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#### Debt ceiling passes now and solves collapse, but floor time is limited and avoiding new fights is key

Zhou 10/7 [Li, politics and policy reporter for Vox, “The debt ceiling fight is far from over” https://www.vox.com/22711441/debt-ceiling-congress-december]

Lawmakers have ended another standoff over the debt ceiling — at least temporarily.

On Thursday, the Senate voted 50-48 to increase the debt ceiling (a legal cap to how much the US can borrow) by $480 billion, an action the House is expected to take too. That money will enable the US government to cover its loan obligations until early December, when Congress will once again have to either pass a longer-term increase or another stopgap suspension.

The current agreement is the product of a weekslong stalemate on the issue that saw Democrats trying to pressure the GOP into giving up their roadblock of an increase or suspension of the debt ceiling, and Republicans repeatedly refusing to do so.

The impasse had high stakes, as the US faced a rapidly approaching default deadline. According to Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, the US could run out of money as early as October 18. Passing that deadline without an increase or suspension would have likely triggered a massive domestic and international economic collapse.

Ultimately, Republican senators decided to cooperate with Democrats, for now. However, in approving this short-term fix, lawmakers have failed to address the issues that brought them to a stalemate in the first place. They’ve now set themselves up for another dangerous impasse when this bill expires after December 3.

The standoff, briefly explained

Republicans have been intent on using the debt ceiling to make Democrats look bad.

Prior to their offer to back an increase this week, Republicans had not only said that they wouldn’t vote for a suspension but also that they would be blocking Democrats’ attempts to approve one using regular legislative order. If Republicans didn’t previously block the vote, Democrats would have been able to pass it with 51 votes — but because they did, the measure required 60 to advance.

Instead, Republicans pushed Democrats to use budget reconciliation — another process that would enable them to raise the debt limit with just 51 votes — to increase the cap on their own. Democrats were reluctant to use budget reconciliation both because it can be a lengthy and convoluted process and because it would have required them to specify how much they are raising the debt limit (something they ended up having to do anyway for the December increase).

Effectively, Republicans wanted Democrats on the record as having increased the debt limit by trillions of dollars in order to portray them during the midterms as big spenders. Additionally, Republicans argued that because Democrats are working on a partisan basis to pass an expansive social spending bill, they should take care of any debt ceiling increases on a partisan basis, too.

“Republicans’ position is simple,” Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell wrote to President Joe Biden on Monday. “We have no list of demands. For two and a half months, we have simply warned that since your party wishes to govern alone, it must handle the debt limit alone as well.”

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) talks with reporters on October 7. The Senate voted to increase the debt ceiling, enabling the US government to cover its loan obligations until early December. Win McNamee/Getty Images

Democrats, on the other hand, have argued that Republicans ought to work with them to pass a suspension or increase, or simply get out of the way. One, because avoiding a gigantic economic collapse is in everyone’s interest, and the minority party hasn’t typically blocked action to this degree in the past. And two, because both Democrats and Republicans are responsible for the actual debt that this legislation would address.

Both points are true: The debt grew nearly $8 trillion during the Trump administration as a result of massive tax cuts and pandemic relief. In that time frame, Republicans and Democrats both voted to suspend the debt limit three times. But that didn’t sway Republican lawmakers.

Because Republicans had refused to give up their opposition and Democrats were intent on keeping the pressure on the GOP, the two sides were at an impasse until this week.

How the debt deal came together

On Wednesday, McConnell reversed his position and told Democrats that Republicans would not block a short-term increase to the debt limit into December.

Adamant that they would not pursue reconciliation to raise the ceiling (and, given the deadline, likely out of time to try doing so) Democrats raised the possibility of creating a carve-out in the filibuster rules that would also allow them to pass debt ceiling measures with the 51 Democratic votes they have, rather than the 60 votes filibuster rules require.

That latter option appeared to be gaining momentum this week, although key moderates like Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) were still wary of it. As a sign of its traction, however, Biden — who has traditionally been cautious of altering filibuster rules — called carving out a special debt-ceiling-related exemption to the filibuster a “real possibility.”

That possibility may have spurred McConnell’s decision to cave for the time being. According to CNN’s Manu Raju, McConnell was worried about potential threats to the filibuster when he offered Democrats a deal to increase the debt ceiling for now.

The filibuster has allowed McConnell to block a range of Democratic priorities — from police to voting reforms — despite his party being in the minority. The assumption is that exempting the debt ceiling from the filibuster would increase pressure on Democrats to do so for other issues Republicans oppose, like expanding protections for voting rights.

For now, the filibuster stands. And the GOP’s move helps prevent the US from going into default in the near term. It does little to resolve the central conflict at hand, however. Republicans are still insisting, after all, that Democrats use budget reconciliation to approve a longer-term debt ceiling increase on a partisan basis.

Democrats, meanwhile, are refusing to do so and may consider a filibuster carve-out again in December. “We’re not doing it on reconciliation,” Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA) emphasized earlier this week.

There will be more debt drama in December

The use of the debt limit as political leverage is nothing new.

As Republicans have been fond of pointing out, Biden was among the Democratic senators who voted against raising it in 2006 in order to send a message about his disagreement with Republican policies. In that scenario, though, Democrats did not filibuster the legislation or prevent Republicans from approving it with a simple majority. Additionally, Republicans have previously withheld votes for debt ceiling increases in exchange for policy concessions, something that’s not the case this time around.

This year, as Republicans emphasized, they took issue with the debt limit in order to simply make a point, a tough position to negotiate with.

Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) speaks to reporters as the Senate was nearing a deal on a short-term increase to the debt ceiling. Bloomberg via Getty Images

This short-term fix does help Democrats in that it allows them to focus their time and energies instead on a larger social spending bill they’ve struggled to complete.

“McConnell caved,” Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) told reporters. “And now we’re going to spend our time doing child care, health care, and fighting climate change.”

But the larger disagreements between Republicans and Democrats regarding how to move forward remain.

And by procrastinating on solving them, lawmakers have set themselves up for a difficult December. The new deadline to address the debt ceiling also coincides with another deadline to pass more government appropriations — that is, the money needed to keep the government functioning.

That means Congress will find itself in a tough spot yet again in just a few months. Not only will lawmakers have to solve their debt ceiling disagreements and stave off economic disaster, but they’ll have to do so while fighting over how to avoid a government shutdown.

#### Manchin and Sinema would fight the plan – that’s a massive floor time suck

Harold 21 [Zack, staf reporter for The Guardian, “US minimum wage activists face their toughest foe: Democrat Joe Manchin” https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/feb/22/us-15-dollar-minimum-wage-joe-manchin-west-virginia]

Hopes that the US will finally increase the federal minimum wage for the first time in nearly 12 years face a seemingly unlikely opponent: a Democrat senator from one of the poorest states in the union.

Joe Manchin of West Virginia, the state’s former governor and the Democrats’ most conservative senator, has long opposed his party’s progressive wing and is on record saying he does not support increasing the minimum wage from $7.25 to $15 an hour, the first increase since 2009. “I’m supportive of basically having something that’s responsible and reasonable,” he told the Hill. He has advocated for a rise to $11.

Industry lobbying allied to Republican and – until relatively recently – Democrat opposition has locked the US’s minimum wage at $7.25 since the last raise in 2009.

'Hopefully it makes history': Fight for $15 closes in on mighty win for US workers

None of this has found favor with some low-wage workers in a state where an estimated 278,734 West Virginians lived in poverty in 2019, 16% of the population and the sixth highest poverty rate in the US.

