# China v 7

## Advantage

#### [Ignatius 1] The Chinese economy appears superficially strong, but that hides massive structural inequalities that threaten sustainable growth

Ignatius 20

Adi Ignatius, editor-in-chief, Harvard Business Review, “Americans Don’t Know How Capitalist China Is,” May-June 2021. <https://hbr.org/2021/05/americans-dont-know-how-capitalist-china-is> -CAT

Weijian Shan understands the delicate U.S.-China dynamic as well as anyone. He was born in China, and his life was upended during the Cultural Revolution, when he was sent off to do farm labor in the Gobi Desert. Eventually he came to the United States, where he earned a master’s and a PhD at UC Berkeley, worked for the World Bank and J.P. Morgan, and taught at the Wharton School. A candid observer of Asian society and business, Shan is the author of Out of the Gobi: My Story of China and America and the newly published Money Games: The Inside Story of How American Dealmakers Saved Korea’s Most Iconic Bank. Now CEO of the Hong Kong–based $40 billion private-equity firm PAG, Shan spoke with HBR Editor in Chief Adi Ignatius about the economic prospects for China and the United States. HBR: China’s economy seems to be the healthiest in the world at the moment. Does that create new investment opportunities? Shan: Despite initial blunders, China has handled the coronavirus pandemic well through strict lockdowns and mass testing. Its GDP dropped 6.8% in the first quarter of 2020, but resumed growth from the second quarter onward. China has been shifting away from an investment-driven growth model to one led by private consumption. A decade ago its retail-goods market was about $1.8 trillion—less than half that of the United States. In 2019 that market reached $6 trillion, surpassing the U.S. level of $5.5 trillion. Even now China’s private consumption represents only about 39% of its GDP—way below the U.S. level of 68% and the world average of 63%. That leaves much room for growth and many opportunities for investors, particularly in businesses that cater to consumers. Investors have always been enticed by China’s vast market. How accessible is it these days? Our firm, PAG, invests throughout Asia and occasionally beyond. China’s is the only major economy that requires no special approval for foreign direct investments, although some sectors, such as Lived Change media and the internet, are on a “negative list” that restricts them. However, there are usually lawful ways to get around that. PAG invested about $100 million in a digital music business in China a few years back which subsequently merged with a similar business and changed its name to Tencent Music Entertainment. Today it’s traded on the New York Stock Exchange with a market cap of about $45 billion and has more than 800 million unique active users. The name of the game in China is scale. If a business is successful, it’s usually open to taking outside capital so that it can quickly expand nationwide. That’s why China is the most active private-equity market in Asia. Trade wars, nationalism, and the pandemic have led many companies to question their supply chain strategy—in particular basing manufacturing in China, thousands of miles from their markets. Are you seeing a significant shift in supply chains out of China? Some manufacturing has been relocated away from China since the trade war with the U.S. began in 2018, but that hasn’t made a dent in either China’s exports or America’s trade deficit. In fact, the pandemic has made the world more dependent on Chinese exports, which grew 21% in November over the previous year. The point is that a China-based supply chain has proved a blessing, not a curse, in this pandemic. Any shift in supply chains will be gradual and partial, because it’s very costly to move from the most efficient supplier to the second or third best. American companies will do so only if U.S. tariffs become more penalizing than moving would be. Also, while it’s relatively easy to shift the sourcing of a low-value-added product from China to Vietnam or Mexico, how can you move an entire supply chain with many indigenous players? And what if the market itself is in China? GM sells more cars in China than in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico combined. Where can it move its production if the target market is China? China is also Apple’s biggest market for iPhones: It has about twice as many iPhone users as the United States does. The U.S. continues to vilify China, and China does itself no favors with its poor policy on human rights. How can outside investors ensure that they don’t become collateral damage in a bigger political and economic war? Both countries have human rights issues, although in different forms. Investors anywhere should invest in a socially responsible way to advance human rights, adhering to a high standard for labor practices, gender equality, investment in human capital, and charitable contributions. Wherever PAG operates, we adhere to the same environmental, social, and governance policies. The Trump administration was determined to damage China’s economy and businesses. Does the U.S. even have the power to hurt China economically? Here and there, yes, but not in a meaningful way in general, and not without harm to itself. Trump’s trade war was an abject failure. Its stated purpose was to reduce America’s trade deficit. In November 2020 China’s trade surplus with the U.S. was 70% greater than it had been in January 2017, when Donald Trump took office. Meanwhile, American consumers have paid for the higher tariffs, because the average prices of Chinese exports haven’t decreased. China’s GDP is forecast to grow 7% to 8% this year. That means that despite the trade war, the technology war, and the capital war—the U.S. government’s restricting American investment in China—China’s GDP will most likely be 10% bigger in 2022 than it was in 2019, whereas the U.S. economy probably will only recover to 2019 levels by 2022, according to the International Monetary Fund. It seems that the only country that can stifle China’s growth is China itself—if it makes major policy mistakes. And only the U.S. can threaten America’s economic supremacy—by underinvesting in its own infrastructure and by limiting trade. What are the dangers in America’s continued demonization of China? Much of Donald Trump’s rhetoric and his actions on China were meant to deflect attention from his leadership failures at home, such as neglecting his duty to protect the public from the coronavirus. With less than a quarter of China’s population, America has a death toll about 100 times China’s and counting. Some real differences between the two countries do exist, but they have historically managed them without escalating tensions. The United States had maintained a fairly consistent foreign policy until Trump. The Biden administration is expected to restore that policy and to work within the rules of international institutions, which I expect will defuse tensions. When Nixon first visited China, in 1972, the differences between the two countries were vast, in political and economic systems and of course in ideology. Yet they found common ground to work in mutually beneficial ways. Today the differences are arguably a lot smaller, and there are many areas in which the two can benefit from cooperation. After all, each is the other’s largest trading partner, and China has lent more than $1 trillion to the U.S. government by holding U.S. Treasury bills. Let’s be honest: A rising China may be a threat to America’s economic and technological supremacy, but not to its national security, because China doesn’t export its ideology or political system and doesn’t seek regime change anywhere in the world. But it won’t back off from its territorial claims, all of which predate the People’s Republic of China. The real danger is the Taiwan issue. If the U.S. abandons the one-China policy and supports Taiwan’s independence, conflict will be inevitable, with unimaginable consequences for the world market. Is a China-U.S. decoupling a real possibility? Not completely and not without very high costs. The technology war waged by the Trump administration forced China to develop critical technologies, such as semiconductor chips, for which it has relied on U.S. suppliers. It will take years if not decades for China to catch up in some areas, at great cost. But the technology war also hurts U.S. suppliers. The top 10 American semiconductor chip makers sell about three times as much in China as in the United States. Losing the China market will be costly for American tech companies and deprive them of funds for further R&D. What are the biggest risks for China’s economy in the coming years? The economy has grown 36-fold over the past three decades, chiefly because of market-oriented reforms that have created a vibrant private sector, which now accounts for about two-thirds of China’s GDP. But the state-owned sector remains too big and inefficient. Great challenges lie ahead. China’s saving rate will drop significantly as its population ages, and investment will slow. The country will need to continue to reform and privatize its state-owned firms—and shift from investment to private consumption—or it will not be able to sustain its growth. Next In Understanding China Understanding China Businesspeople and politicians in the West hold outdated beliefs about the second-largest economy in the world. This package reveals much that may surprise them. Are you concerned about China’s debt? I see no systemic risk either in China’s banking system or in its economy. Pundits tend to be alarmed by a default here and there. But defaults and bankruptcies are common in a market economy. Only a sudden surge of such events would herald an economic crisis. In 2020, a year of severe difficulties all over the world, there was no significant increase in Chinese corporate defaults. In fact, China is the only G20 country to have posted positive growth. Its monetary policy is reasonably tight, with the yield on government bonds about 3.5 times that on U.S. Treasuries. Its currency appreciated 6% against the dollar last year. All these testify to the strength of the Chinese economy. What is it that Americans don’t understand about China? They don’t know how capitalist China is. China’s rapid economic growth is the result of its embrace of a market economy and private enterprise. China is among the most open markets in the world: It is the largest trading nation and also the largest recipient of foreign direct investment, surpassing the United States in 2020. The major focus of government expenditure is domestic infrastructure. China now has better highways, rail systems, bridges, and airports than the United States does. For example, over the past 15 years it has built the longest high-speed rail system in the world. At 22,000 miles, it is twice as long as the rest of the world’s combined. China’s high-speed rail could cover the distance between Boston and Chicago in about four hours, whereas Amtrak’s fastest service takes 22 hours. One reason China can spend so much on infrastructure is that its defense budget, after years of increases, is still only about a quarter that of the United States. And what is it that the Chinese don’t understand about the United States? They don’t know how socialist it is, with its Social Security system and its policies to tax the rich by collecting capital gains taxes. China is still in the process of building a social safety net that is largely undefined and underfunded, and it has no tax on personal capital gains. In 2020 China had more billionaires than the U.S. did, and it outpaces the U.S. three to one in minting them. Consequently, inequality is greater in China than in the United States, measured by the Gini coefficient.

#### [Haack] Xi is crushing nascent labor movements that were the only hope of addressing those inequalities

Haack 21

Michael Haack 2-13-2021 "Could Biden Make US-China Trade Better for Workers?" <https://thediplomat.com/2021/02/could-biden-make-us-china-trade-better-for-workers/> (Michael Haack currently a contractor with the China Labor Translation Project, a project of the Chinese Progressive Association. He previously worked with industrial workers in southern China. Michael holds master’s degrees from SOAS, University of London and American University)//Elmer -recut CAT

Meanwhile, even as China grows, its wealth remains largely with companies and the government. Individual households capture only around 40 percent of China’s GDP compared to around 70 percent in the United States. Inequality has soared. China’s official Gini coefficient is at 0.47 (independent analyses put the number considerably higher) compared to 0.39 in the U.S. “Chinese workers are underpaid and overtaxed, so they can’t afford to spend as much on goods and services,” said Mathew Klein of Barron’s. “The result is that Chinese businesses systematically generate a surplus of goods that gets dumped on the rest of the world, which in turn leads to some combination of deindustrialization and rising indebtedness.” Concern for the United States’ industrial capacity has led populists to rally for “decoupling.” For its part, China would also prefer to not rely on the United States for consumers and technology. In a recent speech to Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) CEO Dialogues, Xi Jinping was clear that “making domestic consumption the main driver of its growth” is the priority for China. While parties on both sides have called for a distancing, the counties’ asset-holding elites have become further entwined. Promising a fairer deal with China, former U.S. President Donald Trump launched a tariff war in 2018, which reached a partial resolution with the Phase One deal on January 15, 2020. The deal dovetailed with China’s domestic efforts to remove barriers on financial services and strengthen intellectual property rights. On April 1, 2020 China removed the caps on foreign ownership of financial services, letting U.S. firms soak up more of the profits from their operations in China. The Wall Street giants were quick to respond. Within days, JP Morgan committed $1 billion to buy the other 49 percent of its joint venture in China. Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley soon followed. This just added to the steady increase in U.S. investment into China over the last two decades. Additionally, $2.2 trillion worth of Chinese companies are capitalized on U.S. markets. These financial entanglements indicate that distancing can only lead to a “messy divorce,” according to Raghuram Rajan of the University of Chicago. “They are tied together in so many ways – trade, investment, tourism, student and academic exchanges – as well as distrustful on so many issues,” Rajan said. “Looks like a bad marriage to me, and they need to figure out how they work out their differences.” Since a total decoupling is not in the cards, could the Biden administration’s approach to the U.S.-China relationship bear fruit for workers when one considers that any worker related demand is likely to have to be balanced against the interests of the financial sector? Policy Opportunities Since the 1990s even when labor provisions were secured in trade agreements, there was little hope of enforcement. Though 14 U.S. free trade agreements have labor provisions, only seven complaints have ever been submitted and only one resolved. This, however, may be changing. “Trump’s ham-fisted, clumsy, cynical, ignorant, desire to approach trade from a different angle did allow for greater attention to issues like labor rights than anyone thought was possible,” said Trevor Sutton from the Center for American Progress. When the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), a.k.a. NAFTA 2.0, was signed at the end of January, 2020 the list of people that celebrated it included Donald Trump’s brash conservative trade representative, Robert Lighthizer; AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka; and a folk singer named Ryan Harvey, who cut his teeth protesting the evils of capitalism before joining Global Trade Watch. In order to be in compliance, the Mexican Congress had to pass a new labor law. Employers in Mexico can be brought to a court chaired by the U.S. trade representative (USTR) and secretary of labor for violating their workers’ right to form a union. If the dispute is unable to be resolved bilaterally, then the United States may directly sanction the Mexican company for violating workers’ right to organize. The new NAFTA also mandates that 40-45 percent of car components be made by a worker earning at least $16 per hour, or be subject to tariffs. The USMCA will rely on activists to bring cases, something that has caused many to question its applicability in authoritarian contexts. The recent experience of Vietnam and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), however, may be more analogous to what could be possible with China. While the TPP was being negotiated, Vietnam’s manufacturing sector was experiencing a long wave of wildcat strikes. Many reformers believed the answer was to give workers a legal avenue to organize and collectively bargain. The TPP negotiations were able to provide cover for the reformers in this system and nudge the skeptics to reform Vietnam’s labor laws. Though the labor agreement fell apart when the United States pulled out of the TPP, Vietnam has recently legalized “worker representative organizations at the enterprise level,” said Joe Buckley of Vietnam Labor Update. It has also signed on to certain International Labor Organization (ILO) collective bargaining conventions that strengthen workers’ right to organize, a first for the one party “socialist” state. A Worker-First Approach to China Like Vietnam, China’s industrial sector faced a wave of strikes in the 2000s and 2010s. In China, just as in Vietnam, reformers in the country’s single party-controlled union federation began to experiment with collective bargaining, especially in the manufacturing hub of Guangdong province. Talk about instituting a “right to strike” emerged amidst a strike wave in 2010. Then came 2013. Xi Jinping took the reins of the Communist Party and set out to remake China and the crackdowns began. Labor NGOs, labor studies professors, progressive labor lawyers, and even Marxist students have been shut down, arrested or otherwise silenced. “Although China enacted a series of pro-worker laws in the late 2000s, many of these provisions are poorly implemented,” said Eli Friedman, professor at Cornell University (Disclosure: Eli Friedman is one of the author’s supervisors at the China Labor Translation Project). “As has been the case in countless other countries, China would likely experience reduced inequality and greater domestic consumption if independent trade unions were allowed to flourish — thus advancing their own stated policy aims.”

