260 per cent in the period 1967–73, and by a further 200 per cent between 1973 and 1979 (Morady, 2020). The flow of petrodollars from GS to international banks helped enable the latter to lend to multinational companies and various governments throughout the world. Some of the money from the GS thus went to Western countries, especially the US, in the form of equities. Since 2000, the GS nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) moved up to over $1 trillion, and together they became the fourteenth-largest economy in the world (Haniah, 2011:4). The financial resources of GS countries were used to expand their economic activates in areas such as development of infrastructure and tourism. The GS purchased assets around the world, with one estimate that in 2008 about 80 per cent of the Saudi Arabia Monetary Agency’s (SAMA) foreign holdings were dollar-dominated, amounting to $390 billion. The private holdings for the same year were about US$420 billion (Setser and Ziemba 2009, p. 10). In a similar way, the other GS such as the UAE have increasingly been emerging as among the biggest foreign investors in the world; in the period 2015-19, the UAE ranked in the top 20 nations in terms of foreign direct investment outflows (Haniah, 2020). The transformations in the Iran and GS in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries are integrated and play a significant role in the global system. The GS and Iran have not been completely dependent on imperialist forces as semi-colonies, nor they are simply client states of imperialist forces. The transition of the GS and Iran has given these countries the aspiration to become regional powers. At the same time, they need the US to provide security and protection, as well as financial support for the regional geo-political hegemony that they partly share in. In Iran, the situation had changed since 1979 because of the Revolution, which empowered the clergy as leading the state. However, the Islamic Republic has remained capitalist, and energy has continued to be crucial in its economy. The Iranian Revolution was anti-imperialist in character because of the role the great powers had played in Iranian history, especially the CIA and the UK’s MI5, which organize a coup to remove the elected Prime Minister, Mohammad Mossadegh, from power and supporting the Shah in this place (Abrahamian, 2013). This seemed to the Islamic Republic’s leaders as giving them no choice but to take an anti-US stand. Since the Revolution, under considerable pressure of sanctions and threats of invasion by the US, Iran has moved closer to China and Russia. There has been a continuity of imperialism, albeit in a different form, rather than a break from it, as has been witnessed in the region since the Cold War. While the US and its allies the GS and Israel continue to dominate in the region, China, Russia alongside of Iran have also been positioning themselves for influence in the region. 5. The Militarization of the Region One of the features of sub-imperialism is military competition between rival powers and hence an expansion of hegemony. Iran along with other GS has stockpiled weapons in an attempt to challenge any domestic opposition to the ruling elites, while demonstrating the nation’s strength and reinforcing its bid for regional hegemony. Arms production is one of the world’s biggest and most profitable industries. With the transition to capitalism and especially since the global increase in oil prices in the 1970s, the market for arms in the Middle East has become attractive. The growing military expenditures in the region started before the Iranian Revolution, and were largely due to the critical geopolitical location of the Persian Gulf and the importance of its energy resources. It had a considerable impact upon the legitimacy of these regimes both in the Middle East and globally. The US political and military presence in the Persian Gulf, including in Qatar, the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Iraq, has contributed to the growing militarization. Since the end of the Cold War in 1989 and the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein in 1990, the GS have increased their military hardware from Western arms traders, especially the US. According to figures released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, in 2014 Saudi Arabia spent £54 billion on weapons, more than any other country in the developing world. The UAE spent £15bn and Qatar spent £16bn. The seven nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE), between 1997-2014, together spent far more on their military spending than Iran (SIPRI, 2015). Among GS purchasers of military hardware and services, between 2015 and 2019, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar ranked as the world’s first, eighth, and tenth largest arms importers. Much of the arms imports are from the US. Saudi Arabia alone purchased one-quarter of total US arms exports during that period, up from 7.4 percent in 2010–14. Arms sales have also brought, from exporting countries, advisers, technicians, and the establishment of military bases around the region. In the face of various internal, regional and global crises, huge build-ups of sophisticated weapons have become a political necessity for the rulers in the region, both to boast their latest modern weapons as well as in the hope to shield them from internal and external threats. The balance of military spending has favoured the GS, and is shaped by the level of US commitment and power projection capability supporting its Arab security partners. This has meant closer relations and growing exports of arms, especially to Saudi Arabia, since Trump’s becoming US President in 2017. Domestic conflicts in countries like Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, along with Iran’s growing strategic influence, have also been influential factors in arms spending in the GS. The continuing influence of the Islamic Republic, the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and the civil wars in Yemen and Syria have provided additional reasons for the GS to increase their arm spending. 6. The Economic Cost of the US Sanctions The Iranian revolution has caused imbalances in the region, as the US lost one of its most important allies in the Middle East. This has caused much tension not just between Iran and the US, but also involving the other regional actors such as Saudi Arabia, UAE. Iran has also taken advantage of the conditions in the region that have developed since the US- and British-led invasion of Iraq in 2001, growing its influence there and later in Syria. The Western response, especially that of the US, has been isolation and sanctions. Consequently, Iran has been forced, since 1979, to look for allies around the world in the hope of thwarting the US threat. Although this has helped Iran marginally, it has not been very effective. The Islamic Republic has jostled for hegemony in the region with Saudi Arabia and UAE. Of course, Iran cannot, even regionally, serve as a power equivalent to that of the US, and it also lacks the financial muscle of the GS. Even though China and Russia, at times, have given tacit support to the Islamic Republic, this has not been substantial enough. Consequently, Iran has faced difficulties, especially since 2011, when, during Ahmadinejad’s presidency, it began uranium enrichment for its nuclear project. The reaction by the US was immediate, with sanctions no longer being imposed unilaterally by Western countries, but taking the form of internationally imposed sanctions under a United Nations resolution, effectively involving countries and organisations around the globe (Morady, 2020). As a result, Iran’s energy sector was hit badly, with oil exports reduced from over 2 million barrels a day to less than 1.5 million (Morady, 2017). By 2012, the Islamic Republic’s oil export revenues had declined to $69 billion from $95 billion in 2011. At this time, oil exports accounted for 80 per cent of Iran’s total export revenue and 50-60 per cent of the government’s income. The sanctions also curtailed much-needed investment in the oil industry as foreign companies cancelled many different projects. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)3 between the great powers (the US, Russia, China, the UK, and France) and Iran (‘the 5+1’) in 2015 was expected to provide opportunities for the Islamic Republic in exchange for ending its nuclear enrichment. This amounted in some respects to accepting Iran as a dominant power, while the US also hoped to facilitate closer relations, involving collaboration in areas where there was strategic convergence between them. The Islamic Republic enjoyed a temporary breathing space as oil production and GDP started improving. However, with Donald Trump’s becoming President, the US called for ending negotiations, and in 2017 finally withdrew from the JCPOA, the nuclear accord with Iran. Trump called for a return to comprehensive sanctions in an effort to pressure Iran to reduce its influence in the region. Crude oil production and exports had continued to decline since the May 2018, as the US re-imposed sanctions against Iran. As a result, Iran’s exports of crude oil and condensate were at about 2.7 million barrels per day (b/d). However, Iran’s crude oil and condensate exports fell to 1.9 million b/d immediately after the US reinstated the sanctions. The impact was a recession, which accelerated in 2019-20. Iran’s GDP contracted by 7.6 per cent in the first 9 months of 2019, mainly as a result of a 37 per cent decline in its oil exports. Non-oil GDP growth in April-December 2019 was close to zero, a marginal improvement compared to the sector’s 2.1 per cent contraction in 2018-19. Since the recent COVID-19 outbreak, Iran’s economy has seen significantly disrupted trade, tourism, and retail businesses. Inflation rates in Iran have skyrocketed, to between 42.7-63.5 per cent, with this increase disproportionately affecting the nation’s poor. Some reports suggest that between 23 and 40 per cent of Iran’s population is now living under the absolute poverty line. Whilst Iran has tried to influence the region, this has not been without cost as the sanctions have put the country under considerable pressure. It is apparent that the US has used its power to force Iran to accept the terms that the US is putting forward, or else face a strong challenge. 7. Conclusion Nearly a century after oil was discovered in Iran, the Middle East continues to be a battleground for competing great and now regional powers. The outside intervention, in particular from the US, in the Middle East has reflected the vitality of an area that has also seen much instability. However, the integration with global capitalism of the GS, initially through energy resources, has impacted various social forces. The transformation of the Middle East, especially the GS and Iran, has heightened the geopolitical competition between regional powers. The regional powers of Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, have shown the maturity of capitalist development in the region and the ability of the states to influence it. However, these sub-imperialist forces continue to rely on the support of the Western powers, especially the US, although the relationship involves much autonomy on their part. The recent diplomatic development between the UAE and Bahrain and Israel, giving the former two nations have full diplomatic relations with the latter, will intensify the geopolitical rivalries. Obviously, this relationship is based on economic, military, and security matters but undoubtedly, there has been a shift in the geopolitical positioning of GS by having Israel on their side. This is not just a direct challenge to Iran’s influence in. Iraq, Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon; it also is a response to Turkey’s competing with the UAE for influence in countries such as Sudan and Libya. It is very likely that the other GS will recognise the state of Israel, and this will further transfer the geopolitical dynamics in the Middle East.

#### The aff ruins Iran’s resistance economy – sanction relief that occurred in 2015 was detrimental to the economy of resistance as the US attempted to liberalize Iran into its western SOI – all in the name of neoliberal development

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Calls for a ‘resistance economy’ in Iran came after years of external aggression. They emerged in the context of Iran’s ‘20 year national vision’ announced in 2005. Principles at that time included calls for Iran to become a developed country “founded on ethical principles and Islamic, national and revolutionary values” which will take a lead in “advanced knowledge … economy, science and technology” (Khamenei, 2005). The national vision goals suggested that Iran should be “a fully advanced country, rising to the number-one rank in economic, scientific and technological progress among 28 nations in the Middle East and Southeast Asia”. This would entail (a) achievement of fast-paced and sustainable economic growth; (b) creation of durable employment opportunities; (c) enhancement of factor productivity; (d) active presence in regional and international markets; (e) development of a diverse, knowledge-based economy, free of inflation and blessed by food security; and (f) establishment of a market environment conducive to domestic and international business entrepreneurship” (Amuzegar, 2006). In addition, an implicit request was made to move from dependency on oil and gas. However, a new wave of economic aggression (‘sanctions’) was undertaken by the US and Israeli attempts to block Iran’s nuclear program. In such circumstances, Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei elaborated his concept of an “economy of resistance” in 2012. According to him, “the enemy's goal was to focus on our economy, work against our national growth, undermine efforts to create employment opportunities, disrupt and jeopardize our national welfare, create problems for the people, make the people disappointed and isolate them from the Islamic Republic” (Khamenei, 2012). In response to that, Iran’s leader suggested “an economy of resistance … [which meant] putting the people in charge of the economy … minimizing the country’s dependence on oil … managing consumption - that is to say, moderate consumption and avoidance of extravagance … making the best of the available time, resources and facilities ... moving forward on the basis of plans … reliance on domestic talents, on the domestic capacities of the country. Furthermore, special attention was given to the capacities of the youth, their creativeness, the tasks they can manage and follow, the knowledge that they acquire, and the knowledge that they turn into technology” (Khamenei, 2012 & 2016). The concept can be summed up as a process to achieve growth, diversification and prosperity under pressure from western countries. Iran would support local industries to turn threats into opportunities (Sharara 2019). Based on this proposition, one can observe several articulated strategic concerns, beginning with a concerted effort to boost domestic production. How could the threats be turned into opportunities? Sanctions during the administrations of President Khatami and President Ahmadinejad had already “stimulated Iran’s industrial development, insofar as they kept foreign competition at bay. Iran was in fact able to become something of an industrial powerhouse” (Sharara, 2019). The proposed resistance economy emphasised national production, with specific roles for the government, cooperatives and workers, but including elites and their technologies. Increasing national production implied stabilising the economy, boosting innovative national production and reducing dependence on oil revenues (Jalili Piran & Soleymani Dorche, 2015, pp. 648-651). The country’s industrial development, whilst targeted and threatened due to numerous sanctions, included eliminating imports of steel and fuel. Indeed, the US-based International Trade Administration recognised that between 2015 and 2018, Iran had moved from a net importer of steel into one of the world’s top 20 steel exporters (ITA, 2018). Steel production averaged more than 2 million tons per month from October 2018 to June 2019 (Trading Economics, 2019) or 25 million tons per year (Rahmani, 2019). Today, Iran no longer exports crude oil to import fuel, because its expanded refinery capacity has ensured national fuel selfsufficiency (Paraskova, 2019). The country’s mobile telephone and computer hardware sector is well advanced (PBC, 2019). Motor vehicle production, including export production, has grown strongly and will grow more since the time when US third party sanctions forced French automakers (Renault, Peugeot and Citroen) to withdraw (Khatinoglu, 2018). A foreign industry analyst termed Iran’s motor vehicle market (2019-2024) a “consolidated market with strong growth prospects” (MI, 2019). Meanwhile, Iran has been reverse engineering foreign built tunnelling machines and pharmaceuticals. Barakat pharmaceutical town (Alborz province), opened in 2018, employs 7,000 and indirectly another 30,000 (Sharara, 2019). In many of these cases, an export potential has been built. Outside commentators sometimes speak of a ‘securitization’ of the Iranian economy, indicating that security forces have come to play an important economic role. Toumaj (2014) observes that the resistance economy implies ‘securitization’, where the security forces, including the IRGC, play an important role in managing both economic policy and strategic enterprise. The Intelligence Ministry has also become involved, as economic concerns are linked to Iran’s strategic position in the region, with Iran looking to a multipolar world and greater linkages with Asia (Toumaj, 2014: 7-8). The term ‘securitization’ is often used disparagingly, suggesting either inefficient management or something that reflects adversely on the government. In fact, security forces’ involvement in strategic enterprise is a rather natural adaptation to decades of aggression. In Cuba, for example, the military is involved in tourist operations at the outer borders of the main island, where surveillance and defence also have a priority (Frank, 2017). In North Korea (the DPRK) securitization has become a systemic matter, termed ‘Songun’, where there is security force involvement in virtually all major infrastructure and strategic industry (Park, 2007). Iran also has its own version. Alongside strategic economic ventures, Iran has a fine military industry. In this area, Iran has made substantial progress. The contextual history is that almost all the major powers helped Saddam Hussein wage his war against Iran in the 1980s; many of those same powers (including Russia and China) in more recent years helped subject Iran to great pressure to place its nuclear industry under outside controls and surveillance. One result of the reaction to this pressure is that since 2019, Iran claims to be close to manufacturing the necessary jet and helicopter engines that it needs (Tasnim, 2019). The country has also produced a wide range of missiles, the Kosar fighter jet (Sharara, 2019), and its own antimissile defence system, the Bavar-373, an upgraded counterpart of Russia’s S-300 (IFP, 2019). The idea of greater participation in a resistance economy has been linked to Article 44 of the Iranian Constitution, which requires the state, cooperative and private sectors to contribute to development, under a planned system. As regards to ‘resistance,’ there have been calls for further empowering of the private sector, decreasing the country’s dependence on oil, while promoting more efficient resource management and stable planning (Farhi, 2012). Internal management and planning challenges are linked to participation; that is, the Iranian state has to foment this participation while overcoming its own problems. In 2012, the Speaker or President of the Iranian Parliament, Ali Larijani claimed that foreign sanctions only accounted for 20% of Iran’s economic problems of inflation, foreign exchange and production, and that domestic mismanagement was a more significant problem in Iran (Farhi, 2012). Such problems become more complex by internal divisions over policy, between the liberal faction and what is called the ‘principality’ inside the country and ‘hardliners’ outside. For example, President’s Rouhani’s ‘mismanagement’ of exchange rates in early 2018 was blamed for production problems, because it was said to have “favoured consumption over production” at a time of crisis (Sharara, 2019). Recriminations over the 2015 JCPOA nuclear deal, over which the liberals were rather enthusiastic, also illustrate the internal division in the country. Internal division of opinion may also be accounted for in the relative importance given to developing reliable strategic partners, as compared to greater attention to the demands of the western powers. Yet, resistance economy strongly favours the search for new economic opportunities with strategic partners, not least with those in the region (Jalili Piran & Soleymani Dorche, 2015, pp. 648-651). US analysts are keenly aware of the ‘consensus’ of Iran’s factions around strategic policy, while noting differences over the desired strength of economic ties with the Europeans and the Americans (Toumaj, 2014: 2). However, for Iran, important strategic partners, such as Russia, China and Venezuela, also reside outside the region. Furthermore, despite vicious US sanctions, Iran’s non-oil trade with Vietnam, Indonesia, South Africa, Turkey and Argentina (the VISTA group with a population of more than 540 million) grew very strongly in the first months of 2019 (FT, 2019). Nevertheless, Iran’s regional relations remain central in the country’s economic exchange and growth.

#### Iran’s resistance economy is the only way to create a West Asian bloc that resist the hegemony of the US and China – this only happens without western interference

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From 2018 onwards, Iran was again under pressure from Western nations. The government must have as its priority, the security and stabilisation of its citizens, but that cannot mean disengagement from the region, as its enemies demand. The 'resistance economy' has wider implications for both Iran and the region. It implies active construction and engagement in new political and economic realities, rather than attaching hope to the false promises of neoliberalism. There is little doubt that the Islamic Republic of Iran, with its principled stability and great capacity, is best placed to lead a West Asian economic alliance, alongside an independent security bloc. That alliance must be between those countries assailed by the US-led coalition, precisely for their independence. Such integration would benefit Iran, as well as the region. The often-stated imperial and Zionist fear of such an alliance simply reinforces this view. This paper’s final section outlines the key relevant elements of Iran’s capacity and the benefits and practical implications of regional integration. Propaganda never sleeps. On the 40th anniversary of Iran’s revolution, US President Donald Trump published a series of propaganda graphics suggesting Iran had experienced ‘40 years of failure’ (AFP, 2019). No one can take claims from a dedicated enemy at face value. In fact, independent evidence from the United Nations Development Programme indicates that despite constant aggression, Iran has made outstanding progress in the past decades. Between 1990 and 2017, the country’s Human Development Index grew on average 1.21% per year, second only to China (UNDP, 2018b: Table 2). Iran’s progress was due to exceptional and sustained improvements in life expectancy - mainly due to health care improvements and child survival - and improvements in education (UNDP, 1999; UNDP, 2018a). Between 1980 and 2017, average life expectancy in Iran rose from 54.1 to 76.2 years, and average years of schooling rose from 2.2 to 9.8, a more than fourfold increase, almost at gender equity (UNDP 2016; UNDP 2018a). Inequality and poverty fell substantially (UNDP 1999; World Bank 2019a). Iran moved ahead while its enemies waged dreadful and futile wars. Iran has been attempting to escape its dependence on oil revenues, a trend that coincides with the new round of unilateral coercive measures from Washington. In 2017, oil revenues as a percentage of GDP were down to 15% of GDP, from highs of 32% over 2000-2008 (World Bank 2020a). That revenue had been battered by periodic coercive measures, which cut exports in 2011- 2012, followed by recovery in 2015-2016, then another decline in 2018-2020. While GDP has contracted very strongly since the Trump administration’s ‘maximum pressure’ assault, the current account increased substantially, as imports “outpaced the decline in exports” (World Bank (2020b). This provides a significant space for the country to stabilise and make structural adjustments, even while dealing with the COVID19 epidemic. Yet, what sort of structural adjustments were made in the country? In the region, Iran’s role has been rather critical, in its support of the people of Palestine, of Lebanon, of Syria, of Iraq and of Yemen. This solidarity with independent and suffering people, under similar attacks by the West, is what has caused an increase in Zionist regime and Washington’s aggression. They rightly fear that Iran is likely to lead an alliance of independent peoples. That ‘threat’ rests in Iran’s principles, its stability, its political will and its human capacity. For example, former US official Larry Wilkerson acknowledged that in face of the US plan “to sweep the Middle East” and to “destabilise the entire region”, Washington was confronted by Iran as “one of the most stable countries in the region” (Wilkerson, 2018). Cheap polemics against Iran these days are refuted by independent sources. According to the World Bank (2019b), Iran reduced its inequality (as measured by the Gini index) from 47.40 in 1986 to 38.80 in 2014. Inequality in the US remains significantly higher, at 41.5 (Gini). Despite the rhetoric of ‘freedom’, the US imprisonment rate (the highest in the world at 698 per 100,000 people) was more than two times that of Iran (at 287). In addition, far more Iranians trust their national government (71%) than is the case in the USA (39%) (UNDP 2018b: Tables 3, 12 & 14). This continuing progress and trust are at the root of Iran’s current stability. With such stability and capacity, what role could Iran play in regional integration? Zionists and their allies fear Iran’s role in forming a united front facing the occupied Palestine, and dread the emergence of an ‘Iranian land bridge’ from Tehran to Beirut (Ibish 2017). In fact, such infrastructure corridors would represent a great economic and social advance for the peoples of the sabotaged and divided region. The positive spillover effects of major infrastructure, properly managed, can work at the regional level, as it does at the national level (Najkar et al., 2018). A similar claim could be made about the Russia-Iran joint rail project, linking to Asia and Europe (SRB, 2017). The resurrection of energy projects, such as the Kirkuk-Baniyas oil pipeline (Boev, 2017) fall in the same category. Such cross-national projects can break the attempted siege of West Asian countries and open new possibilities to benefit the peoples of the region. However, they require cooperation, joint investment and close security cooperation. This raises the question of enforcing security guarantees from outside investors who might wish to join in the probable benefits from West Asian development. Shouldn’t strategic partners be required to contribute to the protection of large projects from attempts at destabilisation? Land-based ‘connectivity’ is proving important both for trade and for avoiding the oceanic interventions of outside powers. This is despite the fact that rail links, while often faster, can be more expensive than sea transport (Ruta, 2018). Land connectivity remains an important factor in China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as does for Iran in building its regional and extra-regional networks. The great promise for Ankara and Tehran in Russia China relations has been stressed (Duarte, 2014), same as the importance of Central and West Asia to India’s pipelines and transport corridors (Mubarik, 2017), as well as the China-Pakistan corridor as a mechanism for “regional integration and peace” (Khan & Marwat, 2016). An integrated trade zone with preferential terms clearly opens an expanded market. Such market already exists to a certain level, for example with regards to Iran’s automobile industry. However, systematic trade preferences deepen such advantages. If we take just a simple four nation model, as illustrated in Table 4a, choosing four of the independent and assailed states of the region, we can see that a preferential trade bloc could double Iran’s market, and expand to a much greater extent the market of the smaller partners. Initial concessional allocations can largely raise peripheral production. For example, if there were a particular efficient industry in Yemen (assuming the country were unified and stable), an integration agreement and initial concession could expand its national market of 30 million to a regional market of 172 million. This is what happened in Cuba’s Ernesto Guevara Electronic Components Complex under the ALBA. A small rural factory that supplied rural schools with solar panels suddenly became a much larger enterprise after it gained preferential access to several other countries. That factory was then able to diversify into other electronic components (Prensa Latina, 2014). However, integration is not simply a matter of expanded markets. Inchoate regional growth may generate “powerful centrifugal forces within regions”, and thus not necessarily strengthen coherent capacity (Garzón, 2017). Further, effective leadership with shared values is essential for an economic bloc to have an advantage in agreements with other blocs and powerful states. Advantage, or weight, is needed for advantageous terms on specific and broad issues, both with more ‘neutral’ countries and with adversaries. Such principle applies to West Asia’s place in China’s belt and road infrastructure initiative (Lehr, 2018). An Indian analyst has pointed out the challenge to Washington’s ambitions posed by Iran-China relations (Bhat, 2012); but such a challenge would have greater substance with an Iran-led WestAsian bloc linked to China. There is the important question of strengthening shared values and the character of a West Asian Alliance, to build internal strength while maintaining a degree of openness to trusted neighbours and other partners. This also applies to industrial development. Two decades ago, UNCTAD claimed that the criteria for successful industrial clusters went further than competition and exports. Successful industrial clusters were characterised by high levels of innovation, trust, cooperation, learning and skill development (UNCTAD, 1998). Cultivation of these qualities requires more than just ‘markets’. Both Iran and the region benefit from a counter-hegemonic regional alliance. Naturally, such an alliance pre-supposes a security alliance. This paper has kept its focus on economic issues. However, strategic concerns have always been central to the concept of a ‘resistance economy’. A Washington-based academic, while assuming that the US influence in the region is a constant, recognises that Iran’s geo-political role and its expanded trade are closely linked (Peyrouse 2014). The necessary implications of the economic integration of a region subject to repeated aggression are that (i) a certain form of participation in security guarantees would most likely be an appropriate requirement for those seeking to benefit from investment in large infrastructure, energy and other strategic joint venture projects; (ii) strategic partners (whether countries or corporations) might best be rated on levels of trust for the purpose of investment partnerships and fiscal concessions. This paper has focussed mostly on Iran and its independent Arab neighbours. However, Iran’s relations with the other neighbours such as Tajikistan and Afghanistan are also important issues to be investigated (Muzalevsky, 2010). Relations with Turkey, selected Persian Gulf countries and the Asian continent need not be prejudiced by the formation of a West Asian alliance. Regional integration, like industrialisation, can develop spread effects. As the leading independent country of the region, Iran is able to chair a coalition of proven and experienced regional resistance leaders, to jointly determine priorities and cooperation in security, strategic partnerships and regional infrastructure. Such group could also coordinate cooperation in education, science, culture, social programs, industry and commerce, a coalition, which would build on existing cooperation, making it more systematic and resilient This paper has outlined the failed promises of neoliberalism, which moved from a partisan construction of ‘liberal’ markets, with rigged rules, to a comprehensive rollout of siege warfare against the independent countries and peoples of West Asia. The Europeans, for the most part, have proven themselves either complicit or unable to break from the aggression driven by Washington, whose hybrid wars have aimed at keeping the entire region fragmented and weak. In these circumstances, a decisive and distinct economic path is necessary for the future of both the people of Iran and of the region. The principles of Resistance economy, in particular the call to transform pressures into opportunities and to develop strategic partnerships, have become even more relevant in today’s world. A wider, counter-hegemonic ‘new regionalism’ is essential, and might draw lessons from the parallel experiences of Latin America; notwithstanding the distinct conditions and cultures of West Asia. Iran’s leadership of a counter-hegemonic bloc, with diverse political systems, but shared institutions, could produce rapid benefits, therefore consolidating real interests to lessen outside threats and build distinctive forms of cooperation. This is not simply altruism. Iran would economically benefit from an integrated and expanded market. A West Asian economic bloc could upgrade human and industrial capacity, reinforcing security and stability while entrenching decent human values.

### L – North Korea

#### The US will always seek to make North Korea into a threat that produces an antagonistic relationship with the North Korea – the affs means alter their sanctions are part in parcel of US empire to save itself using new means to contain China – that results in Chinese lashout

Beal 20 [Tim 1-21-2020 Taylor & Francis; Francis US Imperialism, the Korean Peninsula and Trumpian Disruption, International Critical Thought, V 10, 1 Accessed 3-10-2021] CSUF JmB NDT 2021

Trumpian Disruption and US Korea Policy Nowhere is Trump’s disruption of US foreign policy more evident than in Korea. The United States initiated the division of the Korean peninsula in 1945 to protect its newly acquired possession of Japan from the Soviet Union, as a barrier against contagion from China then in suspended civil war soon to be reignited, and perhaps as a forward base on the Asian mainland for expansion to the west. Over time China has replaced the Soviet Union/Russia as the main challenge but this geopolitical imperative remains the underlying rationale for US Korea policy. South Korea is seen by American strategists as essential for its containment of China and as a base for the projection of US power, both alone and through its allies, through maritime Asia and into the Indian Ocean and beyond (Beal 2019b). South Korean troop are being readied for deployment not merely against China but also against Iran (Kim and Yang 2019; Yoo and Noh 2019). Korea was of little importance to the United States in 1945 beyond its geographical location. The Korean War changed that. The war was the first that the United States had not won and so marked a turning point in US imperialism. It was exorcised from public consciousness and became “The Forgotten War” (Blair 1987). It came to be overshadowed by defeat in Vietnam but then something strange happened. After the US was expelled from Vietnam and the country re-unified Washington had little choice but to come to some sort of terms with the enemy. The Sino-Vietnamese war of 1979 gave political cover for that and raised hopes that Vietnam could be used as a pawn against China. However, Korea was different. It was unfinished business. The North remained independent and defiant. The US control of the more populous South always fuelled the hope that the North might be taken over (“collapse” became the favourite euphemism). However, there were problems with that scenario. North Korea provided justification for the US military presence in the South (and to some extent in Japan) so if it were to disappear then there was a danger that the US might have to abandon its forward position in Northeast Asia. Vietnam faded from American view and Korea returned to the spotlight. It was necessary to demonise North Korea and to portray it as a dangerous threat. This was fraudulent—the US and its allies outgun North Korea hundreds of times over. North Korea has always been able to retaliate locally and as it has developed its missiles and its nuclear deterrence that retaliatory capability has increased both in force and in reach. However, retaliation is but a component of defence and so is conceptually different from aggression. Moreover in North Korea’s case, nuclear retaliation would be what Seymour Hersh called the Samson Option in respect of Israel; its use would bring retributory destruction (Hersh 1991). Although the “North Korean threat” is bogus it is widely believed and “what to do about North Korea” has become a key issue in American domestic politics. This is the situation that Trump inherited in 2016 (Beal 2019a). It is important to realise that Trump, or any president, is only part of the US power structure and he may disrupt Establishment, and established, Korea policy but he cannot destroy it. The military, the state bureaucracy and Congress all hem him in. When he departs the scene it is very likely that nothing much will have changed in terms of US policy. However, he is president now and his disruption causes great anguish and anger. Trump’s policy can be looked at in terms of the South, of the North and the interrelationship between the two. South Korea Trump has taken longstanding American concerns about trade with South Korea and amplified them. The Establishment generally approves of pressuring South Korea (and other countries) over trade issues but regards Trump’s overt bullying as clumsy; it would prefer more velvet on the iron fist. Moreover, excessive demands may force the South Korea economy to divert to other trading partners, especially China (Lee 2010). On top of which South Korea, like others, is suffering collateral damage from Trump’s trade war with China (Cha 2019). This all calls for sophisticated diplomacy, which is not Trump’s forte. There are deeper concerns over his handling the issue of the cost of the US military presence in South Korea. Again this is something Washington and Seoul have been wrangling over for decades and is an issue that is replicated throughout the empire so it is a matter of Trump mishandling negotiations and exacerbating disagreement rather than creating it. Apart from his narcissistically abrasive manner, the fundamental problem is that Trump appears to believe in the “free rider” myth. He sees the US as generously and disinterestedly “protecting” countries around the world from external threat; Europe from Russia, Pacific Asia from China, Japan and South Korea from North Korea, and he is not alone in this perception even amongst the elite (Moran 2019). However, the reality is quite different. It is the US that has moved eastwards since the collapse of the Soviet Union, not Russia westwards. It is the US which encircles China with bases and sends its Coast Guard to patrol the Chinese coast in the South China Sea. By contrast, China’s presence abroad, especially the Belt and Road Initiative is primarily commercially strategic rather than military (though the Eurasian Landbridge does provide protection against US control of maritime trade routes). We have seen how the empire doubles the military budget of the US. South Korea plays a special role. It affords the US bases close to China, it has a large and well-equipped military and has the largest reservoir of reservists in the world (Beal 2016a). Trump is not alone in believing the rhetoric but the Establishment in general instinctively tempers this with a recognition of reality. US military strategy sees a forward military presence in South Korea as essential for the containment of China (and to a lesser extent Russia) (Jackson 2018). Whilst there is no objection to extracting more payment from South Korea—empires are by definition systems of extortion—the Establishment realises that this needs to be subordinated to deeper strategic objectives. It would be foolish to imperil those for a marginal increase in rent (Klingner, Carafano, and Lohman 2019). Moon Jae-in will not stand up to Trump on this, or other issues, and will seek a way of yielding face (Elich 2019). However, reports of rising Anti-Americanism might be a portent of things to come (Salmon 2019). North Korea If the establishment is unhappy with Trump’s handling of South it is furious with his attempts to negotiate with the North. An agreement with Pyongyang, other than its disarmament and surrender, offers no benefit to imperialism. The current situation, in fact, serves it very well. North Korea’s nuclear deterrent poses no military threat to the US: “The United States has coexisted with a nuclear North Korea for more than a decade now, and we can continue to coexist for decades to come” (Kristian 2019). It is a domestic problem for the president not a danger to the US. “Maximum pressure” imposes no meaningful economic costs on the US (though it does on South Korea), and poses no danger of US casualties. It may be ineffective in forcing North Korea to surrender, in which case the usual remedy is to increase sanctions rather than reassess policy (Cho 2019). It causes malnutrition, poor health, early death and economic distress—tools of destabilisation—but the Establishment, despite its frequent breast-beating about human rights has no qualms about that and very easily, and conveniently, blames the victim, as it does elsewhere; for instance in Venezuela and Iran (Hudson 2019a; DeYoung, Cunningham, and Mekhennet 2019; Robinson 2019). On the other hand, some sort of peace agreement would imperil the US forward position in Northeast Asia and its containment of China. What would be the justification for the US military presence in South Korea, and its control over the South Korean military if peace broke out? Nevertheless, US presidents are expected to tackle the “threat from North Korea” and that is acceptable as long as they steer clear of peace. Trump broke a cardinal rule of imperialism by deciding to engage in personal negotiations with Kim Jong Un. It is accepted that presidents will negotiate personally with leaders of major powers, though the furore over Trump meeting Putin shows how distasteful that is. Minor leaders—such Moon Jae-in, Abe Shinzo and Scott Morrison—get an audience with the emperor, and that is calibrated to their status within the imperial hierarchy. Presidents do not have summits with leaders of small independent countries. That suggests equality and legitimacy. To the imperial mind-set equality between states is anathema and legitimacy is only accorded by the imperial power and does not derive inherently from the country in question. At the same time, it appears that Trump has no understanding of the issues. He does not understand what the Establishment is going on about, and he has even less comprehension of the North Korean position. He does not seem to see why they want security guarantees and cessation of economic warfare (“sanctions relief”). He makes statements of astounding childlike banality; North Korea, he says has “tremendous economic potential” and is “located between Russia and China on one side, and South Korea on the other. It’s all waterfront property. It’s a great location, as we used to say in the real estate business.” Iraq and Libya were also waterfront properties. Although Trump does not understand imperial policy, and at times acts in variance to it (withdrawal from Syria and Afghanistan for instance) he still appoints Establishment practitioners to key roles, Bolton being the outstanding example. Trump wanted to negotiate a deal with North Korea but he had as his National Security Advisor a man who loathed the idea of a settlement with any resisting country, and who ensured that the US demands were something the other side could not possibly accept. The predictable result is that negotiations collapse, as in Hanoi in February 2019 and since there has been no change they have remained in stalemate ever since. Bolton has gone, but the policy of demanding unconditional surrender remains. There were signs in June 2019 that forces within the Establishment were prepared to accept a deal that would cap North Korea’s nuclear deterrent, a compromise that would allow it to retain a small, but sufficient, retaliatory capacity and be prepared to make the gestures that would enable Trump to claim a victory (Crowley and Sanger 2019). However, those hopes seem to have come to nothing and at the time of writing it appears that Trump will not respond to Kim Jong Un’s end-of-year ultimatum to negotiate in a way that addresses North’s concerns rather than making unacceptable demands (Editorial 2019b; Choe 2019). Perhaps because he is distracted by the impeachment process Trump’s negotiation with North Korea appear to sunk into catatonic paralysis.

#### The aff is nothing more than US neo-imperialism drive to continue to contain China – the tinkering of the NoKo sanctions creates the conditions for relation normalization as Korea becomes a counterbalance to China – China becomes fearful and lashes out against a unified western Korea – that causes US-China war – it goes nuclear

Young-ik, K. (2017). [Imperialism and the two Koreas. Irish Marxist Review, 6(19), 37-49. Accessed 3-11-21] CSUF JmB NDT 2021

At the beginning I pointed out that instability in the Korean Peninsula must be examined in the context of the imperialist world system. Over the past 25 years, the US has had many opportunities to resolve the issue of North Korean nuclear weapons. However, the US has always approached the issue in connection to its goal of maintaining and strengthening its power and influence in East Asia. This has been an approach shared by other imperialist powers including China, Russia and Japan. North Korea has been playing a game of survival by resorting to ~~brinkmanship~~ [brinkship]tactics in response to US threats. Kim Jong-eun and North Korean officials are trying to increase their chances of survival against the conventional weaponry and military exercises of the US and South Korea, flaunting their ability to retaliate with nukes if push comes to shove. The nuclear warheads and missiles also serve as a means of dragging the US to the negotiating table. North Korea’s official media and diplomats often hurl insults to the US, but Pyongyang has continued to seek dialogue through other channels. The paramount objective for the North Korean nationalist regime is to secure its own stable place within the system of capitalist states. Faced with pressure from the imperialist world system, North Korean rulers chose to develop nuclear weapons. The North Korean Party paper Rohdong claimed: ‘Peace and stability in the peninsula, East Asia, and moreover the wider world is ensured by virtue of our being a nuclear power.’ Nuclear weapons, however, are not an effective means of resisting imperialism; they do not keep Pyongyang’s rulers from having to constantly face imperialist rulers who wish to see the North Korean regime collapse. Moreover, there’s the problem of Trump. There are certainly quite a few Wall Street bankers and retired generals in the Trump administration, but there are also features that clearly set it apart from past Republican governments. Trump’s supporters include those who, like Steve Bannon, identify with European right-wing populism, which indicates the extent to which Trump’s rise to power is connected with the international wave of right-wing populism. Trump came to power in a context where the free market-oriented post-war international order the US had built was beginning to crack, while mainstream US politicians were failing to articulate a way to preserve US imperial hegemony under these circumstances. The solution proposed by Trump was a shift in the direction of US strategy, encapsulated in the slogan ‘America first’. This shift has had destabilizing effects throughout the world and in East Asia and the Korean peninsula in particular. It was Obama’s strategy to maintain US hegemony by redirecting resources to East Asia, in particular to contain China. In practice, however, Obama had to deal with challenges arising from Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Asia at the same time, and so the gap between his administration’s foreign policy rhetoric and fiscal and military realities on the ground widened over time. Obama thus ultimately failed to halt the further erosion of US power relative to rival countries. Trump criticized the Obama administration’s foreign policy and insisted that he had a solution. On the other hand, he had previously criticized the US wars in the Middle East post 9/11, and said that he was willing to talk with North Korea. This had led some liberals in South Korea to harbor the illusion that Trump would be better than Clinton for bringing peace in the Korean peninsula. But once elected, Trump faulted his predecessor for being too weak, and flaunted his bravado as commander-inchief by engaging in military actions. He pounded Syria with Tomahawk missiles in April, dropped the most devastating non-nuclear bomb in Afghanistan, and recently decided to send more troops there. He embarrassed even his own generals when he said the US nuclear stockpile could be increased tenfold - such is his eagerness to increase arms spending. At around the same time as the bombs hit Syria and Afghanistan, Trump began to stir up tensions in the Korean peninsula by sending in an aircraft carrier. The Korean Peninsula is now facing the most dangerous situation it has seen in the 21st century. Trump’s words have greatly contributed to this. Talk of ‘fire and fury’ to befall North Korea was just one among numerous threats to come out of Trump’s mouth and Twitter account. In this regard, Trump’s speech to the UN in September is significant: it starkly revealed the meaning of his ‘America First’ policy, and brought his North Korea-bashing rhetoric to an apogee. Trump used the words ‘sovereignty’ and ‘sovereign’ 21 times in the UN speech. He said: In foreign affairs, we are renewing this founding principle of sovereignty. ... As President of the United States, I will always put America first, just like you, as the leaders of your countries will always, and should always, put your countries first. By repeatedly emphasizing sovereignty Trump was making clear that US interests came first; that the US would respond very firmly to challenges coming from any state or other entity, ‘from the Ukraine to the South China Sea’. He also showed that he was ready to ignore or overturn the existing neoliberal international order if necessary. Trump berated the ‘rogue regimes’ of Iran and Venezuela in his UN speech, but the ‘rogue regime’ for which he reserved the most venom was North Korea. He warned the latter: The United States has great strength and patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea. Rocket Man is on a suicide mission for himself and for his regime. Trump’s message here is qualitatively different from those of his predecessors. Neither Obama nor even George W. Bush went so far as to threaten North Korea with total annihilation. They certainly did threaten the regime, but nevertheless made a distinction between the regime and the North Korean people, in however hypocritical a way. For Trump, such distinction seems meaningless. The difference cannot simply be reduced to Trump’s idiosyncratic style of speech. Key figures in Trump’s administration such as Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley, Defense Secretary James Mattis, and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson continue to emphasize the availability of military options. On September 23 after Trump’s UN speech, US Air Force B-1B Lancer bombers from Guam flew in international airspace over waters east of North Korea. According to the US Department of Defense, ‘This is the farthest north of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) any US fighter or bomber aircraft have flown North Korea’s coast in the 21st century.’ The Pentagon’s Chief Spokesperson Dana W. White explained the meaning of this operation: ‘This mission is a demonstration of US resolve and a clear message that the President has many military options to defeat any threat.’ On September 25, North Korean Foreign Minister Lee Yongho said this amounted to ‘a declaration of war on North Korea.’ It is unclear whether Trump has made up his mind to risk a full-scale war against North Korea. Trump’s generals including ‘Mad Dog’ Mattis are well aware of the likely consequences. A pre-emptive attack by the US will immediately push all sides toward an all-out war. An allout war in the Korean Peninsula, even a conventional one, will involve a melee of two million soldiers from the North, South and the US raging through the land. Two million is a lower-bound projection assuming China stays out of the mess. Pyongyang and Seoul are only 200 km apart: conventional war in between the two capitals alone would sacrifice millions of civilians. In the worst case, a nuclear war could break out. In such a war, Washington would most likely win by obliterating the North with conventional and/or nuclear weapons, but probably after Seoul and Tokyo have been laid to waste. More than 25 million people live in Seoul and the greater metropolitan area. A nuclear bomb destroying Seoul is not only horrific to imagine, it would also be a painful loss to Washington. The sheer scale of damage that a second Korean War is likely to bring works to constrain the behavior of both parties to some extent. However, it would be hasty to therefore preclude the possibility of a war in the peninsula. For the Trump administration, the possibility of a nuclear armed North Korea precipitating nuclear proliferation and thereby threatening the US’ global nuclear supremacy is a worrying prospect. Therefore a challenge for Trump is to demonstrate to other capitalist powers that Washington has the situation under control while maintaining America’s nuclear advantage. It follows that Trump is likely to keep applying "maximum pressure" to Pyongyang. In a meeting with his top military brass on October 6, Trump called the moment ‘the calm before the storm.’ Trump is likely to ramp up military pressure alongside economic sanctions. Having already sent B-1B bomber into North Korean sea, he could decide to send in an aircraft carrier next time. In fact, US aircraft carrier had previously sailed to the eastern coast of North Korea after the USS Pueblo incident in 1968. The US plans to increase deployment of its strategic weapons to Korea, which is certain to provoke Pyonyang. If Trump continues on this path of escalating tensions, North Korean rulers will likely respond with yet more nuclear tests or missile launches. The vicious cycle of escalations may very well spark accidental military clashes. Another factor that casts an ominous shadow on the Korean situation is the intensifying rivalry among imperialist countries surrounding the peninsula, especially the US and China. Trump and his key aides believe that chastising China economically is inseparable from the task of preventing China’s rise as a political and military powerhouse. On October 18, Secretary of State Tillerson sent a warning to China in a speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS): ‘We will not shrink from China’s challenges to the rule-based order and where the Chinese subverts the sovereignty of neighboring countries and disadvantages in the US and our friends.’ He stressed that it was vital to defend US interests in the Indo-Pacific region, home to the most vibrant economic growth in the world and to major maritime transportation routes; to that end, Tillerson continued, Washington would strengthen cooperation with countries such as India, Japan and Australia. While trying to curtail Chinese expansion from the South by strengthening ties with India and Japan (such as the joint military exercise between the 3 states on the Indian Ocean), the Trump administration is following its predecessors in urging Japan and South Korea to enhance trilateral cooperation with the US to contain China from the East. As always, North Korea is cited as the excuse for this initiative. Trump has been calling on China to strengthen economic sanctions against North Korea, accompanied by the threat of sanctions against Chinese enterprises and individuals. Over the years, North Korea has responded to tightening sanctions from the West by seeking alternative sources of foreign exchange and by trying to revive the economy. One result is that trade with China as a share of North Korean GDP has surged over the last 20 years, to the extent that the economy has now become absolutely dependent on China. However, the close trading relation can also create subtle tensions between Beijing and Pyongyang. Kim Jong-eun’s regime is not happy about the adverse terms of trade imposed by China upon North Korea. Above all, it is concerned that China’s growing economic clout will translate into greater political influence on Pyongyang, so that North Korea will be treated as the ‘Fourth Province’ of China’s northeastern region. North Korea’s recent moves to develop trade relations with Russia are part of its effort to escape excessive reliance on the Chinese economy. The mysterious murder in Malaysia this year of Kim Jong-eun’s half-brother Kim Jong-nam, who was under Beijing’s protection, as well as the 2013 execution of Kim Jong-eun’s uncle Jang Sung-taek, who’s had friendly relations with Chinese leaders, reveal the nature of Pyongyang’s relationship with Beijing. One of Jang Sung-taek’s crimes cited by the regime was that he had sold coal, land and other resources on the cheap to a ‘foreign country’ - an act of ‘treason’. The identity of that ‘foreign country’ wasn’t difficult to infer. China, for its part, finds Kim Jongeun’s regime with its penchant for nuclear tests to be a headache, not least because North Korean ‘provocations’ offer the US the perfect excuse to enlist South Korea and Japan in its effort to encircle China, and also because North Korean nukes could set off a nuclear domino effect rippling through South Korea and Japan. Nonetheless, China does not want the collapse of the North Korean regime. Thus Beijing is only partially implementing Trump’s demands for tightened sanctions. If the North Korean regime collapses, China could face a flood of refugees pouring into China across the North Korean border. Also, if North Korea gets absorbed to the South, China will have to share a border for the first time ever with a pro-Western country that hosts over 28,000 US troops on its soil - within arm’s reach from Beijing. Thus China’s state-run newspaper Global Times proclaimed in an editorial in August that, ‘If the US and South Korea carry out strikes and try to overthrow the North Korean regime and change the political pattern of the Korean Peninsula, China will prevent them from doing so.’ As an imperialist power itself, Russia has different interests from those of China, but shares China’s unwillingness to see the North Korean regime collapse. Russia, too, is disturbed by Washington’s moves to establish missile defense in East Asia under the pretext of North Korea. The Korean peninsula is thus tangled up in inter-imperialist conflict: not in the vicinity or periphery but smack in the middle of it. Such entanglement can amplify tensions in the peninsula when coupled with specific events in the wider region in the not-so-distant future; in the worst case, it may lead to another imperialist proxy war.