Last Thursday Manchin reaffirmed his stance during a virtual meeting with members of the West Virginia Poor People’s Campaign (WVPPC), a group pushing for an increased minimum wage and other policy changes that would benefit the working class.

That meeting was closed to the media but at an online press conference immediately afterward, participants said Manchin refused to budge. “He was kind of copping out,” said WVPPC member Brianna Griffith, a restaurant worker and whitewater rafting guide who, due to exemptions for tipped workers, only makes $2.62 an hour.

As a result of her sub-minimum wage job, Griffith received only $67 a week in unemployment benefits until that ran out in August. She lost her house and was forced to move in with her grandmother. Although she has now returned to work, business is slow and she estimates tips have fallen by 75%.

When Griffith told Manchin about her plight on Thursday, she said he asked about the $600 stimulus check approved by Congress in December. “He seemed to think that $600 … was enough to get me by,” she said. “I feel like he’s got his head in the clouds and he doesn’t understand what’s happening to poor people in West Virginia.”

Despite Manchin’s insistence on an $11 minimum wage, according to MIT’s living wage calculator, even a $15 minimum wage would only provide a living wage for single West Virginians without children. For a West Virginia family with two working parents and two children, both parents would need to be making at least $20.14 an hour to make ends meet.

Griffith said if the minimum wage was increased to $15 an hour, “I could afford to live on my own. I could afford a car that’s not 25 years old.”

The Rev Dr William Barber, co-chair of the national Poor People’s Campaign, was in last week’s meeting and said Manchin agreed the current $7.25 minimum wage was “not enough”.

But Barber said he was “amazed” Manchin could hear from people like Griffith and still oppose increasing the minimum wage to $15.

“What he is suggesting would just further keep people in poverty and hurting,” he said.

Raising the minimum wage was a key part of Democrats’ 2020 platform. The former presidential candidate and now Senate budget committee chairman, Bernie Sanders, has referred to the current $7.25 rate as “a starvation wage”.

The wage hike, formally known as the Raise the Wage Act of 2021, is now part of a proposed $1.9tn Covid-19 relief bill. The measure would incrementally raise the minimum wage from $7.25 to $15 over the next four years.

With only a razor-thin majority in the Senate, all 50 Democrat senators need to be onboard for the bill to pass. But in addition to Manchin, Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona has told Politico she does not want the minimum wage increase to be part of the Covid relief package.

#### Debt default is the easiest way to wreck the US economy—ruins the US dollar and financial reputation

Egan 9/8 [Matt Egan is an award-winning reporter at CNN, covering business, the economy and financial markets across CNN's television and digital platforms, "'Financial Armageddon.' What's at stake if the debt limit isn't raised", 9/8/21, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/08/business/debt-ceiling-default-explained/index.html>]

The easiest way to spark a financial crisis and wreck the US economy would be to allow the federal government to default on its debt. It would be an epic, unforced error — and millions of Americans would pay the price.

And yet that unlikely situation is once again being contemplated. If Congress doesn't raise the limit on federal borrowing the federal government will most likely run out of cash and extraordinary measures next month, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen warned lawmakers on Wednesday.

In short, a default would be an economic cataclysm. Interest rates would spike, the stock market would crater, retirement accounts would take a beating, the value of the US dollar would erode and the financial reputation of the world's only superpower would be tarnished.

"It would be financial Armageddon," Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, told CNN. "It's complete craziness to even contemplate the idea of not paying our debt on time."

But it's a crazy world.

Lawmakers in Washington are again playing chicken with America's creditworthiness. And the path to raising the debt ceiling is not clear.

Even though Congress has in the past raised the debt ceiling with a bipartisan vote, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell vowed in July that Republicans will not vote to raise the debt ceiling.

JPMorgan Chase (JPM) CEO Jamie Dimon urged lawmakers not to even think about going down this path again. During a hearing in May, Dimon said an actual default "could cause an immediate, literally cascading catastrophe of unbelievable proportions and damage America for 100 years."

'Irreparable damage'

In her letter to Congress, Yellen said history shows that waiting "until the last minute" to suspend or increase the debt limit "can cause serious harm" to business and consumer confidence, raise borrowing costs for taxpayers and hurt America's credit rating.

"A delay that calls into question the federal government's ability to meet all its obligations would likely cause irreparable damage to the U.S. economy and global financial markets," Yellen wrote.

A US default would undermine the bedrock of the modern global financial system.

"We pay our debt. That's what distinguishes the United States from almost every other country on the planet," Zandi of Moody's said.

Because of America's long track record of paying its debt, it's very cheap for Washington to borrow. But a default would force ratings companies to downgrade US debt and shatter that borrowing advantage. Markets plunged in 2011 when that debt ceiling standoff caused Standard & Poor's to downgrade America's credit rating.

Higher borrowing costs would make it much harder for Washington to borrow to pay for infrastructure, the climate crisis or to fight future recessions. And refinancing America's nearly $29 trillion mountain of existing debt would become that much more expensive. Interest expenses, which totaled $345 billion in fiscal 2020, would quickly rival what Washington spends on defense.

#### Extinction

Joshua Zoffer 20, Investor at Cove Hill Partners, Fellow at New America, JD Candidate at Yale University Law School, AB from Harvard University, “To End Forever War, Keep the Dollar Globally Dominant”, The New Republic, 2/3/2020, https://newrepublic.com/article/156417/end-forever-war-keep-dollar-globally-dominant