#### [Bloomberg] Without a balanced recovery, future growth is unsustainable.

Bloomberg 21

1-19-2021 "China’s Wide Income Gap Undercut Spending as Growth Recovers" <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-01-18/china-s-strong-growth-masks-unbalanced-recovery-as-incomes-lag> //Elmer -recut CAT

China’s successful control of Covid-19 made it the only major economy to have grown last year, but wide income inequality and still weak consumer spending reflects an unbalanced recovery. Here’s a deeper look at some of the data published alongside the gross domestic product report this week: Income Gap Official figures released on Monday which showed that the economy’s growth rate surpassed pre-pandemic levels in the last quarter also revealed that the richest 20% of Chinese had an average disposable income of more than 80,000 yuan ($12,000) last year, 10.2 times what the poorest 20% earn. The multiple in the U.S. is about 8.4 and closer to 5 in Western European countries such as Germany and France, according to data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. By this measure, China’s inequality levels are comparable with Mexico, where the top 20% earn 10.4 times the bottom 20%. President Xi Jinping has flagged the country’s unequal income distribution as a threat to its future growth, with officials considering more redistributive policies to encourage household spending. While inequality didn’t surge in China due to the pandemic, the data showed officials have made little headway in reducing it, with the income gap remaining largely stable since 2015. Weak Consumption The full-year 2020 data also showed that even though China’s suppression of the virus allowed normal economic activities to resume by the second half of the year, growth in household spending has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. China’s per-capita consumption, after adjusting for inflation, dropped 4% in 2020. That’s comparable with forecasts for U.S. personal consumption spending, which is projected to have fallen 3.8% in 2020, according to a Bloomberg survey. Retail sales declined 3.9% in 2020 from the previous year, a steeper fall than in developed economies such as the U.S., where government payments to workers stuck at home and unemployed supported spending on consumer goods. In common with other economies, China’s spending on services suffered more than spending on goods due to closures and fear of the virus, with an almost 17% drop in spending at restaurants last year.

#### [Joske] A Chinese recession would cause instability, repression, and military adventurism in Taiwan

Joske 18

Stephen Joske 10-23-2018 “China’s Coming Financial Crisis And The National Security Connection” <https://warontherocks.com/2018/10/chinas-coming-financial-crisis-and-the-national-security-connection/> (senior adviser to the Australian Treasurer during the 1997–98 Asian crisis)//re-cut by Elmer -recut CAT

The biggest national security issues, however, arise from the unpredictable political impact of a recession in China. We learned this, or should have, during the 1997 to 1998 Asian crisis. China may have had a disguised recession or near recession in 1998, but it was in a much smaller economy. Apart from that one episode there is no collective memory of recession and how to deal with it. As such, China is now psychologically unprepared to deal with the challenges of a recession. China’s coming recession will be accompanied by a large uncontrolled devaluation of the RMB as foreign exchange reserves evaporate, so it will be impossible to conceal this time. All asset prices, including housing prices, will be hit. Combine the shock of an unexpected economic setback with tensions in a one party state where a single individual has been calling the shots, and political instability could set in. While Xi’s anti-corruption campaign has not eliminated corruption, it has created many enemies who are biding their time. Minxin Pei has documented the activities of China’s powerful corruption networks. These networks, not a debilitated civil society, represent the alternative government of China. Competition between them could easily be destabilizing in a winner-take-all political environment. While our understanding of elite politics in China is poor, a recession would likely discredit the existing leadership and set off intense competition between corrupt factions for control of China. Bo Xilai, a former Chongqing party chief and Politburo member, was purged in 2012 but his son appears to still be interested in politics. While the outcome is impossible to predict, we can see the conditions in place for destabilizing events ranging from military adventurism to civil war. Alternatively, the regime could reassert its stability through increased repression, which would make China harder to deal with and would spill over into the Chinese diaspora. China’s Belt and Road Initiative has never had a real economic base. It is all about power projection (such as the Gwadar port) and would quickly be dropped by Beijing as a post-crisis China becomes focused on domestic political and economic stability. Any Chinese military adventurism is likely to be focused on Taiwan. China’s military is currently poorly equipped for an invasion of Taiwan, which has difficult geography and a substantial military, making an invasion of Taiwan unlikely to succeed. However, it is possible the Chinese leadership would miscalculate the risks, leaving it in a limited war with no clear resolution that would quickly draw in Japan and the United States. China has spent most of its history disunited, reflecting its geography. It has a number of widely dispersed economic centers. It was in outright civil war as recently as the 1960s. If competition between political factions remains unresolved, a civil war could develop, leaving China as a battleground where Russia, Japan, and the United States seek to influence the outcome. This scenario would stall or even end China’s rise as a global military and political power.

#### [Ignatius 2] Taiwan is the Rubicon that can’t be crossed.

Ignatius 2

Adi Ignatius, editor-in-chief, Harvard Business Review, “Americans Don’t Know How Capitalist China Is,” May-June 2021. <https://hbr.org/2021/05/americans-dont-know-how-capitalist-china-is> -CAT

Some real differences between the two countries do exist, but they have historically managed them without escalating tensions. The United States had maintained a fairly consistent foreign policy until Trump. The Biden administration is expected to restore that policy and to work within the rules of international institutions, which I expect will defuse tensions. When Nixon first visited China, in 1972, the differences between the two countries were vast, in political and economic systems and of course in ideology. Yet they found common ground to work in mutually beneficial ways. Today the differences are arguably a lot smaller, and there are many areas in which the two can benefit from cooperation. After all, each is the other’s largest trading partner, and China has lent more than $1 trillion to the U.S. government by holding U.S. Treasury bills. Let’s be honest: A rising China may be a threat to America’s economic and technological supremacy, but not to its national security, because China doesn’t export its ideology or political system and doesn’t seek regime change anywhere in the world. But it won’t back off from its territorial claims, all of which predate the People’s Republic of China. The real danger is the Taiwan issue. If the U.S. abandons the one-China policy and supports Taiwan’s independence, conflict will be inevitable, with unimaginable consequences for the world market. Is a China-U.S. decoupling a real possibility? Not completely and not without very high costs. The technology war waged by the Trump administration forced China to develop critical technologies, such as semiconductor chips, for which it has relied on U.S. suppliers. It will take years if not decades for China to catch up in some areas, at great cost. But the technology war also hurts U.S. suppliers. The top 10 American semiconductor chip makers sell about three times as much in China as in the United States. Losing the China market will be costly for American tech companies and deprive them of funds for further R&D. What are the biggest risks for China’s economy in the coming years? The economy has grown 36-fold over the past three decades, chiefly because of market-oriented reforms that have created a vibrant private sector, which now accounts for about two-thirds of China’s GDP. But the state-owned sector remains too big and inefficient. Great challenges lie ahead. China’s saving rate will drop significantly as its population ages, and investment will slow. The country will need to continue to reform and privatize its state-owned firms—and shift from investment to private consumption—or it will not be able to sustain its growth.

#### [Talmadge] That goes Nuclear

Talmadge 18

Caitlin, Associate Professor of Security Studies at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, “Beijing’s Nuclear Option: Why a U.S.-China War Could Spiral Out of Control,” accessible online at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2018-10-15/beijings-nuclear-option>, published Nov/Dec 2018]//re-cut by Elmer -recut CAT

