### 1NC – 1

#### Interpretation – the Affirmative must specify an enforcement mechanism for the Plan in a delineated text in the 1AC. There is no normal means since terms are negotiated contextually among member states.

WTO No Date "Whose WTO is it anyway?" <https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/org1_e.htm> //Elmer

**When WTO rules impose disciplines** on countries’ policies, **that is the outcome of negotiations among WTO members.** The rules are **enforced** **by** the **members themselves** **under agreed procedures that they negotiated**, **including the possibility of trade sanctions**. But those sanctions are imposed by member countries, and authorized by the membership as a whole. This is quite different from other agencies whose bureaucracies can, for example, influence a country’s policy by threatening to withhold credit.

#### Violation: they don’t

#### Standards

#### 1] Shiftiness- They can redefine the 1AC’s enforcement mechanism in the 1AR which allows them to recontextualize their enforcement mechanism to wriggle out of DA’s since all DA links are predicated on type of enforcement i.e. sanctions bad das, domestic politics das off of backlash, information research sharing da if they put monetary punishments, or trade das.

#### 2] Real World - Policy makers will always specify how the mandates of the plan should be endorsed. It also means zero solvency, absent spec, states can circumvent the Aff’s policy since there is no delineated way to enforce the affirmative which means there’s no way to actualize any of their solvency arguments.

#### ESpec isn’t regressive or arbitrary- it’s an active part of the WTO is central to any advocacy about international IP law since the only uniqueness of a reduction of IP protections is how effective its enforcement is.

#### Fairness and education are voters – its how judges evaluate rounds and why schools fund debate

#### DTD – it’s key to norm set and deter future abuse

#### Competing interps – Reasonability invites arbitrary judge intervention and a race to the bottom of questionable argumentation – it also collapses since brightlines operate on an offense-defense paradigm

#### No RVIs – A – Encourages theory baiting – outweighs because if the shell is frivolous, they can beat it quickly B – its illogical for you to win for proving you were fair – outweighs since logic is a litmus test for other arguments

### 1NC – 2

#### Capitalism is a system engendering massive violence and inevitable extinction – the foundational task is to find a way out – the Role of the Ballot is to endorse the best organizational tactics.

Badiou ‘18

[Alain, former chair of philosophy at the Ecole Normale Superiure, professor of philosophy at The European Graduate School. Translated by David Broder. 07/30/2018. “The Neolithic, Capitalism, and Communism,” <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3948-the-neolithic-capitalism-and-communism>] pat

Today, it has become commonplace to predict the end of the human race such as we know it. There are various reasons for such forecasts. According to a messianic kind of environmentalism, the excessive predations of a beastly humanity will soon bring about the end of life on Earth. Meanwhile, those who instead point to runaway technological advances prophesy, indiscriminately, the automation of all work by robots, grand developments in computing, automatically-generated art, plastic-coated killers, and the dangers of a super-human intelligence.

Suddenly, we see the emergence of threatening categories like transhumanism and the post-human — or, their mirror image, a return to our animal state — depending on whether one prophesies on the basis of technological innovation or laments all the attacks on Mother Nature.

For me, all such prophesies are just so much ideological noise, intended to obscure the real peril that humanity is today exposed to: that is to say, the impasse that globalised capitalism is leading us into. In fact, it is this form of society — and it alone — which permits the destructive exploitation of natural resources, precisely because it connects this exploitation to the boundless quest for private profit. The fact that so many species are endangered, that climate change cannot be controlled, that water is becoming like some rare treasure, is all a by-product of the merciless competition among billionaire predators. There is no other reason for the fact that scientific innovation is subject to the question of what technologies can sell, in an anarchic selection mechanism.

Environmentalist preaching does sometimes use persuasive descriptions of what is going on — despite the exaggerations typical of the prophet. But most of the time this becomes mere propaganda, useful for those states who want to show their friendly face. Just as it is for the multinationals who would have us believe — to the greater benefit of their balance sheets — in the noble, fraternal, natural purity of the commodities they are trafficking.

The fetishism of technology, and the unbroken series of "revolutions" in this domain — of which the "digital revolution" is the most in vogue — has constantly spread the beliefs both that this will take us to the paradise of a world without work — with robots to serve us, and us left to idle — and then, on the other hand, that digital "thought" will crush the human intellect. Today there is not one magazine that does not inform its astonished readers of the imminent "victory" of artificial over natural intelligence. But in most cases neither "nature" nor the "artificial" are properly or clearly defined.

