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I affirm Resolved: The appropriation of outer space by private entities is unjust

## The sole advantage is capitalism

#### Private expansion into space only serves bourgeois interests and expands exploitation of labor

Marx 20 [Paris Marx (socialist writer and host of the Tech Won't Save Us podcast). “Yes to Space Exploration. No to Space Capitalism.” 6/8/2020. Jacobin Mag. <https://jacobinmag.com/2020/06/spacex-elon-musk-jeff-bezos-capitalism>]

The space billionaires — Musk and Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos foremost among them — have little stake in the well-being of the majority of the population. Their space visions are designed for wealthy people like themselves, with little mention of where the working class would fit in. They’ve built their wealth on exploitation, and their visions of the future are little more than an extension of their present actions.

A History of Violence

The business practices of Musk and Bezos are increasingly well known and have been on clear display during the pandemic. Musk tried to claim Tesla’s Fremont, California factory was “essential” until [authorities forced him to close it;](https://www.sfchronicle.com/business/article/Tesla-s-Fremont-factory-ordered-to-shut-down-15137774.php) then he [reopened it in defiance of health orders](https://www.vox.com/recode/2020/5/12/21255812/elon-musk-tesla-factory-coronavirus-reopening). As Tesla CEO, Musk has a long history of opposing the unionization of workers, presiding over a high rate of worker injuries ([which the company tried to cover up](https://www.revealnews.org/article/tesla-says-its-factory-is-safer-but-it-left-injuries-off-the-books/)), and even having a former worker [hacked and harassed](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2019-03-13/when-elon-musk-tried-to-destroy-tesla-whistleblower-martin-tripp) after he became a whistleblower.

Meanwhile, Bezos has a similar history of abusing Amazon workers. Amazon’s warehouses are known for having [higher injury rates than the industry average](https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2019/11/amazon-warehouse-reports-show-worker-injuries/602530/), the company has [fought unionization](https://gizmodo.com/amazons-aggressive-anti-union-tactics-revealed-in-leake-1829305201), and the stories of the [terrible](https://www.businessinsider.com/amazon-warehouse-2011-9) [conditions](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/feb/05/amazon-workers-protest-unsafe-grueling-conditions-warehouse) [experienced](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/amazon-protests-workers-urinate-plastic-bottles-no-toilet-breaks-milton-keynes-jeff-bezos-a9012351.html) [by](https://www.theverge.com/2019/4/25/18516004/amazon-warehouse-fulfillment-centers-productivity-firing-terminations) [workers](https://www.businessinsider.com/amazon-warehouse-workers-share-their-horror-stories-2018-4) are legendary. During the pandemic, that has continued, with the company failing to enforce social distancing or provide adequate protective equipment [until workers began walking out](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/mar/30/amazon-workers-strike-coronavirus), refusing to be [open about infection information](https://www.latimes.com/business/technology/story/2020-05-28/amazon-whole-foods-workers-track-coronavirus-cases), and firing workers who dared [criticize](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/apr/02/amazon-chris-smalls-smart-articulate-leaked-memo) [the](https://www.theverge.com/2020/4/14/21220353/amazon-covid-19-criticism-protest-fired-employees-cunningham-costa-climate-change) [company](https://www.vice.com/en_ca/article/y3zd9g/whole-foods-just-fired-an-employee-who-kept-track-of-coronavirus-cases), all while Bezos’s wealth has increased by [more than $30 billion](https://www.cnbc.com/2020/05/21/american-billionaires-got-434-billion-richer-during-the-pandemic.html).

But it goes beyond that, because the worldviews of these billionaires began to be formed long before they started the empires they currently lord over.

Musk did not have a regular childhood, but rather a wealthy upbringing in apartheid South Africa. His father was an engineer and owned part of an emerald mine in Zambia, telling [Business Insider](https://theconversation.com/donald-trumps-space-force-the-dangerous-militarisation-of-outer-space-98588), “We were very wealthy. We had so much money at times we couldn’t even close our safe.” In Elon Musk: Tesla, SpaceX, and the Quest for a Fantastic Future, Ashlee Vance describes how Musk got money from his father when he was starting one of his original ventures. He also had a particular admiration for his grandfather, who moved to apartheid South Africa from Canada after rallying “against government interference in the lives of individuals.”

Bezos has a not dissimilar story. His father was a well-off oil engineer in Cuba while Fulgencio Batista was in power. In Bit Tyrants, Rob Larson explains that Bezos’s father left the island after the Cuban Revolution and passed his libertarian views down to his son. Bezos’s parents [invested nearly $250,000](https://money.com/amazon-jeff-bezoss-parents-investments/) in Amazon in 1995 as it was getting started.

These space barons made their billions through the exploitation of their workers and came from well-off backgrounds made possible from resource extraction. When digging into their visions for a future in space, it’s clear that they seek to extend these conditions into the cosmos, not challenge them in favor of space exploration for the benefit of all.

The Future They Want

Musk and Bezos are the leading drivers of the modern push to privatize and colonize space through their respective companies, SpaceX and Blue Origin. Their visions differ slightly, with Musk preferring to colonize Mars, while Bezos has more interest in building space colonies in orbit.

In 2016, Musk claimed he would [begin sending rockets to Mars in 2018](https://observer.com/2016/06/elon-musk-charts-path-to-colonizing-mars-within-a-decade/). That never happened, but it hasn’t ended his obsession. Musk is determined to make humans a multi-planetary species, framing our choice as either space colonization or the risk of extinction. Bezos says that Earth is the best planet in our solar system, but if we don’t colonize space we doom ourselves to “[stasis and rationing](https://jacobinmag.com/2019/07/space-colonies-jeff-bezos-blue-origin).”

These framings serve the interests of these billionaires, and make it seem like colonizing space is an obvious and necessary choice when it isn’t. It ignores their personal culpability and the role of the capitalist system they seek to reproduce in causing the problems they say we need to flee in the first place.

Billionaires have a much greater carbon footprint than ordinary people, with Musk [flying his private jet](https://arstechnica.com/cars/2019/01/elon-musk-private-jet-flew-150000-miles-in-2018-washington-post-reports/) all around the world as he claims to be an environmental champion. Amazon, meanwhile, is [courting oil and gas companies](https://gizmodo.com/amazon-is-aggressively-pursuing-big-oil-as-it-stalls-ou-1833875828) with cloud services to make their business more efficient, and Tesla is selling [a false vision of sustainability](https://jacobinmag.com/2020/01/elon-musk-climate-apocalypse-tesla-spacex) that purposely serves people like Musk, all while capitalism continues to drive the climate system toward the cliff edge. Colonizing space will not save us from billionaire-fueled climate dystopia.