In early 2016, Obama Treasury Secretary Jack Lew cautioned that the dollar’s dominance as a global currency rested, in part, on the U.S. government’s reluctance to fully weaponize it. If foreign markets and governments “feel that we will deploy sanctions without sufficient justification or for inappropriate reasons,” he warned, “we should not be surprised if they look for ways to avoid doing business in the United States or in U.S. dollars.” Lew’s case stemmed from the more fundamental view that the dollar’s international role is “a source of tremendous strength for our economy, a benefit for U.S. companies and a driver of U.S. global leadership”—in other words, a role worth keeping. This view is emblematic of American financial governance since the Second World War. U.S. economic analysts, especially at the Treasury, have jealously guarded the dollar’s role and the many benefits it offers: the ability to run large deficits at low cost and disproportionate influence over the structure of the global economy, among others. Yet in their recent article in The New Republic, David Adler and Daniel Bessner argue the U.S. should abandon these advantages. In their view, the dollar’s role has encouraged American militarism and should be relinquished to curb such behavior. Dollar hegemony is not without cost, but to renounce it would be a profound mistake. Adler and Bessner’s view neglects the sizable economic benefits the dollar’s role confers on the U.S., as well as its possible use as an antidote to military adventurism. It ignores the enormous good that can be done with deficit spending, much of which has gone to the American military but could instead fund progressive programs. And it elides the inability of the U.S. and its global trading partners to shift away from dollar dominance without creating worldwide financial distress. Adler and Bessner are right that the U.S. has misused its privilege, but Washington should not abandon it; rather, American leaders should seek to transform it. Generations of American policymakers have been right to protect the dollar’s key currency role for economic reasons. Most notably, dollar hegemony affords the U.S. the ability to run large and prolonged budget and balance-of-payments deficits. The dollar represents 62 percent of allocated foreign exchange reserves, is used to invoice and settle roughly half of world trade, and accounts for 42 percent of global payments. Because governments, banks, and businesses worldwide need lots of dollars, the world market always stands ready to absorb new U.S.-dollar-denominated debt without charging higher interest rates. Adler and Bessner correctly point out that the rest of the world considers the dollar’s role as the world’s reserve currency to be an “exorbitant privilege,” a term coined in the 1960s by then French Finance Minister Valéry Giscard D’Estaing. The ability to spend beyond its means has enabled the U.S. to fund its impressive military might, whether one views that power as the fountainhead of Pax Americana or the source of illegitimate military adventurism. But these economic benefits go beyond just deficits. The demand for dollars also pushes up the dollar’s value against other currencies, enhancing American purchasing power and offering consumers access to imports on the cheap. The dollar’s role also means American firms rarely need to do business in foreign currencies, reducing transaction costs and exchange-rate risks. More broadly, America’s central economic role gives it outsize influence at crucial moments. At the height of the financial crisis that began in 2008, the Federal Reserve was able to inject vital liquidity into the global financial system by selectively offering dollar swap lines to trusted foreign central banks. Dollar hegemony enabled the U.S. to act swiftly, effectively, and on its own terms. In addition, the dollar’s role offers a potent alternative to kinetic military action as a means of pursuing foreign policy objectives. The dollar’s broad use means access to dollar liquidity—which in turn requires access to the U.S. financial system—is essential for foreign governments and businesses. For foreign banks, especially, being cut off from dollar access is essentially a death sentence. That makes sanctions that do so a powerful tool in the international arena. In 2005, for example, the U.S. used the dollar to strike a devastating blow against North Korea without firing a single shot or even formally enacting sanctions. Using authority provided by Section 311 of the Patriot Act, the Department of the Treasury crippled Banco Delta Asia, a bank accused of facilitating illegal activity by the North Korean government, by merely threatening to cut off its access to the American financial system. Deposit outflows began within days; within weeks the bank was placed under government administration to avoid a full collapse. Pyongyang was hit hard, as other banks ceased their business with it to avoid meeting the same fate. Similarly, though the Trump administration has worked hard to undo it, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran to limit the development of nuclear weapons was made possible, in part, by painful dollar sanctions that brought Iran to the table. Far from being a proximate cause of military conflict, the dollar’s central global role has often been used to contain adversaries without military intervention. Still, skeptics are right to point out that the dollar’s role has indirectly funded American interventionism and that dollar sanctions have been overused, provoking the ire of American allies. But these facts suggest we should use our dollar power to forge a more progressive U.S. order, not abandon the advantage altogether. America’s exorbitant privilege need not fund warships and missiles: The same low-interest borrowing could be used to fund a new universal health care system, expand access to higher education, or pursue any number of large-scale social policy objectives, including financing global public goods that no other country or consortium of countries is prepared to fund, such as climate change mitigation.

# Case

## Framing

#### the standard is maximizing expected wellbeing

#### 1 – Extinction o/ws nearly anything under any framework, even moral uncertainty – infinite future generations

Pummer 15 — (Theron Pummer, Junior Research Fellow in Philosophy at St. Anne's College, University of Oxford, “Moral Agreement on Saving the World“, Practical Ethics University of Oxford, 5-18-2015, Available Online at http://blog.practicalethics.ox.ac.uk/2015/05/moral-agreement-on-saving-the-world/, accessed 7-2-2018, HKR-AM) \*\*we do not endorse ableist language=

There appears to be lot of disagreement in moral philosophy. Whether these many apparent disagreements are deep and irresolvable, I believe there is at least one thing it is reasonable to agree on right now, whatever general moral view we adopt: that it is very important to reduce the risk that all intelligent beings on this planet are eliminated by an enormous catastrophe, such as a nuclear war. How we might in fact try to reduce such existential risks is discussed elsewhere. My claim here is only that we – whether we’re consequentialists, deontologists, or virtue ethicists – should all agree that we should try to save the world. According to consequentialism, we should maximize the good, where this is taken to be the goodness, from an impartial perspective, of outcomes. Clearly one thing that makes an outcome good is that the people in it are doing well. There is little disagreement here. If the happiness or well-being of possible future people is just as important as that of people who already exist, and if they would have good lives, it is not hard to see how reducing existential risk is easily the most important thing in the whole world. This is for the familiar reason that there are so many people who could exist in the future – there are trillions upon trillions… upon trillions.There are so many possible future people that reducing existential risk is arguably the most important thing in the world,even if the well-being of these possible people were given only 0.001% as much weight as that of existing people. Even on a wholly person-affecting view – according to which there’s nothing (apart from effects on existing people) to be said in favor of creating happy people – the case for reducing existential risk is very strong. As noted in this seminal paper, this case is strengthened by the fact that there’s a good chance that many existing people will, with the aid of life-extension technology, live very long and very high quality lives. You might think what I have just argued applies to consequentialists only. There is a tendency to assume that, if an argument appeals to consequentialist considerations (the goodness of outcomes), it is irrelevant to non-consequentialists. But that is a huge mistake. Non-consequentialism is the view that there’s more that determines rightness than the goodness of consequences or outcomes; it is not the view that the latter don’t matter. Even John Rawls wrote, “All ethical doctrines worth our attention take consequences into account in judging rightness. One which did not would simply be irrational, crazy.” Minimally plausible versions of deontology and virtue ethics must be concerned in part with promoting the good, from an impartial point of view. They’d thus imply very strong reasons to reduce existential risk, at least when this doesn’t significantly involve doing harm to others or damaging one’s character. What’s even more surprising, perhaps, is that even if our own good (or that of those near and dear to us) has much greater weight than goodness from the impartial “point of view of the universe,” indeed even if the latter is entirely morally irrelevant, we may nonetheless have very strong reasons to reduce existential risk. Even egoism, the view that each agent should maximize her own good, might imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk. It will depend, among other things, on what one’s own good consists in. If well-being consisted in pleasure only, it is somewhat harder to argue that egoism would imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk – perhaps we could argue that one would maximize her expected hedonic well-being by funding life extension technology or by having herself cryogenically frozen at the time of her bodily death as well as giving money to reduce existential risk (so that there is a world for her to live in!). I am not sure, however, how strong the reasons to do this would be. But views which imply that, if I don’t care about other people, I have no or very little reason to help them are not even minimally plausible views (in addition to hedonistic egoism, I here have in mind views that imply that one has no reason to perform an act unless one actually desires to do that act). To be minimally plausible, egoism will need to be paired with a more sophisticated account of well-being. To see this, it is enough to consider, as Plato did, the possibility of a ring of invisibility – suppose that, while wearing it, Ayn could derive some pleasure by helping the poor, but instead could derive just a bit more by severely harming them. Hedonistic egoism would absurdly imply she should do the latter. To avoid this implication, egoists would need to build something like the meaningfulness of a life into well-being, in some robust way, where this would to a significant extent be a function of other-regarding concerns (see chapter 12 of this classic intro to ethics). But once these elements are included, we can (roughly, as above) argue that this sort of egoism will imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk. Add to all of this Samuel Scheffler’s recent intriguing arguments (quick podcast version available here) that most of what makes our lives go well would be undermined if there were no future generations of intelligent persons. On his view, my life would contain vastly less well-being if (say) a year after my death the world came to an end. So obviously if Scheffler were right I’d have very strong reason to reduce existential risk. We should also take into account moral uncertainty. What is it reasonable for one to do, when one is uncertain not (only) about the empirical facts, but also about the moral facts? I’ve just argued that there’s agreement among minimally plausible ethical views that we have strong reason to reduce existential risk – not only consequentialists, but also deontologists, virtue ethicists, and sophisticated egoists should agree. But even those (hedonistic egoists) who disagree should have a significant level of confidence that they are mistaken, and that one of the above views is correct. Even if they were 90% sure that their view is the correct one (and 10% sure that one of these other ones is correct), they would have pretty strong reason, from the standpoint of moral uncertainty, to reduce existential risk. Perhaps most disturbingly still, even if we are only 1% sure that the well-being of possible future people matters, it is at least arguable that, from the standpoint of moral uncertainty, reducing existential risk is the most important thing in the world. Again, this is largely for the reason that there are so many people who could exist in the future – there are trillions upon trillions… upon trillions. (For more on this and other related issues, see this excellent dissertation). Of course, it is uncertain whether these untold trillions would, in general, have good lives. It’s possible they’ll be miserable. It is enough for my claim that there is moral agreement in the relevant sense if, at least given certain empirical claims about what future lives would most likely be like, all minimally plausible moral views would converge on the conclusion that we should try to save the world. While there are some non-crazy views that place significantly greater moral weight on avoiding suffering than on promoting happiness, for reasons others have offered (and for independent reasons I won’t get into here unless requested to), they nonetheless seem to be fairly implausible views. And even if things did not go well for our ancestors, I am optimistic that they will overall go fantastically well for our descendants, if we allow them to. I suspect that most of us alive today – at least those of us not suffering from extreme illness or poverty – have lives that are well worth living, and that things will continue to improve. Derek Parfit, whose work has emphasized future generations as well as agreement in ethics, described our situation clearly and accurately: “We live during the hinge of history. Given the scientific and technological discoveries of the last two centuries, the world has never changed as fast. We shall soon have even greater powers to transform, not only our surroundings, but ourselves and our successors. If we act wisely in the next few centuries, humanity will survive its most dangerous and decisive period.Our descendants could, if necessary, go elsewhere, spreading through this galaxy…. Our descendants might, I believe, make the further future very good. But that good future may also depend in part on us. If our selfish recklessness ends human history, we would be acting very wrongly.” (From chapter 36 of On What Matters)