Since the origins of philosophy, the question of the real scope of the word "nature" has been constantly posed. "Nature" could mean the romantic reverie of evening sunsets, the atomic materialism of Lucretius (De natura rerum), the inner being of things, Spinoza’s Totality (Deus sive Natura), the objective underside of all culture, rural and peasant surroundings as counterposed to the suspicious artificiality of the towns ("the earth does not lie," as Marshal Pétain put it), biology as distinct from physics, cosmology as compared to the tiny location that is our planet, the invariance of centuries as compared to the frenzy of innovation, natural sexuality as compared to perversion… I am afraid that today "nature" most of all refers to the calm of the villa and the garden, the charm wild animals have for tourists, and the beach or the mountains where we can spend a nice summer. Who, then, can imagine man responsible for nature, when thus far he has just been a thinking flea on a secondary planet in an average solar system at the edge of one banal galaxy?

Since its origins philosophy has also devoted a great deal of thought to Technology, or the Arts. The Greeks meditated on the dialectic of Techne and Physis — a dialectic within which they situated the human animal. They laid the ground for this animal to be seen as "a reed, the weakest of nature, but … a thinking reed." For Pascal, this meant that humanity was stronger than Nature and closer to God. A long time ago, they saw that the animal capable of mathematics would do great things to the order of materiality.

Are these "robots" which they keep banging on about anything more than calculation in the form of a machine? Digits in motion? We know that they can count quicker than us, but it was we who invented them, precisely in order to fulfil this task. It would be stupid to look at a crane raising a concrete pillar up to some great height, use this to argue that man is incapable of the same feat, and then conclude by saying that some muscular, superhuman giant has emerged… Lightning-quick counting is not the sign of an insuperable "intelligence" either. Technological transhumanism plays the same old tune — an inexhaustible theme of horror and sci-fi movies — of the creator overwhelmed by his own creation. It does so either thrilled about the advent of the superman — something we have been expecting ever since Nietzsche — or fearing him and taking refuge under the skirt of Gaia, Mother Nature.

Let’s put things in a bit more perspective.

For four or five millennia, humanity has been organised by the triad of private property — which concentrates enormous wealth in the hands of very narrow oligarchies; the family, in which fortunes are transmitted via inheritance; and the state, which protects both property and the family by armed force. This triad defined our species’ Neolithic age, and we are still at this point — we could even say, now more than ever. Capitalism is the contemporary form of the Neolithic. Its enslavement of technology in the interests of competition, profit and concentrating capital only raises to their fullest extension the monstrous inequalities, the social absurdities, the murderous wars, and the damaging ideologies that have always accompanied the deployment of new technology under the reign of class hierarchy throughout history.

We should be clear that technological inventions were the preliminary conditions of the arrival of the Neolithic age, and by no means its result. If we consider our species’ fate, we see that sedentary agriculture, the domestication of cattle and horses, pottery, bronze, metallic weapons, writing, nationalities, monumental architecture, and the monotheist religions are inventions at least as important as the airplane or the smartphone. Throughout history, whatever has been human has always, by definition, been artificial. If that had not existed, there would not have been Neolithic humanity — the humanity we know — but a permanent close proximity with animal life; something which did indeed exist, in the form of small nomadic groups, for around 200,000 years.

A fearful and obscurantist primitivism has its roots in the fallacious concept of "primitive communism." Today we can see this cult of the ancient societies in which babies, men, women and the elderly supposedly lived in fraternity, without anything artificial, and indeed lived in common with the mice, the frogs, and the bears. Ultimately, all this is nothing but ridiculous reactionary propaganda. For everything suggests that the societies in question were extremely violent. After all, even their most basic survival needs were constantly under threat.

To speak fearfully of the victory of the artificial over the nature, of robot over man, is today an untenable regression, something truly absurd. It is easy enough to answer such fears, such prophesies. For judged by this standard, even a simple axe, or a domesticated horse, not to mention a papyrus covered in symbols, is an exemplary case of the post- or trans-human. Even an abacus allows quicker calculation than the fingers of the human hand.