#### The aff continues to view North Korea as a target within the politico-military realm, an object to be absorbed. This naturalizes an image of North Korea that legitimizes the liberal strategy of neoliberalization and the conservative one of militarization. The aff patronizingly declares, give up your nuclear weapons and we will modernize you, don’t and be subject to intervention by foreign powers who assume themselves more endowed with the power to produce territory of North Korea

Lee 15**.** Seung-ook, Visiting Professor, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, The Korea Advanced Institute of Science & Technology. “A Geo-Economic Object or an Object of GeoPolitical Absorption? Competing Visions of North Korea in South Korean Politics, Journal of Contemporary Asia.

The so-called Sunshine Policy launched by the liberal regime of South Korea brought about a significant transformation in its visions of North Korea. Through it, North Korea became an “object of development.” This was something different from the previous idea of North Korea as a politico-military target. However, to conservatives, North Korea remains within the politico-military realm as an object of territorial and ideological absorption. As a result, political conflicts in South Korea in the conception of North Korea – between a geo-economic object and an object of geopolitical absorption – entail competitive appropriation of the discourse of “China’s colonisation of North Korea” and affect the way North Korean territory is produced. The struggle over geography is also a conflict between competing images and imaginings, a contest of power and resistance that involves not only struggles to represent the materiality of physical geographical objects and boundaries but also the equally powerful and, in a different manner, the equally material force of discursive borders between an idealised Self and a demonised Other, between “us” and “them” (Ó Tuathail 1996, 14–15). In both North and South Korea, despite decades of animosity, the reunification of the Korean peninsula has long been desired – a dream for the Korean nation to fulfil. Since the division of the peninsula and during the Cold War, the South Korean state forcibly imposed and sustained its monopolistic vision of North Korea as an arch-enemy. This entailed the production of imaginative geographies and territorial representations of the North which were negative in content. This imaginary was bolstered by institutional mechanisms such as the National Security Law. The territory of the North was naturalised not only as a dangerous place but also as an object to be re-appropriated. Article Three of the Constitution of the Republic of Korea, enacted July 17, 1948, stipulates: “The territory of the Republic of Korea shall consist of the Korean peninsula and its adjacent islands” (Constitutional Court of Korea 1987). By this conception, the North was deemed as legally and morally “our land” but still an “unrecovered territory,” occupied by the enemy (see Schmitt [1932] 2007).1 This “othering” of the North was particularly crucial to illegitimate military regimes of the South (see Lee et al. 2014). After regime change in 1998, old hostilities shifted. The liberal regime of South Korea launched the so-called Sunshine Policy to promote peace and reconciliation through economic aid and co-operation, or “South-North economic co-operation” (남북경협). Though this term means the development of mutual economic co-operation between South and North Korea, it is driven by the underlying intention of bringing about gradual changes in North Korea’s socialist system. Former South Korean President Kim Dae-jung claimed that “Sunshine is more effective than strong wind in inducing North Korea to come out of isolation and confrontation” (Koo and Nam 2001, 83).2 The June 2000 summit meeting between the two Koreas facilitated the expansion of economic interchange and co-operation and led to the development of the Mt Kumgang and the Kaesong Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Despite several problems, economic co-operation was coaxed along for ten years, from February 1998 to February 2008, by liberal regimes. This entailed a significant change in the vision of North Korea; it challenged the prevalent view of North Korea as an enemy that should be defeated (Lee et al. 2014). A new narrative replaced this hegemonic vision. North Korea became a geo-economic object. In this sense, Hyun Ok Park (2009, 112) explains that inter-Korean economic co-operation consists in the transition “from the once-and-for-all unification to a gradual and linear process of unification, and from territorial to market integration of the two Koreas” (emphasis added). Yet the transformation has not been fully successful. It has sparked new political conflicts facilitated by politicians and intellectuals but spread throughout South Korean society. These conflicts are generally envisioned as ideological confrontations between liberal (or progressive) and conservative groups. They are called the “South-South conflicts” (남남갈등). While this antagonism first centred on ex-President Kim Dae-jung’s Sunshine Policy (for example, conservatives consistently attacked inter-Korean economic co-operation because they thought that it helped fund the development of North Korean nuclear power), it has encompassed various other political and economic issues regarding not only North Korea but also the US. For example, conflicts rage over issues such as the transfer of wartime operational control from the United States (US) to South Korean forces and the US-Korea Free Trade Agreement (W.-Y. Lee 2012). This article examines conflicts in South Korea regarding the discourses describing North Korea in order to scrutinise how different territorial imaginaries of the North underlie these political-economic struggles.3 It is argued that while North Korea has been appropriated through a neo-liberal frame by liberals, to conservatives it remains a politico-military object of territorial absorption. As a result of this bifurcation, political conflicts in South Korea over the conception of North Korea – as an object of geopolitical absorption or as a geo-economic object – have come, dialectically, to influence the way North Korean territory is produced. In other words, political contestations between competing visions and interests in South Korea help to shape the production of state territory in North Korea. However, this does not mean that only liberals retain a geo-economic vision of North Korea and conservatives stick to a geo-political one. Both factions have both geo-political and geo-economic representations and concerns towards the North. What distinguishes them is that they consistently highlight one side over the other: while liberals see that geo-economic practices can address geo-political concerns, conservatives still favour the hegemonic geo-political scripts of North Korea to describe a particular geo-economic vision of the North. This article will elaborate this claim through an analysis that moves across two different planes: South Korea’s North Korea policies and Sino-North Korean economic relations. The former concerns the political contestations over how to view North Korea. The latter will entail a synoptic genealogy of the discourse of “China’s colonisation of North Korea.” Political Conflicts over How to View North Korea Geo-political visions of North Korea, which were hegemonic during the Cold War, have shifted since the 1990s. When the North suffered serious economic crises in the mid-1990s, a new economic vision of the North surfaced in the South as expectations were raised of reunification brought on by the collapse of North Korea. After witnessing the unification of the two Germanies (which caused considerable stress for the German economy), calculations of the costs of reunification with the devastated North Korean economy presented it as an economic burden on the South Korean economy.4 Concomitantly, the necessity of reunification became contested.5 As Kaplan (2006) asserts: The truth is, many South Koreans have an interest in the perpetuation of the Kim Family Regime [KFR], or something like it, since the KFR’s demise would usher in a period of economic sacrifice that nobody in South Korea is prepared for. A longstanding commitment by the American military has allowed the country to evolve into a materialistic society. Few South Koreans have any interest in the disruption the collapse of the KFR would produce. Kaplan’s argument is too simplistic. Ten years of liberal governments forged a new vision of North Korea as a geo-economic object rather than a serious economic liability. The North was viewed as “an object of development” (Mitchell 2002) both to revitalise the failing economy of North Korea and to promote renewed economic growth of South Korea after the 1997–98 financial crisis. Under this vision, interKorean economic co-operation expanded under the “Sunshine Policy” during the Kim Dae-jung regime and the “Peace and Prosperity Policy” under the Roh Moo-Hyun government. The Kaesong Industrial Complex (hereafter KIC) was hailed as the symbolic locus and space for these new economic approaches to the North. Liberals stress both geo-political and geo-economic benefits of economic engagement with North Korea via the KIC. First, the geographical location of the KIC in the northern border region of the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), 40 miles from Seoul, provides close economic linkages between the KIC and the huge markets of the Seoul Metropolitan Area; it also has a substantial deterrent effect on military action. Second, the KIC represents a promising economic “survival strategy” to both the South and North Korean economies. The competitiveness of smalland medium-sized South Korean firms has been in decline because of cheaper labour costs in China and Southeast Asian countries (see Table 1). The KIC attests that North Korea can provide reserves of cheap and disciplined labour – speaking the same language as South Korean managers. In addition, vast underdeveloped, low-cost industrial lands are expected to enhance the comparative advantage of South Korean capital. The joint industrial project is also seen as crucial for North Korea to overcome its economic difficulties by attracting productive capital from the South, and in the long term it will reduce the cost of reunification (see S.-O. Lee 2014a). Thus, the KIC and inter-Korean economic co-operation is usually regarded as a “win-win strategy to both Koreas” (K.-S. Lee 2004, 108). As former South Korean President Roh emphasised in his 2007 Independence Day speech, “Now we should develop South-North economic cooperation into productive investment cooperation and interactive cooperation, and bring about the opportunity for investment for us and the opportunity to recover economy for North Korea [sic.].” In addition, liberals anticipated that the KIC would function as a showcase of the capitalist market economy to help North Korea understand the concepts and importance of profit and hopefully bring about transformation of North Korea’s socialist economy (Kang 2006; Wrobel 2011). Some liberal scholars contend that inter-Korean economic co-operation can contribute to the peace and prosperity of the Korean peninsula by creating a unified economic sphere. Using the KIC as an archetype, they argue that a gradual expansion of SEZs would be one important step towards realising this imaginary (Yang and Lee 2007, 158). This geo-economic vision of North Korea and the Korean peninsula extends from criticism of both reunification-through-absorption and economic scepticism towards the integration with the North. This position interprets geo-economic processes led by the state-capital nexus as the basis for geo-political security. Liberal politicians and scholars in this camp see inter-Korean economic co-operation as the cornerstone for more open policies across Northeast Asia (Y.-I. Lee 2009, 72–77). In other words, North Korea is regarded as an important economic asset to the South, but this is not the whole story. Peace and co-operation with the North is envisioned as a crucial precondition for placing Korea as the economic hub of Northeast Asia. In this sense, reunification is seen as a new accumulation strategy for the South. Liberals’ geo-economic view of North Korea entails the construction of new geographical imaginaries beyond the peninsula. This imaginary first materialised as a plan to restructure the country into “an international business hub for the Northeast Asian region” during the Kim Dae-jung regime (Lee and Hobday 2003, 498). The Roh administration developed it into the concept of the peninsula as the “hub of Northeast Asia”: The Korean peninsula is located at the heart of the region. It is a big bridge linking China and Japan, the continent and the ocean. Such a geopolitical characteristic often caused pain for us in the past. Today, however, this same feature is offering us an opportunity. Indeed, it demands that we play a pivotal role in the Age of Northeast Asia in the 21st century (Roh 2003).6 President Kim employed the concept of the “hub” in symbolic terms to attract foreign direct investment; subsequently, the Roh government saw the hub as transforming the peninsula into a regional centre of international logistics and financial services. This plan has led to the development of SEZs both in North Korea and South Korea (B.-G. Park 2005). These new geo-economic visions and imaginaries of the liberals mostly draw on two different but related theoretical sources – Paik Nak-chung’s “theory of the division system” and Suh Dong-man’s “theory of the economy of the Korean peninsula.” Paik, long a leader in the South Korean civic movements, has played a pioneering role in proposing an alternative vision of the Korean peninsula. In his article titled “For the recognition of the division system,” Paik (1992, 289) asserts that it is imperative to study the effects of the division structure in the Korean peninsula more systemically. Drawing on Wallerstein’s (1974) World-Systems theory, he argues that the ontological character of the division system can be identified at once as a sub-system of the world-system and as the superordinate system of South and North Korean systems. Instead of seeing the division as a confrontation between two systems, ideologies, or states, he describes the division system as a temporally and spatially particular world-subsystem that encompasses both the South and North (Paik 2000, 110). The main mechanism sustaining this system is the mutual dependence of the ruling powers in both Koreas (Paik 1992, 293–294). This makes it impossible for either Korea to transform into a “normal” democratic society or to reduce its dependence on foreign powers. Moreover, the division system is inherently unstable, swayed by internal contradictions and external geo-political conditions (Paik 2000, 108). This interpretation leads to the conclusion that unification and domestic reform are firmly woven together through one essential task: overcoming the division system (J.-Y. Kim 2004). In other words, Paik’s idea suggests that both South Korea’s and North Korea’s political-economic contradictions derive from the division system. The top priority for undoing the division system is to remove mutual distrust between the two Koreas. This idea has served as a key alternative approach to North Korea beyond the hegemonic prism from the conservative powers, and it provides a theoretical basis for liberals’ and centrists’ novel ideas on the Korean peninsula. A prominent one is from Suh Dong-man. Suh, who was a political science professor and the former director of the Office of Planning and Coordination at the National Intelligence Service under the Roh government, proposed a theory that envisioned the Korean peninsula as a unified economic space. Developing Paik’s idea of unification as a process, he claims that inter-Korean economic relations can pose a viable solution to the problematic economies of both Koreas. Specifically, the formation of North–South economic linkages can curb excessive market powers in South Korea through the creation of markets in North Korea (Suh 2007). To avoid exploitation of North Korea, he proposes two different economic linkages: (i) vertical division of labour between South Korean capital and North Korean labour power and land; and (ii) horizontal division of labour in the development of Competing Visions of North Korea in South Korean Politics 697 Downloaded by [University of Michigan] at 14:47 26 March 2016 high-tech industries (hardware from South Korea and software from the North) (Suh 2007, 213). According to Suh (2006a), inter-Korean economic relations would create two virtuous cycles in geo-political-economic terms: one is between South Korean surplus capital to find productive investment opportunities and development of the North Korean economy; and the other is between welfare and peace. He believes that the South–North economic co-operation will not only check the increasing penetration of neo-liberal logic but also open an alternative economic space. This view is bolstered by a new geographical imaginary of North Korea as the object of a “spatial fix,” as a region where South Korean capital can search for new profitable opportunities (Harvey 2003). Yet such visions of North Korea held by liberal politicians and scholars are neither hegemonic nor uncontested. South Korean conservative politicians, scholars and media fired back with a new discourse featuring the word “giveaways” (퍼주기). Kim and colleagues (2009, 456) translate this term into “the most generous aid to North Korea.” This discourse claims that unilateral economic aid without a fair return only contributes to the survival of the Kim regime in the North and consequently delays unification. Especially after the 2003 crisis over North Korea’s nuclear programme, this discourse evolved into the claim that funding from South Korea actually supports North Korea’s development of nuclear weapons and missiles. For example, expressions such as “Give rice and get slapped in the face,” “South’s support for North Korea is returned with missiles,” and “The South makes North Korea develop bad habits” embody the “giveaways” discourse (G.-S. Kim 2006, 61). Instead of seeking clear evidence for this flow of money – for example, showing that the money from the KIC is invested in the development of nuclear capability – they argue for more transparent distribution of funds, strict mutualism, and a strategy linking economic policy and political (nuclear) policy (G.-S. Kim 2006).7 This position is undergirded by the firm belief that economic support and co-operation will never transform North Korea.8 And implicitly it is still predicated on a fixed and normative vision of the North as a geo-political object – an evil thing that must be conquered. To recapitulate a central element of the argument, it is clear that liberals and conservatives share a common territorial aspiration towards North Korea as “our territory.” Yet the specific representations, imaginations and practices have significantly diverged according to their underlying imperatives. South Korean liberals project geo-economic hopes and desires onto the northern territory as a space to renew growth. They contend that expanding economic links with the North will alleviate pressing geo-political concerns. For instance, it is reported that during the 2007 inter-Korean summit meeting, President Roh suggested to Kim Jong Il a plan for “drawing a peace-economy map on top of the security-military map” (Yonhap News, June 24, 2013). For its part, the conservative faction is obsessed with the Cold War-era geo-political scripts of fear and danger about North Korea. Conservative forces endlessly lambasted the liberal regimes for risking national security in return for economic engagement with the North (Doucette 2010, 24). This narrative is interlaced with geo-economic fears of the high costs of unification. As Sparke (2007, 342) makes clear, geo-economic imperatives anticipate unfettered capitalist penetration into the most isolated country in the world, and fantasise flow, connectivity and interactions, whereas geo-political imperatives stress and reproduce distinctions between “us” and “them” and provoke an urgent need to contain and expel others from “our” territory. These political conflicts have become more pronounced since 2008 with the return of conservative leadership in South Korea. When Lee Myung-bak – called “the bulldozer” due to his successful career as the chief executive officer of Hyundai Engineering and Construction and mayor of Seoul – was elected, few predicted that the two Koreas’ relationship would rupture, given his advocacy for pragmatism and his connection with Hyundai, which has pioneered the business in North Korea (Doucette 2010). Armstrong (2008, 128) explains: Though he needs to demonstrate his toughness on Pyongyang to please his conservative base, given Hyundai’s record as South Korea’s largest corporate investor in the North, Lee would seem particularly well positioned to continue and deepen South Korea’s economic penetration of the DPRK…It remains to be seen whether the ideological or economically opportunistic side of Lee’s North Korea policy will win out. Yet the relationship broke down completely. President Lee’s deep hostility towards the North manifested itself even before he officially assumed the presidency. For instance, the Presidential Transition Committee attempted to abolish the Ministry of Unification and merge it into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Snyder 2009). Though this plan was cancelled due to strong opposition from civic groups and opposition parties, this episode is regarded as an important indicator of the Lee regime’s view of inter-Korean relations not as a distinctive, intra-national problem but as a sub-set of foreign affairs (Toloraya 2008). As this episode evinces, Lee’s stance towards North Korea was obvious. Criticising liberal regimes for “coddling” North Korea with “unconditional” economic support, Lee proclaimed a new principle on North Korean policy: conditional reciprocity. 9 This idea materialised in a policy called “Vision 3000: Denuclearisation and Openness,” which was explained as “a strategic initiative that seeks to encourage North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons by clearly spelling out the benefits that would accrue from such a decision” (Office of the President 2009, 17). Specifically, this plan had the South supporting the North in achieving US$3,000 per capita GNP on the condition that it pursued denuclearisation and opening. While the conservative government declared that it would pursue mutual benefits and common prosperity in its relationship with North Korea (Office of the President 2009), it did not have any specific economic vision towards the North or for how the South could benefit from economic engagement with the North. Simply put, this policy declares: abandon your nuclear weapons and open your country, then we will modernise you.10 This patronising view, deriving from a deep mistrust and extreme animosity, has no doubt cooled inter-Korean relations, which have been further aggravated by two incidents – the sinking of the South Korean warship, the Cheonan, and North Korea’s shelling of South Korea’s Yeonpyeong Island in the Yellow Sea in 2010. Concomitantly, South Korean conservatives clamoured for the imminence of reunification. Kim Jong Il’s stroke in August 2008 and reports about a deepening economic crisis fuelled strong doubts about the sustainability of the North Korean regime (The Sunday Guardian, June 6, 2010). Though this collapse scenario had repeatedly popped up since the North’s crisis in the 1990s, it has been taken most seriously at this time by South Korean conservatives. Thus Vision 3000 is off the table, replaced by “unification by absorption.” WikiLeaks cables help us detail this position. In February 2010, South Korea’s then Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Chun Yung-woo, told the US Embassy officers that “[t]he DPRK…had already collapsed economically and would collapse politically two to three years after the death of Kim Jong-il” (emphasis added). He further assured them that China would be “comfortable with a reunified Korea controlled by Seoul and anchored to the United States in a ‘benign alliance’ – as long as Korea was not hostile towards China.” 11 In a similar vein, President Lee said twice in public that “unification is near,” blatantly indicating his wish for the implosion of the North (S. Lee 2012). Favouring economic sanctions and pressures, the Lee government’s policy involved waiting for the North “to collapse” rather than “to change” (Reuters, February 28, 2012). This waiting strategy entailed making preparations for an abrupt unification. The government reassigned the budget for inter-Korean co-operation under the item “funding research to deal with contingencies in North Korea” (Y.-C. Kim 2011). Then on August 15, 2010, the president announced his introduction of a unification tax to finance the high cost of reunification, explaining: “Reunification will happen. It is therefore our duty to start thinking about real and substantive ways to prepare for reunification such as the adoption of a unification tax” (Lee Myung-bak 2010a). The Ministry of Unification promoted a new fund-raising campaign for unification called the “unification jar” (통일항아리). This project, intended to fund the costs of unification from donations, elicited criticism from the North that this jar “actually aimed to raise [the] money needed for the ‘unification under liberal democracy’” (Korea News Service, May 22, 2012). These policies of South Korean conservatives clearly communicate their vision of North Korea as a geo-political object of territorial claims, but one that will be very costly. Such territorial representations do not take into account the geo-economic calculations of land, labour power and natural resources in the North: “Lee …views Nordpolitik mainly through prisms of politics, ideology, and security rather than geo-economics” (FosterCarter 2012). Thus, one liberal scholar makes the criticism that there is “a major contradiction in his proposal, proposing a unification tax while having burnt all the bridges with North Korea” (The Washington Post, August 16, 2010). Actually, the Lee government’s policy is more consistent than contradictory. We only need to recognise the links from the underlying vision of the North as an evil that must be conquered to the belief in its imminent collapse and a cost-oriented calculation about unification. This divergence between liberals and conservatives also emerged in President Lee’s economic project of resource diplomacy. The Lee government stressed resource diplomacy as an imperative for a resource-scarce country that needed to maintain a stable energy supply for economic growth. The government widely propagated its accomplishments in securing overseas resources (mostly in Africa), but a series of corruption scandals and exaggerated achievements were a serious blow to the regime (Chun 2010; Ilyo Shinmun, October 19, 2011; The Korea Herald, February 6, 2012). However, resource diplomacy is not only the preserve of this conservative government. The Roh government also sought various channels to secure energy and natural resources, and resource-affluent North Korea was an important target. Several joint resource development projects were implemented by combining South Korean capital with the North’s labour and resources. The South even suggested the establishment of a SEZ for interKorean joint resource development in Dancheon where magnesite abounds (K. Lee 2006). Yet, as Snyder (2008) notes, “it is not yet clear how or whether President Lee’s early emphasis on ‘resource diplomacy’ may be applied to North Korea.” Despite many excursions to Africa and Latin America for scores of hours in the name of resource diplomacy, the Lee administration paid no attention to the resources just across the DMZ. Instead, they worry that money from China’s resource development in the North is sustaining the Kim regime. This line is consistently applied to other issues. For example, the South Korean embassy sent emails to South Korean tourists in Nepal, warning: “Please refrain from visiting North Korean restaurants that are becoming sources of funds for the Kim Jong-il regime. Anyone who has visited such restaurants will be subject to investigation on charges of violating the Inter-Korean Exchange and Co-operation Law and the National Security Law upon returning home” (Chosun Ilbo, January 3, 2011). One South Korean who has done business in North Korea showed the absurdness of the Lee administration’s North Korea policy. When the South Korean government enforced the “5.24 measures” that suspended all inter-Korean economic exchange except the KIC, he asked why the government would adopt a policy that damaged the South’s numerous private firms doing business in the North. A government official answered that the goal was not to let even one dollar slip into North Korea. The businessman asked: “Then, more than 35 million dollars flow into the North every year via the KIC; are they not money but mere scraps of paper?” His question was met with silence (Kyunghyang Shinmun, November 9, 2011). Another South–South conflict arises in the conception of North Korean people. Liberals have constructed a representation that corresponds to their geo-economic calculation towards the North. Beyond the Cold War normative perspective, they view North Koreans through a neo-liberal lens as so much cheap, well-disciplined labour power, ready to benefit South Korean capital (Lim 2005; Hong 2011). Liberal intellectuals and politicians see the KIC as a training site where neo-liberal subjectivity should be engendered and moulded. They expect that North Korean labourers will learn about the market economy and this will naturally bring about economic reform and opening in the North (Yonhap News, May 24, 2004; Heo 2011). In this sense, for liberals, the KIC demonstrates that “establishing ‘market rule’ was never a matter of imposing, from above, a singular regulatory template. It has been about learning by doing (and by failing) within an evolving framework of market-oriented reform parameters and strategic objectives” (Peck et al. 2009, 107). Conservative powers reject these ideas. They see that the money from inter-Korean economic co-operation has rewarded and sustained the Kim Jong Il regime that has harshly suppressed the North Korean people. For them the KIC has little to do with the constitution of neo-liberal subjects. Rather, conservatives view the North Korean people through the prism of human rights. Hence, it was the conservative media that criticised the North Korean government for exploitation of labour power in the KIC because of lower wages and long working hours (Kang 2006; Cho 2011).12 These groups have seldom criticised the abuses of human rights during the modern history of South Korea; indeed, they have been mostly complicit in them (Jeong 2009; Ohmynews, February 9, 2011). Ironically, conservative politicians who once suppressed democracy movements under military dictatorships in their own country now support the human rights of the North Korean people and demand the democratisation of the North. For example, Hyung-Keun Chung, former assemblyman and First Deputy Director of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, was notorious for torturing anti-government activists. During the liberal regimes, he criticised the government’s North Korea policy and called for the improvement of human rights in North Korea (Ohmynews, November 19, 2005). Across the globe, the idea of human rights has provided grounds for military interventions, mostly of the West into Third World countries (Bricmont 2006). More fundamentally, the rhetoric of human rights entails the construction of a particular form of subject. Žižek (1999) offers an insightful criticism of NATO’s intervention in Yugoslavia: We have the ideological construction of the idea of subject-victim to whose aid NATO intervenes – not a political subject with a clear agenda, but a subject of helpless suffering…caught in the madness of a local clash that can only be pacified by the intervention of a benevolent foreign power…beneath this depoliticized, let’sjust-protect-human-rights rhetoric, there is an extremely violent gesture of reducing the other to the helpless victim. The South Korean conservatives’ human rights offensive is in line with these practices. For example, joint action between South Korean and US conservatives to adopt the North Korean Human Rights Act is seen as support for military sanctions on North Korea (Pressian, July 28, 2004). In particular, the Lee government proposed several laws concerning North Korean human rights (for example, laws to support civil groups in the South that engage in this issue), which are currently pending in the National Assembly (Pressian, December 8, 2008). The presentation of North Koreans as helpless subjects to be liberated from dictatorial rule serves to encourage and facilitate direct intervention by foreign powers and, in the end, leads to unification by territorial absorption (Chosun Ilbo, May 4, 2002; Chung 2008).13 Conservative groups reiterate the claim that horrible conditions exist in the camps along with massive violations of human rights in the North and that the only solution is the collapse of the regime (Hong 2009). Lastly, these political conflicts have reshaped the production of territory in North Korea. Since the return of conservative powers in 2008, the Mt Kumgang SEZ has been closed and the KIC suspended. The substantial flow of tourists and businessmen crossing the DMZ has been disrupted. The advance of de-bordering processes, which was improving the “three tong” problems – the poor conditions of passage (통행), communication (통신) and customs clearance procedures (통관), has been checked (Joongang Daily, October 4, 2007). Geo-economic de-bordering of “the most heavily armed border in the world” (Bush 2005) is again overshadowed by geo-political imperatives.14 And these South–South conflicts have undergone a complicated evolution since China’s economic move into North Korea became conspicuous in the early 2000s.

#### Their hierarchical calculation of North korean rationality is indebted to an imperialist frame of IR

Chung 15 [Postcolonial Perspectives on Nuclear Nonproliferation January 2015 Conference Paper for the ISA Global Southern Caucus Conference 2015 8-10 January 2015 Singapore Management University (SMU), Singapore ALEX H. CHUNG B.A. Hons (UNDA) M.A. (UNSW) AFAIM MPhil/PhD Candidate Government and International Relations Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) The University of Sydney, https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.1087.1769&rep=rep1&type=pdf]

The traditional neo-realist security paradigm perceives nuclear weapons as either “deterrents against overwhelming conventional military threats or as coercive tools to compel changes in the status quo,” (Sagan 1997, p. 57). Realist and neo-realist nuclear perspectives were underpinned by the MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) doctrine – wherein state actors maximise their security by behaving ‘rationally’, given the anarchic nature of the world (Seliktar 2011, p. 190). For neorealists, the end of the ‘Cold War’ marked the end of the bipolar distribution of power that was considered to be more stable than the introduction of the post-Cold War multipolar arrangement of power. This resulted in the acceleration of nuclear proliferation (Chafetz 1993, p. 127). Anxiety over proliferation persisted after the Cold War due to the fact that those considered ‘rogue states’ were among those hoping to join the ‘nuclear club’, thus igniting serious debate on ‘rationality’ (Seliktar 2011, p. 191). Promoters of ‘planned’ or ‘managed’ proliferation such as Waltz see the proliferation of nuclear weapons as both inevitable and not a cause for alarm, given the overwhelming power of nuclear deterrence; “the ability of a state, not to defend itself, but to threaten an adversary with unacceptable damage if attacked,” (Gavin 2012, p. 574). Many neorealist political scientists, including Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, William Riker, and John Mearsheimer have promoted the ‘managed’ or ‘planned’ proliferation argument, advocating for the spread of nuclear weapons into key areas, such as Ukraine and Germany, where non-nuclear states face nuclear armed enemies, based on the belief that “the chance of bilateral conflict becoming nuclear decreases to zero when all nations are nuclear armed,” (Sagan 1994, p. 66). The basis for the neorealists’ confidence in deterrence is the ‘long peace’ maintained between the United States and the Soviet Union during the ‘Cold War’ (Sagan 1994, p. 66). However, even supporters of ‘managed’ or ‘planned’ proliferation in the neorealist school do not agree with uncontrolled nuclear proliferation (Frankel 1993, p. 39). In the debate surrounding deterrence and its applicability to ‘rogue states’, Mearsheimer stated that the “logic of controlled proliferation might not extend to Third World dictatorships,” (Seliktar 2011, p. 192). For realists, IR theory is based on great power politics (Barkawi & Laffey 2006, p. 331). Neorealist and realist perspectives on nuclear proliferation are based on ‘rationality’ constructed via Western dominated narratives of World War II and the ‘Cold War’ (Biswas, forthcoming 2012; Frankel 1993, p. 40). The Eurocentric IR paradigm regards the weak and powerless as “marginal or derivative elements of world politics,” (Barkawi & Laffey 2006, p. 332). Rationality and objectivity are firmly attributed to ‘great powers’ as demonstrated by the scholarly analysis of the ‘Cuban Missile Crisis’. Cubans were depicted as politicised, whereas Americans and Soviets were characterised as apolitical (Barkawi & Laffey 2006, p. 338). Agency rests on the ‘great powers’, while the security interests and actions of ‘weak’ states in the ‘Global South’, such as Cuba, are conveniently ignored or disregarded (Barkawi & Laffey 2006, p. 329; Biswas, forthcoming 2012). The one-sided and Eurocentric logic of ‘planned’ proliferation, which promotes horizontal proliferation to those states that neorealists deem ‘rational’ and ‘objective’ is merely a reproduction of the superpower-based ‘Cold War’ era thinking. These ideologies disregarded the agency of the ‘weak’ and ‘powerless’, and the importance of the Global South or ‘Third World’ in affecting international affairs, and arbitrarily assigned rationality and objectivity to the great powers. While the end the ‘Cold War’ transformed and ameliorated much of the security concerns of Europe and the West, it did little to resolve the widespread feelings of insecurity elsewhere in the world (Biswas, forthcoming 2012; Singh 1998, p. 41). The ‘Cold War’ in many nonWestern parts of the world, including Vietnam, Korea, Afghanistan, and the many other states that served as proxies for superpower rivalry, were in fact very real and very ‘hot’ (Biswas, forthcoming 2012). The deterrence logic that serves as the fundamental basis for neorealist proliferation theory has been derived from the postwar period of bipolarity (Frankel 1993, p. 40). Through the myopic lenses of neorealist proliferation theory, no consideration is given to ‘vertical proliferation’ of the great powers, specifically in the United States and Russia. Such proliferation is not viewed as a problem, nor is the possibility of a global convention abolishing nuclear weapons, as proposed by various nonaligned nations, especially India, been discussed as a practical solution to the security dilemma that nuclear weapons pose (Gusterson 1999, p. 114). The ‘managed’ proliferation solution that many neorealists ascribe to is nonetheless racialised and Eurocentric. Waltz suggests that in a new multipolar world, Germany, Japan, and possibly Italy should be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons (Seliktar 2011, p. 192). ‘Planned’ or ‘managed’ proliferation is simply a convenient euphemism for deciding which state should receive approval to acquire nuclear weapons based on an arbitrary, Eurocentric, and subjective assessment of rationality. The neorealist perspective merely serves to perpetuate an already flawed and unequal system, continuing to put the ‘West’ or the ‘North’ on some type of intellectual pedestal that affirms its own image of rationality and objectivity, thereby denying any meaningful agency or possibility of equality for all states in the world. Liberal Exclusionism Unlike neorealists, liberals do not entirely disregard the existence of ‘weak’ states, but they are merely of interest, “primarily as bearers of rights and objects of emancipation…for their normative value in Western political theoretic terms,” (Barkawi & Laffey 2006, p. 333). Whereas “realist approaches to security studies are Eurocentric in that they locate agency and history with the great powers,” liberal approaches are equally Eurocentric, in addition to defining the West “in ethical and progressive terms,” (Barkawi & Laffey 2006, p. 340). In the Western imagination, discourse on nuclear proliferation is deeply entrenched in relation to the Third World, dividing the world into states that can be trusted with nuclear weapons and those that cannot (Gusterson 1999, p. 113). Liberals and conservatives alike hold the following orthodox belief: “the proliferation of nuclear weapons to nuclear-threshold states in the Third World, especially the Islamic world, would be enormously dangerous,” (Gusterson 1999, p. 112). Nuclear apartheid is justified in the liberal mindset, since western democracies have the moral imperative and ethical superiority to impose their will for the good of the ‘other’. Edward Said asserts that Orientalist discourse demarcates the world in a binary opposition that presents the ‘Orient’ as the mirror image of the West, “where ‘we’ are rational and disciplined; ‘they are impulsive and emotional; where ‘we’ are modern and flexible, ‘they’ are slaves to ancient passions and routines; where ‘we’ are honest and compassionate, ‘they’ are treacherous and uncultivated,” (Gusterson 1999, p. 114). This Orientalist process has an effect of creating an immense sense of ‘Otherness’ separating the Third World from liberal Western democracies, thereby rationalising and internalising a sense of liberal ‘superiority’ (Gusterson 1999, p. 114). Empirically, this construct of ethical superiority in the liberal West requires Orwellian self-delusion. As purported by Barkawi & Laffey (2006, p. 341), the Holocaust presents a challenge to the liberal faith in the “Western myths of progress and ethical superiority.” To maintain the Western belief in liberal superiority, the “sins of Western civilisation” are displaced “onto an intrusive non-European Other…Germany, that quintessentially Western society, somehow becomes not Western,” (Barkawi & Laffey 2006, p. 341). Furthermore, the brutal and barbaric slaughter and loss of life amongst ‘natives’ was a normative feature of European colonisation and expansion into the non-European world (Barkawi & Laffey 2006, p. 343). As observed by Sven Lindqvist, “the Holocaust was unique – in Europe. But the history of Western expansion in other parts of the world shows many examples of total extermination of whole peoples,” (Barkwai & Laffey 2006, p. 343). Liberal ideology legitimates domination over the Global South. This can be observed via liberal Western discourse on nuclear proliferation as it “legitimates the nuclear monopoly of the recognised nuclear powers,” (Gusterson 1999, p. 115). Much like neorealism, rationality and objectivity is arbitrarily assigned to the West, while the Global South or ‘Third World’ is considered to be subjective, irrational, or even ‘rogue’ and therefore incapable of the responsibility of a nuclear arsenal. The inherent Eurocentricism in liberal ideology directly results in a “taken-for-granted politics that sides with the rulers, with the powerful, with the imperialists, and not with the downtrodden, the weak, the colonised, or the post-colonised,” (Barkawi & Laffey 2006, p. 344) For example, Iran has been demonised by the United States since the Iranian Revolution in 1979, when citizens of the Islamic Republic laid siege to the US embassy compound in Tehran, and took fifty-two American hostages for 444 days (Zenko 2012). Their suspected nuclear weapons program and alleged sponsorship of terrorism have deemed them a ‘rogue state’ (BBC 2001; Munoz 2012). US President Obama issued a warning to Iran in a September 2012 speech to the UN General Assembly, stating unequivocally, “The United States will do what we must to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon…It would threaten the elimination of Israel, the security of Gulf nations and the stability of the global economy,” (ABC News 2012). North Korea, an NPT non-signatory and nuclear state is perceived to pursue “alien objectives which are normative anathema to the rest of the ‘civilised’ international system,” leading to the assumption that the North Korean state is acting fundamentally outside the norms of the global community, and is therefore clearly a “rogue state” (Smith 2000, p. 115). Nicholas Eberstadt wrote that, “the North Korean regime is the North Korean nuclear problem,” (Smith 2000, p. 118). These Eurocentric and racist assumptions in liberal IR theory have led to obvious and problematic ‘double standards’ and inequities in the treatment of non-Western states, exacerbated by the existing Northern dominated nuclear non-proliferation regime. While Iran has suffered debilitating economic sanctions over suspicions of an unconfirmed clandestine nuclear weapons program, Israel, one of only four NPT non-signatories, and the sole state in the Middle East that actually possesses nuclear weapons, has remained free from any meaningful, significant, or even symbolic international oversight (Steinbach 2011, p. 34). Warren Kozak (2012) epitomises the unashamed and blatant Eurocentricism of the liberal Western perspective on the issue of nuclear proliferation: “Few people lost a wink of sleep over the American nuclear monopoly in the 1940sand when the Saudis or Syrians or Egyptians have turned off their lights over the past half-century, the last worry on their minds has been being blown to bits by an Israeli nuclear bomb…the sound mind understands that [Israel], the only stable democracy in the Middle East, is also one of its few rational actors.” Conclusion As remarked by E. H. Carr in 1977, “[t]he study of international relations in English speaking countries is simply a study of the best way to run the world from positions of strength,” (Barkawi & Laffey 2006, p. 349). I find the Eurocentric nature of international relations, institutions, treaties, and the elitism of the nuclear non-proliferation regime to be an unjustifiable concentration of power in the hands of a very few at the expense of the vast majority of the world. The current nuclear non-proliferation regime merely serves to reinforce and perpetuate logics of colonial violence and inequality. In my opinion, as per the India’s nuclear policy, the only fair and just security solution is the following: “in a world of nuclear proliferation lies either in global disarmament or in the exercise of the principle of equal and legitimate security for all,” (Singh 1998, p. 41).

### L – Oil

#### Energy security is imperial capitalism – conversion of GHGs into molecules of freedom makes war inevitable – extinction

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Given the reality of imperialism, the main response by the economic and military power structures in the North to this climate rift, pointing to more serious vulnerabilities to climate change in the global South than in the global North, has been mainly twofold: (1) to explore how these vulnerabilities in the South create new global security issues, and (2) how they might be exploited so as to increase imperial dominance. This is most obvious in the case of the United States, where the new grand strategy of the Donald Trump administration is one of global “energy dominance” through the expansion of fossil fuel production and the use of this to leverage greater geopolitical and geoeconomic power.31 The U.S. military, meanwhile, is preparing for a host of new vulnerabilities, related in particular to oil and water, and for interventions to secure U.S. global hegemony in these changing circumstances. Economic and military interests are working together to strategize means for securing global value and resource chains, so as both to strengthen Fortress America and secure its supply lines—working as well with its junior partners in the triad, Europe and Japan. This strategic repositioning of imperialism in the Anthropocene can best be seen by examining the race for control of natural resources in two areas: fossil fuels and water. Energy Imperialism In 2018, John Lehman, secretary of the navy in the Ronald Reagan administration, reflecting on the two major wars fought by the United States in the Middle East at the close of the twentieth and the opening of the twenty-first century, declared: “You don’t want to fall into the trap of the left and say that we only went into Iraq for their oil but depending [on] how you phrase it, the costs [of these wars] can be attributed to the strategic dependence we have on Gulf oil.”32 In other words, the issue, according to Lehman, was not just the immediate rewards from additional oil production—a naive view he attributed to the left—but the defense of an entire imperial economic system based on fossil fuels. Today, following the fracking revolution, the United States is officially pursuing a strategy of total energy dominance in what is seen as a global competition for fossil fuels, against a backdrop of planetary ecological disruption.33 The role of climate change in altering the conditions of U.S. imperial dominance permeate U.S. military and security discussions. And while global warming itself is not mentioned in the official 2017 National Security Strategy document of the United States, its very absence, coupled with the insistence on defending U.S. “sovereignty” with respect to fossil fuels and the criticism of “antigrowth” approaches to fossil fuel energy, point to its overriding significance in the Anthropocene crisis even there.34 The general approach in the U.S. military and strategic community is to see climate change as a “threat multiplier,” associated with such facts as: political instability, negative effects on food availability and prices, water and energy shortages, spread of disease, extreme weather emergencies, mass migration, disruption of maritime transport, economic collapse in vulnerable nations, and increased threats to economic global supply chains—particularly in strategic materials.35 The prevailing viewpoint is one of looking outward from Fortress America and its various global bastions, encompassing the United States (and Canada); its military bases overseas of which there are more than six hundred; its dependencies; its European and Japanese so-called allies; the Greater Middle East, where it has been in perpetual war for almost three decades; and its various critical supply lines.36 As early as 2003, a report commissioned by the Pentagon on abrupt climate change declared that it was necessary to “create vulnerability metrics” as to which countries would be hit hardest by climate change in order to make it possible for the United States to act effectively in safeguarding its own geostrategic interests. It was suggested that, under these circumstances, relatively well-off populations with ample natural resources and food producing capabilities, such as the United States and Australia, would be likely driven to build walls and “defensive fortresses” around themselves to keep massive waves of would-be immigrants out, no doubt in the name of defending their national sovereignty.37 As the report explained, violence and disruption stemming from the stresses created by abrupt changes in the climate pose a different type of threat to national security than we are accustomed to today. Military confrontation may be triggered by a desperate need for natural resources such as energy, food, and water rather than conflicts over ideology, religion, or national honor. The shifting motivation for confrontation would alter which countries are most vulnerable and the existing warning signs for security threats.38 As the world’s carrying capacity declines under harsh climatic conditions, the authors of the report indicated that warfare would become more widespread, producing increased dangers of thermonuclear conflagration. The military and security literature in the United States has continued to promote this general strategic outlook, affirming the reality of climate change while focusing on the means of advancing U.S. global hegemony in the context of the current planetary emergency. Implicit in this is the recognition that the United States will be less directly hit initially than most of the rest of the world by the effects of global warming. Washington can then concentrate on using its global economic, political, and military power in these circumstances of growing worldwide chaos and catastrophe to advance its own agenda of full-spectrum dominance. In this respect, the U.S. military, imperial state, and economy remain tightly linked to the major U.S. fossil fuel corporations. This has led to the development of a new strategy of energy imperialism, in which U.S. preeminence in the control of world energy and a commitment to maximal fossil fuel extraction have been placed at the center of today’s national security objectives. With the fracking revolution, U.S. production of oil and gas rose massively, causing the Barack Obama administration to remove regulations limiting the export of U.S. crude oil. Between 2015 and 2018, U.S. crude oil exports increased fourfold and its liquid natural gas exports increased by thirty-five-fold. The United States in 2018 exported two million barrels of crude oil a day, making it one of the world’s leading oil exporters. At the same time, decreased dependence on oil imports has allowed it to impose stringent economic sanctions on major oil powers to which it is opposed, such as Venezuela, Iran, and Russia.39 The Trump administration has sought to remove all regulatory restrictions that would limit the expansion of the fossil fuel industry. This has resulted in a vast expansion in fossil fuel production and infrastructure, with the United States emerging as the leading fossil fuel producer of both oil and natural gas in the world. Even as debates are taking place on a Green New Deal in the United States and in the world as a whole, oil- and gas-pipeline expansion globally has tripled since 1996, with over half of the ongoing pipeline expansion projects (and over a third if measured by pipeline length) located in North America, connecting points of extraction with refineries and export terminals. Oil- and gas-pipeline expansion plans (preconstruction and construction) in North America currently amount to $232 billion (over $600 billion globally), with total oil and gas infrastructure expansion in excess of $1 trillion for North America and $2.9 trillion globally.40 The U.S. pipeline boom is directed at exports since the expansion of oil and gas extraction is far more than can be absorbed by domestic consumption. Under a Current Policies Scenario (or business as usual), by 2040 world demand for natural gas relative to 2017 prices is projected to rise by 55 percent, while oil demand is expected to increase by 26 percent. Globally, “banks, equity investors, and bondholders are in the process of placing over $600 billion in bets on an expanded pipeline system [which includes over 300 pipelines in development globally] with an expected lifespan of 40 years or more.”41 According to Ted Nace, lead author of a Global Energy Monitor report on the Pipeline Bubble, “these pipelines are locking in huge emissions for 40 to 50 years at a time, with the scientists saying we have to move in 10 years. These pipelines are a bet that the world won’t get serious about climate change, allowing the incumbency of oil and gas to strengthen.”42 The pipeline infrastructure creates a path dependency, ensuring investment and support for burning fossil fuels, dramatically shortening the climate horizon associated with the trillionth metric ton of carbon. In the United States alone, the natural-gas output made possible by these pipelines, either under construction or in the preconstruction stage, would add over half a billion metric tons of carbon dioxide each year by 2040, above 2017 levels.43 ExxonMobil, the leading U.S. oil multinational, has declared that it plans on pumping 25 percent more oil and gas in 2025 in its world operations than it did in 2017.44 It is on the back of this expansion of oil and natural gas production and pipelines that the Trump administration has erected its new imperialist strategy of global energy dominance in defiance of all concerns over climate change. As Trump declared in June 2017: “We will be dominant. We will export American energy all over the world, all around the globe,” especially Asia. The fossil fuel industry had saved U.S. “sovereignty.” U.S. energy policy is to expand not only oil and gas production but coal production worldwide. The United States, he declared, was working on financing overseas coal plants in Ukraine and elsewhere.45 The U.S. National Security Strategy document released in December 2017 insisted that “energy dominance”—giving the United States the central position in all aspects of global energy production and consumption, based on “unleashing” its abundant fossil fuel resources—was the key to economic growth and to “countering an anti-growth energy agenda that is detrimental to U.S. economic and energy security interests.”46 Michael Klare notes: “From the White House perspective, the U.S. is engaged in a momentous struggle for global power with rival nations and, it is claimed, the country’s abundance of fossil fuels affords it a vital edge. The more of those fuels America produces and exports, the greater its stature in a competitive world system, which is precisely why maximizing such output has already become a major pillar of President Trump’s national security policy.” This “militarization of energy policy” is not occurring so much in ignorance of climate change or of the advent of the Anthropocene, as based on a bet that fossil fuels are the means to increased imperial power, overriding all other considerations, and need to be locked in so that no alternative-energy revolution is possible.47 Humanity be damned. On May 28, 2019, the U.S. Department of Energy issued a press release rebranding natural gas as freedom gas and referring to its carbon dioxide molecules as “molecules of U.S. freedom.”4

#### The assumption of “oil volatility” obfuscates blame of oil CEO’s unending greed and puts it onto the larger economic public – it’s fake securitizing hype that justifies minority scapegoating and turns their other advatange

Buell 2016. John – columnist for The Progressive Populist and a faculty adjunct at Cochise College, environmental activist and prolific author, “Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire: Exxon, Neoliberalism, and the Climate Crisis,” the Contemporary Condition, August 24, 2016, <http://contemporarycondition.blogspot.com/2016/08/liar-liar-pants-on-fire-exxon.html>

That markets can serve as information processors in certain domains and time frames does not establish their universal validity. Markets are not the only self-organizing systems in our universe, and, as Connolly puts it, economic markets are “more fragile, interdependent, and volatile than their most fervent supporters imagine.” Their evolution can just as easily lead to system threatening crashes as to a higher rationality. Models based on this ideal failed to anticipate even the possibility of a market crash, let alone its timing. Exxon’s Lies and a Word from the Pope Viewers of the recent Olympic games were treated to another deceptive effort by Exxon to rebrand itself as a responsible corporate citizen. The neoliberal worldview—often called the Washington consensus-- has done far more to damage the environment than Exxon’s lies about climate change. Consider the infamous cap and trade. As Mirowski, points out, most neoliberals never believed in their own denialism. It was a strategy to fight off regulation and to find a market-oriented approach to the problem. A market in transferable permits for allowable levels of carbon emission seemed the ideal neoliberal solution. From the start the market has been dogged by the failure of enforcement mechanisms. More fundamentally markets for carbon permits interact in destructive ways with security and consumer markets. When the world financial market collapsed, coal prices and the price of carbon permits declined, thus removing any incentive to move out of this noxious fuel. Finally, when such dangerous and uncertain programs as cap and trade, financial deregulation, or off shore oil production blow up, as they inevitably will, clean up costs are largely dumped on the public. Then when government debt grows, this phenomenon is taken as proof of government’s overreach. Shareholder value and the deification of the market thus are only one of neoliberalism’s inegalitarian thrusts. These would include a commitment to fiscal austerity, and privatization of key state resources. Implicit in these concepts of market fundamentalism, austerity, and privatization is a dangerous contempt for democracy and the role of the state in markets. In the marketplace of ideas, dollars vote. Some ideas are therefore more equal than others. In this regard Mirowski cites one of the central esoteric tenets of the neoliberals: This is Friedrich Hayek on the popular will: “if we proceed on the assumption that only the exercises of freedom that the majority will practice are important, we would be certain to create a stagnant society with all the characteristics of unfreedom.” Taken together, austerity, privatization, and periodic financial bubbles and crises and the hollowing out of democracy have driven a fierce turn toward socioeconomic inequality. Inequality in turn places pressure on the environment along several pathways. Inequality isolates the rich. The poorest—and especially minority groups--are virtually disenfranchised and left vulnerable to accepting the blandishments of the oil giants. To paraphrase Rousseau, inequality has reached the point where a substantial part of the population no longer has the resources to participate effectively whereas a tiny minority thinks it has the affluence and power to escape social problems. What about those in the shrinking middle? Workers face longer hours in highly inegalitarian work places, exacerbating pressures to keep up with the higher ups Here is Connolly from a prescient passage in a 1995 book, The Ethos of Pluralization: “The American Political Economy is built around the illusory promise of universalizing exclusionary goods. As it becomes increasingly clear to a variety of constituencies that they are losing ground in this elusive quest, they either drop out of institutional politics or vent their anger on the most vulnerable scapegoats available.” Despite these chronic problems, shareholder value, austerity, and the magic of the market are so common today that they are taken as axioms of modern societies. Mirowski calls this phenomenon everyday neoliberalism. Yet neither law nor economic history affirms the validity of the neoliberal creed.  A corporation’s obligations are to its consumers, workers, and the larger community. Corporations are granted special privileges—by governments-- but accompanying these privileges are obligations. The shareholder is owed corporate honesty but only residual earnings after responsibility to workers. Consumers, and the community are met.