But these billionaires do not hide who would be served by their futures. Musk has given many figures for the cost of a ticket to Mars, but they’re never cheap. He told Vance the tickets would cost $500,000 to $1 million, a price at which he thinks “it’s highly likely that there will be a self-sustaining Martian colony.” However, the workers for such a colony clearly won’t be able to buy their own way. Rather, Musk tweeted a plan for [Martian indentured servitude](https://gizmodo.com/elon-musk-a-new-life-awaits-you-on-the-off-world-colon-1841071257) where workers would take on loans to pay for their tickets and pay them off later because “There will be a lot of jobs on Mars!”

Bezos is even more open about how the workforce will have to expand to serve his vision, but has little to say about what they’ll be doing. His plan to maintain economic “growth and dynamism” requires the human population to grow to a trillion people. He claims this would create “a thousand Mozarts and a thousand Einsteins” who would live in space colonies that are supposed to house a million people each, with the surface of Earth being mainly for tourism. Meanwhile, industrial and mining work would move into orbit so as not to pollute the planet, and while he doesn’t explicitly acknowledge it, it’s likely that’s where you’ll find many of those trillion workers toiling for their space overlord and his descendants.

Space Shouldn’t Serve Capitalists

In 1978, Murray Bookchin [skewered a certain brand of futurism](http://unevenearth.org/2019/10/bookchin_doing_the_impossible/) that sought to “extend the present into the future” and desired “multinational corporations to become multi-cosmic corporations.” Much of this future thinking obsesses about possible changes to technology, but seeks to preserve the existing social and economic relations — “the present as it exists today, projected, one hundred years from now,” as Bookchin put it. That’s at the core of the space billionaires’ vision for the future.

Space has been used by past US presidents to bolster American power and influence, but it was largely accepted that capitalism ended at the edge of the atmosphere. That’s no longer the case, and just as past capitalist expansions have come at the expense of poor and working people to enrich a small elite, so too will this one. Bezos and Trump may have a public feud, but that doesn’t mean that their mutual interest isn’t served by a renewed US push into space that funnels massive public funds into private pockets and seeks to open celestial bodies to capitalist resource extraction.

#### Capitalism causes every impact—poverty, inequality, democratic decline, disease, climate change, women and worker exploitation, and nuclear war

Foster 19 [John Foster (PhD from York University, Professor at the University of Oregon Department of Sociology), “Capitalism Has Failed—What Next?,” Monthly Review, 2/1/19, <https://monthlyreview.org/2019/02/01/capitalism-has-failed-what-next/>]