As China’s power has grown in recent years, so, too, has the risk of war with the United States. Under President Xi Jinping, China has increased its political and economic pressure on Taiwan and built military installations on coral reefs in the South China Sea, fueling Washington’s fears that Chinese expansionism will threaten U.S. allies and influence in the region. U.S. destroyers have transited the Taiwan Strait, to loud protests from Beijing. American policymakers have wondered aloud whether they should send an aircraft carrier through the strait as well. Chinese fighter jets have intercepted U.S. aircraft in the skies above the South China Sea. Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump has brought long-simmering economic disputes to a rolling boil. A war between the two countries remains unlikely, but the prospect of a military confrontation—resulting, for example, from a Chinese campaign against Taiwan—no longer seems as implausible as it once did. And the odds of such a confrontation going nuclear are higher than most policymakers and analysts think. Members of China’s strategic community tend to dismiss such concerns. Likewise, U.S. studies of a potential war with China often exclude nuclear weapons from the analysis entirely, treating them as basically irrelevant to the course of a conflict. Asked about the issue in 2015, Dennis Blair, the former commander of U.S. forces in the Indo-Pacific, estimated the likelihood of a U.S.-Chinese nuclear crisis as “somewhere between nil and zero.” This assurance is misguided. If deployed against China, the Pentagon’s preferred style of conventional warfare would be a potential recipe for nuclear escalation. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States’ signature approach to war has been simple: punch deep into enemy territory in order to rapidly knock out the opponent’s key military assets at minimal cost. But the Pentagon developed this formula in wars against Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Serbia, none of which was a nuclear power. China, by contrast, not only has nuclear weapons; it has also intermingled them with its conventional military forces, making it difficult to attack one without attacking the other. This means that a major U.S. military campaign targeting China’s conventional forces would likely also threaten its nuclear arsenal. Faced with such a threat, Chinese leaders could decide to use their nuclear weapons while they were still able to. As U.S. and Chinese leaders navigate a relationship fraught with mutual suspicion, they must come to grips with the fact that a conventional war could skid into a nuclear confrontation. Although this risk is not high in absolute terms, its consequences for the region and the world would be devastating. As long as the United States and China continue to pursue their current grand strategies, the risk is likely to endure. This means that leaders on both sides should dispense with the illusion that they can easily fight a limited war. They should focus instead on managing or resolving the political, economic, and military tensions that might lead to a conflict in the first place. A NEW KIND OF THREAT There are some reasons for optimism. For one, China has long stood out for its nonaggressive nuclear doctrine. After its first nuclear test, in 1964, China largely avoided the Cold War arms race, building a much smaller and simpler nuclear arsenal than its resources would have allowed. Chinese leaders have consistently characterized nuclear weapons as useful only for deterring nuclear aggression and coercion. Historically, this narrow purpose required only a handful of nuclear weapons that could ensure Chinese retaliation in the event of an attack. To this day, China maintains a “no first use” pledge, promising that it will never be the first to use nuclear weapons. The prospect of a nuclear conflict can also seem like a relic of the Cold War. Back then, the United States and its allies lived in fear of a Warsaw Pact offensive rapidly overrunning Europe. NATO stood ready to use nuclear weapons first to stalemate such an attack. Both Washington and Moscow also consistently worried that their nuclear forces could be taken out in a bolt-from-the-blue nuclear strike by the other side. This mutual fear increased the risk that one superpower might rush to launch in the erroneous belief that it was already under attack. Initially, the danger of unauthorized strikes also loomed large. In the 1950s, lax safety procedures for U.S. nuclear weapons stationed on NATO soil, as well as minimal civilian oversight of U.S. military commanders, raised a serious risk that nuclear escalation could have occurred without explicit orders from the U.S. president. The good news is that these Cold War worries have little bearing on U.S.-Chinese relations today. Neither country could rapidly overrun the other’s territory in a conventional war. Neither seems worried about a nuclear bolt from the blue. And civilian political control of nuclear weapons is relatively strong in both countries. What remains, in theory, is the comforting logic of mutual deterrence: in a war between two nuclear powers, neither side will launch a nuclear strike for fear that its enemy will respond in kind. The bad news is that one other trigger remains: a conventional war that threatens China’s nuclear arsenal. Conventional forces can threaten nuclear forces in ways that generate pressures to escalate—especially when ever more capable U.S. conventional forces face adversaries with relatively small and fragile nuclear arsenals, such as China. If U.S. operations endangered or damaged China’s nuclear forces, Chinese leaders might come to think that Washington had aims beyond winning the conventional war—that it might be seeking to disable or destroy China’s nuclear arsenal outright, perhaps as a prelude to regime change. In the fog of war, Beijing might reluctantly conclude that limited nuclear escalation—an initial strike small enough that it could avoid full-scale U.S. retaliation—was a viable option to defend itself. STRAIT SHOOTERS The most worrisome flash point for a U.S.-Chinese war is Taiwan. Beijing’s long-term objective of reunifying the island with mainland China is clearly in conflict with Washington’s longstanding desire to maintain the status quo in the strait. It is not difficult to imagine how this might lead to war. For example, China could decide that the political or military window for regaining control over the island was closing and launch an attack, using air and naval forces to blockade Taiwanese harbors or bombard the island. Although U.S. law does not require Washington to intervene in such a scenario, the Taiwan Relations Act states that the United States will “consider any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including by boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States.” Were Washington to intervene on Taipei’s behalf, the world’s sole superpower and its rising competitor would find themselves in the first great-power war of the twenty-first century. In the course of such a war, U.S. conventional military operations would likely threaten, disable, or outright eliminate some Chinese nuclear capabilities—whether doing so was Washington’s stated objective or not. In fact, if the United States engaged in the style of warfare it has practiced over the last 30 years, this outcome would be all but guaranteed. Consider submarine warfare. China could use its conventionally armed attack submarines to blockade Taiwanese harbors or bomb the island, or to attack U.S. and allied forces in the region. If that happened, the U.S. Navy would almost certainly undertake an antisubmarine campaign, which would likely threaten China’s “boomers,” the four nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarines that form its naval nuclear deterrent. China’s conventionally armed and nuclear-armed submarines share the same shore-based communications system; a U.S. attack on these transmitters would thus not only disrupt the activities of China’s attack submarine force but also cut off its boomers from contact with Beijing, leaving Chinese leaders unsure of the fate of their naval nuclear force. In addition, nuclear ballistic missile submarines depend on attack submarines for protection, just as lumbering bomber aircraft rely on nimble fighter jets. If the United States started sinking Chinese attack submarines, it would be sinking the very force that protects China’s ballistic missile submarines, leaving the latter dramatically more vulnerable. Even more dangerous, U.S. forces hunting Chinese attack submarines could inadvertently sink a Chinese boomer instead. After all, at least some Chinese attack submarines might be escorting ballistic missile submarines, especially in wartime, when China might flush its boomers from their ports and try to send them within range of the continental United States. Since correctly identifying targets remains one of the trickiest challenges of undersea warfare, a U.S. submarine crew might come within shooting range of a Chinese submarine without being sure of its type, especially in a crowded, noisy environment like the Taiwan Strait. Platitudes about caution are easy in peacetime. In wartime, when Chinese attack submarines might already have launched deadly strikes, the U.S. crew might decide to shoot first and ask questions later. Adding to China’s sense of vulnerability, the small size of its nuclear-armed submarine force means that just two such incidents would eliminate half of its sea-based deterrent. Meanwhile, any Chinese boomers that escaped this fate would likely be cut off from communication with onshore commanders, left without an escort force, and unable to return to destroyed ports. If that happened, China would essentially have no naval nuclear deterrent. The situation is similar onshore, where any U.S. military campaign would have to contend with China’s growing land-based conventional ballistic missile force. Much of this force is within range of Taiwan, ready to launch ballistic missiles against the island or at any allies coming to its aid. Once again, U.S. victory would hinge on the ability to degrade this conventional ballistic missile force. And once again, it would be virtually impossible to do so while leaving China’s nuclear ballistic missile force unscathed. Chinese conventional and nuclear ballistic missiles are often attached to the same base headquarters, meaning that they likely share transportation and supply networks, patrol routes, and other supporting infrastructure. It is also possible that they share some command-and-control networks, or that the United States would be unable to distinguish between the conventional and nuclear networks even if they were physically separate. To add to the challenge, some of China’s ballistic missiles can carry either a conventional or a nuclear warhead, and the two versions are virtually indistinguishable to U.S. aerial surveillance. In a war, targeting the conventional variants would likely mean destroying some nuclear ones in the process. Furthermore, sending manned aircraft to attack Chinese missile launch sites and bases would require at least partial control of the airspace over China, which in turn would require weakening Chinese air defenses. But degrading China’s coastal air defense network in order to fight a conventional war would also leave much of its nuclear force without protection. Once China was under attack, its leaders might come to fear that even intercontinental ballistic missiles located deep in the country’s interior were vulnerable. For years, observers have pointed to the U.S. military’s failed attempts to locate and destroy Iraqi Scud missiles during the 1990–91 Gulf War as evidence that mobile missiles are virtually impervious to attack. Therefore, the thinking goes, China could retain a nuclear deterrent no matter what harm U.S. forces inflicted on its coastal areas. Yet recent research suggests otherwise. Chinese intercontinental ballistic missiles are larger and less mobile than the Iraqi Scuds were, and they are harder to move without detection. The United States is also likely to have been tracking them much more closely in peacetime. As a result, China is unlikely to view a failed Scud hunt in Iraq nearly 30 years ago as reassurance that its residual nuclear force is safe today, especially during an ongoing, high-intensity conventional war. China’s vehement criticism of a U.S. regional missile defense system designed to guard against a potential North Korean attack already reflects these latent fears. Beijing’s worry is that this system could help Washington block the handful of missiles China might launch in the aftermath of a U.S. attack on its arsenal. That sort of campaign might seem much more plausible in Beijing’s eyes if a conventional war had already begun to seriously undermine other parts of China’s nuclear deterrent. It does not help that China’s real-time awareness of the state of its forces would probably be limited, since blinding the adversary is a standard part of the U.S. military playbook. Put simply, the favored U.S. strategy to ensure a conventional victory would likely endanger much of China’s nuclear arsenal in the process, at sea and on land. Whether the United States actually intended to target all of China’s nuclear weapons would be incidental. All that would matter is that Chinese leaders would consider them threatened. LESSONS FROM THE PAST At that point, the question becomes, How will China react? Will it practice restraint and uphold the “no first use” pledge once its nuclear forces appear to be under attack? Or will it use those weapons while it still can, gambling that limited escalation will either halt the U.S. campaign or intimidate Washington into backing down? Chinese writings and statements remain deliberately ambiguous on this point. It is unclear which exact set of capabilities China considers part of its core nuclear deterrent and which it considers less crucial. For example, if China already recognizes that its sea-based nuclear deterrent is relatively small and weak, then losing some of its ballistic missile submarines in a war might not prompt any radical discontinuity in its calculus. The danger lies in wartime developments that could shift China’s assumptions about U.S. intentions. If Beijing interprets the erosion of its sea- and land-based nuclear forces as a deliberate effort to destroy its nuclear deterrent, or perhaps even as a prelude to a nuclear attack, it might see limited nuclear escalation as a way to force an end to the conflict. For example, China could use nuclear weapons to instantaneously destroy the U.S. air bases that posed the biggest threat to its arsenal. It could also launch a nuclear strike with no direct military purpose—on an unpopulated area or at sea—as a way to signal that the United States had crossed a redline. If such escalation appears far-fetched, China’s history suggests otherwise. In 1969, similar dynamics brought China to the brink of nuclear war with the Soviet Union. In early March of that year, Chinese troops ambushed Soviet guards amid rising tensions over a disputed border area. Less than two weeks later, the two countries were fighting an undeclared border war with heavy artillery and aircraft. The conflict quickly escalated beyond what Chinese leaders had expected, and before the end of March, Moscow was making thinly veiled nuclear threats to pressure China to back down. Chinese leaders initially dismissed these warnings, only to radically upgrade their threat assessment once they learned that the Soviets had privately discussed nuclear attack plans with other countries. Moscow never intended to follow through on its nuclear threat, archives would later reveal, but Chinese leaders believed otherwise. On three separate occasions, they were convinced that a Soviet nuclear attack was imminent. Once, when Moscow sent representatives to talks in Beijing, China suspected that the plane transporting the delegation was in fact carrying nuclear weapons. Increasingly fearful, China test-fired a thermonuclear weapon in the Lop Nur desert and put its rudimentary nuclear forces on alert—a dangerous step in itself, as it increased the risk of an unauthorized or accidental launch. Only after numerous preparations for Soviet nuclear attacks that never came did Beijing finally agree to negotiations. China is a different country today than it was in the time of Mao Zedong, but the 1969 conflict offers important lessons. China started a war in which it believed nuclear weapons would be irrelevant, even though the Soviet arsenal was several orders of magnitude larger than China’s, just as the U.S. arsenal dwarfs China’s today. Once the conventional war did not go as planned, the Chinese reversed their assessment of the possibility of a nuclear attack to a degree bordering on paranoia. Most worrying, China signaled that it was actually considering using its nuclear weapons, even though it had to expect devastating retaliation. Ambiguous wartime information and worst-case thinking led it to take nuclear risks it would have considered unthinkable only months earlier. This pattern could unfold again today.

#### [Starr] That risks extinction from nuclear winter

Starr 17

Steven; director of the University of Missouri’s Clinical Laboratory Science Program, senior scientist at the Physicians for Social Responsibility, Associate member of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, expert in the environmental consequences of nuclear war; 1/9/17; “Turning a Blind Eye Towards Armageddon — U.S. Leaders Reject Nuclear Winter Studies”; <https://fas.org/2017/01/turning-a-blind-eye-towards-armageddon-u-s-leaders-reject-nuclear-winter-studies/>; Federation of American Scientists; accessed 11/24/18; TV

The detonation of an atomic bomb with this explosive power will instantly ignite fires over a surface area of three to five square miles. In the recent studies, the scientists calculated that the blast, fire, and radiation from a war fought with 100 atomic bombs could produce direct fatalities comparable to all of those worldwide in World War II, or to those once estimated for a “counterforce” nuclear war between the superpowers. However, the long-term environmental effects of the war could significantly disrupt the global weather for at least a decade, which would likely result in a vast global famine. The scientists predicted that nuclear firestorms in the burning cities would cause at least five million tons of black carbon smoke to quickly rise above cloud level into the stratosphere, **where it could not be rained out**. The smoke would circle the Earth in less than two weeks and would form a global stratospheric smoke layer that would remain for more than a decade. The smoke would absorb warming sunlight, which would heat the smoke to temperatures near the boiling point of water, producing ozone losses of 20 to 50 percent over populated areas. This would almost double the amount of UV-B reaching the most populated regions of the mid-latitudes, and it would create UV-B indices unprecedented in human history. In North America and Central Europe, the time required to get a painful sunburn at mid-day in June could decrease to as little as six minutes for fair-skinned individuals. As the smoke layer blocked warming sunlight from reaching the Earth’s surface, it would produce the coldest average surface temperatures in the last 1,000 years. The scientists calculated that global food production would decrease by 20 to 40 percent during a five-year period following such a war. Medical experts have predicted that the shortening of growing seasons and corresponding decreases in agricultural production could cause up to two billion people to perish from famine. The climatologists also investigated the effects of a nuclear war fought with the vastly more powerful modern thermonuclear weapons possessed by the United States, Russia, China, France, and England. Some of the thermonuclear weapons constructed during the 1950s and 1960s were 1,000 times more powerful than an atomic bomb. During the last 30 years, the average size of thermonuclear or “strategic” nuclear weapons has decreased. Yet today, each of the approximately 3,540 strategic weapons deployed by the United States and Russia is seven to 80 times more powerful than the atomic bombs modeled in the India-Pakistan study. The smallest strategic nuclear weapon has an explosive power of 100,000 tons of TNT, compared to an atomic bomb with an average explosive power of 15,000 tons of TNT. Strategic nuclear weapons produce much larger nuclear firestorms than do atomic bombs. For example, a standard Russian 800-kiloton warhead, on an average day, will ignite fires covering a surface area of 90 to 152 square miles. A war fought with hundreds or thousands of U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear weapons would ignite immense nuclear firestorms covering land surface areas of many thousands or tens of thousands of square miles. The scientists calculated that these fires would produce up to 180 million tons of black carbon soot and smoke, which would form a dense, global stratospheric smoke layer. The smoke would remain in the stratosphere for 10 to 20 years, and it would block as much as 70 percent of sunlight from reaching the surface of the Northern Hemisphere and 35 percent from the Southern Hemisphere. So much sunlight would be blocked by the smoke that the noonday sun would resemble a full moon at midnight. Under such conditions, it would only require a matter of days or weeks for daily minimum temperatures to fall below freezing in the largest agricultural areas of the Northern Hemisphere, where freezing temperatures would occur every day for a period of between one to more than two years. Average surface temperatures would become colder than those experienced 18,000 years ago at the height of the last Ice Age, and the prolonged cold would cause average rainfall to decrease by up to 90%. Growing seasons would be completely eliminated for more than a decade; it would be too cold and dark to grow food crops, which would doom the majority of the human population. NUCLEAR WINTER IN BRIEF The profound cold and darkness following nuclear war became known as nuclear winter and was first predicted in 1983 by a group of NASA scientists led by Carl Sagan. During the mid-1980s, a large body of research was done by such groups as the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE), the World Meteorological Organization, and the U.S. National Research Council of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences; their work essentially supported the initial findings of the 1983 studies. The idea of nuclear winter, published and supported by prominent scientists, generated extensive public alarm and put political pressure on the United States and Soviet Union to reverse a runaway nuclear arms race, which, by 1986, had created a global nuclear arsenal of more than 65,000 nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, this created a backlash among many powerful military and industrial interests, who undertook an extensive media campaign to brand nuclear winter as “bad science” and the scientists who discovered it as “irresponsible.” Critics used various uncertainties in the studies and the first climate models (which are primitive by today’s standards) as a basis to criticize and reject the concept of nuclear winter. In 1986, the Council on Foreign Relations published an article by scientists from the National Center for Atmospheric Research, who predicted drops in global cooling about half as large as those first predicted by the 1983 studies and described this as a “nuclear autumn.”