### L – Russia-China Axis

#### **The aff creates a false choice between the US led international order and a Chinese-Russia led order this prevents** revolution is self-serving and self-defeating readings of history designed to serve the imperial narrative

Kohli, A. (2020). Imperialism and the developing world: How Britain and the United States shaped the global periphery. Oxford University Press. Accessed 7/2/24 CSUF JmB TDI

Imperialism is an age-old phenomenon. In one form or another, it is likely to continue. There is insight in Thucydides’s suggestion that the “weak” will always be “subject to the strong,” and that the powerful seldom turn down “the opportunities of aggrandizement offered by superior strength.”20 But one problem with such venerable claims is that they tend to absolve the strong for exploiting the weak. Another problem is the danger of near banality passing for ancient wisdom: if there will always be rich and poor, then should we not worry about inequality? If some citizens will always commit crimes, then should we not try to find ways to mitigate the harm of such behavior? A commitment to a better world suggests that we seek to right the wrongs of the past. In a world of states, then, it is important to strengthen arrangements that discourage powerful states from imposing their will on weaker ones. It may well be the case that institutions cannot readily restrain the powerful in an “anarchic world.”21 If so, it is at least important to dissect the self-serving claims of the powerful; at minimum, the mighty should not to be allowed to define what is right. Throughout this volume I have interrogated several interrelated claims made by hegemonic states of the modern era: we really do not run an empire; if we do, it is only because it was offered to us; even when it was not offered to us, we had to take it, not for greed, but for the sake of our own security; and, in any case, the impact of our empire was, on balance, benign. My analysis has underscored the ways in which each of these claims is deeply misleading. With this core analysis in mind, I have a few final, speculative thoughts on the future of imperialism. Extrapolating from the recent past, two sets of comments are especially pertinent. First, what is the likely trajectory of American interventions in the developing world in the near future? Second, will emerging powers like China follow the expansionist patterns analyzed in this book? Is China also moving toward building an informal empire? As I turn to discuss these questions, an obvious but important caveat ought to be borne in mind: peering into the future is hazardous. Nevertheless, if the analysis of the past is correct, it ought to have some bearing on future projections. The United States has never really needed an empire. The analysis in this volume has suggested instead that unlike Britain, which really needed an empire to sustain prosperity in the nineteenth century, the United States in the twentieth century had merely wanted one. The tentativeness in the American imperial project is a function of this difference between need and want. American gains from imperial interventions in the global periphery have also been uneven. A case can be made that during the post–World War II period, the United States has been more successful in achieving its goals—at least short- to medium-term goals—via covert (or indirect) rather than overt, military interventions. For example, the former suggestion is supported by American interventions in Iran and Chile and by the most recent imposition of the Washington Consensus on Latin American countries. By contrast, US intervention in Vietnam was a heroic failure. The most recent military intervention in Iraq is still unfolding. But it is unlikely that the partial success in Iraq in deposing a despot and opening the oil wells of that country to foreign capital will ever be judged worth the cost in treasure, loss of life, and the unstable polity that the United States has left behind. The relative failures of US military interventions in the developing world are also comprehensible. Of course, the United States is a military giant and, if it so chose, it could readily defeat and occupy any (or most) developing countries. But that is not the American goal. The United States does not want colonies. What it wants instead are stable-but-subservient regimes in the global periphery. And these are increasingly hard to construct via military interventions. As I argue throughout this book, the building blocks of old-fashioned nineteenth century imperialism—ready collaborators in the periphery who benefited from maintaining commodity-exporting economies and clientelistic polities—have dissolved in the global periphery. Mass politics has replaced clientelism nearly everywhere. Plebiscitarian politics, in turn, encourages a variety of nationalists to the fore. Imperial efforts to overtly shape and control the politics of a developing country then readily run up against developing-country nationalism. Diem and others in South Vietnam, for example, could thus never be considered legitimate rulers of a sovereign South Vietnam; they were in fact puppets and were seen as such by the Vietnamese, no match for a Ho Chi Minh. The same is true elsewhere, such as in contemporary Iraq. This does not mean that modern-day imperialists cannot find ready collaborators in the developing world, or that commodity-producing elites and their political representatives do not have much to gain from quiet collaboration with industrialized countries, especially the United States. But as democracy spreads in peripheral countries, subservient rulers face power challenges from a variety of nationalists. The American preference for democracy, on the one hand, but for promotion of stable-but-subservient regimes in the developing world, on the other, are thus inherently in tension. When economic stakes are high, as in the case of oil-rich Saudi Arabia, the United States quietly sets aside the goal of democracy in favor of supporting the power of a stable-but-subservient regime. What is the likely shape of US interventions in the developing world in the near future? Enormous power disparities and the prospect of economic gain will tempt the United States to intervene in one developing country or another. Global norms of noninterference in the affairs of sovereign nations may put some brakes on imperial ambitions. American citizens’ awareness that US interventions in the developing world often bring misery to the lives of those who are already destitute may also retard the imperial urge. However, neither global norms nor public opinion is likely to make imperialism a relic of the past. The post–World War II record examined here sharply supports this projection. The more pertinent issue is what form American imperialism will take in the near future. Again, the record examined here suggests that the United States does economic imperialism better than military imperialism. To the extent that imperialism is rational, one should expect the United States to eschew military interventions but continue to seek economic advantage in the global periphery via the use of covert and indirect interventions. As this book goes to press, Iran and Venezuela, which both possess enormous oil resources, are the focus of American angst. Will the United States intervene militarily in these countries? A cost-benefit analysis of the past suggests that the United States ought not to pursue a military option in these countries. But what complicates this rational suggestion is the enormous power surplus that the United States enjoys in the world. This power surplus, in turn, enables American leaders to periodically ignore the costs of interventions, which, in any case, are borne largely by American taxpayers and soldiers, and to indulge their whims and hubris.

#### The American unipolar moment has failed to halt the rise of Russia-China axis of power, a natural result of the failures of US hegemony --- in response the aff recreates the same security dilemmas which spiral into conflict

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This article used a consistent set of primary sources, an explicit methodology, and both qualitative and quantitative data to account for the evolution of the current securitization process which portrays great power competition, in the form of Russia’s and China’s open challenge to America’s position in the international system, as an existential threat to America’s place in the international system. While at some level the specific elements of this new narrative – revisionism, the democracy-autocracy binary, and spheres of influence – are revivals of Cold War tropes, this analysis allowed for a better understanding of the broader issues involved in how this narrative shift reflects U.S. geopolitical culture, how it believes this challenge has occurred, and how it perceives America’s role in the changing international system. From these, the likely future of American grand strategy and geopolitical culture is coming into clearer focus. It is the open recognition that the geopolitical status quo is actually slipping, a situation which some IRT scholars have been saying for some time (Schweller and Pu 2011; Layne 2012; Mearsheimer 2019), which has precipitated this narrative shift. **This demonstrates exactly how closely tied U.S. self-identity and geopolitical culture are to the preservation of primacy, unipolarity, and the liberal-democratic world order. Should one or more of these conditions fully collapse, then we are likely to see a dramatic rupture in American geopolitical culture – with a difficult redefinition of its place in the world, a popular backlash, and unpredictable results**. Moreover, the quantitative data reveal that this narrative shift has had less to do with the growing capabilities of Russia/China than their ultimate goal to promote a new global architecture based upon multipolarity. The ability of Russia’s and China’s nuclear programs to end the physical existence of the U.S. has remained virtually the same since the end of the Cold War, and while these states have begun closing the military and technical gap between themselves and the U.S., this new geopolitical narrative more closely corresponds to a notable rise in references to their intentions, rather than capabilities. This is seen most clearly by the fact that Russia’s more overt challenge has resulted in it being singled out as the more significant threat over China, which, based upon raw current and future capabilities, is objectively a far larger danger. This raises important theoretical questions about threat perceptions and securitization processes which seemingly have more to do with perceptions about current and future aggressiveness than capabilities. This invites further study. Finally, LeGreco and Tracy (2009) noted that an equally important aspect of discourse/narrative tracing is to track what is not said. There was little acknowledgment from the American side that it had a substantive hand in precipitating these changes by either promoting a security dilemma between itself, on the one hand, and China/Russia, on the other, or that it has engaged in a grand strategy which has led to overextension and imperial decline. Therefore, according to this (self-)limited understanding on Washington’s part, there appears little that it can do to ameliorate the situation, and no course correction is seen as necessary except for confronting these states when their actions run contrary to U.S. interests. If the pattern leading up to the 2019 threat assessment is any indication, we are likely to see a closer alignment between this intensified threat narrative and a reinvigorated mission to preserve the status quo, without any self-awareness that this policy may be self-defeating. America appears to be firmly in the “’Try Harder!’” phase of strategic thinking, to use Legro’s (2005, 37) formulation. This is reflected in the Trump administration’s National Security Strategy (NSS), which appears to double down on the strategy of pursuing American primacy, even to the point of direct confrontation (Clarke and Ricketts 2017). By doing so, these officials are neither preparing American foreign policy nor its citizens for a revised geopolitical culture better suited to ensure a soft-landing of unipolarity. Consequently, it is likely that the United States “won’t see [the end] coming until it’s too late,” as Schweller (2011) speculated. Thus, a full accounting of why this broader structural change is occurring will likely elude American policymakers for the foreseeable future, leading to an even weaker United States and more fraught great power relations as the defining features of the international system and America’s place within it.

### L – Structural Adjustment

#### The 1AC is another instance of neoliberal globalization – a new project of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) – a process of opening up sanctioned countries for trade all in the name of the expansion of global capitalism – this project of neoliberalism must be spearheaded by a “benign” hegemon of the United States, but this façade is used for the enhancement of neocolonialism

Anderson, T. (2019). Iran’s Resistance Economy and Regional Integration. Journal of World Sociopolitical Studies, 3(4), 649-685. Accessed 6/30/24 CSUF JmB TDI

Neoliberal globalism, as an ideology of compulsory corporate globalisation (Hoogvelt, 1997), suggests that complete openness to foreign capital would bring benefits similar to those theorised for the so-called ‘free trade’. Yet, the systems to deliver this openness embodied ‘rigged rules’ and delivered asymmetric benefits. This Anglo-American neoliberal project drew selectively on the economic liberal principles of ‘comparative advantage’ (Ricardo, 1817), which encourage specialization and trade, and the ‘open market’ ideologies of the European neoclassical economists of the 1870s, supplemented by mid-twentieth-century standards of macroeconomic management (Keynes, 1936). The principles of universal liberalisation, aimed at generalised economic growth, have been promoted by international financial institutions, such as the World Bank (2009). The need for diversification (and as a result ‘broad based growth’) was accepted, whereas planned industrial upgrades were not. The developmental prospects of ‘comparative advantage’ were always limited, as the idea was based on comparative statics and only addressed short-term opportunities. Economic liberals spoke of a minimal economic role for the state, opposing public investment that might crowd out (or compete with) private investment (Spencer & Yohe, 1970). In this view of the world, the state should minimize its commitments and introduce ‘user pays’ and privatized services to encourage consumer participation and market formation. The liberal idea of a minimalist state always faced a double standards contradiction: highlighted by what was believed to be (in the North American ‘exceptionalist’ tradition) the need for a powerful ‘benevolent hegemon’ to stabilise the world system. There have been extensive criticism of open market principles, in particular because market theories do not correspond to the reality of industrial production dominated by giant corporations, including monopolistic finance corporations. However, the most important criticism is that liberal models do not describe the historical development path of the wealthy countries. Open market strategies were not used in the industrialisation of Europe, North America, or Japan. Liberal attempts to suggest the contrary (e.g. Rostow, 1960) have little historical substance. Development in much of Europe was backed by a substantial economic surplus from the colonies and slave-based economies (e.g. Williams, 1944) absorbed into commerce and industry. European, North American, and Japanese capitalist development grew both their human resources and technologies with state sponsorship, financial assistance and public-private monopolies (Ettlinger, 1991). After the World War II, the USA suggested that Japan should pursue its ‘comparative advantage’ as a provider of cheap labour in basic industry. The Japanese, on the contrary, in a war-devastated, resource-poor country, decided instead to invest in human resources and upgrade their productive capacities (Johnson, 1982). Nevertheless, the USA and the Europeans were keen to open export markets for their industrial products, in the post-World War II period. That was the chief motive behind the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade from 1947 onwards, and for its successor, the World Trade Organization (WTO), which was established in 1995. However, the fine sounding principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination in trade did not match the practice. The detail of agreements and a manipulated ‘consensus’ decision-making processes, dominated by the large powers, saw to that. Agriculture was included for the first time in the final Uruguay Round of GATT (1986-1994) to draw in a group of agricultural exporters, looking for new trade opportunities. Yet, when the WTO talks grounded to a halt in the early 21st century, the failure of promises over agriculture exports was determined to be a leading reason. The agricultural subsidy rules were declared to have been ‘rigged’ in favour of Europe and the USA, who “weren’t willing to give up their agricultural subsidies” (Amadeo, 2019). Jawara and Kwa (2003) studied the process and found a toxic negotiating environment, which was “entirely at odds with the official picture of a rules based consensus”. They found “closed doors rather than open access”, decisions made without full approval of the developing countries and, “illegitimate pressures and inducements … including threats ... and hints that aid to countries refusing to kow-tow may be withheld”. The failure of the WTO process, and the subsequent boom in regional agreements, has been widely discussed. Hussain (2004) puts the failure down to the “uneven playing field” facing developing countries, increased unilateralism and farm protection in the wealthy countries. In parallel, there had been a significant reaction amongst developing countries to ‘structural adjustment programs’ (SAPs) created by the World Bank and the IMF in the early 1980s. These policy prescriptions (balanced budgets, openings to foreign capital, privatizations, removal of tariffs and reduction in social controls on investors) were attached to debt relief packages for a public debt crisis, which followed the lifting of controls on bank interest rates. The SAPs were widely associated with austerity budgets and the sale of public assets to foreign companies. In 1999, SAPs were renamed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and the world ‘privatization’ disappeared from the World Bank-IMF lexicon, to be replaced by a variety of ‘partnerships’. Analysts pointed to serious compromises made in those countries under structural adjustment’, in particular political repression and a weakening of the ‘buffer’ role of the state, to protect populations from external shocks (Cheru, 1999). Others found that the SAPs acted to “worsen government respect for physical integrity rights’, such as torture, political imprisonment and extra-judicial killings (Abouharb & Cingranelli, 2006). By the late 20th century, there was internal revolt against the neoliberal program. Former World Bank chief economist and later Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz (2002) decried the IMF-World Bank liberalisation program as dysfunctional because, in the absence of a proper institutional framework, hasty capital ‘liberalization’ (as in Russia and certain eastern European countries) could simply aggravate a country’s economic problems. Several years later, Stiglitz pronounced the neoliberal project “dead in both developing and developed countries” (Martin, 2016). Iran lost the opportunity to benefit from the above-mentioned experiences, as it was never a member of the GATT or the WTO. The Islamic Republic did apply to join the WTO in 1996 (Yousefvand, 2016), but was blocked by the USA. Tehran was later reported saying that accession was no longer a priority (Jalili, 2017). Nor are Iraq, Syria, Lebanon or Palestine members of the WTO. Amongst the independent West Asian countries, only Yemen was admitted (in 2014) to enjoy the dubious benefits of WTO ‘most favoured nation’ status (WTO 2019b), just before it was smothered in a US-Saudi led war. It is hardly a coincidence that today, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen are all subject to siege or sanction by the USA and its allies, on various pretexts; same is applied to practically all the Palestinian Resistance groups (US Dept. of Treasury 2019). Would WTO membership prevent discrimination in trade? No, as the case of besieged Yemen illustrates. Such is also the case with Cuba, a WTO member, who is subject to US economic ‘sanctions’ (which the Cubans call a ‘blockade’) since 1962. There is little doubt that most of Washington’s unilateral sanctions go against international law, which prohibits economic coercion, drawing on the principle of non-intervention in the UN Charter. That Charter law is supplemented by customary and treaty law in trade, shipping and telecommunications. The illegality is made more obvious by the ‘unlawful intent’ involved in political coercion and the stated intention to inflict damage on entire populations (Shneyer & Barta 1981: 468, 471-475). In addition, the assaults on the rights of third parties are illegal. Unlawful aims, aggressive intent and damage to third parties permeate most of Washington’s sanctions regimes (Anderson 2019: 36), including those against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The false promises of neoliberal regimes have paralleled consistent economic and physical aggression against Iran and most of the independent countries of the region. This claim is outlined in Table 1 below. In a parallel process, the US government has tried to pressure the Cuban people and “to control actions of third party states,” as regards Cuba (Shneyer & Barta 1981: 452). The tightening of the blockade on Cuba in the 1990s has been described as a policy of imposing ‘deliberate harm’ (White, 2018: 14). In the early 1960s, a senior US official, Lester Mallory, put the case for economic attacks on the entire population, to undermine the popular Cuban government: “every possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life of Cuba …to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government” (Mallory, 1960). Similarly, in the early 1970s, US President Nixon expressed the hope of forcing political upheaval and change in Chile by measures “to make the economy scream” (Kornbluh, 2017). Nixon intended direct damage to public health, food security, well-being and safety. These actions against Cuba and Chile – as also today against Iran, Venezuela and Syria – are economic warfare and arguably crimes against humanity (Selby-Green, 2019). Before coming to the direct aggression against the independent countries of West Asia (the ethnic cleansing in Palestine, the destruction of states in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, the invasions and occupation of Syria, the aggression against Yemen and the terrorist proxy wars conducted against much of the region), we can identify a systematic economic exclusion and aggression against those same nations, going back several decades. All this forms a critical background, essential for considerations of economic strategy.

### L – Trade

#### Attempts of sanction relief are neoliberal colonization that reopen the sanctioned country for trade which kills any resistance their economy has built to the US

Anderson, T. (2019). Iran’s Resistance Economy and Regional Integration. Journal of World Sociopolitical Studies, 3(4), 649-685. Accessed 6/30/24 CSUF JmB TDI

‘New regionalism’ is a new type of discourse that discusses different approaches taken after the failure of the Doha Round of the WTO, and in the wake of the failure of US-led globalism. In certain discussions, it refers simply to the search for new trade opportunities, and it often implies the development of competitive blocs (e.g. NAFTA following the EU); it sometimes involves new hegemonic strategies, while at other times, there is a developmental or counter-hegemonic impetus. It has been argued that new regionalism was a means of the newly decolonised states, escaping from a dependence imposed by imperial dictates, whether in Asia (Saravanamuttu 1986: 204-222) or in Africa (Omotola 2010: 103-131). This regional focus was in part a reaction to the challenges of globalisation posed to new states, and their need to coordinate macroeconomic policy while building local autonomy (Omotola 2010: 117). This has been referred to as “moments of re‐scaled regionalized state power that now enframe the process of economic governance” (Macleod 2001: 804-829), alongside strategies of broader social and economic development. For example, Giovanni Andrea Cornia, Director of the United Nations University/ World Institute for Development Economics Research, wrote that new regionalism was not simply an economic issue, but rather “a comprehensive, multidimensional, political phenomenon including economics, security, environment and other issues”, and in particular secure development (Cornia in Hettne et al., 2016, pp. xvii). In a similar way, Linares (2011) speaks of the ‘new socio-cultural strategy’ of the Latin American ALBA group, founded by Cuba and Venezuela. Porter et al. (2015) speak of new regionalism as a way of promoting regional development, and Grugel (2004) stresses on the differences in the ‘new regionalism’ of the EU and the USA towards Latin America. The term is quite flexible (see Table 3a below). Regional agreements are certainly a new game. According to the WTO, in June of 2019, there were at least 294 RTAs in power, and another 170 notified, compared to less than 30 in 1992 (WTO 2019a). Most of these agreements were registered after the multilateral talks began to collapse from 2003 onwards. This means that most new trade opportunities in the last two decades have come through regional and bilateral ‘preferential’ trade agreements. There have been several failed attempts by the USA to create ‘mega-regional trade agreements’ (MRTAs), such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the TransPacific Partnership (TPP) (Mevel, 2016) and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), the latter scuttled by a coalition of independent Latin American states in 2005 (Amadeo, 2018). Those proposals carried elements rejected in the WTO Doha round, such as stronger intellectual property rights and investor access claims. These may be viewed as new attempts to drive European and North American corporate privilege by securing monopoly rents. Earlier in the 50s and 60s, plans for regional integration amongst developing countries stressed (like Iran’s resistance economy) making use of “import substitution on a regional scale”, while facing problems of inefficiencies in production, especially if not confronted with competition (Balassa & Stoutjesdijk, 1975). Iran today does not face the same developmental challenges, as do many developing countries, which have far less development in human capital, technology and industrialisation. Yet, it is worth briefly reviewing the developmental arguments by way of addressing the liberal arguments against regionalism, and in the context of economic aggression. Table 3b below illustrates key points and suggested aims outlined by Langhammer and Hiemenz (1990). These aims closely parallel those determined for the resistance economy, albeit with a regional focus: expanding the domestic market, improving resource allocation, enhancing industrialisation, protection against outside shocks, and building a security consensus. Latin America’s counter-hegemonic regional bloc, the Bolivarian Alliance for our America (ALBA) – founded by Venezuela and Cuba – offers additional lessons, from a parallel experience. This progressive bloc grew in direct reaction to Washington’s hegemonic plan for the Americas, the failed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). That project was seen as an extension of an annexationist, exclusionary and subjugating practice, which dated back to the 19th century. The late Hugo Chavez stressed the need for integration to be a participatory process: “necessary integration, liberating integration, not neocolonial integration … the social movements of Latin America, the workers, the students, the small farmers, the organised women have a key role”, in a struggle against neoliberalism and imperialism (Chavez, 2004). This group would integrate, while excluding the imperial power, the United States of America. According to the ALBA, the integration would also exclude the oligarchs of the region. Integration would go beyond trade and economic matters, into a deep, inclusive socio-political integration based on solidarity, complementarity and cooperation (Martinez, 2005; Anderson 2014: 26-31). Chavez spoke of “constructing a Great Country (Patria Grande) in Latin America” (Lopez Blanch 2009: 2). Venezuela and Cuba enunciated several founding principles: “just and sustainable development”; “special and differential treatment” for unequal partners; guaranteed access to benefits for those who participate (as opposed to a competitive system where influential players win); “cooperation and solidarity”, particularly as expressed by strong regional social programs; special funds and measures for the environment and for emergencies; energy integration (a theme coined by Venezuela); less dependence on foreign investment and inter-member preferences for public and joint venture capital; protection of Latin American and Caribbean cultures and the establishment of Telesur, a public television channel to present “our realities”. There would also be shared positions on democratic struggles (ALBA-TCP, 2004). A Cuban economist claimed that the project had two principles: to create “a regional integration scheme that promotes social justice together with economic development”, and “a space of anti-hegemonic power projection to neutralise the US domination of the Western Hemisphere” (Alzugaray Treto, 2011). Practical complementarity may be seen in the first CubaVenezuela exchanges, which were large-scale barter swaps, most prominently Cuba’s provision of medical and educational services and training in exchange for Venezuela’s discount oil and assistance in rebuilding Cuba’s energy sector. For five years, from 2004 and 2008 (when the US financial crisis hit), Cuba’s average per capita economic growth rate was 8%, while Venezuela’s was 8.6%, compared to a Latin American average of 4% (ECLAC, 2012). Within a few years, the ALBA group had grown to 11 nation states. The most prominent expressions of ALBA were its social programs – literacy, primary health care, educational and health programs – most often financed and otherwise supported by Venezuela and staffed by Cuban health and education professionals (Anderson 2014: 26-31). Through these programs, Venezuela, Bolivia and Nicaragua all reduced their adult illiteracy to minimal levels in a few years (Nehru, 2011). By 2011, achievements of the new grouping were believed to include: lifting 11 million people from poverty; making 3.5 million people literate, thus raising overall literacy from 84% to 96%, increasing school and college enrolments, massive joint health programs reducing infant mortality by 32%; and assisting 900,000 handicapped people in 2010 alone (ERBV, 2011). ALBA-type agreements were formed with non-ALBA countries. For example, in 2005 Venezuela signed nine agreements with Argentina, which included: support for Telesur; cooperation between state energy agencies; supply of Argentina’s ship-building facilities to Venezuela in exchange for agreements on concessional oil supply; and cooperation on health, hospitals, sciences and social sciences (ALBA-TCP, 2008), as well as an agreement to develop a continental gas pipeline (Anderson 2014: 26-31). Other countries expressed their interest to participate in ALBA’s social programs, such as the disabilities mission. Further, ALBA articulated the call for a ‘new regional financial architecture’, which included a new regional currency and a Bank of ALBA, to finance large joint venture projects (ALBA-TCP Secretariat, 2010). In addition to the above-mentioned participation of various nations in ALBA’s social programs, certain ‘Great Nation’ projects and enterprises went into the new territory. ALBAMED, for example, listed 475 essential medicines, which would be made available to the member countries under a new regulatory system. ALBATEL was constructing a new system of communications through its own satellite (Sanz, 2012). Cooperation in pharmaceutical enterprises would mean greater efficiency in producing necessary medicines and, if necessary, greater bargaining power in making purchases outside the bloc (Cuba Standard, 2013; RTV, 2014). Although the ALBA bloc is still young and has faced certain setbacks, it seems to present interesting lessons for Iran and its neighbours. First, a regional counter-hegemonic bloc with diverse political systems but a shared social solidarity can produce rapid benefits. Second, such a bloc can consolidate real interests to lessen the threat of outside hegemonic powers; and third, the principles established by such a bloc can have a wider influence. Existing West Asian bilateral agreements might usefully be reshaped into more formal regional cooperation mechanisms.

### L – Venezuela

#### This card zeros the second advantage – the prospect of fears of the Maduro regime are unfounded and propagated by the US as an information war in their total conquest for imperialism as they use this information war to depose Maduro regime

Caballero, F. S. (2018). Imperialism and hegemonic information in Latin America: The media coup in Venezuela vs. The criminalization of protest in Mexico. In Propaganda Model Today: Filtering Perception and Awareness: Filtering Perception and Awareness (pp. 237-247). London: University of Westminster Press. Accessed 7/4/2024 CSUF JmB TDI

Bearing in mind the distinctive features of the real structure of information in practically all the countries of the region, the state of siege under which the Bolivarian revolution has been placed can be regarded as a revealing example of the validity of the propaganda model for the purposes described here. Since Hugo Chávez became President of Venezuela, the private media, national and international alike, have subjected the country to continual and systematic harassment, thus contributing to the construction of a distorted picture of the democratic processes in the Republic of Venezuela, even to the extreme of justifying the failed coup d’état in 2002.2 The North American ‘peace operations’ have, nonetheless, gone unnoticed by the populace. As a matter of fact, in the public space audiences do not have access to any other type of narrative than the vilification of the revolutionary leaders. To such an extent that the coordination and lobbying activities of those representing the hegemonic geopolitical interests remain hidden from the public eye, by deliberate omission on the part of the mainstream media, while they contribute, without constraints, to control and repress the emergence of popular protest movements, if not to destabilize expressly unfavorable or unreliable governments, as is the case of the so-called ‘unrestricted warfare’ waged by the Pentagon against Venezuela. Thus, the self-styled ‘independent media’ such as El País implemented an information policy to legitimize the planned coup and the destabilizing proinsurgency captained from Washington by expert conspirators like Otto Reich, a former collaborator of Ronald Reagan and a leading expert in counterinsurgency and low-intensity operations such as those orchestrated in Central America against Nicaragua. The in-depth study of Fernando Casado illustrates analytically to what extent this process of psychological war relies on the committed work of the so-called ‘anti-journalists.’ A hundred qualitative interviews with Spanish-speaking journalists, both European and Latin American, from leading newspapers including Clarín (Argentina), El Tiempo (Colombia), El País (Spain) and El Comercio (Ecuador), revealed the existence of a deliberate propaganda campaign launched by the major media corporations against the Chávez government as part of a covert operation to counter the revolutionary process. In this coverage, several techniques have been employed to step up the media siege and propaganda war in which the country is currently immersed: 1. The caricaturing of Presidents Chávez and Maduro. The sensationalist representation of both heads of state has tended to waver between the ridiculous and the grotesque, both being criminalized by their antagonists, according to the Nixon hypothesis, as ‘dangerous, mad criminals.’ Be that as it may, at any rate it is possible to confirm a hugely negative and distorted portrayal of both presidents in the national and international media, which has gradually permeated public opinion to such a degree as to justify a possible intervention in ‘defence of democracy.’ 2. Disinformation and psychological warfare. The production of false news, from non-existent conflicts on the Colombian border, to putative shortage crises, through set-ups involving cases of corruption and ties with drug trafficking, has aimed to destabilize the Bolivarian government and isolate it on the international stage. In short, ‘information about Venezuela is usually spectacular and sensationalist; anecdotes turn into the focus of the news; important political figures as President Chávez are trivialized, emphasizing witty remarks rather than significant decisions which have benefited millions of people’.3 3. Campaigns against the lack of freedom of expression and democracy. The opposition and the international press have promoted continuous propaganda campaigns, describing the Chávez government as a dictatorship because of the purported absence of liberties, a term that has been repeatedly dismissed by the Carter Foundation, the Organization of American States (OAS) itself, the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the European Union (EU), among other multilateral agencies. 4. The spreading of rumors and the dearth of news on social networks. Together with the clichés and the distorted picture of the country due to the continuous disinformation in the mainstream media, social networks have been used to reinforce this prevailing image by circulating all kinds of canards about the leaders of the Venezuelan government or their allies, even, as has occurred during the elections in Spain, to invoke the alleged danger of a Venezuelantype drift in other countries whose progressive parties aspire to government. 5. The bias and imbalance in the sources and the use of ideologically focused language on a lexicological and semantic level. Furthermore, news about the country has been continually manipulated as regards the use of sources and semiotic operations, repeatedly employed with the clear purpose of propaganda. Thus, for example, the mainstream international media only cite sources reflecting the stance of the USA and its opposition allies, without giving voice to the Venezuelan government, except to reinforce a priori the bias in news coverage or to ridicule its representatives in a conspicuous fashion. By the same token, when reference is made to the democratically elected government of the country it is regularly referred to as a regime, which conjures up images of authoritarian systems such as that of the ex-USSR in the eyes of public opinion. This bias is applied across the board to North Korea, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Bolivia, and functions, in tandem with other semiotic strategies, to construct a view contrary to the revolutionary process. Consequently, the media war against Venezuela ‘is translated into a continuous deformation and manipulation of information, produced serving destabilizing agendas against Bolivarian Revolution’, which systematically violates the right of readers and audience to receive truthful information’.4 It has always been held that, in war, as in times of peace, the first victim is the truth, but in the case of Venezuela the media have never, now or before, intended to shed light on the murky, coup-mongering web of interests opposing the Bolivarian revolutionary process. What is of real interest in the case, however, is that the major disinformation campaigns orchestrated in favor of covert operations before the coup d’état were not a success, in spite of the fact that they managed to snare many intellectuals, journalists and media companies, who believed the manipulated version of the facts purposefully fabricated by the Cisneros Group and the psychological warfare advisors sent by the USA for that purpose, in their discursive plot and strategy of persuasion. The situation of the Bolivarian Republic, described by the Pentagon ‘as a battle cry of communists and socialists’ in the heart of South America, recalls in this sense the plan designed to topple the government of Salvador Allende in 1973: media smear campaigns, rumors and intense disinformation; the mobilization of the elites; unfounded accusations against the person of the President; an army divided; the economic blockade promoted by the employers’ association; the flight of capital; an attempted coup; and considerable international pressure. In this respect, the tragic events of September 1973 in Chile should be recalled, because not by chance Charles Shapiro, one of the actors also responsible for operations in Trinidad and Tobago and an advocate of the terror campaigns in Central America (Nicaragua and El Salvador), occupied the post of US Ambassador to Venezuela in order to implement a destabilizing pro-insurgency program against the Bolivarian government. As in the case of the operation against the Popular Unity (UP) government in Chile, the counter-revolutionary operation in Venezuela has focused on four lines of strategic action bolstered by the activities of the media: 1. Economic destabilization (as in Chile, the gains in welfare and economic equality, a result of the reallocation and exploitation of the country’s oil resources, have been attacked by means of an active campaign based on the flight of capital and lockouts against the government’s policy of redistribution). 2. Political-social destabilization (the economic and political establishment have attempted to present as a civil war what is none other than an active operation of psychological warfare and mobilization by means of reports with eye-catching headlines revolving around corruption, which have since proved to be unfounded). 3. Destabilization of the National Armed Forces (the protests of sectors of the army have been associated with the manoeuvring of the USA to garner support against Chávez and Maduro, inciting prominent military officers to implement a strategy of harassment and destabilization of the government). 4. Civil disobedience (after the failure of the coup d’état, minority groups of the population, overrepresented in the country’s oligopolistic media, painted a picture of ungovernability, which has had a strong impact on public opinion, with garimpas and continual sabotages, such as those instigated by Leopoldo López). Thus, media conglomerates such as PRISA have presented as a ‘civil rebellion’ what is none other than a mobilization organized by the corporate/media/military bloc in favor of US interests. The outcome of these covert operations is unpredictable and, if this symbolic escalation of violence continues, it could lead to an authentic class confrontation. We have outlined this as a working hypothesis in previous studies. The problem with the spiral of dissembling and silencing dirty wars like this is that it is highly likely that it will lead to upheavals and disruptions, multiple disturbances and wars, in the growing escalation of exploitation and indiscriminate violence of this fearsome product of military engineering in Latin America, as is currently the case in Mexico.

#### US interests in Venezuelan oil is an elitist interest in Latin America that is an attempt to secure a weakening empires supply lines – that results in US military domination and guarantees conflict

Petras, J. (2010). US Venezuelan relations: Imperialism and revolution. Voltaire Network, 15. Accessed 7/4/2024 CSUF JmB TDI

Within this imperial matrix, Venezuela was of special importance as the most important provider of petroleum. This was especially true in times of heightened US and Israeli induced political hostility and military warfare in the Middle East, with the onset of the US invasion of Iraq and sanctions against Iran, Sudan and other Muslim oil suppliers. Under US hegemony Venezuela was a major player in the US effort to isolate and undermine the Cuban revolutionary government. Venezuelan client regimes played a major role in support of the successful US led effort to expel Cuba from the OAS; in 1961 and brokering a deal in the early 1990’s to disarm the guerillas in El Salvador and Guatemala without regime or structural changes in exchange for legal status of the ex- combatants. In short, Venezuelan regimes played a strategic role in policing the Central American-Caribbean region, a supplier of oil and as an important regional market for US exports. For Venezuela the benefits of its relations with the US were highly skewed to the upper and the affluent middle classes. They were able to import luxury goods with low tariffs and invest in real estate, especially in south Florida. The business and banking elite were able to “associate” in joint ventures with US MNC especially in the lucrative oil, gas, aluminum and refinery sectors. US military training missions and joint military exercises provided a seemingly reliable force to defend ruling class interests and repress popular protests and revolts. The benefits for the popular classes, mainly US consumer imports, were far outweighed by the losses incurred through the outflow of income in the form of royalties, interest, profits and rents. Even more prejudicial were the US promoted neo-liberal policies which undermined the social safety net, increased economic vulnerability to market volatility and led to a two decade long crises culminating in a double digit decline in living standards (1979 – 1999). Toward Conceptualizing US-Venezuelan Relations Several key concepts are central to the understanding of US-Venezuelan relations in the past and present Chavez era. These include the notion of ‘hegemony’ in which the ideas and interests of Washington are accepted and internalized by the Venezuelan ruling and governing class. Hegemony was never effective throughout Venezuelan class and civil society. “Counter- hegemonic” ideologies and definitions of socio-economic interests existed with varying degree of intensity and organization throughout the post 1958 revolutionary period. In the 1960’s mass movements, guerilla organizations and sectors of the trade unions formed part of a nationalist and socialist counter-hegemonic bloc. Venezuelan-US relations were not uniform despite substantial continuities over time. Despite close relations and economic dependence especially during the 1960’s counter-insurgency period, Venezuela was one of the original promoters of OPEC, nationalized the oil industry (1976), opposed the US backed Somoza regime and White House plans to intervene to block a Sandinista victory (in 1979). The regression from nationalist capitalism to US sponsored neo-liberalism in the late 1980’s and 1990’s reflected a period of maximum US hegemony, a phenomena that took place throughout Latin America in the 1990’s. The election and re-election of President Chavez beginning in 1998 through the first decade of the new century marked a decline of US hegemony in the governing and popular classes but not among the business elite, trade union officials (CTV) and sectors of the military and public sector elite especially in the state oil company (PDVSA). The decline in US hegemony was influenced by the change in the power configuration governing Venezuela, the severe economic crises in 2000 – 2002, the demise and overthrow of client regimes in key Latin American countries and the rise of radical social movements and left center regimes. Accelerating the ‘loss of presence of the US’ and ‘policing’ of Latin America, were the wars in the Middle East, Iraq, South Asia (Afghanistan, Pakistan) and the expanding economic role and trading relations between Latin America and Asia (mainly China). The commodity boom between 2003 – 2008 further eroded US leverage via the IMF and WB and enhanced the counter- hegemonic policies of the center-left regimes especially inVenezuela. A key concept toward understanding the decline of US hegemony over Venezuela are “pivotal events”. This concept refers to major political conflicts which trigger a realignment of inter-state relations and changes the correlation of domestic socio-political forces. In our study President’s Bush’s launch of the “War on Terror” following 9/11/01 involving the invasion of Afghanistan and claims to extra territorial rights to pursue and assassinate adversaries dubbed “terrorists” was rejected by President Chavez (“you can’t fight terror with terror”). These events triggered far reaching consequences in US- Venezuelan relations. Related to the above, our conceptualization of US-Venezuelan relations emphasizes the high degree of inter-action between global policies and regional conflicts. In operational terms the attempt by Washington to impose universal/global conformity to its war on terrorism led to a US backed coup, which in turn fueled Chavez’ policy of extra hemispheric alignments with adversaries of the White House. Historical shifts in global economic power and profound changes in the internal make-up of the US economy have necessitated a reconceptualization of the principal levers of the US empire. In the past dollar diplomacy , meaning the dominant role of US industry and banks, played a major role in imposing US hegemony in Latin America, supplemented via military interventions and military coups especially in the Caribbean and Central America. In recent years financial capital “services” have displaced US manufacturing as the driving force and military wars and intervention have overshadowed economic instruments, especially with the surge of Asian trade agreements with Latin America. We reconceptualize US-Venezuelan relations in light of a declining US economic and rising military empire, as a compensatory mechanism for sustaining hegemony especially as a tool for restoring client domestic elites to power. The relation between past imperial successes in securing harmonious hegemonic collaborating rulers in the 1990’s and the profound political changes resulting from the crises of and breakdown of neo-liberalism, led Washington to totally misread the new realities. The resulting policy failures (for example Latin America’s rejection of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas) and isolation and defeat of US policy toward Venezuela, Cuba and Honduras reflects what we conceptualize as “romantic reaction”, a failure of political realism: nostalgia for the imperial “golden age” of hegemony and pillage of the1990’s. The repeated failure by both the Bush and Obama regime to recognize regime changes, ideological shifts and the new development models and trade patterns has lead to mindless threats and diplomatic incapacity to develop any new bridges to the centrist regimes in the key countries of South America, especially toward Mercosur (Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay). The gap between past (1975 – 2000) dominance and present declining hegemony, in Latin America establishes the parameters for understanding US-Venezuelan relations and in particular the ten years of political confrontation and the incapacity of Washington to restore its client elites to power, despite repeated efforts. Likewise despite Venezuela’s dependence on single product exports (petrol) and bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption, its external policies have gotten around selected US boycotts and hostile diplomatic moves, while expanding regional ties and forging new trade and investment networks. The full story of the emergence of this hemispheric and extra hemispheric polarization between Washington and Caracas which follows tells us a great deal about the future of US-Latin American relations and equally so of the prospects for US empire at a time of financial crises and rising militarism.