Less than two decades into the twenty-first century, it is evident that capitalism has failed as a social system. The world is mired in economic stagnation, financialization, and the most extreme inequality in human history, accompanied by mass unemployment and underemployment, precariousness, poverty, hunger, wasted output and lives, and what at this point can only be called a planetary ecological “death spiral.”1 The digital revolution, the greatest technological advance of our time, has rapidly mutated from a promise of free communication and liberated production into new means of surveillance, control, and displacement of the working population. The institutions of liberal democracy are at the point of collapse, while fascism, the rear guard of the capitalist system, is again on the march, along with patriarchy, racism, imperialism, and war. To say that capitalism is a failed system is not, of course, to suggest that its breakdown and disintegration is imminent.2 It does, however, mean that it has passed from being a historically necessary and creative system at its inception to being a historically unnecessary and destructive one in the present century. Today, more than ever, the world is faced with the epochal choice between “the revolutionary reconstitution of society at large and the common ruin of the contending classes.”3 Indications of this failure of capitalism are everywhere. Stagnation of investment punctuated by bubbles of financial expansion, which then inevitably burst, now characterizes the so-called free market.4 Soaring inequality in income and wealth has its counterpart in the declining material circumstances of a majority of the population. Real wages for most workers in the United States have barely budged in forty years despite steadily rising productivity.5 Work intensity has increased, while work and safety protections on the job have been systematically jettisoned. Unemployment data has become more and more meaningless due to a new institutionalized underemployment in the form of contract labor in the gig economy.6 Unions have been reduced to mere shadows of their former glory as capitalism has asserted totalitarian control over workplaces. With the demise of Soviet-type societies, social democracy in Europe has perished in the new atmosphere of “liberated capitalism.”7 The capture of the surplus value produced by overexploited populations in the poorest regions of the world, via the global labor arbitrage instituted by multinational corporations, is leading to an unprecedented amassing of financial wealth at the center of the world economy and relative poverty in the periphery.8 Around $21 trillion of offshore funds are currently lodged in tax havens on islands mostly in the Caribbean, constituting “the fortified refuge of Big Finance.”9 Technologically driven monopolies resulting from the global-communications revolution, together with the rise to dominance of Wall Street-based financial capital geared to speculative asset creation, have further contributed to the riches of today’s “1 percent.” Forty-two billionaires now enjoy as much wealth as half the world’s population, while the three richest men in the United States—Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and Warren Buffett—have more wealth than half the U.S. population.10 In every region of the world, inequality has increased sharply in recent decades.11 The gap in per capita income and wealth between the richest and poorest nations, which has been the dominant trend for centuries, is rapidly widening once again.12 More than 60 percent of the world’s employed population, some two billion people, now work in the impoverished informal sector, forming a massive global proletariat. The global reserve army of labor is some 70 percent larger than the active labor army of formally employed workers.13 Adequate health care, housing, education, and clean water and air are increasingly out of reach for large sections of the population, even in wealthy countries in North America and Europe, while transportation is becoming more difficult in the United States and many other countries due to irrationally high levels of dependency on the automobile and disinvestment in public transportation. Urban structures are more and more characterized by gentrification and segregation, with cities becoming the playthings of the well-to-do while marginalized populations are shunted aside. About half a million people, most of them children, are homeless on any given night in the United States.14 New York City is experiencing a major rat infestation, attributed to warming temperatures, mirroring trends around the world.15 In the United States and other high-income countries, life expectancy is in decline, with a remarkable resurgence of Victorian illnesses related to poverty and exploitation. In Britain, gout, scarlet fever, whooping cough, and even scurvy are now resurgent, along with tuberculosis. With inadequate enforcement of work health and safety regulations, black lung disease has returned with a vengeance in U.S. coal country.16 Overuse of antibiotics, particularly by capitalist agribusiness, is leading to an antibiotic-resistance crisis, with the dangerous growth of superbugs generating increasing numbers of deaths, which by mid–century could surpass annual cancer deaths, prompting the World Health Organization to declare a “global health emergency.”17 These dire conditions, arising from the workings of the system, are consistent with what Frederick Engels, in the Condition of the Working Class in England, called “social murder.”18 At the instigation of giant corporations, philanthrocapitalist foundations, and neoliberal governments, public education has been restructured around corporate-designed testing based on the implementation of robotic common-core standards. This is generating massive databases on the student population, much of which are now being surreptitiously marketed and sold.19 The corporatization and privatization of education is feeding the progressive subordination of children’s needs to the cash nexus of the commodity market. We are thus seeing a dramatic return of Thomas Gradgrind’s and Mr. M’Choakumchild’s crass utilitarian philosophy dramatized in Charles Dickens’s Hard Times: “Facts are alone wanted in life” and “You are never to fancy.”20 Having been reduced to intellectual dungeons, many of the poorest, most racially segregated schools in the United States are mere pipelines for prisons or the military.21 More than two million people in the United States are behind bars, a higher rate of incarceration than any other country in the world, constituting a new Jim Crow. The total population in prison is nearly equal to the number of people in Houston, Texas, the fourth largest U.S. city. African Americans and Latinos make up 56 percent of those incarcerated, while constituting only about 32 percent of the U.S. population. Nearly 50 percent of American adults, and a much higher percentage among African Americans and Native Americans, have an immediate family member who has spent or is currently spending time behind bars. Both black men and Native American men in the United States are nearly three times, Hispanic men nearly two times, more likely to die of police shootings than white men.22 Racial divides are now widening across the entire planet. Violence against women and the expropriation of their unpaid labor, as well as the higher level of exploitation of their paid labor, are integral to the way in which power is organized in capitalist society—and how it seeks to divide rather than unify the population. More than a third of women worldwide have experienced physical/sexual violence. Women’s bodies, in particular, are objectified, reified, and commodified as part of the normal workings of monopoly-capitalist marketing.23 The mass media-propaganda system, part of the larger corporate matrix, is now merging into a social media-based propaganda system that is more porous and seemingly anarchic, but more universal and more than ever favoring money and power. Utilizing modern marketing and surveillance techniques, which now dominate all digital interactions, vested interests are able to tailor their messages, largely unchecked, to individuals and their social networks, creating concerns about “fake news” on all sides.24 Numerous business entities promising technological manipulation of voters in countries across the world have now surfaced, auctioning off their services to the highest bidders.25 The elimination of net neutrality in the United States means further concentration, centralization, and control over the entire Internet by monopolistic service providers. Elections are increasingly prey to unregulated “dark money” emanating from the coffers of corporations and the billionaire class. Although presenting itself as the world’s leading democracy, the United States, as Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy stated in Monopoly Capital in 1966, “is democratic in form and plutocratic in content.”26 In the Trump administration, following a long-established tradition, 72 percent of those appointed to the cabinet have come from the higher corporate echelons, while others have been drawn from the military.27 War, engineered by the United States and other major powers at the apex of the system, has become perpetual in strategic oil regions such as the Middle East, and threatens to escalate into a global thermonuclear exchange. During the Obama administration, the United States was engaged in wars/bombings in seven different countries—Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, and Pakistan.28 Torture and assassinations have been reinstituted by Washington as acceptable instruments of war against those now innumerable individuals, group networks, and whole societies that are branded as terrorist. A new Cold War and nuclear arms race is in the making between the United States and Russia, while Washington is seeking to place road blocks to the continued rise of China. The Trump administration has created a new space force as a separate branch of the military in an attempt to ensure U.S. dominance in the militarization of space. Sounding the alarm on the increasing dangers of a nuclear war and of climate destabilization, the distinguished Bulletin of Atomic Scientists moved its doomsday clock in 2018 to two minutes to midnight, the closest since 1953, when it marked the advent of thermonuclear weapons.29 Increasingly severe economic sanctions are being imposed by the United States on countries like Venezuela and Nicaragua, despite their democratic elections—or because of them. Trade and currency wars are being actively promoted by core states, while racist barriers against immigration continue to be erected in Europe and the United States as some 60 million refugees and internally displaced peoples flee devastated environments. Migrant populations worldwide have risen to 250 million, with those residing in high-income countries constituting more than 14 percent of the populations of those countries, up from less than 10 percent in 2000. Meanwhile, ruling circles and wealthy countries seek to wall off islands of power and privilege from the mass of humanity, who are to be left to their fate.30 More than three-quarters of a billion people, over 10 percent of the world population, are chronically malnourished.31 Food stress in the United States keeps climbing, leading to the rapid growth of cheap dollar stores selling poor quality and toxic food. Around forty million Americans, representing one out of eight households, including nearly thirteen million children, are food insecure.32 Subsistence farmers are being pushed off their lands by agribusiness, private capital, and sovereign wealth funds in a global depeasantization process that constitutes the greatest movement of people in history.33 Urban overcrowding and poverty across much of the globe is so severe that one can now reasonably refer to a “planet of slums.”34 Meanwhile, the world housing market is estimated to be worth up to $163 trillion (as compared to the value of gold mined over all recorded history, estimated at $7.5 trillion).35 The Anthropocene epoch, first ushered in by the Great Acceleration of the world economy immediately after the Second World War, has generated enormous rifts in planetary boundaries, extending from climate change to ocean acidification, to the sixth extinction, to disruption of the global nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, to the loss of freshwater, to the disappearance of forests, to widespread toxic-chemical and radioactive pollution.36 It is now estimated that 60 percent of the world’s wildlife vertebrate population (including mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and fish) have been wiped out since 1970, while the worldwide abundance of invertebrates has declined by 45 percent in recent decades.37 What climatologist James Hansen calls the “species exterminations” resulting from accelerating climate change and rapidly shifting climate zones are only compounding this general process of biodiversity loss. Biologists expect that half of all species will be facing extinction by the end of the century.38 If present climate-change trends continue, the “global carbon budget” associated with a 2°C increase in average global temperature will be broken in sixteen years (while a 1.5°C increase in global average temperature—staying beneath which is the key to long-term stabilization of the climate—will be reached in a decade). Earth System scientists warn that the world is now perilously close to a Hothouse Earth, in which catastrophic climate change will be locked in and irreversible.39 The ecological, social, and economic costs to humanity of continuing to increase carbon emissions by 2.0 percent a year as in recent decades (rising in 2018 by 2.7 percent—3.4 percent in the United States), and failing to meet the minimal 3.0 percent annual reductions in emissions currently needed to avoid a catastrophic destabilization of the earth’s energy balance, are simply incalculable.40 Nevertheless, major energy corporations continue to lie about climate change, promoting and bankrolling climate denialism—while admitting the truth in their internal documents. These corporations are working to accelerate the extraction and production of fossil fuels, including the dirtiest, most greenhouse gas-generating varieties, reaping enormous profits in the process. The melting of the Arctic ice from global warming is seen by capital as a new El Dorado, opening up massive additional oil and gas reserves to be exploited without regard to the consequences for the earth’s climate. In response to scientific reports on climate change, Exxon Mobil declared that it intends to extract and sell all of the fossil-fuel reserves at its disposal.41 Energy corporations continue to intervene in climate negotiations to ensure that any agreements to limit carbon emissions are defanged. Capitalist countries across the board are putting the accumulation of wealth for a few above combatting climate destabilization, threatening the very future of humanity. Capitalism is best understood as a competitive class-based mode of production and exchange geared to the accumulation of capital through the exploitation of workers’ labor power and the private appropriation of surplus value (value generated beyond the costs of the workers’ own reproduction). The mode of economic accounting intrinsic to capitalism designates as a value-generating good or service anything that passes through the market and therefore produces income. It follows that the greater part of the social and environmental costs of production outside the market are excluded in this form of valuation and are treated as mere negative “externalities,” unrelated to the capitalist economy itself—whether in terms of the shortening and degradation of human life or the destruction of the natural environment. As environmental economist K. William Kapp stated, “capitalism must be regarded as an economy of unpaid costs.”42 We have now reached a point in the twenty-first century in which the externalities of this irrational system, such as the costs of war, the depletion of natural resources, the waste of human lives, and the disruption of the planetary environment, now far exceed any future economic benefits that capitalism offers to society as a whole. The accumulation of capital and the amassing of wealth are increasingly occurring at the expense of an irrevocable rift in the social and environmental conditions governing human life on earth.43 Some would argue that China stands as an exception to much of the above, characterized as it is by a seemingly unstoppable rate of economic advance (though carrying with it deep social and ecological contradictions). Yet Chinese development has its roots in the 1949 Chinese Revolution, carried out by the Chinese Communist Party headed by Mao Zedong, whereby it liberated itself from the imperialist system. This allowed it to develop for decades under a planned economy largely free of constraints from outside forces, establishing a strong agricultural and industrial economic base. This was followed by a shift in the post-Maoist reform period to a hybrid system of more limited state planning along with a much greater reliance on market relations (and a vast expansion of debt and speculation) under conditions—the globalization of the world market—that were particularly fortuitous to its “catching up.” Through trade wars and other pressures aimed at destabilizing China’s position in the world market, the United States is already seeking to challenge the bases of China’s growth in world trade. China, therefore, stands not so much for the successes of late capitalism but rather for its inherent limitations. The current Chinese model, moreover, carries within it many of the destructive tendencies of the system of capital accumulation. Ultimately, China’s future too depends on a return to the process of revolutionary transition, spurred by its own population.44 How did these disastrous conditions characterizing capitalism worldwide develop? An understanding of the failure of capitalism, beginning in the twentieth century, requires a historical examination of the rise of neoliberalism, and how this has only served to increase the destructiveness of the system. Only then can we address the future of humanity in the twenty-first century.

