# 1AR

### 1AR Theory – Multiple (2+) 1NC Theory Shells Bad

#### Interp - Neg may not read multiple theory shells with no RVI.

#### Viol – you did.

#### Standard is reciprocity – Each new shell is another no-risk layer for the neg – AFF has to win 3+ layers and the Neg can just win a single argument, that’s ridiculous. 1AR theory doesn’t solve reciprocity because it just forces further uplayering, which neither of us should want.

#### Voter is Fairness – one shell solves—either they can pick the strongest and win on that, or none is true and they didn’t need to read theory. AND, they could read reject-the-arg theory for others if needed.

#### 1] DTD - DTA gives them what they want

#### 2] Competing interps—a) reasonability is arbitrary and invites judge intervention; b) brightline; c) we figure the best possible norm means a race to the top

# Cosmocap 1AC v8

Green text = read and endorsed

Blue text = capitalist tropes, read to kritik

## Phase 1: A New Hope

#### Capitalism had to start somewhere, and so do I.

**Wanner 15**

(Wanner, Thomas (Senior Lecturer@University of Adelaide, PhD International Political Economy@Flinders University of South Australia, BA Politics Honors@University of Tasmania). “The New ‘Passive Revolution’ of the Green Economy and Growth Discourse: Maintaining the ‘Sustainable Development’ of Neoliberal Capitalism,” January 31, 2015. https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/45184991/Passive\_revolution.pdf?response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DThe\_New\_Passive\_Revolution\_of\_the\_Green.pdf&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A%2F20191029%2Fus-east-1%2Fs3%2Faws4\_request&X-Amz-Date=20191029T013515Z&X-Amz-Expires=3600&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=9fcb4adaecb78a466179cf991a9373bfb9eac6dd63e4b7a569ca94d2de733b5d//SHL)

Green economy and growth: the new ‘passive revolution’ of capitalist hegemony Green economy and green growth are the new ‘common vision’ and ‘pathway’ to achieve sustainable development (World Bank2012: 24). Green growth is conceived as ‘not a replacement for sustainable development, but rather should be considered a subset of it’ (OECD2011: 11). Green growth or ‘improving the eco-logical quality of economic growth’ (UNESCAP2008: 10) is not a new idea and, as in the 1980s when the concept of sustainable development emerged, is driven by the increasing urgent necessity to deal with environmental scarcity and degradation which is seen to threaten economic growth and development. According to the OECD (2011: 17), ‘the impacts of economic activity on environmental systems are creating imbalances which are putting economic growth and development at risk’. From this perspective, it should be noted that environmental risk management is not about the risks to the environment but rather the risks to accumulation, entailing the management of risks to economic growth. As stated in a report by the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, managing environmental risks is about ‘managing the risks to growth from adverse environmental events’ (Everett et al. 2010: 12).Here we see the manner in which the green economy/growth discourse is produced, which occupies one distinct side of a divide between those that see growth as reconcilable with environmental pursuits and those that are skeptical of this. This divide is nothing new, having been central to debates regarding the validity and importance of the concept of sustainable development ever since its emergence in the 1980s. Sustainable development emerged as a passive revolution to maintain capitalist hegemony and economic growth in the light of environmentalist critiques about disastrous social and environmental consequences of industrial modern capitalism and calls for ‘limits to growth’. In this way, by diverting the counter-hegemonic challenge of environmentalism, the sustainable development discourse has been part of the sustainable development of capitalism. The Brundtland Report (WCED1987) widely popularized the concept of sustainable development and firmly established it on the international political agenda. The report emphasised the synergy between economic growth and the environment and the inseparability and complementarity of development and environmental issues. It stressed the need to revive growth while changing the quality of economic growth as the two top ‘strategic imperatives’ for achieving sustainable development (WCED1987: 54 – 76). With this intervention, the earlier debates about the limits to growth and the conflict between environmental sustainability and the sustainability of growth were seemingly reconciled and/or defused. In no uncertain terms, the report shifted the framing of environmental issues from a situation whereby the environment was threatened and degraded by economic development to one where the economy and economic growth were threatened by the very environmental issues growth had created. We have in the past been concerned with the impacts of economic growth upon the environment. We are now forced to concern our-selves with the impacts of ecological stress – degradation of soils, water regimes, atmosphere, and forests – upon our economic prospects. (WCED1987:5)In the 25 years since the report, the increased impact of ecological stress on the ‘economic prospects’ of countries has grown, subsequently leading to a rapid rise in attention being paid to green growth and green economy.9It is apparent that green growth is a ‘new economic paradigm’ in the sense that the goal is to supersede fossil-fuel-driven ‘business-as-usual’ economic growth because of its ecological unsustainability. Greening the economy and growth is about improving the environmental sustainability10of current unsustainable economic growth patterns. But green economy/growth must be seen as yet another mechanism to maintain the ‘techno-economic hegemony’ and ‘hegemony of economic “win – win” thinking’ that, first and foremost, attempts to legitimize the global capitalist economic order (Bluhdorn and Welsh 2007: 186, 187). Within this attempt, the centrality of economic growth for consumer capitalism remains beyond reproach and limits to growth are obfuscated in the discourse of green economy/growth. The green economy/growth discourse, in short, can be seen as an extension of the dominant sustainable development discourse and a new form of ‘passive revolution’ to save capitalist hegemony and its attendant interests. Yet at the same time, the discourse of green economy/growth is a step further than the discourse of sustainable development which was based, as indicated above, on the complementarity between economic and ecological sustainability and included trade-offs between both (WCED1987). Green economy/growth discourse entails the prospect of complete decoupling of economic growth from natural resource use and environmental deterioration (UNEP2011a: xi). The ‘passive revolution’ of the dominant sustainable development discourse is complete in that the protection of the neoliberal free market economies and economic growth, now in form of ‘green growth’, is ensured because there are no longer any trade-offs between the environment and economic growth. In fact, ‘decoupled’ green growth has no environmental impacts, stimulates environmental protection, helps to create ‘green jobs’ and alleviate poverty. Trade-offs are reframed in the green economy/growth discourse as ‘apparent trade-offs between strengthening the market economy and pursuing green growth’ (OECD2011: 130) that are within the economy and restructuring processes towards green economy but noting relation to the environment. UNEP’s (2011a) major report on green economy attempts to dispel the myths that (i) there is a trade-off between economic growth and environmental sustainability and (ii) establishing greener forms of economic growth and development is largely the prerogative of developed countries (16). However, the debunking of these myths is in itself a myth, grounded in the belief that technological innovation, adequate pricing of ‘natural capital’ and a combination of market-based and policy instruments can achieve single-handedly economic and ecological sustainability and, in the process, eradicate global poverty and national and inter-national inequalities. The following sections discuss (i) the economy-focused approach of green economy/green growth and (ii) the myths of green growth, or, in other words, the conflicts and contradictions that are hidden and masked in the ‘passive revolution’ of this new discourse about green economy/growth.

#### And even though things get worse the longer we wait, it’s still not too late.

**Russell 19**

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Well, what are the scientists saying?The answer, of course, is that they have been warning about severe global impacts from climate change for more than three decades. But over the past 12 months those warnings have intensified. Reports detailing the massive environmental, economic, and human consequences of unfettered global warming have come at a fast and furious pace. And, collectively, they are far scarier than the sum of their parts. (Click here to see a rundown.) The deluge began last October, with the release of a special report from the United Nations’ global climate science authority, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), on the potential impacts of a rise in global temperature of 1.5 degrees Celsius or more. Three international IPCC working groups with 91 authors and editors from 40 countries examined 6,000-plus scientific studies and called for “global carbon dioxide emissions (to) start to decline well before 2030” to avoid the most severe consequences of global warming. It said “global warming is likely to reach 1.5 degrees Celsius between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate.” The release of the report provided a “breakthrough” moment in public consciousness and press coverage, with countless soundbites, headlines, and images warning of a “12-year” deadline to head off “climate change catastrophe.” The “12-year” catchphrase was even more alarming than the IPCC’s already strong admonitions. The planet won’t implode in 2030, but further delays in major global actions will make it increasingly difficult to move to a low-carbon world. In November, the United States’ Fourth National Climate Assessment, produced by government and outside experts, reinforced the gloom-and-doom message of the October IPCC report. “Climate change creates new risks and exacerbates existing vulnerabilities in communities across the United States, presenting growing challenges to human health and safety, quality of life, and the rate of economic growth,” it warned. The Trump administration’s attempt to minimize media coverage of America’s climate report card by releasing it on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, backfired: The congressionally mandated report got double coverage as both an environmental and a political story. The dire news didn’t abate as 2018 drew to a close. A December report from the World Health Organization (WHO) said that emissions from fossil fuel-powered electricity, transportation, and other sources are “a major contributor to health-damaging air pollution, which every year kills **over seven million people**.” It called extreme weather events linked to human-caused climate change “a clear and present danger to health security” and concluded the health benefits of addressing climate change “far outweigh the costs of meeting climate change goals.” Just as the disastrous future impacts of climate change were coming into clearer focus, we also received sobering news about the present. Last December, the Global Carbon Project projected that carbon dioxide emissions worldwide reached an all-time high in 2018, up more than two percent after three years of almost no growth. A January 2019 U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) report estimated an increase of nearly 3 percent in 2018 energy-related carbon dioxide emissions, the largest jump since 2010 — reversing a trend that had seen three consecutive years of decline. The EIA estimated that total U.S. emissions would fall in 2019, and that prediction appears to be bearing out, due to a drop in coal consumption. However, total global carbon dioxide emissions will see a rise again for 2019, says Stanford University’s Rob Jackson, who chairs the Global Carbon Project’s Scientific Steering Committee. Alarm bells about climate change impacts in the Arctic sounded throughout the year. In April, a NASA-funded study of the Greenland ice sheet, published online on Earth Day, found the mass loss of ice discharged into the ocean from glaciers on the world’s largest island had increased six-fold since the 1980s. Meanwhile, sea level had risen nearly 14 millimeters since 1972, with half of that in the last eight years. (Later, a severe mid-summer Arctic heat wave contributed to historic melting of the Greenland ice sheet, with 12.5 billion tons of ice melting into the ocean on a single day — the “biggest single-day volume loss on record,” according to the Washington Post). A little-publicized Stanford University study, also released on Earth Day, found that global warming from fossil fuel use “very likely exacerbated global economic inequality” over the past 50 years. The study’s authors found that warming has likely enhanced economic growth in cooler, wealthier countries while dampening economic growth in hotter, poorer countries. In May, a landmark U.N. biodiversity report provided another stark statistic: One million animal and plant species on Earth are threatened with extinction, and rates of extinction are “accelerating.” The report gave a devastating assessment of how climate change and global economic development over the past 50 years have impacted nature and threatened the health of ecosystems important to humans and all other species. The report’s research underpinnings are strong: a systematic review of some 15,000 scientific and government sources that also includes indigenous and local knowledge. In August, on the heels of record-breaking global heat waves, from South Korea to northern Norway, another major IPCC special report called attention to land-related climate change threats. It found that “climate change, including increases in frequency and intensity of extremes, has adversely impacted food security and terrestrial ecosystems as well as contributed to desertification and land degradation in many regions” of the world. The report recommended sustainable land development and adaptation practices to combat further destruction. The highly anticipated September 23rd U.N. Climate Action Summit in New York brought additional climate reports. On September 22nd, the U.N. Summit’s Science Advisory Group released United in Science, an ambitious synthesis connecting the dots between “the very latest authoritative” science and “concrete actions” to “halt the worst effects of climate change.” The IPCC released a post-summit blockbuster report outlining profound changes underway in the Earth’s oceans and frozen regions, including glaciers and ice sheets. The report concluded that warming oceans, melting ice, and rising sea levels are already affecting everything from coral reefs to the nearly 10 percent of the global population living in low-lying coastal areas — and negative impacts will greatly worsen in the future. The oceans report capped 12 months of overwhelming scientific evidence of global climate change hazards. The consistent message is that severe climate-change damage is already well underway; some impacts will be long-lasting or irreversible; the damage disproportionately hits vulnerable populations; and combatting climate change will require unprecedented economic, social, and technological transformation. But, crucially, the reports say **it is** likely **not too late** to prevent the worst effects of global warming by adopting meaningful adaptation and mitigation strategies.