## Impacts

### ! – Landry List

#### Neoliberalism causes war, fascism, dispossession, climate change, and systems of biopolitical control

Gonzalez-Vicente, R. (2020). The liberal peace fallacy: violent neoliberalism and the temporal and spatial traps of state-based approaches to peace. Territory, Politics, Governance, 8(1), 100-116. Accessed 7/1/2024 CSUF JmB TDI

How are we then to explain the inability of mainstream liberal approaches to predict what seems to be a logical turn – in the form of a societal defence or Polanyian ‘counter movement’ versus the inequalities, risks and vulnerabilities fomented by the world market? Much of the problem lies within IRT’s scalar limitations, which we can explore by focusing on the disjunction between the interstate scale and the diversity of political economic processes and social conflict occurring at other scales. This disjunction is with no doubt closely related to IRT’s development and consolidation in the post-Second World War years, a period characterized by particular patterns of growth of national development, marked ideological preferences and methodological nationalism – although at that point debates on structural violence and positive peace already existed in the margins of the field of IR (Gleditsch, Nordkvelle, & Strand, 2014). These all resulted in what John Agnew famously described as IRT’s ‘territorial trap’, a fixation with the interstate scale and the assumption that states are containers of societies, with politics played in a domestic/ foreign binary (Agnew, 1994). Below, I expand on this notion to discuss how violence or risk have been rescaled in the neoliberal era from the interstate realm and into the individual one, with societies taking on the costs of a competitive market integration that has allowed for – at least temporarily – relatively convivial relations between key states (and the elites who control them) mediating the global economic architecture (on risk, see also Beck, 1999). IRT’s territorial trap remains ubiquitous. Despite decades of powerful critiques that have presented the post-Westphalian nation-state as a never fully realized political moment and a site of social conflict (Agnew, 1994; Mitchell, 1991), states remain an ontological fixation at the core of IRT. This is even more so the case when it comes to the understanding of conflict and peace. Whereas the field of IR is today increasingly open to accepting ‘non-traditional’ security threats such as organized crime, terrorism or epidemics, these are to a great degree studied as anomalies in a state-based system, and considered only inasmuch as they pose a threat to state order. Typologies of war such as the Correlates of War (COW) Data Sets accept non-state entities as potential actors of conflict. However, these are narrowly defined as ‘nonterritorial entities or non-state armed groups’ that are not formally accepted as members of the interstate system but which must contest the power of a state or at least represent a violent challenge to state or state-like entities in order to be agents of conflict (COW Wars v. 4.0, 2014). According to this understanding, peace is not only negatively constructed as the absence of violence (Williams & McConnell, 2011, p. 928), but in particular as the absence of violence explicitly directed at the state or at gaining control of a state. This monoscalar conceptualization of peace and conflict pervades liberal IRT, too, which considers the state the key actor in international relations, and markets the connecting fabric holding international peace together. Gartzke and Li argue, for example, how the demonstrators who took the streets ‘from Seattle to Switzerland and from Gothenburg to Jakarta … mobilised by apocalyptic visions of the menace of globalisation’ failed to recognize that economic integration offers mutual benefits to states that opt for settlements in the place of fighting (Gartzke & Li, 2003, p. 562). This is, of course, a caricature of ‘alter-globalisation’ movements that fails to acknowledge the transnational networks behind such movements.6 Yet, it is a useful example to show how, by focusing on states as the aggregate beneficiaries of ‘efficient’ modes of transnational production and exchange, liberal scholarship eschews the variegated forms of politico-economic conflict that market reordering foments at intrastate scales. The crucial point is that, with the complexities of global dynamics flattened into a chessboard of one-dimensional state actors, mainstream IR perspectives are often unable to address the multiscalar violent repercussions of liberal market integration and therefore its challenges to positive peace – understood as ‘the possibility of maximising human potential’ (Flint, 2005, p. 7) and the absence of structural, cultural and environmental violence (Galtung, 1996; Richmond, 2008, p. 89). Peace, much like war, operates at ‘intertwined and mutually constitutive’ scales, from the intimate to the global (Koopman, 2011, p. 194). Anchored in mid-20th-century statist notions of world politics, conventional IR understandings of peace and conflict are oblivious to threats to everyday peace when state power is not directly under challenge. In this way, foreign direct investment or trade are considered phenomena that bring states more closely integrated, hence either increasing the likelihood of peace (from the liberal perspective) or not necessarily having an impact on the probability of conflict in the long term (from the realist perspective). Yet, the undemocratic trends behind processes of transnationalization of capital reproduce new and old forms of violence. John Nagle, a political anthropologist of ethnic conflict, highlights, for example, how global market integration may indeed ‘cause a violent backlash if economic reconstruction dispossesses groups from their land or dismantles their traditional economic systems without providing acceptable alternatives’ (Nagle, 2010, p. 232), or what could also be described as processes of primitive accumulation without immediate proletarianization. The creation of masses of unemployed youth, surplus to the immediate exploitative needs of capital, is of course an important factor behind the rise of violence in many societies, as, for example, many in the Caribbean (Pantin, 1996). Moreover, these processes of dispossession and the dismantling of livelihoods are per se violent by-products of neoliberal integration. Violent neoliberalism, mediated not by an invisible hand but by explicit elite interests (Harvey, 2005) or more subject-based processes of governmentality (Larner, 2000), is a recurrent phenomenon in the study of the globalization of capitalism. The integration of ‘developing countries’ with global markets is typically plagued with violent rationales of development and tangible issues of exploitation and dispossession, as vividly exemplified in Simon Springer’s studies of violent neoliberalism in Cambodia (Springer, 2015). An important issue to be considered here is the transformation of the state alongside processes of economic globalization, adopting increasingly competitive and regulatory forms, and ubiquitously morphing into what some have described as ‘capitalist states’ (Jessop, 2002). This transformation implies that, through processes of disciplinary neoliberalism (Gill, 1995), states can in fact mediate between global competitive forces and domestic societies not to protect the latter from outside dangers or the recurring crises of capitalism, but in fact to impose measures of austerity, protect creditors, and in general promote more precarious and vulnerable patterns of living. A powerful example of violent neoliberalism is found in processes of worker exploitation fomented by flexible regimes of accumulation required to attract capital investment. This explains why 70,000 workplace casualties in China during 2012 (The Economist, 2013) – a country where workers’ independent organization is to a great extent illegal, or 180,000 protests in 2010 (The Wall Street Journal, 2011), do not affect IR’s calculations of peace, despite the close link between these incidents and exploitation dynamics associated with China’s integration into global markets (Chan, 2001). It is only from this perspective that IR scholars in China can present their country’s growing economic pre-eminence as a ‘peaceful rise’, arguing that ‘the Chinese have made [the choice] to embrace economic globalization rather than detach themselves from it’ (Zheng, 2005). Ironically, given the ostensible incompatibility between liberal emphases upon freedom and pluralism and state propaganda, Chinese official media also suggests that globalization and peace provide ‘favourable conditions for building a harmonious society’, where ‘the political environment is stable, the economy is prosperous, people live in peace and work in comfort and social welfare improves’ (People’s Daily, 2007). The actual ‘harmonisation’ of society in China has indeed entailed occasional improvements in welfare provision and some concessions to labour – for example, in the form of a new Labour Contract Law in 2007 that required firms to give written contracts to their workers. Yet, disciplinary measures hold sway, and the very lawyers who sought to protect worker rights under the Labour Contract Law framework are being incarcerated under the charges of ‘disturbing social order’, while income inequality and labour unrest have continued to rise (Financial Times, 2016; Hui & Chan, 2011). And crucially, intrastate violence can in turn be rescaled to the inter-national sphere. Therefore, analysts often associate the rise in protests and repression in China with the Chinese Communist Party’s orchestration of and permissiveness towards nationalist campaigns and patriotic discourse – including typical recourse to international belligerence over disputed territories and anti-Western rhetoric – in search for legitimacy (Hughes, 2006). Similarly, there has been an emergence of inequality, vulnerability and precarization in economically developed countries that can also be analyzed under the framework of violent neoliberalism. As transnational capital benefits from exploiting the world’s largest unfree labour force in China and other low and middle income countries, middle classes elsewhere have seen their rights and economic power decline. In the United States, the last decades of globalization and prosperity have been accompanied by increased levels of poverty, a net decline of 2.7 million jobs between 2001 and 2011, and declining inflation-adjusted minimum wages (Mischel & Davis, 2015; Scott, 2015; Shaefer & Edin, 2013). Marketization has reached grotesque proportions, and today even the disciplinary apparatus of the state is up for sale, resulting in skyrocketing incarceration rates, chiefly affecting impoverished populations and the African American community (BBC, 2014). In Spain, a rampant series of evictions following the 2008 Global Financial Crisis – with over 600,000 foreclosures from 2008 to 2015 (El País, 2015) – left families homeless while political elites transferred €100 billion of public wealth to private and privatized financial institutions, with four-fifths of the sum deemed unrecoverable according to the estimations of the Spanish Central Bank. Global and national processes have in this way powerful impacts on other scales, including the personal lived experiences of crisis. In the United States, studies find that the 40% rise in suicides since 1999 is connected to the recession of 2007–09, while the World Health Organisation (WHO) observes a 60% increase in suicide rates across the world over the last 45 years that appears to be connected to periodic spikes in economic hardship (Oyesanya, Lopez-Morinigo, & Dutta, 2015; Whiteman, 2015). With global affluence concentrated in increasingly fewer hands (with eight people having the same amount of wealth as 50% of the world’s population according to some studies; Hardoon, 2017), and with risk gradually removed from markets and transferred to increasingly vulnerable individuals, national illiberal politics has come to constitute a logical reaction to the liberal order for many, or a quest for refuge from the violence of markets, however fraught the responses offered by many of the populist alternatives now in vogue. Another vivid example of violent neoliberalism is seen in the apparent capitulation of the future of the world’s environment and the present livelihoods of many to the immediate needs of capital. Here we see the expansion of capitalist activities in search of previously untapped resources in the developing world and elsewhere driving conflict with local populations and fomenting processes of internal colonialism and dispossession (Gonzalez-Vicente, 2017; Kaag & Zoomers, 2014). Even a wide range of allegedly well-intentioned initiatives to preserve biodiversity operate now according to market logics, relying on the valuation and commodification of nature and the deployment of green credentials ultimately to displace populations in ways that are reminiscent of processes of primitive accumulation (Fairhead, Leachm, & Scoones, 2012; Lohmann, 2010). And, of course, climate change and environmental degradation in general have become key drivers of global migrations, with the risk of being displaced by natural disasters today being 60% higher than 40 years ago and 25.4 million people needing to migrate every year to escape the consequences of natural disasters (Greenpeace, 2017, p. 6). Crucial here – once again – is the fact that our current global environmental crisis cannot be understood outside the context of global liberal integration, as the promotion of ‘good business environments’ (note the irony) and competition across jurisdictions to attract capital investments have resulted in any attempt to make businesses pay for the environmental ‘externalities’ of production being just a marginal note in a downward trajectory towards an environmental dystopia. These violent by-products of liberal integration operate at scales that go from the global to the intimate. Yet, despite the vast amounts of empirical evidence illustrating the violence inherent in processes of marketization, the epistemological limitations of IRT create illusions of liberal peace in the absence of conflict between states. The examples above illustrate how state-based peace is limited in its implications for the everyday lives of many people and may even be counterproductive at diverse scales where violence is systematically applied and justified to perpetuate liberal state peace and market integration. Importantly, people are not just victims of violence, but agents of political change. If at an early stage of globalization liberal elites were able to contain discontent through appeals to technical prowess, claims of a lack of viable alternatives (see, for example, Margaret Thatcher’s famous ‘there is no alternative’ mantra) and the depoliticization of policy more broadly, today we observe a process of re-politicization that often takes reactionary forms (Gonzalez-Vicente & Carroll, 2017). While in some countries progressive alternatives to the liberal order are revitalizing the political debate, and indeed solidarity campaigns have delivered some important victories across the world, what we observe in many places today is the conjunction of national reactionary discourse (with elites placing responsibilities for the social crisis on foreign forces and migrants, for example) and a continued hegemony of markets. This new populist order dangerously combines an economic base that will continue to produce market violence with nationalist rationales that undermine internationalist solidarity, and which unfortunately invite further violence towards the ‘other’.

### ! – Extinction

#### Capitalism makes extinction inevitable- biosphere collapse, warming, fascist backsliding, and resource conflict

Dr. Ted Trainer 22, Conjoint Lecturer, Social Sciences, University of New South Wales, "Where Is Capitalism Taking Us? 2: The Longer Term Trajectory," in Capitalism: Why We Should Scrap It, Chapter 8, 03/07/2022, pg. 96-104. [language edited]

Let us step back and consider again the global situation sketched in Chapter 3. It was explained that the increasingly serious range of problems, including environmental destruction, resource depletion, deprivation of the Third World, conflict over access to resources and markets, and the deterioration of social cohesion, are direct consequences of the fact that there is far too much producing and consuming going on. The main argument in this chapter is that this society is not capable of dealing with this situation, and that it will inevitably culminate in the more or less catastrophic breakdown of society on a global scale. Before detailing that argument some aspects of the trajectory should be considered further. What will happen? Following is an attempt to sketch the most likely trajectory ahead. The multi-factored limits to growth noose will tighten, hopefully slowly but probably too quickly. Many of its elements are already gathering force and compounding to increase difficulties towards a time of great and terminal troubles. As explained, the key determinants of our near-term fate seem to be the future of fracking and of debt. Most likely is a relatively sudden end of the debt fuelled tight-oil venture which then triggers a global debt crisis and a far more serious global economic collapse than the 2008-2009 GFC. There are varied expectations regarding the time scale; Ahmed (2017) explains why it could be a matter of a decade or so before the Middle Eastern failed states become unable to maintain oil exports. Tverberg and several others have a similarly short-term expectation. Randers (2012) however expects the disruption to impact around 2070. Immiseration. But the most important determinant of our fate is probably not directly to do with biophysical limits. It is the extent to which the long-suffering and docile masses will go on tolerating how they are being treated. For at least 6,000 years people have been astoundingly passive, putting up with tyrants, kings, and general rule by usually brutal and greedy elites. But over the last two or three decades people in rich countries have become seriously discontented with their situation, recognising that governments do not attend to their needs. One result is the worldwide decline in belief in democracy. Others are the advent of Trump, Brexit, right-wing populism and support for fascism. Guy Standing analyses this well (2012), pointing to the way financialisation is replacing Neoliberalism with domination by the accumulation of assets on which rents can be drawn while casting more and more people into the “precariat”. This is a class struggling with insecurity and personal debt. The hard-won achievements of old labour, secure jobs and good wages etc., are being swept away and replaced by “gig” economies in which the precariat suffers high indebtedness and struggles to find intermittent work, pays high rents (e.g., for mortgages, accommodation, student fees.) Below them is the “lumpenproletariat” of chronically unemployed, aged, infirm, homeless and excluded. The above chapter on the US points to the Walmart-gutted towns, impoverished casual labour, rural poverty and dying country towns, and the social wreckage generating the opioid crisis and other harmful effects. It is not surprising that this produced such support for a Presidential candidate promising to “drain the Washington swamp” seen to be responsible for the situation. The decline in regard for democracy that is underway is another consequence of immiseration. People are becoming less satisfied with the capacity or willingness of the system to attend to their problems and fix things. The Australian National University’s recent Australian election survey shows distrust of politicians rose from an already high 63% in 2014 to 76% in 2016. Another question found 56% think the federal government is run for a few big interests. (Yeginsu, 2018.) Tverberg (2021) sees how low disposable household income is now a major determinant of what is happening to the oil industry. The crisis of low prices and rampant bankruptcies in the petroleum industry has not been due to running into scarcity as the “peak oil” thesis once predicted, but to falling demand because large and increasing numbers of people cannot afford to purchase goods at previous rates. This is a most important and somewhat overlooked causal factor in the discussion of global economic woes. Consider the following evidence on it. There has been negligible increase in household disposable income for 60-80% of Australian households since 2012, while prices have risen and the income of the rich has risen considerably. Similarly in the US real incomes for most workers have barely risen in 40 years and the minimum wage has been at $US15,000 p.a. for years. (Hutchins 2018.) Stasse (2020) refers to literature on “…an unprecedented squeeze on living standards for ordinary households.” Wright (2019) says that in the US “…average hourly pay is below what it was in 1973; 40 percent of adults lack the savings to pay for a $400 emergency expense.” The shrinking middle class and rising precariat class are part of the phenomenon, and it is evident in the rise of household debt, now very high in Australia. Karp (2020) says in the US households’ debt-to-income ratio was less than 40 percent in 1950 but is now120 percent, and since 1985 the wealth share of the bottom 90 percent of adults declined from 40 percent to 27 percent. Indices of increasing hardship at the bottom are clear. In the UK. MacFarlane (2019) reports, “Rough sleeping in England has increased by 165 per cent, while homeless deaths have more than doubled. The number of people using food banks has increased to 1.6 million … up from just 26,000 in 2009. 14 million people are living in poverty … the UK population is still 1.6 per cent poorer than it was more than a decade ago on average.” Menadue (2020) reports that in Australia, “Homelessness is also increasingly significantly. It rose by 30% in the decade to 2016.” These observations point to a killing of the goose that was laying golden eggs, a failure to attend to the way the drive to extract as much wealth as possible eventually undercuts the capacity to go on siphoning it out, by leaving most people with too little purchasing power. This situation is a consequence of the success of the capitalist class. Their dominance has meant that they have been able to ride over the resistance that might have got them to make sufficient concessions to defuse the problems they were causing. Streek (2014) puts it in terms of capitalism becoming its own worst enemy. “It has eliminated criticism and oppositional moves, which would have pushed it to adapt…” The accumulating power has also led to corruption, which in time reduces a system’s capacity to respond to challenges. Streek (2014) points to the way the GFC revealed “…rating agencies being paid by the producers of toxic securities to award them top grades; offshore shadow banking, money laundering and assistance in large-scale tax evasion as the normal business of the biggest banks with the best addresses; the sale to unsuspecting customers of securities constructed so that other customers could bet against them; the leading banks worldwide fraudulently fixing interest rates and the gold price, and so on.” He notes the billions of dollars in fines for these offences which several large banks have had to pay recently, including by some major Australian banks. In more recent years several inquiries and revelations have detailed similar criminal behaviour on the part of mainstream institutions, especially via the Australian Banking royal commission, and exposures of global tax haven and laundering operations. The advent of cannibalism. Collins (2021) and others point to the way the economy’s increasing difficulties have led it to enter a “catabolic” or “cannibalistic” phase. As the capacity to do good business producing useful things deteriorates, investors turn to activities that plunder the economy. It is as if a hardware firm has to start selling the corrugated iron on its own roof to stay in business. The illicit drug industry and the Mafia are similar; rather than producing new wealth effort goes into extracting previously produced wealth. Much financial activity is of this nature, such as “short selling”, “asset stripping” and getting hold of assets that enable rents to be extracted. In the GFC a lot of money was lent to home buyers incapable of meeting the payments, because investors could not find less risky outlets. When the borrowers could not pay their interest instalments their houses were repossessed by the banks and sold off. Similarly in the US some of the money in the worker’s pay packet is put into a pension fund run by the corporation, to be paid back on retirement, but many corporations have taken these funds to invest, and “lost” them. Often they were lent to smart operators in the financial sector to put into speculative ventures, siphoning out fees in the process. Sometimes money is borrowed to buy weak firms, arrange for them to borrow too much and thus drive them into bankruptcy, and then sell them off, and because the pension money has become an asset of the firm it goes to the lenders and is lost to the workers who earned it and set it aside. So, accumulation and profit making are being kept up by activities which enrich big and smart investors (lenders) by getting hold of the wealth of little/naive investors (borrowers), through granting them loans they cannot repay. Another common mechanism is simply commercialising activities that the state once carried out without charge. This is an aspect of “financialisation” discussed in Chapter 4. A good example is where students must now pay for college and university education, meaning large loans must be taken out and large interest payments then flow to lenders from the earnings of parents and students. Again the process does not involve lending to produce anything, it just enables wealth previously produced to be acquired by lenders. Collins (2021) and others see this process accelerating as the ever-increasing volumes of accumulated capital find it increasingly difficult to find investment opportunities in producing anything of value. Streek (2014) says, “… the struggle for the last remaining profit opportunities is becoming uglier by the day.” Collins (2021) says. “… catabolic capitalists will stoke the profit engine by taking over troubled businesses, selling them off for parts, firing the workforce, and pilfering their pensions.” As difficulties increase for governments and their revenues decrease they will come under greater pressure to give business the conditions it wants in order to stimulate economic activity. “Regulatory agencies that once provided some protection from polluters, dangerous products, unsafe workplaces, labour exploitation, identity theft, and financial fraud will be dismantled … Public safety will be stripped down, privatized, and sold to those who can still afford it. Court budgets will shrivel, privatized prisons will exploit convict labour, and police will seldom respond to everyday crimes. Instead, private security firms and gated communities will guard the wealthy … catabolic capitalists will pick over the carcasses of bankrupt governments. Crumbling public transportation and decaying highways will be transformed into private thoroughfares, maintained by convict labour or indentured workers. After pressuring bankrupt governments to sell off public utilities, water storage, and waste management systems, corporations will deliver these essential services only to the businesses and communities who can afford them. And, as public schools and libraries go broke, exclusive private academies will employ a fraction of the jobless teachers and professors to educate a shrinking class of affluent students.” End game. A number of analysts see the foregoing phenomena as aspects of a terminal decline, partly driven by increasing resource and ecological difficulties, partly by worsening inequality and “immiseration”, and partly by deteriorating “legitimacy”. Rising discontent in Europe and the US is evident in support for populist and fascist movements. Blame is usually put on the wrong targets, especially immigrants. That the squalor is due to capitalism is not recognised, thanks largely to the weakness of Left parties and the fine work done over generations by those keeping capitalist ideology in good shape. In my lectures on Marx I point to a list of things which I and others think he got wrong. But there are some extremely important things I think he got right. One is that capitalism is shot through with serious contradictions such as the fact that the interests of workers clash with those of the class that owns capital. Another extremely important point he made is that as the system matures immiseration will eventually increase. This is what we are seeing now (Marx’s timing was way out.) As the rich and super-rich cream off increasing proportions of wealth the masses are increasingly having to struggle to get by, and are therefore less able to keep up the purchasing that is the life-blood of the system. And they are more and more discontented. Most importantly, he saw that these tendencies would result in the system’s self-destruction. The question is, when will people finally cease putting up with what the system does to them? When will they realise that the system is not designed to work for them? When will they see that it cannot but worsen their situation as time goes by? When will they realise what is causing their plight? The tightening limits will intensify the immiseration as governments are forced to cut spending on welfare etc. and to drive worker’s conditions down and give more favours to the rich in order to get the economy going. Governments struggling to control dissent and to help capital are very likely to adopt fascist options, but unlike in the 1930s, now the materials necessary to maintain armies, large bureaucracies and secret police and stage mass rallies will not be available, so descent towards a warlord dominated feudalism becomes plausible. In some Third World regions and even US cities this seems to be happening, for instance in the form of drug gangs. Many analysts have tried to draw attention to where these limits are taking us. Mason (2003) for instance sees the many problematic trends culminating in “The 2030 Spike”, the title of his book. As noted above, among those who discuss the multi-dimensional global breakdown likely to be brought on before long by limits and scarcity are Korowicz (2012), Morgan (2013), Kunstler (2005), Greer (2005), Bardi (2011), Duncan (2013), Gilding (2011), Randers (2012) and Streeck (2014). Some foresee more or less totally catastrophic collapse, the end of Western civilisation, with a die-off of billions. The next collapse might not be the final one; some foresee “... a long and bumpy road down”. Randers (2012) expects the time of troubles to be around 2070. However, Ahmed (2017), Tverberg (2021), Mason (2003) and other “collapsologists” give reasons to expect it to be before 2030. The hope must be for a protracted Goldilocks depression, one that is not so severe as to destroy the chances of salvage, but savage enough to jolt people into recognizing that they must shift to the local, cooperative and frugal self-sufficiency detailed in Chapter 10. The situation will at best be confused and chaotic, with governments and “leaders” continuing to not understand the fundamental causes and quick to blame the wrong things. The present tendencies to right-wing populism and fascism are likely to gain momentum, supported by many in privileged classes who will call for repressive measures to restore order and protect their security and property. Many in angry lower classes will want strong leaders willing to break rules. (A recent survey found this to already be true of a majority of UK people; Walker, 2019.) Capitalism will again morph into its fascist form whereby an authoritarian central government rules in cooperation with a selected few big capitalist firms. It is highly unlikely that there will be sober, clear headed rational thinking about causes and solutions. Poor and struggling governments will be even less capable of analysing or dealing with the situation effectively than they are now. The international possibilities are similarly disturbing. Dominant powers will surely become more aggressive in their efforts to control sources of scarce resources and markets. Third world governments wallowing in debt are likely to allow corporations to cause greater environmental destruction and to generate revenue, and to resort to increasingly repressive measures to control dissent over deteriorating living conditions. (Ahmed, 2017). The problems cannot be solved. The conventional assumption is that the problems can and will be solved by the institutions and processes of present society, such as by parliaments implementing effective policies in line with international agreements and resolutions, and ordinary people accepting legislated adjustments to their circumstances. But from the perspective of The Simpler Way, this expectation is now clearly mistaken. Given the foregoing account of the nature and magnitude of the problems, the institutions and political process of this society are not capable of recognising the situation and rationally facing up to it and making the enormous and difficult changes required to solve it. Consider the following reasons. The enormity of the changes required. Even the Degrowth literature generally fails to adequately represent the magnitude and difficulty of the reductions required. (Again, for the numerical case see Trainer, 2021a). Chapter 3 explained that rich-world volumes of production and thus consumption of resources must be cut by up to 90%, meaning that most of the present quantities of industry, transport, travel, construction, shopping, exporting, investing etc. have to be phased out. How could this possibly be done? This is the “degrowth conundrum”. It cannot be a matter of just closing a coal mine and transferring the workers to other jobs, because the amounts of production, work and jobs have to be cut dramatically. It would have to involve the creation and massive implementation of totally new social structures and procedures, whereby most people could live well without producing anywhere near so much as before. This could not be done unless it involved historically totally unprecedented, massive and rapid cultural change, to widespread public understanding and acceptance of the extremely radically new systems and values. And governments cannot impose or make the new ways work. Chapter 10 will make it clear that this could only be done by conscientious citizens who are eager to build and operate the new local systems. There isn’t time Even if the understanding and the will existed, it is difficult to imagine that the enormous required could be carried out in a few decades. They involve reversing what have been some of the fundamental ideas and values that have driven Western civilization over the last two hundred years, and scrapping and replacing vast systems and structures. Yet it is probable that the following three main global threats each give us no more than ten years. Carbon. According to various estimates the “carbon emissions budget” associated with a 67% chance of limiting temperature rise to under 1.5 degrees will have been exhausted within about twelve years. (Levin, 2018, Steffen, 2020.) Many insist that this one-in-three chance of failure is far too high to be acceptable. A more responsible target would significantly reduce the budget, and therefore the time left to move off fossil fuels. Note also that these estimates do not take into account the positive feedbacks, such as warming causing loss of snow causing absorption of more solar heat. Currently there are around 490 new coal-fired power stations being built around the world, with 790 planned. (Global Energy Monitor, 2020.) By 2050 energy demand is likely to be around 890 EJ/y, 56% higher than at present. (Minqui, 2019.) Input from renewable sources would have to increase by 27 EJ every year but the current rate of increase is only 0.72 EJ/y. (Our World in Data, 2019.) This equates to building 1.5 million 2 MW wind turbines every year, costing over 6% of world GDP not including the cost of energy storage, grid strengthening and distribution. And plant built now will probably only last twenty years, less than half as long as coal-fired plant. There will be at least formidable difficulties in developing satisfactory renewable energy solutions for emissions from the 80% of demand made up by the heavy land transport, agriculture, military, shipping and aircraft sectors. (Trainer, 2017.) These numbers would seem to completely rule out any possibility that acceptable emissions targets can be met in the time available. Petroleum. It is likely that a major and permanent collapse in oil availability will occur, possibly within a decade. (Ahmed, 2017.) It is generally recognized that the supply of conventional petroleum peaked around 2005 and has declined significantly since then. World supply has continued to increase due to the remarkable rise in output from the advent of “fracking” in the US “tight-oil” regions. However, there are strong reasons for expecting this source to peak and decline soon. (Hughes 2016, Cunningham 2019, Whipple 2019, Cobb, 2019.) T0 2020 the major producers have not made a profit in any year of operation while accumulating a debt of over one quarter of a trillion dollars. It seems that an oil price high enough for producers to break even is too high for the economy to avoid recession. Unless there are major technical breakthroughs reducing costs, which are not thought to be likely, at some point in the near future lenders will probably cease providing capital to the fracking sector. A major factor increasing costs is the decline in the energy return on the energy that has to be invested to produce energy. There is a strong case that it will either not be possible for renewable energy sources to replace fossil fuels or that it will be too expensive. (Trainer, 2017.) As noted above, only 20% of demand is in the form of electricity, which is the easiest task. It will be much more costly to run heavy trucks, farm tractors, mining equipment, ships and aircraft on renewables. Ahmed (2017) presents a persuasive case that most Middle East oil-producing nations are encountering such serious ecological, food, water, population growth and climate problems that their capacity to export oil could be largely eliminated within ten years. Meanwhile the amount of energy it takes to produce a barrel of oil is increasing significantly (Brockway, et al., 2019). Despite these alarming observations the precariousness and urgency of the petroleum situation is attracting little attention. Debt. After remaining more or less stable for decades, global debt has quadrupled since 1999. (Hienberg, 2018.) It is now equivalent to around three times global GDP, is far higher than before the GFC, and is regarded by various economists as inevitably bound to crash soon. (Brown, 2018, Lu, 2020.) In addition to these three major factors many other biophysical difficulties are reducing the capacity of economies to deal with the accelerating problems tightening the limits noose, including water scarcity, fisheries decline, deteriorating mineral grades, accelerating costs of ecological disruption such as climate change, agricultural soil damage and loss, chemical poisoning of ecosystems, species loss, ocean acidification and sea rise. A [collection] ~~holocaust~~ of extinctions appears to have begun, now possibly including insects and thus jeopardising pollination of food crops. These and other factors will cut into the diminishing resources available to apply to solving system difficulties. Existing political institutions are not capable of making changes of the magnitude required. Our institutions are reasonably good at making small changes. Elections are usually won by small margins and therefore governments cannot afford to irritate significant numbers of voters or they will be thrown out. But they cannot adopt policies that go against the vital interests of significant sectors. This situation is partly a consequence of the self-interested, competitive, individualistic ethos built into present cultural and political systems. Burdens are not shared fairly or appropriately but are typically left to groups least able to avoid them. Because dealing with the global predicament effectively would be seen to involve painful adjustments on a massive scale people would be acutely sensitive to perceived inequities in the changes they were called upon to make. Fierce resistance, disputes and appeals would surely proliferate over the new options presented, the changes in locations, and especially the dramatically reduced levels of income, purchasing and consumption. Authoritarian governments can force big changes through but current democracies are much less able to. The problems interact, compound and positively feedback. Often solving one problem increases difficulties in other areas, especially by increasing energy demand. More importantly, problems often have multiplicative interactive effects. For instance, Ahmed’s analysis of Middle Eastern oil producers shows how climate change, drought, rising temperatures, soil loss and rapid population growth are combining to generate intractable challenges for governments. As their capacity to cope declines they resort to repression in an effort to contain discontent and maintain order, which feeds back to generate more discontent, further disrupting productive systems and capacity to cope. Thus the difficulties now being experienced due to climate change are likely to be swamped soon by a tidal wave of many compounding positive feedback effects. Several analysts including those listed above have detailed how the combined effects are likely to trigger sudden and catastrophic breakdown in the global economy.

### ! – Populism

#### Neoliberalism causes the rise of populism – Xi and Trump are the latest examples of nationalist uprisings that result in war

Gonzalez-Vicente, R. (2020). The liberal peace fallacy: violent neoliberalism and the temporal and spatial traps of state-based approaches to peace. Territory, Politics, Governance, 8(1), 100-116. Accessed 7/1/2024 CSUF JmB TDI

Writing in 1998, Philip Cerny identified the emergence of a generalized sense of insecurity following the end of the Cold War, which he described as a ‘neomedieval scenario’ or a situation of ‘durable disorder’, mirroring in a way what Eric Hobsbawm had earlier called a ‘descent to barbarism’ (Hobsbawm, 1994). Cerny explained that this durable disorder was characterized by: nation-state based institutions and processes having been transformed into transmission belts and enforcement mechanisms for decisions arrived at on different levels of the wider global system, but with that system as a whole becoming increasingly incapable of generating effective, authoritative, multifunctional coordination and control mechanisms or governance structures. (Cerny, 1998, p. 45) Some of these elements are still discernible, and have been even amplified, in the current juncture. With market efficiency having become a major ordering mechanism across jurisdictions, and with global economic competition tightening profit margins and deepening the productivity race, policy elites across the world struggle to promote economic competitiveness while maintaining social legitimacy all at once. Yet, rather than rendering state institutions obsolete, dysfunctional or completely delegitimized, the contemporary crisis has resulted in attempts to renew or transform the political discourse as a way of providing authoritative answers to the durable (social) disorder. Indeed, some of these attempts have relied, in one way or another, on class rationales (e.g., Sanders in the United States, Syriza in Greece), but many invoke the nation as an (imagined) community under attack, not necessarily by markets and elites, but by an ‘other’ that is often found in competing economies or immigrants and their cultures. These political rearticulations replace the optimistic globalizing rationales that liberal elites have prominently fomented since the 1980s, yet in a curious and troubling way, the new populist order promoted by the likes of Trump in the United States or Xi in China combines the centrality of markets and the role of the capitalist state in expanding them, with rising reactionary nationalism to assuage the social disorder brought about by a consolidating the world market. In order to trace the unfolding of neoliberalism’s contemporary illiberal moment, this paper has discussed the intimate dialectical relationship between neoliberal violence at various scales and the emergence of the new populist order, which has IR pundits pondering the increased likelihood of conflict. At one level, the durable social disorder of market integration should per se challenge the liberal peace panacea, given the many concrete violent manifestations of neoliberalism covered in this paper. At a different level, I have also tried to meet IR scholarship in its own terrain, understanding how some of these forms of neoliberal violence may seem inconsequential for theorists who focus on interstate war (within certain periods of time) as the only/main concern in the field of international relations. Here, I have relied on Polanyian understandings of a ‘counter movement’ to chart the links between processes of liberal market integration and the social and political repercussions that follow, including in our times an apparent rise in illiberal politics. To do so, I have relied on a temporal critique to identify the long-term political impacts of the social dislocation prompted by the pursuit of a market utopia. I have also explained the multiplicity of scales in which violence works through world market capitalism, arriving at a contemporary situation in which people across the world look for answers in defensive and aggressive forms of nationalism that cohabit in curious and conflicting ways with the continued prevalence of the world market order. In many ways, these conclusions are not entirely surprising. Activists and critical scholars of the global political economy, geographers, anthropologists and sociologists have for decades studied the destructive effects of liberal market integration, from the impacts on job destruction following the implementation of free-trade agreements to the increased commodification and destruction of nature or the rising insecurity that we experience as market principles come to govern our everyday lives – all these having been politically conditioned and supported by institutions that ensure the reproduction of a system which continues to transfer risk from markets to individuals despite important forms of resistance (Cammack, 2004). Yet, these insights have not been easily incorporated into IR debates on conflict and indeed have been deliberately ignored by proponents of a liberal or capitalist peace, who insist on associating market integration with both democracy and a decreased likelihood of conflict, despite ample evidence for the contrary. This problematic position can be summarized in two false dichotomies that continue to pervade the argument for a liberal or capitalist peace: one between market liberalism and authoritarianism, which should have been completely refuted by Pinochet’s Chile, Lee Kuan Yew’s Singapore, the rise of the Chinese economy or ‘disciplinary neoliberalism’ in the West (Gill, 1995), and another between economic globalization and nationalism, clearly under challenge today by recent political developments in places such as the UK, the United States or China, to name a few. Although I should reiterate that it is not the goal of the paper to predict the likelihood of conflict, some broad conclusions can be reached from my critique of liberal peace. If the consolidation of the world market along competitive economic lines and models of Pareto-efficiency has resulted in various forms of violence upon many (environmental, political, economic) and a rise of belligerent discourses, one should expect that replacing the goals of efficiency (or at least prevailing understandings of efficiency) and profitability with those of social justice could deliver different outcomes (Sandbrook, 2011). Here we could imagine processes of integration that put the rights of people and nature before those of capital – for example, with trade and investment agreements that penalize environmentally destructive methods of production, impose severe tariffs on products manufactured in jurisdictions where labour is unfree and where inequality is reflected in abusive salaries, or that prohibit the use of tax havens. These objectives will not be easily achieved, given the consolidation of the world market and its competitive pressures and, indeed, the great material interests at play. To reach any of these goals, internationalist allegiances between progressive forces across nation-states would be necessary, both to push for the retreat of the market frontier from the many aspects of social life that it has inundated in the last decades and to combat the tendency to seek defence in national identities that hamper the sort of transnational political mobilization needed to take on eminently global challenges (Gonzalez-Vicente & Carroll, 2017; Sandbrook, 2011). Importantly, such campaigns are not a distant utopia, but have been a powerful oppositional force since the early days of the neoliberal era, with their voices gaining renewed prominence in the West following the 2007/08 Global Financial Crisis. Ultimately, the future of global peace will depend on societies’ ability to come together and shape a world order where the rights of people and nature prevail over those of capital and, indeed, over the dystopia of a disembedded and dehumanized world market.

### ! – Tuns Oil

#### Cap turns oil crisis – profit motive ensures endless war

Bates 20 [Sarah. Writer and political journalist for *Socialist Worker*. “Capitalism—a system rigged for oil.” *Socialist Worker*. February 11th, 2020. <https://socialistworker.co.uk/art/49591/Capitalism+a+system+rigged+for+oil>]

But capitalism is driven forward by competition among rival corporations. If bosses didn’t try to maximise profits, they would be driven out of business and replaced by another company. This means the short-term drive for profits comes ahead of planet and people. So the problem is not just the fat cats who sit in the boardrooms or the politicians who protect their wealth and power. It’s the entire system that to blame—and the oil and fossil production are central to it. Fighting for a greener version of capitalism doesn’t confront the social, economic and political forces behind it. It’s not eating hamburgers or flying abroad for a holiday that powers the utter devastation seen by the floods in Jakarta, cyclone Idai in southern Africa or the bushfires in Australia. These events are a result of a climate catastrophe powered by a system built in the interests of the billionaires. Time is running out to take meaningful action for the future of the planet. Before capitalism ruins it, we should burn down the system and create a new socialist society from the ashes. Oil demand grows even though the planet burns If oil extraction continues at the same pace, the results will be disastrous. If it increases, the consequences are unfathomable. Yet demand for oil is rising and the development of renewable energy doesn’t come anywhere close to matching capitalism’s need for petrol. Global demand for oil will continue to grow until 2030, according to the International Energy Agency. That’s the year the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said was the last opportunity to prevent the worst-case scenario for the planet. The IPCC said that oil and gas production needs to fall by about 20 percent by 2030 and by about 55 percent by 2050 to stop the critical above 1.5 degree level. But the US was pumping 17.8 million barrels a day in November 2019—up from an average of 15.5 million the previous year. ExxonMobil is planning to pump 25 percent more oil and gas in 2025 than in 2017. Rising anger over climate change is pushing the fossil fuel firms to appear as though they are changing. At a shareholders meeting in May 2019, over 99 percent of BP shareholders voted in a favour of a resolution by the Climate Action 100+ group. It called on the firm to make greater disclosures on its emissions and show how investments agree with the Paris climate agreements. But bosses were quick to point out that any changes wouldn’t be hurting their bottom line. BP chairman Helge Lund said, “My mission is to see BP advancing the transition while remaining an attractive investment proposition.” Firms are also grabbing new opportunities to build fracking or tar sands operations. Tar sands is extracted through “strip mining”, where everything on the surface is removed to get to the oil. It releases even more emissions than other types of mining. Oil firms dependent on the states The bosses that sit in oil and gas boardrooms are some of the most powerful people in the world. Their power and influence guides prime ministers, presidents and kings. With one of the largest reserves of oil in the world, the Middle East is a critical prize for Western imperialist powers. They bomb, invade and try to control states in order to maintain control of the oil fields. Century-old dodgy deals cooked up a by Western governments, oil barons and local rulers still shape the region today. In the wake of the First World War oil consortiums made agreements with British and French government to secure access to oil-rich territories. This was important because oil in the Middle East was cheaper to extract than in the US. And it was also beneficial for imperialist powers looking for allies to back up domination of the region. After the Second World War, the US doubled down on its attempts to control the Middle East. It backed Arab rulers it could count on to clamp down on political ferment. From the 1970s free market policies were imposed by US-backed governments and wealth generated from oil was grabbed by Arab ruling class and multinational corporations. Energy companies don’t directly fight wars to maintain control of their interests—but back up states that can guarantee the pro fits keep rolling in. Western governments cloak these manoeuvres in the language of “liberation” and “freedom”. Its vast oil reserves—and how central it is to capitalism—means the Middle East is a battleground for imperial rivalries. Securing control of the region is important for solidifying their military, political and economic dominance within the global economy. Each company and each state is locked into an eternal competition with their rivals to gain a bigger slice of the pie. They’re all fighting not get swallowed up or driven out of business. So it’s capitalism—and specifically the competition inherent in it—that drives these conflicts. Oil isn’t just careering us towards climate catastrophe. At every stage of its extraction, production and combustion, the industry symbolises not only capitalism’s disregard for the planet, but for the people who live on it.

## Alternatives

### Anti-Imperial Internationalism

#### The alternative is an anti-imperial internationalism

Artner, A., & Yin, Z. (2023). Towards a non-hegemonic world order–emancipation and the political agency of the Global South in a changing world order. Third World Quarterly, 44(10), 2193-2207. Accessed 7/2/24 CSUF JmB TDI

