

# NECRO K

## FRAMEWORK

The means by which nation states and the WTO assert their governance is through dictating who lives and dies, taking power away from the people; we see this global framing until today with COVID vaccines, and epidemics such as HIV/AIDS in the global south.

Eric Otieno **Sumba** (2021): Necropolitics at large: pandemic politics and the coloniality of the global access gap, Critical Studies on Security, DOI: 10.1080/21624887.2021.1904354

Until their patent expires, usually after a minimum of twenty years, companies have the legal right to exclude others from making, using, or distributing the product, meaning that prices usually fall sharply when the patent expires and generic products enter the market. Unable to afford brand pharmaceutical products immediately, most countries find themselves at a disadvantage. During pandemics, high demand, bidding and stockpiling exacerbate this effect, implicating the TRIPS patent provisions in the gap. Over the last two decades, even middle-income countries have been reluctant to use TRIPS flexibilities, fearing legal consequences. In 1997, the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association sued South Africa for tabling a bill that would facilitate compulsory licensing to make medicines more affordable. Only after a sustained protest by the TAC and pressure by the international allies of the fledgling Access to Medicines movement was the case dropped in 2000 (Mbali 2013, 136). For most of the world, any hope of accessing Covid-19 vaccines now rests on COVAX, a World Health Organization and Global Vaccine Alliance initiative. However, the unfettered vaccine nationalism of early 2021 shattered lingering calls for 'pooled procurement' and 'equitable distribution'. Simultaneously, privileged access for the EU was codified as a matter of course: Partly because members pre-ordered the vaccine, the European Commission director-general for health

stated that 'we went really very far with the quantities and we bought all that could be bought' (Henley, Conolly, and Boffey 2021). **Access for most of the Global South remained conditional** on varying degrees of philanthropy. As it stands, **some countries might receive initial doses in 2024, while** those who want to buy sooner, like **South Africa, pay twice as much as the EU for a vaccine** whose clinical trials involved 2000 South-Africans (Beaumont 2020; Sullivan 2021).

**'World leaders' go to great lengths to leave structures that perpetuate the gap intact**, only to create ad hoc mechanisms that deliver too little, too late. Pandemic politics are also mediated by colonial continuities, including nascent racism. **Arguing against a dedicated ARV programme** in Washington DC in 2001, **USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios said Africans wouldn't know when to take their doses because they 'do not know what** watches and **clocks are [ . . . ] they use the sun'<sup>15</sup>** (Attaran 2007, 390). Echoing Natsios' ideas some two

decades later, two doctors in Paris proposed testing Covid-19 vaccines in 'Africa' where 'there are no masks, no treatment or intensive care'<sup>6</sup> (Rosman 2020). A week later, WHO donor Melinda Gates anticipated a pearl-clutching Covid-19 apocalypse in 'Africa' with 'dead bodies on the street' (Melinda Gates: This is what keeps me up at night 2020). Finally, in January 2021, a sweeping New York Times article accused 'Africa', the 'continent where the dead are not counted' (Maclean 2021) of underreporting deaths, reifying the (still) relatively low Covid-19 death toll as a puzzle that warranted global head-scratching.

**Collectively, these examples merely signal the violence of the gap as a racialised manifestation of an uneven global order.** Recall that **within necropolitics, the death of racialised others 'is something to which nobody feels any obligation to respond.** Nobody even bears the slightest feelings of responsibility toward **this sort of** life or, rather, **death'** (Mbembe 2019, 38). While racism is marshalled to argue against access to pharmaceutical[s] products for the 'wretched of the earth', pre-emptive concern that they will die yields astonishment when deaths are (s)lower than expected. **As a driver of the necropolitical principle, racism, Mbembe suggests, is preceded by 'a generalized cheapening of the price of life' and a 'habitation to loss'**

<sup>15</sup>metaphorically evident above, coupled with besieged national governance and global pharmacocracy (Mbembe 2019, 38) (Sunderthis Rajan 2017, 16–17). While Mbembe's necropolitical principle portends organised destruction within the sacrificial economy of war, it describes gross negligence in this context. If Mbembe's necropower is a structure of terror, it operates as spectral violence and death in the context of the gap. It is not expedient to brandish jarring mortality statistics to prove its far-reaching

Consequences.

**hus, egalitarianism is the value criterion**

“Merriam-Webster Dictionary.” Merriam-Webster.com, 2021,  
www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/egalitarianism. Accessed 18 Sept. 2021.

1: **a belief in human equality especially with respect to social, political, and economic affairs**

2: **a social philosophy advocating the removal of inequalities among people**

## LINK

**The link is that this racialized manifestation of an uneven global order is inscribed in the WTO and TRIPS.**

Eric Otieno **Sumba** (20**21**): Necropolitics at large: pandemic politics and the coloniality of the global access gap, Critical Studies on Security, DOI: 10.1080/21624887.2021.1904354

Additionally, a plausibly deniable **‘hydraulic racism’**<sup>7</sup> (Mbembe 2019, 59) **animates the hierarchies of the global liberal order** (Hesse 2004, 11). **It is historically inscribed in institutions and rulebooks**, including the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, **whose reform – part of a larger backlash against the** Worldmaking **efforts of anticolonial nationalists** and the Group of 77 – created the WTO in 1995 (Getachew 2019, 37; Slobodian 2018, 182). Newly independent states had used their majority in multilateral institutions to bypass realist realpolitik or liberal institutional internationalism and transform international society into a system that guaranteed sovereign equality and anti-colonial self-determination (Marshall 2020, 340). Conversely, **the isonomy instituted at the WTO by liberal European thinkers**<sup>8</sup> **was blind to colonialism, imperialism and racial hierarchies**, doing little to mitigate their vestiges within the post-colonial world order (Slobodian 2018, 179). Bolstering GATT reform efforts, **the US pharmaceutical lobby** in the 1980s **worked towards universalising a system designed to commodify, enclose and seek rents based on knowledge resources that eventually shaped TRIPS patent provisions**. The disputed agreement only **became part of WTO founding documents by a nebulous mix of negotiation and coercion** (Tyfield 2008, 536). As such, **the TRIPS role in re-inscribing coloniality cannot be overstated.**