## Phase 2: The Empire Strikes Back

#### Globalization transformed petrocapitalism into semiocapitalism, where the assets of rogue corporations are ephemeral, shifting jurisdictions at whim, limited only by physical territoriality

Bifo 15

Francesco ‘Bifo’ Berardi, Professor of Social History of Communication at the Accademia di Belle Arti of Milan, *Heroes: Mass Murder and Suicide*, Verso: Brooklyn, NY, 2015, p. 89-92

Absolute Capitalism How should we define the contemporary economic system? I reject the expression ‘cognitive capitalism’, since only labour can be defined as cognitive. Capital is not the subject of cognitive activity: it is only its exploiter. The bearer of knowledge, creativity and skills is the cognitive worker. I also avoid the definitions of ‘monetarism’ and of ‘neoliberal capitalism’, which seem to me to be inaccurate despite their widespread use. The variation in money supply was only a technical aspect, and Neoliberalism only the ideological justification, of an epochal transformation that took place in the last decades of the twentieth century. In the context of a long-term anthropological evolution, contemporary capitalism can be understood as the turning point beyond the age of Humanism. The modern bourgeoisie embodied the values of Humanist freedom from theological destiny, and bourgeois capitalism was a product of the Humanist revolution. But the combined effect of a preponderance of capital accumulation and of the deterritorialization of the production process have led to the end of the bourgeois characterization of the economic system. The production and exchange of abstract signs has taken the predominant place in the overall process of accumulation: semiocapitalism has taken the place of industrial capitalism. Financial abstraction is only the extreme manifestation of the predominance of semiosis in comparison with physical production. Semiocapitalism is, for me, a suitable definition of the present economic system at the global level. However, if we intend to grasp the political dimension of the transformation that Neoliberal deregulation has brought about, I think that it would be more correct to speak of ‘capitalist absolutism’. The English word ‘absolute’ descends from the Latin ab-solutus, a term translatable as ‘emancipated from any limitation’. In this context, ‘absolute’ means not limited by restrictions, unconditional, unconstrained by constitutional or other provisions. The bourgeoisie fought a battle against early modern absolutism, after taking advantage of the effects of national unification and social regulation that absolutist monarchs enforced on traditional societies. The bourgeois struggle against monarchic absolutism was part of the battle for the liberation of privately owned enterprise from the control of the state, but also for the limitation of the monarch’s actions under the rule of law. Once it managed to impose the rule of law over the power of the feudal aristocracy and of the monarch, the bourgeoisie also accepted a legal limitation to its own economic expansion. The bourgeoisie could not be indifferent to the destiny of the territory or the community of workers, which was obviously linked to the destiny of its own investments. Workers and the bourgeoisie shared the same urban space, and the same future. If the economy crumbled, it was a disgrace also for the owner, although it was a much worse disgrace for the workers and their families. This is why the bourgeois class accepted the democratic deal, and the negotiation with the working class. The rise of financial capitalism, the deterritorialization of production and exchange, and finally the emergence of a virtual class without territorial identity have been accompanied by a general process of deregulation. The globalization of corporate trade hindered and rendered impossible any all-encompassing legal control on their activity. The sovereignty of nation states made way for global corporations acting with absolute freedom, disregarding the local authority and shifting their immaterial assets from one location to another. This is particularly evident in reference to the environmental crisis, as the legal limits to the exploitation of physical resources and the pollution of the environment are systematically (and ultimately, suicidally) ignored by corporations. At the same time, the globalization of the labour market destroyed the unionized power of workers, and opened the way to a general reduction of salaries, increased exploitation and the erosion of regulations covering working conditions and working hours. This is why I believe that the contemporary global system should be defined as one of absolute capitalism, in which the only effective principles are those of value-accumulation, profit-growth and economic competition. These are its all-encompassing priorities, and the overwhelming impetus at its core. All other concerns, including the survival of the planet or the future of the next generation, are subsumed to these greater goals. Compared to the past situation of bourgeois industrial capitalism, the relationship between social welfare and financial profit is now inverted. In the industrial economy, profits increased when citizens acquired enough money to buy the goods that were produced in the factories. In the sphere of financial capitalism, financial indicators go up only if social welfare crumbles and salaries fall. Unsurprisingly, those few hundred billionaires listed in Forbes magazine have hugely increased their capital in 2010, 2011 and 2012, years which were dramatically marked by rising unemployment, poverty and cuts to social welfare. Far from emancipating society from any rule, Neoliberal deregulation has emancipated capital from the political law and social needs, while subjecting society to the blind adherence to the law of financial accumulation. It has marked the beginning of an age of capitalist absolutism, in which capital accumulation and particularly financial accumulation are entirely independent (ab-solutus, untied) from the social interest. In this way, the Humanist tradition, which was based on the idea that human destiny is not subjected to any theological law or necessity, is finally obliterated.

#### Because those territorial limits don’t exist in outer space, those corporations can hijack entire nation-states, shaping laws to benefit capital rather than constrain it

Van Fossen 99

Anthony Van Fossen, Griffith University, Nathan, Australia. “Globalization, Stateless Capitalism, and the International Political Economy of Tonga’s Satellite Venture,” Pacific Studies, Vol. 22, No. 2, June 1999 -CAT

Satellites, by their very nature, operate beyond a country’s territory and serve as instruments to bypass the effective sovereignty and jurisdiction of most of the states of the world. They are increasingly owned or controlled by private capitalists rather than governments. The recent trend toward mobile cellular networks and small satellites has offered much greater opportunities for participation and even control by the private sector. It has made governmental regulators and national post and telecommunications monopolies Political Economy of Tonga’s Satellite Venture 21 and oligopolies ever more apprehensive. This defensiveness has been expressed particularly by INTELSAT, which is financed by a consortium of national telephone companies and acts to limit competition with and between them. INTELSAT supports a system where satellites have genuine nationality. Tongasat points the way toward a “nationality of convenience,” where a jurisdiction may register satellites and enact laws for them that favor the interests of capital. States such as Tonga have little actual supervisory power. The tax havens of Mauritius and Singapore followed Tonga’s lead by filing for a disproportionate number of satellite slots—apparently intending to offer them to foreign companies for a fee (Business Times [Singapore], 22 September 1994). Located in the tax haven of Luxembourg, Société Européene des Satellites (the platform of choice for Rupert Murdoch, Canal Plus, Leo Kirch, and other major media organizations) has become the third largest satellite operator in the world (Australian Financial Review, 30 March 1995; Financial Times, 10 May 1998). In a move seen as having “echoes of Tongasat,” GE Americom (the company that has controlled the largest number of orbital slots over the United States and that has the largest satellite capacity in the world) abandoned the U.S. regulatory process administered by the FCC and turned to the government in the tax haven of Gibraltar for assistance in obtaining rights to twelve international satellite slots (Satellite Week, 15 January 1996; Via Satellite, 1 July 1997). Orion Asia Pacific also decided to avoid American regulations, including foreign ownership limits, by operating from the Pacific Islands tax haven of the Marshall Islands, whose government arranged access to a slot at 139.0 degrees East so Orion can provide services from India to Hawai‘i (Bernama, 2 October 1997; Cable and Satellite Asia, March 1997). Tax haven promoters in Pacific Islands microstates would appear to be likely beneficiaries of the ITU’s increasing reluctance to grant valuable slots to countries that already have a large number of satellites in orbit (Newsbytes News Network, 28 March 1996). If American hegemony continues to weaken, it appears likely that current or aspiring offshore financial centers may become increasingly involved in passing satellite legislation that allows owners and lessors to avoid a welter of competing laws, regulations, and taxes that mainland states attempt to enforce. According to international law, positions in geostationary orbit cannot be maintained for longer than thirty years; hence an allocation amounts to usufruct and not permanent appropriation. Thus, over time, users of slots given to traditional powers may gravitate toward new space-age flag-of-convenience jurisdictions in a manner similar to the major post–World War II movement of ships to maritime open registers in tax havens. Since it is difficult, if not impossible, for a state to appropriate or own 22 Pacific Studies, Vol. 22, No. 2—June 1999 outer space (which is like the open seas), jurisdiction and regulation become largely a matter of regulation of the vessel, represented by its flag (Weaver 1992). Although a maritime flag of convenience does not give a ship exclusive access to any section of the global waters, a satellite flag of convenience currently is supposed to confer use of an orbital slot from which other satellites are excluded. But there is increasing recognition (even within the ITU) that space may be even more like the open seas than once thought and that the value of exclusion has been overly emphasized. At 94.5 degrees East four satellites operate harmoniously in the same slot because there are no conflicts between their frequencies and antennas (Aviation Week and Space Technology, 8 August 1994). Flags of convenience in outer space are likely to increase as the number of satellites grows. Some writers claim technical advances will allow four thousand satellites to operate in geostationary orbit without interference (Riddick 1994). A Possible Future As the world’s global satellite regime continues to evolve, spacefaring companies ultimately owned in core countries may find it increasingly necessary to pay fees to microstates such as Tonga to gain access to orbital slots. Core countries (and particularly the United States) no longer have virtually unlimited use of the orbital spectrum. This evolving space satellite regime increasingly favors the claims of less-developed sovereign states. Even the United States will probably have to learn to cooperate with small, less-developed countries such as Tonga (Ezor 1993). Pacific Islands states would appear to be primary candidates for the further development of flags of convenience in space. Like the shipping business over the past twenty-five years, the satellite business has been risky and unpredictable. High rates of failure have meant that not a single American satellite carrier from the early 1980s was still operating ten years later (Australian Financial Review, 16 November 1993). Tongasat’s situation has also been extremely volatile. In May 1997 Tongasat had four satellites in different orbital slots, with a fifth just launched into the 170.75-degrees-East slot (Islands Business, May 1997). Less than a year later only two of its slots were still filled by satellites paying fees to Tonga—at 134.0 and 138.0 degrees East, which connect Asia and North America (Via Satellite, February 1998). Continuing deregulation of telecommunications would only further accentuate the satellite industry’s instability, unpredictability, and riskiness (Giget 1994:478). The cycles of the world satellite industry increasingly resemble the boom and bust of the oil-tanker business, a great user of maritime flags of convenience. In both the shipping and satellite industries Political Economy of Tonga’s Satellite Venture 23 there is a long delay between the ordering and the launching of vessels (Economist, 3 May 1997), with consequent cycles of great scarcity and oversupply. If both the maritime and satellite businesses continue to become more entrepreneurial, more globalized, and less tied to subsidies and protection from states, the appeal of flags of convenience will grow. Flags of convenience are means of minimizing state regulation, taxation, national rules of procurement and service, and so forth.15 The increasing deregulation of outer space reflects conditions on earth, where property is increasingly allowed to be relocated to jurisdictions that make the fewest claims on it. This is often justified by the doctrine of the equality of sovereign states. Tonga’s satellite venture has departed radically from the social democratic conception of outer space as the common heritage of humanity. It has accelerated the globalization of stateless capitalism into ethereal realms. One day the advent of Tongasat may even be regarded as marking a significant new phase in world historical change.