## Plan

#### [Friedman] Reform must be an all-or-nothing endeavor. There’s no middle ground.

Friedman 17 Eli Friedman 4-20-2017 "Collective Bargaining in China is Dead: The Situation is Excellent" <https://www.chinoiresie.info/collective-bargaining-in-china-is-dead-the-situation-is-excellent/> (Assistant Professor of International and Comparative Labour at Cornell University)//Elmer -recut CAT

For many years reform-oriented labour activists and scholars working in China have seen collective bargaining as the cure for the country’s severe labour problems. The logic underlying this was often unstated, but straightforward: collective bargaining was crucial for twentieth century labour movements in capitalist countries in giving workers a voice and creating a more equitable social distribution of wealth. With growing levels of labour unrest in China over the past twenty years, collective bargaining seemed like a logical next step. Hopeful reformers—both within the official unions as well as labour NGO activists and academics—envisioned rationalised, legalised bargaining between labour and capital as a central pillar in the construction of a more just workplace and society. The challenges to institutionalising a robust collective bargaining system in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) have always been profound. Fundamental to labour relations theory is that collective bargaining rights must be accompanied by the right to strike and freedom of association—capital has no reason to take workers seriously without labour possessing some coercive power. But independent unions have long been an anathema to the Communist Party. From the Lai Ruoyu debacle of the 1950s to the crushing of the Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation in 1989, the Party has made it clear time and again that independent worker organisations are forbidden. Although workers have never enjoyed the right to strike in practice, the right was formally included in the Chinese constitutions of 1975 and 1978. It was Deng Xiaoping who removed it from the constitution just as private capital began pouring into China in the early 1980s. Working Within the System Nonetheless, with no signs of articulated worker movements since 1989, many well-intentioned people thought it was worth trying to advance worker rights within the system. Especially from the mid 2000s on, academics (myself included) launched research projects, NGOs held training sessions, and foreign unions engaged with the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU). Many assumed that the state would eventually decide that worker insurgency was exacting too high a cost, and that serious labour reforms were therefore necessary. And indeed, beginning in the late 2000s the ACFTU made collective negotiations (xieshang)—rather than the more antagonistic sounding ‘bargaining’ (tanpan)—a high priority, investing time and resources into expanding the coverage of collective contracts. At its best, collective bargaining in China has been woefully inadequate. The state and the ACFTU have been very cautious about controlling workers’ aspirations, and have insisted on the fundamental harmony of interests between labour and capital. Experiments with bargaining have been almost exclusively restricted to single enterprises, thereby preventing workers from constituting cross-workplace ties. The overwhelming majority of collective contracts are formulaic: actual bargaining rarely occurs, and enforcement is largely non-existent. The few shining examples where employers have made real compromises during collective bargaining have followed autonomously organised wildcat strikes. The best-known case is the 2010 strike from a Honda transmission plant in Guangdong province, which resulted in major wage gains as well as an (ultimately unsuccessful) effort to reform the enterprise union. It is not coincidental that substantive worker-led bargaining is much more likely in Japanese or American firms, where the state must be cautious not to inflame patriotic sentiments. State-sanctioned economic nationalism is a shaky foundation for a robust collective bargaining system. The Death of Collective Bargaining under Xi Even these timid efforts have been smothered in recent years, as the central government has turned in a markedly anti-worker direction under Xi Jinping. There was a brief moment in 2010 when discussion about the right to strike emerged from hushed whispers into the public discourse. But this opening was ephemeral, and union reformers in Guangdong who had pushed gentle reforms in the mid-late 2000s were replaced with typical Party apparatchiks. The country’s pre-eminent centre for labour studies at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou was shuttered. The academic study of employment has now been left almost entirely to business schools, as the government has stymied further expansion of labour relations programs. Labour NGOs in Guangzhou were subjected to a brutal crackdown in December 2015, with the government specifically targeting those groups that had been helping workers to engage in collective negotiations to resolve strikes. And the ACFTU has seemingly given up on advancing collective negotiations altogether. The Chairman of the ACFTU Li Jianguo does not even mention the term in his speeches anymore. Under the ‘work developments’ section of the ACFTU’s website, a lonely single report on collective contracts for the entirety of 2016 is a stark indication that the union has almost totally forsaken this agenda. Collective bargaining is not dead in the sense that it will disappear from China’s labour-capital relations. It is almost certain that official unions will continue to pursue bargaining in its current vacuous, bureaucratic, and worker-exclusionary form. Collective contracts will continue to be signed, tabulated, and then hidden from view from workers. Somewhat less pessimistically, workers will continue to force management to bargain with the collective via wildcat strikes. This latter form will still be an important means by which workers can attempt to ensure their most basic rights, and these efforts are absolutely worth supporting. But collective bargaining is dead as a political aim. It is not going to be the cornerstone of twentieth century-style class compromise in China, it is not generative of worker power, and it certainly does not herald broader social transformation. To the extent that legal bargaining does develop, it will be as a mechanism for the state to deprive workers of autonomous power. What then might Chinese workers and allied intellectuals and activists aim for? At the risk of stating the obvious, the working class needs more power. The question is, how to foster proletarian power in the face of a highly competent authoritarian state that views organised workers as an existential threat? In the absence of independent organisations, the only option is an intensification of already widespread worker insurgency. The more wildcat strikes, mass direct action, and worker riots, the more the state and capital will be forced to take worker grievances seriously. Of course such forms of collective action come at great risk for workers, and many have already paid a high price. In any particular case, the risks may certainly outweigh the benefits. But in the aggregate, expansive unrest is just what the working class needs. With the institutions firmly oriented towards advancing the inter-related goals of state domination and exploitation by capital, disruption on a large scale is the only chance workers have of forcing change. Ungovernability will be the necessary prelude to any institutional reform worthy of the name.

#### Thus, a just People’s Republic of China ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike.

## Solvency

#### 1] [Roberts] Recognizing the right to strike solves party interests and reduces inequality.

Roberts 10

Dexter Roberts 8-5-2010 "Is the Right to Strike Coming to China" <https://archive.md/hjNI7> (Editor at Bloomberg)//Elmer -recut CAT

The name gives no hint of the revolutionary changes afoot for mainland workers. Yet the proposed Regulations on the Democratic Management of Enterprises, now being debated by the Guangdong Provincial People's Congress, could give Chinese labor the ultimate—and until now taboo—bargaining tool: an officially sanctioned right to strike. "This has been a no-go area in China for decades," says Robin Munro, deputy director at the Hong Kong-based China Labour Bulletin. All Chinese workers belong to one union, but it wields little power. "This is the first time ever Chinese authorities have said it is O.K. to strike." The draft law could take effect by this fall in Guangdong, the industrialized coastal province where Honda (HMC) workers in June illegally and successfully struck for higher wages. The proposed law is seen by many activists and researchers as a trial balloon before a possible national rollout. The rules: If one-fifth or more of a company's staff demands collective bargaining, then management must discuss workers' grievances. Before talks begin, the union must elect local worker representatives. Until now, union reps came from management ranks. The next section of the proposed law ventures into even more radical territory. For six decades, picketing and disrupting production have been illegal and subject to harsh punishment. Under the Guangdong proposal, as long as workers first try negotiating and refrain from violence, they're allowed to strike. Though the draft could still get watered down, the fact that officials are even considering legalizing strikes signals a sea change. The party's moves are an attempt to recognize—and regulate—what is already happening. "Every month there are hundreds of strikes," says Chang Kai, a labor relations professor at Renmin University of China who advised the Honda workers. "What the government is concerned about is whether it can control these strikes or not." Formalizing workers' rights could also advance China's goal of rebalancing the economy. "There is a new emphasis on how to reduce the wage gap and get consumers to spend more," says Chang-Hee Lee, an industrial relations expert at the International Labour Organization's Beijing office. "This is not very easy to accomplish unless workers have more bargaining power." The bottom line: A proposed law being debated in Guangdong could greatly strengthen the bargaining power of Chinese workers.

#### 2] [Dongfang] Legal protection is key. Blanket recognition stabilizes individual reforms and reduces the risk of failure.

Dongfang 11

Han Dongfang 4-6-2011 "Liberate China's Workers" <https://archive.md/7RvDG#selection-307.0-316.0> (director of China Labour Bulletin, a nongovernmental organization that defends the rights of workers in China.)//Elmer -recut CAT

HONG KONG — There is no legal right to strike in China, but there are strikes every day. Factory workers, hotel employees, teachers and taxi drivers regularly withdraw their labor and demand a better deal from their employer. Strikes are often successful, and these days strike leaders hardly ever get put in prison. It may seem ironic that workers in a nominally Communist country don’t have the right to strike, and that workers are apparently willing to defy the Communist Party by going out on strike. But China effectively abandoned Communism and embraced capitalism many years ago. And in a capitalist economy, strikes are a fact of life. Chinese scholars, government officials and even some businessmen have long recognized this fact and have called for the restoration of the right to strike, which was removed from the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China in 1982. Deng Xiaoping feared that the economic reforms he was introducing would lead to labor unrest. Although Deng and his successors were able to quiet labor unrest and strike action for a while, the trend over the last five years or so has been clear. As the business leader Zeng Qinghong noted recently, the number of strikes is increasing every year. Mr. Zeng, who is head of the Guangzhou Automobile Co., reported that in just two months last summer, there were more than 20 strikes in the automotive industry in the Pearl River Delta alone, and that new strikes were occurring all the time. Mr. Zeng suggested in a submission to this year’s National People’s Congress, China’s annual legislature, that the right to strike should be restored because it was a basic right of workers in a market economy and a natural adjunct to the right to work. I agree with Mr. Zeng on this point and would like to take his argument one step further. The right to strike is clearly important, but the most vital and fundamental right of workers is the right to collective bargaining. After all, why do workers go out on strike? Very simply, they go on strike for higher pay and better working conditions. The strike is not an end in itself but is part of a bargaining process. And if the collective bargaining process were more effective, in many cases, workers would not need to go out on strike at all. If you talk to factory workers, most will tell you they would rather not go on strike if they can avoid it. Indeed, most only go on strike because they have no alternative. China’s workers want and need an alternative. They want a system in which they can raise their demands for higher pay and discuss those demands in peaceful, equal and constructive negotiations with management. If workers can achieve their goals through peaceful collective bargaining, in the long run there will be fewer strikes, workers will be better paid and labor relations will be vastly improved. We also have to be aware that if the right to strike is reinstated in the Constitution in isolation — without the right to collective bargaining — there would be a danger that the right of workers to go on strike might actually be eroded. Just look at the right to stage a public demonstration. Chinese citizens do have the constitutional right to demonstrate but in reality they have to apply to the police for permission, and of course very few of those applications are granted. Likewise, if workers have to apply to the authorities before they can go on strike, the right to strike will become meaningless. Moreover, the number of strikes would not be reduced because workers would continue to go out on strike regardless and labor relations will deteriorate even further. On the other hand, if the right to strike is framed in a way that can liberate workers and encourage and empower them to engage in collective bargaining, safe in the knowledge that they have a powerful weapon that can be deployed if necessary, labor relations will be enhanced and the number of strikes might actually decrease. There is a saying in China that “you should not only focus on your head when you have headache because the real reason for the headache could be your foot.” As Mr. Zeng noted, the rapidly increasing number of strikes in China has become a major headache, not only for business but for the government as well. If the government wants to reduce the number of strikes in China, it needs to take a holistic approach and address the root cause of the problem — the absence of an effective collective bargaining system in which democratically elected workers’ representatives can negotiate better pay and conditions with their employer. If such a system can be implemented in China it would obviously benefit workers but it would also benefit employers like Mr. Zeng who are concerned about high worker turnover and the loss of production through strike action. Crucially, it is also in the interest of the Chinese government to introduce collective bargaining. The authorities may be nervous about handing power to the workers but they should bear in mind that by doing so they would aid the development of more harmonious labor relations, which could lead to the Communist Party’s goal of creating a more prosperous, stable and harmonious society.

#### 3] [Bieler & Lee] Adopting international labor standards spills over.

Bieler & Lee 16

Andreas Bieler & Chun-Yi Lee, “Chinese Labour in the Global Economy: An introduction” Globalizations, 14:2, 179-188, DOI: [10.1080/14747731.2016.1207934](https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2016.1207934) Andreas Bieler is Professor of Political Economy and Fellow of the Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice (CSSGJ) in the School of Politics and International Relations, University of Nottingham, UK. Chun-Yi Lee is Lecturer in the School of Politics and International Relations at the University of Nottingham/UK. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14747731.2016.1207934> -CAT