#### 2 – Actor specificity:

#### [A] Governments must aggregate since every policy benefits some and harms others, which also means side constraints freeze action. [B] States lack wills or intentions since policies are collective actions. [C] No act- omission distinction— governments must vote on bills, so inaction is an explicit act taken, and governments are responsible for the public sphere so they must aggregate. Actor-specificity comes first since different agents have different ethical standings.

#### 3 - only it can explain degrees of wrongness- it is worse to kill thousands than to lie to a friend- either ethical theories cannot explain comparative badness, or it collapses

#### Epistemic modesty; framework is a sliding scale, and it serves to prioritize not preclude impacts so only ep modesty is logical

Materiality controls their impacts; cx came up on “its intrinsically obvious” but only pain n pleasure explain why

#### Debating about extinction is valuable even if we don’t solve it

Khan 18 [Risalat, activist and entrepreneur from Bangladesh passionate about addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and other existential challenges. He was featured by The Guardian as one of the “young climate campaigners to watch” (2015). As a campaigner with the global civic movement Avaaz (2014-17), Risalat was part of a small core team that spearheaded the largest climate marches in history with a turnout of over 800,000 across 2,000 cities. After fighting for the Paris Agreement, Risalat led a campaign joined by over a million people to stop the Rampal coal plant in Bangladesh to protect the Sundarbans World Heritage forest, and elicited criticism of the plant from Crédit Agricolé through targeted advocacy. Currently, Risalat is pursuing an MPA in Environmental Science and Policy at Columbia University as a SIPA Environmental Fellow, “5 reasons why we need to start talking about existential risks,” https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/01/5-reasons-start-talking-existential-risks-extinction-moriori/]

Infinite future possibilities I find the story of the Moriori profound. It teaches me two lessons. Firstly, that human culture is far from immutable. That we can struggle against our baser instincts. That we can master them and rise to unprecedented challenges. Secondly, that even this does not make us masters of our own destiny. We can make visionary choices, but the future can still surprise us. This is a humbling realization. Because faced with an uncertain future, the only wise thing we can do is prepare for possibilities. Standing at the launch pad of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the possibilities seem endless. They range from an era of abundance to the end of humanity, and everything in between. How do we navigate such a wide and divergent spectrum? I am an optimist. From my bubble of privilege, life feels like a rollercoaster ride full of ever more impressive wonders, even as I try to fight the many social injustices that still blight us. However, the accelerating pace of change amid uncertainty elicits one fundamental observation. Among the infinite future possibilities, only one outcome is truly irreversible: extinction. Concerns about extinction are often dismissed as apocalyptic alarmism. Sometimes, they are. But repeating that mankind is still here after 70 years of existential warning about nuclear warfare is a straw man argument. The fact that a 1000-year flood has not happened does not negate its possibility. And there have been far too many nuclear near-misses to rest easy. As the World Economic Forum’s Annual Meeting in Davos discusses how to create a shared future in a fractured world, here are five reasons why the possibility of existential risks should raise the stakes of conversation: 1. Extinction is the rule, not the exception More than 99.9% of all the species that ever existed are gone. Deep time is unfathomable to the human brain. But if one cares to take a tour of the billions of years of life’s history, we find a litany of forgotten species. And we have only discovered a mere fraction of the extinct species that once roamed the planet. In the speck of time since the first humans evolved, more than 99.9% of all the distinct human cultures that have ever existed are extinct. Each hunter-gatherer tribe had its own mythologies, traditions and norms. They wiped each other out, or coalesced into larger formations following the agricultural revolution. However, as major civilizations emerged, even those that reached incredible heights, such as the Egyptians and the Romans, eventually collapsed. It is only in the very recent past that we became a truly global civilization. Our interconnectedness continues to grow rapidly. “Stand or fall, we are the last civilization”, as Ricken Patel, the founder of the global civic movement Avaaz, put it. 2. Environmental pressures can drive extinction More than 15,000 scientists just issued a ‘warning to humanity’. They called on us to reduce our impact on the biosphere, 25 years after their first such appeal. The warning notes that we are far outstripping the capacity of our planet in all but one measure of ozone depletion, including emissions, biodiversity, freshwater availability and more. The scientists, not a crowd known to overstate facts, conclude: “soon it will be too late to shift course away from our failing trajectory, and time is running out”. In his 2005 book Collapse, Jared Diamond charts the history of past societies. He makes the case that overpopulation and resource use beyond the carrying capacity have often been important, if not the only, drivers of collapse. Even though we are making important incremental progress in battles such as climate change, we must still achieve tremendous step changes in our response to several major environmental crises. We must do this even while the world’s population continues to grow. These pressures are bound to exert great stress on our global civilization. 3. Superintelligence: unplanned obsolescence? Imagine a monkey society that foresaw the ascendance of humans. Fearing a loss of status and power, it decided to kill the proverbial Adam and Eve. It crafted the most ingenious plan it could: starve the humans by taking away all their bananas. Foolproof plan, right? This story describes the fundamental difficulty with superintelligence. A superintelligent being may always do something entirely different from what we, with our mere mortal intelligence, can foresee. In his 2014 book Superintelligence, Swedish philosopher Nick Bostrom presents the challenge in thought-provoking detail, and advises caution. Bostrom cites a survey of industry experts that projected a 50% chance of the development of artificial superintelligence by 2050, and a 90% chance by 2075. The latter date is within the life expectancy of many alive today. Visionaries like Stephen Hawking and Elon Musk have warned of the existential risks from artificial superintelligence. Their opposite camp includes Larry Page and Mark Zuckerberg. But on an issue that concerns the future of humanity, is it really wise to ignore the guy who explained the nature of space to us and another guy who just put a reusable rocket in it? 4. Technology: known knowns and unknown unknowns Many fundamentally disruptive technologies are coming of age, from bioengineering to quantum computing, 3-D printing, robotics, nanotechnology and more. Lord Martin Rees describes potential existential challenges from some of these technologies, such as a bioengineered pandemic, in his book Our Final Century. Imagine if North Korea, feeling secure in its isolation, could release a virulent strain of Ebola, engineered to be airborne. Would it do it? Would ISIS? Projecting decades forward, we will likely develop capabilities that are unthinkable even now. The unknown unknowns of our technological path are profoundly humbling. 5. 'The Trump Factor' Despite our scientific ingenuity, we are still a confused and confusing species. Think back to two years ago, and how you thought the world worked then. Has that not been upended by the election of Donald Trump as US President, and everything that has happened since? The mix of billions of messy humans will forever be unpredictable. When the combustible forces described above are added to this melee, we find ourselves on a tightrope. What choices must we now make now to create a shared future, in which we are not at perpetual risk of destroying ourselves? Common enemy to common cause Throughout history, we have rallied against the ‘other’. Tribes have overpowered tribes, empires have conquered rivals. Even today, our fiercest displays of unity typically happen at wartime. We give our lives for our motherland and defend nationalistic pride like a wounded lion. But like the early Morioris, we 21st-century citizens find ourselves on an increasingly unstable island. We may have a violent past, but we have no more dangerous enemy than ourselves. Our task is to find our own Nunuku’s Law. Our own shared contract, based on equity, would help us navigate safely. It would ensure a future that unleashes the full potential of our still-budding human civilization, in all its diversity. We cannot do this unless we are humbly grounded in the possibility of our own destruction. Survival is life’s primal instinct. In the absence of a common enemy, we must find common cause in survival. Our future may depend on whether we realize this.