## Phase 3: Cosmocap IS the Death Star

#### Freed from the shackles of national and international law, megacorporations pretend to invest in things like rural internet access to ostensibly help developing nations, while really only serving the 1%

Turner 20

S. Derek Turner, “Broadband Boondoggle: Ajit Pai's $886M Gift to Elon Musk,” Free Press, December 14, 2020 <https://www.freepress.net/our-response/expert-analysis/insights-opinions/broadband-boondoggle-ajit-pais-886m-gift-elon-musk> -CAT

Last week, we documented how FCC Chairman Ajit Pai’s supposed crowning achievement, a $9.2-billion accelerated-subsidy plan to bring broadband to rural areas, was plagued with examples of scarce funds going to build broadband in rich, urban areas. I have no doubt that a portion of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) is going to truly needy areas. But I am an advocate for families who can’t afford broadband, who have been harmed by the Pai FCC’s continual assault on the Lifeline program and who are often forgotten by D.C. politicians who myopically focus exclusively on rural areas. To connect those most in need most often means connecting people to networks that already exist. That’s why it’s important to expose how the FCC’s rush to build new networks has resulted in wasteful spending. Though I believe solving the rural-deployment problem is important, the roots of that problem are different from the root causes of the digital divide that plagues urban areas. We should be spending more time and, yes, money to address those issues of choice, affordability and high prices that keep tens of millions of people disconnected even when they already have an adequate broadband option in their neighborhoods. Feature or bug? The RDOF’s massive waste is a result of Pai’s design Yet even in terms of fulfilling its own rural-first goals — which has unfortunately been Pai’s sole priority — this latest initiative looks bad. Based on our initial estimates, more than $700 million of the $9.2 billion in subsidies were awarded to ISPs for deployment in non-rural areas. And the level of direct waste is in fact likely higher than this, because the RDOF auction’s design flaws led to granting subsidies in areas that are already served or could be served without subsidies, both in rural and urban areas. We’ll dive into the numbers in greater detail in a forthcoming post. Pai’s RDOF is a giant reshaping of a Universal Service Fund (USF) subsidy program meant to more rapidly close the rural digital divide. But the agency bungled the implementation by sending so much of this scarce USF money — raised through a regressive fee system that disproportionately impacts the poor — to companies that have no plans to serve rural customers. To make matters even worse, much of the funding the FCC directed to urban areas last week isn’t for projects that help low-income urban communities in any way. As we discuss below, many of these areas showed up as eligible for subsidies only because no ISP reported offering fast internet access there — even though they are not technically areas that need USF support. Some of these areas are just empty plots of land. Some are parking lots. Some are roads adjacent to blocks where gigabit service is already available from multiple ISPs. Some are blocks entirely occupied by large enterprises like airports or universities, which self-provision their own internet access and don’t need or take service at these individual buildings and blocks. And some are areas where the cost for an incumbent cable or telco ISP to deploy would be at or below their normal cost, but are occupied by businesses that have no need for super-fast services. While the FCC continues to ignore the plight of the urban poor, it’s giving Elon Musk nearly a billion in subsidies, a significant portion of it to serve urban airports, parking lots and dog parks As we continued to dig into the data, we were struck by the huge number of random tiny areas in cities where Elon Musk’s new low earth orbit (LEO) satellite-broadband company Starlink won subsidies. This is the case despite the fact Musk has made it clear, both to the media and to the FCC, that his venture is still in the trial stages and isn’t intended for urban customers. As SpaceX told the FCC when the agency was creating the bidding rules for the RDOF, “Starlink is uniquely positioned to deliver high-quality broadband service to the hardest-to-reach rural Americans, for whom access has for too long been unreliable, prohibitively expensive, or completely unavailable” (emphasis added). Musk himself poured cold water on the notion that Starlink will be a competitor to traditional urban ISPs, pointing out that the service is “not good for high-density situations.” He added, “I want to be clear, it’s not like Starlink is some huge threat to telcos. I want to be super clear it is not . . . In fact, it will be helpful to telcos because Starlink will serve the hardest-to-serve customers that telcos otherwise have trouble doing with landlines or even with ... cell towers” (emphasis added). LEO satellite-internet service has to cover a very wide geographic area with limited bandwidth. Those inherent physical limitations coupled with Musk’s own comments make it clear that the service isn’t suitable for urban customers. But the pricing screams this truth as well: Starlink’s retail price is slated to be $499 for the equipment and $99 per month thereafter. That’s hardly a more affordable service in cities, or one that could compete on price with cable-modem and telco-internet services (or fixed-wireless services, including 5G) that are widely available in urban areas. But while Starlink bid for and won the right to serve many rural areas (in exchange for FCC subsidy payments), it appears to have reached its total $886-million award by bidding for the right to serve a large number of very urban areas that the FCC’s broken system deemed eligible for awards. Our initial estimates indicate that nearly 13 percent of the money awarded to Starlink — $111 million — is to provide service in urban areas. And the level of wasted funds is potentially higher, as the FCC’s auction design led to assignment of winning bids in areas that may already be served or may not meet the threshold of a “high-cost” area, even though they are located in an area that the Census Bureau defines as non-urban. Elon Musk’s company appears to have played by the rules. But the FCC’s rules created a broken system. By bidding for subsidies assigned to dense urban areas, Musk’s firm and others were able to get potentially hundreds of millions in subsidies meant for people and businesses in rural areas that would never see broadband deployment without the government’s help. Apparently we have a massive airport digital divide I first realized something was amiss with the RDOF awards when I started perusing the FCC’s map of winning bids, looking to see if any were granted near where I live (Los Angeles County, the most-populated county in the United States). I noticed the FCC granted a subsidy to two industrial buildings right outside of LAX airport. So this put me on the trail: Just how many major U.S. airports were on the FCC’s eligible list? When I started looking, I was shocked to discover the number of airports where Musk’s Starlink and a few other providers won subsidies. Below is a list of the 20 busiest U.S. airports. These are hardly unserved or underserved places. And they’re hardly candidates for subsidies paid for by regressive fees on your telecommunications-service bills. Yet in nearly every one, Elon Musk’s Starlink or another less-well-known ISP bid for and won subsidies, even though it’s preposterous to think these are locations where these companies will serve a single customer. Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport: The airport proper was not on the FCC’s list of eligible blocks, but Starlink won subsidies for most of the eligible adjacent areas Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Los Angeles International Airport: The fixed-wireless company Geolinks won subsidies for an adjacent area (see my prior blog post). Our initial analysis suggests that non-rural areas account for nearly one-quarter of the $235 million in RDOF funds awarded to Geolinks. O’Hare International Airport (Chicago): Starlink won subsidies for adjacent areas. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport: Fixed-wireless company LTD Broadband LLC (which won the most RDOF awards measured by dollars) won the subsidies for DFW, a clear waste of scarce USF funds. Starlink did not win any areas in Texas, despite Musk making a big show of moving to the state. Denver International Airport: Starlink won subsidies to serve part of the airport terminals and adjacent areas. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC John F. Kennedy International Airport: Starlink won subsidies to serve some of the airport proper and adjacent areas in Queens. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC San Francisco International Airport: SFO and adjacent areas were not on the eligible list of unserved areas. (A rarity for our country’s major airports, it seems!) Seattle-Tacoma International Airport: SeaTac proper wasn’t on the eligible list, but Starlink won several of the eligible blocks adjacent to it. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC McCarran International Airport (Las Vegas): According to Form 477 data, none of the areas at or surrounding Las Vegas’ main airport are eligible. But Starlink won the right to serve a parking lot and strip mall containing a bagel shop directly adjacent to the airport. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Orlando International Airport: This airport and adjacent areas were not on the eligible list of unserved areas. Newark Liberty International Airport: Starlink won subsidies to serve the airport terminals and adjacent areas too. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Charlotte Douglas International Airport (Charlotte, North Carolina): This airport and adjacent areas were not on the eligible list of unserved areas. Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport: This airport and adjacent areas were not on the eligible list of unserved areas. George Bush Intercontinental Airport (Houston): Fixed-wireless company LTD Broadband LLC (which won the most RDOF awards measured by dollars) won the subsidies for Houston just as it did for DFW, a clear waste of scarce USF funds. As noted above, Starlink did not win any areas of Texas. Miami International Airport: Starlink won subsidies to serve the airport terminals and adjacent areas. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Logan International Airport (Boston): Logan proper was not on the list of RDOF-eligible areas, but Starlink won subsidies for many of the supposedly unserved areas surrounding the airport. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport: Starlink won subsidies to serve part of the airport terminals and adjacent areas. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport: The airport terminals were not on the list of eligible blocks, but Starlink won all of the eligible blocks surrounding the airport. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Detroit Metropolitan Airport: Starlink won subsidies to serve the airport terminals and adjacent areas. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Philadelphia International Airport: Starlink won subsidies to serve part of the airport terminals and adjacent areas. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Musk’s Starlink won ‘rural’ deployment subsidies in many urban metropolitan areas I could write a book full of these examples — or even several volumes. After all, Musk won $886 million to “serve” nearly 645,000 locations in 35 states. Many major metro areas are littered with Starlink-winning blocks. It’s unlikely that any single person living in these areas will ever become a Starlink customer, and there’s no justification for the FCC to offer Musk or any ISP deployment subsidies for these densely populated urban areas. It’s questionable whether Musk needed any subsidy money to launch and operate his rural-only satellite-broadband service. But by cobbling together $886 million in awards using so many urban blocks to add to that total, Starlink and the FCC have short-circuited their own policy design. If Musk needed that much of our subsidy money to make his rural-only operation viable, he should have bid on rural blocks in the areas he intends to serve. That he didn’t suggests three possibilities: He either couldn’t win the reverse auction for those areas outright (meaning another company will get FCC subsidy money to serve them while Starlink covers them too); that this is just another Hyperloop-style boondoggle; or that the auction was so rushed that companies like Starlink didn’t even know what they were bidding on. None of these explanations are acceptable. Here are some examples from the biggest U.S. cities and metropolitan areas. Note: The name “Space Exploration Technologies Corp.” hovering over an area indicates a Starlink-subsidized block below it. Most of these are too small to see when zoomed this far out. But as you can see for yourself, many of these areas are unpopulated open spaces, industrial parks or random strips of road medians: New York City Here’s the partial view of the New York metro area. This map doesn’t even begin to capture the insanity of the subsidies Musk won, like the award Starlink won to serve the Jersey City Target store. I will provide some additional examples in my next post. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Chicago We see the same story here. Zooming in on downtown Chicago provides some ridiculous examples of waste, such as blocks with luxury hotels where Musk won RDOF subsidies. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Washington, D.C. There were no winning bids by any company for D.C. proper, despite the strange fact that the FCC deemed numerous downtown government buildings as eligible for RDOF awards. But Musk’s Starlink won a huge amount of RDOF funding to ostensibly serve the urban and suburban areas surrounding D.C., which Comcast, Cox and Verizon FiOS are already blanketing in gigabit service. Many of the blocks Starlink won in this area are empty parking lots, grassy fields and highway medians. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Miami Miami is littered with Starlink RDOF blocks that are parking lots, open spaces and retail spaces. One ridiculous example is a parking garage in downtown Miami Beach, two blocks from the beach, surrounded on all sides by multiple companies offering gigabit service. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Philadelphia Musk really cleaned up in Greater Philly. I will offer some additional egregious examples in my next post — like Musk winning subsidies to serve Drexel University buildings, when the school self-provisions its own 100 Gbps Internet2-connected lines. Zooming in on this map exposes a litany of tiny blocks adjacent to gigabit deployments, where there’s no defensible case to be made for FCC subsidies. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Atlanta The rural areas surrounding metro Atlanta are full of RDOF awards to companies like Charter, but Starlink dominates the urban and suburban core. Many of these areas are industrial, and some are populated areas that are adjacent to existing gigabit-wired deployments. As always, zooming in uncovers a litany of tiny blocks not discernible from the metro-level view. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC San Francisco It’s hard to fathom that the cosmopolitan home of many high-tech companies would have any areas that need rural-deployment subsidies — but Starlink won awards to serve a number of the city’s blocks. These include an award of $13,230 ($1,323 per year) to “serve” portions of the street (and only the street) that borders the southern edge of Golden Gate Park. That amount of pure waste may not seem like a lot in the grand scheme, but it’s enough to support 12 Lifeline-program families for a decade. Starlink receiving a subsidy to serve a busy road is bad enough. But it’s even more ludicrous considering the FCC awarded subsidies to a different company to serve some of the areas of Golden Gate Park directly next to where Musk is being paid to not-actually-serve. A fixed-wireless company named Etheric Communications won subsidies to bring gigabit to certain parts of the park, some of which touch the parts of the road outside that the FCC is paying Musk to serve. In fact, all of the “blocks” Etheric and Musk are being paid to serve — like the block containing the Botanical Gardens — touch other blocks in Golden Gate Park where Etheric already reports offering 200 Mbps-level service (areas that also have a number of other wired and wireless ISPs already offering service). Why are USF funds being given to Etheric to expand its service a mere few feet away from where it already (presumably) profitably operates in competition with numerous other ISPs? Why is the FCC paying Elon Musk anything to “deploy” his satellite service to a few blocks of concrete and street lights that border this urban park? Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Seattle Here we see the FCC funded Starlink to serve densely populated areas of Seattle, which is home to major tech companies like Amazon and Microsoft. Musk won subsidies to offer his expensive satellite-broadband service to blocks containing big-box stores like Target, and one award for the block containing the already well-connected Seattle Municipal Court building. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Boston As an organization founded in Northampton, Massachusetts, Free Press is keenly aware of the need for broadband deployment in much of the western part of the state. That’s why it’s so disappointing to see rural-subsidy dollars that never flowed to needy towns now flowing to well-connected areas in and around Boston. Spend a few minutes with the RDOF-winners map and you’ll find examples like Starlink meeting the $990 annual-reserve price to deploy to a stretch of grass along I-90 that is literally across the street from buildings where two cable companies (Comcast and Radiate Holdings) and two fixed-wireless companies (Starry and netBlazr) currently offer service. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Detroit Rounding out our list of 10 is Detroit (I could keep going; many major-metro areas in the 35 states in which Starlink won subsidies have tons of egregious examples of waste). The metro-level view gives an initial idea of the extent of Starlink subsidies in this dense urban area. They include such head scratchers as Starlink winning blocks that surround the massive Little Caesars Arena, which abut other blocks where Comcast and MetroNet fiber offer gigabit-level service. Thumbnail Cooperative Network Services, LLC Some people say we shouldn’t treat the perfect as the enemy of the good. But a big swindle — perpetrated by those who attack policies designed to help poor people connect — is not acceptable. The purpose of the USF and the RDOF is to provide subsidies to private companies where no business case for deployment exists, today and 10 years from now. Yet here we have way too many examples of your money going out the door and into the pockets of rich ISPs, to ostensibly serve places with no inhabitants, or where service is already deployed, or where gigabit is literally across the street and could be profitably extended without subsidies. As a satellite company with a self-professed rural-first business plan to boot, Musk’s Starlink never should have been permitted to bid on any urban-area blocks. As we’ve seen, these blocks will show up on the FCC’s map as “unserved,” for reasons that have no relationship to the purpose of the Universal Service Fund, or to this specific RDOF auction. The FCC created the RDOF to find the most efficient subsidy amount needed to get an ISP to deploy to an area that lacks infrastructure, when that area would never see it but for the subsidies. But none of the urban and suburban areas where Starlink won USF subsidies fit that criteria. These areas are currently served by at least three national 5G carriers, each of which currently offers internet-access services that are comparable in quality and price to Musk’s yet-to-launch Starlink. These areas are also literally adjacent to areas where cable and wired-telephone-company incumbents have deployed gigabit infrastructure. Let me be clear: The criteria for whether we spend scarce RDOF monies should not be based simply on whether a block shows up in the FCC Form 477 data as unserved. Nor should it matter if the block shows up on the FCC’s map as an unserved urban block with people living there. The criteria should be whether a subsidy is actually needed — and in deciding that, it would be logical to award funds intended for rural areas to areas that are actually rural. Musk is but one example of questionable RDOF spending. We and others looking into this will surface more examples in the days to come. We don’t yet know what can be done to right the ship and make RDOF what it was intended to be. What we do know is that Ajit Pai’s alleged crowning achievement is lousy with the exact kind of waste he used as an excuse to attack and shrink the Lifeline program. There’s no longer any political penalty for hypocrisy in D.C. But there is plenty of work to be done to clean up the mess that Pai and his Trump cronies have left in their wake.