When we began organising this volume in 2021, the 1955 Asian–African conference in Bandung had just celebrated its 66th anniversary; the Non-Aligned Movement had been launched 60years earlier (in 1961); and the 1966 Trilateral Conference in Cuba had just turned 55years old. These ‘magic numbers’ – 66, 60, 55 – inspired the organisation of the Bandung– Belgrade–Havana conference in Indonesia, originally intended to be held in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a delay, so the conference took place a year later, between 7 and 14 November 2022, just ahead of the G20 meeting in Bali, Indonesia. The conference was organised by a broad, international network of the Bandung Spirit initiative, for which Darwis Khudori, an Indonesian engineering architect, historian, and associate professor at the University of Le Havre, has been the engine for more than a decade. We originally wished to contribute to this valuable event by raising the waves and modes of the self-organisation of the Global South in the changing world order into the focus of attention with this collection. We wished to answer many questions. Can we say that there is an ongoing encirclement of the global centre by the countries of the Global South? What forms do the emancipatory movements of the Global South take and what roles are they playing in the transformation of the world order? What lessons can we learn from the past and present experiments aimed at building a better society beyond capitalism? How can the emancipation movements of the Global South be promoted on either a national or an international level? What is the significance of different cultures, identities and ideologies in making the world better than the prevailing, individualism-driven, competition-based, oppressive one? When forming our questions at the beginning of 2021, we had no idea that the change of the world would accelerate so quickly. As we put down these words, mankind is already rapidly approaching a huge economic and social crisis, if not an annihilating nuclear World War III. Today it is more important than ever to find a way out of the increasingly violent world of imperialism, which started its rampage with the original capital accumulation and colonisation, and sustains itself through the perpetual, increasing exploitation of man and nature. For a long time, our attention has been focused on the actions of the great powers. Their attempt to dominate and govern the world has long been the driving force in shaping the global order. Such a will to dominate has always been countered by the will to resist. It is the dynamic interaction and tension between the two forces that is constantly shaping our world. However, our international relations discourse has largely relied on the practices of the dominating forces to develop its theories. The limitation of viewing the world through the perspective of the great powers is two-fold. On one hand, it creates an ahistorical illusion that the world order is primarily determined by the power struggle between a handful of dominant, self-interested states. On the other hand, it creates a teleological framework, restricting our capacity to understand the diversity of state behaviour and the implications of state international conduct. Our rapidly transforming reality reminds us of the limits of our perspective and theoretical frame for understanding the world order. Therefore, we propose to look beyond the major powers and into the state-making practices of, and international conduct among, the countries in the Global South. The Global South countries, which have long been under the domination of the big powers in the Global North, have fed imperialism with their natural and human resources for centuries. Even today, their economic development and state-making projects are still hampered by the ‘soft’ means of neo-colonialism. On the one hand, the norms and institutions, like human rights, rule-of-law, and ‘NGOisation’ (non-governmental organizationisation) that the Global North imposes on the Global South in the name of promoting development, often violate traditional national norms, foster neo-liberal policies and result in increased underdevelopment (Omach 2021; Sakue-Collins 2021; Sesay 2021). On the other hand, skyrocketing inequalities, bad governments and violent conflicts, mostly in Africa, are often the results of the old, neo-colonial practices (Parashar and Schulz 2021). The constantly recurring problems have led to continually renewing social movements, whose activities cannot be reduced to a national level. The emancipatory movements of the Global South always have an international dimension, which the pioneers of these countries recognised as early as the mid-1950s, when they argued for the right of nations to develop independently and peacefully. Our collection offers a sample of these national emancipatory movements that affect both national and international relations. The political momentum in the Third World Before engaging in a discussion of the Global South, the first problem we encounter is the problem of naming. What terminology should we use to refer to the countries that are both economically underdeveloped and politically oppressed by the hegemonic order dominated by the superpower and major powers in the Global North? Our collection uses the term the ‘Global South’ with reservations. This widely accepted term fails to capture the complexity of inequality across the world. Such inequality reflects a structural problem of an imperialist world order, which permanently locks a majority of states and social groups at the bottom of a global economic, intellectual, and socio-cultural value chain. Such an imperialist world order is fundamentally hierarchical. The making of such an order should be historically contextualised. We embrace the Global South to be part of a newly emerged political and intellectual global trend, which aims to move beyond the Western-centric world imagination. We do this by investigating the history of modernisation and transnational cooperation in mainly Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We are also keenly aware of the geographic limitations implied in the term ‘Global South’. Some articles in this volume, therefore, use ‘Third World’, a seemingly outdated term, to refer to a political momentum behind the transnational solidarity movement during the first three decades since the end of World War II in 1945. The Third World, in this context, brings forward a shared will among the oppressed countries in a capitalist world system. The political aspiration embedded in the solidarity movements in the Third World is to build a fairer and more democratic world in which states are equal not only legally but also politically and economically. Here, the ‘Third World’ implies an unequal structure of the existing capitalist world system. Through this term, we emphasise the dialectical relation between the will to dominate and the will to resist. By analysing the state-making within, and cooperation among, the Third World countries, we want to bring forward the oppressed countries as a constructive force in shaping the modern world order. To avoid confusion, we use the term the ‘Third World’ as a historical and political denominator, shared by countries in the Global South. We want to emphasise that the historical and political significance of the Third World resides neither in its status of being oppressed nor in its violent resistance. Its significance lies, instead, in its pursuit of human emancipation and national liberation, which makes countries in the Global South active agents in the making of the world order and human history in general. A brief historical contextualisation will help us further clarify the terminological confusion. Mao Zedong said in 1975: We are living in an age in which four hundred years of the rule of capitalism is decaying before our very eyes. This is the age in which countries are fighting for independence, nations are fighting for liberation, and the people want revolution. Revolution is the main trend in the world today! (Mao 1975, 20) Mao made this political statement in a historical moment that Samir Amin referred to as the ‘Bandung era’ (Amin 2006, 85). This period witnessed a surging enthusiasm for comprehensive inter-state cooperation on economic, political and cultural affairs between Asian and African countries. The bipolar confrontation between the two hegemonic powers, namely the US and the USSR, was not the only defining feature of the Cold War era. The Third World countries were actively involved in shaping the post-World War II global order. Through their bilateral interactions and various institution-building efforts – including the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Afro–Asian Peoples’ Solidarity Organization (AAPSO), the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAAL), and Group 77 at the United Nations – the Third World countries became a prominent driving force behind the development of a ‘negotiated globalisation’ in the 1960s and 1970s (Amin 2006, 2019a). Today, however, the Third World, as a category, appears to have lost its theoretical legitimacy. It has been increasingly considered to be an outdated, contested or even ‘offensive’ term (NPR 2021; Clarke 2018), since the 1980s, particularly in the English-speaking world. More ‘neutral’ terms such as ‘developing’, ‘undeveloped’, ‘less developed’, and ‘the Global South’ have been introduced to refer to the areas and economic condition that were formerly depicted by the term ‘the Third World’ (Tomlinson 2003). The political momentum behind the Third World ideals of national development and a more egalitarian world order withered away as well. To many of the Third World leaders, as Julius Nyerere sadly expressed in the 8th NAM Summit in Harare in 1986, the Third World symbolised a movement, which had gone from ‘growth and hope’ to ‘disillusionment’ (Prashad 2007, 276). The challenges faced by the Third World countries should not be simplistically viewed as a decline. It is a historical recession. For a short period beginning in the 1980s, the movement lost its political momentum. However, its political aim, to construct a fairer and more democratic world order by emancipating all nations, large or small, has remained valid. Today, as it was after the Second World War when the old colonial empires collapsed, a true cultural, economic and even political independence, for many countries, has yet to be reached. Revolutions can only be fought after the acquisition of national sovereignty. The three streams about which Mao spoke – the fight of the national ruling classes to enlarge their scope for manoeuvre and get greater access to resources of rent; the will of nations to develop according to their own needs; and the natural aspiration of people towards socialism – are all interwoven and express the need and will to overcome capitalism on a global scale. Samir Amin frequently quoted these words of Mao. He stressed that polarisation, which is inherent in capitalism, fuels ‘a permanent natural rebellion against the capitalist world order’ (Amin 2019b, 29). We can say, paraphrasing Karl Polanyi (1944), that there is a global double movement. One side pushes for a more profit-oriented market and the other, the global countermovement, resists and tries to protect society against predatory market forces (Artner 2023). Beyond Eurocentrism The relationship between state and market is an intriguing one. The Eurocentric ontology stresses a dichotomous relationship between the two. Freeing the market powers from state control has always been depicted as one of the driving forces enabling the modern transformation of Europe. However, can this understanding of the market–state relationship be transplanted outside Europe, particularly to the areas where local economy and social structure have been devastated by the imperial mode of modernisation? To the core countries in the capitalist world system, such as the United States, France, and the UK, ‘yes’ is the obvious answer to the question. This Eurocentric discussion of development provides a teleological understanding to the world’s future. In his short essay published in 1952, Alfred Sauvy borrowed the term tiers état (the Third Estate) from French political tradition and used it to describe the population in underdeveloped areas across the globe. He claimed that tiers monde (the Third World) depicted the political aspiration of these people who wished their countries to transform into developed capitalism (Sauvy 1952, 14). By using the term tiers monde, Sauvy depicts the socio-economic condition of sous-développés (underdevelopment) in the peripheral areas of capitalist global order. This socio-economic understanding of global inequality was quickly adopted by intellectuals such as Georges Balandier, whose work focused on the developmental issues within colonised or formerly colonised areas (Balandier 1956). The implication of this developmental discourse is that the circumstance of underdevelopment in the colonised and semi-colonised worlds is an economic issue. Thus, the issue of underdevelopment is taken out of the historical context of colonial expansion and the capitalist world system. The resistance from the oppressed is then viewed as a reaction of poverty and desperation. The focus of development led by the liberal West is to eliminate the threat of resistance, which is understood as a structural violence to the liberal world order (Galtung 1971; Worsley 1984). Instead of addressing the fundamental inequality of the capitalist world system, developmental study and modernisation theory in the US, starting from the late 1950s, began actively exploring the possibility of pacifying the Third World resistance through further capitalist global expansion (Millikan and Rostow 1957). During the Cold War, the eminent threat of the Third World countries leaning towards the opposing Socialist camp forced the Western camp to address the Third World developmental issue. However, with the fall of the Soviet Union, the Third World also lost its political significance. American scholars of international relations lost interest in the Third World completely. This argument states that, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Third World no longer bears the value of being a playground for the superpower competition for influence during the Cold War. It is asserted that most Third World countries cannot threaten the United States, and the few that could will not, as it would not be in their interests (Buchanan 1990; Maynes 1990; Van Evera 1990; Hendrickson 1992). Not every American political scientist shared the same optimism. Some suggested that instability in the Third World states could still threaten American interests and the US-dominated world peace (David 1992–1993). In this scenario, the Third World was seen as a place filled with ‘failed states’ and ‘rogue states’ which were either completely ‘ungovernable’ or waiting to be ‘fixed’. They posed challenges to ‘American national security and international peace and stability’ (Yoo 2011). Nevertheless, neither view considered the Third World nations to be autonomous entities. From this hegemon-centric perspective, the Third World countries could only rely on the favour of the major powers to gain their chances of economic development and relevance in global politics. During the same period, we witnessed the emerging tendency to push the entire problem of the ‘Third World’, and the centre–periphery relations in the capitalist world order, out of the academic and political lexicon. On a geopolitical level, this transformation featured the decline of the Soviet Union and its sinking to a Third World status – resulting in the emergence of the concept of the ‘Global South’ – and the rapid rise of the United States as a unipolar global hegemon. On an economic level, it echoed the increasing influence of neo-liberal globalisation, replacing the negotiated globalisation made possible by the newly independent, formerly colonised, and economically underdeveloped nations largely in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Amin 2019a). The academic rejection of the Third World also saw the return of the economic determinist understanding of inequality among nations and regions. The neo-liberal development model in the West in the 1980s was reaffirmed with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, leading towards a widespread triumphalism that the future of human development was determined to move towards globalisation of market economics and electoral democracy Despite the post-Cold War political exultation, the economic condition that shapes the underdevelopment of the Third World countries has not changed. The economists and modernisation theorists see the neo-liberal globalisation as a silver bullet for all the problems in the Third World countries. Most researchers in the English-speaking world also agree that global stratification is not determined only by economic differentiation. The social systems, as they pointed out, also play a vital role in human development (Worsley 1964, 1984). However, proponents of the neo-liberal globalisation do not offer any innovative solutions to address the developmental gap. Instead, they go back to the framework brought forward by the modernisation theorists in the 1950s. Such a project of modernisation builds on the classic British, liberal economic theory of comparative advantage. It argues that the technological and capital input from the West will mobilise the surplus labour in the Afro–Asian underdeveloped countries. By further integrating the Third World countries into the advanced, Western-dominated global market, the West could build their confidence in the democratic process and, consequently, prevent the Third World from leaning towards the Communist bloc (Millikan and Rostow 1957). Replacing Eurocentrism with hegemon-centrism The divide between the West and the rest is not simply a geographic one. Instead, it should be understood as a particular way of comprehending the world through a hegemon-centric structure, in which the West is the hegemonic centre responsible for governing the world according to its own image. This hegemon-centric view sees the world as a hierarchical one. It envisions the forming of a global order based on a Hobbesian state theory. It holds fast to the assumption that the ‘governance of international systems’ could not be possible without the presence of ‘empires, hegemonies and great powers’ (Gilpin 1981). Even for Keohane’s rule-based multilateral cooperation, a strong state power still needs to be the pivot point, providing leadership and security for the smooth running of the international order (Keohane 1984). This hegemon-centric hierarchical understanding of the world order reminds us of the discussions of civilisation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On the issue of development, the hegemon-centric view assumes that only domination by a hegemonic power or a cohort of powers could constitute the optimal situation for ensuring and maintaining an open and stable world economy. The small and weak nations do not make any significant impact in global affairs. Instead, their development is assessed by predominantly two criteria, namely the level of integration with the neo-liberal world economy, and the similarity of their political system to the liberal democratic countries in the Global North. Such a hegemon-centric view of the global order believes that the decline of one hegemon means confrontations and conflicts and will always lead to the rise of another (Keohane 1980, 1984; Gilpin 1975, 1981; Kindleberger 1987). In this teleological destiny, nationalism around the world will always repeat the European historical experience, leading to expansionist aggression, causing havoc to people and the world (Kedourie 1961). A state will either strive to become a regional or global hegemon and succeed, or it will be placed under the dominance of a rising hegemon. The prevalence of this hegemonic-centric worldview corresponds with the ascent of a unipolar world order mainly under the US hegemony. This is depicted as an ‘era of globalisation’. However, international institutions continue to be strategic instruments of US will. The American state is undisputedly the ‘hegemon of the system’ that exercises its power through military intervention, enormous nuclear and conventional weapon arsenals, the dominance of the dollar in international finance, and the selective deregulation of markets (Strange 1982). By beginning to discuss the diverse experiences of modernisation, manifested through the state-making and nation-building history of the Global South countries, we hope to move away from the hegemon-centric worldview and truly challenge its epistemology. One of our aspirations is to democratise theories by engaging with the practices of modernisation by peoples beyond the Euromerican historical tradition. We aim to explore beyond the limitation of normative thinking and incorporate dialectics into our analysis. Hence, we propose to focus on the relations between different forces and the constructive power manifested in the process of interaction. In this case, world system theory and its related dependency theory become the analytical foundation for the Global South, considered as a viable category beyond the hegemon-centric and economic-determinist understanding of the world. The underdeveloped status of the Global South is an inherited structural component of the capitalist world system. Without addressing the structural problems of the hegemon-centric capitalist world system, it is impossible to resolve or even alleviate the inequality and the undemocratic nature of the existing world order. Organisation of this volume This volume encompasses a broad spectrum in terms of space, time and issues. It deals with all parts of the Global South (Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe); it raises economic, political, environmental and cultural questions; it looks back into the past and investigates the present – but, in both cases, from the perspective of a greater future. The first group of articles discusses general issues: the waves of anti-systemic movements since 1870; the comparative achievements of the socialism-oriented countries in terms of the population’s standard of living since 1960; and the question of economic management during a transition from capitalism to socialism in a periphery country, using the example of Cuba. This is followed by articles about the emancipatory movements of Latin America, in general, and the Amazon region, in particular. While these articles deal mostly with the economic base, the last group of articles concentrates on the superstructure, discussing the relevance of culture, ideology and education, based on the experiences and challenges of consciousness formation in Rojava, China and Africa. All of the articles contribute to our understanding about what kind of counter-hegemonic and anti-capitalist movements, and with what results, have been influencing the ongoing change of our world. In his paper, Chungse Jung renews the discussion of the antisystemic movements, invented by Immanuel Wallerstein, and redefines them as emancipatory struggles in the Global South (Jung 2023). He investigates the two threads of the movements, and the struggles against exploitation and exclusion, from an international standpoint. The movements against exploitation include those mobilisations that aim at ending or mitigating economic oppression, such as poverty, austerity measures, dispossession of people of their land, and other forms of primitive accumulation. Struggles against exclusion denote those local, national or international movements that contest the political subordination of people, mainly through racist and ethnic discrimination. For the empirical analysis regarding the number and nature of anti-systemic movements between 1870 and 2016, the author collected data from The New York Times. He found four great waves of popular protests in the Global South. In all of them, the most characteristic theme of the protests was the struggle against exclusion. While the proportion of struggles against exploitation in the protests reached its peak in the middle of the twentieth century and declined afterwards, the rate of the struggles against exclusion was the highest during the 2010s. The increasing importance of the struggle against exclusion coincides with the growing signs of the decline of the US hegemony. However, in the era of neo-liberalism, the anti-systemic movements as a whole weakened and, by the end of the examined period, a new wave did not unfold. We will likely experience a new wave in the coming years, as the contradictions between the imperialist forces and the rising powers of the Global South sharpen. Chungse Jung’s paper also demonstrates that nationalism has always been at the forefront of the anti-colonialist liberation struggles, and, even today, nationalist and ethnic conflicts are strongly connected to the states’ struggles for resources. In our age of accelerated change in the world system, we can count on a new rise of nationalism. We note that this phenomenon relates to the need of states for independence, which is underpinned by the wish of all nations for liberty. Whether nationalism, awakened in this way, becomes a framework of hatred, enmity and xenophobia or is guided towards the feeling of solidarity with other nations depends on which political forces take the lead in the struggle for independence. To this question, Yin Zhiguang’s article (Yin 2023) gives an answer. Alexandra Arabadzhyan discusses the past experiences of socialism-oriented countries, but from another angle (Arabadzhyan 2023). She investigates the problem of macroeconomic management through the Great Economic Debate in Cuba in the 1960s. From her paper, we come to know Che Guevara as a political economist who studied Marxism assiduously and applied his knowledge immediately and consequentially to the transition of Cuba from dependent, colonial capitalism to socialism. Arabadzhyan presents Guevara’s position on the role of the market during the socialist construction. Following Marx, Guevara defined socialism as a society in which the capitalist commodity production is abolished, and a strong state works for the society (the working people) with the help of central planning. Guevara’s starting point in the debate was that the rule of value belongs to capitalism, so its role should diminish as the construction of socialism progresses, and in no way should market mechanisms be allowed to dominate the socialist construction. Guevara saw the use of the law of value, in the Soviet Union during the New Economic Policy in the 1920s, as a major step backward – but nevertheless a necessary one because of the low concentration of production. However, he also thought that, as the market logic and capitalist values did not disappear even after its industrialisation, the USSR would return to capitalism. In the same vein, he opposed the contemporary pro-market economic reforms in Eastern Europe, because these implemented the profit motive in state-owned companies and, through decentralisation, destroyed the hierarchic structure of central planning. He was convinced that, instead of the law of value feeding the interests of the individual, the socialist morale should drive people towards a greater and better performance during the transition to socialism. Guevara’s insistence on both the determining role of central planning, and the crucial importance of the socialist mind-set on the long road to socialism is a hypothetical message to the Global South that is worth considering, in light of both the collapse of the socialist experiment in Eastern Europe, and the achievements of China over the last century. Bruno De Conti and Patricia Villen start their article by explaining why it is misleading to interpret the rise of the Latin American emancipatory movements as a product of the global neo-liberal turn in the 1980s (De Conti and Villen 2023). They emphasise that neo-liberalism worsened, but did not create, the contradictions of peripheral capitalism. The Latin American social movements are deeply rooted in the historical heritage of colonialism and neo-colonialism, which, in turn, determined the path of the integration of the subcontinent into the global capitalist division of labour. The pressure of capitalism on the working classes of the Global North has become more tangible as neo-liberalism has gained ground, but this pressure was a reality in the everyday life of people in the Global South well before that. The most authentic face of capitalism is seen in the periphery of the capitalist world order. The authors describe the main characteristics of the Latin American societies, which derived from their colonial pasts and resulted in structural underdevelopment. These features, for example the concentration of lands, the oligarchic rulers, the monoculture, the genocide of the native population and the relentless influence of the US, have led the Latin American societies towards an externally oriented, dependent development. De Conti and Villen provide examples for the most important movements in Latin America, which are organised around four issues: livelihood, territory, ethnic identity and nature. Through their descriptions of the landless and homeless workers’ movement, the Zapatistas, and the Buen Vivir movement, the authors show how these have grown beyond their original, immediate goals and arrived at an attitude of criticism against the colonial structures of capitalism. These various movements challenge cultural, economic and political aspects of the Latin American reality and have a tendency to unite in a complex struggle against all socio-economic and environmental problems produced by the global capitalist accumulation. The lesson shown to us by De Conti and Villen is very much in line with the conclusion of Gabriel Domingues and Sérgio Sauer, who found that the different streams of resistance in the Brazilian Amazon region culminated in a common anti-systemic frontier (Domingues and Sauer 2023). The authors state that the indigenist, environmentalist and peasant organisations, mobilisations and other grassroots activities originated in the nineteenth century but gained momentum after the rise of neo-liberalism in the 1980s. Their struggle has evolved with varying degrees of success depending on the objectives (class content) of the governments in power. The strengthening of the agrarian extractive frontier after Jair Bolsonaro’s victory in the 2018 elections has accelerated the cooperation between the free streams of movements and has led to the creation of what the authors call a socio-environmental frontier. On top of that, the global relevance of the tropical forest extinction has allied local resistance in the Brazilian region with the environmental organisations of the industrialised countries and has given new tools to the movements to resist the ‘predatory developmentalist model’ of the local and national elites. The concentration of efforts in the common socio-environmental frontier has yielded fruit – for example, numerous protected areas have been created in the Amazon – but these improvements are far from enough to change the basic socio-economic relations, or the superstructure, both of which work for the survival of anti-social and environmentally unsustainable modes of production. There is a risk, the authors warn, that local initiatives and communities will fall into the trap of the market logic that surrounds their activity. In this respect the accumulation and concentration of capital under the control of the ‘green’ multinational organisations of the Global North poses one of the biggest threats. We know from Marx that in every class society, the ruling ideology is the ideology of the ruling class. This truth is excellently illustrated by Elise Boyle Espinosa and Adam Ronan. Their article (Boyle Espinosa and Ronan 2023) is about the importance of education through the example of the self-declared Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, better known as ‘Rojava’. The authors describe how education managed to create a political community that is different from the nationalist-capitalist mode of social reproduction. Their knowledge about the topic is based on their fieldwork in mid-2018, when they visited Kurdish-majority cities and conducted individual and group interviews. Because they were located in four different states and subjected to oppression and nationalist policies, a logical choice for the Kurdish movement for emancipation has been an ideology that seeks emancipation through ecology, Jineology (the science of women) and pluralism, in place of the traditional ideologies that might guide a nation. On these pillars of a democratic nation, elaborated by Abdullah Öcalan, the ideology of a multicultural society is built. The ethical values, including the traditional ‘equality, democracy, freedom’, and the resistance against oppression are the foundations of education in Rojava. Their education is multicultural and multi-lingual. Representation, participation and decentralisation are not only incorporated in the curriculum but also practised in the everyday life of the schools and the whole autonomous region. Although the number of schools under Rojava’s administration has increased, the attempts to destroy the educational system have persisted and created ‘a war of education’. The schools of Rojava are not officially recognised by Syria, and do not promise good career opportunities to students. However, those who adopt this ideology of emancipation become soldiers of a better society and will support the revolution in Rojava. Zhiguang Yin continues the discussion on the role of education in the socialist nation-building of the Third World (Yin 2023). His article focuses on cultural aspects in the formation of international solidarity among peoples of the Third World, fighting against imperial oppression. The author leads us to China in the late 1950s and describes several concrete events that illustrate how the Afro–Asian solidarity movement functioned within the framework of the Great Leap Forward of Culture and served to build a progressive, internationalist, national identity of Chinese people. Today, in the age of accelerated change in the world order, the lessons of the state- and nation-making processes after the Second World War in the Third World are coming back to the fore. National independence was the core issue in that era. However, the formation of nations and states in the Third World has always been different from that of the ‘First World’ during the nineteenth century. While the latter was built on war, the former involved nation-building with the leadership of strong governments, helped by transnational solidarity and mutual aid, mainly within the Afro– Asian world. There, the nationalism of peoples fighting for their independence has always been interwoven with internationalism and respect for other nations. Another lesson from Yin’s paper is that such nation-building can only be successful if the state mobilises people for this purpose by raising awareness about anti-imperialist internationalism. If, in the process of nation-making, people are able to identify themselves as a population in a very similar position to the people of other nations, the national feeling will never become xenophobic nationalism. If this ‘similar position’ of people is understood to mean a similar place in the world order, their hatred will be directed against the inequality between nations and classes itself, rather than against the other nations as such. The leaders of the revolutions that have managed to stay on their feet, like Lenin, Mao, Guevara, or Kim Il Sung, have all emphasised that, in the transition from capitalism to socialism, the elements of the superstructure, like politics, culture and the state of mind of the citizens in general, gain priority over the economy. This is also true if we consider the transition on a global level, from a world order in which hegemony prevails to another that is founded on the equality of nations. From this point of view, the Afro–Asian cultural cooperation after the Second World War played an important role in the process of the transformation of the global order. The Movement helped to create an alternative vision to the Anglo-Saxon narratives of modernisation and thereby facilitated the process of cultural decolonisation. This leads us to the conclusion that the nationalism of the people of the Third World can only exist as an anti-imperialist, internationalist interpretation of ‘the national pride’. Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni’s article is also related to the problem of changing the world by changing the minds of the oppressed (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2023). He interprets the change necessary for the global order as re-envisioning the world – ‘reworlding’, as he calls it – from the perspective of the Global South, a viewpoint in direct opposition to that of their colonisers’ Eurocentric reality and worldview. We call this process the emancipatory movement of the Global South, or, to use the author’s own term, the Global South ‘project’. This project takes many forms, ideological as well as material, from the formation of aspirations and ideologies to waging protests and revolutions, but all forms are united in their counter-hegemonic focus and rejection of the colonialist model of the world. Ndlovu-Gatsheni goes on to describe the Africa-related movements, ideologies and activism in greater detail. He chooses the Haitian Revolution as the starting point of the effort to envision and rebuild a world outside the colonisers’ prejudice and limitations. The Haitian Revolution represented an anti-racist and egalitarian worldview at the dawn of capitalism, and it provides an alternative to the Eurocentric epistemology of the world. We must note that since the time of the revolution, the imperialist forces have not allowed the Haitian people to get free from neo-colonial subordination and form their own destiny. Their fight continues to this day. The Haitian people’s more-than-a-century-long, almost constant struggle combines peoples’ desire for independence, liberty and revolution, and so it has become a perennial symbol of the fight against colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism and the oppressive world order of capitalism in general. Ndlovu-Gatsheni claims that the Haitian Revolution became the basis of the Black Radical Tradition, which has formed the epistemological framework of many initiatives such as Black Feminism, Negritude, The Harlem Renaissance, Garveyism, Rastafarianism, Pan-Africanism, Black Lives Matter, and others. Ndlovu-Gatsheni’s article contributes to our understanding about how the racist ideology, promoting the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon world built by the ‘white’ people, has left the oppressed populations no alternative other than ‘to assert their being’, by considering themselves a Black/Negro/African race whose destiny it is to shatter the unjust world order imposed on mankind by the white colonisers, and to create a new civilisation, free of oppression. The revolutionary forces in the Global North, as well as globally, seem to pay more attention to the revolutions and wars for the independence of Asia (China, Viet Nam, Korea, etc.) and Latin America (Cuba, Chile, Venezuela, Bolivia, etc.) than to the emancipatory movements rooted in Africa. Taken together, the articles in this issue demonstrate that no emancipatory movement has existed in the Third World/Global South without an inherent international vein. Internationalism is in the very nature of the social movements of these countries, even if the movements started with different original foci. They all are rooted in the experiment of colonisation and the struggle against its long-lasting effects. Unlike the social movements of the Global North, where the efforts of the working classes for self-protection relate exclusively to exploitation by their own capitalist class, the social movements of the Global South cannot but target both their own national capitalist classes and the transnational capitalist class, of which the national capitalist classes are appendixes but also competitors. In this way, the working classes of both the Global North and the Global South are opposing the same global ruling class, but from different positions. The working classes of the Global North are situated between the global ruling class and the exploited masses of the global periphery. Exploited as they may be, the working classes of the Global North, as a whole, belong to the global labour aristocracy by the mere existence of Western imperialism. Engels already realised in 1858 that … the English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that the ultimate aim of this most bourgeois of all nations would appear to be the possession, alongside the bourgeoisie, of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat. In the case of a nation which exploits the entire world this is, of course, justified to some extent. (Engels 1858, 343 - emphasis in the original) Half a century later, Lenin observed the rise in the number of imperialist countries and concluded that ‘A privileged upper stratum of the proletariat in the imperialist countries lives partly at the expense of hundreds of millions in the uncivilised nations’ (Lenin 1916, 107). Since then, the capital accumulation on the global scale has deepened, expanded and strengthened this mechanism. So, the historical task of changing from a hierarchic and hegemonic world to an egalitarian one is left to the Global South. However, as this challenge from the Global South strengthens, so the fight, put up by the decaying imperialism to preserve its hegemony, intensifies. This inevitably leads to increased pressure on the working people of the Global North. This we have seen in the last year, watching the boomerang effects of the sanctions imposed by the West on Russia, and in the growing popular protests against them in Europe. Our only hope can be that the multifaceted emancipatory movements of the Global South continue to strengthen and integrate until the point at which they are powerful enough to force the US-led imperialism to back away from its hegemonic position and allow the nations to establish their own true sovereignty. Reaching this point would open the way for a multipolar world, ‘where many worlds fit’ – as the Zapatistas say – and where socialism would be possible. As Zhou Enlai stated in his Bandung Speech in 1955, with more and more ‘Afro-Asian nations freeing themselves from the constraint of colonialism’, the ‘Afro-Asian region’ has transformed tremendously. The Afro-Asian peoples’ wish to regain ‘control of their own fates’ after a ‘long struggle’ against colonialism symbolises that ‘yesterday’s Asia and Africa’ are being made anew. The common historical experience of suffering and struggle enables the Afro–Asian peoples to envision their volonté générale to achieve ‘freedom and independence’, and to ‘change the socio-economical backwardness caused by the colonial rule’ (Enlai 1955, 112–114). In this long historical process of transformation, the Afro-Asian peoples have developed a sense of ‘empathy and solicitude’ that enables the Afro-Asian nations to peacefully coexist and achieve ‘friendly cooperation’ (Enlai 1955, 120). In the first few decades after World War II, a large percentage of humanity believed in the ideal of a new global order, in which the principle of sovereignty was not a synonym for hegemony. Nation-building initiatives were understood in the context of building a better future for the world. Ordinary people around the globe were engaged in discussions about international affairs, daring to believe that they could be the ‘driving force behind the making of history’. The vision embedded in the Third World movement might be idealistic in the eyes of today’s people, notably through the lenses of political realism and pragmatism. However, in the context of the 1950s, when the war-torn world was eagerly redeeming itself from its brutal hegemonic past, the discourse of internationalism indeed provided new hope for people who believed in the new world order as depicted in the United Nations Charter. It was in this moment of international solidarity that the need for redemption, transcendence and ultimately salvation was presented to the people through political practices. Today, the emancipation efforts seem to be intensifying at all levels.

### Class Struggle

#### The alternative is class prime --- a process of multiplicity that pulls together international movements and organizing strategies against neoliberal globalization

Hardt and Negri 2019 "Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, Empire, Twenty Years On, NLR 120, November–December 2019", [https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii120/articles/empire-twenty-years-on Accessed 7/2/](https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii120/articles/empire-twenty-years-on%20Accessed%207/2/)2024 CSUF JmB TDI

Multiplicity is becoming the exclusive horizon of our political imagination. The most inspiring movements of the past decades, from Cochabamba to Standing Rock, Ferguson to Cape Town, Cairo to Madrid, have been animated by multitudes. Leaderlessness is the label often given to these uprisings, especially by the media: and indeed, they reject traditional forms of centralized leadership, attempting to create new democratic forms of expression. But rather than describing them as leaderless, it is more useful to understand them as multitude struggles—useful, in part, because it allows us to grasp both their virtues and the challenges they face. These movements have achieved important results; they have often alluded to an alternative, better world. But they have generally been short-lived and many have suffered defeat, with some witnessing their gains brutally reversed. Something more is needed; and, as militants of various stripes will tell you, creative and original thinking about political organization is urgently required. We have no interest in lecturing these movements about the need to abandon their multiplicity and construct a unified political subject, be it a centralized leadership council, an electoral party or ‘a people’. A return to traditional forms of organization is not likely to result in more lasting or effective movements; in any case, they have been explicitly repudiated by the democratic sensibilities of the activists themselves. Furthermore, we do not believe, to put it in abstract terms, that only ‘the one’ can decide. The most important question for us is: how can a multiplicity act politically, with the sustained power to bring about real social transformation? It may be helpful here to step back twenty years and approach our contemporary situation from that vantage point. To explore the potential of today’s movements, we trace two historical and theoretical passages: from class to multitude and from multitude to class. This may at first appear as a pendulum action, a simple round trip; but we intend it to mark a theoretical and political advance, since the ‘class’ at the departure is not the same as that at arrival: the passage through multitude transforms its meaning. The general formula of organization we propose, then, is C–M–C', class–multitude–class prime.footnote31 As in Marx’s formula, the importance rests on the transformation undergone at the centre of the process. Class prime must be a multitudinous class, an intersectional class. From class to multitude The movement from class to multitude names, in part, the general recognition over the last several decades that the working class must be understood in terms of multiplicity, both within and outside its domain—a shift that corresponds to the emptying-out of claims to represent the working class by traditional parties and syndicalist institutions. As an empirical formation, of course, the working class has never ceased to exist. But since its internal composition has changed—with novel forms of work, new labouring conditions and wage relations—new investigations of class composition are required. In particular, these should explore the powers of social cooperation and the common. In addition, the differences among labouring populations, which have always existed, now increasingly refuse unitary representation. Differences among sectors of labour—for instance, between waged and unwaged work, stable and precarious employment, documented and undocumented workers—along with differences of gender, race and nationality, which to some extent map on to those differences of work status, all demand expression. Any investigation of class composition at this point—and any proposition of class-political projects—has to be embedded in intersectional analysis. This is not a class, one might say, if by class one understands a subject that is internally unified, or can be represented as a unified whole; it is a multitude, an irreducible multiplicity. At the same time, the passage from class to multitude means that the struggles of the working class, and anticapitalist struggles in general, must be cast together and on an equal basis with struggles against other axes of domination: feminist, antiracist, decolonial, queer, anti-ablist and others (theorists of multiplicity are not troubled by open sets and unending lists). In this sense, the concept of the multitude is closely allied with—and, indeed, profoundly indebted to—intersectional analysis and practice, which emerges from the theoretical practice of us black feminism. Intersectionality, at the most basic level, is a political theory of multiplicity. It aims to counter traditional single-axis frameworks of political analysis by recognizing the interlocking nature of race, class, sex, gender and national hierarchies. This means, first, that no one structure of domination is primary to (or reducible to) the others. Instead, they are relatively autonomous, have equal significance and are mutually constitutive. Second, just as structures of domination are characterized by multiplicity, so too are the subjectivities that stand in relation to them. This does not imply either a rejection of identity or a cumulative, additive conception of many identities; rather, it requires a rethinking of subjectivity in the key of multiplicity.footnote32 The call for intersectional multitudes is not merely an appeal for greater inclusion but rather, as Jennifer Nash says, ‘an antisubordination project’—that is, a combative, revolutionary strategy on multiple fronts simultaneously.footnote33 It may be helpful at this point to consider the passage from class to multitude through the concept of precarity, in two senses. The first sense of precarity, mainly developed among European theorists and activists, is conceived primarily in terms of wage and labour relations.footnote34 Precarity in this sense marks a contrast to the stable employment contracts that served as a regulative ideal in the Fordist economy of the mid-20th century—a regulative ideal that existed as a reality only for a limited number of (generally male) industrial workers in the dominant countries. Guaranteed labour contracts and laws that protect workers’ rights have been progressively eroded, and workers have been forced to accept informal, short-term labour contracts. These labour arrangements have always been raced and gendered, of course; but all sectors of the workforce are being affected by this trend, albeit in different ways and measures. This precaritization of labour is a powerful weapon in the grand arsenal of neoliberalism. Another sense of precarity, more developed by us writers, provides a useful complement, and again serves as part of an interpretation of—and challenge to—neoliberalism, but from a much broader perspective. Precarity, writes Judith Butler, ‘designates that politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support more than others, and become differentially exposed to injury, violence and death.’footnote35 Labour precarity is certainly part of the mix, but the notion of precarious life aims to grasp how legal, economic and governmental changes have increased the insecurity of a wide range of already subordinated populations—women, trans people, gay and lesbian populations, people of colour, migrants, the disabled and others. There is thus one notion of precarity that speaks the language of the working class and another that promotes an intersectional vision. Put them together and you have a good foundation for theorizing the multitude. We do not pose this movement from class to multitude (or from the people to the multitude) as a political mandate. That is not necessary, because it is already an accomplished fact that has manifested itself over the past twenty years in different countries and social contexts. We understand that many regard the historical shift from class to multitude as a decline and a loss, beginning with the diminished power and membership of institutional trade unions and working-class parties (and, indeed, not every multiplicity is politically progressive; crowds and mobs are just as likely to be reactionary). But we should also recognize all that has been gained in the process. At the level of analysis, it should be obvious that the multiplicity of mutually constituting structures of domination offers a superior lens for grasping our social reality, and this requires supplementing our brief investigation of capitalist rule with equal analyses of the institutional structures of race, gender and sexual hierarchies. But it is most crucial at the level of practice: there will be no successful and sustained project of class politics today that is not also feminist, antiracist and queer. Rethinking class Yet to theorize multiplicity, or even to recognize existing multiplicities, is not enough—especially if by multiplicity one means simply fracturing and separation. To be politically effective, organization is required. And when dealing with multiplicities, that pressure is even more intense. To respond to our initial question—how can a multiplicity decide and act politically?—simply by saying that it needs to organize, is not yet very helpful. The next step, then, requires a return to the concept of class—but class conceived differently now—in order to explore more fully what a multitude can become and how it can act politically. One obvious objection to the proposal of this second movement, from multitude to class, is that it unravels all the advantages achieved in the previous movement, from a unified political conception based on a single axis of domination, that determined by capital, to a multiplicity, which also engages patriarchy, white supremacy and other axes. Our intention, however, is to develop a conception of class that refers not only to the working class but is itself a multiplicity, a political formation that makes good on the gains of the multitude. It may be helpful, first of all, simply to note authors who use the concept of class beyond reference to the working class, in order to address race, gender domination and struggle. Achille Mbembe, for instance, analyses the contemporary modes of control deployed against Africans migrating to Europe in terms of a ‘racial class’: Europe has decided not only to militarize its frontiers but to extend them into the far distance . . . [its borders] are now located all along the shifting routes and torturous paths trodden by the candidates for migration, relocating to keep on top of their trajectories . . . In reality, it is the body of the African, of every African taken individually, and of all Africans as a racial class that constitutes today the borders of Europe. This new type of human body is not only the skin-body and the abject body of epidermal racism, that of segregation. It is also the border-body, which traces the limit between those who are ‘us’ and those who are not, and whom one can maltreat with impunity.footnote36 In the new global regime of mobility, Mbembe claims, Africans will be transformed into ‘a stigmatized racial class’. For him, the concept of class here is not, or not only, a socio-economic category. It serves instead as a means to think collective racial difference that is not merely based on skin colour; this racial class is born in the racist structures and institutions of Europe. Mbembe’s references here echo 1970s feminists like Christine Delphy, who employed the concept ‘sex class’ to understand patriarchal domination and to designate a basis of feminist struggle. To other feminists who challenged her usage, Delphy responded that the concept of class could grasp better than any other how subordinate social subjects are created by relations of domination. From this perspective, Delphy writes, ‘one cannot consider each group separate from the other because they are united by a relation of domination . . . The groups are not . . . constituted before they are put in relation. On the contrary, their relation is what constitutes them as such.’footnote37 Here, then, relations of domination are prior to and constitutive of social subjects. In Delphy’s usage, again, class refers not exclusively to economic status, but instead involves an analytical procedure that can be deployed with respect to any axis of domination. Our interest in these analyses of Mbembe and Delphy is, first, to highlight this point—that the concept of class can be used to grasp the effects of subjection created by relations of domination, not only with respect to capital but also with respect to white supremacy and patriarchy, in the interests of not only the working class but also the racial class, the sex class and others. Second, it is important to stress that the concept of class is employed here not only as a descriptive claim but as a political call to those subjected to patriarchal or racial hierarchies to struggle together, as a class.footnote38 Finally, and this is the point most difficult to confront: to recognize a plurality of classes dominated and struggling in parallel fashion is a step forward, but is not enough. The notion of ‘multitudinous class’ or ‘intersectional class’ that we seek requires a further step: an internal articulation of these different subjectivities—working class, racial class, sex class—in struggle. Intersectional analyses commonly address the need for articulation between the subordinated subjectivities in terms of solidarity and coalition. Often this repeats an additive strategy: working-class plus feminist plus antiracist plus lgbtq struggle, plus . . . In other words, even when intersectional analysis refuses additive notions of identity, an additive logic can still govern activist imaginaries. One weakness of this approach is that the bonds of solidarity are external. What is needed are internal bonds of solidarity—that is, a different mode of articulation, going beyond standard conceptions of coalition. Let us illustrate this key condition—the internal relations of solidarity in this multitudinous class—with three theoretical examples. First, Rosa Luxemburg: after the failed 1905 insurrection in Russia, Luxemburg criticized the German proletariat and its party for their expressions of sympathy and support for their Russian cousins, whether tinged with condescension or admiration. Luxemburg was not, of course, advocating that German workers disengage from, or pay less attention to, the Russian struggles—exactly the opposite. The problem for her was that such expressions of ‘international class solidarity’ posed merely an external relation: German revolutionaries needed to recognize instead that the Russian events were their own affair and internal to their struggle, ‘a chapter of their own social and political history’.footnote39 A second theoretical example: Iris Young in the early 1980s challenged male socialists who profess solidarity with the feminist movement. ‘By and large’, she writes, ‘socialists do not consider fighting women’s oppression as a central aspect of the struggle against capitalism itself.’footnote40Note that Young is not addressing the misogynist and anti-feminist male socialists, of whom there were many, but instead the supportive male comrades who offer solidarity to feminists, or who see feminist struggle as allied with but separate from their own. Like Luxemburg, Young charges that such solidarity is not enough. She exhorts male socialists, in effect, to recognize feminist struggle against patriarchy as a chapter of their own social and political history. You cannot really be anticapitalist without also being feminist because, since they are mutually constitutive, capital cannot be defeated without also defeating patriarchy. A third example: Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor makes a parallel argument addressing antiracist activists in the us who do not also focus on class domination. Too often, she maintains, there is a kind of segregation of struggles, such that anticapitalist struggles are assumed to be the task of white people, while people of colour must conduct antiracist struggles. ‘No serious socialist current in the last hundred years’, Taylor writes, ‘has ever demanded that Black or Latino/a workers put their struggles on the back burner while some other class struggle is waged first. This assumption rests on the mistaken idea that the working class is white and male, and therefore incapable of taking up issues of race, class and gender. In fact, the American working class is female, immigrant, Black, white, Latino/a and more. Immigrant issues, gender issues and antiracisms are working-class issues.’footnote41 This is not a matter of accepting the participation of allies or expressing solidarity; the struggle against white supremacy and that against capital must be understood as internal to one another. The objection at this point might be: yes, they all need to struggle together because they are all precarious in the two senses discussed earlier; but such a projection of sameness is not helpful, because the modes of precarity and domination are different. We need to maintain the conception of multiplicity—capitalist domination is not the same as gender or race domination, and one cannot be subsumed under another. Instead of a reduction to sameness, this argument requires an articulation among the subjectivities in struggle. This is why class—a multitudinous class—rather than coalition seems to us the appropriate concept. But this is a notion of class that is not only composed of a multiplicity, and grounded in forms of social cooperation and the common, but also articulated by internal bonds of solidarity and intersection among struggles, each recognizing that the others are ‘a chapter of their own social and political history’. That is its mode of articulation, its mode of assembly. This is why we call this transformed notion ‘class prime’, so that instead of class–multitude–class, the entire movement we are trying to sketch is class–multitude–class prime: C–M–C'. This serves at least as an initial theoretical response to our earlier question: can a multiplicity act politically? Yes, it can do so as class prime, as an internally articulated multiplicity oriented equally in struggle against capital, patriarchy, white supremacy and other axes of domination. Granted, it is merely a formal, conceptual response, but perhaps it can offer a framework for thinking and pursuing that political project.

### Disruption

#### The alternative is a disruption of a politics as usual – debate’s game is manifested in neoliberal ideology and the affs politics are the latest example of that ideology --- only a complete rejection solves

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This article revisits the intellectual history behind Nick Dyer-Witheford and Greig de Peuter’s Games of Empire (2009) and builds on their work to think further about how we might politically analyse games, especially in relationship to new forms of social organisation in the future. The worlds of games are important places for us to think about time, as demonstrated by historical game studies in evaluating the past, but there is a role for games to help us consider the future as well. Because games are, to some extent, systems, they facilitate a systems thinking approach that connects the material to the immaterial. Because games also tend to be action-based, they allow thinking through of acts as well as representations. Games allow us to think about a time and place that is different from the present and how it might operate as a system that we could live in. Our speculation on the future can make use of games that both do and do not align with our individual politics. We do not need to see games as representing only the world we want to live in but also to think about worlds to avoid, as both utopian and dystopian projections of the future can shape our acts in the present. The role that Games of Empire (2009) plays in this picture is to expose the alignments and disjunctures between the ideologies that a game presents and the means by which games are produced. The possible futures offered by different games can be critiqued in relationship to their conditions of production. Games of Empire emerges out of games studies, but perhaps, it owes a greater intellectual debt to the history of post-autonomist Marxist scholarship. Dyer-Witheford was among the first anglophone interlocutors of autonomism in media studies with his work Cyber-Marx (1999), and this trajectory continues into Games of Empire with de Peuter. Unlike Cyber-Marx, which draws a great deal on the Italian autonomia movements of Italy in the 1960s and 1970s, Games of Empire takes the post-autonomist work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s Empire trilogy (2000, 2004, 2009) as its reference point. The question raised is simply worded but impossibly complex: what is the future we are after? In this article, I argue that the historical game studies framework of experimenting with history through games can also be used to open up politically useful gaming experiments for the future. Indeed, as I will show, the post-autonomist lineage that Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter draw upon is predicated on theories of political resistance that are developed through experimentation in new social forms. I argue that games can be a component for thinking about the possibilities that the future might hold, both for understanding how we might organise economically but also for thinking about what problems we might face. Like video games, post-autonomism concerns itself with a practical focus on the future. I argue that a post-autonomist method of games analysis requires an explicitly political interpretation that is focused on trying to imagine a political future through experiments in gaming. Marxist Theoretical Lineages for Games of Empire Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter draw primarily on the work of Hardt and Negri’s Empire trilogy (2000, 2004, 2009) as their core theoretical background and also make use of key works by other Italian Marxists such as Virno (2004), Lazzarato (1996) and Tronti (1966/2019). These scholars can be broadly categorised as post-autonomists, as they are inheritors of the autonomia movement of the 1970s, itself largely drawing on prior Italian Marxists such as Antonio Gramsci (see also Dyer-Witheford, 1999; Wright, 2002). Autonomia formed in response to the roboticisation of Italian automobile factories; this reduced wages and the need for specialised labour, while also undermining the union movement’s bargaining power. Traditional forms of factory-based strikes were no longer sufficient as mass skilled workers were replaced by machines. Instead work was reframed around informational, affective and intellectual forms of labour and the creation of social or cultural commodities, accordingly new forms of social resistance became necessary. Autonomia experimented with new forms of social organisation both inside and outside the factory walls. The autonomia movement was defined by a core Gramscian framework and the significant influence of feminist scholarship from Lotta Feminista. These approaches drew attention to how labour was arranged outside the space of the factory through a particular attention to social reproduction, that is the focus on the creation of social subjects within capitalism, especially in gendered forms of labour. This is accounted for in works by Dalla Costa and James (1971), Federici (1984/2004), Fortunati (1996) and more recently Terranova (2000). A wide array of unique theoretical positions and crises emerged over this time within Italian Marxism that led to numerous splits and divisions (see Bologna, 1980; Tronti, 2012; Wright, 2002, p. 11–21). From this period, Italian Marxism was defined by an interest in networked, affective, militant and collaborative approaches that tended to reject institutions, including unions and political parties (see Lotringer & Marazzi, 2007). Autonomia was defined by a new community of activism that – however incomplete or partial – included a diverse collection of identities recognising a common problem. Hardt and Negri’s Empire trilogy responds to this period and is post-autonomist insofar as the autonomist tendency significantly shifted in terms of its idea of the subject and in terms of its idea of the factory. Not least of which is the fact that the autonomist focuses on the changes in the workplace due to robotics, computers and a shift towards valorising intellectual work over manual labour has found a great deal of purchase in explaining contemporary trends in technology and work. Their thesis is that the world had been organised by a political rationality that had reorganised nation states into a single system that facilitated these changes, a world order they call ‘Empire’. Empire was to politics what capitalism was to the economy, and they worked hand in glove to expand and accumulate. Empire is not found in a single source but is present in a diverse array of state bodies and international treaties and fostered through practices such as trade liberalisation and expansion of property systems. Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter thoroughly demonstrate the value of postautonomist language in unpacking the multilayered, intertwined cultural, ideological and political economic components in digital video games. They have drawn on the autonomist and post-autonomist histories of language and globalisation, material and immaterial labour, and imperialist expansion and ideology. Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter see gaming as having a potential role in an emancipatory praxis; video gaming’s status as exemplary media of Empire (2009, p. xxix) means that it is ideal for representing imperial systems and also for submitting them to critique. My contribution to this discussion is to note that games provide an important form of critique: alternatives to Empire. Experimentation and imagination about the future are political necessities within post-autonomist scholarship. In their critique of Empire, Hardt and Negri (2009) note that while it is all well and good to critique what we have, there needs to be some sort of orienting positive force that allows us to create the world after Empire. The problem with the present moment is that it not only suffuses material politics but has also infected our imagination of the future. We need to develop new ideas about how we might live and think together and to identify new social and economic systems for living. Problem of Imagining a Future In each of their books, Hardt and Negri ask ‘what is to be done’ to move past Empire. This recalls the post-autonomist theory of exodus: the idea of transiting from a present crisis into a new, real space that may provide us with better conditions of existence (see Virno, 1996). If we are to move past the space of Empire, then we must have a model or idea of what we are going to build. The problem of imagining the future of the world past capitalism has been articulated in academic contexts at least since the 1970s by Franklin (1979) in an evaluation of Ballard. Franklin critiques Ballard’s ‘The Subliminal Man’ (1963) as misapprehending the end of capitalism as the end of the world itself that Ballard himself could not think of a world past capitalism and that capitalism’s absence could only be accepted if it also meant the end of everything. Later interlocutors such as Jameson (1994) and Zi ˇ zek (1994) ˇ generalised the problem from an individual pathology to a social one: the population at large struggles to conceive of a world past capitalism, where capitalism cannot be seen to thrive, hence the quote that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism. The ideological nature of the problem is posed by Fisher (2009) who notes that capitalism, like all ideological systems, contains within it an assertion of its own natural continuation. This problem – the inability to think of a future that is substantively different – is difficult to resolve. For Hardt and Negri, Empire infects everything so profoundly that we cannot think of its responses. This does not mean that games naturally produce a new political horizon. As Hutchins (2008) has noted, the goal of a politics built from play cannot be left to ideas of fraternity or camaraderie naturally emerging out of an ‘Olympism’, where controlled competition would necessarily lead to a form of community. Hutchins critiques the idea that a natural liberal politics might harmoniously emerge from institutional play, even when such institutions have strongly didactic positions on what should emerge from play; something new emerges but not necessarily in a predictable way. We cannot leave our analysis of games to only address the apparent, didactic and marketised presentation of what the future might look like. What is necessary are forms of experimentation that allow us to think beyond the present moment. The post autonomist theory provides the concept of the laboratory (Hardt, 1996) as a way of thinking on the new forms of social organisation that might help us move into the future. This is a task that, by its nature as an evaluation of a situation that does not yet exist, is accomplished through speculation, the application of theory and the inspirations of fiction. Other scholars, such as Jameson (1984) and Hage (2012), note the centrality of the imagination of the future as a core issue for political action. Hage states that a mental projection of the future is necessary in order to take political action in the present: ideas of the future are ‘not just a conception of the world but an investment in it’ (2012, p. 291). Games can productively contribute, as ‘laboratories’, to the experimentation for the future by allowing us to think about other times and places so that we might think politically about the present. Games can contribute to this by allowing us to think, experiment and reflect of different social orders that we might bring to light. Games are not the only way that this could happen, and building from Games of Empire, they have a unique capacity to help think about life beyond Empire.

### AT: Transition Wars

#### Transition wars are already happening – Pentagon war games and fascist crackdown on protests prove the United States is ready to wage a war on the working class. The alternative’s endorsement of revolutionary tactics is key to winning

**Shea 20** – Top writer in Economics that is countering the lies of capitalism and imperialism Rainer Shea, “Economic and social collapse continue as the U.S. drifts ever closer to a class war,” Medium, 8/30/20, https://medium.com/@rainershea612/economic-and-social-collapse-continue-as-the-u-s-drifts-ever-closer-to-a-class-war-f69160ac23a9

It was inevitable that things would get to this point. The decision by the U.S. ruling class to make inequality’s growth unlimited through neoliberal policies, the rise and decline of the American imperialist project, and the climatic and ecological crisis have all been leading to the predictable outcome we’re now experiencing. This is an outcome where the imperial core descends into rapid economic dysfunction, violence, and eventually the breakdown of the state. The initial results from this unraveling are beneficial to reactionaries like Kyle Rittenghouse, the high school kid who shot two protesters this last week during a night of unrest in Kenosha. As Ukraine’s descent into economic and social collapse since the 2014 U.S. coup has shown, fascists love a failed state. It lets far-right militias act with more impunity, as has been shown while both Ukraine’s U.S.-backed fascists and America’s armed “patriot” groups have exploited the recent chaos in their respective countries. But the descent into social collapse in the U.S. and much of the rest of the world is one that’s come from the collapse of global capitalism, as was foretold by the predictions from Marx about how capitalism will eventually consume itself. And this opens up the potential for the chaos to lead to the triumph of proletarian revolution, rather than of reactionary barbarism. Whether or not this will happen depends on how well the people on the side of proletarian revolution mobilize[s]. It will also depend on what kind of political line that the people leading the charge represent. Before taking the steps of becoming organized and equipped for a class-based civil war, it would be wise for you to read Lenin’s The State and Revolution, Mao’s Combat Liberalism, and other works that can help you avoid falling into liberal, idealistic, or adventurist thinking. Because without the right line and political education, we’ll be blindly rushing into this extremely important task. We’ll be at risk of committing ourselves to counterproductive ideologies like anarchism, or of becoming aligned with the Democratic Party, or of otherwise drifting away from the Marxist-Leninist goal of overthrowing the capitalist state and replacing it with a proletarian-run state. Our responsibilities are to seek out the education that can help us avoid these ideological pitfalls, and then equip ourselves for confrontation with the forces of capitalist reaction. Three months ago, the communist YouTuber and leader Hakim assessed what we’ll need to do before we can carry out this confrontation: “State repression will only get worse. The people not only should, but need, to fight back. Do not let fascism take hold, the U.S. is only a step away. Arm yourselves. Establish armed wings of revolutionary organizations. Start coordinating armed actions across the country with as many organizations as you can. Remember, never terrorist activity-only military and state targets. Establish Red bases around the country, and begin building dual power. People’s war is the solution.” Our revolutionary crisis has since moved closer to the point where these tactics will be doable on a widespread scale. Millions of this year’s newly jobless people have had their unemployment benefits cut. Unemployment is still dropping, with mid-August unemployment claims having topped one million. In this year’s second quarter, U.S. GDP dropped by 32.9%. The austerity policies that the government is responding to the downturn with are sure to lead to a multiplier effect, where spending cuts bring about falling incomes which lead to further spending cuts. And so the process of capitalist contraction will continue in the coming months and years, with ever more people finding themselves left behind and willing to join a revolutionary movement. If it sounds like wishful thinking that more people will join these kinds of militant revolutionary strains, consider that the U.S. military has openly expressed fears that the poverty and unemployment of the 2020s will lead to them having to deal with a class war. A 2016 U.S. Army War College document about the future of warfare warned that deteriorating living conditions for the lower classes will create: A surplus of unemployed males with little to do but join gangs or engage in crime as a source of income. Joining extremist or terrorist organizations might also appear attractive as a way out. At the very least, in the event of some kind of conflict, these young men would provide a pool of potential recruits for those opposing the United States.” This fearful anticipation was paralleled by a 2018 Pentagon war game that included a scenario where the military and intelligence agencies would have to counter a rebellion by the youngest generation of adults, who launch an attempt at revolution in 2025 for these reasons that the war game describes: Many found themselves stuck with excessive college debt when they discovered employment options did not meet their expectations. Gen Z are often described as seeking independence and opportunity but are also among the least likely to believe there is such a thing as the “American Dream,” and that the “system is rigged” against them. As the country’s transition into a failed state accelerates, so does the chance for a proletarian and anti-colonial revolution, where the disaffected lower classes unite to resolve the contradictions of the capitalist and settler-colonial system which has produced all of this misery. The George Floyd protests are an early part of this backlash from the country’s exploited and oppressed peoples. But before they lead to a movement that can overthrow the system, and that can replace it with a decolonized continent where society is developing towards socialism, their participants and supporters will need to get behind such a revolutionary program. Through this process of uniting the masses behind a revolutionary line, we Marxists will be able to build a fighting force which challenges the existence of the capitalist and settler-colonial state. It’s this prospect, one where poor and colonized peoples work together to militantly carry out the Marxist-Leninist goals which have liberated countries like Cuba and China, that scares the ruling class. The police enabled Rittenhouse to commit his crimes because just like is the case in post-coup Bolivia, the capitalist state is in a united front with those who are willing to carry out fascist vigilante violence. They’ll try to use fascist paramilitaries, the military, and their militarized police to crush an attempt at revolution. We’ll need to be prepared for when they come after us.