### Solvency

#### The aff strikes a meaningful blow to capitalism by denying access to space, its necessary next expansion since capitalism requires continued expansion

Shammas and Holen 19 [Victor L. Shammas (Oslo Metropolitan University, Work Research Institute (AFI), Oslo, Norway) and Tomas B. Holen (Independent scholar, Oslo, Norway). "One giant leap for capitalistkind: private enterprise in outer space." Palgrave Commun., vol. 5, no. 10, 29 Jan. 2019, pp. 1-9, doi:10.1057/s41599-019-0218-9 [Quality Control]]

No longer terra nullius, space is now the **new terra firma** of capitalistkind: its naturalized terroir**, its next necessary terrain**. The logic of capitalism dictates that capital should seek to **expand outwards** into the vastness of space, a point recognized by a recent ethnography of NewSpace actors (Valentine, 2016, p. 1050). The operations of capitalistkind serve to resolve a series of (potential) **crises of capitalism**, revolving around the slow, steady decline of **spatial fixes** (see e.g., Harvey, 1985, p. 51–66) as they come crashing up against the quickly vanishing blank spaces remaining on earthly maps and declining (terrestrial) opportunities for profitable investment of surplus capital (Dickens and Ormrod, 2007a, p. 49–78).

**A ‘spatial fix'** involves the **geographic modulation** of capital accumulation, consisting in the outward expansion of capital onto new geographic terrains, or into new spaces, with the aim of filling a gap in the home terrains of capital. Jessop (2006, p. 149) notes that spatial fixes may involve a number of strategies, including the creation of new markets within the capitalist world, engaging in trade with non-capitalist economies, and exporting surplus capital to undeveloped or underdeveloped regions. The first two address the problem of insufficient demand and the latter option creates a productive (or valorizing) outlet for excess capital. Capitalism must regularly discover, develop, and appropriate such new spaces because of its inherent tendency to generate surplus capital, i.e., capital bereft of profitable purpose. In Harvey’s (2006, p. xviii) terms, a spatial fix revolves around ‘geographical expansions and restructuring…as a temporary solution to crises understood…in terms of the overaccumulation of capital'. It is a **temporary** solution because these newly appropriated spaces will in turn **become exhausted of profitable potential** and are likely to produce their own stocks of surplus capital; while ‘capital surpluses that otherwise stood to be devalued, could be absorbed through geographical expansions and spatio-temporal displacements' (Harvey, 2006, p. xviii), this outwards drive of capitalism is inherently limitless: **there is no end point or final destination for capitalism**. Instead, capitalism must **continuously propel itself onwards** in search of pristine sites of renewed capital accumulation. In this way, Harvey writes, society constantly ‘creates fresh productive powers elsewhere to absorb its overaccumulated capital' (Harvey, 1981, p. 8).

Historically, spatial fixes have played an important role in conserving the capitalist system. As Jessop (2006, p. 149) points out, ‘The export of surplus money capital, surplus commodities, and/or surplus labour-power outside the space(s) where they originate enabled capital to avoid, at least for a period, the threat of devaluation'. But these new spaces for capital are not necessarily limited to physical terrains, as with colonial expansion in the nineteenth century; as Greene and Joseph (2015) note, various digital spaces, such as the Internet, can also be considered as spatial fixes: the Web absorbs overaccumulated capital, heightens consumption of virtual and physical goods, and makes inexpensive, flexible sources of labor available to employers. Greene and Joseph offer the example of online high-speed frequency trading as a digital spatial fix that **furthers the ‘annihilation of space by time'** first noted by Marx in his Grundrisse (see Marx, 1973, p. 524).