#### Unless we do something, SpaceX will provide the ultimate refuge for the capitalist class: leaving the planet altogether to escape all responsibility. This is humanity’s last chance to rethink it’s priorities before they literally escape our atmosphere.

**Franzini 20**

Benedetta Franzini B.A., University of British Columbia, “A Narrative Analysis of the Corporatization of Celestial Bodies”, School of Communication (Dual Degree Program in Global Communication) Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology, Simon Fraser University, 2019. CAT

SpaceX is able to challenge the Treaty’s guidelines by depicting itself as fundamental to human advancement, thanks to its superiority in technology and scientific achievements. Another important detail that allows SpaceX to continue its Mars&Beyond project, and that further connects it to colonial activities by European corporations in the 17th and 18th century, is the rejection by the current president of the United States, Donald J. Trump, of UNOOSA’s declaration of Outer Space and celestial bodies as “global commons” (White House, 2020, par. 4). It is, therefore, important to highlight the danger of privatization of Outer Space and celestial bodies, as it could lead to the disruption of international cooperation and to a potential escalation of conflict among rising world powers – such as India and China. As in the case of 20th century Space Race, which was driven by a competition between the US and USSR on who would be the first one to successfully land on the Moon, SpaceX and the US have created a similar atmosphere of competition in the 21st century. As of 2020 there are many international companies racing against one another, some examples being: Virgin Galactic (UK), Roscomos (Russia), Zero2Infinity (Spain), India Space research Organization (ISRO), SpaceX (US),and China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp (CASC). In addition to this, there are many US based company that are also racing against one another, some examples are Blue Origin, Orion Span, Boeing, and SpaceX. This competition could not only result in the disruption of the International Rule of Law, but it could also have significant implications for how outer space and celestial bodies 36 are conceived, and what that means for how they will construct the lived experience of class, race, and gender relations in the future. As discussed in the content analysis section, UNOOSA treaties and agreements, including the 1966 Outer Space Treaty, can only effective if they are signed and ratified by states. Additionally, because the application of the guidelines is based on soft law, meaning is not “directly enforceable” (USLegal, 2019). Unless states report illegal activity by another state, UNOOSA can only request the state to submit any findings to the organization and to all party state to the treaty. An example of an agreement that has not been ratified nor signed by many states, US and Russia included, is the 1979 Moon Agreement. This means that any updated restrictions from the 1966 Outer Space Treaty cannot be reinforced on states that do not recognize the agreement, giving the latter more leeway in the actualization of their projects. Because of this flexibility, the US is able to give SpaceX freedom of action, as long as the company will lead the US to the occupation of Mars and to “making history” (SpaceX, Elon Musk, 2020, par. 1). This argument that a US company, SpaceX, has colonial ideals was further developed in the discursive analysis and narrative analysis of the corporation’s website, and of its CEO’s tweets and interviews. Here I showed how Elon Musk and the company have created a narrative in which the privatization of Mars is justified as its success will give hope for a brighter future for everyone. However, this means that the US’s company will be able to decide who will have access to the technology to go to Mars and who will not. Although, SpaceX seems to be in the leading position for achieving the Mars&Beyond project, many companies are also creating their own technologies and projects so that they too can go to Mars. The resulting competition among states and their corporations is resulting in the deterioration of international cooperation. It is thus important for UNOOSA to create policies that take a proactive stance towards the roles of private corporations in the future of international cooperation. This means creating benefits for those states that keep their corporations accountable for any deviation from UNOOSA guidelines, as well as increase pressure for states to sign and ratify new agreements on the peaceful use of Outer Space and celestial bodies. 37 As of October 2, 2019, UNOOSA has partnered with Italian, Zambian, and US companies – SpaceX was not one of them – to “make space more accessible” (Gohd, 2019, par. 1). They are planning on creating opportunities open to all UN member States, though the projects are particularly intended for developing countries, to offer space-based research. That is all member states can experiment for free on a satellite (Gohd, 2019). This initiative will also adhere to the guidelines on reducing Space debris and climate change. As discussed on Space.com “UNOOSA aims to increase space access in ways that Di Pippo describes as "responsible," meaning they will adhere to guidelines regarding issues such as "space junk" and climate change” (Gohd, 2019, par. 10). By partnering with private corporations from different countries and creating more benefits for its member states, UNOOSA is trying to reduce the number of single corporations competing against one another and internationally. This effort, however, will not stop SpaceX, for instance, because the company does not need those benefits created by UNOOSA. SpaceX can easily find other sponsors for its projects. Having said that, Victor Shammas and Tomas Holen (2019) argue that, although SpaceX declares itself as an independent company, it is actually “deeply embedded in in the state” and highly “dependent on tax-payer money to stay afloat”(as cited in Nelson and Block, 2018, p. 189). Therefore, for capitalistic value on the use of Mars and outer space may be altered depending on whether the “state [can] create a regulatory environment, subsidize infrastructure, and hand down contracts – in short, assemble outer space as a domain made accessible in legal, technical, and economic ways” (Shammas and Holen, 2019, p. 6).

#### We must reject these excuses which allow the 1% to destroy our planet and perpetuate global injustice.

**Ahmed 20**

Nafeez Ahmed -- Visiting Research Fellow at the Global Sustainability Institute at Anglia Ruskin University's Faculty of Science & Technology + M.A. in contemporary war & peace studies + DPhil (April 2009) in international relations from the School of Global Studies @ Sussex University, “**Capitalism is Destroying ‘Safe Operating Space’ for Humanity, Warn Scientists**”, https://www.resilience.org/stories/2020-06-24/capitalism-is-destroying-safe-operating-space-for-humanity-warn-scientists/, 24 June 2020, EmmieeM) -recut CAT

* The last paragraph shows that rapid peaceful transition is possible so put away that garbage Harris 02 transition wars card