Abstract This Introduction outlines the main purpose of this special issue volume: to analyse new forms of resistance by Chinese workers against conditions of super-exploitation. After an assessment of the new international division of labour, we provide an overview of Chinese production in the global economy, followed by an introduction of the contributions to this volume. China is generally regarded as the new economic powerhouse in the global political economy. Some even talk of an emerging power, which may in time replace the US as the global economy’s hegemon. And yet, there is a dark underside to this ‘miracle’ in the form of workers’ long hours, low pay, and lack of welfare benefits. Increasing levels of inequality have gone hand in hand with widespread working conditions characterised by super-exploitation. Nevertheless, Chinese workers have not simply accepted these conditions of exploitation. They have started to fight back. The purpose of this volume is to analyse these various forms of resistance by Chinese workers and the way they are organised, be it through the official state trade union All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), be it through informal labour NGOs, or indeed both. Considering the large number of workers in Chinese production, what happens in China does not only affect Chinese workers, but equally workers elsewhere. Hence, the findings of this special issue on Chinese labour in the global economy are not only confined to China. They are of relevance for the global economy as a whole. In this Introduction, we will first analyse key developments in the global political economy to set the stage. Second, we will assess the location of Chinese production within this new international division of labour, before providing an overview of the contributions to this volume. Global Restructuring: The New International Division of Labour The post-Second World War years in industrialised countries were characterised by enormous growth rates and increasing wealth. National class compromises between capital and labour were the foundation of this post-war economic recovery. While labour accepted capital’s prerogative over the means of production and the way production is organised, capital in turn agreed on workers participating in growing wealth through a steady increase in wages and improvement in working conditions. In tripartite relationships, the state supported this compromise through Keynesian, demand-led economic policies guaranteeing full employment in a system of mass employment and mass consumption. Additionally, the state supported the class compromise through an expanding welfare state establishing universal access to services such as health and education. Observers often speak of a golden capitalist age when commenting on the post-war period. Nevertheless, when the rate of profit started to decline, economic growth was no longer strong enough to ensure both, capitalist super-profits and rising wages for workers. The late 1960s and the early 1970s saw increasing levels of industrial conflict in Western industrialised countries. In response, capital renounced the national class compromises. While they technologically innovated production at the high-value added end in industrialised countries, in a spatial fix labour-intensive parts of manufacturing such as the textile industry were transferred to cheap labour locations in the Global South (Silver, 2003, pp. 64–66). Transnational corporations (TNCs) became the dominant companies within the new, transnationalised social relations of production, and a transnational capitalist class emerged as the new key agent of global capital within what has been referred to as globalisation (Robinson, 2004). The increasing transnationalisation of production is reflected in the drastic increase in FDI especially since the mid-1980s, establishing lasting production links across borders. Outflows of FDI rose from US$88 billion in 1986 to US$1187 billion in 2000 as peak year (Bieler, 2006, p. 50). A period of recession caused a decline in FDI flows from 2001 to 2003, but four years of consecutive growth led to a new all-time high of FDI outflows of US$1996.5 billion in 2007 (UNCTAD, 2008, p. 253). Overall, there were close to 80,000 TNCs with roughly the same number of foreign affiliates in 2007 (UNCTAD, 2008, p. 212). Unsurprisingly, FDI flows have again declined since the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008 (UNCTAD, 2015, p. 18), but even slightly lower levels contribute to the continuing build-up of FDI stocks over time, indicating the ever more important role played by TNCs. While outward FDI stocks had been US$2,253,944 million in 1990, they were US$7,298,188 million in 2000 and US$25,874,757 million in 2014 (UNCTAD, 2015, p. A7). The increasing transnationalisation of production has gone hand in hand with greater decentralisation and fragmentation of the production process itself through processes of outsourcing along the production chain. Thus, transnational production, under the direction of TNCs, is increasingly organised in global commodity chains (GCCs) (Robinson, 2008, p. 27). In this process, TNCs ‘began dividing the production process into ever finer segments, both vertical and horizontal, and locating the separate stages in two or more countries, creating cross-border production networks’ (Hart-Landsberg, 2013, p. 91). In these networks, TNCs no longer own the various production sites along the GCC, but rely on ‘independent contract manufacturers to procure the necessary parts and components and oversee their assembly into final products’ (Hart-Landsberg, 2013, p. 92). In other words, TNCs are still in charge, but their strategy has significantly changed. From owning cross-border production structures, they have moved to co-ordinating GCCs. As confirmed by the UN, ‘TNC-coordinated [GCCs] account for some 80 per cent of global trade. Patterns of value added trade in [GCCs] are shaped to a significant extent by the investment decisions of TNCs’ (UNCTAD, 2013, p. xxii). Developing Asia occupies the leading position in the new international division of labour. The region’s share in total world exports of manufacturers grew from 11.1 percent in 1996–1997 to 33.8 percent in 2009/2010. Its share of total third world exports of manufactures increased from 68 percent to 76 percent over the same period. (Hart-Landsberg, 2015, p. 4) Within Asia, China mainly operates as the regional assembly platform. It is China’s unique position as the region’s production platform that enabled the country to increase its share of world exports of IT products from 3 percent in 1992 to 24 percent in 2006, and its share of electrical goods from 4 percent to 21 percent over the same period. (Hart-Landsberg, 2013, p. 34) In turn, these products are mainly destined for markets in North America and Europe integrating East Asia tightly with the global economy, but also making it dependent on continuing demand in the Global North. In sum, since the region’s trade activity largely involves an intraregional trade of parts and components culminating in China-based exports aimed primarily at the United States and the European Union, the reality is that Asia has become ever more tightly integrated and dependent on exporting to developed capitalist markets, especially the United States. (Hart-Landsberg, 2013, p. 36) The idea of South–South trade and economic co-operation as an alternative growth model for developing countries has not materialised. Rather, while China is the assembly platform of global capital, Latin America and Africa have mainly been reduced to exporters of primary commodities, with China having become their main customer. While Latin American and sub-Saharan nations have long specialised in the export of primary commodities, developing Asia, especially China, has now replaced core capitalist countries as their main export market. China has surpassed the United States as the world’s largest consumer of major metals and agricultural commodities. In 2011, it consumed approximately 20 percent of all non-renewable energy resources, 23 percent of major agricultural crops, and 40 percent of base metals. (Hart-Landsberg, 2015, p. 6) Importantly, as David Coates remarked, the increasing organisation of production across borders and the related possibility for capital to move labour-intensive production to cheap labour locations is not due to new technology, but the result of social developments. ‘Capital is more geographically mobile than it was in the past because it now has more proletariats on which to land’ (Coates, 2000, p. 255) and more proletariats to create. The integration of China, India, and the former Soviet Union during the 1980s and 1990s doubled the global workforce to almost three billion by 2000 (Freeman, 2010). In 2011, China’s working-age population alone numbered over 1 billion (Economist, 2012). The increase in the global workforce has also fuelled the informalisation of production. This is especially the case in developing countries, which had never been in a position to establish a large industrial sector with permanent and secure employment. According to the most recent estimates, non-agricultural employment in the informal economy represents 82 per cent of total employment in South Asia, 66 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa, 65 per cent in East and South-East Asia (excluding China), 51 per cent in Latin America and 10 per cent in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. (ILO, 2014, p. 6) Nevertheless, informalisation more and more also affects developed countries in the North, where employers are on the offensive and demand a flexibilisation of the labour market with the argument that it is necessary in order to retain competitiveness (Standing, 2011). ‘Although affecting workers in all core countries, the trend has probably gone furthest in Japan. There, part-time workers, who make on average 38 percent less per hour than full-time workers, now account for approximately 40 percent of the workforce’ (Hart-Landsberg, 2015, p. 9). The implications for workers around the world are clear. In times of transnational production, national labour movements are increasingly put into competition with each other. If workers in one country do not accept the demands by capital, production is moved to other locations where workers are more amenable. While trade unions were able to organise workers well at the national level, they have struggled to avoid cross-border competition. Additionally, it has been very difficult to organise along GCCs as well as within the informal economy (Bieler, Lindberg, & Sauerborn, 2010). Chinese Production in the Global Political Economy As a result of the particular location of Chinese labour in the global political economy as outlined above, Chinese production is characterised by two key aspects. First, it is predominantly based on cheap labour, necessary for assembling the various parts into final products for export to North American and European markets. ‘Chinese leaders have, like the leaders of most other countries, consciously pursued a low-wage growth strategy for some time’ (Hart-Landsberg, 2015, p. 14). Second, Chinese exports are dominated by foreign TNCs. By 2003, foreign TNCs and joint ventures ‘accounted for almost 80% of China’s exports of industrial machinery, 90% of computers, components, and peripherals; and 71% of electronics and telecommunications equipment’ (Panitch & Gindin, 2014, p. 152). This tendency has intensified further in recent years. TNCs produce approximately 85 percent of China’s high technology exports. Moreover, the share of China’s high technology exports produced by wholly owned TNCs continues to grow, from 55 percent in 2002 to 68 percent in 2009, suggesting a tightening of foreign control. (Hart-Landsberg, 2015, p. 5). Unsurprisingly, it is these foreign TNCs that reap super-profits from exploiting Chinese workers. Foxconn, assembling products for Apple, is a clear example in this respect. ‘Hon Hai [Foxconn] made $2.4 billion in profits in 2010, or $2400 per employee, compared to $263,000 in profits reaped by Apple for each of its 63,000 employees (43,000 of whom are in the United States)’ (Smith, 2012). As most export production is based on cheap labour, China must ensure a continuing supply of workers willing to work for low wages. This has been secured partly as a result of the privatisation of state-owned enterprises in the mid-1990s, which resulted in the redundancy of some 60 million workers, and partly due to the growing group of migrant workers, which amounted to 269 million workers by 2013, coming from the countryside to the new production power houses in the coastal areas (Chan & Selden, 2014, pp. 600–601). The power of workers decreased significantly as a result of increasing precarity and labour’s share of GDP ‘fell from approximately 53 percent of GDP in 1992 to below 40 percent in 2006. Private consumption as a percent of GDP also declined, falling from approximately 47 percent to 36 percent over the same period’ (Hart-Landsberg, 2013, p. 50; see also Qi, 2014). The agricultural sector has played a crucial role in ensuring the supply of cheap labour in that it provided a separate stream of income especially for the dependents of migrant workers left back at home. In turn, this facilitated the super-exploitation of migrant workers themselves. Agriculture is, thus, closely linked to industrial production in that agriculture and the rural society provide the conditions for the reproduction of labour power. For rural households, agriculture in most cases is merely one of their income sources. Rural households are semi-proletarianised as they are participating in both household-organised agricultural production and wage employment. (Qi, 2014) Unsurprisingly, this development model has led to enormous levels of inequality. Capitalism in general is driven by dynamics of uneven and combined development and unevenness characterises the international situation between different countries, as well as the situation within countries. China is no exception in this respect (see the contribution by Jane Hardy in this volume). Internationally, despite Chinese development the gap between China and industrialised countries has remained large. In 2010 (even after the aftermath of the crisis and recession) China’s GDP was $5.9 trillion—only 40 percent of the US’s $14.6 trillion. Translated into GDP per head this gap is even starker: China’s $4,260 was only 9 percent of the US’s $47,240. (Hardy & Budd, 2012) As Neil Davidson concludes, ‘although China develops more dramatically than any of the countries, like India, with which it is usually bracketed, it is unlikely on any remotely foreseeable scenario, to “catch up” with the West in any overall sense’ (Davidson, 2006, p. 226). Within China, inequality has increased too. Whereas inequality in China in 1980 was comparable to that of social democratic Germany (Gini coefficient = 0.25), by 2005 it was less equal than Russia (Gini coefficient = 0.45). The wealthiest 10 percent of the Chinese population earned seven times that of the poorest 10 percent in the 1980s but by 2005 that inequality had risen to a factor of 18. The richest 10 percent of the population now accounts for 45 percent of the country’s wealth, the poorest 10 percent only 1.4 percent. (Smith, 2008, p. 256) Hypermodern coastal regions are counterpoised to backward, inner rural areas. According to one estimate, the ‘winners’ of the economic reforms—the state administrators, managers, private entrepreneurs, professionals and technicians—amount to approximately 9 per cent of the entire population. The losers, on the other hand—the production workers, service workers, farmers, the unemployed and underemployed—amount to about 82 per cent of the population. (Gray, 2010, p. 460) In response to the global financial crisis, China implemented a stimulus package of US$586 billion in 2008 and 2009. Highly praised at the international level and regarded as proof of the narrative of China as a lender able to lead the global economy out of crisis, the way it was structured had dramatic implications at the national level. Because local governments were asked to provide matching funds for central government investment, the result was an ‘increasing commodification of land as a means to generate income’ (Sum & Jessop, 2013, p. 457). In turn, this had social consequences. ‘Land sales and property development became important investment and speculative activities with consequences such as a property bubble, forced displacement from land, peasant riots, state terror, dispossession of the already vulnerable (e.g. migrant children) and increasing inequalities’ (Sum & Jessop, 2013, p. 463). Moreover, this stimulus package has not increased private consumption as a percentage of GDP. In 2012, it was still at 35% (Hart-Landsberg, 2015, p. 14). And yet, importantly, workers are not only victims of capitalist exploitation. They have also got agency of resistance. As Chan and Selden indicate, labour disputes are on the rise, workers are fighting back: Official statistics show that in 1996, 48,121 labor disputes were accepted for arbitration, the total rising sharply to 120,191 in 1999, involving more than 470,000 aggrieved laborers as numbers soared in the context of massive layoffs of state sector workers. The upward trend continued from 2000, reflecting widespread incidences of rights violations as the private sector expanded. Labor cases further skyrocketed to 693,465 involving more than 1.2 million laborers nationwide in the economic crisis of 2008. These were disputes over wage and insurance payments, illegal layoffs, and inadequate compensation payments. (Chan & Selden, 2014, p. 607) Demanding higher income, better working conditions, respect for their dignity, and social protection, Chinese workers are no longer prepared to work in conditions of super-exploitation. This volume is dedicated to a focus on workers’ resistance and an assessment of the possibilities of Chinese workers to improve their situation. Overview of Special Issue Structure In her contribution, Jane Hardy analyses in detail how Chinese production is integrated into the global political economy along lines of uneven and combined development. While Chinese development is closely combined with global development, it is also extremely uneven between China and other countries as well as within China itself. Hardy further indicates how the stimulus package in 2008, with which the Chinese government attempted to avoid being dragged into the global recession, resulted in a huge crisis of overaccumulation. The official figure of US$586 billion needs to be complemented by the additional loans taken up by local governments across China, all in a desperate search for profitable investment opportunities. Ultimately, China’s response to the global financial crisis is based on a fundamental contradiction. On the one hand, the government intends to boost domestic demand through higher wages to become less dependent on exports to North America and Europe; on the other, however, it needs to keep wages low to ensure increasing productivity and continuing competitiveness, on which large parts of Chinese exports are based. It is, therefore, not surprising that the results of the stimulus package are highly mixed and private consumption as a percentage of GDP has not increased (see above). Andreas Bieler and Chun-Yi Lee, in turn, start their comparative analysis of resistance in the cheap labour, low value-added electronics sector in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) area and resistance in the higher-value added IT sector in the Yangtse River Delta (YRD) with an assessment of the different locations of these two production sectors in the global economy. Because the electronics sector is mainly based on cheap labour, there are higher levels of industrial conflict over pay and working conditions. By contrast, the higher-value added IT sector depends on a more skilled and stable workforce. Hence, it has to provide better pay and working conditions. Unsurprisingly, these different locations in the global political economy shape the forms of struggle in the two sectors. In the electronics industry, informal labour NGOs generally assist workers individually and collectively in securing their rights, often in open confrontation with management, while more formal labour NGOs in the IT sector focus on organising interesting after-work activities for workers. Does this indicate that general upgrading to more high-value added activities could be a more general path towards improved working conditions for workers? Boy Lüthje and Florian Butollo’s research casts doubts over this assumption. They investigate in more detail the electronics contract manufacturing (ECM) industry in China’s Pearl River Delta (PRD). They identify technological upgrading and diversification of production, combined, however, with a continuation of super-exploitation of workers, based on extremely flexible mass production with a low-skilled workforce and a high turnover of personnel. There have been some continuing, modest wage increases due to a raising minimum wage, but base wages in general remain low and workers continue to depend on excessive overtime. In short, the linkage between industrial upgrading on the one hand and an upgrading of work and labour relations on the other is weak. Social innovation in the workplace is still missing. Interestingly, the PRD continues to be a major site of ECM production with new factories further inland complementing rather than replacing factories in the PRD. How can we then understand the role of the Chinese state in industrial development and workers’ struggles for their rights? In their chapter on class struggle and the Chinese state, Chan and Hui argue that neither the notion that the role of the state has been undermined by globalisation, nor the concept of the state as an autonomous, independent actor is adequate, when assessing the Chinese state. Rather, the state needs to be understood as a field and condensation of class struggle. Hence, during the economic crisis global capital pushed the Chinese state towards reducing the protection of workers. In the wake of economic recovery, however, workers started to re-assert themselves in a wave of strikes such as the strike at Honda in 2010 and at Yue Yuen in 2014. To ensure the overall continuation of capitalist accumulation the state had to intervene in their support in relation to demands around collective bargaining and company contributions to social insurance systems. In short, class struggle rather than technological upgrading is the way towards improved working conditions. This conclusion is supported by Tim Pringle. In his contribution to this volume, he pursues a class against capital approach in his analysis of rising demands for collective bargaining by Chinese workers. Rather than drawing on the notions of ‘class-in-itself’ and ‘class-for-itself’, where especially the former is considered to be the result of workers’ location within production and, thus, delinked from struggle, the notion of class against capital emphasises the centrality of class conflict. Pringle, thus, overcomes artificial notions of fragmented working classes, often imposed by capital and the state from above to undermine labour solidarity. Interestingly, in his analysis of class struggles in the southern province of Guangdong, he also investigates in detail the struggles of the highly precarious and fragmented sanitation workers in Guangzhou in addition to the more well-known strikes in the Honda-owned auto parts factory in Foshan, at the Yantian International Container Terminals and the Yue Yuen shoe manufacturer in Dongguan, examined by other contributions to this volume. Overall, he argues that labour has emerged as a class against capital in Guangdong changing the balance of class forces and pushing capital and state into forms of collective bargaining. The article by Chan and Selden focuses specifically on the situation of China’s migrant workforce. A new generation of migrant workers is emerging, they argue, which no longer intends to return to their homes in rural China, but wants to improve their lives in the cities, where they are working. Against the background of super-exploitation in companies such as Foxconn they adopt a variety of strategies to support their demands for better pay, better social benefits, and more human working hours. The state increasingly attempts to intervene in disputes also through the official ACFTU to mediate between workers and employers, but workers are continuing to push independently to secure their rights from employers. Considering the crucial location in GCCs and the fact that there is a decrease in the number of young workers, these workers enjoy considerable bargaining power vis-à-vis employers and the state. It is this bargaining power that ultimately ensures that class struggle results in gains for workers. Xuebing Cao and Quan Meng analyse the strike by dockworkers at the Yantian International Container Terminals in 2013. They demonstrate how these workers were able to organise themselves towards strike activity in the absence of an active official union, which resulted in a pay increase of 30%. They could rely on a range of different sources of bargaining power, including, most importantly, workplace bargaining power. The introduction of new technology in ports had implied that the work carried out had become ever more specialised. Hence, when these workers went on strike, their company was unable to replace them. In their contribution to this volume, Schmalz, Sommer and Xu analyse the underlying dynamics of the mass strike at the shoe factory Yue Yuen in Dongguan. Overall, three factors contributed to the strike. First, there has been increasing low wage competition by other regions in China and other countries putting downward pressure on shoe factories in southern China. Employers such as Yue Yuen attempted to cut costs by not paying social insurance contributions. Second, the Communist Party’s anti-corruption campaign is creating new spaces for workers to demand that employers comply with their legal obligations. Third, social insurance payments and their vital importance for older workers close to retirement have increasingly become an important issue for industrial conflict. Interestingly, unlike Chan and Selden in this volume, they point out that it is not necessarily always younger migrant workers who take strike action. Middle-aged and older migrant workers too go on strike in order to defend their social protection such as pensions upon retirement. When it became apparent that their employer Yue Yuen had not paid the legally required social insurance payments, 40,000 workers took strike action concerned about their personal future. Against the background of two closely related hope projects—the global hope project of China as an object driving global growth as well as the Chinese hope project based on building national strength and modernity—Ngai-Ling Sum traces the emergence of a new subaltern class in China, the so-called Diaosi. This new group, on the one hand, actively embraces its loser identity and marginality in Chinese society. At the same time, she also demonstrates that this development does not automatically imply that these Diaosi form a group of resistance to their exploitation. Many actions are also an expression of resignation. Capital, moreover, attempts to re-integrate the Diaosi into society by providing particular avenues of specific consumption for these people. It discovers the Diaosi as a potential market and thereby pacifies them. Finally, the state increasingly attempts to control their actions of resistance in the name of civility and social stability. In short, mounting resistance by Chinese workers against super-exploitation should not be taken for granted. It emerges in processes of class struggle, which also include moments of exploited workers’ co-optation into the hegemonic Chinese modernisation project. Globalisation has put different national labour movements in competition with each other. Hence, the level of exploitation of workers in China has direct consequences of exploitation levels of workers in other countries. Unsurprisingly, the global labour movement in its institutional expression of the International Trade Union Confederation and various Global Union Federations assesses its possibilities of engaging with Chinese labour organisations and workers’ struggles and here in particular the ACFTU. With about 134 million members, it appears to be too powerful an organisation to be disregarded. And yet, in their contribution to this volume, Rob Lambert and Eddie Webster caution against a rush towards official contact. As they point out, the ACFTU is actually part of the Chinese labour regime. Being closely aligned with, and subordinated to, the Chinese Communist Party, the ACFTU has little room for independent manoeuvre. Most importantly, the ACFTU has not accepted the international labour standards of the ILO including, for example, the right to free association. It is, therefore, not a ‘proper’ trade union independent from the Chinese state and can, as a result, not fulfil the function of organising workers’ resistance against exploitation. Rather than co-operating with the ACFTU, Lambert and Webster conclude, international labour organisations should support local workers and their struggles. Simultaneously, they should intensify their pressure on the ACFTU to accept international labour standards. In the Conclusion to this volume, we will pick up on the issue of how to support best Chinese workers in their struggles for social justice.

