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#### The aff’s description of nation states as singular, autonomous, and discrete masks IR as a discipline of the ruling class that uses its centralized power to spread imperialism – it also foments hostility between nations rather than political leaders.

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In everyday speech people talk about countries as though they were people. We speak about the United States, China, Russia, France, and so forth. We speak of them as though they were singular entities, like individual persons. That though is not all. When talking about international relations or things such as trade policy or economic policy generally we use language that implies agency. In other words, we use language that speaks about decisions, choices, and actions of various kinds. We say things such as, “In 1939 Germany invaded Poland,” or “China is engaged in widespread theft of intellectual property,” or “America is pursuing a particular policy toward Iran.” Nations Do Not Act One of the fundamental features of human life is that the language we use to talk about the world both reflects and shapes our understanding of the world, the way we think about it. This is all the more powerful for often being unconscious. In this case the kind of language and even the grammar reveals a number of deep-seated assumptions and also helps to shape and direct the way we look at the world. Referring to countries or political communities as singular entities that decide and act has a whole series of assumptions built into the language. The grammar of this language has some of these entities as subjects, acting and doing things, and others as objects, being acted upon (as in the case of the U.S. and Iran above). The language means that countries are seen as singular entities that decide and act in the way that individual human beings do. If you stop and think about this it becomes obvious that there is something wrong with this. Humans are not a hive species like ants or bees. As a species we do not decide and act with a single mind or will. Rather a political community or society is a large number of particular individual men and women. There may be a process of collective decision-making that arrives at decisions that are binding on the individual members of the community, but that does not mean a single will or purpose or even a single collective acting agency. If you start to think more carefully about this you will realize that there is actually very little in the way even of a collective decision-making process, much less shared purpose and action. Language and the way we use it is obscuring reality rather than revealing it. One way of thinking about this is to imagine that you meet an alien from another planet who has been learning about Earth from television broadcasts and is trying to find out more about our planet. Hearing reporters constantly say things like the remarks cited above, the alien asks you, “Can you show me the United States?” What would you show them? You could get out an atlas and point to the part of the map that shows the U.S. It is not that, however, that is doing anything. Alternatively, you could show them people living and working in the U.S., but that would also not be satisfactory — in what sense are they pursuing a foreign policy, for example? You could show the alien the president, or Congress in session, or major public figures. Here you would be getting closer to what the alien wants you to explain, but it is still not the correct answer because there are few who would say that the president or Congress is the United States (even if they think they are). The reality is that in discussions like this, terms like America, Russia, China are shorthand. We use them to avoid having to use more accurate but clumsy and awkward expressions. Instead of speaking about “China,” we should say, “The political community composed of the people inhabiting the part of the world commonly known as China, of very varied interests, tastes, and inclinations, and the complex and constantly changing relations between them.” (Technically we are using the trope of synecdoche, in which a part or aspect of something is described as though it is the whole of that something.) Performing this exercise, of expanding singular nouns into the full statement, is useful and revealing. It clarifies certain things and poses a whole series of questions. Considering those questions may then lead to a significant shift of thinking or perception and a recognition of realities that were previously obscured by the language people use. In particular, thinking in this way raises the question of who or what has agency in the kinds of discussions that our confused alien was picking up. Who or what makes decisions? Who or what acts, and how is this done? If we talk about Chinese or American policy, who has formulated the policy and why have they done this? How was it formulated? Asking questions like this leads to much greater clarity even if we cannot answer the questions with our current knowledge. It is clear that the entire population does not have agency in any of these cases. Sometimes some individuals have agency but not all or many. Collective Decision Making For example the statement “China is engaged in theft of intellectual property,” means in fact “Specific people and organized groups of people (companies) living in the part of the planet commonly known as China and being part of the political community made up of the people living there are engaged in theft of intellectual property.” So it does not make sense to think of the entire population of a political community in a specific place as having agency. What though if the political community in question is one with a collective decision-making process that involves consultation and discussion between all adult members of the political community? Leaving aside the problems of the inherent reality of politics (which is what we are speaking of here), this still does not mean that we can speak of the adult population as a whole deciding on a course of action, much less acting on or executing that policy. Many will dissent. There is not a common or single purpose but in fact many often-conflicting purposes. Above all, the entire electorate or political community does not act directly. So, when we use shorthand like China or the United States and speak of actions in the sphere of international relations, what we are actually speaking about is the governments of the United States and China. We are speaking about the relatively small number of people in a particular political community who have political power and who can make decisions that will then be put into effect. We are also speaking of people such as diplomats and the military who are directly controlled by and responsible to the small number who make the decisions and who put those decisions into effect. When we speak about actions and policies in the sphere of international relations we should be very careful to explicitly say, “The Chinese government…” or “The government of the United States…” and not “China…” or “the United States.…” If you want to unwrap those more accurate statements they would be something like, “The group of people with political power and decision-making and executive capacity in the political community made up of the many people of varied interests, beliefs, and inclinations who inhabit the part of the world commonly known as China/the United States.” Countries and Governments One of the most damaging aspects of the way we usually speak about public policy and about international relations in particular is the way that it leads us to conflate countries (the social and political community as a whole) with governments (the people who have and exercise power in those political communities). This leads to ways of thinking that are misguided and often damaging, such as hostility toward the entire population of another part of the world, rather than the people with power there. The normal way of speaking also obscures a whole range of matters and precludes us asking a whole series of interesting questions. Who are the people with power? How did they get it? Why did they decide to do what they did? Why do others obey or go along with it? Analytically, this also means that you should think about international relations in particular in a new way, one that is not reflected in popular discussion or reporting in the media. The way you should think about it from this perspective is as follows. The surface of the planet is divided into self-governing (or nominally self-governing) sovereign units. Each of these is a political and social community made up of the people who live on that part of the planet’s surface. The people who make up these communities are very heterogeneous, and many have connections of a personal or business nature with people from other parts of the world who live in other political communities. Within each political community there are ruling groups. These are the people who have the power to make decisions that can then be enforced, if necessary on all of the other people in that political community. This subset are the people with political power. (There are other people with agency within the community, but their agency is weaker and diffuse whereas the agency of the ruling group is relatively greater and more concentrated.) In particular they have the capacity that other people do not have to legitimately deploy and use deadly force. Notice that in this