#### They are super shifty on fiat; I don’t get disads bc fiat is fake but they get to repossess fiat?

## Semiocap

Its fake

## Cap Good

### Warming Good

#### Co2 key to ag and habitat diversity—their impacts are hype.

Goklany 15. (Dr. Indur M. Goklany, PhD MSU, is a science and technology policy analyst for the United States Department of the Interior, where he holds the position of Assistant Director of Programs, Science and Technology Policy. CARBON DIOXIDE The good news. <http://www.thegwpf.org/content/uploads/2015/10/benefits.pdf>)

Summary 1. This paper addresses the question of whether, and how much, increased carbon dioxide concentrations have benefited the biosphere and humanity by stimulating plant growth, warming the planet and increasing rainfall. 2. Empirical data confirms that the biosphere’s productivity has increased by about 14% since 1982, in large part as a result of rising carbon dioxide levels. 3. Thousands of scientific experiments indicate that increasing carbon dioxide concentrations in the air have contributed to increases in crop yields. 4. These increases in yield are very likely to have reduced the appropriation of land for farming by 11–17% compared with what it would otherwise be, resulting in more land being left wild. 5. Satellite evidence confirms that increasing carbon dioxide concentrations have also resulted in greater productivity of wild terrestrial ecosystems in all vegetation types. 6. Increasing carbon dioxide concentrations have also increased the productivity of many marine ecosystems. 7. In recent decades, trends in climate-sensitive indicators of human and environmental wellbeing have improved and continue to do so despite claims that they would deteriorate because of global warming. 8. Compared with the benefits from carbon dioxide on crop and biosphere productivity, the adverse impacts of carbon dioxide – on the frequency and intensity of extreme weather, on sea level, vector-borne disease prevalence and human health – have been too small to measure or have been swamped by other factors. 9. Models used to influence policy on climate change have overestimated the rate of warming, underestimated direct benefits of carbon dioxide, overestimated the harms from climate change and underestimated human capacity to adapt so as to capture the benefits while reducing the harms. 10. It is very likely that the impact of rising carbon dioxide concentrations is currently net beneficial for both humanity and the biosphere generally. These benefits are real, whereas the costs of warming are uncertain. Halting the increase in carbon dioxide concentrations abruptly would deprive people and the planet of the benefits of carbon dioxide much sooner than they would reduce any costs of warming.

### War

#### Cap solves war---liberal order good and won’t collapse

Michael Mousseau 19, PhD, studies international politics with a particular focus on the link between economic conditions, institutions, and conflict, 7/29/19, “The End of War: How a Robust Marketplace and Liberal Hegemony Are Leading to Perpetual World Peace,” https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/full/10.1162/isec\_a\_00352?mobileUi=0