The COVID19 pandemic has exposed a strange anomaly in the global economy. If it doesn’t keep growing endlessly, it just breaks. Grow, or die. But there’s a deeper problem. New scientific research confirms that capitalism’s structural obsession with endless growth is destroying the very conditions for human survival on planet Earth. A landmark study in the journal Nature Communications, “Scientists’ warning on affluence” — by scientists in Australia, Switzerland and the UK — concludes that the most fundamental driver of environmental destruction is the overconsumption of the super-rich. This factor lies over and above other factors like fossil fuel consumption, industrial agriculture and deforestation: because it is overconsumption by the super-rich which is the chief driver of these other factors breaching key planetary boundaries. The paper notes that the richest 10 percent of people are responsible for up to 43 percent of destructive global environmental impacts. In contrast, the poorest 10 percent in the world are responsible just around 5 percent of these environmental impacts: The new paper is authored by Thomas Wiedmann of UNSW Sydney’s School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Manfred Lenzen of the University of Sydney’s School of Physics, Lorenz T. Keysser of ETH Zürich’s Department of Environmental Systems Science, and Julia K. Steinberger of Leeds University’s School of Earth and Environment. It confirms that global structural inequalities in the distribution of wealth are intimately related to an escalating environmental crisis threatening the very existence of human societies. Synthesising knowledge from across the scientific community, the paper identifies capitalism as the main cause behind “alarming trends of environmental degradation” which now pose “existential threats to natural systems, economies and societies.” The paper concludes: “It is clear that prevailing capitalist, growth-driven economic systems have not only increased affluence since World War II, but have led to enormous increases in inequality, financial instability, resource consumption and environmental pressures on vital earth support systems.” Capitalism and the pandemic Thanks to the way capitalism works, the paper shows, the super-rich are incentivised to keep getting richer — at the expense of the health of our societies and the planet overall. The research provides an important scientific context for how we can understand many earlier scientific studies revealing that industrial expansion has hugely increased the risks of new disease outbreaks. Just last April, a paper in Landscape Ecology found that deforestation driven by increased demand for consumption of agricultural commodities or beef have increased the probability of ‘zoonotic’ diseases (exotic diseases circulating amongst animals) jumping to humans. This is because industrial expansion, driven by capitalist pressures, has intensified the encroachment of human activities on wildlife and natural ecosystems. Two years ago, another study in Frontiers of Microbiology concluded presciently that accelerating deforestation due to “demographic growth” and the associated expansion of “farming, logging, and hunting”, is dangerously transforming rural environments. More bat species carrying exotic viruses have ended up next to human dwellings, the study said. This is increasing “the risk of transmission of viruses through direct contact, domestic animal infection, or contamination by urine or faeces.” It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the COVID19 pandemic thus emerged directly from these rapidly growing impacts of human activities. As the new paper in Nature Communications confirms, these impacts have accelerated in the context of the fundamental operations of industrial capitalism. Eroding the ‘safe operating space’ The result is that capitalism is causing human societies to increasingly breach key planetary boundaries, such as land-use change, biosphere integrity and climate change. Remaining within these boundaries is essential to maintain what scientists describe as a “safe operating space” for human civilization. If those key ecosystems are disrupted, that “safe operating space” will begin to erode**.** The global impacts of the COVID19 pandemic are yet another clear indication that this process of erosion has already begun. “The evidence is clear,” write Weidmann and his co-authors. “Long-term and concurrent human and planetary wellbeing will not be achieved in the Anthropocene if affluent overconsumption continues, spurred by economic systems that exploit nature and humans. We find that, to a large extent, the affluent lifestyles of the world’s rich determine and drive global environmental and social impact. Moreover, international trade mechanisms allow the rich world to displace its impact to the global poor.” The new scientific research thus confirms that the normal functioning of **capitalism is eroding the ‘safe space’ by which human civilisation is able to survive**. The structures The paper also sets out how this is happening in some detail. The super-rich basically end up driving this destructive system forward in three key ways. Firstly, they are directly responsible for “biophysical resource use… through high consumption.” Secondly, they are “members of powerful factions of the capitalist class.” Thirdly, due to that positioning, they end up “driving consumption norms across the population.” But perhaps the most important insight of the paper is not that this is purely because the super-rich are especially evil or terrible compared to the rest of the population — but because of the systemic pressures produced by capitalist structures. The authors point out that: “Growth imperatives are active at multiple levels, making the pursuit of economic growth (net investment, i.e. investment above depreciation) a necessity for different actors and leading to social and economic instability in the absence of it.” At the core of capitalism, the paper observes, is a fundamental social relationship defining the way working people are systemically marginalised from access to the productive resources of the earth, along with the mechanisms used to extract these resources and produce goods and services. This means that to survive economically in this system, certain behavioural patterns become not just normalised, but seemingly entirely rational — at least from a limited perspective that ignores wider societal and environmental consequences. In the words of the authors: “In capitalism, workers are separated from the means of production, implying that they must compete in labour markets to sell their labour power to capitalists in order to earn a living.” Meanwhile, firms which own and control these means of production “need to compete in the market, leading to a necessity to reinvest profits into more efficient production processes to minimise costs (e.g. through replacing human labour power with machines and positive returns to scale), innovation of new products and/or advertising to convince consumers to buy more.” If a firm fails to remain competitive through such behaviours, “it either goes bankrupt or is taken over by a more successful business. Under normal economic conditions, this capitalist competition is expected to lead to aggregate growth dynamics.” The irony is that, as the paper also shows, the “affluence” accumulated by the super-rich isn’t correlated with happiness or well-being. Restructure The “hegemonic” dominance of global capitalism, then, is the principal obstacle to the systemic transformation needed to reduce overconsumption. So it’s not enough to simply try to “green” current consumption through technologies like renewable energy — we need to actually reduce our environmental impacts by changing our behaviours with a focus on cutting back our use of planetary resources: “Not only can a sufficient decoupling of environmental and detrimental social impacts from economic growth not be achieved by technological innovation alone, but also the profit-driven mechanism of prevailing economic systems prevents the necessary reduction of impacts and resource utilisation per se.” The good news is that it doesn’t have to be this way. The paper reviews a range of “bottom-up studies” showing that dramatic reductions in our material footprint are perfectly possible while still maintaining good material living standards. In India, Brazil and South Africa, “decent living standards” can be supported “with around 90 percent less per-capita energy use than currently consumed in affluent countries.” Similar possible reductions are feasible for modern industrial economies such as Australia and the US. By becoming aware of how the wider economic system incentivises behaviour that is destructive of human societies and planetary ecosystems critical for human survival, both ordinary workers and more wealthy sectors — including the super-rich — can work toward rewriting the global economic operating system. This can be done by restructuring ownership in firms, equalising relations with workers, and intentionally reorganising the way decisions are made about investment priorities. The paper points out that citizens and communities have a crucial role to play in getting organised, upgrading efforts for public education about these key issues, and experimenting with new ways to work together in bringing about “social tipping points” — points at which social action can catalyse mass change. While a sense of doom and apathy about the prospects for such change is understandable, mounting evidence based on systems science suggests that global capitalism as we know it is in a state of protracted crisis and collapse that began some decades ago. This research strongly supports the view that as industrial civilization reaches the last stages of its systemic life-cycle, there is unprecedented and increasing opportunity for small-scale actions and efforts to have large system-wide impacts. The new paper shows that the need for joined-up action is paramount: structural racism, environmental crisis, global inequalities are not really separate crises — but different facets of human civilization’s broken relationship with nature. Yet, of course, the biggest takeaway is that those who bear most responsibility for environmental destruction — those who hold the most wealth in our societies — urgently need to wake up to how their narrow models of life are, quite literally, destroying the foundations for human survival over the coming decades.

## ROB

#### Thus, the role of the ballot is to endorse the debater that best transforms discourse to enable us to reject the commodifying mindset of capitalism. Transformation is not a metaphor, and injustices are real, not theoretical.

Bluwstein 21

Jevgeniy Bluwstein, Department of Geosciences, University of Fribourg, Switzerland. “Transformation is not a Metaphor,” Political Georgraphy, June 20, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2021.1022450> -CAT

In this intervention I highlight an element that has been overlookedin this important debate about “progressive environmental futures” (Robbins, 2019, p. 1) – the dismantling of fossil capitalism. More still, I argue that some perspectives in this forum may even distract our attention from a more direct engagement with this – in my view – most urgent question of our time. Ultimately, I suggest that by not engaging this question head on, debates about “transformation” risk rendering it a metaphor. Here, I am inspired by the influential critique of decolonial scholarship by Tuck and Yang (2012), who insist that “decolonization is not a metaphor.” Tuck and Yang (2012) maintain that while the decolonization of academic and educational institutions through the recognition and integration of alternative knowledges is important, this is not the central objective of decolonization. Writing from a settler-colonial context, the authors suggest that “[u]ntil stolen land is relinquished, critical consciousness does not translate into action that disrupts settler colonialism” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 19). In a settler-colonial context, decolonization thus must go beyond the usual critique of epistemology and beyond calls for decolonizing knowledge and methodologies. Above all, land has to be given back and colonial property relations dismantled. Although Tuck and Yang’s intervention is specific to a settler-colonial context, and thus should not be generalized, it resonates with broader critiques raised against recent trends in decolonial and ontopolitical scholarship. For instance, Chandler and Reid (2020, p. 494) are frustrated with the exuberant attention to the “coloniality of knowledge” at the expense of paying due attention to “the coloniality of real inequalities and injustices in the world.” Relatedly, the late David Graeber sees a lack of engagement with material questions of slavery, class, patriarchy, war, police, poverty, hunger and inequality in scholarship that privileges multiple ontologies of being and epistemologies of knowing (Graeber, 2015). Drawing on these perspectives about the limits of critique, here, I draw a parallel between decolonization that requires land repatriation and not just the decolonization of knowledge production, and a vision of transformation that requires the rapid, ruptural dismantling of fossil capitalism and not just the transformation of our understanding of socio-ecological limits. In this vein, a vision of transformation that is not a metaphor needs to go beyond questions and critiques of limits, technology, labor and growth (however illuminating they may be), and to engage more directly with political strategy, organization and praxis in the here and now. After all, what matters is “which strategies can actually work to address the environmental and social crises the world faces” (Bliss, 2021, p. 1). But isn’t addressing environmental and social crises exactly what the debate in this forum is ultimately about? Yes and no. Yes, because a post-capitalist future is central to both, a degrowth and a socialist modernist vision, although in different ways. No, because this forum has not touched upon questions of political strategy, organization, and praxis for short-term dismantling of fossil capitalism, even though both camps agree that capitalism is the single biggest obstacle towards progressive environmental futures. Hoping that a future world of degrowth or socialist modernism will get us beyond fossil capitalism by, say 2050, is akin to placing our hopes in not-yet-available negative-emission technologies. Put differently, if net-zero emissions discourses risk leading to mitigation deterrence and becoming a spatiotemporal fix for fossil capitalism (Carton, 2019), can some visions of degrowth or socialist modernism similarly risk leading to transformation deterrence? If these visions do not build on political strategizing for actively dismantling fossil capitalism, I do not see why fossil capitalism cannot continue to fix its crises, to overcome its internal contradictions, and even to appropriate some degrowth or socialist demands. In this sense, “imagining progressive environmental futures,” the initial framing of this Virtual Forum (Robbins, 2019, p. 1), must begin with imagining a rapid, ruptural dismantling of fossil capitalism, as we debate the role of limits, growth, labor, and technology in a post-capitalist future. Importantly, critical engagement with growth, labor, and technology must be rooted in a materialist analysis if transformation is not to end up a metaphor. Arguably, economic growth and a capitalist mode of production do not simply go away in a hypothetical future where knowledge and science are decolonized, and where marginalized perspectives on socio-ecological crises are recognized. From this vantage point, I find the critique of degrowth scholarship through feminist and decolonial perspectives offered by Mehta and Harcourt (2021) somewhat misdirected, for it steers attention away from a direct engagement with fossil capitalism towards a critique of epistemology. Hickel’s more materialist take on decolonization seems more appropriate. His insistence on a decolonial transformation is based on the realization that “solidarity with the South requires degrowth in the North” (Hickel, 2021, p. 2). Simply put, production and consumption must go down in the North, regardless of how we conceptualize and make sense of these material phenomena. I would have liked to know how this goal could be pursued strategically and practically, in the short term. Here, Huber’s (2021) emphasis on production over consumption is analytically convincing, but it raises the problem of fossil socialism. Against the background of a looming climate crisis, it may matter little if production is transformed into socialist hands, given that working people and labor unions with a stake in fossil capitalism have been a major obstacle towards radical socio-ecological transformation so far. This suggests that transformation that is not a metaphor must dismantle both capitalism and fossil fuel infrastructure. This also suggests that essentializing labor may be a good political strategy in some times, but not necessarily in the context of a climate emergency. Moreover, Paulson’s response to Huber highlights an important point: We need a vision for a radical politics where our political economy is not based on “colonial, racialized, and gendered relations of production” (Paulson, 2021, p. 1). That said, Paulson’s alternative vision through “a different politics of knowledge and strategies of worldmaking” (Paulson, 2021, p. 2) risks reducing urgently needed socio-ecological transformation to a metaphor, similar to the intervention by Mehta and Harcourt (2021). If socio-ecological transformation is not a metaphor, Kallis’s (2021) insistence on collective self-limitation seems necessary, and Huber’s (2021) insistence on limits on profits seems fundamental. Highlighting how a culture of self-limitation could be promoted has been a strength of degrowth scholarship, but how we can impose limits on capital and eventually suspend the logic of capital remains a lacuna. While I do not claim to have the answers, here I propose a set of strategic and tactical questions about how limits on fossil capital could be imposed: Who should stop the extraction of minerals and fossil fuels? Who should blockade and eventually shut down fossil infrastructures, from coal mines to pipelines to highways to power plants? Could technology be harnessed here for “digital resistance” (to highlight one concrete way that the intervention by Howson, Crandall, and Balaguer (2021) may fit here)? What, if any, role can divestment and expropriation play? How can potentially “stranded assets” actually remain in the ground? What should be done about state and corporate repression and counterinsurgency? What could be done about a resurgent far right that seizes the climate crisis for political gains? What about capital’s notorious capacities to overcome its internal contradictions? How do we deal with multiple scales through which fossil capital operates? How can the state be harnessed to prevent an economic recession? How can popular support be nurtured across scales and classes when laws are broken and fossil fuel infrastructures actively dismantled? What laws are in the way and what laws should be defended? Which means and ends are ethically and morally just and acceptable? How can we defend democratic values and practices in what presumably requires the state of exception? What alliances need to be built (as hinted by Paulson) and what social antagonisms amplified? What new institutions need to be created? What can we learn from current frontline struggles against fossil capital, such as NoDAPL, Ende Gel¨ande, or the various ZADs (zone `a d´efendre) across France (also hinted by Paulson)? What can we learn from the successes and losses, dilemmas and challenges, of popular climate movements? The different contributions to this forum thus far have ignored these questions and debates on (the limits to) resistance to fossil capital. Andreas Malm is well known for having pushed these debates in some of his recent works. The provocatively titled book How to Blow up a Pipeline (Malm, 2021) is a case in point. In another book, Malm and the Zetkin Collective examine the forces on the far right that may either defend fossil capital or help bring about climate apartheid in the future (Malm and The Zetkin Collective, 2021). To be sure, Malm’s account of fossil capital has little to say about contemporary decolonization debates, and he questions - at times unfairly - important tenets of, and insights from, political ecology (Malm, 2018). Yet he raises important strategic and tactical questions. Although Malm does not expect critical theorists (like the ones participating in this forum) to get their hands dirty through direct action against fossil fuel infrastructure, he demands that academic theory for the climate crisis “clear up space for action and resistance” (Malm, 2018, p. 18). Some theories, Malm insists, “can make the situation clearer while others might muddy it” (Malm, 2018, p. 16). While Malm can be read as someone with strong sympathies for socialist modernism, his work resonates with Andrea Brock’s and Alexander Dunlap’s degrowth-oriented, anti-modernist scholarship that draws explicitly on insights from decolonization and environmental justice. Brock and Dunlap highlight autonomous, anarchist, and insurrectional practices employed against fossil capitalism, and they show what counterinsurgency strategies by fossil capital and the state look like (Brock, 2020; Brock & Dunlap, 2018; Dunlap, 2021). In short, writing against the grain of some degrowth scholarship, their degrowth vision for transformation foregrounds “a political ecology of resistance that invigorates political praxis to subvert the ongoing socio-ecological catastrophes” (Dunlap, 2020, p. 1). Regardless of what role one sees for the state, labor, or technology in a progressive environmental future (I am sitting on the fence on many of these issues myself), the issues raised by scholars such as Malm, Brock, and Dunlap (and in fact, many others) speak directly to this Virtual Forum and deserve more attention. To be sure, political ecological, feminist, and decolonial scholarship represented in this forum has much to offer for a critical engagement with some of the blind spots in Malm’s work (Hansen, 2021) and with insurrectionist and anarchist approaches. But it strikes me as odd that automated dairy cows have received so much attention throughout this forum, while the difficult strategic, organizational, and practical questions as to how we should dismantle fossil capitalism have received so little. What, we must ask, can degrowth and socialist modernism contribute to a political ecology of resistance against fossil capitalism and climate breakdown?