particular context, it does not matter how the people with power got their position or how it is legitimized. (It does matter when we discuss other things, of course.) From this point of view international relations and things such as global trade policy are the relations between ruling groups. International relations are not the relations, exchanges, and agreements between those people and organizations that do not belong to the ruling groups. An important point is that although ruling groups may be internally varied and divided, they are much less so at any point in time than the population as a whole. They will typically have certain strong common interests. Many of these derive from the geographical location and situation of the part of the planet that they control. This is important because it means that the interests of the group controlling a particular part of the world will remain constant for long periods regardless of the actual people who make up that ruling group at any time, or their ideology and beliefs. Other interests reflect the particular economic and other circumstances of a given time, and these will change. Thus, as long as India was a part of the British Empire, protecting the sea route to India was a vital interest for the ruling group in Britain, but this was no longer the case after 1947. These interests between ruling groups may conflict, for all sorts of reasons. The ruling groups then have to weigh up how important the interests are and how far they are prepared to go to defend them. The problem is that miscalculation by one ruling group can lead to armed conflict, as we have seen many times in history. The really important point though is this. Just as we should not conflate or confuse countries (entire political communities) and governments (the ruling groups of those political communities), so we should not assume that ruling groups and the entire populations of their political community have common or shared interests. Conflicts of Interest Sometimes they do but not always. Frequently, the interests of ruling groups are at odds with the actual interests of a large part of the political community or even a majority of them. Imperialism is perhaps the classic example of this since empires do not serve the interests of the majority of the population even of the imperial power but do bring huge benefits of various kinds to the ruling group of that power. Moreover, while there are frequently conflicts of interest between ruling groups there are almost never such conflicts between the general populations of political communities. There may be conflicts of interest between specific (and typically small) parts of those larger wholes, but it is vanishingly unlikely that there can be a conflict of interest between the entire populations of two or more political communities, or even a majority of them. This reflects two things. The first is the aforementioned variety and heterogeneity of the interests, concerns, and aspirations of the larger population. This makes it much less likely that they will have a specific common interest than the much smaller and relatively more homogeneous ruling group. The other is the general disparity between human relations based upon power and those founded on voluntary exchange of all kinds (including but not confined to trade). The first kind are inherently conflictual because they ultimately rest upon the two relations of submission and domination, which outside a very specific situation are always zero-sum relations. The second by contrast are always positive sum because they rest on the foundation of mutual benefit. This means that historically the policy that liberals and individualists have always urged when thinking about international relations is free contact between the people who make up the populations of different political communities and as little active role for ruling groups as possible (both with regard to internal politics and external relations with other communities). One solution was the classical liberal idea of “people’s diplomacy,” which looked to strengthen and systematize the voluntary and personal relations between people from different political communities at the expense of the formal relations between ruling groups. The insight, expressed in works like George Washington’s Farewell Address, was that there should be as much contact and trade as possible between people and no more formal contact between governments than necessary.

#### Beginning analysis of IR at the nation state produces everyday nationalism that is continually reinforced through ritual practices like debate that cognitively and affectively take for granted the legitimacy of the nation state – that causes violent social exclusion

Bonikowski and Gheihman 15 [Bart Bonikowski and Nina Gheihman, Harvard University. Nation-State as Symbolic Construct. International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences, 2nd edition, Volume 16. [https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/bonikowski\_and\_gheihman\_-\_nation-state\_as\_symbolic\_construct.pdf]//recut](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/bonikowski_and_gheihman_-_nation-state_as_symbolic_construct.pdf%5d//recut) CHS PK

Nationalism is one of the central ideologies of the modem era. Not surprisingly, its hegemonic rise over the past 200 years has attracted considerable attention from historians, sociologists, and political scientists. Researchers have been especially preoccupied with those aspects of nationalism that have been most disruptive for existing social and political institutions, from the emergence of collective identification in newly forming nation-states and the struggle for statehood by minority groups to the sudden emptions of nativism and xenophobia in otherwise stable societies. Much of this literature has been based on the implicit assumption that in the absence of violent upheavals, nationalism in established democracies is simply a fait accompli rather than a source of continued social and political change. In contrast, more recent studies have turned their attention to everyday forms of nationalism, arguing that the primacy of the nation-state as a unit of political governance and collective identification is continually reinforced - and sometimes subtly altered - through routine cognitive and affective orientations that are themselves products of institutional and ritual practices. Such work has shown that meanings attached to the nation are not uniform within a given national community, but systematically vary across individuals and social groups and are associated with other socially and politically relevant attitudes and behaviors. This article provides an analytical overview of this burgeoning literature, identifying its contributions, limitations, and potential for achieving a more nuanced understanding of nationalism in contemporary societies. Traditional Nationalism Scholarship The majority of research on nationalism falls within three broad traditions that investigate the origins of the nation-state as an institutionalized political form, the rise of new independent nation-states in the post-War period; and radical nationalist ideologies in contemporary societies. Focusing on the historical emergence of the nation-state, the first approach is grounded in the observation that prior to the eighteenth century, the political authority vested in statelike institutions was rarely absolute or uncontested. Most states ruled over diverse populations sharply divided along lines of ethnicity, cultural tradition, religion, and language. It is only with the rise of the modern nation-state and its constitutive ideology of nationalism that state sovereignty became codified in both a territorial and cultural sense, with state subjects increasingly viewing themselves as members of a community with shared descent, customs, and collective fate (Gellner, 1983; Anderson, 1983). In the process, the nation became the source of the state's legitimacy and the congruence of the state's political and the nation's cultural boundaries became a taken-for-granted reality. Of course, this process was far from teleological; the rise of the nation-state came in fits and starts and was accompanied by protracted conflicts and institutionalized forms of intergroup domination. The second tradition documents the rise of independent nation-states in the post-War period, most recently during the postcommunist transition in Eastern Europe. This literature is rich in case studies, but has been less effective at formulating general conclusions about nation-state formation and diffusion. Among the exceptions is Hechter's (2000) Containing Nationalism, which argues that nationalist movements are mobilized by centralized states' direct rule over culturally heterogeneous but territorially bounded populations. Viewing this as a problem for state stability, Hechter advocates policies that grant autonomy to minority populations. Another important theoretical contribution is Brubaker's (1996) study of ethnic relations in former Soviet republics and satellite states, which he sees as characterized by three distinct types of nationalism: 'nationalizing nationalism' of the newly sovereign states, 'minority nationalism' of domestic minority groups, and 'homeland nationalism' of coethnics in bordering countries. The interaction between these three political forces gives rise to state-driven social exclusion, oppositional stmggles for minority rights, and occasional eruptions of violence directed against states and their