If my argument is correct, the world is on the cusp of tremendous change: across the globe, contractualism is overtaking status-personalism and, in so doing, launching an era of peace and prosperity. This conclusion is reached without any monotonic or teleological assumptions: anything that collapses the contractualist economies for a generation or two would stop or reverse this trend.81 All else being equal, the contractualist hegemony has made the odds of unit-level change from a status to a contractualist economy more likely than the reverse. At the start of the twentieth century, only the United States had a contractualist economy; by the end, at least thirty-five states were contractualist.82 The Westphalian system has never been as conducive to transitions to contractualist economies as it has been under the contractualist hegemony, which prohibits states from starting wars for booty, debt collection, or territory. Nor has the world ever had such widespread access to capital, mobility, and equity in trade as it has had since the contractualist hegemony made it so with the signing of the Atlantic Charter and the implementation of the Bretton Woods agreements. The number of transitions also predictably increased after the Cold War, when the contractualist hegemony emerged as largely unchallenged. In this way, system change toward contractualist hegemony within the anarchic order, rooted in unit-level change, ultimately promotes more unit-level change toward a contractualist world. Reports of the Demise of the Liberal Order Are Greatly Exaggerated I have argued that the liberal global order is on the rise; yet, liberal values around the world seem to be in retreat. In recent years, two contractualist states with populist governments—Hungary and Poland—have begun to embrace anti-immigrant and anti-globalization positions. In the United States, President Donald Trump appears to favor status values such as power, rank, and loyalty over contractualist values such as equity and respect for the rule of law. In foreign policy, Trump does not seem to share contractualists' opposition to Russia's efforts to sow chaos, and he sees trade in terms of winners and losers. Reports of the demise of the liberal order, however, are greatly exaggerated. First, Hungary and Poland are newly contractualist states. The sociological nature of economic norms theory means that contractualist values should be more firmly rooted in older contractualist societies than in newer ones. This is corroborated with the natural experiment of Germany: in 1962 West Germany embraced contractualism (see table 1), but it was only after 1991 that East Germany could have become contractualist, when massive investments from the Federal Republic caused incomes in the marketplace to become higher than incomes obtainable from status relationships. Today, Germany's populist movement is concentrated in the eastern part of the country and is largely nonexistent in the western part,83 which corroborates the expectation that some newly contractualist societies retain some of their status values even after a generation of robust opportunity in the marketplace. Deeper changes in values may not occur until generational cohorts initially socialized into status or axial economies have passed on. Second, the electorates in most of the thirty-five contractualist states listed in table 1 in 2010 have not experienced substantial increases in populist sentiment. Italy's Five Star movement is often called populist but largely because of its anti-immigrant stance. Although an embrace of immigrants would seem consistent with contractualist values, opposition to large numbers of immigrants is arguably a rational response to what is essentially a huge external shock that has intensified in recent years. Britons voted to leave the European Union, but largely because they believed they were being treated unfairly in it. The rejection of unfair terms of trade, whether perceived correctly or not, is consistent with contractualist values. Third, the strength of institutions far exceeds that of any one person, including the president of the United States. Liberal values and institutions are rooted in contractualist economic norms and will not disappear simply because some leaders choose not to abide by them. For instance, although Trump may want the United States to withdraw from the North Atlantic alliance, this is not a view shared by Congress and the American people. Even members of Trump's administration have often restrained him in ways consistent with contractualist values and institutions.84 In economic norms theory, the only way the United States' contractualist values could shift to status or axial values would be through radical economic change. As mentioned above, economics is ultimately at the mercy of politics, as an influential coalition of rent-seekers could potentially collapse a contractualist economy by failing to sustain the highly inclusive marketplace or uphold the state's credibility in enforcing of contracts. In recent years, the U.S. economy has begun tilting toward rent-seekers, given the growing role of private money in electoral campaigns and the increasing sophistication of rent-seekers in masking their activities though the manipulation of public opinion, including through their concentrated ownership of media outlets. Such rentierism could precipitate a change in U.S. values if it results in a retraction of the market substantial enough that newer generations began to obtain higher wages in newfound status networks than in the marketplace. In this way, the Trump phenomenon may reflect a pathology in U.S. governing institutions; but at least so far, it arguably has not extended to the American people. Most of Trump's supporters seem to be drawn to him not for his expressions of status values, but for his pledges to fight a “rigged” system and create well-paying jobs. Whether or not Trump means what he says, many of his supporters saw a vote for him as an act of protest against the increasing corruption occurring in the United States, a clear contractualist expression.85 Although a collapse of the U.S. economy and transition to an axial or a status economy is always possible, the feedback loop of popular insistence on economic growth and a highly inclusive marketplace makes this unlikely. Aside from an external shock (such as nuclear war or climate devastation), such a transition could happen only if the rentiers somehow manage to remain in power long enough to institutionalize a permanently underemployed underclass. Fourth, even if the U.S. economy were to collapse and the United States became an axial or a status power, the combined economic might of all the other contractualist countries in the world is nearly twice that of the United States. The soft power of the United States in world politics lies not in its power to persuade, but in it being the largest of the contractualist states, and in its willingness to provide the public good of global security since the collapse of the pound sterling in late 1946. If the United States withdrew from its leadership role, the remaining contractualist powers would fill the vacuum. None of them has an economy relatively large enough to enable it to act as a natural leader and principal provider of global security, but it is the temperament of these states that they can easily form an international organization to coordinate and act on their shared security interests, even if some may choose to free ride. Fifth, current events need to be viewed within a larger context. Fernand Braudel pinpoints the rise of the modern world economy as starting around the year 1450 in northwestern Europe.86 The first contractualist economy emerged more than two centuries ago. Since then, contractualist states have confronted numerous shocks and threats to their systems, including the American Civil War, the Great Depression, two world wars, and the Cold War. The present populist mini-wave and pathologies in U.S. democracy are mere trifling episodes in a larger historical frame. Conclusion This article has introduced a new liberal theory of global politics and argues that global alignments are rooted in factors internal to states: status states want expansion and disorder wherever they lack control; contractualist states want universal stability and order based on the principle of self-determination for all states. As such, global patterns of war, peace, and cooperation can be explained without recourse to such external factors as trade interdependence, international institutions, interstate images, or intersubjective structure; economic norms theory can explain these patterns from states' internal conditions alone. If this argument is correct, then the relative power of states does determine the perception of threat, as realists have long maintained, but with an essential qualifi- cation: only among status states. In this way, internal conditions can explain why 2,400 years ago Sparta feared the rising power of Athens, and why today the distribution of power seems to be playing an ever reduced role in global politics. My analyses of most states from 1946 to 2010 corroborate the prediction of a liberal global hierarchy managed by a natural alliance of states with contractualist economies. States with contractualist and export-oriented economies tend to agree on issues voted on in the United Nations General Assembly, regardless of their power status or capability, because they have common interests in a global order based on self-determination. Among states with status and insular economies, in contrast, major powers and those with greater capability are more likely to balance the contractualist hegemony, which they fear. Meanwhile, minor powers and those with less capability are more likely to bandwagon with it, which they fear less than they do the status major powers. Additionally, the theory provides an explanation for a large number of observed facts in international politics. It can explain the decline of war. It can explain the United States' enduring soft power, and why its leadership continues utterly unchallenged by other market powers, despite its relative economic decline since the mid-twentieth century. It offers an account for why developing states with weak institutions tend to bandwagon with the Western powers;87 and why land powers tend to provoke counterbalancing coalitions, and sea powers, which tend to be trading powers, do not.88 It can account for the democratic peace; why democracies tend to win theirwars; and why the probability of war among market democracies is practically zero. It can explain how states become prosperous; how democracy consolidates; the tenacity of corruption in developing countries; why Western powers reproach their clients for their corruption;89 and why states fail. It can explain global terrorism and anti-Americanism.90 If the theory is right, war is becoming obsolete, and not for reasons supposed in most international relations theorizing. There is no security dilemma in international politics, as realists contend there is: relative power reliably matters only to leaders of status states, which always consider all other states enemies. Yet, the trajectory of peace is not at all caused by democracy, trade, or international institutions, as liberals maintain. As argued here, democracy, trade, and institutions are epiphenomenal. Contractualist economies are not the only explanation for these factors, but they are a cause of democratic consolidation, foreign policy preferences for equitable trade, and international organization. Leaders of contractualist states assess threats based not on their images of other states' regime types, economic types, or their capabilities, but on their behavior. What economic norms theory cannot explain is the triggering environmental and political origins of economic change. Although the theory predicts systemic effects (contractualist hegemony) on unit-level change (national transitions toward contractualist economies), it cannot predict when and where leaders of status and axial states might seek to support the market; when and where contractualist economies will emerge; or when and where systemic effects will result in changes in the units. The theory treats economic change largely exogenously.91 Thus, the theory cannot predict what China will do in the future, because it is impossible to know whether it will become a contractualist power. The theory can predict, however, that conflict with China is not inevitable, and that it can be avoided if the contractualist powers do not confuse China's mercantilist pursuits with incipient revisionism, and if they grasp that China's leadership increasingly has interests in the global market order. If China transitions to a contractualist economy—and such a prospect is likely if current trends continue—the proportion of people in the contractualist mind-set worldwide will more than double, from 16 percent to 35 percent. This would greatly increase the speed of the trajectory toward peace, as long as the planet can ecologically sustain the contractualist economies' high levels of productivity. Russia, in contrast, is the natural enemy of the contractualist hegemony: its status economy encourages the sowing of chaos anywhere Russia lacks control, putting it in direct opposition to the contractualists' interest in order. Russia has a substantial nuclear arsenal, but this does not diminish the overwhelming might of the contractualist hegemony, because nuclear weapons can be used rationally only to deter attacks. Contractualist states do not attack states to make them contractualist, so Russia's deterrent capability has no effect on the power of this hegemony and the trajectory of peace. Since the defeat of the Axis powers in 1945, an alliance of contractualist states has sought to impose a global order based on the principle of self-determination—a principle that applies to all states, large and small. This global order is increasing the odds of states transitioning from status to contractualist economies and reducing the odds of reverse transitions. In this way, economic norms theory supports the proposition that the world may be nearing half a millennium of change that began with the rise of axial markets in northwestern Europe around 1450. If the theory is correct, the beginning of the end of this change may have been the emergence of the contractualist hegemony in the mid-twentieth century. This article has argued that no status power could ever overtake the combined might of this hegemony. Thus, barring some dark force that brings about a collapse of the global economy, the world is now in the endgame of a five-century-long trajectory toward permanent peace and prosperity.