## 2lt

#### We must shift our focus away from outer space and towards many individual and collectively shared spaces, where our actions can be meaningful in small but significant ways. Thus, the dualternative is to escape the economy and embrace transnational society.

Fournier 08

Fournier, Valérie (University of Leicester School of Management, Leicester, UK). "Escaping from the economy: the politics of degrowth." International journal of sociology and social policy, Vol. 28 No. 11/12, pp. 528-545. 24, October 2008. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01443330810915233>. CAT.

Any talk of democracy or citizenship begs questions about inclusion and exclusion: who will be willing/able to take part in civil society? Will it be, as environmental politics are often represented, the preserve of a small minority? (e.g. Latta, 2007; Schosberg, 1999) Or can it be made to involve, and appeal to, a broader audience? As noted earlier, there is a potential tension between environmentalism and democracy (Torgerson, 1999; Latta, 2007). On this issue, the degrowth movement is clear that it would stand for democracy before ecology, and as I discussed earlier is wary of ‘‘ecological imperative’’ discourse. By foregrounding choice and democracy in its attempt to politicise the economy, it is careful not to fall into another form of determinism, ecological or otherwise, and is insistent that whilst the material conditions defined by limited ecological space and its unfair distribution create an imperative for radical change, they do not in themselves dictate the ways in which this should be done; indeed, this ecological crisis could be seen as an opportunity to shape our future. In addition, the foregrounding of citizenship in the degrowth movement as well as in some recent work within environmentalism (e.g. Dobson, 2003, 2006; Doherty and de Geus, 1996) calls upon us all to participate in environmental actions. Environmental degradation is not a problem to be solved exclusively by government policy but through the everyday decisions and actions of all of us (e.g Berglund and Matti, 2006). If, following Dobson (2003), we define citizenship in terms of material relations grounded in ecological scarcity, then we are all drawn in as citizens, called to act and participate in the fair distribution of limited natural resources; we are all in relations of obligations, in a position of owing or being owed ecological space (Dobson, 2006). However this potentially all inclusive definition of (ecological) citizenship leaves two questions open. The first one concerns the mechanisms through which we are called upon as citizens (how do we get the call?), the second concerns our willingness to answer that call, in other words why should we want to be a citizen? Turning to the first point, the degrowth movement may have some interesting contributions to make. It has proposed or organised the creation of various spaces of civil society, of citizenship, from one day event such as the ‘‘Buy Nothing Day’’, to the more ambitious general consumption strike, to month long events such as the Marches pour la De´croissance, or attempts to re-embed markets within local fabric and politics. However, if degrowth proponents are keen to open up spaces for the enactment of local democracy, they are equally wary of the danger of leaving political participation to these relatively small and local levels, for, they argue, this could lead to parochialism, and to the confinement of critique and alternatives to a few marginal groups. Thus, to challenge the supposed neo-liberal consensus around growth, and re-politicise economic debates and practices, there is a need to engage with a wider public. For degrowth to be inclusive, it cannot be left in the hands of local or direct participation but needs to be articulated at broader levels, it needs to become a mass movement. This is not to deny the importance of grassroots initiatives, of local politics and ‘‘small events’’; but for proponents of degrowth, we also need to develop mechanisms that will link up local spaces and actions into a broader political movement, and that will bring debates to a broader audience; an this involves entering parliamentary politics (Arie`s, 2007). It is for this reason that the Parti pour la De´croissance was created, and that proponents of degrowth support representative democracy. They argue that whilst direct democracy is appropriate at small local level, it cannot be organised beyond small groups of 50 people, thus excluding the majority of citizens (Cheynet, 2007). For supporters of degrowth, representative democracy is essential to the organisation of inclusive collective action and debate. And indeed it seems that this strategy has succeeded in bringing the notion of degrowth to public debate, for as noted earlier, it has become a term with which the press and mainstream politicians have had to engage with (although usually not embrace). The second issue raised by the emphasis on citizenship concerns motivation is; considering the comfort many of us in the North enjoy as consumers, why would we want the burden, obligations, responsibility of citizenship? Indeed, a quick perusal at the reactions of governments or individuals in the face of rapidly escalating environmental degradation does not bring much hope. Whilst there is a growing number of people and governments who recognise the urgency of ecological threats, they remain unwilling or unable to do anything other than ‘‘sustain the unsustainable’’ to borrow a phrase from Blu¨hdorn (2007); this is, indeed, a response I am commonly faced with when talking to students about the sort of alternative economies we could build in response to environmental and social degradation. Whilst many of the students seem well aware of the environmental and social wreckage caused by Western style consumption and production, they admit that they remain unwilling to do away with fast food, designer clothing or cheap consumer goods. So short of the authoritarian responses that would eschew the motivation question and that the degrowth movement is so keen to avoid, what could drive people to abandon the comfort of consumerism and take on the obligation of citizenship? Various suggestions have been offered. For example, Dobson (2003, 2006) in his discussion of ecological citizenship argues that it is justice that will motivate us to acknowledge, and act upon, our obligations. He agrees that simply pointing to material asymmetries in the use of ecological resources will not provide sufficient ground for action; there need to be reasons that link the facts of asymmetries to conclusions about how we should act. For him, this is the role of justice: ‘‘Justice is the reason that links the facts (unequal occupation of ecological space) to the normative conclusion (act so as to reduce the occupation of ecological space where appropriate’’ (Dobson, 2006, p. 450). However, this still leaves open the question of why we should be motivated by justice. Dobson (2006) deals with this in a footnote, where he claims ‘‘I hope I will not be asked to explain why people should feel motivated to do justice, as this is a task that has confounded much more powerful minds than my own’’ (p. 451). Indeed, but then we are back to the beginning. In a rebuttal of Dobson’s thesis, Hayward (2006) tries to eschew the question of motivation by putting forward ‘‘resourcefulness’’ as the main ecological virtue; this he argues ‘‘involves the development and exercise of human capacities, and this fulfils part of the substance of a good human life; it also eases the pressure on finite natural phenomena that are needed as resources in (roughly) inverse proportion to resourcefulness’’ (p. 442). For Hayward, the very definition of resourcefulness avoids the problem of motivation behind Dobson’s justice; since resourcefulness relies on the development of human capacities, it also defines the good life. In other words it is what we should all want to develop if we are to become fully human, to realise our potential as human beings. Thus resourcefulness conveniently aligns ecological concerns and personal interests; as individuals deploy ingenuity to reduce their use of resources, they will also develop themselves or realise their human capacities. But as Dobson (2006) notes, it is not clear what is ecological about resourcefulness; indeed, humans can, and have, put their ingenuity to work on many projects, from space exploration, to the exploitation of resources, or the design of war machines and nuclear weapons; and the reduction in the use of natural resources has, so far at least, not been at the forefront of these projects. Both the values of justice and resourcefulness could be read within a degrowth framework; concerns for justice underpin its avowed republican values of democracy, equality and solidarity, and its articulation of democratic choice and citizenship. A case could also be made for the existence of a parallel between Hayward’s resourcefulness and the degrowth movement’s emphasis on humanistic value; thus, for example, Arie`s’ (2005) claim that he would stand for degrowth even without the ecological crisis, but simply to be ‘‘human’’ hints at the development of human capacities beyond that of ‘‘consuming’’. However, maybe the point is not to find what could motivate us to be ‘‘good ecological citizens’’, as any simple answer to this question is bound to be flawed and could be co-opted into another set of instrumental measures, but rather to create spaces where we can act as citizens rather than as consumers, whatever our motives for doing this might be (social justice, environmental justice, self-development). In other words, instead of trying to work out our motivations for acting as citizens, we could simply create as many spaces as possible where we would be defined in terms other than economic rationality: not as consumers who want more (for less), who are after value for money, or the latest cheap deal. Whilst the degrowth movement is no more able to answer the big motivation question as any other environmental writers or theories, it can make a small contribution to environmental politics by opening up such spaces. As I have suggested earlier, degrowth is not merely about consuming and producing less, it is first and foremost about providing a critique of the economy and its colonising effect, and pointing to escape routes. Escaping from the economy thus provides an essential starting point for conceptualising forms of social organisation that do not rely on economic vocabulary, for imagining practices such as consumer strikes that break up with economic rationality, for developing spaces such as local markets in which we can experiment non-economic relations and identity. Thus maybe the main contribution of the degrowth movement to environmental politics and debates is that through its emphasis on ‘‘escaping from the economy’’ it provides both conceptual and practical strategies for challenging the growth economy; and it does this by inviting us to rethink economic practices in terms of democratic choices and acts of citizenship. This is not to say that these non economic spaces do not exist already; the myth of universal commodification tends to ignore the fact that many of us spend a significant proportion of our time providing for ourselves, or helping others provide for themselves, without relying on the market (e.g.Williams, 2004, 2005a, b). In addition, others have made similar points about the need to escape from ‘‘orthodox’’ economic framing; as was mentioned earlier Gibson-Graham (1996, 2002, 2006) have called for a reconceptualisation of economic relations and identity away from capitalocentric thinking. However, considering the serious nature of the ecological and social crisis facing us, multiplying the calls to escape from the economy, and finding as many points of exit as possible may be far from a redundant exercise.

#### Instead of rejecting the affirmative mindset, the role of the negative is to contribute to it. Language matters – actually embracing socialism requires first discursively embracing it.