Outer space serves at least two purposes in this regard. In the short-to medium-term, it allows for the export of surplus capital into emerging industries, such as satellite imaging and communication. These are **significant sites of capital accumulation**: global revenues in the worldwide satellite market in 2016 amounted to $260 billion (SIA, 2017, p. 4). Clearly, much of this activity is taking place ‘on the ground'; it is occurring in the ‘terrestrial economy'. But all that capital would have to find some other meaningful or productive outlet were it not for the expansion of capital into space. Second, outer space serves as an arena of technological innovation, which feeds back into the terrestrial economy, helping to **avert crisis by pushing capital out of technological stagnation and innovation shortfalls.**

In short, **outer space serves as a spatial fix**. It swallows up surplus capital, promising to deliver valuable resources, technological innovations, and communication services to capitalists back on Earth. This places outer space on the **same level as traditional colonization**, analyzed in Hegel’s Philosophy of Right, which Hegel thought of as a product of the ‘inner dialectic of civil society', which drives the market to ‘push beyond its own limits and seek markets, and so its necessary means of subsistence, in other lands which are either deficient in the goods it has overproduced, or else generally backward in creative industry, etc.' (Hegel, 2008, p. 222). In this regard, SpaceX and related ventures are not so very different from maritime colonialists and the trader-exploiters of the British East India Company. But **there is something new at stake**. As the Silicon Valley entrepreneur Peter Diamandis has gleefully noted: ‘There are twenty-trillion-dollar checks up there, waiting to be cashed!' (Seaney and Glendenning, 2016). Capitalistkind consists in the **naturalization of capitalist consciousness and practic**e, the (**false) universalization** of a particular mode of political economy as inherent to the human condition, **followed by the projection of this naturalized universality into space**—**capitalist humanity** as a Fukuyamite ‘end of history', the end-point of (earthly) historical unfolding, **but the starting point of humanity’s first serious advances in space.**

#### Capitalist domination of the cosmos is imminent and cements inequality and exploitation. Forging new democratic distribution of space resources can revolutionize the global economy for emancipatory ends

Levine 15 [Nick Levine 15 (MPhil candidate in history of science at the University of Cambridge), 3-21-2015, "Democratize the Universe," Jacobin, https://jacobinmag.com/2015/03/space-industry-extraction-levine]