### NR – Alt Solvency

#### The fault lines in the US led global imperialism are cracking – the wave of Russian sanction is depriving the imperial cores working class of amenities which drives them to the anti-imperial center – only the continued pressure from the multipolar pressure can end neoliberalism ever expanding nature

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According to Marx, the basic contradiction of capitalism is the contradiction between the socialized form of production and the private form of expropriation. In the age of imperialism, this basic contradiction has risen to a global level and manifests as a contradiction between the globalized form of production and the national form of expropriation. This means that, in addition to the inter-class struggle, the intra-class contradictions also express themselves globally and have taken an international, inter-country form. That is the centre-periphery contradiction, because both the labourers and the capitalists of the periphery are exploited by the centre capital, and – indirectly, through their share from the imperialist rent – also by the labourers of the centre. Due to this general internationalization, the inter-class (capital – labour) and intra-class (within capital) struggles come together and join forces in the fight of the (semi-) periphery against the imperialist centre. In other words, in the age of collective imperialism, the national class struggles cannot be waged without a successful international, anti-imperialist struggle against the position of the global imperialist hegemon. The international aspect of their national class struggle has been apparent since the young soviet state was attacked in 1918-19 by more than a dozen capitalist countries. A second experiment to eradicate socialism was made by the Nazi Germany in 1941. Also, after the second world war, the United States and the former colonizing powers of Europe made many attacks against the revolutionary attempts of the countries in the Global South and in Europe (Greece). So, the international dimension of the class struggle is not new. However, in the age of unipolar, hegemonic, transnational monopoly capitalism, it has become even more decisive. The imperialist centre does not tolerate even non-socialist governments if they are unwilling to serve the interests of the transnational class and try, instead, to serve the interests of their own domestic economy based on their own national capitalist and working classes, as was the case, for instance, in Libya, Syria, Brazil, Iraq or Iran. In all capitalist countries, there are basically two large groups within the ruling class: one is the comprador bourgeoisie, encompassing mostly larger, foreign-oriented companies, which gain rent from the international economy through connections with transnational corporations, 2 and the other, let’s call it “national” bourgeoisie, which is made up of mostly smaller, domestic-market oriented, eager-to-grow companies. These national capitalists of the global south, or “subaltern ruling classes,” as they were called by Amin, 3 are also oppressed by the transnational capital. This is because not only the wages of workers but also the profits of the national capital are lower on the periphery, due to the drainage of the surplus value by the centre capital. Mixed forms of capitalist groups are also possible, and the groups themselves are not homogeneous, but the struggle between these two basic interests (international versus national) is always on the battlefield, because market competition results in small, ever newer, and typically national companies entering the market. Currently, the capitalist class of the centre countries has become overwhelmingly transnational, and their governments, together with the whole international superstructure of imperialism, serve them. In this globalized intra-class struggle, the national capitalist groups must fight for their interests against the entire, internationally organized transnational capitalist class. This is a very unequal fight. So, to succeed, the national capital needs to have a strong state and a solid government. The autocratic forms of governance in the periphery derive from this strategic requirement. The same is true in the case of socialist revolutionary governments. However, the opposition to the transnational capital, which is an essentially anti-imperialist position, can be maintained in the long run only with the support of the people. This is why Amin (2016) agreed with Mao’s conclusion, namely, that the anti-imperialist fight is a door to socialism if led by the communists. The more severe the fight against imperialism, and the more the national government needs the support of the people – the more concessions the national government, even a capitalist one, must make for them. On the other hand, the more the people take part in this fight – the more experience and knowledge they gain about the society and the social changes they want. There are division lines within the global working class as well, mainly because the working classes of the imperialist countries have lost their revolutionary potential thanks to their relative wellbeing, financed by the imperialist rent of their ruling classes. However, the anti-imperialist fight of the periphery indispensably entails disconnecting from the exploitative mechanisms of the centre, or delinking as Amin (1990) called it. If this occurs, the centre will be deprived of the imperialist rent. Consequently, the working classes of the imperialist countries will suffer a higher rate of exploitation and declining living standard, and that will revolutionise them. We are now in just such a situation, due to the European effects of the sanction-policy against Russia that will be discussed later. If the working classes of the centre do not wake up in time, imperialism will provoke mankind into a third, and nuclear, world war. Collective imperialism challenged The uneven and combined development produces emerging economies time and again, so the hierarchy of the unipolar, hegemonic, transnational monopoly capitalism can only be maintained with permanent efforts to contain the rise of other nations with either hard or soft means. Sanctioning is one of the latter. Already in the era of the Soviet Union, as far back as 1947, all of the East European socialism-oriented countries, together with Cuba and China, were banned from importing advanced technologies made by the West. Today, sanctions are used against all countries that do not want to submit themselves to the needs of the accumulation of centre capital. Among them, China and Russia are of the first importance. In the past decades, China, under the leadership of the Communist Party and with the help of central planning and controlled market forces, emerged as a new power in the global economy. Beyond its remarkable economic performance, China has continuously improved the standard of living of her population, showed rapid technological development, established economic and security cooperation with many countries, and proved its ability to handle different crises efficiently. China now aims at being the global leader in innovation by 2035 while maintaining “a people-centred approach.” 4 The Russian Federation has also upgraded itself economically, although not at the same pace as China and not with the same social results. In Russia, there has not been a strong communist influence, although the Communist Party is the second largest party in the Duma. As the old socio-economic structures collapsed in 1989-1991, and the traditional eastern European economic partners disappeared or were acquired by the West, the newly born Russian capitalist class turned to the global market and began selling off Russia’s natural resources for low prices but substantial profit. After a decade of pillaging the country’s wealth, an oligarchic state capitalism has been stabilized under Putin’s governance. In the first decades after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russian political leadership, influenced by the wishful thinking of the Russian oligarchy, sought the benevolence of the West. But the West, under the command of the US, did not accepted Russia’s hand. The reason is obvious. If Western Europe had cooperated with Russia from Lisbon to Vladivostok, and German technology integrated with the Russian natural wealth, the United States of America would have lost its economic and military supremacy. 5 Therefore it has been in the interest of the US to divide Europe. The Brzezinski (1997) doctrine – rooted in Mackinder’s Heartland-theory – has manifested by moving NATO eastward since the 1990s, increasing American influence in Ukraine, and making Europe more dependent on the military, technology and finance of the US, while pressuring China with Hong Kong and Taiwan, and forming alliances with Australia, India and Japan (AUKUS, QUAD). Russia, in spite its technological development, particularly in military (e.g. hypersonic) technologies, has remained a semi-periphery country that exported mostly natural resources and imported manufactured goods, played host to substantial foreign capital investment, financed the West with the artificial devaluation of the ruble and billions of dollars of capital outflow, particularly since 2008 (Komolov 2019). Beside the ongoing economic peripheralization, Russia has been marginalized by the West politically as well, which has manifested in the move of NATO eastward. Russia had reasons to feel increasingly threatened after 2008, when, at the Bucharest Summit, NATO agreed that Georgia and Ukraine would become members in future, and, even more so, after the US-sponsored coup d’état in Kyiv in 2014 (known as the pro-European “Maidan revolution”) that resulted an anti-Russia Ukrainian government, which was answered by the reunification of the Crimea with Russia and the referendums of autonomy in the People’s Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk. From that year forward, the development of the Russian domestic economy has accelerated with its eye on security issues. Today, the strategic sectors are owned or controlled by the state. There is no room for a comprador bourgeoisie because of the deepening gap between Russia and the West and the need for the development of the domestic economy. Since the early 2000s, agricultural production has been modernized with public money; Russia has become self-sufficient in basic food products; and its agricultural exports have increased. Despite these achievements, Russia has remained a peripheral country, exporting raw materials and agricultural items and being reliant on the importation of manufactured products. Russia’s only, albeit substantial, strength regarding the geopolitical power relations is its military. So, halting China and wrecking Russia, to prevent the formulation of a Eurasian economic space, has become the primary interest of US imperialism. By a war in Europe, the European allies of the US can also be kept down – as was the goal of the creation of NATO according to its first secretary-general, Lord Ismay, to “keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.” Ukraine as a tool and a victim of imperialism The Ukrainian state was formed by the leaders of the Soviet Union (Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev). The country only began to build its independent national identity after the dissolution of the USSR. With a substantial Russian speaking population, and several other nationalities, and a special geopolitical location between two different and competing regions, the best choice for Ukraine would have been to operate as a federalist state and maintain nonalignment in foreign relations. Ukraine is a large country, rich in natural resources, in which everything necessary for the wellbeing of the population is available. However, the systemic change and the independence of 1991 brought about a prolonged chaotic and unstable era, capital flight, a selling out of natural resources and manpower, and a severe decline in the standard of living. Ukraine remains a land of comprador bourgeoisie who rule over the state, accumulate wealth without limit and have even organized their own paramilitary groups. The political leadership has oscillated between a western and the eastern orientation. Leveraging its soft power (media, NGOs) and the Ukrainian nationalism, the United States organized the orange revolution in 2004 and the coup d’état in 2014 6 that turned Ukraine against Russia. Right after the coup, the new Ukrainian government created a law that strictly limited the use of minority languages. This led to protests in the Russian-speaking population, fierce repression of the protestors by the government and paramilitary groups, the secession of Crimea, and the proclamation of autonomy in the People’s Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk. Under the influence of the US, Kyiv has never implemented the Minsk Agreements (signed in 2014 and 2015) that could have solved the problems of the Russian minorities in a democratic way, and has never given up the goal of reinstating its authority over Crimea and the selfproclaimed People’s Republics in The Donbass. As Angela Merkel, ex-chancellor of Germany later made it clear, the fulfilment of the Minsk agreements had never been taken seriously. The agreements were signed to buy time for the West to strengthen Ukraine militarily (Schwartz 2022). After the coup in 2014, military cooperation between Ukraine and NATO intensified, and by 2021 Ukraine had become a de facto NATO member. The mainstream media did not informe the world about the increasing role of the extreme right forces in Ukraine, the formation of the ultra-nationalist, neo-Nazi Azov Battalion to fight pro-Russian forces in the Donbas, and its subsequent incorporation into the National Guard, the official cult of the far-right nationalist leader, Stepan Bandera, the killing of anti-Maidan (pro-Russian) people in Odessa, and the civil war in The Donbass that caused 14,200-14,400 deaths and 37-39,000 injuries between 14 April 2014 to 31 December 2021 (OHCHR 2022). Neither was revealed that the ultra-nationalist groups had been promoted by the US, Canada, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, United Kingdom, Lithuania and Poland, with money, military equipment and training (Somos 2021). The financial help from the US was sent directly to these organizations until 2018. By then, the ultra-nationalist ideology has already penetrated the National Army: Kuzmenko (2021) revealed the strong ties between the Azov movement and the Ukrainian National Army Academy. The role of the European Union in communication warfare can be illustrated by the following. On 7 November 2014, the European Parliament addressed a question to the European Commission regarding the incident in Odessa on 2 May 2014, where 48 anti-Maidan people died in a fire in the Trade Union House that was attacked by the pro-Maidan (anti-Russian) crowd. The question was whether the Commission intended to condemn the massacre and “adopt foreign policies that will help prevent such tragic events recurring in future.” The Commission ordered an investigation but, up to now, has never issued a condemnatory statement (European Parliament 2014). In contrast stands the case of the alleged Russian massacre against civilians in Bucha, Ukraine (“detected” in April 2022), in which the European Commission and national governments (France and Germany), were quick to urge additional sanctions against Russia right after the news broke (Rauhala and Ariès 2022), without requiring any investigation or evidence to prove who was, in fact, the perpetrator. Halting imperialism in Ukraine The military attack against the Ukrainian regime was one of the three choices that Russia has had to make since the beginning of 2022. To understand the alternatives, we must first examine the starting position based on four facts that related to humanism, security, diplomacy and advocacy. Fact No1: The Russian population in The Donbass and Crimea was threatened by further massacre and lasting repression. In March 2021, Volodymyr Zelensky, President of Ukraine, issued a decree about the reoccupation of Crimea with international assistance that was then followed by an increased military mobilization (President of Ukraine 2021). The shelling of the Peoples’ Republics of Lugansk and Donetsk has continued and, in the middle of February 2022, became more intensive, and the Duma asked Putin to recognize their independence (Baud 2022). The humanitarian issue became hot. Fact No2: The security concerns of Russia have been justified. The western border of Russia is the direction from which it has been invaded three times, with the aim of the demolition of its sovereignty (Napoleon in 1812, intervention in 1918, attack of the Nazi Germany in 1941). In the 21st century, the possibility of a new attack has emerged as NATO continuous to spread eastward. Samir Amin warned already in 2003: “The American ruling class proclaims without a shade of reticence that it will not ‘tolerate’ the rebuilding of any economic or military power capable of questioning its monopoly of domination over the planet and, to this end, assigns itself the right to lead ‘preventive wars.’ Three potential adversaries can be made out. In the first place Russia, whose dismemberment constitutes the United States’ greatest strategic objective. The Russian ruling class doesn’t appear to have understood this to date. Rather, it seems to have convinced itself that, after having ‘lost the war,’ it could ‘win the peace,’ just as happened with Germany and Japan. It forgets that Washington needed to help those two adversaries of the Second World War, precisely to face the Soviet challenge. The new circumstances are different; the United States has no serious competition. Its option then is to definitively and utterly destroy the defeated Russian adversary. Could it be that V. Putin has understood this and could Russia [be] beginning to dispel its illusions?” (Amin 2003) As a part of this strategy, the US has arranged colour revolutions in countries neighbouring Russia, the latest ones in Belarus and Kazakhstan in 2020-2021. Georgia and Ukraine aspire to a full-fledged NATO-membership (Constitution of Ukraine, Articles No 85, 102 and 116). Both countries have had severe conflicts with Russia. Georgia does not recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia; Ukraine does not recognize the independence of the two Peoples’ Republics in The Donbass and does not accept the joining of Crimea to Russia. Both countries claim the above-mentioned territories. What is more, days before the Russian attack, on 19 February 2022, in his speech at Munich Security Conference, Zelensky raised the possibility of Ukraine declaring the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, by which Ukraine gave up its nuclear weapons, ineffective (Zelensky 2022). Furthermore, Russia and China have stated that there are bioweapon laboratories in the Ukraine, a fact, which has been verified by undersecretary of state of the US, Victoria Nuland (Greenwald 2022). Based on the strategies of NATO, there has been no reason to believe that Ukraine (and Georgia) would not become NATO-member(s) in the very near future. And if Ukraine does become a member and attempts to get Crimea and The Donbass back by force, Russia would find itself in a direct war with NATO, based on the organization’s collective defence principle (articles 5 and 6 of NATO). This would mean a third, and very likely nuclear world war – the end of the humankind. Fact No3. The diplomatic solutions have not worked. The government of Ukraine has not implemented the Minsk Agreements, in fact it have violated them by shelling The Donbass, killing thousands of civilians (Baud 2022, OHCHR 2022). Russia has many times expressed its dissatisfaction with the policy of NATO, lastly in November 2021, when Russia asked the organization to put in writing that it rules out further expansion into Europe and in the Caucasus. Fact No4. Russia lacks the soft power to assert its own interests. Neither its economic strengths, its political, cultural influence nor its communication facilities are sufficient to create colour revolutions a’la United States to change governments. The only means Russia has, is its hard power: military enforcement. At the beginning of 2022 Russia’s geopolitical position was shaped by these pressing realities. Based on these, the country faced three possible pathways to action, leading to three alternative futures: Option No1: Doing nothing, giving up sovereignty. This pathway meant letting NATO continue spreading eastward and incorporating first Ukraine, then other neighbouring countries (Georgia, Kazakhstan and Belorussia), letting Russian people be repressed by the ultranationalist pro-US Ukrainian regime, and letting Russia be integrated into the world economy as a typical natural-resource exporting periphery, subjugated to the interests of the imperialist core. Amin described this alternative in 2015 as follows: “Neoliberalism can produce for Russia only a tragic economic and social regression, a pattern of “lumpen development,” and a growing subordinate status in the global imperialist order. Russia would provide the triad with oil, gas, and some other natural resources; its industries would be reduced to the status of sub-contracting for the benefit of Western financial monopolies. In such a position, which is not very far from that of Russia today in the global system, attempts to act independently in the international area will remain extremely fragile, threatened by “sanctions” which will strengthen the disastrous alignment of the ruling economic oligarchy to the demands of dominant monopolies of the triad.” (Amin 2015) In this scenario imperialism would go unstopped, and its next target would be China. So, after the fall of Russia, China would face a very similar situation vis-á-vis NATO/US. This is why China tacitly stands with Russia in the Ukrainian conflict today. Option No2: Doing nothing and hoping to preserve sovereignty. In other words: postponing the clash with US-led imperialism. This option would mean NATO could expand and encircle Russia. However, before the final defeat, at a certain point, for instance over the harsh oppression of Russian nationalities in Ukraine or in another neighbouring by-then-already NATO-country Russia would wage a war with the Atlantic powers, that would be a third and nuclear world war. Option No3: Before Ukraine becomes a de jure member of NATO, Russia pushes the western influence out of Ukraine with the only means that Russia has: military enforcement. By doing so, it can prevent, at least for a good while, the worst outcomes, namely the crude oppression of Russians in Ukraine, the fall of the Russian state and a nuclear war. The conclusions here are as follows: 1) For Russia there was no viable alternative to the military operation in Ukraine. 2) This is an anti-imperialist war waged by a semi-periphery country against the USled imperialism in a (proto-)fascist country. 3) Once again in history, Russia undertakes the task and burden of halting imperialism and fascism . On 2 March 2022 in the UN Assembly, 77,9 percent or 141 states voted for a resolution that condemned Russia. However, it is worth remembering that those countries that voted against (five countries including Russia 7 ) or abstained (35 countries) represent more than half (53,5%) of the world population and more than 60 percent of the population of the global (semi- ) periphery (the “Global South”). The ratio is even higher (84,7%) if we count the population of those countries that did not join in the sanctions against Russia. Even India, which under the Modi government has strengthened its ties with the US, has deepened its cooperation with Russia. The international cooperation agreements, in which Russia is a partner (e.g. BRICS, Belt & Road, Shanghai Cooperation Organization), enjoy large popularity among the developing countries; large and resource-rich countries, like Argentina, Egypt, Turkey, Iran or Saudi Arabia have all expressed their desire to join BRICS; in Burkina Faso after the coup d’etat on 30 September 2022, anti-France protesters expressed their support for the new interim military government and the military and economic relations with Russia and China (Burke 2022). In September 2022, in his statement to the UN Carlos Rafael Faría Tortosa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela, said that the North “must recognize that the unipolar, colonialist system cannot adequately respond to the problems and needs that they themselves have created [in] harming humanity, animal life and the planet” and “must accept new Powers and new leadership of China, the Russian Federation, India, Iran and Turkey” (Tortosa 2022). The change of the power-structure of the world has accelerated. The attack of Russia against Ukraine in February 2022 will go down in history as a turning point in the imperialist rule over the globe. The true face of imperialism and a forced delinking Immediately after the outbreak of the military conflict in Ukraine, capitalism once again revealed its true face. The US and its allies could have stopped the war in a moment by declaring that NATO would give up surrounding Russia and never allow Ukraine to join; that they recognize Crimea as part of Russia; and that they are ready to enforce the implementation of the Minsk Agreements. But they never said anything similar. Instead, they have expanded the war that kill people and destroy a country by sending money, military equipment and “volunteer” solders to Ukraine, and have imposed endless waves of crippling sanctions against Russia. With this behaviour, the political class of the transnational capital supplied crystal-clear proof that the last thing they cared about was the people. Their steps have only made the conflict deeper, longer-lasting, and ensured more death and suffering, especially for the Ukrainian population they purport to be worrying about. Breaking value chains, cutting cheap energy import, forcing companies to leave Russia, and confiscating Russian companies and monetary reserves have caused inflation, decreased energy supplies, and will lead to high unemployment. Boosting military spending eats up money that could be used for the benefit of the population and will drive up public debt. The sanction-tsunami against Russia will have even more severe effects, not so much in Russia, as in Europe and in the poorest developing countries. It is the US and its European lackeys that fuel this conflict and awaken the threat of a third world war. The leaders of the “democratic” European states have neither asked their own population if they agree with such a deepening and widening of the conflict nor have they understood the counterproductivity and boomerang-effect of the sanctions they have decided. Under the sanctions, Russia is forced to eliminate its economic and technological dependence on the West, “expand import substitution and help domestic producers replace foreign products in supply chains” – as per order of Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin (Bhadrakumar 2022). This is precisely what Amin called delinking, which is the waiting room of the road to socialism. In addition, new import- and export-opportunities will open for the countries that do not follow the imperialists’ sanction policy. On the top of that, due to the sanctions, the imperialist centre has highlighted its unreliability and violated its own values, such as the protection of private ownership, freedom of speech and free access of information. The closure of bank accounts, disclosure of Russia from the SWIFT system, the confiscation of Russia’s monetary reserves etc. all send the same strong message to the world: if you deal with us, you must dance to our music, otherwise we will punish you even as we violate our own rules to do so. This undermines the willingness of many countries to cooperate with the imperialist North. Dollar- or Euro-denominated bonds and equities have ceased to be a safe investment. Even old friends of the US, like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have begun seeking new financial solutions. Russia now uses its own credit card system and demands payments in Russian ruble for its energy exports. China’s aspiration to use the yuan in its foreign trade has strengthened, and the importance of the domestic payments systems of India and Brazil has grown. Saudi Arabia has also been considering turning from the dollar to the yuan for its oilexportation. In the end, the sanctions accelerate the very decline of the US-led imperialism that they are meant to withhold (Desai 2022). All this means that the escalation of the conflict in Europe is counter-productive from the viewpoint of imperialism as well, as it shrinks the markets, hinders capital accumulation, and decreases the purchasing power and the standard of living of the population in the North. The latter can lead to social protests and fall of governments. Trying to show strength, the North-Atlantic powers weaken themselves. However, imperialism will not stop. As with all ruling classes, so for the imperialists: the end of their rule equals the end of the world as they perceive it. Therefore, if they feel their last day approaches, they will not hesitate to destroy the whole world. The socialist road opens with the anti-imperialist fight Imperialism has entered its final stage. This ignited a life-and-death struggle for its survival, which will be long and awful. We knew that it would come, and we did not think that it would go without violence, as violent systems never disappear peacefully. However, we thought, if we have thought about it at all, that the final struggle would be started by imperialism. Those who are dreaming about a peaceful and egalitarian world without exploitation usually reject the idea of initiating international military action. Now we see the first military aggression abroad of a preventive nature that aims at pushing imperialism back. Until now, anti-imperialist wars have been waged in the homeland of the invaded, occupied and colonized nations and extended beyond their borders only in cases where it was necessary to destroy the invasive enemy (e.g. in the WWII). We are used to think that any aggression against another country is imperialist behaviour and that only imperialists use the pretext of “prevention” for justifying their aggression. Relying on Lenin’s work without understanding the changes that have taken place since his analysis of imperialism, seems to support that view. However, we must update our thinking now; Russia’s decision to attack Ukraine aimed at demilitarization and denazification of the country, and at showing the US/NATO that red lines do exist. The Soviet Union lost 27 million people and suffered enormous destruction of land and means of production in the second world war. With a NATOmember hostile country in its neighbourhood the situation could be repeated. So, the prevention seems to be rational. And what is even more important: by protecting its national interests in the Ukraine, Russia wages a war against the US-led imperialism. In the unipolar, hegemonic, transnational monopoly capitalist form of imperialism, the transformation of the world into a better one inevitably begins with an antiimperialist fight. This can result in a multipolar world that allows nations to choose their own ways of development. Only then can national class struggles be waged. Russia is a state-capitalist, semi-peripheral country fighting an anti-imperialist hybrid war. To succeed, it needs the support of its population, and this support is particularly needed in the shadow of sanctions. The restructuring and advancement of the Russian economy to achieve independence from the imperialist countries require more state intervention, central planning, and innovation with the involvement of people, as well as an increase in their share of the value added produced by them. With the increasing mutual reliance between China and Russia, the successes of China in improving the living standard of her people and its technological innovation can serve as an example for Russia. The historical legacy of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the victory over Nazism in 1945 and, hopefully, in Ukraine today, make the Russian population receptive to a socialist turn in their social development. Such a turn is indispensable in Russia, as well as in other countries in the Global South, for a successful fight against imperialism and for the formulation of a multipolar world that opens the way to socialism. This is becoming clearer day by day as the war hysteria fuelled by the US-led imperialism brings the threat of a third and nuclear world war closer and closer. To prevent this horrible end, the alliance of the national anti-imperialist forces backed by the working classes of the world is needed now.

### AT: Cap Sustainable

#### Cap is unsustainable – Financialization and speculation.

Foster et al. 21 [John Bellamy Foster, R. Jamil Jonna, and Brett Clark, \* professor of sociology at the University of Oregon, \*\*\* professor of sociology at the University of Utah, “The Contagion of Capital: Financialized Capitalism, COVID-19, and the Great Divide,” 2021, *Monthly Review*, Vol. 27, Issue 8, https://monthlyreview.org/2021/01/01/the-contagion-of-capital/]

Free Cash and the Financialization of Capital

“Capitalism,” as left economist Robert Heilbroner wrote in The Nature and Logic of Capitalism in 1985, is “a social formation in which the accumulation of capital becomes the organizing basis for socioeconomic life.”1 Economic crises in capitalism, whether short term or long term, are primarily crises of accumulation, that is, of the savings-and-investment (or surplus-and-investment) dynamics. Investment in new productive capacity in new or existing businesses is what determines growth. Such investment decisions are governed by expected profits on new investments.

Viewed in these terms, the decline in the long-term growth rate experienced by the mature, monopolistic economies of the United States, Europe, and Japan over the last half century can be seen as related principally to the atrophy of net investment.2 Existing excess capacity in plant and equipment, a product of the monopolistic structure of accumulation, tends to decrease expected profits on new investment.3 The U.S. economy has seen a long-term decline in capacity utilization in manufacturing, which has averaged 78 percent from 1972 to 2019—well below levels that stimulate net investment.4 As a result, the capital accumulation process within production has stagnated, with existing idle capacity tending to shut off the creation of new capacity. From 1960 to 1980, it was common for private net investment to constitute around 40 percent of private gross investment. Since 2000, this has dropped to around 20 percent, even as gross investment has weakened relative to national income.5

The significance of the atrophy of net investment in the core capitalist countries cannot be exaggerated. As the foremost emerging economy in the world today, China has what economist Zhun Xu calls a “high Baran ratio,” standing for investment as a share of economic surplus. Conceptually, economic surplus—the difference between national output and wage income or essential consumption—is gross property income (profit, rent, interest). Zhun uses the income of the top 10 percent as a proxy for economic surplus. On this basis, he explains, China has invested around 80 percent of its economic surplus, leading to high growth rates of 7 percent or higher. In contrast, mature, monopolistic economies such as the Group of 7 (the United States, Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Canada) typically have relatively low Baran ratios, investing less than 50 percent of economic surplus, resulting in what for decades have been weak and declining average annual growth rates.6

Given these conditions, it is important to ask: What happens to that part of the economic surplus held by corporations and individual capitalists that is not invested in new capacity?7 Some of it is used for capitalist consumption, but this has inherent limits. The vast economic surplus (actual and potential) generated by the system of economic exploitation far exceeds what can be spent in the luxury consumption of the wealthy, however ostentatious. More importantly, capitalists do not desire to consume the larger part of the economic surplus at their disposal, since, above all else, they seek to amass wealth.

Government spending absorbs some of the economic surplus, as does waste in the business process. However, government deficit spending also increases corporate profits after taxes above the level determined by capitalist spending on consumption and investment.8 Hence, with both the growth of the federal deficit and the stagnation of investment, the amount of free cash in corporate coffers has dramatically expanded. This free cash plays a central role in the financialization of capital and the resulting extreme polarization of society.9

As stipulated by Craig Medlen in Free Cash, Capital Accumulation and Inequality, free cash equals corporate profits after taxes plus depreciation minus investment. (In national income accounting, corporate profits after taxes plus depreciation is known as corporate cash flow. The funds associated with depreciation [or capital consumption] are part of the gross surplus available to corporations.)10

A wider conception of free cash, utilized in this article, also includes net interest. Hence, in the wide version, Free Cash = Corporate Profits After Taxes + Depreciation + Net Interest – Investment.11 This free cash is held by corporations or is distributed to stockholders through dividend payouts and/or stock buybacks.12

Building on the research of Michał Kalecki, Medlen demonstrates that the amount of free cash is identical to the federal government deficit minus the excess of savings over investment of the noncorporate sector (now usually negative) plus the current account balance. The three factors of (1) the federal deficit, (2) the country’s current account balance (or the trade deficit), and (3) the deficit spending of the noncorporate sector (encompassing noncorporate business, housing, and personal finance) can therefore be seen as underpinning free cash.13

Chart 1 shows the growth of corporate free cash in the U.S. economy from the period immediately after the Second World War to the present. Free cash, as non-invested surplus, became a much bigger and bigger factor in the U.S. economy beginning in the 1980s due mainly to the combined effects of a long-term decline in corporate taxation, the increasing federal deficit, and the atrophy of net investment.14 Free cash falls in recessions (due to lower business activity and income), but then rockets up soon afterward due to investment not keeping up with increasing economic activity, freeing up more cash after investment. This sudden rebound in cash is also a product of the fact that the Federal Reserve Board now steps in during every recession, at precisely such “Minsky Moments” when the prospects for investment are at their worst, with lavish provision of low-interest credit.

Another way of looking at this phenomenon is to chart the total cash or liquid funds that corporations actually have ready at hand, if they were to choose to invest (or otherwise productively use) the surplus at their disposal. Of course, corporate investment is not dependent on the prior availability of savings/surplus, since capitalism, as Joseph Schumpeter long ago explained, is a system that creates “credit ad hoc”; while John Maynard Keynes and Kalecki taught that investment determines savings, not the other way around.15 Nevertheless, it is significant that the cash funds of corporations in the current phase of monopoly-finance capital far exceed profitable investment outlets. At the beginning of 2020, nonfinancial corporations were sitting on over $4 trillion dollars in cash; before the end of 2020 this had risen to over $5 trillion.16 According to the Federal Reserve Flow of Funds data, shown in Chart 2, total cash held by U.S. nonfinancial corporations as a share of gross domestic product (GDP)—much of it parked abroad in tax havens—has almost tripled between the early 1990s and the present.17

The total cash holdings of nonfinancial corporations on hand at any given time are not to be confused with free cash, which is that part of the corporate cash flow left over after investment in a given year—much of which is not held as cash deposits but instead spent on mergers and acquisitions, stock buybacks, and other financial instruments. Rather, total cash on hand, as defined by the Federal Reserve Flow of Funds, simply measures the actual cash deposits sitting in the accounts of nonfinancial corporations presented as annual averages based on quarterly data. Still, the rapid growth of total cash currently held by nonfinancial corporations in the form of ready monies, both absolutely and as a proportion of GDP (as shown in Chart 2), is a further indication of an economy that has shifted from capital formation to speculation.

As we have seen, when corporations do not invest their economic surplus in new capital formation—primarily due to vanishing investment opportunities in an economy characterized by excess capacity—they are left with abundant free cash that is partly returned to the shareholders through share buybacks and, to a lesser degree, dividends. It is also used for speculation, including mergers, acquisitions, and the panoply of corporate “cash management” techniques that amount to the leveraging of free cash to enhance returns.18 This gives rise to a whole alphabet soup of financial instruments, in which corporations use the cash at their disposal partly as collateral for debt leverage, with nonfinancial corporate debt rising rapidly as a share of national income. Predictably recurring internal corporate funds in the form of free cash constitute a “flow collateral” allowing for further leverage, feeding speculation. A speculative economy relies on borrowed funds for leverage, backed up in part by cash. Expanding cash reserves are also needed as hedges in case of financial defaults. The whole system is a house of cards.

The progressive financialization of the capitalist economy, whereby the financial superstructure continues to expand as a share of the underlying productive economy, has led to ever-greater asset price bubbles and growing threats of world economic meltdown. So far, a complete meltdown has been headed off by central banks, as in the 2000 and 2008 financial crashes. At every major recurring disturbance, and with serious economic repercussions, the monetary authorities pump massive amounts of cash into the financial superstructure of the economy only to give rise to greater bubbles in the future.

Theoretically, stock values represent future expected streams of earnings arising primarily from production.19 Nowadays, however, finance has become increasingly autonomous from production (or the “real economy”), relying on its own speculative “self-financing,” leading to financial bubbles, contagions, and crashes, with the monetary authorities intervening to keep the whole house of cards from collapsing. This serves to reduce the risk to speculators, thereby keeping the value of stocks and other financial assets rising on a long-term basis, along with the overall wealth/income ratio. In these circumstances, so-called asset accumulation by speculative means has replaced actual accumulation or productive investment as a route to the increase of wealth, generating a condition of “profits without production.”20

In order to grasp the full significance of the financialization of the economy, it is useful to look at the two conceptions of capital (relative to national income) depicted in Chart 3.21 One of these, the numerator of the lower line, is the traditional conception of capital as fixed investment stock (physical structures and equipment) at historical cost minus depreciation. This is called the fixed capital stock of the nation and is tied directly to economic growth.22 It represents what economic theorists from Adam Smith to Karl Marx to Keynes have referred to as the accumulation of capital. Capital formation and national income are closely related, generally rising and falling together, producing the relatively flat line, representing the ratio of fixed capital stock to national income, shown in Chart 3.

Yet, capital, as Marx noted very early in the process, has more and more taken on the “duplicate” form of “fictitious capital,” that is, the structure of financial claims (in monetary values) produced by the formal title to this real capital. Insofar as economic activity is directed to the appreciation of such financial claims to wealth relatively independently of the accumulation of capital at the level of production, it has metamorphosed into a largely speculative form.23

This can be seen by looking again at Chart 3. In contrast to the lower line, the upper line depicts what is traditionally seen as the wealth/income ratio (which some economic theorists, such as Thomas Piketty, conflate with the capital/income ratio, treating wealth as capital).24 The numerator here is the value of corporate stocks. Since the mid–1980s, the ratio of stock value to national income has increased more than 300 percent. This marks an enormous growth of financial wealth, with speculation-induced asset growth sidelining the role of productive investment or capital accumulation as such in the amassing of wealth. This is associated with a massive redistribution of wealth to the top of society. The top 10 percent of the U.S. population owns 88 percent of the value of stocks, while the top 1 percent owns 56 percent.25 Rising stock values relative to national income thus mean, all other things being equal, rapidly rising wealth (and income) inequality.26

The existence of the two conceptions of capital (and of capital/income ratios) presented here—one representing historical investment cost minus depreciation, and conforming to the notion of accumulated capital stock, the other the monetary value of stock equities (in economics traditionally treated as wealth rather than capital)—is often downplayed within establishment economics under the assumption that in the long run they will simply fall in line with each other, and with national income. As leading mainstream economic growth theorist Robert Solow writes: “Stock market values, the financial counterpart of corporate productive capital, can fluctuate violently, more violently than national income. In a recession the wealth-income ratio may fall noticeably, although the stock of productive capital, and even its expected future earning power, may have changed very little or not at all. But as long as we stick to longer-run trends…this difficulty can safely be disregarded.”27

But can the divergence of stock values from income (and from fixed capital stock) in reality be so easily disregarded? Chart 3 depicts a sharp increase in stock values relative to national income, which has now continued for over a third of a century, with decreases in total stock values as a ratio of national income (output) occurring during recessions, then rebounding during recoveries.28 The overall movement is clearly in the direction of compounded financial hyperextension. This conforms to the general pattern of the financialization of the capitalist economy, constituting a structural change in the system associated with the growth of monopoly-finance capital. This has gone hand in hand with a bubblier economy, with financial bubbles bursting in 1987, 1991, 2001, and 2008, but ultimately shored up by the Federal Reserve and other central banks.

Today, vast amounts of free cash are spilling over into waves of mergers and acquisitions, typically aimed at acquiring megamonopoly positions in the economy. A major focus is the tech sector, much of which is directed at commodifying all information in society, in the form of a ubiquitous surveillance capitalism.29 All financial bubbles derive their animus from some common rationale, which claims that this time is different, discounting the reality of a bubble. In the present case, the rationale is that the advance of the FAANG stocks (Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix, and Google), which now comprise almost a quarter of the value of Standard and Poor 500’s total capitalization, is unstoppable, reflecting the dominance of technology. Apple alone has reached a stock market valuation of $2 trillion. All of this is feeding a massive increase in income and wealth inequality in the United States, as the gains from financial assets rise relative to income. Yet, like all previous bubbles, this one too will burst.30

Kalecki determined that the export surplus on the U.S. current account increased free cash, as did the federal deficit.31 However, the current account deficit cannot be seen, in today’s overall structural context, as simply reducing free cash, because of the changed role of multinational corporations in late imperialism, which alters other parts of the equation. Due to globalization and the rise of the global labor arbitrage, U.S. multinational corporations in their intrafirm relations have in effect substituted production overseas by their affiliates for parent company exports, thereby decreasing their investment in fixed capital in the United States.32 The sales abroad of goods by majority-owned affiliates of U.S. multinational corporations in 2018 were 14.5 times the exports of goods to majority-owned affiliates.33 Foreign profits of U.S. corporations as a proportion of U.S. domestic corporate profits rose from 4 percent in 1950 to 9 percent in 1970 to 29 percent in 2019. This mainly reflects the shift in production to low unit labor cost countries in the Global South. Samir Amin described the vast expropriation of surplus from the Global South, based on the global labor arbitrage, as a form of “imperialist rent.”34

This expansion of global labor-value chains is also associated with an epochal increase in what is called the non-equity mode of production, or arm’s length production. Companies like Apple and Nike rely not on foreign direct investment abroad, but instead draw on subcontractors overseas to produce their goods at extremely low unit labor costs, often generating gross profit margins on shipping prices on the order of 50 to 60 percent.35

The loss of investment in the United States, as U.S. multinational corporations have substituted production overseas, coupled with the growth of foreign profits of U.S. megafirms, has further increased the free cash at the disposal of corporations (even with a growing deficit in the current account), thereby intensifying the all-around contradictions of overaccumulation, stagnation, and financialization in the U.S. economy. Much of this free cash is parked in tax havens overseas to escape U.S. taxes.36

Washington uses its printing press, through the federal deficit, to compensate for the U.S. current account deficit. Foreign governments cooperate, providing the “giant gift” of accepting dollars in lieu of goods, thereby acquiring massive dollar reserves.37 At some point, however, these contradictions are bound to undermine the hegemony of the dollar as the world’s reserve currency, with dire ramifications for the U.S.-based world empire.

The COVID-19 Crisis and the Great Divide

Received economic ideology, with its compartmentalized view, treats the COVID-19 pandemic as simply an external shock to the economy emanating from the natural environment and thus unrelated to capitalism. However, as Rob Wallace and his colleagues have shown, contagions like COVID-19 arise from the worldwide circuits of capital associated with the global labor arbitrage and the accelerated extraction of the planet’s resources.38 This is tied especially to global agribusiness, which displaces, often forcibly, subsistence farmers while advancing into wilderness areas, destroying ecosystems, and disrupting wildlife. The result is a growing spillover of zoonoses (or diseases from other animals that are capable of being transmitted to human populations). From the standpoint of the Structural One Health tradition in epidemiology, the COVID-19 pandemic can therefore be seen as part of the larger planetary ecological crisis or metabolic rift engendered by twenty-first-century capitalism.39

In March 2020, the U.S. stock market saw a sharp dip as COVID-19 spread in the United States. The Federal Reserve immediately brought out its firehose to flood the market with liquidity, purchasing, from March to June 2020, $1.6 trillion in U.S. Treasuries and $700 billion in mortgage-backed securities, and letting markets know that there was virtually no limit to the trillions that they were ready to pour into markets.40 The result was that—just as social distancing and lockdowns were being instituted and unemployment was soaring to the highest levels since the Great Depression, reaching almost seventeen million—the U.S. stock market experienced its biggest increase since 1974 in the week of April 6 to 10.41 Wall Street profits rose in the first half of 2020 by 82 percent over the year before.42 The total wealth of U.S. billionaires skyrocketed by $700 billion between March and July 2020, even as the number of those dying from COVID-19 in the United States continued to mount and as millions of U.S. workers found themselves hit hard by the crisis.43 Amazon centi-billionaire Jeff Bezos experienced an increase in his total wealth by more than $74 billion in 2020, while Tesla megacapitalist Elon Musk saw his wealth increase in 2020 by $76 billion, making him too a centi-billionaire. (For comparison, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits provided by the federal government in Fiscal Year 2019, aiding tens of millions of low-income families, seniors on fixed incomes, and disabled people, amounted to $62.3 billion.)44 All of this points to the continuing operation of what Marx termed “the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation,” polarizing wealth and poverty, or what Solow, commenting on the work of Piketty, calls “the rich-get-richer dynamic.”45

The wreckage inflicted on the U.S. population as a whole has been enormous. In mid–October 2020, more than 25 million workers in the United States were hurt in the pandemic crisis. According to official unemployment figures, 11.1 million workers in the United States were officially unemployed; another 3.1 million had lost their jobs but were misclassified as a result of the lockdowns; 4.5 million had dropped out of the labor force since the pandemic; and 7 million were still employed but experiencing cuts in pay and hours due to the coronavirus crisis. The number claiming unemployment compensation in all programs in October equaled 21.5 million people.46 Millions are behind in payments for rent, home mortgages, and student loans while food insecurity has grown from 35 million to over 50 million as a result of insufficient government help during the pandemic.47

According to the 2020 U.S. Financial Health Pulse Report, published by the U.S. Financial Network, more than two-thirds of the U.S. population at present are in a financially unhealthy condition. Of these, more than 20 percent are concerned about not having enough food, while more than a quarter are worried about their ability to pay their next month’s rent or mortgage. Ironically, the financial health of the bottom two-thirds of the population at the time the survey was completed (August 2020) was slightly improved compared to 2019 (prior to the present economic and epidemiological crisis), due to the temporary relief mainly in the form of unemployment compensation provided by the federal government in response to the pandemic.48 In the third quarter of 2020, the U.S. economy was still 3.5 percent smaller than in the fourth quarter of 2019, with tens of millions of people suffering as a result of the crisis.49

Exploiting these conditions, the richest 1 percent saw their financial assets skyrocketing as a share of national income. FAANG stocks led the way as corporations and the wealthy turned increasingly from investment to speculative outlets, focusing on the big tech monopolies. By October 2020, Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix, and Google had seen the value of their shares rise year-to-date by 29, 61, 77, 64, and 61 percent respectively.50

Such frenetic speculation naturally carries with it the growing danger of a financial meltdown. At present, the U.S. economy is faced with a stock market bubble that is threatening to burst. Two of the more influential ways of ascertaining whether a financial crisis centered on the stock market is imminent are: (1) the stock price to company earnings ratios (P/E) of stocks, and (2) Warren Buffett’s Expensive Market Rule. The historical average P/E ratio, according to the Shiller Index, is 16. In August 2020, the U.S. stock market was priced at more than twice that, at 35. On Black Tuesday during the 1929 stock market crash, which led to the Great Depression, the P/E ratio had reached 30. The 2000 stock market crash that ended the tech boom of the 1990s occurred when the P/E ratio reached 43.51

According to Buffett’s Expensive Market Rule, the mean average of stock values (measured by Wilshire 5000 market-value capitalization index) as a ratio of GDP is 80 percent. The 2000 tech crash occurred when the stock to income ratio, measured in this way, reached 130 percent, while the 2007 Great Financial Crisis occurred when it reached 110 percent. In August 2020, the ratio was at 180 percent.52

Another key indicator of growing financial instability is the ratio of nonfinancial corporate debt to GDP, depicted in Chart 4. Corporations flush with free cash have taken on debt, available at very low interest rates, in order to further pursue nonproductive ventures such as mergers, acquisitions, and various forms of speculation, using the free cash as flow collateral. In each of the three previous economic crises of 1991, 2000, and 2008, nonfinancial corporate debt reached cyclical peaks in the range of 43 to 45 percent of national income. In 2020, nonfinancial corporate debt in relation to national income reached a record 56 percent. This is a sure sign of a financial bubble stretched beyond its limits.