**Sani ‘13** [Shehu Sani – Nigerian senator, an author, playwright and a human rights activist. He is President of the Civil Rights Congress of Nigeria - (CRCN). and the Chairman of Hand-in-Hand, Africa. He was a leading figure in the struggle for the restoration of democracy in Nigeria] “Hatred for Black People” November 2013.] MT – Recut CAT

The important point here is that **language plays a role in the state's definition and policing of "the epistemological limits of what society can be." Language is not simply a cultural epiphenomenon of more fundamental economic processes. It functions as a "measure of population" setting both the outer limits of society—that is, the question of who legitimately belongs to the national community—and its inner limits or demarcations**. The reality is that language is a strong force in society that segregates groups according to specific cultures, sexes, races, classes, etc. **The underlying issue that allows language to build up such barriers is the subconscious fight to possess the English language. Language segregates members of society, either forcing them out or accepting them into the larger, accepted group. Languages force people out of the majority, while at the same time segregating them into smaller and smaller groups within their minority.** People at each level of society associate and claim a certain type of language that defines their identity. Everyone is trying to define and prove themselves through their use of language, either consciously or subconsciously.

#### By reversing the Western framing of global differences/local commonalities to one of local differences/global commonalities, we defuse efforts to hijack our method and shift the movement from high school debate to the global community— that’s a prereq to policymaking.

Ravishankar 21

Ravishankar, Ananya Usharani, "The Possibility of Transnational Anti-Capitalism/Imperialism". The Trinity Papers (2011 - present) (2021). Trinity College Digital Repository, Hartford, CT. <https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/trinitypapers/99> -CAT

The problem with globalized internationalism and liberal inclusion politics is the focus on difference rather than commonality. Both seem to take the universal as a given, and focus on constructing and unearthing differences, which runs the risk of a preoccupation with identity politics. The principle upon which a call to transnationalism rests upon fundamentally is that differences are those which are given, and universality is what is to be constructed from finding commonalities within that very plethora of diverse experience. This approach is also articulated in Frantz Fanon’s notion of a ‘national culture’, as opposed to a self-enclosed approach such as nationalism. In discussing the development of, and the struggles with a national consciousness in the wake of colonialism, Fanon describes a constant wavering in African unity, seemingly making a return to chauvinism, racism, and “regionalisms within the same national reality” (Fanon 2004, 106). Evidently, a preoccupation with identity politics, and the failure to see past immediate group interests is what proved the national bourgeoisie to be incapable of achieving a national unity, or ‘building the nation’ (Fanon 2004, 106). He describes the way that, “Colonialism [...] undertakes to break this will to unify by taking advantage of every weak link in the movement [...] shamelessly pulls all these string, only too content to see the Africans, who were once in league against it, tear at each other’s throats” (Fanon 2004, 107). This demonstrates the very tendencies which Žižek and Badiou call attention to as well. The focus on differences are these very weak links which Fanon talks about. Colonialism pulling at these weak links is a strategic attempt at shifting attention away from the common ground of anti-colonialism, and instead toward the multitude of ways in which those same people differ – a refocusing which eventually leads to groups that were once united on a common front, now at odds with one another. This is what Fanon calls a “narrow-minded nationalism” (Fanon 2004, 109). A perfect example of this is that of the ‘national party’ which Fanon draws our attention to. Although it claims to speak on behalf of the interests of the people as a whole, the fact that it operates on a tribal basis absolutely undermines such a claim. The ‘national party’ ultimately ends up being a self-enclosed group, outwardly claiming to represent universal interests. Any successful revolutionary outcome, or aim toward a ‘common salvation’ is dependent upon a coordinated consciousness of the people in a collective struggle (Fanon 2004, 140). Such a collective consciousness cannot come from narrow-minded nationalism or divisive regionalism which preys upon difference over commonality. Individual experiences ought not to be weaponized as an avenue for identity politics or a preoccupation with difference. What happens when we begin to see it in the way Fanon suggests? “Since individual experience is national, since it is a link in the national chain, it ceases to be individual, narrow and limited in scope, and can lead to the truth of the nation and the world” (Fanon 2004, 140-141). To see individual experience as national, and the claim that it can lead to the truth of the nation, is the very possibility that Badiou articulates, namely that of using individual experience to unearth and to construct those universal truths, the universal which can be used as the point of departure and as a tool of mobilization. Fanon argues that this truth ceases to be narrow and limited because the truth of the nation is what is universal despite all regionalism and tribalism. Such kind of truth, and this notion of the individual experience as the national, and I would argue one step further, as the transnational as well, is a manner by which the prospect of a transnational solidarity-building project can come to fruition. Fanon continually places emphasis on the need to “detribalize” and to “unify” (Fanon 2004, 141), and more importantly to shift from a national consciousness to a social and political consciousness. The notion of ‘national culture’ to Fanon is one not on the basis of any kind of concrete, pre-determined membership, but of a “collective thought process of a people to describe, justify, and extol the actions whereby they have joined forced and remained strong, [...] at the heart of the liberation struggle” (Fanon 2004, 168). This is what is meant by a group which is not self-enclosed – it is not a given, not based on essentialism, but instead is based on invention. He also goes on to emphasize that it alone is “capable of giving us an international dimension” (Fanon 2004, 179). Nationalism on the other hand is the opposite – self-enclosed, characterized by essentialism, is a given, and very much embodies the tribalism and regionalism he previously mentioned. National culture can be said to be based on those universalisms, while nationalism can be said to be based on difference, and is an avenue whereby differences become more pronounced and are at the centre. The significance of Fanon in my argument is the character of the national culture he identifies. This is very much a culture that embodies the path of transnationalism, in fact it can be seen as the intermediary toward the transnational. In the same way that the national culture is a construction from the commonalities which emerge from the collection of individual experience (Fanon 2004, 141), so also can a transnational ‘culture’, in the same sense, be constructed from a similar frame, emerging from the commonalities between national cultures. The role of the national culture in anti-colonial struggle and revolution is precisely the role that is so desperately needed in anti-capitalist and imperialist struggle today in the face of globalized capitalism. Fanon’s ideas of the need for such an experience which surpasses the individual, and embodies the national, the unity in the liberation struggle, are precisely what seem to be echoed by Badiou and Žižek, and I would argue to be essential in conceiving of anti-capitalist mobilization and comradeship today. As Badiou suggested, global capitalism has already laid the groundwork for us to have a global response (Badiou and Engelmann 2019, 89), a groundwork which guarantees us that on some level we must be able to find commonality and invent the universal. In a pool of such wide-ranging experiences and circumstances, there is bound to be an overlap, a uniting commonality. But, again, this is in no way to suggest that a uniting commonality overrides or blurs the utter difference in experience. On the contrary, that powerful uniting factor emphasizes the utter difference in experience, such an emphasis makes it all the more powerful as a point of departure for transnational alliance (Badiou and Engelmann 2019, 98). Ultimately, the argument for transnationalism is not to suggest that we must act in the exact same manner, in unison, and that we can collectively compile a list of measures to take that would apply universally. Instead, what is argued here is that in light of a global issue, there must be a global common ground to take as the point of departure. To put it in similar terms to Fanon, the individual experience is national, and could further be argued to be transnational as well. To take our individual societies, and more importantly those differences as our separate points of departure, is to overlook the global nature of such issues and the potential of finding those individual experiences which are the national which are the transnational, and to necessarily bring about limitations to our ability to resist such systems. There is only so much we can do as separate societies in the face of a global problem. A ‘politics of difference’ is often seen as one which recognizes different identities, and further recognizes the autonomy of those different identities (Rutherford 1990, 10). Because of this understanding of difference, the kind of call to internationalism that I argue for faces the risk of being understood as the opposite of this – to not recognize different identities, to suppress their autonomy. But, this misses the point. It once again comes down to the focus of difference over universality. As much as we recognize and address differences, the fact still remains that difference cannot be a point of universalizability, that which is required to build solidarity to begin with. Such a project of simply recognizing difference, or a diversity project has its limitations in that this is all that it is - seeking to recognize different individual identities. What is this collection of difference acting as the point of departure for? What is the greater project toward which this is necessarily the foundational framework? It is important to note that Badiou does not dismiss difference, in fact he praises the sheer multitude of difference as that which allows the universal to be all the more powerful (Badiou and Engelmann 2019, 98). A politics of difference becomes too individualistic to a point where there is no basis to even search for, or seek to construct the universal among them, because the universal then takes away from individuality, and with it, the notion of autonomy as well. In his paper, a major grievance Rutherford has with the ‘new left’ is the belief in “some underlying totality that united differences into homogeneity” (Rutherford 1990, 15). I disagree with him in characterizing these ‘united differences’ as homogenous. To argue as such is to make it seem as though the creation of a universal to unite among differences is actually a method of silencing or repressing those differences. I would argue that under such a belief, the preoccupation with difference pushes one to see any uniting factor among them as opposing what difference stands for, and as the problem itself. A commonality that happens to emerge is not itself the problem, but is something necessary to comprehend what the problem actually is based on what such a unifying shared experience signifies. Rutherford’s main issue seems to be that the focus on a uniting factor or cause erases or posits as secondary all those issues regarding and stemming from the differences in identity (Rutherford 1990, 16). But this seems to be an assumption made in response to a unifying anti-capitalism in the face of global capitalism. Is there reason to believe that there cannot be unifying factors outside of the shared grievances of capitalism, or that such grievances are not inherently linked to the interests of capital? Take for example the issue of police brutality. In the context of the U.S. we see this addressed time and time again by the Black Lives Matter movement. But this is not the only context or country in which police brutality is a pernicious social ill, and the institution of policing is misguided, outdated, and unjustifiably violent. We also see this brought to light with the movement to end SARS in Nigeria, a unit of the Nigerian police force known to have a record of abuses of power. We see it in India with the ruling party’s henchmen called to fire at protestors dissenting against the Indian military occupation of Kashmir and a xenophobic citizenship act, at farmer’s defending their livelihoods, and at Muslims and Dalits for no apparent reason. We see it in Myanmar as police open fire at protestors, detaining activists, abducting and executing its citizens. The list can go on endlessly. What is notable is how diverse these groups are, yet simultaneously, how painfully similar. The nuances of each differ, no doubt, but the common ground is the disproportionate monopoly on violence held by the state, the role of the antiquated institution of police as it exists in carrying out state-sponsored tyranny and executions how they see fit, and the appropriation of such institutions for the purpose of protecting the interests of capital. Anti-police brutality is anti-capitalism as well. The push for a transnational comradeship then is not ‘restricted’ to what is made to look like the ‘singular’, ‘narrow’ issue of global capitalism. The idea that it is, or that the issue of global capitalism does not implicate any further issues, is what seemingly leads to the conclusion that the prospect of transnational solidarity through a construction of a universal is a glazing over the intricacies and nuances of individual experience, and therefore a homogenizing move. This is a call to act in a manner that is conducive to transnational solidarity. Resisting from within self-enclosed groups which are all preoccupied with the needs of their specific group identity does not allow for revolution - it deprives us of the space to find those commonalities and build solidarity with other groups. We cannot aim to act from a self-enclosed group in the face of global phenomena since this would simply not bring about the impact of resistance which is required if every group is primarily concerned with their own needs, and risks a turn toward fascist tendencies. Solidarity here does not emerge from a recognition of one’s own identity through another’s, but through the very identities by which they defer. As articulated so brilliantly by Fanon, what unites us are the ruptures, not as much the identity groups to which we belong. In identifying those moments of oppression and exploitation that characterize our societies and our experiences, we are able to connect to those who identify similarly. This is the foundation for transnational solidarity and comradeship. When we are looking at an transnationalism in global anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist struggle, this is not to say that all these different groups of people who have to come together in solidarity are identical in their standpoints, in the scope of their issues, or in the way they think fit to combat the global phenomena. Instead, it is to say that regardless of these different identities such groups and people may take up or find themselves in, we ought to connect with one another on a transnational level, in a shared non-identity with the global capitalist and imperialist system, a shared experience of exploitation and oppression by them. This is why I argue that Fanon’s notion of the national culture is what is needed here to take that step toward the transnational. Without this, there seems to be no viable prospect strong enough to counter a global phenomenon like capitalism, and all that it entails. The intent of liberal ‘inclusion’ and ‘representation’ politics derails any aim at international solidarity by centering difference over the common in the abundance of individual experiences we bring together in a group. To focus on the universal as central to a transnational consciousness is not to inadvertently devalue all those aspects which are not universalizable - this is not necessarily a zero-sum game of value. The main assertion here is that those commonalities are what act as intermediary steps to finding a common ground and common solution. The only way we are even able to evaluate our differences and find such a common ground is first and foremost through the acknowledgement of our existence within the globalized systems we seek to dismantle. The lack of exterior is important here because it is precisely what puts us in a position to compare experiences and have a chance at constructing the universal. From Fanon’s notion of national culture, and historical examples of mass-mobilization such as the Haitian and French revolutions, we inherit and further develop a method of constructing out of the individual, a national truth, which we ought to push further in developing an international truth in our current situation.