Today we need neither a return to primitivism, or fear of the "ravages" the advent of technology might bring. Nor is there any use in morbid fascination for the science-fiction of all-conquering robots. The urgent task we face is the methodical search for a way out of the Neolithic order. This latter has lasted for millennia, valuing only competition and hierarchy and tolerating the poverty of billions of human beings. It must be surpassed at all cost. Except, that is, the cost of the high-tech wars so well known to the Neolithic age, in the lineage of the wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945, with their tens of millions of dead. And this time it could be a lot more.

The problem is not technology, or nature. The problem is how to organise societies at a global scale. We need to posit that a non-Neolithic way of organising society is possible. This means no private ownership of that which ought to be held in common, namely the production of all the necessities of human life. It means no inherited power or concentration of wealth. No separate state to protect oligarchies. No hierarchical division of labour. No nations, and no closed and hostile identities. A collective organisation of everything that is in the collective interest.

All this has a name, indeed a fine one: communism. Capitalism is but the final phase of the restrictions that the Neolithic form of society has imposed on human life. It is the final stage of the Neolithic. Humanity, that fine animal, must make one last push to break out of a condition in which 5,000 years of inventions served a handful of people. For almost two centuries — since Marx, anyway — we have known that we have to begin the new age. An age of technologies incredible for all of us, of tasks distributed equally among all of us, of the sharing of everything, and education that affirms the genius of all. May this new communism everywhere and on every question stand up against the morbid survival of capitalism. This capitalism, this seeming "modernity," represents a Neolithic world that has in fact been going on for five millennia. And that means that it is old — far too old.

#### TRIPS/compulsory licensing is a neoliberal ploy to both legitimize the WTO as a governing apparatus while covertly authorizing economic retaliation against nations who invoke it.

Ferrer ‘19

[Cory, MFA Candidate, University of Colorado Department of Communication. 2019. “THE RHETORIC OF “BALANCE”: NEOCOLONIALISM AND RESISTANCE IN THE GLOBAL BATTLE FOR GENERIC DRUGS,” www.proquest.com/openview/5cbb5aa35aec157b3cdf8b03d5d269b7/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y] Harun + pat

Recall also, that compulsory licensing is only a limited solution to the problem of accessing patented drugs in poorer countries. As the Doha Declaration explains: “We recognize that WTO Members with insufficient or no manufacturing capacities in the pharmaceutical sector could face difficulties in making effective use of compulsory licensing under the TRIPS Agreement” (2). As long as a country doesn’t have the means to produce the drugs, there is no one to whom the government could issue a compulsory license. So long as TRIPS restricts patented medicines from crossing international borders, compulsory licenses fall far short of addressing the need for patented medicines in countries that have little or no manufacturing capacity. In what is possibly the most depressing sentence of the Doha Declaration, the document goes on to offer, not a solution, but an instruction to the TRIPS Council to “find an expeditious solution to this problem and to report to the General Council before the end of 2002” (2). In other words, these negotiations were not able reach a compromise, and so they simply left this for future negotiations.

Also conspicuously absent from the Doha Ministerial declaration is any language addressing the rights of countries who take advantage of these flexibilities and remain free from bilateral pressure for doing so. While one could easily argue that if the US chooses to impose sanctions on a country of their own accord, rather than initiate dispute proceedings through the WTO, then this doesn’t necessarily concern the TRIPS agreement. However, given WTO secretary general Mike Moore’s stated concern with countries “feeling secure” in taking advantage of these flexibilities, and given that the issue of “bilateral pressure” was raised as an obstacle to this security during the TRIPS Council negotiations, the absence of any language addressing this issue appears to be a hard concession to the interests of the US and its allies, allowing them to continue holding the threat of economic sanctions over any nation that takes advantage of the flexibilities granted by this declaration (Moore; “Governments”).

Overall, the Doha declaration makes some significant concessions to the demands of the Global South’s coalition yet stops well short of fully authorizing WTO Members to take full advantage of all public health policies that would put affordable medicines into the hands of their people. The declaration recognizes that it falls short and puts a pin in the issue until the next negotiation, having failed to create a suitable compromise between nations who profit from IP protection and nations who suffer from it. The results of these later negotiations will be discussed in the conclusion to this thesis. Ultimately, the Doha Declaration—and WTO policy in general—are constrained by the demand for a standard of consensus which leaves ultimate veto power in the hands of powerful nations profiting at the others’ expense.