The privatization of the Milky Way has begun. Last summer, the bipartisan ASTEROIDS Act was introduced in Congress. The legislation’s aim is to grant US corporations property rights over any natural resources — like the platinum-group metals used in electronics — that they extract from asteroids. The bill took advantage of an ambiguity in the United Nations’ 1967 Outer Space Treaty. That agreement forbade nations and private organizations from claiming territory on celestial bodies, but was unclear about whether the exploitation of their natural resources would be allowed, and if so, on what terms. The legal framework governing the economic development of outer space will have enormous effects on the distribution of wealth and income in the Milky Way and beyond. **We could fight for a galactic democracy, where the proceeds of the space economy are distributed widely.** Or we could accept the trickle-down astronomics anticipated by the ASTEROIDS Act, which would allow for the concentration of vast amounts of economic and political power in the hands of a few corporations and the most technologically developed nations. Given the pressing problems of inequality and climate change on Earth, the US left has been understandably uninterested in or largely dismissive of any space pursuits. For this reason, it remains unprepared to organize around extraterrestrial economic justice. The Left’s rejection of space has effectively ceded the celestial commons to the business interests who would literally universalize laissez-faire. Organizing around extraterrestrial politics wasn’t always treated as an escapist distraction. In the 1970s, fighting for a celestial commons **was a pillar of developing countries’ struggle to create a more equitable economic order**. Starting in the 1960s, a coalition of underdeveloped nations, many recently decolonized, asserted their strength in numbers in the United Nations by forming a caucus known as the Group of 77. In the early 1970s, this bloc announced its intention to establish a “new international economic order,” which found its expression in a series of UN treaties governing international regions, like sea beds and outer space, that they hoped would spread the economic benefits of the commons more equitably, with special attention to less developed nations. For these countries — as well as for the nervous US business interests that opposed them — their plan to “socialize the moon,” as some put it at the time, was the first step toward a more egalitarian distribution of wealth and power in human society. It will be years before the industrialization of outer space is economically viable, if it ever is. **But the legal framework that would shape that transition is being worked out now.** The ASTEROIDS Act was submitted on behalf of those who would benefit most from a laissez-faire extraterrestrial system. If we leave the discussion about celestial property rights to the business interests that monopolize it now, any dream of economic democracy in outer space will go the way of jetpacks, flying cars, and the fifteen-hour workweek. As Below, So Above Left critics of space proposals make the same mistakes as the most techno-utopian starry-eyed industrialists. From the point of view of the latter, celestial development will provide ultimate salvation to the human race by making us a multi-planetary species; the former see outer space as an infinite void essentially antagonistic to human life, interest in which is only orchestrated for cynical political ends. Each side misconceives extraterrestrial pursuits as qualitatively different from economic activities on Earth. Venturing into space may be a greater technical challenge; it may cost more, be more dangerous, or be a mistaken use of resources. But to understand these prospects in existential terms rather than as a new episode in the familiar history of industrial development and resource extraction — with all the political-strategic dangers and organizing opportunities that come with them — is to be blinded by the space romanticism that is a peculiar vestige of Cold War geopolitics. Whether and how we should go to space are not profound philosophical questions, at least not primarily. What’s at stake is not just the “stature of man,” as Hannah Arendt put it, but a political-economic struggle over the future of the celestial commons, which could result in a dramatic intensification of inequality — or a small step for humankind toward a more egalitarian state of affairs on our current planet. Undoubtedly, there are good reasons to be skeptical about going to space. Some have argued that it shifts attention away from solving the difficult problems of economic and environmental justice on Earth — think of Gil Scott-Heron’s spoken-word poem “Whitey on the Moon,” which juxtaposes the deprivation of the American underclass with the vast resources diverted to space. Scott-Heron’s critique is powerful, but it’s important to remember that he was denouncing an unjust economic system. He wasn’t issuing a timeless condemnation of space pursuits as such. Whether the aims of providing for all and developing outer space are mutually exclusive depends on the political forces on the ground. We might also question whether mining asteroids would be detrimental to our current planet’s environment in the medium term. If we don’t find a renewable way to blast off into outer space, the exploitation of these resources could lead to an intensification of, not a move away from, the fossil-fuel economy. If the environmental impact of space mining turns out to be large, it would be analogous to fracking — a technological development that gives us access to new resources, but with devastating ecological side effects — and ought to be opposed on similar grounds. On the other hand, some speculate that mining the Moon’s Helium-3 reserves, for example, could provide an abundant source of clean energy. The terrestrial environmental impact of space activity remains an open question that must be explored before we stake our hopes on the economic development of outer space. Philosophers have suggested that we might have ethical duties to preserve the “natural” states of celestial bodies. Others fear that our activities might unknowingly wipe out alien microbial life. We should remain sensitive to the aesthetic and cultural value of outer space, as well as the potential for extinction and the exhaustion of resources misleadingly proclaimed to be limitless. But if the Left rejects space on these grounds we abandon its fate to the will of private interests. These concerns shouldn’t cause us to write off space altogether — rather, they should motivate us even more to fight for the careful, democratic use of celestial resources for the benefit of all. There is also reason to be cautiously optimistic about extending economic activity to outer space. For one, the resources there — whether platinum-group metals useful in electronics, or fuels that could be central to the semi-independent functioning of an outer space economy — have the potential to raise our standards of living. Imagine, a superabundance of asteroid metals that are scarce on Earth, like platinum, driving the sort of automation that could expand output and reduce the need to work. Of course, there’s nothing inevitable about the benefits of productivity gains being distributed widely, as we’ve seen in the United States over the past forty years. This is a problem not limited to space, and the myth of the “final frontier” must not distract us from the already existing problems of wealth and income distribution on Earth. While the industrialization of the solar system isn’t a panacea for all economic ills, it does offer a significant organizing opportunity, since it will force a confrontation over the future of the vast celestial commons. The democratic possibilities of such a struggle have been recognized before: one conservative American citizens’ group in the 1970s called a progressive UN space treaty a **“vital component of Third World demands for massive redistribution of wealth so as ultimately to equate the economic positions of the two hemispheres**.” Many in the 1970s identified the egalitarian potential in the development of outer space, and the Left must not overlook it today. Back to the Future One of the Group of 77’s major goals was to apply some of the redistributive functions of the welfare state on a global scale. In 1974, that coalition issued a “Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order,” which called for a fairer system of global trade and resource distribution, one that could alleviate historical inequality. One of the battlegrounds for the Group of 77 was the negotiation over extraterrestrial property rights. The Outer Space Treaty of 1967, signed by over ninety countries in the heat of the first sprint to the moon, rejected the notion that celestial bodies fell under the legal principle of res nullius — meaning that outer space was empty territory that could be claimed for a nation through occupation. It forbade the “national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means” of outer space. But the treaty was not just restrictive. It also had a positive requirement for extraterrestrial conduct: “The exploration and use of outer space,” it declared, “shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and shall be the province of all mankind.” However, nobody knew what this would mean in practice: was it a call for egalitarian economics, or an empty proclamation of liberal benevolence? Complicating matters, it was unclear whether the extraction and sale of natural resources from outer space fell under the category of “appropriation,” which had been forbidden. And what exactly was this benefit to all countries that our outer space pursuits were supposed to bring? How would its distribution be enforced? Which interpretation would win out was more a question of political power than of esoteric legal maneuvers. The Group of 77 took an activist approach to these issues, proposing amendments to the Outer Space Treaty regime that would spread the economic benefits of the celestial commons to less developed countries that did not have the resources to get to space, let alone mine it. Thus in 1970, the Argentine delegate to the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space proposed to legally designate outer space and its resources “the common heritage of mankind.” First applied in negotiations over maritime law a few years earlier, the “common heritage” concept was intended to give legal grounding to the peaceful international governance of the commons. As an alternative to the laissez-faire approach advocated by many private interests, the “common heritage” principle also **provided a legal framework for the democratic distribution of revenues derived from the international commons.