#### Growth solves war – data

Lin 17 [Oon Yong; 4/23/2017; International Economics at SUNY Buffalo, under the supervision of Dr. Sandeep Bhakshar, PhD in economics; “Conflict and Trade,” http://geoeconomics.net/2017/09/13/conflict-and-trade/]

CONFLICT AND TRADE TODAY

In the post-cold war era, actual conflicts are relatively few and far between especially between developed nations due to advances in military hardware [nuclear options]. Conflicts took on other forms such as economic warfare and proxy wars. Fortunately, advances in military technology were met with advances in international relations which led to the founding of intergovernmental organizations in the 20th-century. Trade in the modern context can be examined through globalization which serves as an all-encompassing word that represented progress, cultural exchange and increased trade. Development took off in the 1980s to 1990s, most notably from 1990 to 1996, capital inflows to developing countries increased by a massive 600% (Stiglitz, 2006). The World Trade Organization was formed in 1995, absorbing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade [GATT], the organization enabled countries to have a combined platform to address international trade issues which developed and developing countries would both benefit in a world that was accelerating quickly in terms of trade. China’s control of rare earth mineral exports in the global market and the usefulness of the WTO is an example worth observing. China has an effective 97% control of the rare-earth elements market (Müller, Schweizer, & Seiler, 2016). It posed an issue as the Chinese government applied export quotas, causing global firms that use these minerals to be fearful of a supply issue due to the concentration of the source. Rare earth metals were useful in many applications and that contributed to the concern, United States firms used them for several product developments ranging from technological turbines to lab purposes such as for their magnetic properties. In 2014, an argument was brought up to the World Trade Organization [WTO] by the European Union, United States, and Japan in 2012 about the control of rare earth exports (World Trade Organization, 2015). The timing was nearly 11 years after the accession of China to the WTO, the panel concluded in 2014 that China’s export tariffs on rare earth exports were inconsistent with their WTO obligations. A study conducted by Müller et. al. (2016) begs to differ and found that U.S. firms could have adopted defensive actions such as stockpiling these materials and that export control effects were not overtly damaging after China has joined the World Trade Organization. But it remained apparent that the Chinese government did use its policies to benefit Chinese firms at the expense of non-domestic companies before they had joined the WTO. On 20 May 2015, China responded to the WTO’s request to conform to its panel’s recommendations and to fulfill its obligations to WTO law. China accepted the panel’s judgment, and the issue was resolved amicably. Bilateral agreements that increase cooperation through trade can also help reduce potential conflict. In 2010, a free trade agreement known as the Economic Framework Cooperation Agreement was initiated between ROC Taiwan and PRC China, details of the agreement were finalized in June 2013. The deal’s results were twofold, firstly Taiwan benefited from the trade potential that China provided. Secondly, the agreement led to reduced pressure by PRC China on ROC Taiwan’s agenda of pursuing free trade agreements with New Zealand and Singapore (Kan & Morrison, 2013). The change in China’s political stance during that time allowed ROC Taiwan to ink deals in quick succession, initially [ANZTEC] with New Zealand on the 10th of July 2013, and subsequently with Singapore [ASTEP] on 7th November 2013. Bernard Cole of the National War College in Washington, DC shares that the possibility of ROC Taiwan and PRC China conflict has been reduced (Navarro, 2016) and the de-escalation can be partially attributed to the constant flow of trade between both countries. The most revolutionary organization for trade was the formation of the intergovernmental organization known as the European Union [EU]. The EU was founded after World War II [the deadliest war] to prevent future wars. The EU expressed the primary motivation for the formation, “The first steps were to foster economic cooperation: the idea being that countries that trade with one another become economically interdependent and so more likely to avoid conflict.” (European Union, 2017, para 2). At its founding the EU had six member countries, today it has 28 member countries some of which are fully committed to its economic and monetary union. Furthermore, the EU is at the forefront of democratic thought and champions a broad range of issues such as human rights, internet privacy, and democracy. In support of the idea for the notion of trade and growth bringing peace to society, A Modern Peace? Schumpeter, the Decline of Conflict, and the Investment–War Trade-Off Professors Chatagnier and Castelli argues that To sustain growth (a basic requirement for every industrialized economy), governments and entrepreneurs must reinvest profits in innovation. Political leaders also benefit, as they can extract more revenue from a richer society. Within industrialized economies, war threatens this virtuous mechanism of investment, innovation, profits, and taxes, rendering it materially unprofitable. (Chatagnier & Castelli, 2016) Their argument was based on the assumptions that industrialized economies which have grown to generate additional revenue for society, in general, tends not to prefer wars as it was contrary to the needs of an industrialized economy (Jentleson, 2007). Advocating that an extra dollar spent on military expenditures is one less dollar spent on economic growth for the society. They found that over the last fifty years from 2016, wars were not profitable and that industrialization does indeed reduce a nation’s incentive to enter conflicts due to the economic changes of industrialization. Additionally, the authors recognized that trade between industrialized societies potentially leads to peaceful attitudes (Chatagnier & Castelli, 2016).

## Bottom

#### Only our model solves effective information management – overload is inevitable to some degree, but equipping students to manage it is key – the alt is inactivity and Russian active measures

Leek 16 [Danielle R. Leek, professor of communications at Grand Valley State University, “Policy debate pedagogy: a complementary strategy for civic and political engagement through service-learning,” Communication Education, 65:4, 399-405]