‌Conclusion: What does “Balance” Do?

In the context of the Doha round of negotiations, we see “balance” invoked towards several different ends. The TRIPS agreement invokes “balance” as a form of strategic ambiguity, attempting to please multiple stakeholders by allowing competing interpretations of the same international law to clear the procedural hurdles of consensus. The WTO officers and the EU’s position paper invoked “balance” to build legitimacy for the TRIPS agreement, the deliberative process that produced it, and by extension, the global patent system itself. If the TRIPS agreement strikes a carefully negotiated balance between health and IP protection, then the current balance is presumed sufficient. The paper submitted by the US and its allies invoked “balance” only as a description of strong and effective IP enforcement, a passing nod to balance that ultimately served to build the moral credibility of their strong IP enforcement agenda. For the coalition of the Global South, balance means mutual advantage, but one that must be demonstrated. Their position did not presume the benefit of IP to public health outcomes and argued that when IP protection conflicted with public health outcomes, governments have a standing right to choose public health.

Balance is therefore a deeply contested signifier: both a site of neo-colonial domination, and a site of counter-colonial resistance. However, all these conceptions of balance have one thing in common. They all, in some way, reinforce the legitimacy of the TRIPS agreement and the WTO as a governing institution of the global economy. Though the DCGP openly challenged Western Hegemony of these forums, it did so by drawing on specific provisions of the TRIPS agreement and claiming a position as an authoritative interpreter of international law to which Western nations are (on paper) equally beholden. Instead of challenging the legitimacy of the WTO and TRIPS agreements, the governments of the Global South are claiming that legitimacy for themselves in a counter-colonial push to assert themselves as equal governors and rightsholder of the neo-liberal world order. Though “balance” is typically invoked as a resolution to conflict, it is in fact the very site of that conflict it’s supposed to resolve.

#### Their fetishization of small firms as a source of innovation endorses a reactionary petit bourgeoisie class that devolves into fascism.

* SME = small and medium-sized enterprises

Kohl 21 – researcher in comparative political economy and economic sociology at the Max-Planck Institute for the Study of Societies [Sebastian Kohl and Timur Ergen, “Is More Mittelstand the Answer? Firm Size and the Crisis of Democratic Capitalism,” 06/17/21, *Analyse & Kritik*, Vol. 43, Issue 1, https://doi.org/10.1515/auk-2021-0004]

3.2 Small firms as guarantor of equal societies?

In the SME ideal as described above, the removal of economic concentration is seen as a path towards more equal societies, while proponents of SME-based economies highlight the equality associated with widespread business ownership. Most prominently perhaps, deconcentration as a redistributional agenda was at the core of German ordoliberals’ postwar efforts to use deconcentration as a tool to create mass support for democratic capitalism. In the words of their leading figure, minister of economic affairs and later chancellor Ludwig Erhard, establishing a competitive order was meant to end extreme social inequalities, to “once and for all overcome the traditional conservative social structure through mass purchasing power” (Erhard 1957, 7). The view that social inequalities are ultimately caused by deficiencies of an economy’s competitive order has recently also been termed the ‘monopoly regressivity’ view, i.e., the idea that more economic concentration leads to regressive (wealth) distributions and that antitrust could curb inequality (c.f. Baker/Salop 2015). At least on the face of it, in a cross-section of OECD countries and beyond, there is not a clearly negative association of countries’ Gini coefficients and the prominence of SMEs in their employment figures (cf. Figure 2). Prima facie, the most recent rise in inequality of the past decades also does not square with the fact that competition policy authorities and legislation have spread across the world with growing competencies since WWII (Bradford/Chilton 2018, 40).

[Fig. 2 Omitted]

In the following, we discuss more fine-grained considerations of how inequality and market concentration can be empirically linked through three channels. First, less market concentration comes with the promise of lowering consumer prices such that the inequality of ‘disposable income’ could be reduced. This channel also highlights the importance of consumption for inequality debates, which traditionally tend to focus exclusively on income and capital. Economic inequality could hence also play a role on the consumer side of the budget or, in other words, the additional layer of inequality introduced by how differently people spend money on goods and services. Second, less market concentration may lead to the diffusion monopsonist buyers of labor power, which could improve labor’s bargaining power and income position. Third, less concentration comes with the promise that more households could be direct business owners themselves and thus participate in business rents at times when, in Piketty’s (2014) terms, r is greater than g. We examine the potential of these promises in the light of their internal logic and selected empirical evidence in turn.