majority populations. Finally, the third body of literature focuses on radical nationalist movements. Rather than aiming to reconfigure the political boundaries of existing nation-states, these movements attempt to mobilize members of dominant groups to resist changes to the nation's symbolic boundaries brought on by immigration or the extension of rights to oppressed native-born populations. These mobilization efforts are typically motivated by racially, ethnically, or religiously essentialist conceptions of the nation that explicitly exclude entire categories of people based on ascribed characteristics. Much contemporary research in this tradition focuses on Europe, which has experienced a resurgence of radical right-wing politics with strong ethnic nationalist tendencies (Taggart, 2000; Mudde, 2007; Bale, 2013). A distinct but substantively related line of research on the United States has focused on the country's long history of exclusionary politics based on nativist, racist, and fundamentalist ideologies (Higham, [1955]2002; Burris et al., 2000; Blee, 2002). The above three approaches have generated many rich insights about the origins and continued importance of nationalist ideology in modern society. Yet, this classic work has largely ignored the more mundane - but no less important - aspects of everyday nationalism in stable democratic countries. Nationalism in Settled Times As a growing number of studies have demonstrated, the political significance of nationalism is not limited to periods of major political transformation or national crisis; nationalism exerts distinct effects on political change in settled times, although its impact is likely to be more subtle (Swidler, 1986). To understand this process, the analytical lens must shift from explicit political ideologies to tacit understandings of the nation's symbolic significance within a given polity. While most citizens of contemporary societies take for granted the legitimacy of the nation-state form, they often disagree in important ways about what their nation-state means to them. This variation - both within and across populations and over time - is an important feature of political culture that influences political behavior and drives policy change. Scholars have explored this dimension of nationalism from two vantage points: first, historical, ethnographic, and interpretive studies have explored the meaning-making processes that produce and maintain national identification; second, survey-based research has sought to map the variation in nationalist attitudes within and across populations and to demonstrate the impact of these attitudes on other political beliefs. Together, these approaches have laid the groundwork for a more complete understanding of nationalism in politically settled times. Interpretive Studies of Everyday Nationalism A long line of work in political sociology and political science has focused on how meanings attributed to the nation affect people's self-understanding and how such conceptions relate to a given country's overarching political culture. Classic studies in this tradition were based on a functionalist understanding of culture as a coherent system of agreed-upon values that facilitates social cohesion; this logically implied that the task for nationalism scholars was to uncover each nation's essential and stable cultural characteristics. For instance, in Continental Divide, Lipset (1990) argues that the national identity of the United States consists of the central tenets of the American Creed: antistatism, individualism, populism, and egalitarianism. In contrast, Canada - Upset's comparison case -prioritizes a distinct set of principles, including deference to authority, collectivism, elitism, and group-based particularism. Such large-scale cultural generalizations were typical of postwar scholarship, as exemplified by the work of Myrdal (1944), Hartz (1964), and the broader enterprise of consensus history. An influential legacy of the functionalist approach has been the distinction between ethnic and civic nationalism, initially made by Friedrich Meinecke ([1907] 1970) and subsequently elaborated by Hans Kohn (1944). This binary opposition assumes a stable character to national identity, but differentiates between two alternatives: the first based on ascriptive criteria such as race, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, or language and the second on elective criteria, such as commitment to the country's core ideology, subjective identification with a national community, and respect for the nation's laws and traditions. This dichotomy has been used to classify the central ideologies of specific nations - with Germany as the prototype of ethnic nationalism and France of civic nationalism - and occasionally entire world regions. The view of national culture as stable and homogenous has been challenged by more recent research. Rogers Smith's (1997) work on citizenship law in the United States, for instance, reveals a layered and often contradictory patchwork of legislation and court decisions informed by three distinct ideological perspectives (i.e., liberalism, republicanism, and 'ascriptive Americanism'), which have competed for dominance over the course of American history. Others have critiqued the ethnic-civic distinction on theoretical and empirical grounds for attributing essential properties to entire countries and regions and glossing over considerable within-country heterogeneity (Kaufmann, 2000; Shulman, 2002; Bmbaker, 2004; Ceobanu and Escandell, 2008). Despite its limitations, functionalist research on national identity has generated a number of valuable insights. Perhaps most importantly, it has helped scholars recognize that even though nationalism has become a hegemonic ideology in modem society, the content of nationalist beliefs can be highly variable. This work has also highlighted the inherent tendency of nationalism toward social exclusion: given that nationalism is predicated on a fundamental belief in the unique characteristics of each nation, it inevitably draws sharp symbolic and social boundaries around national communities based on a range of arbitrary criteria. Of course, the need for distinguishing between members and nonmembers is necessary for every state's ability to fulfill its core functions, such as generating tax revenue, managing economic development, providing social programs, and ensuring national security, but how such distinctions are made and maintained is an important object of study.

#### Nationalism causes great power war and prevents solving 21st century existential threats – debates over alternatives to the nation states are key now to sustainable transition

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The populist and atavistic nationalist dynamics of European right-wing movements and groups supporting Donald Trump are negatively impacting multilateralism and reinvigorating state-dominated power politics reminiscent of those that fuelled the First and Second World Wars. In doing so they challenge prospects for sustainable development, stable peacebuilding and the nurturing of institutions capable of addressing the major problems of the 21st century. Drivers of Authoritarian Populism and Atavistic Nationalism There are a number of different explanations for the re-emergence of authoritarian populism and atavistic nationalism. Similar to the interwar period in the 20th century, there are a range of economic drivers. Economic inequality both within and between countries has expanded dramatically over the past 20 years. The global financial crisis of 2007–2008 and the Euro crisis of 2009 resulted in growing unemployment rates and disillusionment with the capacity of state systems to provide adequate social safety nets. Compounding this scenario, manufacturing has shifted from the industrial north to the global south and within the industrialised north, male jobs have been diminishing while female service sector jobs have been expanding. The incapacity of some newly emergent democracies (especially in Eastern Europe) to cope with these shocks has nudged them in more authoritarian directions. Second, there has been a gradual shift away from class-based politics towards identity-based politics. For the most part, 20th-century politics was defined by economic issues. The Left focused its attention on trade unions, social welfare programmes, and redistributive policies while the Right was primarily interested in reducing the size of government and promoting the private sector. Left-wing politicians in most Western democracies, for example, do not advocate the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange. Rather most Centre-left parties operate within permissive neo-liberal economic frameworks and distinguish themselves from other parties primarily by arguing for the inclusion of marginalised groups, the disabled, ethnic minorities, immigrants, refugees, women, LGBT and by the promotion of wider human rights concerns. The autocratic populist right, meanwhile, also generally accepts the neo-liberal economic framework, but focuses its attention on ‘nostalgic patriotism’, such as ‘Make America Great Again’ and the promotion of cultural, ethnic and religiously defined nationalism. As Frank Furedi (2005) argues, the right has forgotten the past that it wishes to preserve and the left has forgotten the future it wishes to achieve, thereby leaving citizens in a paralysing present where political leaders generate fear, infantilise the electorate and provide simplistic