## IMPACT

**The impact is that Necropower dynamics of epidemics today threaten to dispose of lives slowly and invisibly, committing ableism and structural violence that comes first.**

Tony **Sandset** (2021) The necropolitics of COVID-19: Race, class and slow death in an ongoing pandemic, *Global Public Health*, 16:8-9, 1411-1423, DOI: 10.1080/17441692.2021.1906927

The processes of privatisation, neoliberalism, and the fragmentation of state welfare, have created conditions where 'slow death' is an omnipresent danger. In terms of the current COVID-19 pandemic, **the necropower dynamics of COVID-19 and other epidemics, whether Ebola or HIV, are of slow violence. After decades of reduced infrastructure for medical care in many countries,** whether through limited medical facilities in rural areas or through the sheer scarcity of life-saving hospital equipment witnessed now, **national governments cannot guarantee or even administer life,** except through the crudest forms of non-medical state control and cold violence against non-citizens as cited earlier. (Lee, 2020)

**Slow violence** can be defined as **[is] 'a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all'** (Nixon, 2011, p. 2).

If certain lives are more grievable than others, it is because **we have come to accept that certain lives in certain situations will be exposed to the necropolitical condition of slow violence and death.** Butler states that these questions revolve around the framing of which lives count as livable, and thus also grievable (Butler, 2016, pp. 6–12). For Butler, this is a question that can be answered by attuning to how certain lives are more protected than others and some lives are less grievable than others, **as can be discerned from** for instance **how few 'deaths from AIDS were publicly grievable losses at the beginning of the AIDS pandemic** or the extensive deaths now taking place in Africa are, in the media, for the most part, unmarkable and ungrivable'

In the rhetoric of COVID and its neoliberal focus on weighing the economy versus life, people in 'high contact, high risk' jobs are positioned as sacrifices to the relatively well-off and protected (Mcivor et al., 2020). In this framing, the necropolitics of COVID-19 is contingent upon what kind of job people have. From the U.S, we can read Jennifer Suggs, a Walmart cashier in New Orleans who says, 'We're not essential. We're sacrificial. I will be replaced if I die from this'.<sup>11</sup> How we come to accept that certain people are at higher risk of infection and even death is also a question about how we come to value certain kinds of jobs, and certain kinds of communities. **The underlying ableism and structural precariousness that structures the COVID-19 pandemic shows us that it is 'those who were already viewed as disposable even before the onset of the pandemic who are now falling ill and dying in disproportionate numbers'** (Mcivor et al., 2020).

## ALT

**The alt is to reject the racist state and WTO and use our power as students to deconstruct necropolitics and structural violence and imagine different worlds with decolonization through an active process that starts with education.**

**Winter and Leighton 01 - Deborah DuNann Winter (professor of psychology at Whitman College) and Dana C. Leighton (Assistant Professor of Psychology at Texas**

A&M University), "Peace, conflict, and violence: Peace psychology in the 21st century," Pg. 4-5, 2001

Finally, **to recognize** the operation of **structural violence forces us to ask questions about** how and **why we tolerate it**, questions **which** often **have painful answers** for the privileged elite who unconsciously support it. A final question of this section is how and why we allow ourselves to be so oblivious to structural violence. Susan Opatow offers an intriguing set of answers, in her article Social Injustice. She argues that **our normal perceptual** cognitive **processes divide people into in-groups and out-groups. Those outside our group lie outside our scope of justice. Injustice** that would be instantaneously confronted if it occurred to someone we love or know **is barely noticed if it occurs to** strangers or **those who are invisible** or irrelevant. We do not seem to be able to open our minds and our hearts to everyone, so we draw conceptual lines between those who are in and out of our moral circle. **Those who fall outside are** morally **excluded**, and become either invisible, or demeaned in some way so that we do not have to acknowledge the injustice they suffer. Moral exclusion is a human failing, but Opatow argues convincingly that it is an outcome of everyday social cognition. To reduce its nefarious effects, we must be vigilant in noticing and listening to oppressed, invisible, outsiders. Inclusionary thinking can be fostered by relationships, communication, and appreciation of diversity. Like Opatow, all the authors in this section point out that **structural violence is not inevitable if we become aware of its operation, and build systematic ways to mitigate its effects**. Learning about structural violence may be discouraging, overwhelming, or maddening, but these papers encourage us to step beyond guilt and anger, and begin to think about how to reduce structural violence. All the authors in this section note that the same structures (such as global communication and normal social cognition) which feed structural violence, can also be used to empower citizens to reduce it. In the long run, reducing structural violence by reclaiming neighborhoods, demanding social justice and living wages, providing prenatal care, alleviating sexism, and celebrating local cultures, will be our most surefooted path to building lasting peace.

It is important to realize that the propositions of the Aff are purely theoretical and will not take effect after this round. What will affect the participants in this round, is the acknowledgement of systemic violence in the organizations such as the WTO. The WTO is built upon colonialism and the self-interest of the global north. Thus, these ad hoc measures that do too little, too late will only perpetuate hydraulic racism and slow violence.

Vote for the Neg to advocate against these colonial structures and advocate for the global south.

ROJ

**The Role of the Judge is to promote Critical Thinking – they must enhance our potential to understand the roots of structural violence embedded in institutions and governments, which means debate must help challenge structures in power today to avoid reproducing them.**