## Framing

#### The standard is maximizing expected wellbeing. Prefer:

#### 1] Degrees of wrongness – If I break a promise to meet for lunch, that’s not as bad as breaking one to take a dying person to the hospital. Only the consequences explain why the second one is so much worse than the first.

#### 2] Aggregation – States lack unified intent. Because different people have different ethical systems, the only non-arbitrary way to aggregate is to help the most people.

#### 3] [Blum] Util’s a prerequisite to all other moral theories; robust neuroscience proves – pleasure and pain are the only intrinsic values and disvalues – everything else regresses

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Kenneth Blum, 1Department of Psychiatry, Boonshoft School of Medicine, Dayton VA Medical Center, Wright State University, Dayton, OH, USA 2Department of Psychiatry, McKnight Brain Institute, University of Florida College of Medicine, Gainesville, FL, USA 3Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Keck Medicine University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, USA 4Division of Applied Clinical Research & Education, Dominion Diagnostics, LLC, North Kingstown, RI, USA 5Department of Precision Medicine, Geneus Health LLC, San Antonio, TX, USA 6Department of Addiction Research & Therapy, Nupathways Inc., Innsbrook, MO, USA 7Department of Clinical Neurology, Path Foundation, New York, NY, USA 8Division of Neuroscience-Based Addiction Therapy, The Shores Treatment & Recovery Center, Port Saint Lucie, FL, USA 9Institute of Psychology, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary 10Division of Addiction Research, Dominion Diagnostics, LLC. North Kingston, RI, USA 11Victory Nutrition International, Lederach, PA., USA 12National Human Genome Center at Howard University, Washington, DC., USA, Marjorie Gondré-Lewis, 12National Human Genome Center at Howard University, Washington, DC., USA 13Departments of Anatomy and Psychiatry, Howard University College of Medicine, Washington, DC US, Bruce Steinberg, 4Division of Applied Clinical Research & Education, Dominion Diagnostics, LLC, North Kingstown, RI, USA, Igor Elman, 15Department Psychiatry, Cooper University School of Medicine, Camden, NJ, USA, David Baron, 3Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Keck Medicine University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, USA, Edward J Modestino, 14Department of Psychology, Curry College, Milton, MA, USA, Rajendra D Badgaiyan, 15Department Psychiatry, Cooper University School of Medicine, Camden, NJ, USA, Mark S Gold 16Department of Psychiatry, Washington University, St. Louis, MO, USA, “Our evolved unique pleasure circuit makes humans different from apes: Reconsideration of data derived from animal studies”, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 28 February 2018, accessed: 19 August 2020, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6446569/>, R.S. -recut CAT