solutions to complex problems. Identity-based conflicts can easily become ‘tribal’, more difficult to resolve than interest-based politics because they are based on group membership, values and beliefs. Third, most European and North American populism is being driven by deep national anxieties about mass immigration (e.g. Syrian refugee flows into Europe); cultural liberalisation and changing social mores (e.g. gay marriage, gender identity rights); and deep anxieties about a perceived transfer of national sovereignty to multilateral organisations like the European Union and the United Nations. This latter concern certainly fuelled the so-called ‘Brexit’ referendum, in which British voters chose British sovereign interests over membership in the EU. Right of centre parties have capitalised on such fears by portraying left of centre parties as socially permissive and willing to cede sovereign rights to international organisations. Such dynamics come as no surprise, however, to conflict analysts who have long argued that unless individual and group needs for security, welfare and identity recognition are satisfied relationships will be fraught and prone to violence. Addressing the Causes and Dynamics of Authoritarian Nationalism and Atavistic Populism The articles in this volume address many of the issues outlined above. Janjira Sombatpoonsiri, for example, highlights the economic and cultural drivers of authoritarian populism, suggesting nonviolent civil society groups can resist right-wing populism by working to (i) eradicate the negative consequences of the neo-liberal agenda, particularly growing economic inequality, and (ii) develop a better understanding of what the ‘people’ means to those with a more radical progressive agenda. She argues that this will involve a cultural deconstruction and reconstruction of the notion of the ‘people’ in response to the anxieties undergirding authoritarian populist and atavistic nationalist discourses. In order to do this, she argues that civil society actors also need to understand power in collaborative rather than dominatory terms and begin identifying values and beliefs capable of unifying rather than dividing states and societies. Paul Porteous reaches similar conclusions through his practice-oriented article on the multinational Arab-Australian community, providing an excellent example of how a ‘communitarian’ orientation can help counter prejudice, bias and ethnically based populism. Porteous demonstrates that a commitment to community building and the development of collaborative problem solving processes reduces polarisation and division and builds mutuality across boundaries of ethnic difference. In particular, he suggests that community based problem solving models that examine ‘shared dilemmas’ help generate inclusion rather than division and collaboration over competition. Vera Heuer and Brent Hierman examine the use of substate populism to critique national elites on behalf of the ‘pure’ local people. They analyse the different ways in which Narendra Modi, chief minister of Gujarat, India and Melis Myrzakmatov, mayor of Osh, Kyrgyzstan, utilised substate populist animus to catalyse deadly ethnic riots that advanced their own political interests and to delegitimise external efforts promoting post-conflict reconciliation. In contrast to Heuer and Hierman’s piece that documents how ethnically based nationalism can be activated for malign purposes, Goran Filic analyses how the city of Tuzla managed to avoid inter-ethnic conflict and radical nationalism during the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. Despite the fact that Tuzla was surrounded by vicious ethnic fighting, the city managed to protect and sustain peace in its borders by reactivating Tuzla’s working class, anti-nationalist and anti-fascist traditions. These class-based traditions resulted in the only non-ethnic political leadership in the country during the first multiparty municipal elections. The article demonstrates how citizens and politicians were able to launch an inclusive and egalitarian effort in support of representative democracy rather than violent ethnic mobilisation. Strategies for Preventing Authoritarian Populism and Atavistic Nationalism A number of the contributions to this issue focus their attention on creative and radical alternatives to authoritarian populism. Mike Klein’s paper, for example, argues that nonviolent pedagogies that develop critical consciousness, social movement leadership, and democratic culture, such as those used in the Scandinavian folk school (folkehøjskoles) model, provide an antidote to radical disagreement, contradiction, and polarisation. Using the Highlander Folk School in the US as a case study, Klein argues that such education laid the foundation for the US labour, civil rights, and environmental movements. Further, as originally conceived, such schools played a critical role in the promotion of individual and collective agency aimed at advancing agonistic democracy against the politics of fear, division, and polarisation as well as the Scandinavian social welfare system that helps guard against the economic drivers mentioned earlier. In addition to generating intolerance, bias, prejudice and discrimination internally, authoritarian populism and atavistic nationalism can also create problems for transnational relationships. Ria Shibata discusses the way ‘nostalgic patriotism’ used by right-wing populist and nationalist movements in Japan has encouraged historical amnesia about Japan’s Imperial past while promoting neo-nationalist and nationalist values for the future. She argues that economic, political and military threats to Japan’s identity and national self-esteem serve as drivers for nationalists that may result in expanded militarisation and changes to the Japanese peace constitution. Through interviews with Japanese youth, Shibata investigates how likely Japanese youth are to support revisions to the peace constitution and a stronger military defence. Additional strategies for counteracting and preventing authoritarian nationalism and atavistic populism are identified in the briefings by Liz Hume, who suggests that using conflict assessment tools can help the United States as it faces deep internal political divisions, and by Lisa Schirch, who suggests ways for Israelis and Palestinians to avoid trauma triggers in their own narratives as a way of stimulating higher levels of empathetic awareness about the rights and needs of all parties involved. Both briefings underscore the importance of finding ways to transcend the politics of fear and develop programmes that will address needs for deep recognition, physical and emotional security, welfare, and resilience. As a counterpoint, Nick Tobia raises some fundamental questions about whether authoritarian, oppressive populists can do good in conflict zones. Despite the assumption that liberal politicians will be better equipped to design successful peace processes and generate peace agreements than populist leaders, Tobia suggests populist leaders may have leverage to take radical political moves. In an analysis of the Bangsamoro peace process in the Philippines, Tobia argues that Duterte’s populist appeal enabled him to bring the MNLF–Misuari faction into the peace process with positive consequences. Concluding Remarks This volume underscores the importance of understanding authoritarian populism and atavistic nationalism in all their complexity so that we might prevent the negative consequences that flowed from their flowering in the interwar period of the 20th century. In the first place, as noted by Sombatpoonsiri, it is critical to understand the diverse ways in which economic factors create ripe conditions for populist and nationalist appeals to flourish. Second, as noted by Hume, Schirch, and Porteous in this volume, culture wars and zero sum identity-based politics generate high levels of animosity towards those who are not members of significant reference groups, organisations and subcultures. There is a very urgent need to develop institutions and mechanisms for the development of respectful civil discourse across all boundaries of difference (Sennett 2003). The folk high schools discussed by Klein or the class-based alliances documented by Filic may help in this regard. Third, it is vital that populist nationalist politics do not get inextricably linked to the development and expansion of coercive agency and capacity, as noted by Shibata, Heuer and Hierman. Fourth, it is vital to have some fundamental debates about whether liberal, democratic capitalist states operating under the rule of law are capable of meeting the economic, welfare and identity needs of citizens in the 21st century. If they are not, some very urgent conversations are needed about what might replace them and they had better be capable of delivering better outcomes than what we already have. Fifth, the Centre-Left needs to focus more attention on what sort of international order it wishes to advance. If it does not and populists retain their growing popularity the existing order (such as it is) will be progressively challenged and will unravel. Finally, what can authoritarian populists and nationalists do about all the major existential challenges to human survival in the 21st century? If they have no solutions to the dilemmas posed by pollution, the control of cyberspace, global climate change, transnational pandemics, and a deeply interconnected world what can those of us on the other side of the equation propose as an alternative?