** In 1973, the Indian delegation to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space tried to put this idea into celestial practice, proposing an amendment to the Outer Space Treaty that called for equitable sharing of space benefits, particularly with developing countries. The Brazilian delegate to the committee summarized the group’s position: “It does not seem justifiable . . . that space activities . . . should evolve in a climate of total laissez-faire, which would conceal under the cloak of rationality new ways for an abusive exercise of power by those who exert control over technology.” Despite opposition from both the Soviet Union and the United States, the final draft of this new outer space agreement included a version of the “common heritage of mankind” doctrine. When the finalized treaty was brought to the US in 1979 for ratification, business groups balked. The vision of egalitarian galactic democracy suggested by the document was rightly seen as contrary to narrow American interests. The United Technologies Corp­oration, a designer and manufacturer of aircrafts and other heavy machinery (including the Black Hawk helicopter) took out a large advertisement in the Washington Post and a number of other newspapers, warning that the treaty would establish an “OPEC-like monopoly, require mandatory transfer of technology, and impose high international taxes on profits as a way of shifting wealth from the developed to the less developed countries.” The president of the corporation, Alexander Haig, also testified against the treaty in Congress in 1979, warning that “the common heritage concept expressed in the treaty underlies Third World efforts directed at a fundamental redistribution of global wealth.” Haig was hired as Ronald Reagan’s secretary of state in 1981, and political opposition to the bill forced NASA’s chief counsel to abandon defense of the treaty. In the end, the Moon Treaty, as the 1979 document came to be known, failed to gain more than a few signatories, leaving open the question of how the benefits of outer space were to be shared. In 1988, a different coalition of developing countries added the question of space benefits to the UN outer space committee’s agenda. But they failed to gain traction, and by 1993 they had to concede, as two long-time delegates to the outer space committee put it, that “their attempt [at] a redistributive revolution in international space cooperation had failed.” The conversation had shifted from the distribution of economic benefits to a narrower emphasis on international scientific coordination and development aid. This retreat culminated in a 1996 declaration that limited the interpretation of the “benefit” clause of the Outer Space Treaty to vague promises to help less developed countries improve their space technologies. The ultimate failure of the Moon Treaty was representative of broader developments in international politics, as the influence of the Group of 77 declined. The fact that the structural adjustment policies of the Washington Consensus won out over the Third World’s redistributive goals was the result of contingent factors — the oil shock’s exacerbation of debt crises, for instance — but it also indicated the limits of the power the Group of 77 had wielded in the first place. In October 2014, the UN outer space committee issued a press release summarizing its most recent session. Its headline: “Outer Space Benefits Must Not Be Allowed to Widen Global Gap between Economic, Social Inequality, Fourth Committee Told.” Despite paying lip service to its past concerns, the outer space committee now emphasizes equal access, voluntary technology transfers, and modest development aid over the direct redistributive approach it took in the 1970s. This shift from struggling for equality of outcome to equality of opportunity, with no accountability mechanism in place to ensure even the latter, represents a striking regression. The egalitarian dreams of the “revolution of the colonized” in the UN, as it was called at the time, have been forgotten. The Empire Strikes Back Recent US plans for outer space development, shaped overwhelmingly by Silicon Valley’s intuitions and capital, stand in stark contrast to the futuristic democratic dreams of the Group of 77. The most prominent of these entrepreneurial visions has been Elon Musk’s plan to colonize Mars. For now, international law seems to unequivocally forbid territorial claims on Mars and other celestial bodies. The legal status of resource extraction, on the other hand, remains an open question. A vocal group of entrepreneurs is hoping to set a precedent for the private appropriation of natural resources from asteroids, without internationally redistributive obligations. Planetary Resources, an asteroid-mining company whose backers include Larry Page, Eric Schmidt, and James Cameron, plans to launch satellites to prospect for valuable asteroids in the next two years. Another US firm, Deep Space Industries, will launch exploratory satellites as soon as next year. These entrepreneurs hope to extract the valuable platinum-group metals, essential for manufacturing electronics, that are rare on Earth. Sensationalist articles on space mining will tell you about an asteroid worth $20 trillion. Investors also believe that asteroids might provide water that could be broken down into oxygen and hydrogen in space, yielding air for astronauts and fuel for their ships. This could facilitate a dramatic acceleration in the economic development of outer space. The CEO of Deep Space Industries said he hopes asteroids near Earth will be “like the Iron Range of Minnesota was for the Detroit car industry last century — a key resource located near where it was needed. In this case, metals and fuel from asteroids can expand the in-space industries of this century. That is our strategy.” Another entrepreneur called the industrialization of outer space the “biggest wealth-creation opportunity in modern history.” Before this value can be generated, however, the legal wrinkles have to be ironed out. And so in the summer of 2014, the ASTEROIDS Act was introduced in the House of Representatives to “promote the right of United States commercial entities to explore and utilize resources from asteroids in outer space, in accordance with the existing international obligations of the United States, free from harmful interference, and to transfer or sell such resources.” The legislation was intended to clarify US interpretations of international space law, explicitly granting American companies the right to extract asteroid resources and bring them to market. The conclusion of Congress’s last session means that the bill will have to be reintroduced for it to move forward, and it is uncertain exactly when and how this will happen. But its appearance marked another clear attempt to unilaterally push international norms toward the free extraction of outer space resources, with limited democratic responsibilities attached — and it will not be the last. Joanne Gabrynowicz, editor emerita of the Journal of Space Law, said that an adviser to Planetary Resources had drafted the bill. Deep Space Industries also sent a letter supporting it directly to the space subcommittee of the House of Representatives. Moreover, Congressman Bill Posey, a cosponsor of the act, represents Florida, a state that Gabrynowicz pointed out has recently been forced to try to attract commercial space business — a direct response to the economic hardship caused by the decommissioning NASA’s space shuttle program. Such extraterrestrial special interests will no doubt continue to exert legislative pressure. In addition to asteroids, companies are investing millions in mining the moon, despite legal uncertainties. One such company, Moon Express, has already received a $10 million data-sharing contract from NASA. One of that company’s founders, a former dot-com billionaire, told the Los Angeles Times: There is strong legal precedent and consensus of “finders, keepers” for resources that are liberated through private investment, and the same will be true on the moon. You don’t have to own land to have ownership of resources you unlock from it. Moon Express will use existing precedents of peaceful presence and exploration set by the US government forty years ago. **This redeployment of the finders-keepers principle is anathema to the redistributive regime imagined by the Group of 77.** Private companies like Planetary Resources and Moon Express, with support from the federal government, are betting not only on the viability of space industrialization, **but also on their ability to push through a legal regime that will validate their property claims on their terms.** But the universalization of laissez-faire is not inevitable. Final Frontier Thesis The history of the Moon Treaty serves as a reminder that outer space is not just a screen onto which we project techno-utopian fantasies or existential anxieties about the infinite void. It has been, and will continue to be, a site of concrete struggle over economic power. The politics of the present are undoubtedly different from those of the 1970s. The egalitarian project of the Group of 77 has given way to BRICS-style market liberalism. Global capital has gained power where international labor efforts have stagnated. Domestic inequalities have skyrocketed. The rapid proliferation of information technologies has temporarily masked the reality that the future, to paraphrase William Gibson, is not being very evenly distributed. Without international political organization to challenge galactic market fundamentalism**, a twenty-first century space odyssey could mean the concentration of even more wealth and income in the hands of a few powerful corporations and the most technologically advanced countries**. At the same time, and for the same reasons, the prospect of preserving the final frontier as a celestial commons presents an opportunity **to fight for a more democratic political economy.** Sharing the benefits of the celestial commons **is key to expanding democracy to a galactic scale**. One time-tested means of distributing the benefits of natural-resource extraction universally is the sovereign wealth fund, which Alaska uses to deliver oil revenue to its residents. As an international commons, outer space offers an opportunity to experiment with such redistributive mechanisms beyond the traditional confines of the nation-state. Organizing around an issue of such scale may seem utopian, but it’s also necessary. From regulating capital to mitigating climate change, the problems that confront us are inherently global in scope and require commensurate strategies. At the very least, the global left ought to demand the creation of an independent Galactic Wealth Fund to manage the proceeds of outer space resources on behalf of all human beings. At first, it would amount to little, divided up among all of us. But as the space economy grows relative to the terrestrial one, social dividends from the Galactic Wealth Fund could provide the basis **for a truly universal basic income.** This is just one component of a broader platform for galactic democracy that must be developed collectively. Extraterrestrial economic justice — not just shiny technological advances — will be central to any truly egalitarian politics in the twenty-first century. It’s time to start building a democratic futurism.