Pleasure is not only one of the three primary reward functions but it also defines reward. As homeostasis explains the functions of only a limited number of rewards, the principal reason why particular stimuli, objects, events, situations, and activities are rewarding may be due to pleasure. This applies first of all to sex and to the primary homeostatic rewards of food and liquid and extends to money, taste, beauty, social encounters and nonmaterial, internally set, and intrinsic rewards. Pleasure, as the primary effect of rewards, drives the prime reward functions of learning, approach behavior, and decision making and provides the basis for hedonic theories of reward function. We are attracted by most rewards and exert intense efforts to obtain them, just because they are enjoyable [10]. Pleasure is a passive reaction that derives from the experience or prediction of reward and may lead to a long-lasting state of happiness. The word happiness is difficult to define. In fact, just obtaining physical pleasure may not be enough. One key to happiness involves a network of good friends. However, it is not obvious how the higher forms of satisfaction and pleasure are related to an ice cream cone, or to your team winning a sporting event. Recent multidisciplinary research, using both humans and detailed invasive brain analysis of animals has discovered some critical ways that the brain processes pleasure [14]. Pleasure as a hallmark of reward is sufficient for defining a reward, but it may not be necessary. A reward may generate positive learning and approach behavior simply because it contains substances that are essential for body function. When we are hungry, we may eat bad and unpleasant meals. A monkey who receives hundreds of small drops of water every morning in the laboratory is unlikely to feel a rush of pleasure every time it gets the 0.1 ml. Nevertheless, with these precautions in mind, we may define any stimulus, object, event, activity, or situation that has the potential to produce pleasure as a reward. In the context of reward deficiency or for disorders of addiction, homeostasis pursues pharmacological treatments: drugs to treat drug addiction, obesity, and other compulsive behaviors. The theory of allostasis suggests broader approaches - such as re-expanding the range of possible pleasures and providing opportunities to expend effort in their pursuit. [15]. It is noteworthy, the first animal studies eliciting approach behavior by electrical brain stimulation interpreted their findings as a discovery of the brain’s pleasure centers [16] which were later partly associated with midbrain dopamine neurons [17–19] despite the notorious difficulties of identifying emotions in animals. Evolutionary theories of pleasure: The love connection BO:D Charles Darwin and other biological scientists that have examined the biological evolution and its basic principles found various mechanisms that steer behavior and biological development. Besides their theory on natural selection, it was particularly the sexual selection process that gained significance in the latter context over the last century, especially when it comes to the question of what makes us “what we are,” i.e., human. However, the capacity to sexually select and evolve is not at all a human accomplishment alone or a sign of our uniqueness; yet, we humans, as it seems, are ingenious in fooling ourselves and others–when we are in love or desperately search for it. It is well established that modern biological theory conjectures that organisms are the result of evolutionary competition. In fact, Richard Dawkins stresses gene survival and propagation as the basic mechanism of life [20]. Only genes that lead to the fittest phenotype will make it. It is noteworthy that the phenotype is selected based on behavior that maximizes gene propagation. To do so, the phenotype must survive and generate offspring, and be better at it than its competitors. Thus, the ultimate, distal function of rewards is to increase evolutionary fitness by ensuring the survival of the organism and reproduction. It is agreed that learning, approach, economic decisions, and positive emotions are the proximal functions through which phenotypes obtain other necessary nutrients for survival, mating, and care for offspring. Behavioral reward functions have evolved to help individuals to survive and propagate their genes. Apparently, people need to live well and long enough to reproduce. Most would agree that homo-sapiens do so by ingesting the substances that make their bodies function properly. For this reason, foods and drinks are rewards. Additional rewards, including those used for economic exchanges, ensure sufficient palatable food and drink supply. Mating and gene propagation is supported by powerful sexual attraction. Additional properties, like body form, augment the chance to mate and nourish and defend offspring and are therefore also rewards. Care for offspring until they can reproduce themselves helps gene propagation and is rewarding; otherwise, many believe mating is useless. According to David E Comings, as any small edge will ultimately result in evolutionary advantage [21], additional reward mechanisms like novelty seeking and exploration widen the spectrum of available rewards and thus enhance the chance for survival, reproduction, and ultimate gene propagation. These functions may help us to obtain the benefits of distant rewards that are determined by our own interests and not immediately available in the environment. Thus the distal reward function in gene propagation and evolutionary fitness defines the proximal reward functions that we see in everyday behavior. That is why foods, drinks, mates, and offspring are rewarding. There have been theories linking pleasure as a required component of health benefits salutogenesis, (salugenesis). In essence, under these terms, pleasure is described as a state or feeling of happiness and satisfaction resulting from an experience that one enjoys. Regarding pleasure, it is a double-edged sword, on the one hand, it promotes positive feelings (like mindfulness) and even better cognition, possibly through the release of dopamine [22]. But on the other hand, pleasure simultaneously encourages addiction and other negative behaviors, i.e., motivational toxicity. It is a complex neurobiological phenomenon, relying on reward circuitry or limbic activity. It is important to realize that through the “Brain Reward Cascade” (BRC) endorphin and endogenous morphinergic mechanisms may play a role [23]. While natural rewards are essential for survival and appetitive motivation leading to beneficial biological behaviors like eating, sex, and reproduction, crucial social interactions seem to further facilitate the positive effects exerted by pleasurable experiences. Indeed, experimentation with addictive drugs is capable of directly acting on reward pathways and causing deterioration of these systems promoting hypodopaminergia [24]. Most would agree that pleasurable activities can stimulate personal growth and may help to induce healthy behavioral changes, including stress management [25]. The work of Esch and Stefano [26] concerning the link between compassion and love implicate the brain reward system, and pleasure induction suggests that social contact in general, i.e., love, attachment, and compassion, can be highly effective in stress reduction, survival, and overall health. Understanding the role of neurotransmission and pleasurable states both positive and negative have been adequately studied over many decades [26–37], but comparative anatomical and neurobiological function between animals and homo sapiens appear to be required and seem to be in an infancy stage. Finding happiness is different between apes and humans As stated earlier in this expert opinion one key to happiness involves a network of good friends [38]. However, it is not entirely clear exactly how the higher forms of satisfaction and pleasure are related to a sugar rush, winning a sports event or even sky diving, all of which augment dopamine release at the reward brain site. Recent multidisciplinary research, using both humans and detailed invasive brain analysis of animals has discovered some critical ways that the brain processes pleasure. Remarkably, there are pathways for ordinary liking and pleasure, which are limited in scope as described above in this commentary. However, there are many brain regions, often termed hot and cold spots, that significantly modulate (increase or decrease) our pleasure or even produce the opposite of pleasure— that is disgust and fear [39]. One specific region of the nucleus accumbens is organized like a computer keyboard, with particular stimulus triggers in rows— producing an increase and decrease of pleasure and disgust. Moreover, the cortex has unique roles in the cognitive evaluation of our feelings of pleasure [40]. Importantly, the interplay of these multiple triggers and the higher brain centers in the prefrontal cortex are very intricate and are just being uncovered. Desire and reward centers It is surprising that many different sources of pleasure activate the same circuits between the mesocorticolimbic regions (Figure 1). Reward and desire are two aspects pleasure induction and have a very widespread, large circuit. Some part of this circuit distinguishes between desire and dread. The so-called pleasure circuitry called “REWARD” involves a well-known dopamine pathway in the mesolimbic system that can influence both pleasure and motivation. In simplest terms, the well-established mesolimbic system is a dopamine circuit for reward. It starts in the ventral tegmental area (VTA) of the midbrain and travels to the nucleus accumbens (Figure 2). It is the cornerstone target to all addictions. The VTA is encompassed with neurons using glutamate, GABA, and dopamine. The nucleus accumbens (NAc) is located within the ventral striatum and is divided into two sub-regions—the motor and limbic regions associated with its core and shell, respectively. The NAc has spiny neurons that receive dopamine from the VTA and glutamate (a dopamine driver) from the hippocampus, amygdala and medial prefrontal cortex. Subsequently, the NAc projects GABA signals to an area termed the ventral pallidum (VP). The region is a relay station in the limbic loop of the basal ganglia, critical for motivation, behavior, emotions and the “Feel Good” response. This defined system of the brain is involved in all addictions –substance, and non –substance related. In 1995, our laboratory coined the term “Reward Deficiency Syndrome” (RDS) to describe genetic and epigenetic induced hypodopaminergia in the “Brain Reward Cascade” that contribute to addiction and compulsive behaviors [3,6,41]. Furthermore, ordinary “liking” of something, or pure pleasure, is represented by small regions mainly in the limbic system (old reptilian part of the brain). These may be part of larger neural circuits. In Latin, hedus is the term for “sweet”; and in Greek, hodone is the term for “pleasure.” Thus, the word Hedonic is now referring to various subcomponents of pleasure: some associated with purely sensory and others with more complex emotions involving morals, aesthetics, and social interactions. The capacity to have pleasure is part of being healthy and may even extend life, especially if linked to optimism as a dopaminergic response [42]. Psychiatric illness often includes symptoms of an abnormal inability to experience pleasure, referred to as anhedonia. A negative feeling state is called dysphoria, which can consist of many emotions such as pain, depression, anxiety, fear, and disgust. Previously many scientists used animal research to uncover the complex mechanisms of pleasure, liking, motivation and even emotions like panic and fear, as discussed above [43]. However, as a significant amount of related research about the specific brain regions of pleasure/reward circuitry has been derived from invasive studies of animals, these cannot be directly compared with subjective states experienced by humans. In an attempt to resolve the controversy regarding the causal contributions of mesolimbic dopamine systems to reward, we have previously evaluated the three-main competing explanatory categories: “liking,” “learning,” and “wanting” [3]. That is, dopamine may mediate (a) liking: the hedonic impact of reward, (b) learning: learned predictions about rewarding effects, or (c) wanting: the pursuit of rewards by attributing incentive salience to reward-related stimuli [44]. We have evaluated these hypotheses, especially as they relate to the RDS, and we find that the incentive salience or “wanting” hypothesis of dopaminergic functioning is supported by a majority of the scientific evidence. Various neuroimaging studies have shown that anticipated behaviors such as sex and gaming, delicious foods and drugs of abuse all affect brain regions associated with reward networks, and may not be unidirectional. Drugs of abuse enhance dopamine signaling which sensitizes mesolimbic brain mechanisms that apparently evolved explicitly to attribute incentive salience to various rewards [45]. Addictive substances are voluntarily self-administered, and they enhance (directly or indirectly) dopaminergic synaptic function in the NAc. This activation of the brain reward networks (producing the ecstatic “high” that users seek). Although these circuits were initially thought to encode a set point of hedonic tone, it is now being considered to be far more complicated in function, also encoding attention, reward expectancy, disconfirmation of reward expectancy, and incentive motivation [46]. The argument about addiction as a disease may be confused with a predisposition to substance and nonsubstance rewards relative to the extreme effect of drugs of abuse on brain neurochemistry. The former sets up an individual to be at high risk through both genetic polymorphisms in reward genes as well as harmful epigenetic insult. Some Psychologists, even with all the data, still infer that addiction is not a disease [47]. Elevated stress levels, together with polymorphisms (genetic variations) of various dopaminergic genes and the genes related to other neurotransmitters (and their genetic variants), and may have an additive effect on vulnerability to various addictions [48]. In this regard, Vanyukov, et al. [48] suggested based on review that whereas the gateway hypothesis does not specify mechanistic connections between “stages,” and does not extend to the risks for addictions the concept of common liability to addictions may be more parsimonious. The latter theory is grounded in genetic theory and supported by data identifying common sources of variation in the risk for specific addictions (e.g., RDS). This commonality has identifiable neurobiological substrate and plausible evolutionary explanations. Over many years the controversy of dopamine involvement in especially “pleasure” has led to confusion concerning separating motivation from actual pleasure (wanting versus liking) [49]. We take the position that animal studies cannot provide real clinical information as described by self-reports in humans. As mentioned earlier and in the abstract, on November 23rd, 2017, evidence for our concerns was discovered [50] In essence, although nonhuman primate brains are similar to our own, the disparity between other primates and those of human cognitive abilities tells us that surface similarity is not the whole story. Sousa et al. [50] small case found various differentially expressed genes, to associate with pleasure related systems. Furthermore, the dopaminergic interneurons located in the human neocortex were absent from the neocortex of nonhuman African apes. Such differences in neuronal transcriptional programs may underlie a variety of neurodevelopmental disorders. In simpler terms, the system controls the production of dopamine, a chemical messenger that plays a significant role in pleasure and rewards. The senior author, Dr. Nenad Sestan from Yale, stated: “Humans have evolved a dopamine system that is different than the one in chimpanzees.” This may explain why the behavior of humans is so unique from that of non-human primates, even though our brains are so surprisingly similar, Sestan said: “It might also shed light on why people are vulnerable to mental disorders such as autism (possibly even addiction).” Remarkably, this research finding emerged from an extensive, multicenter collaboration to compare the brains across several species. These researchers examined 247 specimens of neural tissue from six humans, five chimpanzees, and five macaque monkeys. Moreover, these investigators analyzed which genes were turned on or off in 16 regions of the brain. While the differences among species were subtle, there was a remarkable contrast in the neocortices, specifically in an area of the brain that is much more developed in humans than in chimpanzees. In fact, these researchers found that a gene called tyrosine hydroxylase (TH) for the enzyme, responsible for the production of dopamine, was expressed in the neocortex of humans, but not chimpanzees. As discussed earlier, dopamine is best known for its essential role within the brain’s reward system; the very system that responds to everything from sex, to gambling, to food, and to addictive drugs. However, dopamine also assists in regulating emotional responses, memory, and movement. Notably, abnormal dopamine levels have been linked to disorders including Parkinson’s, schizophrenia and spectrum disorders such as autism and addiction or RDS. Nora Volkow, the director of NIDA, pointed out that one alluring possibility is that the neurotransmitter dopamine plays a substantial role in humans’ ability to pursue various rewards that are perhaps months or even years away in the future. This same idea has been suggested by Dr. Robert Sapolsky, a professor of biology and neurology at Stanford University. Dr. Sapolsky cited evidence that dopamine levels rise dramatically in humans when we anticipate potential rewards that are uncertain and even far off in our futures, such as retirement or even the possible alterlife. This may explain what often motivates people to work for things that have no apparent short-term benefit [51]. In similar work, Volkow and Bale [52] proposed a model in which dopamine can favor NOW processes through phasic signaling in reward circuits or LATER processes through tonic signaling in control circuits. Specifically, they suggest that through its modulation of the orbitofrontal cortex, which processes salience attribution, dopamine also enables shilting from NOW to LATER, while its modulation of the insula, which processes interoceptive information, influences the probability of selecting NOW versus LATER actions based on an individual’s physiological state. This hypothesis further supports the concept that disruptions along these circuits contribute to diverse pathologies, including obesity and addiction or RDS.

#### 4] [Bostrom] Extinction first – You can’t be 100% sure about any framework, so you must keep people alive to make future ethical determinations.

Bostrom 12

[Nick Bostrom, Faculty of Philosophy & Oxford Martin School University of Oxford. “Existential Risk Prevention as Global Priority”. 2012. www.existential-risk.org/concept.html]

These reflections on moral uncertainty suggest an alternative, complementary way of looking at existential risk; they also suggest a new way of thinking about the ideal of sustainability. Let me elaborate. Our present understanding of axiology might well be confused. We may not now know — at least not in concrete detail — what outcomes would count as a big win for humanity; we might not even yet be able to imagine the best ends of our journey. If we are indeed profoundly uncertain about our ultimate aims, then we should recognize that there is a great option value in preserving — and ideally improving — our ability to recognize value and to steer the future accordingly. Ensuring that there will be a future version of humanity with great powers and a propensity to use them wisely is plausibly the best way available to us to increase the probability that the future will contain a lot of value. To do this, we must prevent any existential catastrophe.

## U/V

#### No omissions: violations and K links must come from the text of the AC, not the absence of doing something i.e. not spec-ing

#### It’s an infinite burden since neg can read bidirectional interps like spec good/spec bad

#### Incentivizes friv uplayering which kills topic ed – o/w since we have 4 years for norms but only 2 months for topic ed.