#### Statist IR theories subordinate and subsume the local through state-building interventions that use technocratic procedure to construct peace around the nation state. The alternative is a re-localization of international politics that decouples national-level politics from local movements for cooperation

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A third way in which we have seen delocalisation has been through the ascendancy of dominant perspectives and methodologies in the social sciences. Most of the social sciences rest on generalisation.13 They rely on the factoring up of samples to tell a generalised story. Of course, many social sciences rely on case studies that allow room for nuance and individual stories, but these usually feed into more generalised hypotheses, theories or arguments. The local, which may have location-specific peculiarities, tends to be flattened out in such a perspective. As Feagan notes, ‘the local and contingent were dismissed in the search for the universal and the general'.14 Often the nation-state, or a region of the nation-state, is regarded as the principal level of analysis. This has contributed to a ‘modern demise of place' or a sense of placelessness in many studies.15 Robert Chambers’ observation that most fieldwork researchers stick to the main road still holds true.16 It is worth noting (and this chimes with the next point on technocracy) that the social sciences did not unilaterally devalue the local through their adoption of larger units of analysis. This process was encouraged by the policy world, which sought more ‘scientific' data that conformed to the units in which it worked: municipalities, states, regions, the globe.17 The fourth delocalising factor has been the march of technocracy, or the elevation of bureaucracy to a central organising force in the running of the state, society and economy.18 It manifests itself in the depersonalisation of interactions and the replacement of arbitrary or personalised decision making with systems based on apparently objective criteria. It can be seen in the administration of government services with the introduction of standardised application formats, the centralisation of administration away from local centres, and provision of training, uniforms and codes of conduct so that services and interactions conform to prescribed patterns. Such processes are very common within statebuilding exercises.19 Localised, idiosyncratic and peculiar approaches are obviously antithetical to the flattening power of technocracy. Indeed, there is no local in the technocratic world. It is an arena of standardisation in which there is only one world-view. The local is truly irrelevant. The fifth possible factor that has led to a decline of the local as a unit of analysis has been the reality of urbanisation. This is not to equate localness with the rural. The local can be urban, and many urban areas have neighbourhoods and localities that claim to be distinctive in one way or another. Urbanisation has produced ‘new forms of sociality’, cooperatives, competitions and solidarities.20 But the urbanisation of the planet,21 in association with other processes of modernity, political economy and culture, does reinforce a world-view that attaches less value to the local and the remote. On the simple basis of population scale it is difficult to justify awarding sparsely populated rural areas the same attention as cities. Indeed, a feature of many conflicts has been rapid urbanisation, as rural populations are displaced and seek refuge in urban areas or form new periurban landscapes through the building of camps for internally displaced persons and makeshift shelters that often adopt a semi-permanent character.22 Certainly the rural comes to the city, and leaves its mark on the city,23 but it is often folded into a larger entity and loses much of its distinctiveness. In combination, the five forces described above have championed the generalised and undermined the relevance of particularity and locality. If we look specifically at the role of the local in making and building peace, then we can also see that the local has been side-lined. To a large extent peace-making in the 20th century was a national and international affair.24 It was often the state, or associations of states, which were the principal actors in the making or breaking of peace, and the creation of norms and statutes.25 Much of the history of the 20th century involved state formation and a reinforcement of the idea and practice of statehood. The lesson of World War II was that states, mobilised and acting in concert, could overcome international challenges.26 The very considerable story of sub-state and sub-group activism during World War II has been largely downplayed in dominant narratives that concentrate on major states. The Cold War set one group of states against another group. The model of the nation-state, even small states, has remained durable. Economic development was regulated by states agreeing on trading regimes. This is not to say that sub-state actors had no agency or power of resistance. They were incredibly active in wars and campaigns of national liberation, mass movements for the expansion of rights, and multiple forms of resistance. But often this agency, much of which occurred at the local level, was fashioned in reaction to states or harnessed by states. During the Cold War in particular state sovereignty was guarded jealously (there was only one case of secession between 1949 and 198927). While sub-national groups were active in many contexts, they operated in a paradigm established by states. Peace-making was regarded as a preserve of diplomats and state machinery. When the Cold War ended and the USSR disintegrated, it disintegrated into states (albeit many of them with highly problematic polities). There has been a significant emphasis on state-led and international peace-making and peacebuilding processes in the post-cold war era.28 Leading states, and international organisations mandated by them, became key players in peace formation. The ‘liberal peace-making’ of the 1990s and early 2000s became progressively more complex, with a range of statebuilding tasks often added to the basic aims of securing a ceasefire.29 In Bosnia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, El Salvador, Timor Leste, and many other locations, international actors played a leading role in building a particular type of peace. This form of peace reified the state as the principal unit of political and economic business.30 When looking at the component parts of peace accords, or at peacebuilding activities aimed at stabilising a post-peace accord society, it becomes clear that the state was regarded as the central pillar around which peace could be constructed. Peace accords often took the form of, or ushered in, new constitutions. ‘Good governance’ and other ‘reforms’ concentrated on making the state ‘efficient’ and robust. Security sector reform and the institution of new judicial systems often emphasised the importance of a state-wide uniformity in the administration of justice. Peacebuilding in the two decades after the Cold War was likened to ‘getting to Denmark’:31 a state that was stable, democratic, compliant, economically open and unthreatening to the international order. The intolerance of statelessness was reinforced by 9/11 and the association of statelessness with ‘terrorism’ and disorder. Given that states are often vehicles for uniformity and social control, this again meant a flattening out of the local, and even its securitisation. The ‘war on terror’ largely took the form of the USA shoring up states against minorities and those suspected of dissent. Ethiopia, Nepal, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and many other states with poor human rights records took the war on terror as an internationally sanctioned opportunity to reinforce their primacy over minorities and malcontents. The war on terror became a boon to entrenched elites as it lessened the emphasis on human rights and democracy and instead emphasised narratives and practices of secure borders and securitised forms of governance.32 The reinforcement of statehood was in keeping with the world-views and policies of rising (or temporarily subdued) powers. China, India, Turkey, Indonesia and Russia all faced secessionist issues and were largely supportive of the war on terror. In summary, modernity and associated processes have side-lined the local. They have reinforced statehood and international norms, typically alienating the local. In a sense, the local has been written out of peace and the primary roles of peace maker, keeper and broker have been awarded to states, international organisations and coalitions of states. As the next section shows, however, there has been something of a rediscovery of the local, where the local arena is regarded as being potentially useful in helping the implementation of the peacebuilding, stabilisation and development tasks. The rediscovery of the local The previous section has argued that states and international actors have assumed leading roles in peacemaking, with the result that local dynamics and factors have often been side-lined. This section argues that there has been something of a ‘rediscovery’ of the local as the shortcomings of top-down peace-making have become apparent. Some within peace and conflict studies had been convinced of the utility of the local lens and local approaches for a number of decades. Lederach’s