## Role of the ballot

#### We should endorse anti-neoliberal pedagogy in the debate space – it is the only way to produce new ideas and escape the military-industrial-academic-cultural complex

Giroux 14 [Henry A. Giroux (Chair for Scholarship in the Public Interest​, The Paulo Freire Distinguished Scholar in Critical Pedagogy), April 15, 2014, "Neoliberalism and the machinery of disposability," Philosophers for Change, https://philosophersforchange.org/2014/04/15/neoliberalism-and-the-machinery-of-disposability/, 6-28-2019]

Such movements are not simply about reclaiming space but also about producing new ideas, generating new conversations, and introducing a new political language. While there has been considerable coverage in the progressive media since 2001 given to the violence being waged against the movement protesters in Brazil, the United States, Greece and elsewhere, it is important to situate such violence within a broader set of categories that enables a critical understanding of not only the underlying social, economic and political forces at work in such assaults, but also makes it possible to reflect critically on the distinctiveness of the current historical period in which they are taking place. For example, it is difficult to address such state-sponsored violence against young people without analyzing the devolution of the social state, emergence of a politics of disposability, and the corresponding rise of the warfare and punishing state. The merging of the military-industrial-academic-cultural complex and unbridled corporate power points to the need for strategies that address what is specific about the current warfare state and the neoliberal project and how different interests, modes of power, social relations, public pedagogies, and economic configurations come together to shape its politics of domestic terrorism, cruelty, and zones of disposability. Such a conjuncture is invaluable politically in that it provides a theoretical opening for making the practices of the neoliberal revolution visible to organize resistance to its ideologies, policies and modes of governance. It also points to the conceptual power of making clear that history remains an open horizon that cannot be dismissed through appeals to the end of history or end of ideology.[20] It is precisely through the indeterminate nature of history that resistance becomes possible and politics refuses any guarantees and remains open. A number of neoliberal societies, including the United States, have become addicted to violence. War provides jobs, profits, political payoffs, research funds, and forms of political and economic power that reach into every aspect of society. As war becomes a mode of sovereignty and rule, it erodes the distinction between war and peace. Increasingly fed by a moral and political frenzy, warlike values produce and endorse shared fears as the primary register of social relations. Shared fears and the media-induced panics that feed them produce more than a culture of fear. Such hysteria also feeds the growing militarization of the police, who increasingly use their high-tech scanners, surveillance cameras and toxic chemicals on anyone who engages in peaceful protests against the warfare and corporate state. Images abound in the mainstream media of such abuses. As a mode of public pedagogy, a state of permanent war needs willing subjects to abide by its values, ideology and narratives of fear and violence. Such legitimation is largely provided through a market-driven culture addicted to production of consumerism, militarism, and organized violence, largely circulated through various registers of popular culture that extend from high fashion and Hollywood movies to the creation of violent video games and music concerts sponsored by the Pentagon. The market-driven spectacle of war demands a culture of conformity, quiet intellectuals and a largely passive republic of consumers. But it also needs subjects who find intense pleasure in the spectacle of violence.

# Disclosure theory

#### Interp: Debaters must open source all previously read positions on the janfeb topic on the 2021-2022 NDCA LD wiki

#### Violation: screenshot in the doc – they have none

Graphical user interface, text, application, chat or text message

Description automatically generated

#### Standards:

#### 1] Level Playing Field – big schools can go around and scout and collect flows but independents are left in the dark so open source is key for them to prep- they tell you what args debaters going for so you can best prepare. Accessibility first and independent voter – it's an impact multiplier.

#### 2] Argument Education – open source helps novices understand which positions are read by good debaters and how they’re read and help with brainstorming potential 1NCs vs affs – helps compensate for kids who can't afford coaches to prep out affs.

#### 3] Pre-round prep – they have infinite prep before the round and without open source I have nothing – key to fairness since they have a massive lead in prep that makes it super hard for me to prep – key to education since without my prep we can’t actually learn about the topic

#### Fairness and education are voters – debate’s a game that needs rules to evaluate it and education gives us portable skills for life like research and thinking.

#### Drop the debater –it deters future abuse and sets a positive norm.

#### Use competing interps – a) reasonability invites arbitrary judge intervention since we don’t know your bs meter

No RVIs – a) illogical – you shouldn’t win for being fair – it’s a litmus test for engaging in substance, b) norming – I can’t concede the counterinterp if I realize I’m wrong which forces me to argue for bad norms, c) chilling effect – forces you to split your 2AR so you can’t collapse and misconstrue the 2NR

#### Also, affirming is harder – all theory arguments have an implicit aff flex standard because of huge side bias – outweighs neg fairness arguments unless they prove how it uniquely outweighs the disparity since it’s structural.

Shah 19 Sachin “A STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF SIDE-BIAS ON THE 2019 JANUARY-FEBRUARY LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE TOPIC” NSD, 15 February 2019. <http://nsdupdate.com/2019/a-statistical-analysis-of-side-bias-on-the-2019-january-february-lincoln-douglas-debate-topic/> SJCP//JG

To further quantify the side-bias, the proportion of negative wins when the affirmative was favored (p1) can be compared with the proportion of affirmative wins when the negative is favored (p2). Ideally the difference between the proportions would be 0; however, p1 = 34.84% while p2 = 28.77, a staggering 6.07% difference. Now the question is whether this difference is statistically significant. In order to determine the answer, a two-proportion z-test was used. The null hypothesis is p1 – p2 = 0 , because that means both sides are able to overcome the debating level skew equally. The alternative hypothesis is then p1 – p2 > 0, meaning the negative is able to overcome the skew more than the affirmative is able, demonstrating a side-bias. This two-proportion z-test rejected the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative (p-value < 0.0001). There is sufficient evidence that the negative is able to overcome the skew more often than the affirmative can. This implies there is a less than 0.01% chance that there is no side-bias because it demonstrates the higher proportion of negative wins when the affirmative is favored is significant. In short, the negative has a greater ability to win difficult rounds than the affirmative does, which indicates there exists a skew in the negative’s favor. This analysis is statistically rigorous and relevant in several aspects: (A) The p-value is less than the alpha. (B) The data is on the current January-February topic, meaning it’s relevant to rounds these months [2]. (C) The data represents a diversity of debating and judging styles across the country. (D) This analysis accounts for disparities in debating skill level. (E) Type I error was reduced by choosing a small alpha level. The combination of these points validates this analysis. As a final note, it is also interesting to look at the trend over multiple topics. In the rounds from 93 TOC bid distributing tournaments (2017 – 2019 YTD), the negative won 52.99% of ballots (p-value < 0.0001) and 54.63% of upset rounds (p-value < 0.0001). This suggests the bias might be structural, and not topic specific, as this data spans six different topics. Therefore, this analysis confirms that affirming is in fact harder again on the 2019 January-February topic [3]. So don’t lose the flip!