#### CX checks and is binding – it’s debate, not two truths and a lie.

#### [Coverstone 05] Roleplaying the state doesn’t endorse it but teaches the language of power to enable internal resistance strategies

Coverstone 05

Alan Coverstone (masters in communication from Wake Forest, longtime debate coach) “Acting on Activism: Realizing the Vision of Debate with Pro-social Impact” Paper presented at the National Communication Association Annual Conference November 17th 2005 <https://www.natcom.org/> -CAT

An important concern emerges when Mitchell describes reflexive fiat as a contest strategy capable of “eschewing the power to directly control external actors” (1998b, p. 20). Describing debates about what our government should do as attempts to control outside actors is debilitating and disempowering. Control of the US government is exactly what an active, participatory citizenry is supposed to be all about. After all, if democracy means anything, it means that citizens not only have the right, they also bear the obligation to discuss and debate what the government should be doing. Absent that discussion and debate, much of the motivation for personal political activism is also lost. Those who have co-opted Mitchell’s argument for individual advocacy often quickly respond that nothing we do in a debate round can actually change government policy, and unfortunately, an entire generation of debaters has now swallowed this assertion as an article of faith. The best most will muster is, “Of course not, but you don’t either!” The assertion that nothing we do in debate has any impact on government policy is one that carries the potential to undermine Mitchell’s entire project. If there is nothing we can do in a debate round to change government policy, then we are left with precious little in the way of pro-social options for addressing problems we face. At best, we can pursue some Pilot-like hand washing that can purify us as individuals through quixotic activism but offer little to society as a whole. It is very important to note that Mitchell (1998b) tries carefully to limit and bound his notion of reflexive fiat by maintaining that because it “views fiat as a concrete course of action, it is bounded by the limits of pragmatism” (p. 20). Pursued properly, the debates that Mitchell would like to see are those in which the relative efficacy of concrete political strategies for pro-social change is debated. In a few noteworthy examples, this approach has been employed successfully, and I must say that I have thoroughly enjoyed judging and coaching those debates. The students in my program have learned to stretch their understanding of their role in the political process because of the experience. Therefore, those who say I am opposed to Mitchell’s goals here should take care at such a blanket assertion. However, contest debate teaches students to combine personal experience with the language of political power. Powerful personal narratives unconnected to political power are regularly co-opted by those who do learn the language of power. One need look no further than the annual state of the Union Address where personal story after personal story is used to support the political agenda of those in power. The so-called role-playing that public policy contest debates encourage promotes active learning of the vocabulary and levers of power in America. Imagining the ability to use our own arguments to influence government action is one of the great virtues of academic debate. Gerald Graff (2003) analyzed the decline of argumentation in academic discourse and found a source of student antipathy to public argument in an interesting place. I’m up against…their aversion to the role of public spokesperson that formal writing presupposes. It’s as if such students can’t imagine any rewards for being a public actor or even imagining themselves in such a role. This lack of interest in the public sphere may in turn reflect a loss of confidence in the possibility that the arguments we make in public will have an effect on the world. Today’s students’ lack of faith in the power of persuasion reflects the waning of the ideal of civic participation that led educators for centuries to place rhetorical and argumentative training at the center of the school and college curriculum. (Graff, 2003, p. 57) The power to imagine public advocacy that actually makes a difference is one of the great virtues of the traditional notion of fiat that critics deride as mere simulation. Simulation of success in the public realm is far more empowering to students than completely abandoning all notions of personal power in the face of governmental hegemony by teaching students that “nothing they can do in a contest debate can ever make any difference in public policy.” Contest debating is well suited to rewarding public activism if it stops accepting as an article of faith that personal agency is somehow undermined by the so-called role playing in debate. Debate is role-playing whether we imagine government action or imagine individual action. Imagining myself starting a socialist revolution in America is no less of a fantasy than imagining myself making a difference on Capitol Hill. Furthermore, both fantasies influenced my personal and political development virtually ensuring a life of active, pro-social, political participation. Neither fantasy reduced the likelihood that I would spend my life trying to make the difference I imagined. One fantasy actually does make a greater difference: the one that speaks the language of political power. The other fantasy disables action by making one a laughingstock to those who wield the language of power. Fantasy motivates and role-playing trains through visualization. Until we can imagine it, we cannot really do it. Role-playing without question teaches students to be comfortable with the language of power, and that language paves the way for genuine and effective political activism. Debates over the relative efficacy of political strategies for pro-social change must confront governmental power at some point. There is a fallacy in arguing that movements represent a better political strategy than voting and person-to-person advocacy. Sure, a full-scale movement would be better than the limited voice I have as a participating citizen going from door to door in a campaign, but so would full-scale government action. Unfortunately, the gap between my individual decision to pursue movement politics and the emergence of a full-scale movement is at least as great as the gap between my vote and democratic change.

#### Weigh case against the K

Thompson 18

Nicole Akoukou. Chicago-based creative writer. 4-6-2018. "Why I will not allow the fear of a nuclear attack to be white-washed." RaceBaitR. *RaceBaitr* is a community of people genuinely interested in learning more about anti-Blackness, queerness, feminism and their relationship to those subjects. Our audience is committed to learning with us, so pieces should not be expected to address non-marginalized people who haven’t yet dedicated themselves to joining the fight for justice. This space is dedicated to imagining and working toward a world outside of the white supremacist cisheteropatriarchal capitalistic gaze with a particular attention to the function of anti-Blackness. Those who insist on wielding that gaze can call us what you like. We aren’t talking to you.

[http://racebaitr.com/2018/04/06/2087/#](http://racebaitr.com/2018/04/06/2087/) -CAT

I couldn’t spare empathy for a white woman whose biggest fear was something that hadn’t happened yet and might not. Meanwhile, my most significant fears were in motion: women and men dying in cells after being wrongly imprisoned, choked out for peddling cigarettes, or shot to death during ‘routine’ traffic stops. I twitch when my partner is late, worried that a cantankerous cop has brutalized or shot him because he wouldn’t prostrate himself. As a woman of color, I am aware of the multiple types of violence that threaten me currently—not theoretically. Street harassment, excessively affecting me as a Black woman, has blindsided me since I was eleven. A premature body meant being catcalled before I’d discussed the birds and the bees. It meant being followed, whistled at, or groped. As an adult, while navigating through neighborhoods with extinguished street lights, I noticed the correlation between women’s safety and street lighting—as well as the fact that Black and brown neighborhoods were never as brightly lit as those with a more significant white population. I move quickly through those unlit spaces, never comforted by the inevitable whirl of red and blue sirens. In fact, it’s always been the contrary. Ever so often, cops approach me in their vehicle’s encouraging me to “Hurry along,” “Stay on the sidewalk,” or “Have a good night.” My spine stiffening, I never believed they endorsed my safety. Instead, I worried that I’d be accused of an unnamed accusation, corned by a cop who preys on Black women, or worse. A majority of my 50-minute bus ride from the southside of Chicago to the north to join these women for the birthday celebration was spent reading articles about citywide shootings. I began with a Chicago Tribute piece titled “33 people shot, seven fatally, in 13 hours,” then toppled into a barrage of RIP posts on Facebook and ended with angry posts about police brutality on Tumblr. You might guess, by the time I arrived to dinner I wasn’t in the mood for the “I can’t believe we’re all going to die because Trump is an idiot” shit. I shook my head, willing the meal to be over, and was grateful when the check arrived just as someone was asking me about my hair. My thinking wasn’t all too different from Michael Harriot’s ‘Why Black America Isn’t Worried About the Upcoming Nuclear Holocaust.” While the meal was partly pleasant, I departed thinking, “fear of nuclear demolition is just some white shit.” Sadly, that thought would not last long. I still vibe with Harriot’s statement, “Black people have lived under the specter of having our existence erased on a white man’s whim since we stepped onto the shore at Jamestown Landing.” However, a friend—a Black friend—ignited my nuclear paranoia by sharing theories about when it might happen and who faced the greatest threat. In an attempt to ease my friend’s fear, I leaned in to listen but accidentally toppled down the rabbit hole too. I forked through curated news feeds. I sifted through “fake news,” “actual news,” and foreign news sources. Suddenly, an idea took root: nuclear strike would disproportionately impact Black people, brown people, and low-income individuals. North Korea won’t target the plain sight racists of Portland, Oregon, the violently microaggressive liberals of the rural Northwest, or the white-hooded klansmen of Diamondhead, Mississippi. No, under the instruction of the supreme leader Kim Jong-un, North Korea will likely strike densely populated urban areas, such as Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington D.C., and New York City. These locations stand-out as targets for a nuclear strike because they are densely populated U.S. population centers. Attacking the heart of the nation or populous cities would translate to more casualties. With that in mind, it’s not lost on me that the most populous cities in the United States boast sizeable diverse populations, or more plainly put: Black populations. This shit stresses me out! There’s a creeping chill that follows me, a silent alarm that rings each time my Google alert chimes letting me know that Donald Trump has yet again provoked Kim Jong-Un, a man who allegedly killed his very own uncle. I’ve grown so pressed by the idea of nuclear holocaust that my partner and I started gathering non-perishables, candlesticks, a hand-crank radio, and other must-buy items that can be banked in a shopping cart. The practice of preparing for a nuclear holocaust sometimes feels comical, particularly when acknowledging that there has long been a war on Black people in this country. Blackness is bittersweet in flavor. We are blessed with the melanized skin, the MacGyver-like inventiveness of our foremothers, and our blinding brightness—but the anti-blackness that we experience is also blinding as well as stifling. We are stuck by rigged systems, punished with the prison industrial complex, housing discrimination, pay discrimination, and worse. We get side-eyes from strangers when we’re “loitering,” and the police will pull us over for driving “too fast” in a residential neighborhood. We get murdered for holding cell phones while standing in our grandmother’s backyard. The racism that strung up our ancestors, kept them sequestered to the back of the bus and kept them in separate and unequal schools still lives. It lives, and it’s more palpable than dormant. To me, this means one thing: Trump’s America isn’t an unfortunate circumstance, it’s a homecoming event that’s hundreds of years in the making, no matter how many times my white friends’ say, “He’s not my president.” In light of this homecoming, we now flirt with a new, larger fear of a Black genocide. America has always worked towards Black eradication through a steady stream of life-threatening inequality, but nuclear war on American soil would be swift. And for this reason I’ve grown tired of whiteness being at the center of the nuclear conversation. The race-neutral approach to the dialogue, and a tendency to continue to promote the idea that missiles will land in suburban and rural backyards, instead of inner-city playgrounds, is false. “[The Day After](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0085404/),” the iconic, highest-rated television film in history, aired November 20, 1983. More than 100 million people tuned in to watch a film postulating a war between the Soviet Union and the United States. The film, which would go on to affect President Ronald Reagan and policymakers’ nuclear intentions, shows the “true effects of nuclear war on average American citizens.” The Soviet-targeted areas featured in the film include Higginsville, Kansas City, Sedalia, Missouri, as well as El Dorado Springs, Missouri. They depict the destruction of the central United States, and viewers watch as full-scale nuclear war transforms middle America into a burned wasteland. Yet unsurprisingly, the devastation from the attack is completely white-washed, leaving out the more likely victims which are the more densely populated (Black) areas. Death tolls would be high for white populations, yes, but large-scale losses of Black and brown folks would outpace that number, due to placement and poverty. That number would be pushed higher by limited access to premium health care, wealth, and resources. The effects of radiation sickness, burns, compounded injuries, and malnutrition would throttle Black and brown communities and would mark us for generations. It’s for that reason that we have to do more to foster disaster preparedness among Black people where we can. Black people deserve the space to explore nuclear unease, even if we have competing threats, anxieties, and worries.

## ROB

#### The ROB is to endorse the best policy option; that means you compare the Aff plan to hypothetical alternatives from the same agent.

Strait and Wallace 08

L. Paul Strait, University of Southern California and Brett Wallace, George Washington University. “ACADEMIC DEBATE AS A DECISIONMAKING GAME: INCULCATING THE VIRTUE OF PRACTICAL WISDOM”. Contemporary Argumentation and Debate. The Journal of the Cross Examination Debate Association, Vol. 29 (2008): 1-36.

Like all arguments in the negative’s arsenal, counterplans have the burden to be relevant to the question posed by the affirmative plan (disadvantages accomplish this by having a compelling ‘link’). For this reason, counterplans must be competitive but we argue that competition is necessary but not sufficient to demonstrate relevance. Lichtman and Rohrer (1975) observe that negative fiat should have a limited scope, relating to the logic of who is making the decision: It is assumed, of course, that decision-makers being addressed have the power to put a counterplan into effect. An individual or governmental unit can reasonably be asked to reject a particular policy if an alternative promises greater net benefits. If, however, a counterplan must be adopted by another individual or unit of government, the initial decision-maker must consider the probability that the counterplan will be accepted. Debate propositions often affirm that a particular policy should be adopted by the federal government. Even if adoption of this policy by the individual state governments would be more beneficial, a reasonable critic would still affirm the resolution if state adoption were highly unlikely. The federal government should refrain from acting only when the net benefits of state and local action, discounted by the probability that such action will occur, are greater than the net benefits of federal action. (p. 74, footnote 13). Expanding upon this common sense approach, Korcok (2002) reasons that advantages and disadvantages relating to political ramifications, resources, policy effectiveness, enforcement, and so on, all depend upon whose task it is to take the desired action. Therefore, questions of the substantive desirability of the affirmative, along with questions of the educational value of learning general governmental processes, are incoherent without first specifying who is making the decision. Consider what it means when a judge votes affirmative or negative. Supposing the affirmative has presented a topical plan, the judge votes affirmative when the plan is shown to be net-advantageous when compared to the status quo or a competitive alternative, and the judge votes negative when the plan is shown to be less desirable than the status quo or a competitive alternative. If testifying before Congress, this judge could reasonably say: “Based on the arguments I have heard over the last hour and a half, it would be better for you to do X than Y.” In other words, after the debate is concluded, one entity could make a decision based on the information presented. This is not to say that Congress (or anyone else) should make decisions based on the outcomes of scholastic debate rounds. What matters is that the debaters will have made an informed decision. This is utterly impossible if the negative advocates action by some agent other than the affirmative’s. Since the point of fiat is to bracket off questions of ‘would’ in order to focus completely on questions of ‘should,’ questions of probability never get discussed (Broda-Bahm, 2002). From the perspective of the agent identified in the plan, the probability is 100%: if the agent decides to adopt the mandates of the plan, there is an absolute guarantee that it will in fact do so. Yet, if the plan is compared to a counterplan in which Japan, rather than the United States, attempts to solve the advantage(s), there is never a situation where the United States could make a decision based on a 100% probability that Japan would take action if the United States did not. Thus, if Congress failed to consider the chance that that decision-making body would not in fact take the desired action, it would hardly be engaging in what Aristotle (c. 330bce/1941a) calls “correctness of thinking,” the substance of practical wisdom.