Through policy debate, students can develop information literacy and learn how to make critical arguments of fact. This experience is politically empowering for students who will also build confidence for political engagement. Information literacy While there are many definitions of information literacy, the term generally is understood to mean that a student is “able to recognize when information is needed , and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the information needed” for problem- solving and decision-making (Spitzer, Eisenberg, & Lowe, 1998, p. 19). Information exists in a variety of forms, in visual data, computer graphics, sound-recordings, film, and photographs. Information is also constructed and disseminated through a wide range of sources and mediums. Therefore, “information literacy” functions as a blanket term which covers a wide range of more specific literacies. Critiques of service-learning’s knowl- edge-building power, such as those articulated by Eby (1998) and Colby (2008), are chal- lenging both the emphasis the pedagogy places on information gained through experience and the limited scope of political information students are exposed to in the process. Policy debate can augment a student’s civic and political learning by fostering extended information literacies. Snider and Schnurer (2002) identify policy debate as an especially research intensive form of oral discussion which requires extensive time and commitment to learn the dimensions of a topic. Understanding policy issues calls for contemplating a range of materials, from traditional news media publications to court proceedings, research data, and institutional propaganda. Moreover, the nature of policy debate, which involves public presentation of arguments on two competing sides of a question, motivates students to go beyond basic information to achieve a more advanced level of expertise and credibility on a topic (Dybvig & Iverson, n.d.). This type of work differs from traditional research projects where students gather only the materials needed to support their argument while neglecting contrary evidence. Instead, the “debate research process encourages a kind of holistic approach, where students need to pay attention to the critics of their argument because they will have to respond to those attacks” (Snider & Schnurer, 2002, p. 32). In today’s attention economy, cultivating a sensibility for well- rounded information gathering can also aid students in recognizing when and how the knowledge produced in their social environments can be effectively translated to specific contexts. The “cultural shift in the production of data” which has followed the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies means that all students are likely “prosumers”—that is, they consume, produce, and coproduce information online all at the same time (Scoble, 2011). Coupling service- learning with policy debate calls on students to apply information across registers of public engagement, including their own service efforts and their own public argumentation, in and outside of their debates. Information is used in the service experience, which in turn, informs the use of information in debates, where students then produce new information through their argumentation. The process is what Bruce (2008) refers to “informed learning,” or “using information in order to learn.” When individuals move from learning how to gather materials for a task to a cognitive awareness and understanding of how the information-seeking process shapes their learning, they are engaged in informed learning. Through this process, students can come to recognize that information management and credibility is deeply disciplinary and historically con- textual (Bruce & Hughes, 2010). This understanding, combined with practical experience in locating information, is a critical missing element in contemporary political engage- ment. Over 20 years ago, Graber (1994) argued that one of the biggest obstacles to political engagement was not apathy, but a gap between the way news media presents information during elections, and the type of information voters need and will listen to during electoral campaigns. The challenge extends beyond elections into policy-making, especially as younger generations continue to revise their notions of citizenship away from institutional politics towards more social forms of activism (Bennett, Wells, & Freelon, 2011). For stu- dents to effectively practice more expressive forms of citizenship they need experience managing the breadth of information available about issues they care about. As past research indicates a strong correlation between service-learning experience and the motiv- ation and desire for post-graduation service, it seems likely that students who debate about policy issues related to service areas will continue their informed learning practices after they have left the classroom (Soria & Thomas-Card, 2014). Arguing facts In addition to building information literacies, students who combine policy debate with service-learning can practice “politically relevant skills,” which will help them have confidence for political engagement in the future. As Colby (2008) explains, this confidence should be tempered by tolerance for difference and differing opinions. On the surface, debating about institutional politics might seem counterintuitive to this goal. Politicians and the press have a credibility problem among college-aged students, and this leaves younger generations less inclined to feel obligated to the state or to look to traditional modes of policy- making for social change (Bennett et al., 2011; Manning & Edwards, 2014). This lack of faith in government and media outlets also makes political argument more difficult (Klumpp, 2006). Whereas these institutions once served as authoritative and trustworthy sources of information, the credibility of legislators and journalists has decreased over the last 40 years or so. Today, politicians and pundits are viewed as political actors interested in spectacle, power, and profit rather than truth-seeking or the common good. While some political controversies are rooted in competing values, Klumpp (2006) explains that arguments about policy are more often based in fact. Indeed, when engaged in public arguments over questions of policy, people tend to “invoke the authority of facts to support their positions.” Likewise, “the governmental sphere has developed elaborate legal and deliberative processes in recognition of the power of facts as the basis for a decision.” Yet, while shared values are often quickly agreed upon, differences over fact are more difficult to resolve. Without credible institutions of authority that can disseminate facts, public deliberation requires more time, information-gathering, evaluation, and reasoning. The Bush administration’s decision to take military action in Iraq, for example, was presumably based on the “fact” that Saddam Hussein had acquired weapons of mass destruction. This has now become a classic example of poor policy-making grounded in faulty factual evidence. This shortcoming is precisely why policy debate is a valuable complement to service- learning activities. Not only can students use their developing literacies to better understand social problems, they can also learn to access a broader range of knowledge sources, thereby mitigating the absence of fact-finding from traditional institutions. Fur- thermore, policy advocacy gives students experience testing the reasoning underlying claims of fact. Issues of source credibility, analogic comparisons, and data analysis are three examples of the type of critical thinking skills that students may need to apply in order to engage a question of policy (Allen, Berkowitz, Hunt, & Louden, 1999). While the effect may be to undermine government action in some instances, in others students will gain a better understanding of when and where institutional activities can work to make change. As students gain knowledge about the relationship between institutional structures and the communities they serve, they grow confidence in their ability to engage in future conversations about policy issues. Zwarensteyn’s (2012) research high- lights these sorts of effects in high school students who engage in competitive policy debate. Zwarensteyn theorizes that even minimal increases in technical knowledge about politics can translate to significant increases in a student’s sense of self-efficacy. Many students start off feeling very insecure when it comes to their mastery of insti- tutional politics; policy debate helps overcome that insecurity. Moreover, because training in policy debate encourages students to address issues as arguments rather than partisan positions, it encourages them to engage policy-making without the hostility and incivility that often characterizes today’s political scene. Indeed, it is precisely that perceived hostility and incivility that prompts many young people to avoid politics in the first place. I do not mean to imply that students who debate about their service-learning experi- ences will draw homogenous conclusions about policies. Quite the contrary. Students who engage in service-learning still bring their personal visions and history to bear on their debates. As a result, students will often have very different opinions after engaging in a shared debate experience. More importantly, the practice of debating should operate to particularize students’ knowledge of community partners and clients, working against the destructive generalizations and power dynamics that can result when students feel privileged to serve less fortunate “others.” For civic and political engagement through service-learning to be meaningful and productive, it must do more to challenge students’ concepts of the homogenous “we” who helps “them.” Seligman (2013) argues that this civic spirit can be cultivated through the core pedagogical principle of a “shared practice,” which emphasizes the application of knowledge to purpose (p. 60). Policy debate achieves this outcome by calling on students to consider and reconsider their understanding of themselves, institutions, community, and policy every time the question “should” may arise. As Seligman writes: ... the orientation of thought to purpose (having an explanation rest at a place, a purpose) is of extreme importance. We must recognize that the orientation of thought to purpose is to recognize moving from providing a knowledge of, to providing a knowledge for. This means that in the context of encountering difference it is not sufficient to learn about (have an idea of) the other, rather it means to have ideas for certain joint purposes—for a set of “to-does.” A purpose becomes the goal towards which our explanations should be oriented. (p. 61) Put another way, policy debate challenges students “to maintain a sense of doubt and to carry on a systematic and protracted inquiry” in the process of service-learning itself (Seligman, 2013, p. 60). This is precisely the type of complex, ongoing, reflective inquiry that John Dewey had in mind. Political engagement through policy debate This essay began with a discussion of the growing attention to civic engagement programs in higher education. The national trend is to accomplish higher levels of student civic responsibility during and after their time in college through service-learning experiences tied to curricular learning objectives. A challenge for service-learning scholars and teachers is to recognize a distinction between civic activities that are accomplished by helping others and political activities that require engagement with the collective institutional structures and processes that govern social life. Both are necessary for democracy to thrive. Policy debate pedagogy can help service-learning educators accomplish these dual objectives. To call policy debate a pedagogy rather than just a style of debate is purposeful. A pedagogy is a praxis for cultivating learning in others. The pedagogy of service-learning helps students to know and engage social conditions through physical engagement with their environments and communities. Policy debate pedagogy leads students to know and engage these same social conditions while also challenging them to apply their knowledge for the purpose of political advocacy. These pedagogies are natural compliments for cul- tivating student learning. Therefore, future studies should explore how well service-learn- ing combined with policy debate can resolve concerns that policy debate alone does not go far enough to invest students with political agency (Mitchell, 1998). The present analysis suggests the potential for such an outcome is likely. Moreover, research is clear that the civic effects of service-learning as an instructional method are improved simply by increasing the amount of time spent on in-class discus- sion about the service work students do (Levesque-Bristol, Knapp, & Fisher, 2010). Policy debates related to students’ service can accomplish this goal and more. Policy debates can also facilitate the political learning students need to build their political efficacy and capacity for political engagement. Through informed learning about the political process—especially in the context of service practice—students develop literacies that will extend beyond the classroom. Using this knowledge in reasoned public argument about policy challenges invites students to move beyond cynical disengagement towards a productive recognition of their own potential voice in the political world. Policy debate pedagogy brings unique elements to the process of political learning. By emphasizing the conditional and dynamic nature of political arguments and processes, debates can work to relieve students of the misconception that there is a single “right answer” for questions about policy-making and politics, especially during election time. The communication perspective on policy debates also highlights students’ collective involvement in the ever-changing field of political terms, symbols, and meanings that constitute interpretations of our social world. In fact, the historical roots of the term “communication” seem to demand that speech and debate educators call for such emphasis on political learning. “To make common,” the Latin interpretation of communicare, situ- ates our discipline as the heart of public political affairs (Peters, 1999). Connecting policy debate to service-learning helps highlight the common purpose of these approaches in efforts to promote civic engagement in higher education.