bottom-up prescriptions and the turn to ‘civil society’ and ‘participation’ can be interpreted as an understanding that top-down statist approaches needed to be leavened or augmented by more sensitive approaches.33 But, for others, the rediscovery is a more recent phenomenon. From 2005 or so this hegemony of states and international organisations has experienced something of a retreat. In part, this is a result of the puncturing of the liberal peace-making hubris following the debacles of the Iraq and Afghanistan interventions. There has also been mounting evidence that the return from international peace- and statebuilding investments has been poor.34 Despite huge peacebuilding and statebuilding inputs, many post-war societies remain tense, sullen, and with serious economic inequalities. While many of these post-accord problems are the result of local actors and the failure to address the central conflict problem, many of them also stem from the nature of the internationally supported peace paradigm. This peace paradigm insists on attempting to construct Mini-Me states that are politically orientated towards the global North, respect international boundaries and place emphasis on the security aspects of peace. Crucially these post-peace accord states are usually left unprotected against the ravages of global markets, and are forbidden by international financial institutions to pursue welfarist policies. The result is often a poor quality ‘peace’ in which an inter-elite bargain may be reached and guaranteed by international support, while many in the population feel left out.35 The realisation that statebuilding and peacebuilding were not always (if ever) delivering the anticipated results prompted a good deal of reassessment among bilateral donors, international organisations, international financial institutions, international NGOs (INGOs) and other interveners. These reassessments by no means constituted a smooth process. These more sophisticated understandings often placed emphasis on the role that local actors could play in achieving sustainability, legitimacy and cost-effectiveness for peace interventions. They were part of the shift to ‘human security’ and a recognition that national security agendas had failed to deliver demonstrable benefits in terms of freedom from fear and want.36 There was a shift of collective gaze among many analysts away from the state as the principal lens for understanding conflict, towards social forces and the need to take seriously armed non-state actors as more than just militants.37 This often borrowed from discoveries learned long ago in the development field:38 local ‘buy-in’ offered the ‘solution’ to a number of problems. Local ‘partners’ could provide access, legitimacy, value for money, cultural sensitivity, linguistic skills and, potentially, could facilitate a swifter exit for international actors. Thus ‘productive’ international-local relations were seen as the key to development and reconstruction programmes.39 This meant international staff becoming ‘localized in relation to the practices, networks and institutions that mediate political and social processes at the sites in which they operate’.40 The local turn in peacebuilding was in keeping with advances in peace theory that realised the limitations of institution-centric conflict resolution and instead were persuaded by the promise of the more people-centric conflict transformation While some institutions (for example Scandinavian foreign ministries) realised the limitations of liberal peacebuilding much earlier than others (for example the World Bank), it is worth underlining that the rediscovery of the local was not consistent and faced major structural challenges in terms of the realist and statist world-view of the champions of liberal peacebuilding. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, a cursory glance at the reports and websites of major peacebuilding actors reveals the extent to which the term ‘local’ became a fixture in the narratives and policies of many peace-support interveners. It has also become a focus of many academic studies.42 It is important, however, not to attach too much coherence to the local turn in peacebuilding. The most insightful way to assess the true extent of localism in peacebuilding is to ask: where does power lie? Especially when looking at formal peace initiatives, programmes and projects, it is often revealing to ask: where do the money, direction, concepts and authority come from? While projects may have a local face, and be enacted by local personnel in local communities, the real power may come from donors and administrators in New York, London, Geneva or elsewhere. Given that there is rarely a fundamental shift in power relations, it is prudent to label much of the local turn as shallow. There can be mutual dependency between international patrons and local clients. INGOs, for example, may require local partners in order to be eligible for funding offered by a donor. The local NGO may require external funding to stay in existence. It is a mutual relationship, but the power of initiative tends to lie with external actors. In part, the local turn, or re-localisation, in sections of the policy world chimes with neoliberal notions of the rollback of the state as a political unit responsible to its citizens and charged with providing services.43 This withdrawal of the state from its traditional functions applies both to the global North, where a number of rightist governments have reduced the social services offered by the state, and the global South, where international financial institutions have been active in restructuring economies and reducing the size of the state. In the global North governments have increasingly used the slippery term ‘community’ as a catch-all substitute for sub-state levels of governance.44 As central government withdraws from traditional areas of provision (especially related to welfare) then community responses are supposed to take over and utilise local knowledge and resources. Newman observed that ‘The local was constituted as a self-governing entity charged with maximizing its own “assets” and mobilising its own population as problem-solvers, volunteers, and resource mobilisers’.45 Of course, theory and practice do not always match, but governments are able to tap into popular narratives of individuals and communities taking responsibility for themselves, and helping central government save taxpayers’ money. Critics point out that this often amounts to a simple abrogation of responsibility, and that there is rarely meaningful partnership between the local and the centre.46 As one observer noted of local government reforms in Pakistan, ‘elites still dominate’ 47 The conceit of neoliberalism in pushing local communities into space that central government used to occupy, is that it sets communities up in competition with one another. ‘New governmentalities of citizenship and community’ are forged,48 in which individuals and communities are patterned to expect less from central government, and the discipline of the market (using the language of efficiency) is used to encourage communities to find their own ‘solutions’ to problems or compete against each other for limited funding. There is also the pitfall of romanticising the local, whereby external actors ascribe benign, but shallow, characteristics to local communities.49 In these narratives, for example, local people might be ‘paragons of ecological virtue’, possess ‘primordial environmental wisdom’ and be ‘guardians of the forest’.50 Such narratives, of course, strip communities of their agency and flatten out complex, and sometimes contradictory, identities. Whether cast as simple peasants who only want to get on with their lives, a site of resistance against global capitalism, or ecological warriors, the danger is that local communities become instrumentalised or rendered part of a script that is constructed externally by international actors. In such instances communities become commodities; like commodities they are packaged and marketed.51 It is worth emphasising that local communities are often sites of heterogeneity, change, dissent and agency, but international actors can often mobilise significant material power that allows them to tell the local story more effectively than the locals themselves. The accuracy of the local story, however, may get lost in translation.52 Again this can have consequences for how peace is framed and resources mobilised to support any peace. Exogenous actors, with considerable material power at their disposal, may be able to frame a conflict as ‘sectarian’ or ‘tribal’ or ‘ethnic’ and perhaps overlook the political economy of the conflict. This might have consequences for international efforts to address the conflict. Thus far, this article has shown how the local has been depicted as the problem and the solution.53 It has been the problem by being backward and willing to harbour particularistic and exclusive identities. It has been the site of conflict and underdevelopment, and so required peacebuilding and development intervention to help modernise it, connect it, and pacify it. But, at the same time, the local has also been presented as a solution. It has been cast as a reservoir of wisdom and resourcefulness. The language of resilience has been deployed to reconstruct the local as capable and even prescient (in that it understood the dangers of environmental damage all along).54 What these two views of the local show is that the category