The entire world economy, apart from China, is now in crisis, with over a million and a half lives lost worldwide to COVID-19 as of the beginning of December, disrupting normal production relations. The International Monetary Fund has projected a -5.8 percent rate of growth in the advanced economies in 2020 and a -4.4 percent rate of growth in the world.53 In these circumstances, there will be no fast recovery from the current capitalist crisis. Heavy storm winds will continue. The U.S. ability to print dollars to stave off financial crises as well as its capacity to devalue its currency so as to increase its exports (thereby reducing the value of dollar reserves held by countries around the world) may both come up against mounting resistance to the dollar system, further hastening the decline of U.S. hegemony. As in other areas, the contagion of capital, which spreads like a virus, ultimately undermining its own basis, is operative here.54 Washington’s attempt to create trade pacts that will ensure the continued dominance of U.S.-centered global commodity chains is running into increasing competition from Beijing. The 2020 Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the largest trade bloc in the world, accounting for around 30 percent of the global economy, has China as its center of gravity.

Faced with economic stagnation, periodic financial crises, and declining economic hegemony, and confronted with rapid Chinese growth, the United States is heading toward a New Cold War with China. This was made clear in the November 2020 U.S. State Department report, The Elements of the China Challenge, accusing the “People’s Republic of China of authoritarian goals and hegemonic ambitions.” The State Department report proceeded to outline a strategy for the defeat of China by targeting the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), exploiting the CCP’s economic and other “vulnerabilities.”55

Here, the chief economic weapon of the United States is its dominance over world finance. Former Chinese Finance Minister, Lou Jiwei, recently indicated that the United States is preparing to launch a “financial war” against China. U.S. attempts at “the suppression of China” by financial means under a Joe Biden administration, he says, “will be inevitable.” Under these circumstances, Lou insists, China’s earlier goals of internationalizing its currency and initiating full capital account convertibility, which would lead to the loss of its control of state finance, are “no longer safe options.” If Washington were to use its power over the world financial system to smother Chinese growth, Beijing, according to Chen Yuan, a former Chinese central bank deputy governor, could be forced to weaponize its holdings of U.S. sovereign debt (totaling $1.2 trillion) in response. This is viewed as the financial equivalent of nuclear war. A financial (not to mention military) war between the United States and China, driven by U.S. attempts to shore up its declining economic hegemony by attempting to derail its emerging rival, could well spell utter disaster for the global capitalist economy and humanity as a whole.56

The Boundary Line and the Contagion of Capital

The crisis of the U.S. system and of late capitalism as a whole is one of overaccumulation. Economic surplus is generated beyond what can profitably be absorbed in a mature, monopolistic system. This dynamic is associated with high levels of idle capacity, the atrophy of net investment, continuing slow growth (secular stagnation), enhanced military spending, and financial hyperexpansion. The inability of private investment (and capitalist consumption) to absorb all of the surplus actually and potentially available, coupled with government deficit spending, leads to growing amounts of free cash in the hands of corporations. The result is the rise of a system of asset speculation that partially stimulates the economy due to the wealth effect (increases in capitalist consumption fed by a part of the increased returns on wealth), but which is unable to overcome the underlying tendency toward stagnation.57

Hence, monopoly-finance capital of today is a deeply irrational system, in which money is seen as begetting more money without the mediation of production, or what Marx characterized as M-M’ (Money-Money + Δm or surplus value).58 “The viability of today’s money manager capitalism,” as the heterodox economist Hyman Minsky called it,

depends upon not having a serious depression: the continued absence of a serious depression fosters experimentation with portfolio managing techniques that increases the likelihood of system threatening crises, that is, increases the likelihood of depressions. There is a basic contradiction in money manager capitalism which makes continued success ever more dependent upon an apt structure of supportive government interventions. Money manager capitalism rests upon the power of government to prevent a sharp decline in aggregate business profits.… We can expect future crises to be met with some form of ad hoc intervention which will in part reflect an unwillingness by policy makers to appreciate that once again capitalism has changed.59

A rational strategy with which to escape this trap—if only partially—would be to increase the direct U.S. governmental role in investment and consumption in order to address the multiple crises of society, including public spending in response to: (1) the climate emergency; (2) the public health crisis; (3) the shortage of adequate housing for much of the population; (4) the deterioration of the public education system under neoliberalism; (5) the absence of a national mass transit system, and so on. Yet, for the government to enter directly into such areas would involve crossing the private sector-government boundary line, which ensures the present near-complete dominance of the economy by the private sector, a phenomenon first critically diagnosed by Marxist economists Paul A. Baran and Paul M. Sweezy in Monopoly Capital in 1966.60 As Medlen writes, “the institutional arrangements for profit-seeking investment are simply taken for granted as a boundary line that is not to be violated.”61

So strict is the boundary line in the U.S. economy that outside of the Tennessee Valley Authority, as well as various municipal utilities and land leases, government-owned productive facilities cannot be said to produce internal revenues sufficient to compensate for costs of production. “This is primarily because the government, outside a considerable land mass, the public school system, the U.S. Postal Service and toll-free roads, owns essentially nothing.”62 The bulk of federal government discretionary spending goes to the military, which constitutes a huge subsidy to private capital while avoiding any intrusions on the private sector. Meanwhile, the privatization of public health infrastructure and public education is further pushing the boundary line in the direction of the complete dominance of a private sector already prone to overaccumulation and the contagion of capital.

A little more than forty years ago in “Whither U.S. Capitalism?,” Sweezy, writing in Monthly Review, questioned the then common view that the United States, caught in economic stagnation, was headed inevitably to “an American version of the corporate state, authoritarian and repressive internally, increasingly militaristic and aggressive externally.”63 His reasoning is worth recalling today:

There are at least two problems with this “solution” to the crisis of U.S. capitalism. First, it assumes that because the working class has never yet organized itself for effective independent political action it never will in the future either. In my view this reflects a simplistic view of the history of class struggles in the United States and quite unjustifiably rules out the emergence of new patterns of behavior and forms of struggle. Second, it assumes that the capitalists will be united behind a fascist-type policy of repression, and this seems to me doubtful too. Not only is a strategy of this kind costly to large elements of the middle and upper classes, as the whole history of fascism shows, but even more important, it is no solution at all to the real problems of U.S. capitalism. The basic disease of monopoly capitalism is an increasingly powerful tendency to overaccumulate. At anything approaching full employment, the surplus accruing to the propertied classes is far more than they can profitably invest. An attempt to remedy this by further curtailing the standard of living of the lower-income groups can only make things worse. What is needed, in fact, is the exact opposite, a substantial and increasing standard of living of the lower-income groups, not necessarily in the form of more individual consumption: more important at this stage of capitalist development is a greater improvement in collective consumption and the quality of life.64

Sweezy followed this up with the notion of building a “cross-class alliance” between those suffering most from monopoly capitalism and the more far-seeing elements of the ruling class, a kind of new New Deal, but with the working class as the organizing and hegemonic force. This was consistent with a political praxis emphasizing protecting the population in the immediate present while working toward the long-run revolutionary reconstitution of society at large.

More than four decades later, in 2021, the basic conditions are similar, if more serious and threatening. The current struggle for a People’s Green New Deal, based on a just transition, is a call for a cross-class movement to protect humanity as a whole, one which, however, can only be successful by going against the logic of capital and establishing the basis for a new society geared to substantive equality and environmental sustainability: the historical struggle for socialism. If the danger of “a fascist-type policy of repression” of the kind that Sweezy pointed to has reemerged in the twenty-first century in the context of the contagion of capital, so has a new socialist movement from below aimed at ensuring a world of sustainable human development. Predictions as to the future are meaningless in this context. The point is to struggle.

### AT: Cap Solves Climate

#### Green capitalism fails.

Smith 16 [Richard Smith, economic historian. He wrote his UCLA history Ph.D. thesis on the transition to capitalism in China and held post-docs at the East-West Center in Honolulu and Rutgers University, “Green Capitalism: The God that Failed,” 2016, College Publications, pp. 36-38, EA – potentially triggering word censored]

II. Delusions of “natural capitalism”

Paul Hawken was right: We need a “restorative economy,” an economy that lives within nature’s limits, that minimizes and even eliminates waste from production, and so on. But he was completely wrong to imagine that we could ever get this under capitalism. In what follows I am going to explain why this is so and in conclusion state what I think are the implications of this critique. To start with, I’m going to state five theses about green capitalism and then develop these arguments in the rest of this chapter.

1. Capitalism and saving the planet are fundamentally and irreconcilably at odds. It is not just “bad business practices.” Profit seeking cannot be systematically “aligned” with environmental goals, much less subordinated, because any corporate CEO who attempts to do so (and we shall consider the fate of some who tried) will shortly find ~~himself~~ in hot water with his bosses, the shareholders, or if he were to persist, ~~his~~ company would be driven out of the market and/or abandoned by its shareholders. I argue therefore, that the only way to systematically align production with society’s needs is to do so directly, in a democratically planned economy.

2. No capitalist government on earth can impose “green taxes” that would drive the coal industry, or any other industry out of business, or even force major retrenchments by suppressing production because, among other important reasons, given capitalism, this would just provoke recession and mass unemployment if not worse. This means the carbon tax strategy to stop global warming is a non-starter. Since profit seeking and environmental goals are systematically opposed, without green taxes, the entire green capitalist project collapses.

3. Green capitalism enthusiasts vastly underestimate the gravity, scope, and speed of the global ecological collapse of we face and thus unrealistically imagine that growth can continue forever if we just tweak the incentives and penalties a bit here and there with green taxes and such. I claim that the capitalist market system is inherently eco-suicidal, that endless growth can only end in catastrophic eco-collapse, that no amount of tinkering can alter the market system’s suicidal trajectory, and that, therefore, like it or not, humanity has no choice but to try to find a way to replace capitalism with some kind of post-capitalist ecologically sustainable economy.

4. Green capitalism theorists grossly overestimate the potential of “clean” “green” production and “dematerializing,” the economy whereas, in reality, much if not most of the economy from resource extraction like mining and drilling, to metals smelting and chemicals production, to most manufacturing, cannot be greened in any meaningful sense at all. This means that if we really want to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the 80% that scientists say we need to do to save the humans, then we have no choice but to enforce a drastic contraction of production in the industrialized countries, especially in the most polluting and wasteful sectors. Most industries will have to be sharply retrenched. Some, the very worst polluting and wasteful, will have to be virtually closed down entirely. Since the scale of the cuts we need to make to save the humans would mean mass unemployment under capitalism, I contend that the only way to address this problem is to construct a bottom-up socialist economic democracy that can guarantee employment to those made redundant by retraction and closures. Further, the need for sharp cutbacks in production will mean less work overall, therefore the necessity of sharing what work there is among all workers, therefore a shortening of the working day, a sharing economy, all of which will be necessary to save the humans but none of which are compatible with capitalism.

Consumerism and overconsumption are not “dispensable” and cannot be exorcised because they’re not just “cultural” or “habitual.” They are built into capitalism and indispensable for the day-to-day reproduction of corporate producers in a competitive market system in which capitalists, workers, consumers and governments alike are all dependent upon an endless cycle of perpetually increasing consumption to maintain profits, jobs, and tax revenues. We can’t shop our way to sustainability because the problems we face cannot be solved by individual choices in the marketplace because, among other reasons, the global ecological crisis we face cannot be solved by even the largest individual companies, especially because many of these companies will have to be shut down altogether, and furthermore, many problems such as global warming, overfishing, ocean chemistry, are beyond the scope of nation states. They require collective bottom-up democratic control over the entire world economy; they require national and international economic planning, national and global redistributions of wealth to maximize popular support for necessary changes, and global economic coordination to prioritize the needs of humanity, other life forms, and the environment.

### AT: LIO Good

#### Neoliberalism causes the Liberal Order to inevitably fail – only shifting away from the primacy of markets can solve.

Parsi 21 [Vittorio Emanuele Parsi, professor of International Relations at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, “The Wrecking of the Liberal World Order,” 2021, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 242-244, EA]

The Liberal World Order is rooted in the—largely unsuccessful— attempts of the interwar period to ground international politics, as much as possible, on rules and cooperation rather than on power relations among states holding on to an aggressive concept of national sovereignty. Yet, it was only in the wake of World War II that this order emerged in its first complete and effective version, thanks to the interaction between two sets of apparently divergent factors. The first dynamic involved the two main political cultures of the West in the twentieth century—liberalism and social democracy. The Liberal World Order was a unique creation in that it was able to devise a set of goals, institutions, and practices that legitimated the institutions of market economy and representative democracy in the eyes of the lower classes—not only in principle, but also in light of the fact that it provided actual inclusion. Secondly, the order was a product of the interaction between the realization—however, limited—of a ‘blueprint’ and the resultant of systemic forces operating at both a domestic and an international level. The Liberal World Order was designed by statesmen and officials who were committed to restoring international relations based on different premises than the ones that had led to the political, material, and moral destruction of the war. Their project for a rule-based order was grounded on principles—including the aforementioned compromise between liberalism and social democracy— as well as a realistic assessment of international circumstances, including the distribution of power among states. At the same time, the Liberal World Order was a product of the Cold War—namely, the competition between the liberal and socialist ideologies and the corresponding political and social models underlying the bipolar conflict—to the extent in which the competition against socialism underpinned the persuasion that the only way to make liberal democracy viable for ‘the masses’ was to incorporate welfare principles, policies, and institutions into the political and economic framework of liberalism.

In hindsight, then, it is unsurprising that the end of the ideological conflict of the Cold War threw a monkey wrench in the works of this delicate arrangement. In fact, the first signs of the rise of the Neoliberal Global Order can be traced back to the late 1960s. Fueled by the political, economic, and theoretical unrest of the 1970s, the delegitimization and practical de-establishment of the welfare state increasingly characterized economic and social power relations both nationally and internationally. With the defeat of the socialist alternative, the Neoliberal Global Order became the supreme order, and the global market acquired the authority to demand governments and international institutions to be sheltered from the common people’s requests for a fairer distribution of the resources of the globalized economy. At the same time, the unbalance between democracy and market economy had been building up. The progressive delegitimization of sovereignty—so far, the only viable basis of democracy—and the assumed wastefulness of governments and intermediate bodies compared to the unfettered free markets made the globalized international order more and more frail. The symptoms of this in-built weakness were soon manifest.

Years of neglected mutual prejudice in the relations with the Islamic world, of hypocritical support of tractable authoritarian regimes, of spiritless and self-absorbed unresponsiveness to the injustice regularly perpetrated even in allied countries had left the West exposed to desperate acts of violent retaliation. A string of terrorist attacks stripped the Liberal World Order of its famed invulnerability. The overwhelming cost in terms of casualties and resources invested in the military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq did the rest, dispelling the Western illusion of invincibility. But another empty promise was to be exposed by a military campaign started by the West. In the heat of the War on Terror, the George W. Bush administration, with the connivance of the British government led by Tony Blair, not only betrayed the international community, but also the general expectation that an order resting on liberal principles would be the best warrant of a fairer world. The self-professed standard-bearers of the liberal order deliberately resorted to carefully crafted lies to pursue their ideological and interest-driven foreign policy goals. The intervention in Iraq was tainted not only by the forged evidence presented to justify the conflict, but also by the troops’ criminal and inhumane treatment of prisoners and by an unacceptable number of collateral civilian victims. The final blow to the legitimacy of the order and of its leading countries came from a financial crisis generated by the American and European banks’ reckless credit management policies, which quickly escalated into a full-blown economic meltdown. At that point, the core promise of a richer world for everyone—which had already been largely broken by the advent of neoliberal policies— was exposed as empty. On top of that, it also became apparent that the hyper-globalized (neo)liberal world order, now adrift, was about to crash against a metaphorical iceberg composed of several different factors. One of these factors was the increasingly obvious decline of American leadership under the threat that authoritarian powers such as China and Russia pose not only to the primacy of the United States, but to the very foundation of the order the United States still formally guides. But state-generated threats are not the only kind of menace troubling the order, which is faced by the far more evasive danger of terrorism—no less destructive, but much harder to comprehend and prevent. The last two sides of the iceberg, while posing a less immediate existential threat, are in a way even more disturbing, as they come from within the liberal order itself. The election of Donald Trump exacerbated America’s increasing unwillingness to carry the burden of leadership, turning the country that was supposed to be the pillar of the international order into one of its most vociferous critics. Finally, coming full circle, there is the ultimate result of the unbalance between democracy and the market. Left unchecked, the two units of this crucial dyad have increasingly degenerated into sovereigntist populism and technocratic oligarchies, abandoning the people—with all its diversity of circumstances, values, interests, and ideas, and therefore not to be confused with the hypostasized homogeneous entity that populists love referring to—to a no man’s land where it is so neglected by the powers it almost disappears completely.

## FW

### War Games

#### Their interpretation is indebted to a politics that is defined to neoliberal governance – their model results in dispossession

Fordyce, R. (2021). Play, history and politics: Conceiving futures beyond empire. Games and Culture, 16(3), 294-304. Accessed 7/2/2024 CSUF JmB TDI

Games of Empire adds to the political analysis of gaming by establishing connections between the internal narrative, subjective, aesthetic, affective and ludic elements of a particular game with the conditions of production, especially with regard to the labour of those who make the game possible. The way that these conditions make games possible also shapes what kind of possibilities we can imagine for the future. Within this paradigm, Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter align individual video games against two primary categories: games of multitude and games of empire, with these terms drawn from the Empire trilogy. The two categories are determined by what kind of future they permit, either a self-determining alter-globalisation or a continuation of military imperialism. This is the frame that Games of Empire takes: to understand how to locate games within post-autonomist discourse. Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter fold the questions of content and form together under a rubric of consumption and production that pulls in the whole of the imperialist system. They note how the conditions of game development are not separated from the narratives, stories and futures that they produce: these very concerns are built into and are expressed within production and consumption in reciprocal ways. The conditions of these forms of labour are present in the case study of ‘EA Spouse’ (2009, p. 59–65) through to the extractive, slave-based labour necessary to obtain the coltan used in console development (p. 222–224). These examples take the hegemonic impact of informational labour from simply being a top-down system as Hardt and Negri propose, whereby intellectual labour shapes industrial labour, which in turn shapes agricultural labour in a pyramidic structure with intellectual labour at the peak. Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter make clear that the nature of industrial and extractive labour in itself shapes the conditions of intellectual labour as well, influencing the stories and identities that games can tell. As they state, [Fictional] subject positions may be utterly fantastic, quite realistic, or somewhere in between. But such in- game identities are never entirely separated from the options provided by the actual social formations in which the games are set, from which their virtualities derive and into which they flow back. Game virtualities remove us from, but also prepare us for, these actual subject positions. Mostly, as we have discussed at length, they simulate the normalized subjectivities of a global capitalist order – consumer, commander, commanded, cyborg, criminal – not to mention the rapid shedding and swapping between identities that is such an important aptitude of workers (DyerWitheford & de Peuter, 2009, p. 192) It would be a mistake to read the political value of the gaming avatar or a gaming identity as allowing someone to ‘live in another’s shoes’. There are numerous cases where games fail to achieve this because individual lives, especially the lives marginalised people whose experiences are ‘dipped into’ temporarily, are always more complex than can be represented in games, and the consequence is always more severe that can be represented. From a political perspective, we can re-read the above quote as suggesting that we take on others’subject positions not just to work towards new social formations. We can take this further to critique our current moment, addressing the forms of labour that define not just game production but capitalism more generally.

## Aff Answers

### 1AR – FW

#### Clash link turns alt solvency. Refusing to compare the alt to the plan dooms the transition.

Albert, 23—Lecturer in International Relations, SOAS, University of London (Michael, “Ecosocialism for Realists: Transitions, Trade-Offs, and Authoritarian Dangers,” Capitalism Nature Socialism, 34:1, 11-30, dml)

This leads to the second conjoined tendency, which is to neglect difficult strategic questions, trade-offs, and dangers that would likely emerge during the transition process and beyond. The majority of ecosocialists ignore these sorts of questions altogether, while others address them more tepidly. Michael Löwy, for example, who has done some of the finest work on elaborating the ecosocialist alternative, does not consider whether there might be a trade-off between calls for “democratic planning” and the simultaneous emphasis on biospheric limits within which we must constrain consumption. Indeed, he affirms that “nobody has the right to tell people what their needs are” (Löwy Citation2015, 34), but then the question of whether this may require allowing energy-intensive modes of consumption that transgress planetary boundaries to persist is left unaddressed. Instead, Löwy expresses faith that “the rationality of democratic decisions will prevail once the power of commodity fetishism is broken” (28). This is perhaps plausible, but as Löwy himself recognizes, there will be a long period of transition in which the “old habits of consumption would persist” (34), and he doesn’t grapple with the question of how they would be transformed within the requisite timeframe to avoid runaway climate change (i.e. by 2050 or shortly thereafter). Joel Kovel and Michael Lebowitz also recognize that ecosocialism(s)-in-transition would remain marked by the defects of capitalism for some time; thus they emphasize the importance of democratic praxis in forging the new subjectivities and social relations that would be needed to sustain a long-term revolutionary transformation, which otherwise risks lapsing into the same authoritarian statism that has plagued socialism throughout its history (Kovel Citation2007, 272; Lebowitz Citation2006, 66). This is an important insight, though it still begs the question of how a society-wide transformation towards ecosocialist/degrowth principles might occur in the needed time-frame. Given the possible intransigence of energy and emissions-intensive consumption practices, particularly in a context of rising rightwing populism and “fossil fascism” (Malm and Collective Citation2021), we should grapple squarely with the risk that state coercion would be needed enforce ecosocialist degrowth in rich countries. On the other hand, if we choose to follow the democratic will wherever it leads us, even if this entails the perpetuation or even expansion of material-energy intensive modes of living, then we must deal with the biospheric consequences. Might there be a trade-off, then, between degrowth and non-degrowth paths to ecosocialism, each with its own set of challenges and dangers? Ecosocialists have not systematically investigated these sorts of questions.

In sum, we can see that the ecosocialist and degrowth movements have so far devoted limited attention to important strategic questions and trade-offs regarding ecosocialist transitions. Thus they are vulnerable to critiques like those of Matt Huber, who claims that degrowth variants of ecosocialism fail to articulate how their utopian aspirations could be “realistically built out of the present” (Huber Citation2019). Instead, Huber advocates what he calls a “scientific ecosocialism” that eschews the emphasis on degrowth and instead endorses a “traditional socialist politics not of limits and less, but of more” (Huber Citation2019). Unfortunately, Huber’s proposal is itself “utopian” in that it disregards the biospheric devastation that would be entailed by more consumption in the already over-developed global north (which I will expand on below). However, he indicates a crucial problem that must be addressed by the degrowth ecosocialist left: how might an ecosocialist vision based on degrowth (in rich countries) win popular majorities? As Hubert Buch-Hansen bluntly states: “the degrowth project is nowhere near enjoying the degree and type of support it needs if its policies are to be implemented through democratic processes” (Buch-Hansen Citation2018, 160). This is undoubtedly true, at present, and thus more strategic thinking about the how of transition is needed. Following Sam Gindin, we need “an honest presentation of the risks, costs, and dilemmas the [eco]socialist project will face, alongside credible examples and promising indications of how the problems might be creatively addressed” (Gindin Citation2018, 14). Furthermore, as Erik Olin Wright says, we need to understand “not simply the obstacles and openings for strategies in the present, but how those obstacles and opportunities are likely to develop over time” (Wright Citation2010, 18).

In this sense, following Gindin and Olin Wright, we can develop a “realist” or “realist utopian” approach to ecosocialism that combines rigorous social and ecological analysis with speculative imagination, working through the likely constraints on utopian potentials, how they might be surmounted, and the likely challenges, tensions, trade-offs, and dilemmas we would face even in the best-case scenarios. No one could ever pretend to have fully worked out answers to these problems, and the claims of “realism” (i.e. “being realistic”) can always be contested, given that we are dealing with an inherently open and uncertain future (Wright Citation2010). But the difficulties of developing more realistic models of possible futures and theories of systemic change should not lead us to dismiss the importance of facing them as rigorously (and humbly) as possible. To this end, I will first develop a plausible (r)evolutionary scenario of how something like ecosocialist degrowth might emerge in the coming decades, and then think through some of the likely trade-offs and dangers that would accompany the transition process.

### 1AR – Perm

#### Perm do both. Embracing actions like the plan as acts of resistance within capitalism raises class consciousness and creates stepping stones to more radical change like the alt.

Carlo Fanelli and Jeff Noonan 17. Fanelli worked in the Department of Politics and Public Administration at Ryerson University, Canada at the time of publication and Noonan is a professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Windsor, 4-20-2017. “Capital and Organized Labor”, *Reading ‘Capital’ Today: Marx after 150 Years*, edited by Ingo Schmidt and Carlo Fanelli, p. 153-157.

Conclusion: Socialism and the Continuum of Democratic Struggle

The need, therefore, for workers to go beyond traditional trade union based forms of struggle is unquestionable. At the same time, we exist at a moment of history where vanguard revolutionary parties have been discredited, and there is no evidence, in the European and North American contexts, that their fortunes will ever be revived. Thus the question remains: if trade unions and social democracy are incapable of solving the problems they address themselves to because they are not revolutionary, and the historical moment of vanguardist politics seems to have definitively passed, how is the struggle for socialism to be conducted today? The answer to that question lies in the creative intelligence of people in struggle; no theoretical intervention can substitute itself for political practice. What we aim to do in conclusion is not infer a new mode of struggle from abstract principles but instead try to draw out the implicitly radical significance of the struggles within capitalism (for higher wages, for free time, for public institutions) in support of the conclusion that socialism is part and parcel of the struggle for democracy, and the struggle for democracy (as all political struggles) should be understood along a continuum. Reconceiving the goals of struggle as progressively realizable frees the idea of revolution from the nineteenth century image of it as a one-off cataclysm, opening space for new ideas of organization and political strategy that are neither social democratic nor vanguardist (see Hudis, this volume). Here again, Lebowitz is an instructive starting point. He notes that even when struggles do not ‘transcend the capital/wage labour relation’, they can be significant for the life-value of working people’s lives because they express the fact that ‘a qualitative development ... takes place in the course of such struggle’ (2003: 99). The qualitative development is that workers improve the conditions of their own lives, create life-time and life-space for self-realizing activity and mutualistic interaction, and thus both teach themselves that society is not impervious to collective struggle, and make their lives better by realizing some elements of the socialist ideal in their day to day reality. Since every human life is finite, lived by mortal individuals, revolutionary politics must take into account both the short and the long term. Immanuel Wallerstein puts the point well: ‘People live in the present’, he argued. ‘Everybody has to eat today, not tomorrow. Everybody has to sleep today, not tomorrow. Everybody has to do all these just ordinary things today, and you can’t just tell people that they have to wait another five or ten or twenty years, and it is going to get better ... So you’ve got to worry about today, but you can’t worry only about today’ (quoted in Boggs 2012: 197). No one can be expected to sacrifice the whole of their present life for the sake of a distant future that they will never experience. A politics capable of motivating people must demonstrate its capacity to improve workers’ lives in their own here and now and not just function as a way-station on the way to a promised transcendence. Hence the struggle for free time by shortening the working day without loss of real wages has historically been (and could become again, if it were taken up once more by a revivified trades union movement) a victory over the power of capital over the whole of human life. So too the struggle for higher wages. If it is understood as a struggle against the power of capital over human life and not an end in itself or instrumental to higher levels of life-destructive consumption of capitalist commodities, it becomes a basis and a building block for more radical demands. Such struggles can become bases and building blocks if they are used as occasions to raise critical questions: why is it that capitalism permits both mass unemployment and resists shortening the working week without loss of real wages? Why is it that real wages have stagnated while corporate profits have soared? Why is it that capitalism continues to ravage the planet (see Holleman, this volume) even though there is an unshakeable scientific consensus that without drastic socio-economic changes a massive life-crisis awaits us in the not too distant future? When workplace struggles are connected to these sorts of questions workers can realize – without being preached at or otherwise dogmatically exhorted to overthrow capitalism – that the real implications of their struggles contest the power of capital over human (and planetary) life. Let us take another example to further illustrate the point – the struggle for universally accessible public institutions. Here too trade unions have historically played a decisive role. What does the creation of universally accessible public institutions mean? The re-channelling of wealth away from private accumulation towards life-requirement satisfaction on the basis of need, not the ability to pay. In other words, the funding of universally accessible public institutions through taxation is another inroad against the power of capital over life. When education, health care, access to cultural institutions, and pensions are taken out of the cycle of commodified exchange and made available to all people on the basis and to the extent of their needs for them, real life improves: ‘The public provision of goods and services, well-managed in a way that fosters sustainable development and social justice initiatives, and which is accountable to the community, significantly improves standards of living’ (Fanelli 2016: 86). Such improvements take society some way towards instantiating the principle of socialist society: ‘from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs’ (Marx 1875). Of course, public institutions do not fully realize that principle, but nor do they fully ignore it, as commodified exchange does. Nor are actually existing public institutions free of invidious, often racialized and sexualized, oppressive hierarchies of power (see Sears 2014: 56, 88). Nevertheless, they do represent a victory over what Lebowitz calls the ‘mediating power’ of capital, i.e., the way it makes people dependent on the possession of money, as opposed to nature and each other, for their life-support. The road to socialism thus lies along a continuum of struggle against the power capital exerts over people’s ability to satisfy their real life-needs and express and enjoy their life-capacities. This struggle brings to light the deepest contradiction of capitalism, that it masks the real relations of dependence of human life on nature and collective labour with its own structurally imposed dependence on access to labour and commodity markets. Once workers peer behind this curtain of capitalist reification, they see that the real purpose of labour is not the production of private money-value for the capitalist, but life-capital – ‘the life wealth that produces more life wealth without loss and with cumulative gain’ (McMurty 2015) – for the need-based appropriation and use of all. Whatever struggles expose this contradiction, recapture wealth and resources for the production of life-capital, and create universally accessible pathways for all to appropriate life-capital are elements of the struggle for a socialist society. In sum, we have argued that the struggle for socialism must be reconceived as a struggle along a continuum. The ‘political economy of the working class’, implied but largely absent from Capital, focuses on the ways in which organized collective struggle can divert wealth from the circuits of capital to the circuits of collective life-capital through which real human beings preserve and develop themselves. Life can be better or worse in capitalism, and struggle that makes life better without overthrowing it should not be dismissed as ‘reformist’ but understood as part of a continuum of struggle towards socialism. People do not fight, normally, for abstractions or slogans, but for achievable goals that will improve their lives. To radicalize the struggle does not mean radicalizing slogans, but treating each victory as a plateau on which to rest for a moment before extending the counterlogic of public provision, need-satisfaction, and democratic control over wealth and resources further into the life-space and life-time dominated by capital.

#### Using the state to reimagine and reform capitalism is both possible and necessary to solve at the macro level.

Mariana Mazzucato 21. Professor in the Economics of Innovation and Public Value at University College London where she is the founding director of the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, 1-28-2021. *Mission Economy: A Moonshot Guide to Changing Capitalism*, p. 204-10.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 1AR – Alt = Authoritarianism

#### The alt risks authoritarian takeover in even best-case scenarios.

Albert, 23—Lecturer in International Relations, SOAS, University of London (Michael, “Ecosocialism for Realists: Transitions, Trade-Offs, and Authoritarian Dangers,” Capitalism Nature Socialism, 34:1, 11-30, dml)

The scenario sketched above highlights that ecosocialist degrowth transitions would most likely occur in a context of deepening political-economic crisis, intensifying climate shocks, and worsening insecurity for the majority of populations. A key danger, then, is that even in the best-case scenario in which powerful red-green movements decisively shift the balance of power vis-à-vis capital and elect leftist parties following ecosocialist platforms, this could lead to “authoritarian” forms of ecosocialism, understood as ecosocialist regimes that institutionalize “state of emergency” provisions such as unchecked executive power, the suspension of democratic rights and procedures, restrictions on free speech, and military-police repression of dissent (Petras and Fitzgerald Citation1988). This has of course been one of the primary challenges confronting all socialist transitions historically, which have had to fight off external military intervention, resistance from capitalist elites, and reactionary currents from below in order to protect revolutionary gains. Things would be no different for future ecosocialisms-in-transition, particularly given the likely contradiction between the speed at which consumption cuts may need to be made in the global north and the slowness with which post-materialist cultural change would occur, yet such problems have not been systematically explored by ecosocialists and degrowth scholars. The risks are twofold: first, that authoritarian measures would be needed to enforce lifestyle changes upon recalcitrant populations and “deal with the exceptional circumstances of direct and serious threat” to the survival of ecosocialist regimes in their early phases; and second, that such measures, rather than being temporally limited and abolished once the “exceptional circumstances” are dealt with, become the new normal (94). Quincy Saul and Andreas Malm are among the few ecosocialists who don’t shy away from this problem. Saul, for one, writes that “a period of ‘emergency rule,’ when the expropriators are expropriated, must be revised for the twenty-first century, it cannot be dismissed or glossed over” (Saul Citation2011, 58–59). Similarly, Malm suggests that carrying out the transition in the needed time frame would require. warlike state management of all industries … centralized decisions on who can consume what goods in what amounts, [and] punishment of transgressors threatening the annual emissions targets … [which] can only be feasible under an exceptional regime dealing with an unheard-of emergency (Malm Citation2015, 187) The risk, in other words, is that ecosocialist regimes that are democratically elected in a context of unprecedented climate-energy-economic crises may be forced down an authoritarian path in order to enforce carbon rationing, enact rapid and far-reaching transformations in land-use, break through the gridlock of dysfunctional and polarized legislatures, and defend themselves against violence and sabotage from capitalist elites and the far-right. The danger is exacerbated by the fact that worsening climate and political-economic crises, far from neutralizing the threat of rightwing populism, will most likely intensify ethnonationalist reaction and political polarization. As Malm and the Zetkin Collective explain: “the higher the temperatures, the more acute the antagonism between a left that alone stands ready to pick up the instruments for alleviating the crisis and a right that, for that very reason, refuses to contemplate it” (Malm and Collective Citation2021, 286–287). Additionally, given that ecosocialist transitions would entail a “life-threatening situation” for most if not all sectors of the capitalist class, many of them would likely ally with the far-right in order to halt such transitions in their tracks and restore capitalist power “by any means necessary” (241). Thus even in the best-case scenario in which ecosocialists are able to assume power in core states, this would almost certainly occur in a context of rabid far-right resistance in alliance with global capital. The risks are particularly acute in, but not limited to, the US, where the spectacle of armed insurrectionists storming congress to try overthrowing the 2020 presidential election give us a taste of what ecosocialists are up against.

### 1AR – Alt Fails

#### Their alt gets crushed

Fredrik deBoer 16, Limited-Term Lecturer, Introductory Composition at Purdue Program, 3/15/16, “c’mon, guys,” http://fredrikdeboer.com/2016/03/15/cmon-guys/

I could be wrong about the short-term dangers, and the stakes are incredibly high. But in the end we’re left with the same old question: what tactics will actually work to secure a better world?

In a sharp, sober piece about the meaning of left-wing political violence in the 1970s, Tim Barker writes “If you can’t acknowledge radical violence, radicals are reduced to mere victims of repression, rather than political actors who made definite tactical choices under given political circumstances.” The problem, as Barker goes on to imply, is those tactical choices: in today’s America they will essentially never break on the side of armed opposition against the state. The government knows everything about you, I’m sorry to say, your movements and your associations and the books you read and the things you buy and what you’re saying to the people you communicate with. That’s simply on the level of information, before we even get to the state’s incredible capacity to inflict violence. Look, the world has changed. The relative military capacity of regular people compared to establishment governments has changed, especially in fully developed, technology-enabled countries like the United States. The Czar had his armies, yes, but the Czar’s armies depended on manpower above and beyond everything else. The fighting was still mostly different groups of people with rifles shooting at each other. If tomorrow you could rally as many people as the Bolsheviks had at their revolutionary peak, you’re still left in a world of F-15s, drones, and cluster bombs. And that’s to say nothing of the fact that establishment governments in the developed world can rely on the numbing agents of capitalist luxuries and the American dream to damper revolutionary enthusiasm even among the many millions who have been marginalized and impoverished. This just isn’t 1950s Cuba, guys. It’s just not. In a very real way, modern technology effectively lowers the odds of armed political revolution in a country like the United States to zero, and so much the worse for us. This isn’t fatalism. It doesn’t mean there’s no hope. It means that there is little alternative to organization, to changing minds through committed political action and using the available nonviolent means to create change: a concert of grassroots organizing, labor tactics, and partisan politics. Those things aren’t exactly likely to work, either, but they’re a hell of a lot more plausible than us dweebs taking the Pentagon. Bernie Sanders isn’t really a socialist, but he’s a social democrat that moves the conversation to the left, and if people are dedicated and committed to organizing, the local, state, and national candidates he inspires will move it further to the left still. You got any better suggestions? Listen, commie nerds. My people. I love you guys. I really do. And I want to build a better world. Not incrementally, either, but with the kind of sweeping and transformative change that is required to fix a world of such deep injustice. But seriously: none of us are ever going to take to the barricades. And it’s a good thing, too, because we’d probably find a way to shoot in the wrong direction. I can’t dribble a basketball without falling down. American socialism is largely made up of bookish dreamers. I love those people but they’re not for fighting. And even if you have a particular talent for combat, you’re looking at fighting the combined forces of Google, Goldman Sachs, and the defense industry. Violence is hard. Soldiering is hard. In an era of the NSA and military robots, it’s really, really hard. “Should we condone revolutionary violence?” is dorm room, pass-the-bong conversation fodder, of precisely the moral and intellectual weight of “should we torture a guy if we know there’s a bomb and we know he knows where it is and we know we can stop it if we do?” It’s built on absurd hypotheticals, propped up by the power of anxious machismo, and undertaken to no practical political end. It’s understandable. I get it, I really do. But it’s got nothing to do with us. The only way forward is the grubby, unsexy work of building coalitions and asking people to climb on board.

### 1AR – Transition Wars

#### The alt can’t overcome geopolitical growth imperatives or basic human interest. Causes transition wars over resources and relative positioning.

Terzi, 22—Economist at the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, Adjunct Professor at Sciences Po and at HEC Paris (Alessio, “The Global Fight for Planet Earth,” *Growth for Good: Reshaping Capitalism to Save Humanity from Climate Catastrophe*, Chapter 7, pp. 168-172, dml)

As climate activist Greta Thunberg likes to remind her audiences, when the house is on fire, you stop whatever you are doing and focus on extinguishing. The message is that in our climate emergency all other, petty concerns must be set aside. Applied to international relations, this aspirational thinking has some believing that climate change will imply the end of conflictual geopolitics.44 There are practical reasons why this type of thinking might have gathered momentum. After all, much of the world’s recent conflict history, including war after war in the Middle East in the 1990s and early 2000s, was driven in large part by issues related to petroleum. It might seem logical that once economies, as part of their climate mitigation efforts, switch to renewables like solar and wind, conflictual international relations will become a thing of the past. Unfortunately, that change is very unlikely to represent the end of geopolitics.45

First, the overall premise is wrong, as oil and gas will not disappear any time soon. Rather, we will observe a gradual shift in the energy mix from traditional energy sources toward renewables.46 An effort to fast-track the demise of highly polluting coal, while renewable capacity is still building up, might initially lead to a counterintuitive increase in the use of methane— which is, at least for Europe, another source of conflictual geopolitical relations, in its case with Russia.

Second, as discussed in The New Map by energy expert and Pulitzer Prize winner Daniel Yergin, we are by no means close to seeing the end of geopolitics and power politics in the world. Specifically in the realm of energy, new materials such as rare-earth metals will become focal points of contention. Because these minerals are key inputs to the construction of wind turbines and electric cars, and will become fundamental to our technology, varying levels of access to them will reshape the world order and create new imperatives to ensure the safety of supplies.47 Military strategies and foreign policy priorities will be reoriented toward that goal, just as attention has been focused over the past decades on securing oil supply bottlenecks like the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca.48 Indeed, we can already get a sense of this, as the European Union has published, and regularly updates, a list of what it calls “critical raw materials,” necessary to ensure a strong industrial base to the European economy. The US administration did the same, identifying thirty-five critical minerals. For example, cobalt is featured on both lists, as a fundamental mineral in low-carbon technologies like electric vehicles and batteries, including those used every day in smartphones and laptops. Responsible for almost 60 percent of the world’s known reserves and 97 percent of global exports of cobalt is the Democratic Republic of the Congo, suggesting that this country will increasingly enter the spotlight of global power politics.49

Any predictions about geoeconomics must also acknowledge that climate change is not the only megatrend at play; it overlaps with others, including digitalization, automation, quantum computing, artificial intelligence, and big data, all of which exhibit important winner-take-all effects, and in all of which countries will compete. A hugely important megatrend is the rise of China and the re-dimensioning of the United States after roughly a century of global economic and political dominance.50 To the relative “optimists,” like political economist Dani Rodrik, the relationship between China and the United States could evolve into a milder, second Cold War or mutual recognition of existence and differences—an us and them dynamic within a framework of continued reciprocal trade and investment. To the less optimistic, as the global center of economic gravity shifts eastward, the risk of escalation to more open confrontation between superpowers is high.

In his 2017 book Destined for War, historian Graham Allison turned his attention to what he called the Thucydides trap.51 Analyzing the Peloponnesian War that devastated ancient Greece, the Athenian historian Thucydides concluded that “it was the rise of Athens and the fear that this instilled in Sparta that made war inevitable.” How will the rise of a new superpower play out in the twenty-first century? Allison reviews sixteen instances of swaps in economic supremacy between countries over the past five hundred years and paints a grim picture: war broke out in twelve of them. This does not imply that war is inevitable, but suggests the SinoAmerican relationship will shape geopolitics in decades to come. Climate mitigation and international cooperation will play out against a backdrop of rising geopolitical tension between at least two superpowers, which will inevitably push other countries to pick sides.

The politics of degrowth

The degrowth international vision to tackle climate change centers on the proposition that wealthy countries, who have more than enough, will shrink their economies. By doing so, they will bring down greenhouse gas emissions, reducing the risk of catastrophic climate change. And they will do so to such an extent that space will be opened up for poorer countries to develop, while the overall world economy and global emissions remain within safe limits.

From a strictly moral standpoint, this might sound reasonable and desirable. In light of what we have seen up to now, however, we can state categorically that there is no scenario under which a small set of countries willingly makes such an act of self-sacrifice for the global common good.52 While people are primed for altruism and self-sacrifices, these are directed first toward their in-group, and only later toward others, following geographical discounting. Democratic governments are bound by their citizens’ preferences, and therefore these basic human tendencies define the set of policies that can be considered feasible. Naturally, citizens of a country constitute only one type of in-group. Groups can also arise based on shared culture, kinship, language, religion, geography, and other affinities, as emphasized by Amartya Sen in Identity and Violence.53 Humanity as a whole, however, cannot act as an in-group in the absence of an outgroup, and this will not change in the face of climate change.

The fond hope that some countries will actively shrink their economies ignores the reality that these rich countries themselves will remain in conditions of relative scarcity, which will only be felt more acutely as climate change unleashes its negative effects. This implies that the in-group will be in constant need of extra resources, to tackle the needs of the moment, which can be addressing incipient desertification, building infrastructure to prevent flooding, and the like.

In addition, countries themselves, as we have seen, experience relative income theory, and will constantly compare themselves to the past and to other countries. While China’s economy expands at a high clip, you cannot expect the United States to look on with indifference. This is not only based on vague predicaments like “perceptions,” or sinful feelings like envy, but also on hard realities, like the fact that economic might goes hand in hand with military spending and therefore international political influence. This, as we have seen before, generates a sort of geopolitical growth imperative. Reduced resources imply less capacity to protect (or project) a value system, paving the way to reduced self-determination as a people.54

The idea, moreover, that if rich countries shrink poor countries can expand is based on an incomplete understanding of the economics of development. In 2008, a group of nineteen leading policymakers, mostly from developing economies, headed by two economics Nobel laureates, put together The Growth Report, analyzing the experience of thirteen countries that had managed to sustain high GDP growth since the 1950s.55 Drawing on the input of over three hundred distinguished academics, on top of the personal hands-on experiences of the policymakers, the report sifted out common traits among successful cases. These thirteen cases of “miracle” development, all of which featured sharp reductions in extreme poverty, included China, postwar Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brazil, and Taiwan—and a critical feature of literally all of them was fast expansion of exports.56 Note, however, that most exports go to foreign lands that feature consumption aplenty—that is, the rich, growing, industrialized countries.

To recognize this is to see the flaw in the logic of rich countries having to shrink to open up space for poor countries to grow. The whole idea is based on a misreading of the global economy as a zero-sum game. Pursuing a degrowth agenda in the developed world would bring about a collapse of global trade, closing the door to any hope of fast growth in poor countries, turning economic miracles into mirages, and forcing millions to remain in extreme poverty.57

### 1AR – LIO Good

#### Liberal internationalism provides the ground for reform---the alt cedes that potential.

G. John Ikenberry 20. Albert G. Milbank Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University and Global Eminence Scholar at Kyung Hee University, in South Korea. “The Next Liberal Order The Age of Contagion Demands More Internationalism, Not Less”. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-06-09/next-liberal-order>

Liberal internationalists need to acknowledge these missteps and failures. Under the auspices of the liberal international order, the United States has intervened too much, regulated too little, and delivered less than it promised. But what do its detractors have to offer? Despite its faults, no other organizing principle currently under debate comes close to liberal internationalism in making the case for a decent and cooperative world order that encourages the enlightened pursuit of national interests. Ironically, the critics’ complaints make sense only within a system that embraces self-determination, individual rights, economic security, and the rule of law—the very cornerstones of liberal internationalism. The current order may not have realized these principles across the board, but flaws and failures are inherent in all political orders. What is unique about the postwar liberal order is its capacity for self-correction. Even a deeply flawed liberal system provides the institutions through which it can be brought closer to its founding ideals. However serious the liberal order’s shortcomings may be, they pale in comparison to its achievements. Over seven decades, it has lifted more boats—manifest in economic growth and rising incomes—than any other order in world history. It provided a framework for struggling industrial societies in Europe and elsewhere to transform themselves into modern social democracies. Japan and West Germany were integrated into a common security community and went on to fashion distinctive national identities as peaceful great powers. Western Europe subdued old hatreds and launched a grand project of union. European colonial rule in Africa and Asia largely came to an end. The G-7 system of cooperation among Japan, Europe, and North America fostered growth and managed a sequence of trade and financial crises. Beginning in the 1980s, countries across East Asia, Latin America, and eastern Europe opened up their political and economic systems and joined the broader order. The United States experienced its greatest successes as a world power, culminating in the peaceful end to the Cold War, and countries around the globe wanted more, not less, U.S. leadership. This is not an order that one should eagerly escort off the stage. To renew the spirit of liberal internationalism, its proponents should return to its core aim: creating an environment in which liberal democracies can cooperate for mutual gain, manage their shared vulnerabilities, and protect their way of life. In this system, rules and institutions facilitate cooperation among states. Properly regulated trade benefits all parties. Liberal democracies, in particular, have an incentive to work together—not only because their shared values reinforce trust but also because their status as open societies in an open system makes them more vulnerable to transnational threats. Gaining the benefits of interdependence while guarding against its dangers requires collective action.