#### That rapidly reaches critical mass—enough for grassroots movements to take hold

**Alexander 14**

Dr. Samuel Alexander 14, lecturer with the Office for Environmental Programs, University of Melbourne, and research fellow, Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute, February 2014, “Post-Growth Economics: A Paradigm Shift in Progress,” <http://www.sustainable.unimelb.edu.au/files/mssi/Post-Growth%20Economics.pdf> -CAT

Despite the dominance of this growth model of progress around the world, it has never been without its critics, and as this paper will outline, there are reasons to think that grounds for opposition are growing in number, strength, and sophistication. It was the philosopher of science, Thomas Kuhn (1962), who argued that paradigm shifts in the natural sciences occur when the existing paradigm finds itself increasingly unable to solve the critical problems it sets for itself. As anomalies increase in number and severity, the need for an alternative paradigm becomes clearer, and eventually a new paradigm is developed that can solve more problems than the old one. At that stage a paradigm shift is set in motion, and over time the new paradigm becomes accepted and the old one loses its influence, sometimes quite abruptly. In much the same way, this paper proposes that a paradigm shift in macroeconomics is underway, with a post-growth economic framework threatening to resolve critical anomalies that seem irresolvable from within the existing growth paradigm. We will see that a growing array of theorists, from various disciplinary backgrounds, are questioning the feasibility and even the desirability of continuous growth, especially with respect to the most highly developed regions of the world. Increasingly there is a call to look ‘beyond growth’ (see, e.g., Costanza et al, 2014; Kubiszewski et al, 2013; Stiglitz, Sen, and Fitoussi, 2010), on the grounds that growth may now be causing the problems it was traditionally hoped to solve. Not only can it be argued that a post-growth paradigm shift is in progress, it seems the fundamental importance of this shift lies in the fact that it is inrelation to *progress*. That is, it is changing the very nature of what ‘progress’ means.

#### **Grassroots movements solve – we *can* do this**

Medea and Davies 21 (10/20/21)

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In country after country around the world, people are rising up to challenge entrenched, failing [neoliberal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoliberalism) political and economic systems, with mixed but sometimes promising results. [Progressive leaders](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/oct/09/progressive-democrats-congress-strength-infrastructure-reconciliation) in the U.S. Congress are refusing to back down on the Democrats' promises to American voters to reduce poverty, expand rights to healthcare, education, and clean energy, and repair a shredded social safety net. After decades of tax cuts for the rich, they are also committed to raising taxes on wealthy Americans and corporations to pay for this popular agenda. Americans should likewise demand that our government stop wasting trillions of dollars to militarize the world and destroy countries like Afghanistan and Iraq, and start solving our real problems, here and abroad. Germany has elected a [ruling coalition](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-58924480) of Social Democrats, Greens and Free Democrats that excludes the conservative Christian Democrats for the first time since 2000. The new government promises a $14 minimum wage, solar panels on all suitable roof space, 2% of land for wind farms and the closure of Germany's last coal-fired power plants by 2030. Iraqis voted in an election that was called in response to a popular [protest movement](https://www.juancole.com/2019/12/iraqis-against-corruption.html) launched in October 2019 to challenge the [endemic corruption](https://english.alaraby.co.uk/news/iraq-150bn-stolen-oil-cash-smuggled-out-2003) of the post-2003 political class and its subservience to U.S. and Iranian interests. The protest movement was split between taking part in the election and boycotting it, but its candidates still won about 35 seats and will [have a voice](https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/iraq-elections-how-change-political-landscape) in parliament. The party of long-time Iraqi nationalist leader Muqtada al-Sadr won 73 seats, the largest of any single party, while Iranian-backed parties whose armed militias killed hundreds of protesters in 2019 lost popular support and many of their seats. Chile's billionaire president, Sebastian Piñera, is being [impeached](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/13/chile-sebastian-pinera-impeachment-proceedings-pandora-papers) after the Pandora Papers revealed details of bribery and tax evasion in his sale of a mining company, and he could face up to 5 years in prison. Mass street protests in 2019 forced Piñera to agree to a new constitution to replace the one written under the Pinochet military dictatorship, and [a convention](https://publicseminar.org/essays/chile-tries-to-write-a-new-constitution/) that includes representatives of indigenous and other marginalized communities has been elected to draft the constitution. Progressive parties and candidates are expected to do well in the general election in November. Maybe the greatest success of people power has come in Bolivia. In 2020, only a year after a U.S.-backed right-wing [military coup](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/sep/18/silence-us-backed-coup-evo-morales-bolivia-american-states), a [mass mobilization](https://peoplesdispatch.org/2020/08/07/national-strike-continues-across-bolivia-demands-grow-for-anez-to-step-down/) of mostly indigenous working people forced a new election, and the socialist MAS Party of Evo Morales was returned to power. [Since then](https://portside.org/2021-10-16/bolivia-shows-us-what-possible) it has already introduced a new wealth tax and welfare payments to four million people to help eliminate hunger in Bolivia. The Ideological Context Since the 1970s, Western political and corporate leaders have peddled a quasi-religious belief in the power of "free" markets and unbridled capitalism to solve all the world's problems. This new ["neoliberal"](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoliberalism) orthodoxy is a thinly disguised reversion to the systematic injustice of 19th century laissez-faire capitalism, which led to gross inequality and poverty even in wealthy countries, famines that killed [tens of millions](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/01/02/18/reviews/010218.18senlt.html) of people in India and China, and horrific exploitation of the poor and vulnerable worldwide. For most of the 20th century, Western countries gradually responded to the excesses and injustices of capitalism by using the power of government to redistribute wealth through [progressive taxation](https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-soi/02inpetr.pdf) and a growing public sector, and ensure broad access to public goods like education and healthcare. This led to a gradual expansion of broadly shared prosperity in the United States and Western Europe through a strong public sector that balanced the power of private corporations and their owners. The steadily growing shared prosperity of the post-WWII years in the West was derailed by a combination of factors, including the 1973 OPEC oil embargo, Nixon's freeze on prices and wages, runaway inflation caused by dropping the gold standard, and then a second oil crisis after the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Right-wing politicians led by Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in the U.K. blamed the power of organized labor and the public sector for the economic crisis. They launched a "neoliberal" counter-revolution to bust unions, shrink and privatize the public sector, cut taxes, deregulate industries and supposedly unleash "the magic of the market." Then they took credit for a return to economic growth that really owed more to the end of the [oil crises](https://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2011/10/ronald-reagans-legacy/). The United States and United Kingdom used their economic, military and media power to spread their neoliberal gospel across the world. [Chile's experiment](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/nov/13/why-is-inequality-booming-in-chile-blame-the-chicago-boys) in neoliberalism under Pinochet's military dictatorship became a model for U.S. efforts to roll back the "pink tide" in Latin America. When the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe opened to the West at the end of the Cold War, it was the extreme, neoliberal brand of capitalism that Western economists imposed as "[shock therapy](https://newint.org/features/2004/04/01/facts/)" to privatize state-owned enterprises and open countries to Western corporations. In the United States, the mass media shy away from the word "neoliberalism" to describe the changes in society since the 1980s. They describe its effects in less systemic terms, as globalization, privatization, deregulation, consumerism and so on, without calling attention to their common ideological roots. This allows them to treat its impacts as separate, unconnected problems: poverty and inequality, [mass incarceration](https://books.google.com/books?id=fFJh8wZlDIAC&pg=PA411#v=onepage&q&f=false), environmental degradation, ballooning debt, money in politics, disinvestment in public services, declines in public health, permanent war, and record military spending. After a generation of systematic neoliberal control, it is now obvious to people all over the world that neoliberalism has utterly failed to solve the world's problems. As many predicted all along, it has just enabled the rich to get [much, much richer](https://inequality.org/research/growing-apart-political-history-american-inequality/), while structural and even existential problems remain unsolved. Even once people have grasped the self-serving, predatory nature of this system that has overtaken their political and economic life, many still fall victim to the demoralization and powerlessness that are among its most insidious products, as they are brainwashed to see themselves only as individuals and consumers, instead of as active and collectively powerful citizens. In effect, confronting neoliberalism—whether as individuals, groups, communities or countries—requires a two-step process. First, we must understand the nature of the beast that has us and the world in its grip, whatever we choose to call it. Second, we must overcome our own demoralization and powerlessness, and rekindle our collective power as political and economic actors to build the better world we know is possible. We will see that collective power in the streets and the suites at COP26 in Glasgow, when the world's leaders will gather to confront the reality that neoliberalism has allowed corporate profits to trump a rational response to the devastating impact of fossil fuels on the Earth's climate. Extinction Rebellion and other groups will be [in the streets](https://rebellion.global/blog/2020/08/31/act-now-extinction-rebellion-demands/) in Glasgow, demanding the long-delayed action that is required to solve the problem, including an end to net carbon emissions by 2025. While scientists warned us for decades what the result would be, political and business leaders have peddled their [neoliberal snake oil](https://www.bushcenter.org/catalyst/environment/stefanik-market-solutions.html) to keep filling their coffers at the expense of the future of life on Earth. If we fail to stop them now, living conditions will keep deteriorating for people everywhere, as the natural world our lives depend on is washed out from under our feet, goes up in smoke and, species by species, dies and disappears forever. The Covid pandemic is another real world case study on the impact of neoliberalism. As the official death toll reaches [5 million](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/world/covid-cases.html) and many more deaths go unreported, rich countries are still [hoarding vaccines](https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/what-we-do/news-stories/news/us-must-stop-hoarding-excess-covid-19-vaccine-doses), drug companies are reaping a [bonanza of profits](https://www.commondreams.org/newswire/2021/09/15/pharmaceutical-companies-reaping-immoral-profits-covid-vaccines-yet-paying-low) from vaccines and new drugs, and the lethal, devastating injustice of the entire neoliberal "market" system is laid bare for the whole world to see. Calls for a "[people's vaccine](https://www.citizen.org/article/a-plan-for-the-peoples-vaccine/)" and "vaccine justice" have been challenging what has now been termed "vaccine apartheid." Conclusion In the 1980s, U.K. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher often [told the world](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/There_is_no_alternative), "There is no alternative" to the neoliberal order she and President Reagan were unleashing. After only one or two generations, the self-serving insanity they prescribed and the crises it has caused have made it a question of survival for humanity to find alternatives. Around the world, ordinary people are rising up to demand real change. The people of Iraq, Chile and Bolivia have overcome the incredible traumas inflicted on them to take to the streets in the thousands and demand better government. Americans should likewise demand that our government stop wasting trillions of dollars to militarize the world and destroy countries like Afghanistan and Iraq, and start solving our real problems, here and abroad. People around the world understand the nature of the problems we face better than we did a generation or even a decade ago. Now we must overcome demoralization and powerlessness in order to act. It helps to understand that the demoralization and powerlessness we may feel are themselves products of this neoliberal system, and that simply overcoming them is a victory in itself. As we reject the inevitability of neoliberalism and Thatcher's lie that there is no alternative, we must also reject the lie that we are just passive, powerless consumers. As human beings, we have the same collective power that human beings have always had to build a better world for ourselves and our children—and now is the time to harness that power.