is malleable and capable of being made and remade. The remainder of this article can be read as another re-making of the local. But, more optimistically, this remaking of the local does not vest it with good or bad features, but seeks to highlight the capacity of local communities to reconcile, stabilise, negotiate, resist, make peace and engage in conflict and inequality. It hopes to do so in a way that is not patronising or given to romanticisation. It is fully realised that individuals and communities at the local level can provoke and sustain violence and exclusion. At the heart of this remaking of the local is an understanding that the local is a social construction. In order to find the local we need to examine the ways in which we think. Finding the local A starting point in this unpacking of local communities as agents of peace, tolerance and coexistence is to decouple the local from the global. This is easier said than done. These are relational concepts and it is difficult to conceive of one without the other. Even critical geographers have struggled to escape from orthodox paradigms. As Sharp notes, ‘subaltern geopolitics does not position its subjects outside of the state and associated institutions’.55 For the purposes of this article such a stance is too limiting. Certainly the decline of the state has been overplayed;56 as an institution it is here to stay and we should not underestimate its ability to reconstitute itself. Yet it seems accurate to conceive of substantial parts of human agency as operating outside of statist or institutional domains. It may be tempting to dismiss this agency as domestic, soft or somehow marginal to the ‘real’ politics of states, institutions and elections (statist and geopolitical arguments predominate in, for example, Zaum and Selby57). But this agency can be significant, if often difficult to ‘see’.58 It is capable of operating transnational political economies, of spreading ideas and mobilising people and movements, and indeed constituting threats in the minds of governments who are prone to securitise health and migration issues. So this under-the-radar politics deserves to be treated seriously, and in its own right. Lambek’s call to treat the local as ‘untwinned from and irrespective of the global and, indeed, in a modality that is not exclusively spatial’ requires a leap of faith.59 It is difficult to separate the local from what we assume to be its statist or regional hinterland. But his invitation to regard the ‘local as activity’ is useful. In this way the local is interpreted according to its deeds, actions and capabilities. In a sense, it becomes a verb as well as a noun or a simple descriptor of place. It is interpreted in its own right, and not as a mere adjunct to the somehow more important levels of analysis such as the state, the region or the metropolis. Importantly a critical local lens can help us escape from the ethnocentrism that is inclined to see the global North as the starting point and everything else relative to it.60 This critical localism is able to accommodate post-territorial views of locality, in which populations move and the meanings attached to land change. Barbara Bender’s interpretation of the Stonehenge monument in southern England is very useful here.61 She notes that the actual meaning of the monument is unknown. But that has not stopped the iconic stones from being appropriated and re-appropriated by successive generations: ‘Over a period of several hundred years, those with economic and political power and the necessary cultural capital have attempted physically and aesthetically to appropriate the landscape’.62 And there is little to make us believe that this appropriation has only been going on for several hundred years. These flexible interpretations of the local are particularly useful for conflict-affected contexts. First, conflict areas are often characterised by both a sense of belonging to a particular territory, and movement from it in the form of expulsion or ethnic cleansing. Second, while these conflicts can centre around territory, they can simultaneously revolve around an idea of territory. The territories that make up Israel/Palestine clearly have a physical (if contested) manifestation, but they also constitute ideas to their respective constituencies. The notion of territory as an idea applies to many other conflicts in which the notion of a ‘homeland’ or mythical redoubt serves as a mobilising tool. It is something to be protected or strived for. It becomes a metaphor for the larger struggle. It also reminds us that territory has increasingly become post-territorial, no longer dependent on physical topography. This is by no means a new trend, but it has been accelerated by advances in communication. Diaspora populations illustrate how a people do not have to inhabit the same territory. Instead, they can be networked and hold, transnational^, a joint vision of a homeland. Third, the remaking and renaming of territory has played a key part of conflicts, with different sides attempting to reconfigure the ethnic demography, or give the message that a particular piece of territory is under new ownership. Colonial processes often involved the mapping of conquered territories and the renaming of areas anc natural features in honour of the colonial power. Societies that did not have the notion of fixed and legally ratified land tenure found that colonial authorities instituted new regimes of land ownership and transfer. Colonial processes helped separate communities from the sense that a territory ‘belonged’ to them, and underscore how territory can be made and remade. Fourth, conflict often involved the labelling and re-labelling of peoples who occupied a territory. The author, for example, grew up in Northern Ireland in the 1970s and 1980s in an area that was called ‘the murder triangle’ by journalists.63 No local person used that term. For them it was usually a place of habitation, employment, education or family ties. Yet the term ‘murder triangle’ ascribed characteristics on the inhabitants: that they were lawless and dangerous. While Northern Ireland’s civil war did exact a toll in the area, most people attempted to accommodate the conflict in their lives and got on, as far as possible, with work, child rearing and cultural life. Crucially this process of making and remaking territory, communities and the local is not only a feature of war. It has been inimical to peace-making throughout history. New states and territories have been forged as part of peace agreements. Territories have been ceded, lines been drawn on maps, and wholesale renaming has occurred as part of peace accords. The modern era of peace-making and peacebuilding has seen much flexible localism. Peace keeping, for example the United Nation's historical form of intervention, has relied on creating space between combatants. In the most obvious cases this has led to the construction of buffer zones to keep warring parties apart. The UN, collections of states and INGOs have been active in creating safe havens, no-fly zones, humanitarian corridors and zones of peace. These territorial adjustments have not only involved physical territory or the airspace above them. They have also sent out a message that a territory, and its people, are worthy of special treatment. Importantly this designation and re-designation of territory and people has not only been something that has been ‘done to’ territory and communities by international actors. Communities, whether physically located in a locale or transnational^ networked, have sought to construct and reconstruct themselves in the context of peace and conflict. Through their everyday activities individuals and communities can give localities, workplaces or networks a reputation. Sometimes this reputation might be in line with elite versions of the conflict or division (eg Hezbollah saluting the people of the Baalbeck region of Lebanon as staunch defenders of their Shiite mission). But at other times these bottom-up versions of communities and localities can run counter to top-down narratives. For example, through their actions a community may gain a reputation for tolerance of minorities or may be slow to show support for an ethnic leader.64 These actions may occur at the level of the family, the neighbour or the workplace, and thus may be difficult for external observers to identify.65 The chief point of this section has been that the local is a site of construction and reconstruction, much of this perceptual. There are good arguments for us to escape from the paradigm of orthodox thinking on the local. This paradigm tends to be ethnocentric in seeing the local through a lens that regards the metropolitan global North as the starting point.66 The orthodox paradigm tends to see the local as a place and tied to territory. By adopting a lens of critical localism we can break from the orthodox paradigm and see the local in its own right - not always from the vantage point of the global North, which tends to see the local as remote and ‘over there’. Moreover, it is useful to see the local as a verb, defined by what people do. Perhaps then, the title of this article should be ‘what is the local?’ rather than ‘where is the local?’ In order to adopt this critical view of the local, it is useful to see the social, political and economic worlds in terms of networks, relationships and activities. Thinking of the local as a site or a place encourages us to think in static terms. By focusing on activity, we are encouraged to have more flexible interpretations of what might constitute the local. This has implications for peacebuilding practice and research ‘field’ work. It recommends that we map activity rather than territory, and that we need to think of innovative research methodologies that can get beyond static views of locality. None of this is to say that territoriality will not persist. Orthodox interpretations of the local still retain traction and popularity, but they would benefit from being augmented by more plural views of what might constitute the local. Concluding discussion The focus of this special issue is on how peace, peacebuilding and social agency relate to the local. Yet orthodox interpretations of the local are often inadequate to allow us to unpack the geographies and ecologies of resistance, non-compliance, tolerance and coexistence that may contribute to peace or at least contradict dominant narratives that equate a particular locality and its people with conflict or a uniform set of beliefs. Busteed notes that geographies of resistance are ‘constantly shifting in nature, as opportunities come and go’.67 They are geographies of opportunism that individuals and communities will exploit as circumstances allow. In order to attempt to ‘see’ this version of the local, we need to pay attention to situated knowledges that are constructed simultaneously by the local and the global and many points in between.68 So the local, as a physical space and as an idea, needs to be situated and contextualised. It provides, in the words of Gordon and Kech, ‘palimpsests upon which, if we look carefully and ask the right questions, we can detect the signs of past conflicts that scraped out notions of indigeneity’.69 We also need to recognise the hybrid nature of human societies. They are the result of much interchange and negotiation over a long period. In consequence we need to move beyond ideas of communities as being pristine, unchanging and exclusively linked to geographical areas. The local is a sphere of activity that is constantly being made and remade, sometimes with replication and sometimes with change. It is made, remade and negotiated through the everyday actions of inhabitants, as well as those of exogenous and institutional actors. In this way the widened concept of the local has the potential to liberate us from the confines of International Relations as a discipline and related conceptual straitjackets of the state and institutions. The local, as used in this article, is a system of beliefs and practices that loose communities and networks may adopt. There should be no expectation of consistency in these beliefs and practices: they change with time and circumstances. In this view the local may have territorial characteristics, but it can also be extra-territorial. As well as taking the form of small and intimate spaces (for example, around the kitchen table) it can also encompass vast transnational networks, sets of ideas and belonging. This version of the local is not immune from instrumentalisation and capture. Indeed, many actors strive to capture the authenticity and ‘localism’ that they believe is connected with local activity. Nor is it immune from romanticisation or overly benign interpretations of its simplicity and intent. Lambek is correct in recommending a loose epistemological lens from which to view the local: ‘When the local is understood in the first instance through activity, and especially through the sedimentation of acts and their consequences, its spatial dimensions become fluid, dynamic and multiple - and thereby hardly defining’.70 In order for people to navigate their way through life in deeply divided societies, they rely on some sort of social map of their locality (whether this is geographically proximate or a transnational network). It is the contention of this article that the ‘geographic imagination' held by many who engage in everyday peace and diplomatic activity,71 often goes beyond static notions of the local that depend on a fixed physical place. This local might indeed have a local physical dimension, but it is also likely to be comprised of networks, individuals, social capital and community resources that stretch across territories. Flint notes how war and peace impose a ‘forced spatial-temporal compartmentalization’ of perceptions and social relations.72 Societies are shoehorned (through conscription, propaganda and the introduction of ‘national’ emergencies) into thinking about conflicts through specific spatial lenses. The principal lens has been the nationstate, sometimes in alliance with other nation-states. The local is subsumed by the national in war and peace narratives. Entire areas, and peoples, are securitised (like ‘the Middle East’) or even invented (like the ‘murder triangle’ mentioned above). Localities (for example, Helmand Province or Basra) are given notorious taglines in the press and are axiomatically associated with conflict and violence. Everyday peace relies on people who can see beyond such negative imaginaries and who can see their own areas or networks in terms of opportunities and alternatives (however slight). These imaginaries of opportunity and alternatives are often not particularly visible. They may occur in marginal spaces, away from the obvious friction points between communities or antagonists.73 Statist actors, both international and national, may not have the antennae to ‘pick up’ this different way of seeing a community.

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#### Congress won’t withdraw the US government from the WTO now, but more unfair trade practices abroad causes widespread backlash that ends involvement

Johnson 20 [Keith Johnson, a senior staff writer at Foreign Policy, 05-07-2020, “U.S. Effort to Depart WTO Gathers Momentum,” Foreign Policy, [https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/27/world-trade-organization-united-states-departure-china/]/Kankee](https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/27/world-trade-organization-united-states-departure-china/%5d/Kankee) [bracketed to avoid nationalism]

Frustration with hyperglobalization, China’s “economic imperialism,” and a seemingly broken world trading system is boiling over into serious calls for the United S[FG]tates to withdraw from the World Trade Organization (WTO)—which would have potentially disastrous implications for the country if carried out. For the first time since 2005, lawmakers from both parties and both houses of Congress are pushing to pull the United States out of the trading body it helped create and which was the culmination of decades of postwar efforts to boost free trade and economic integration. By law, the United States has a chance to vote every five years on staying inside the WTO, but staying on board was such a no-brainer in recent years that no such resolution was even presented. But this year—powered by a rise in economic nationalism, growing concern about China, and frustration with two decades of paralysis at the WTO—the knives on Capitol Hill are out, to the delight of some of the trade hard-liners in the White House. “The WTO has been a disaster for the United States,” said Rep. Peter DeFazio, an Oregon Democrat, who introduced House legislation to withdraw this month. “No trade regime can last when it no longer serves the people of the countries who are part of it,” said Sen. Josh Hawley, a Missouri Republican, in a recent Senate floor speech after introducing his own resolution to leave. “Our interests and those of the WTO diverged long ago.” It’s doubtful that the measures could secure enough votes for passage in either chamber, and a tight legislative calendar makes the push for withdrawal doubly hard to pull off. But the rush for the exit is still a serious indication of deep and growing dissatisfaction with how global trade has evolved, highlighted by the vulnerability of cross-border supply chains that have begun to come apart under the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic. If the United States were to pull out of the system it helped build, the implications would be dire. Other countries would be able to discriminate against U.S. goods and services with no limits. Tariffs would almost certainly rise and export markets shrink. Meanwhile, others like China and the European Union would increasingly be in a position to write the rules of the future economy, from data protection and privacy to intellectual property and state subsidies. “We’d have no rights, and we’d lose a seat at the table,” said Wendy Cutler, a former U.S. trade negotiator now at the Asia Society. Why the big push now? For years, different aspects of the global trading system have stirred concern and at times anger in the United States and other countries; the WTO has essentially been stuck in place since the collapse of its last big negotiating round in 2008. For years, economists have debated the impact of the so-called “China shock” on U.S. jobs and manufacturing, and some evidence has shown that the competition from low-wage Chinese labor and the rapid movement of U.S. companies offshore hit the U.S. middle class harder than many economists expected. For years, Republicans have railed against international organizations—from the WTO to the International Criminal Court—that they see as encroaching on U.S. sovereignty. Now, all those forces have come together in a kind of imperfect storm.

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Nationalism worsens conflicts, magnifying the impacts