#### All data proves heg is the most peaceful system.

Stephen Brooks & William Wohlforth 16. William, Daniel Webster Professor in the Department of Government at Dartmouth College. Stephen Brooks, Ph. D in Political Science from Yale, Associate Professor of Government at Dartmouth College, Senior Fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University. Page 103-108

Consistency with influential relevant theories lends credence to the expectation that US security commitments actually can shape the strategic environment as deep engagement presupposes. But it is far from conclusive. Not all analysts endorse the theories we discussed in chapter 5. These theories make strong assumptions that states generally act rationally and focus primarily on security. Allowing misperceptions, emotions, domestic politics, desire for status, or concern for honor into the picture might alter the verdict on the strategy’s net expected effects. And to model the strategy’s expected effects we had to simplify things by selecting two mechanisms— assurance and deterrence— and examining their effects independently, thus missing potentially powerful positive interactions between them.

This chapter moves beyond theory to examine patterns of evidence. If the theoretical arguments about the security effects of deep engagement are right, what sort of evidence should we see? Two major bodies of evidence are most important: general empirical findings concerning the strategy’s key mechanisms and regionally focused research.

General Patterns of Evidence Three key questions about US security provision have received the most extensive analysis. First, do alliances such as those sustained by the United States actually deter war and increase security? Second, does such security provision actually hinder nuclear proliferation? And third, does limiting proliferation actually increase security?

Deterrence Effectiveness The determinants of deterrence success and failure have attracted scores of quantitative and case study tests. Much of the case study work yields a cautionary finding: that deterrence is much harder in practice than in theory, because standard models assume away the complexities of human psychology and domestic politics that tend to make some states hard to deter and might cause deterrence policies to backfire. 1 Many quantitative findings, mean- while, are mutually contradictory or are clearly not relevant to extended deterrence. But some relevant results receive broad support:

* Alliances generally do have a deterrent effect. In a study spanning nearly two centuries, Johnson and Leeds found “support for the hypothesis that defensive alliances deter the initiation of disputes.” They conclude that “defensive alliances lower the probability of international conflict and are thus a good policy option for states seeking to maintain peace in the world.” Sechser and Fuhrmann similarly find that formal defense pacts with nuclear states have significant deterrence benefits. 2 3
* The overall balance of military forces (including nuclear) between states does not appear to influence deterrence; the local balance of military forces in the specific theater in which deterrence is actually practiced, however, is key. 4
* Forward- deployed troops enhance the deterrent effect of alliances with overseas allies. 5
* Strong mutual interests and ties enhance deterrence. 6
* Case studies strongly ratify the theoretical expectation that it is easier to defend a given status quo than to challenge it forcefully: compellence (sometimes termed “coercion” or “coercive diplomacy”) is extremely hard.

The most important finding to emerge from this voluminous research is that alliances— especially with nuclear- armed allies like the United States— actually work in deterring conflict. This is all the more striking in view of the fact that what scholars call “selection bias” probably works against it. The United States is more inclined to offer— and protégés to seek— alliance rela- tionships in settings where the probability of military conflicts is higher than average. The fact that alliances work to deter conflict in precisely the situations where deterrence is likely to be especially hard is noteworthy.

More specifically, these findings buttress the key theoretical implication that if the United States is interested in deterring military challenges to the status quo in key regions, relying only on latent military capabilities in the US homeland is likely to be far less effective than having an overseas military posture. Similarly, they lend support to the general proposition that a forward deterrence posture is strongly appealing to a status quo power, because defending a given status quo is far cheaper than overturning it, and, once a favorable status quo is successfully overturned, restoring the status quo ante can be expected to be fearsomely costly. Recognizing the significance of these findings clearly casts doubt on the “wait on the sidelines and decide whether to intervene later” approach that is so strongly favored by retrenchment proponents.

The Causes of Nuclear Proliferation Matthew Kroenig highlights a number of reasons why US policymakers seek to limit the spread of nuclear weapons: “Fear that nuclear proliferation might deter [US leaders] from using military intervention to pursue their interests, reduce the effectiveness of their coercive diplomacy, trigger regional instability, undermine their alliance structures, dissipate their strategic attention, and set off further nuclear proliferation within their sphere of influence.” These are not the only reasons for concern about nuclear proliferation; also notable are the enhanced prospects of nuclear accidents and the greater risk of leakage of nuclear material to terrorists. 9 8

Do deep engagement’s security ties serve to contain the spread of nuclear weapons? The literature on the causes of proliferation is massive and faces challenges as great as any in international relations. With few cases to study, severe challenges in gathering evidence about inevitably secretive nuclear programs, and a large number of factors in play on both the demand and the supply sides, findings are decidedly mixed. Alliance relationships are just one piece of this complex puzzle, one that is hard to isolate from all the other factors in play. And empirical studies face the same selection bias problem just discussed: Nuclear powers are more likely to offer security guarantees to states confronting a serious threat and thus facing above- average incentives to acquire nuclear weapons. Indeed, alliance guarantees might be offered to states actively considering the nuclear option precisely in order to try to forestall that decision. Like a strong drug given only to very sick patients, alliances thus may have a powerful effect even if they sometimes fail to work as hoped. 10

Bearing these challenges in mind, the most relevant findings that emerge from this literature are:

* The most recent statistical analysis of the precise question at issue concludes that “security guarantees significantly reduce proliferation proclivity among their recipients.” In addition, states with such guarantees are less likely to export sensitive nuclear material and technology to other nonnuclear states. 12 11
* Case study research underscores that the complexity of motivations for acquiring nuclear weapons cannot be reduced to security: domestic politics, economic interests, and prestige all matter. 13
* Multiple independently conceived and executed recent case studies nonetheless reveal that security alliances help explain numerous allied decisions not to proliferate even when security is not always the main driver of leaders’ interest in a nuclear program. As Nuno Monteiro and Alexandre Debs stress, “States whose security goals are subsumed by their sponsors’ own aims have never acquired the bomb. … This finding highlights the role of U.S. security commitments in stymieing nuclear proliferation: U.S. protégés will only seek the bomb if they doubt U.S. protection of their core security goals.” 15 14
* Multiple independently conceived and executed recent case research projects further unpack the conditions that decrease the likelihood of allied proliferation, centering on the credibility of the alliance commitment. In addition, in some cases of prevention failure, the alliances allow the patron to influence the ally’s nuclear program subsequently, decreasing further proliferation risks. 17
* Security alliances lower the likelihood of proliferation cascades. To be sure, many predicted cascades did not occur. But security provision, mainly by the United States, is a key reason why. The most comprehensive statistical analysis finds that states are more likely to proliferate in response to neighbors when three conditions are met: (1) there is an intense security rivalry between the two countries; (2) the prospective proliferating state does not have a security guarantee from a nuclear- armed patron; and (3) the potential proliferator has the industrial and technical capacity to launch an indigenous nuclear program. 18 19 16

In sum, as Monteiro and Debs note, “Despite grave concerns that more states would seek a nuclear deterrent to counter U.S. power preponderance,” in fact “the spread of nuclear weapons decelerated with the end of the Cold War in 1989.” Their research, as well as that of scores of scholars using multiple methods and representing many contrasting theoretical perspectives, shows that US security guarantees and the counter- proliferation policy deep engagement allows are a big part of the reason why. 20

The Costs of Nuclear Proliferation General empirical findings thus lend support to the proposition that security alliances impede nuclear proliferation. But is this a net contributor to global security? Most practitioners and policy analysts would probably not even bring this up as a question and would automatically answer yes if it were raised. Yet a small but very prominent group of theorists within the academy reach a different answer: some of the same realist precepts that generate the theoretical prediction that retrenchment would increase demand for nuclear weapons also suggest that proliferation might increase security such that the net effect of retrenchment could be neutral. Most notably, “nuclear optimists” like Kenneth Waltz contend that deterrence essentially solves the security problem for all nuclear- armed states, largely eliminating the direct use of force among them. It follows that US retrenchment might generate an initial decrease in security followed by an increase as insecure states acquire nuclear capabilities, ultimately leaving no net effect on international security. 21

This perspective is countered by “nuclear pessimists” such as Scott Sagan. Reaching outside realism to organization theory and other bodies of social science research, they see major security downsides from new nuclear states. Copious research produced by Sagan and others casts doubt on the expectation that governments can be relied upon to create secure and controlled nuclear forces. The more nuclear states there are, the higher the probability that the organizational, psychological, and civil- military pathologies Sagan identifies will turn an episode like one of the numerous “near misses” he uncovers into actual nuclear use. As Campbell Craig warns, “One day a warning system will fail, or an official will panic, or a terrorist attack will be misconstrued, and the missiles will fly.” 22 23

Looking beyond these kinds of factors, it is notable that powerful reasons to question the assessment of proliferation optimists also emerge even if one assumes, as they do, that states are rational and seek only to maximize their security. First, nuclear deterrence can only work by raising the risk of nuclear war. For deterrence to be credible, there has to be a nonzero chance of nuclear use. If nuclear use is impossible, deterrence cannot be credible. It follows that every nuclear deterrence relationship depends on some probability of 24 nuclear use. The more such relationships there are, the greater the risk of nuclear war. Proliferation therefore increases the chances of nuclear war even in a perfectly rationalist world. Proliferation optimists cannot logically deny that nuclear spread increases the risk of nuclear war. Their argument must be that the security gains of nuclear spread outweigh this enhanced risk.

Estimating that risk is not simply a matter of pondering the conditions under which leaders will choose to unleash nuclear war. Rather, as Schelling established, the question is whether states will run the risk of using nuclear weapons. Nuclear crisis bargaining is about a “competition in risk taking.” Kroenig counts some twenty cases in which states—including prominently the United States—ran real risks of nuclear war in order to prevail in crises. As Kroenig notes, “By asking whether states can be deterred or not … proliferation optimists are asking the wrong question. The right question to ask is: what risk of nuclear war is a specific state willing to run against a particular opponent in a given crisis?” The more nuclear- armed states there are, the more the opportunities for such risk- taking and the greater the probability of nuclear use. 27 26 25

#### Liberal international order is good -- the overall historical record is decidedly improving with changes in political norms and ideas in American diplomats, which disproves their whole theory, but dispensing with moralistic totalizations is necessary to prevent future active measures

**Carothers 18** [THOMAS CAROTHERS is Senior Vice President for Studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 3/12. "Is the U.S. Hypocritical to Criticize Russian Election Meddling?" <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2018-03-12/us-hypocritical-criticize-russian-election-meddling>]

The U.S. response to Russian meddling in the 2016 election has been **extraordinarily weak**. Not only that, it has been accompanied by an attitude of “**whataboutism**” on the part of some Americans—the **relativistic view** that the **U**nited **S**tates has **little ground to complain** about Russia’s actions given its own **history** of meddling in other countries’ political campaigns and elections. It is certainly **essential** to be honest and realistic about the considerable record of past U.S. electoral meddling, and the contrast between Russia and the United States in this domain is certainly not black and white. Yet neither is it one of **indistinguishable shades of gray**. The United States is simply not engaging in electoral meddling in a manner comparable to Russia’s approach.

THE PAST IS NOT THE PRESENT

**Two key flaws** underlie relativist accounts. First, such a position fails to distinguish adequately between the pattern of U.S. interventionism during the Cold War, on the one hand, and U.S. activity since the end of the Cold War on the other. During the former period, the **U**nited **S**tates did indeed illegitimately intervene in numerous foreign elections, trying to tilt outcomes in favor of candidates the United States preferred and in a smaller number of cases laboring to oust legitimately elected leaders Washington saw as hostile to its security and economic interests. The record is long and dark, marked by some especially well-known cases in Guatemala and Iran in the early 1950s and in Chile and Nicaragua in the 1970s and 1980s.

Since the end of the Cold War, however, such interventionism has **decreased significantly** because U.S. policymakers no longer view the world as enmeshed in a **global ideological struggle** in which every country, no matter how small, is a critical piece on a larger **strategic chessboard**. Washington has thus become much less concerned about the outcomes of most foreign elections and much less engaged in trying to tilt them in any particular direction.

Of course, one can identify a few cases over the past 25 years when the United States has tried to manipulate foreign elections with the aim of getting its preferred candidate into power. When Russian President Boris Yeltsin faced reelection in 1996, the Clinton administration mobilized some economic relief to Yeltsin, to try to help him win. In the Palestinian elections of 2006, the George W. Bush administration employed U.S. economic assistance to try to bolster Fatah in its contest with Hamas (with predictably counterproductive results). In the lead up to the 2005 Iraqi elections, the Bush administration formulated a plan to funnel covert funds to favored Iraqi candidates and parties but reportedly backed away from the plan after Congress objected. In 2009, according to former Defense Secretary Robert Gates’ memoir, the United States worked behind the scenes prior to the Afghanistan elections to push President Hamid Karzai aside and keep him from winning.

There have no doubt been other cases, known only to those with access to classified information. Yet **on the whole**, U.S. electoral meddling has **decreased significantly** since the Cold War years. This is true because of the change in U.S. **interests** and because of an **evolution of norms** in many parts of the U.S. policy establishment about the acceptability of such actions. The overall picture today is of a Russia actively expanding its covert electoral meddling in multiple regions as U.S. meddling **continues to decline.** Those convinced that Washington must still routinely use covert means to influence election outcomes all around the world should consider the available evidence: in the last few years the rising pattern of Russian efforts to **manipulate the political life** of countries in central **Europe**, western Europe, the Balkans, the **U**nited **S**tates, and **Latin America** has left many telltale **fingerprints**—it seems highly unlikely Washington could have carried out a **similar pattern** of activities and not leave behind at least **some noticeable traces** of them.

WHAT ABOUT ALL THAT DEMOCRACY PROMOTION?

A second problematic element of the relativist position is the charge that U.S. efforts to **promote democracy** abroad—which make use of diplomatic leverage, democracy aid, and cooperation with pro-democratic multilateral organizations—are just another, more **covert form** of electoral meddling akin to what the Russians are doing. Russian President Vladimir **Putin** is a **strong subscriber to this viewpoint**, convinced that U.S. and other Western democracy programs in his country represent efforts to manipulate its domestic political life against him. Many Western observers—acutely aware of the long record of U.S. interventionism—have their suspicions as well.

U.S. pro-democracy diplomacy and assistance do indeed seek to shape the political direction of other countries. And they are carried out with a strong sense of self-interest, not out of unalloyed idealism. They are driven by the belief that democratic outcomes abroad will generally be favorable to U.S. security and economic interests by producing stable governments amenable to deeper partnerships thanks to shared political values. But unlike Russian electoral meddling, U.S. democracy promotion does not seek to **exacerbate** sociopolitical **divisions**, systematically spread **lies**, favor **particular candidates**, or undercut the technical **integrity of elections**. On the whole, it seeks to help citizens exercise their basic **political** and **civil rights** in electoral processes, enhance the technical integrity of such processes, and increase electoral transparency.

**Skeptics** reluctant to accept the idea that democracy diplomacy and assistance are not about manipulating elections should look at some **recent cases**—such as U.S. efforts to support **Tunisia**’s democratic evolution, to help **Gambia** resolve the blockage that followed its 2016 elections, to encourage the **Hungarian** government to respect media freedom and civic space, and to push the **Myanmar military** at the start of this decade to make room for at least some **democratic political life** in the country.

Skeptics should also note that although the U.S. organizations **engaged in democracy** work are mostly funded by the U.S. government itself, they are **regularly at odds** with the preferences of U.S. **diplomats**, who often hold on to relationships with **friendly autocrats**, as they are wary of the strategic value of democratic change. In the mid-1990s, this was true in **Indonesia** under former President **Suharto** and in **Kazakhstan** under President Nursultan **Nazarbayev**. And in the first decade of this century, the same occurred in **Egypt** under former President Hosni Mubarak and in **Azerbaijan** under the **Aliyev** family. Skeptics should also bear in mind that in most cases where the **U**nited **S**tates is engaged in promoting democracy abroad, it is working alongside and sometimes in active partnership with other democracies not known for geopolitical **interventionism**, such as Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden.

GRAY AREAS Although the overall case is strong for distinguishing U.S. democracy support abroad from the sort of political meddling that Russia is now making a habit of, there are several difficult issues that necessarily complicate the comparison. First, in a small but important number of cases, the United States does assist one side of a contested electoral campaign against the other. This occurs when a strongman leader of doubtful democratic fidelity is trying to legitimate himself and perpetuate his rule through elections. In various such cases, as with Chilean President Augusto Pinochet’s plebiscite in 1988, Slobodan Milosevic’s reelection campaign in 2000, and various Belarusian elections in the 2000s, the United States and a number of other Western actors offered assistance both to the opposition political forces challenging the strongman and to civic groups that were mobilizing get-out-the-vote campaigns. From the Western point of view, such actions are not interfering in a free and fair election but rather trying to help level the playing field in an election that is stacked unfairly against the challengers. From the point of view of the power holders, of course, the United States and its allies are trying to shape the outcome of the election in a partisan fashion. Second, although U.S. and other Western assistance to civil society aims to aid civic actors in their advocacy of rights and democracy—not to take sides in partisan political struggles and campaigns—the line between political society and civil society is often blurry. What to Western providers are principled civic actors working to advance universally valid political and civil rights and democratic values such as transparency and accountability, are to local authorities political animals cloaked in civic garb challenging their hold on power. This is especially true in partially or fully closed political environments such as exist in Cambodia and Venezuela, where regimes have choked off the opposition and demonstrated an ability to undermine elections. Third, despite the fact that most U.S. and Western democracy promotion is carried out in a transparent manner, some aid providers are becoming less transparent in their assistance in order to protect their recipients from being harassed or persecuted. As a result, a growing number of regimes have accused the West of engaging in clandestine political meddling. This scenario creates a vicious cycle in which undemocratic regimes charge democracy promoters of secretive meddling and persecute those they work with, thus driving such organizations to adopt less transparent methods. This in turn further reinforces the perception of secretive meddling. U.S. democracy assistance directed at Iran, for example, has become much less transparent over the past ten years as crackdowns by the Iranian government on recipients of foreign assistance have intensified. Fourth, U.S. democracy policy is markedly inconsistent, even though U.S. efforts to promote democracy in other countries are generally driven by genuine pro-democracy motives. The U.S. government makes more funds available for democracy programs in countries that the United States views as strategic enemies, such as Iran and Cuba, than it does in nondemocratic countries the United States views as strategic partners, such as Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia. The inconsistency is not absolute. Washington does make some efforts to promote democracy and rights in states ruled by “friendly tyrants.” The Trump administration’s decision last year to withhold some U.S. assistance to Egypt as a means of expressing dissatisfaction with President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi’s antidemocratic policies is just one example. And the fact that one is inconsistent in applying the principle does not render meaningless the applications that are made. Nevertheless, the inconsistency hurts the larger case that democracy promotion has real roots in principle.

DIVERGENT PATHS

It is not yet clear what it will take for the **U**nited **S**tates to move forward in putting together an **effective response** to **Russian electoral meddling**, but dispensing with the argument that Washington has **no moral standing for objecting** to such actions is certainly **one necessary step**. The arguments over “whataboutism” merit some careful reflection and assessment given that the facts are not simple and not all the facts are available. The **U**nited **S**tates does have a past record of electoral meddling, particularly during the Cold War. Yet the trends of U.S. and Russian behavior are **divergent**, not convergent—with Russia on the **negative side of the divide**. And although the domain of U.S. democracy promotion is hardly free of flaws and serious past mistakes, it is not the **dark twin** of the illicit, covert election meddling that Russia seems intent on making one of its **defining signatures abroad**.

### 1AR – Sustainability

#### Cap is sustainable- degrowth fails

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[Rasmus -; “The Environmental Risks of Incomplete Globalisation”; Globalizations; <https://www-tandfonline-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/full/10.1080/14747731.2016.1216820>**]**

Yet, despite the remarkable scientific advancements of the last centuries, or even decades, Malthusians tend to reject the very possibility of universal affluence and what they pejoratively refer to as a ‘techno-fix’ (Huesemann & Huesemann, 2011). Instead of uncertain technological innovation, they like to see deep social changes, essentially a **far-reaching** epistemological **homogenisation** by which people everywhere adopt strict regimes of frugality and simplicity. However, just as the solution to the contradictions of capitalism in the 1930s was neither individual moral reform of the capital-owners nor a socialist revolution of society as a whole but rather the institutionalisation of welfare-capitalism and liberal democracy, it seems far wiser to accept the existence of a pluralist society with competing conceptions of the good life and rather focus on applying technology in a conscious way to overcome **environmental determinism**. Obviously, this is also a question of political tactics. While eco-socialist literature tends to think of capitalism in the twenty-first century as a mere elite project, it seems fair to say that the logic of capital accumulation has become almost **universal** today with widely shared material aspirations reaching from home ownership to international travel. Similarly, large groups in the OECD economies either have retired already or will do so in the coming decades with considerable expectations in terms of retirement income. Failure to deliver on these pension expectations would probably create a state of political crisis in which the ‘immigrants’ but also the ‘environment’ would be easy targets. For these, and many other reasons, it is not surprising that political elites remain deeply wedded to the idea of economic growth. Yet, insufficient demand due to rising inequality and a lack of social investments have made it difficult to deliver that growth. In the best of worlds, the need for growth could hypothetically make policy-makers **more** willing to challenge the prevailing supply-side paradigm but also consider the benefits of accelerating globalisation (or at least keeping them away from enacting protectionist measures). While it is obvious that economic growth does not benefit everyone equally, and that it can be source of environmental destruction, the same can be said about the **lack of growth**. A secular stagnation or even degrowth is certainly **no** guarantee for environmental protection or greater equality. If anything, the rich are likely to try to isolate themselves **even more** from the rest of society in case they feel threatened, in particular by moving overseas. It is also not surprising that the literature on degrowth has had almost nothing to say about how such strategies would play out at the international level (including what mechanisms that would be needed to prevent other states from taking military advantage of countries pursuing degrowth) or how exactly economic growth is to be ‘unlearned’ at the micro level. Recognising the difficulties associated with imagining degrowth as an effective way of saving the global environment is not the same as defending ‘status quo’ or **embracing neoliberalism**. As discussed above, it is rather the failure of laissez-faire thinking that has made government intervention necessary to ensure both climate stability and a world with more equal opportunities. One common objection against climate innovation is that the real problem is not about limitations of renewable energy sources but about overcoming the entrenched interests of fossil industries. Yet, the fact that large multinational corporations such as ExxonMobil have vast political influence can also be seen as one of the reasons why technological change must be **disruptive** and go beyond, for instance, the scenarios in the IPCC database. Only by shocking markets through breakthrough innovation does it seem possible to break with the path dependence of existing energy systems in a way that would rapidly displace fossil fuels globally. In terms of strategy, it is also likely that fossil industries will be far more successful in thwarting the deployment of existing inferior technologies than in preventing a more general acceleration of science and technology, which would span multiple fields reaching from nanotechnology to basic physics (Victor, 2011, p. 144) that are not immediately related to energy R&D and as such not subject to the same political economic constraints.

### 1AR – Cap Solves Climate

#### Cap solves climate—markets and growth’s necessary for greenhouse gas reduction.

**Hall and Davis 21** (Stephen is an Academic Fellow specializing in Sustainable Cities at the University of Leeds and has a PhD in Sustainable Infrastructure from the University of Hull & Davis is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Leeds, 9-21-21, “Permission to Say “Capitalism”: Principles for Critical Social Science Engagement With GGR Research,” Frontiers in Climate, Vol. 3, https://www.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fclim.2021.708913

The question of how growth happens is important to HASS scholars because where a HASS scholar lands in that debate will inform what types of economic stimulus are seen as legitimate. Yet there are still deeper and more critical questions about economic growth that need to be asked: Why is growth necessary in capitalism? Is growth necessary for human wellbeing? Is growth necessary for negative emission technologies? To summarize “why” growth instead of “how” growth, we return to Harvey's (2014) Marxian analysis. Harvey explores how capital will only be invested if “it” (capitalists) believes there will be more money available at the end of an investment cycle than at the beginning. If there was no such belief investment of new capital in new rounds of production would cease, again causing crises, and a search for a “fix,” such as a return to aggregate growth (Jackson, 2009). For this belief to exist, somewhere around a 3% compound growth rate is commonly regarded as “healthy” (Harvey, 2017). This means that new productive investments must be found for an exponentially-increasing volume of capital. In our current climate science it is unthinkable that a period of no growth or “de” -growth can exist under capitalism. Even in the “transformation of the global economy” envisioned by Rogelj et al. (2018) an average GDP growth of 231% is envisaged across the global economy between 2020 and 2050 within pathways “consistent” with meeting the 1.5° target (IIASA, 2020). IPCC growth scenarios notwithstanding, there remain serious questions over the assumed ability truly to decouple GDP and GHG emissions (Hickel and Kallis, 2020; Wiedenhofer et al., 2020). There is now a substantial scholarship questioning whether “more growth is good” and whether a growing economy is healthy (Jackson, 2009, 2021; Raworth, 2017). This debate explores what structural changes are needed to bring a “post-growth” economy about (Hardt et al., 2021) and how different economies or alternative economic models might leave growth behind (O'Neill et al., 2018; Hickel and Kallis, 2020). This attachment to growth is critical because it frames how climate change mitigation and negative emissions technologies are legitimized and communicated at the IPCC level. Within the IAM models there is a percentage of future GDP that must be allocated to each technology, the smaller the percentage the easier the political narrative (Livingston and Rummukainen, 2020). At the same time, however, that growth demands that we mine, extract, create, or consume our way to an economy 231% bigger than it is today, and during a moment when growth is extremely sluggish in OECD nations and previous drivers of growth—such as financial engineering, money creation, incorporation of women into the workforce and the privatization and marketization of previously public and common goods—is fast running low on new options (Hardt and Negri, 2009; Harvey, 2014). Humanities and social sciences scholarship on GGR will have to contend with the notion that GGR options in capitalism are primarily evaluated relative to their deployment cost as a proportion of GDP. While GDP is a poor measure of human well-being, it is quite a good measure of how well-capitalism is doing because rising GDP means that, when one sector is exhausted, finance capital can switch capital into another sector. This is what Castree and Christophers (2015) have in mind when they explore options for liquid financial capital to find new, ecologically-positive spatial fixes, including possibly negative emissions. The challenge for different GGR technologies may be less the actual ability to sequester carbon in a sustainable form, and more to be compatible with a monitoring, reporting, and evaluating function that is easily marketized, financed, and traded as a commodity. The sections above have summarized a set of substantial debates that deserve greater attention by HASS scholars in the GGR debates. The tendencies of capitalism to crises, marketization, and the attendant necessity of long run GDP growth, all mean that HASS scholars of GGR deployment within capitalism have a challenging research agenda ahead, but one in which principle 1 has provided a useful starting point. Principle 1: Greenhouse Gas Removal technologies are likely to emerge within capitalism, which is crisis prone, growth dependent, market expanding.

### 1AR – Cap Sustainable

#### It’s sustainable.

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.9 **CHOOSE CAPITALISM**

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

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

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

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

### 1AR – Cap Inevitable

#### Transition impossible — requires reversing centuries of notions of everyday life

**Timms 20** [Aaron; 1/27/20; writer for the New Republic, articles have appeared in The Guardian, The Outline, The Daily Beast, and The Los Angeles Review of Books; "Beyond the Growth Gospel," https://newrepublic.com/article/156024/degrowth-movement-cerbere-can-decreix-commune]/

We all know that our time to **stabilize the climate** is short. But in the supposed battle between the Green New Deal left and degrowthers, there’s only one side that seeks, in any meaningful sense, to stabilize the climate with anything like the required urgency. In its critique of economism and rejection of technocratic business as usual, in the exhortation of its proponents to think critically about what we as a species really want, degrowth contains much that I find **theoretically compelling**. But the movement has surprisingly **little to say** on **renewable energy**, the result of a latent hostility to techno-**scientific innovation**, and the idea that **billions**, within the next decade, will **voluntarily embrace degrowth** at a sufficient scale to arrest global heating is **unrealistic**. Even its most ardent defenders concede that genuine degrowth—which means real, Can Decreix-grade upheaval to daily life, not just fewer steaks or car trips every year—will **not materialize** under present economic and social conditions. Latouche is typically forthright on this question: “Degrowth society cannot emerge from the iron corset of scarcity, needs, economic calculation, and homo æconomicus.” His meaning is what the experience of Can Decreix makes plain: that a life of pure degrowth is **logically impossible** in this world, indeed that the **preconditions for degrowth society do not yet exist**. Any attempts to institute degrowth from above will be seen as an **intolerable offense** to **human dignity** and **well-being**, so long as the rest of civilization is hitched to the train of economic expansion—whether capitalist, socialist, or otherwise.

Not even François can avoid compromising himself through contact with the world as it is. The degrowth he practices at Can Decreix is necessarily a diluted form of the ideal, dependent as it is on the structures and economies of the very system degrowth hopes to supersede. There’s an additional irony here, which is that virtually no degrowther wants to put down roots in the home of degrowth, though François’s partner, Alexandra Guerri, lives with him in the austere precincts of Can Decreix. Other degrowth sympathizers have joined François at the encampment in the eight years since its foundation, but they have not stayed; today he continues alone. De Decker returns to Barcelona shortly after his business at the Belvédère is concluded; other summer school speakers appear in Can Decreix for a day or two and then scuttle back to the city. If the defining property of utopia is that it’s nowhere (the word’s meaning in Greek), it’s perhaps appropriate that this utopia has attracted no one. “I feel isolated with this practice here,” François tells me on my first night at Can Decreix. “It’s a struggle to convince people about this way of life. The idea was to do something collective, but now it’s just me. Few people are **willing to try** something else with flowing and a new way of living.” This is **no surprise**. Even a hair shirt worn voluntarily is uncomfortable. Le Guin once described the anarchist lunar colony she puts at the center of The Dispossessed, the fiction that everyone here is reading, as an “**ambiguous utopia**.” A similar description seems apt for the home of degrowth.

A group of rowdy Irish cycling tourists stops by the Dorade, cleats clacking, and they ask for douze bières merci while the owner replies in English. I finish my coffee, then continue on my path back to Can Decreix. In the town square, I pass some of the summer school attendees. It’s been only two hours since breakfast up on the deck at Can Decreix—porridge, plums, nuts—but one of them is seated at a bench, noise-canceling headphones on, bopping to the beat, and oblivious to the world as he tears into a whole wheel of Camembert with rye crisps and a family-size packet of Bolognese sauce-flavored chips by his side. The man is salt-deprived and hungry. I feel a great surge of sympathy.

Since degrowth can’t form the basis of a realistic **electoral politics**, its proponents are left clinging to the **lifeboat** of “institutional and cultural change” as they attempt to plot a course to our **collective degrowing**, or they retreat into didacticism. (The working class “must master” its wants, Kallis has written, “not insist that they should be satisfied.”) What the degrowthers seek, in their **priestliest utterings**, is not only a new society but also a **complete reset** of the **psychological habitus** of everyday life. For degrowth to “work,” its ideal-type citizen must be **radically different from you or me**, or almost anyone else living under industrial modernity today. This homo post-æconomicus will operate according to as yet **undiscovered automatisms**, **affects**, and **instincts**, conjuring in the process a more sustainable model of human endeavor onto the stage of our desperately overheated globe.

This could indeed be a great thing. After all, a society built on reciprocity, sharing, self-limitation, and care sounds far preferable to the plutocratic catastrophe of present-day financialized capitalism. But such a society cannot arise if **we continue to view material limitations as privations**. It will only work if the longing for less comes **naturally**, is **authentically aspirational**—if we want to live the life unseasoned. This is the journey from the Belvédère to Can Decreix: a journey from We Want Everything to Actually, We Want Very Little. Climate stabilization needs to happen now. **Degrowth cannot happen now**. This is why **degrowth is not a plan** for combating **climate change**, not in any **immediate** or **direct** sense at least. Instead, it is something much more ambitious, with a much hazier time horizon: a project to build a new person.

My contributions to the many energy-sapping tasks required to keep Can Decreix in order throughout the summer school—lugging wood, creating shade for discussion groups using bamboo mats and wooden rods, repairing stone walls, building rocket stoves, coming to grips with human compost—have been every bit as half-assed as you’d expect from a weak, unresourceful knowledge worker in the dog days of capitalism with panna cotta-soft hands and no interest in camping. I am, on anyone’s reading, a hopeless volunteer, the least useful of the useful muzhiks. The one activity at which I’ve shown any kind of skill is the chabrot, a postprandial ritual François has adapted from regional custom. There are two types of wine made in-house at Can Decreix: a sweet grenache and rancio, a dry oxidized wine similar to sherry. To perform the chabrot, each diner pools wine into their plate at the end of the meal, agitates the wine with a fork to degrease the plate, then drinks the wine. (Blessedly the house prohibition on addictive substances does not extend to alcohol.) The point of this ritual is to “go easy on the pipes” when washing the dishes, François tells us. I’ve developed a technique of mopping food scraps off the wine-flooded plate with my fingers, drinking the wine, licking my fingers, then licking the plate clean, such that it does not need to be washed at all and is immediately ready for reuse. For days, I survive off a single, self-cleaned plate, earning François’s trust as the summer school’s “official zealot of the chabrot.” The revulsion others feel at this practice is obvious; despite eager propagandizing on my part, no one performs the chabrot with anything like my level of ideological rigor.

There was once a time in the West when licking your fingers at the table, along with a host of other behaviors now considered **beyond the pale of respectable** society, such as blowing your nose into your hand, were deemed acceptable. The “civilizing process,” as Norbert Elias called it—the **gradual recalibration** of daily social mores by which Europeans cast off these habits—took **centuries**, and required the **mass internalization** of a completely **new model of individuality**. This was not planned, but was rather the result of myriad colliding stochastic evolutions: state formation and the state’s monopoly over violence, urbanization, the growing differentiation of occupations in increasingly complex economies. A **similar process** on a **similar time line** seems **necessary** for degrowth. Society’s collective degrowing will only make sense once individuals want in a way we don’t want, feel as we don’t feel. Whether a future this different can be **engineered** is **debatable**. But that does not mean there remains, in the interim, no virtue to thinking carefully about our course, or even slowing down. On the train of progress, sometimes it’s wise to pull the emergency brake.

### 1AR – Heg Good

#### **Heg is sustainable in every dimension of power – more recent**

Inboden 12/29 (William, Associate Professor at the LBJ School. He is also the William Powers Jr. Executive Director of the Clements Center for National Security. 12-29-20 “The World That COVID Made: What Should American Foreign Policy Do?” <https://www.govexec.com/management/2020/12/world-covid-made-what-should-american-foreign-policy-do/171075/> JO)

COVID-19's long-term effects on the international system remain unknown, in part because the course of the disease remains unknown. Much still depends on factors such as potential new waves of infections as the northern hemisphere winter approaches, improved treatments, and especially the development of an effective vaccine. At this point, some nine months into the plague, we do know that COVID-19 is not a geopolitical blip of little consequence. It has already inflicted a ghastly human toll and caused disastrous social and national dislocations. It is sharpening the key rivalry of the 21st century, the U.S.-China competition, and highlighting strains that were already disordering the world. But it is unlikely to cause a fundamental altering of the global system on par with what happened after World War II destroyed two leading great powers, Germany and Japan, catalyzed the collapse of the European colonial empires, and propelled the United States to international primacy. And the changes that it does cause may not make the international landscape dramatically more menacing. There is even a scenario in which the pandemic weakens autocracy and populism more than democracy, underscores America's structural power even as it temporarily damages its soft power, catalyzes a more formidable balancing coalition against China, and leads to a more realistic form of globalization as well as renewed cooperation between the world's democratic states. That depends, however, on what choices America makes in a post-COVID world. The COVID pandemic reminds us that "American leadership" is not a trite euphemism. It is arguably the single most important factor in whether the arc of history bends toward something better or something worse. America must soon recover the tradition of enlightened global leadership that it presently seems to have abandoned. The fact that American dominance, the liberal order, and other aspects of the pre-COVID status quo continued for decades suggests that they possessed a higher degree of resilience than is often appreciated. Just as important, a closer look at some of the dynamics unleashed or highlighted by the crisis points to several opportunities for the United States and our allies. These include: The pandemic leads not to de-globalization but to re-globalization along geopolitical lines. The fundamental drivers of long-term globalization—technology that shrinks distances, the quest for economic growth that spurs trade, and the recognition that global problems do not recognize borders—have not been undone. If anything, they are underscored. For example, the need for growth to reduce the crushing debt burden created by the pandemic-generated recession will eventually produce a resurgence in global trade. In some ways, the crisis may create opportunities for deeper globalization. As individual nations and leaders wrestle with the next phases of the COVID response, particularly antiviral therapies, vaccine development, contact tracing, and mass immunity, it will become clear that no one nation-state will be able to develop these alone. The resulting networks, some evolving organically and others reinforced by institutional mandates and incentives, will create a connective tissue that binds nation-states together rather than furthering their distance. The medium-term outlook could well be managed globalization along two discernible lines. First, supply chains will likely diversify, with the risk premium justifying the inefficiencies of redundancy. In most cases, the costs of entirely on-shoring production back to the United States will be prohibitive. But savvy firms should be able to generate more resilient production chains without complete on-shoring, and those firms will have a competitive edge over others chasing the unicorn of autarky. Second, globalization will increasingly occur within rather than across geopolitical lines. The quest for diversification and modest U.S.-China decoupling will likely result in a diversion of trade and investment flows to other countries, particularly historic allies like Europe and Japan and other regions such as South and Southeast Asia, where states have their own incentives to minimize their vulnerabilities to Chinese coercion. Geopolitical logic will reinforce and accelerate this trend, since deeper trade and economic integration could strengthen the "free world" economy for competition with Beijing. The pandemic does not result in dramatic, adverse shifts in the balance of power. Even optimists would concede that America's geopolitical position has worsened somewhat as a result of the crisis. The fact that China seemed to gain the upper hand in its fight against the spread of COVID-19 just as the United States and its major allies were slogging through the toughest phase of the lockdown reinforced the impression of waning Western and especially American power. It also enabled the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to pursue its aims while Washington and its democratic allies were laid low; witness the tightened control over Hong Kong, increased repression in Xinjiang, and renewed belligerence toward Taiwan. If the psychological balance of power shifted rapidly, however, the material balance did not shift in a decisive or enduring way. The pandemic damaged every major economy. Almost every geopolitical unit that has been touted at one time or another as a possible emerging disrupter of U.S. primacy—the European Union, Russia, India, or Brazil—suffered a grievous economic wound. If anything, the flight of international investors toward the United States in the middle of the crisis, along with the dollar's resilience as the global reserve currency, underscored the fundamental sources of U.S. structural strength. The pandemic has also drawn attention to China's economic and political fragility. Beijing botched its initial response to the spread of the virus and then botched its attempt to cover up that fact with crude propaganda and gifts of defective PPE. While the CCP welcomed the pandemic's undermining of global and American domestic confidence in the United States, over the medium- and long-term it is unlikely that even this will redound to China’s advantage. While American soft power and diplomatic prestige often attach in the short-term to the successes and failures of a particular leader, they tend to reset fairly quickly after the next electoral cycle. Previous declines in American soft power were followed by sharp bounce-backs, in some cases caused by nothing more than a change in the White House. If, a year from now, the United States is seen to be acting more competently at home and abroad, the deeper sources of American soft power and prestige may reassert themselves. And if the United States leads in developing and distributing a working vaccine—a big "if," but one that the U.S. is well positioned to achieve—then the soft-power bounce-back could be substantial. For China, by contrast, the long-term diplomatic trends seem more troubling. The fact that dozens of countries called for an international inquiry into the pandemic's origins, that international anger at China rose considerably on multiple continents, and that a number of countries that had previously accommodated China swung towards a harder line all suggest that Beijing may confront a more formidable balancing coalition in the years to come. Admittedly, forging an effective balancing coalition will require more skillful U.S. diplomacy than it has exhibited of late. But it is quite possible that this pandemic will scathe China more than the United States. The liberal order holds and is revitalized. As poorly as the institutions of the liberal order performed during the initial stages of the pandemic, they still command more legitimacy in the rest of the world than any plausible alternative. The more likely scenario could be reform and innovative new institutions rather than collapse. Lamentations over the weaknesses of international institutions often go in tandem with expressions of nostalgia for a past golden era of multilateral cooperation. But such an era never existed. International institutions have always faced geopolitical challenges and criticism for their failings. Yet they adapted and endured—and that could happen again. What may emerge is a shift to a two-tiered order, one involving the world's democracies, with a higher level of cohesion and ambition, and the second a broader order with a larger number of countries but a lower level of cohesion and ambition, reserved only for transnational issues such as pandemics and climate change. For example, the G-7 could evolve into a D-10 that includes the leading democracies committed to developing alternatives to technological dependence on China. The United Kingdom has already proposed such a reform. The EU is considering plans to deepen fiscal integration by making additional funds available to COVID-stricken economies. U.S. military alliances are likely to prove even more relevant in the more competitive world that is now emerging. The imperative of decreasing economic dependence on autocracies could lead over time to trade and investment agreements that focus on deepening ties between America and like-minded democracies. And if the United States commits to fighting harder for influence in obscure but important institutions that China has sought to corrupt, the effectiveness of those institutions could be restored. The pandemic proves deadlier for autocrats and populists than democrats. Authoritarians and populists have short-term advantages in confronting a pandemic—for example, in implementing draconian public health measures and exploiting the demagoguery that accompanies suffering. But several months into the pandemic, there does not seem to be a lasting dictator's dividend. The nations that displayed the most effective responses are liberal democracies, including South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Denmark, New Zealand, and Germany. Singapore, a soft-authoritarian city-state, is the main example of a non-democracy that marshaled an effective response, and is almost the exception that proves the rule. The performance of the world's foremost authoritarian regimes was somewhere between mediocre and catastrophic. China's delayed response to the COVID-19 outbreak, once galvanized, drew on the advantages that authoritarianism offers, including mass lockdowns and mass surveillance. Yet that response was necessary because the authoritarian system had prevented a more effective earlier response, and the pandemic almost certainly caused much higher numbers of infections and deaths than its government has admitted. Iran, Russia, Turkmenistan, and North Korea also seem to have been hit very hard, with the damage obscured only by their lack of transparency. Of course, many democratic nations have also under-performed, especially the U.S. But the point is that neither type of political system has a monopoly on ineptitude in its initial response—and that democracies are still well positioned to win the governance challenge over the long term. From a free press and an independent judiciary to opposition parties, decentralized governance, and elections, democracies possess an ecosystem of self-correction that provide warnings when policies aren't working, information channels for suggesting new approaches, policy laboratories for experimenting with different responses, and accountability channels for citizens to either reward or punish their elected leaders and the administrators who serve under them. Authoritarian systems, in contrast, eschew these mechanisms, any one of which could threaten the autocrat's monopoly on power. In the near-term, admittedly, such crises can provide political cover for leaders to consolidate control; they can also create the anger and resentment on which populist leaders thrive. But authoritarians cannot indefinitely hide from the convergent pressures of disaffected citizens, dysfunctional health systems, eroding control, and economic stresses accentuated by the crisis, and their political systems tend to be more brittle than democracies when confronted by such challenges. Witness the ongoing protests in Belarus as the latest example. American policy may be the most important factor in determining which way the future breaks. If the United States commits its vast power and prestige to deepening cooperation and economic integration with the democracies, promoting a geopolitically informed globalization rather than a wholesale retreat from globalization, if it focuses on reforming and competing for influence within the institutions of the liberal order that underperformed or were corrupted by authoritarian influence, and to developing the policies—not simply the rhetoric—of responsible competition with China, then the fluidity that the crisis has created may well redound to the advantage of America and the "free world."

#### Alt collapses heg – collapse causes major power conflicts and extinction.

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\*\*\*SLOC = Sea Lane of Communication

Third, a multipolar world of elevated Great Power security competition **is likely to be one with considerable potential for military crises**, which could **embroil European states**—either inadvertently, or because their vital interests are affected. Whereas under unipolarity, the **U**nited **S**tates could pacify **all potential major power conflicts** by threatening to defeat one or—if necessary—both sides, that is **no longer the case under multipolarity**. Indeed, the difficulty in predicting future international conflict suggests that European grand strategy should at least partially hedge against embroilment in such as yet unforeseen emergencies. There is considerable potential for military crises **on the borders of NATO**, as the events of 2008 and 2014 demonstrate, and any such crisis on Europe’s borders will be a pressing security concern for European states. Likewise, the Middle East is likely to remain a focal point of security competition and an arena of potential conflict **embroiling European states**, given its proximity to the European periphery, its economic importance to Europe, China and India, continuing civil wars in Syria and Iraq, the strength of regional revolutionary movements such as Islamic State/ ISIS, and the presence of several militarily capable regional powers with divergent interests, such as Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia and post-revolutionary Egypt. **There is also the risk of involvement in military crises further afield**, particularly where key commercial or strategic interests are at stake. For example, threats to UK interests in the South Atlantic **will increase as Latin American development proceeds**, especially if the seabed around the Falkland Islands contains large-scale mineral deposits, and France could face similar challenges in Africa. Of course, this article cannot hope, and does not aim, to laundry-list all potential future conflict scenarios; **the key point is that in a world of general Great Power tension, the likelihood of serious militarized crises will increase.** The fourth reason why a multipolar global environment may have an impact on the European strategic environment is that it may increase incentives to **acquire nuclear weapons**—or at least, not to give them up. There are excellent reasons to suppose that nuclear weapons favour defence and make interstate conflict between possessors less likely.41 However, the likelihood of accidental, inadvertent or miscalculated nuclear use **rises with the number of nuclear powers**, particularly when that number includes states with weak administrative capacity and political systems with the potential to be dominated by non-representative militarist or radical factions.42 **Multipolar Great Power competition** will make many states feel vulnerable, and the best deterrent against coercion by those strong in conventional weapons is a nuclear arsenal. Likewise, in such a world, states are more likely to feel that they require a potent means of coercion to promote their interests. That being the case, a grand multilateral disarmament bargain is unlikely, and non-proliferation efforts may well continue to struggle in the coming years, with potentially negative consequences for the European security environment. Of course, it can be argued that there has been less nuclear proliferation than many analysts predicted in the 1950s and 1960s. Conversely, however, Ukraine has recently joined a list of countries, including Libya and Iraq, whose leaders presumably regretted surrendering the deterrent power of a weapons of mass destruction programme under the urgings of the major power(s) that subsequently attacked them. If America’s ability to pacify the globe does wane, moreover, plenty of nuclear-capable states under the US nuclear umbrella that currently choose not to develop nuclear weapons will feel compelled to revisit that choice (South Korea and Japan being obvious candidates). The fifth and final reason why a multipolar international system could threaten the European strategic environment connects to the point made above about potential embroilment in military crises elsewhere in the world. This is the potential for such crises to have negative impacts upon European states’ SLOCs and associated critical supply chains (for food, raw materials, energy, industrial inputs and so forth). Europe relies on **uninterrupted flows of imports and exports**, mainly via the sea, for economic well-being and strategic viability. European energy supplies rely heavily on the Middle East and Russia—both potential sources of diplomatic and strategic tension. The Indian Ocean, the Persian and Arabian Gulfs, and the Straits of Hormuz and Malacca, meanwhile, are all crucial to European seagoing commerce **as well as potential arenas of maritime Great Power contestation**. Yet European states’ maritime capability to provide independent (non-US) influence over such SLOCs has been hollowed out **by progressive waves of naval cuts**. Meanwhile, the South Atlantic will remain an important theatre for the United Kingdom while London sustains its current resolve to retain possession of the Falklands, and all west European states should consider Russia’s increasing maritime assertiveness in the north-east Atlantic—the single most crucial SLOC for European powers, both commercially and strategically.