First, market concentration could impact inequality in a society through its effect on consumer prices, as monopoly prices are usually taken to be higher than prices emerging from a competitive setting. Prices are obviously lowered for all consumers equally at first, so that equality-changing effects can occur in two ways: first, a sector affected by deconcentrating tendencies produces goods which are only consumed by lower- or upper-income strata. If the high-end lobster industry is subject to a supply shock from tough antitrust action, it lowers high-end consumer prices and might even increase the disposable income inequality. The second, perhaps more common case, is when price changes occur in product lines for the many that have a differential relative impact on budgets. On the one hand, lower-income households have lower savings rates than higher-income households, so that rising consumer prices can be thought of as inherently regressive. On the other, poorer households tend to spend a larger share of their income on basic necessities (Engel’s law), so that price increases in these categories such as energy, food, health care, housing and communications affect lower strata of the income distribution disproportionately.

These issues have been studied in the literature on household-specific inflation rates and their impact. A recent comprehensive study, for instance, looked at the household income-specific inflation rates in the European Union (Gürer/Weichenrieder 2020): across 25 EU countries, the lowest income decile had an 11.2% higher inflation rate between 2001 and 2015 (or yearly 0.76 percentage points higher) than the top decile, which translates into an underestimation of the Gini of 0.04 points. For the currently highest expenditure item in average budgets—housing costs—a contemporary of Engel coined the term ‘Schwabian law,’ which refers to the regularity of proportionally higher rental housing expenses of lower-income households (Schwabe 1868). A recent study of German housing expenditure found that “the 50/10 ratio of net household income increases from 1.75 to 1.97 (by 22 percentage points, henceforth pp) between 1993 and 2013, the same ratio net of housing expenditures increases from 1.97 to 2.59 (by 62 pp)” (Dustmann/Fitzenberger/Zimmermann 2018, 1).

In fact, rent price control is one instrument experiencing a certain renaissance in contemporary debates, which mostly targets the biggest expenditure item in tenants’ household budget while simultaneously reducing capital incomes of, on average, richer landlords. A recent study shows that the combined effect of relatively strict rent control can lower the post-housing expenditure Gini by more than one percent, where the inequality-lowering effect through tenants’ budgets is higher than that through landlords’ diminished capital incomes (Kholodilin/Kohl 2021). In the historical long run, rent price controls—mentioned en passant by Piketty (2020, 436)—share a similar history with other inequality-depressing policies such as progressive income and wealth taxation: introduced in and around the world wars, they were part of the solidaristic package of policies that brought down inequality in the interwar and Fordist years. The liberalization of price controls since the 1970s, particularly in Anglophone countries, which returned to high degrees of free market pricing, coincided with the rise of new inequalities (Kholodilin/Kohl 2021).

Such examples imply that decreases in specific consumer prices through antitrust policies or other means, such as specific price controls, may have a certain inequality-decreasing potential, even if it fails to fight income inequality at its source. Practically, tackling income or wealth inequality on the consumption side generally faces the problem that prices and accompanying consumption taxes cannot directly target consumer groups by income or wealth deciles. Indirect taxes are therefore considered to be regressive. Using antitrust to curb prices faces a similar critique. Yet, even more basically, the evidence that antitrust action can reduce consumer prices is at best mixed. Conservative antitrust scholars have long been arguing that vigorous antitrust action in non-hard-core price-fixing cases rarely translates into short-term consumer gains. Crandall and Winston (2003) present a survey of available evidence which, for the authors, is a sufficiently bad record as to suggest a reduction of antitrust policy to a necessary minimum. A recent study of Spanish gas stations also finds increased prices after heavy antitrust fines, suggesting that antitrust consequences are basically paid for by consumers (González/Moral 2019). Even for the prosecution of hard-core price-fixing, empirical studies arrive at mixed results. “There is little doubt,” concludes a meta-study of 25 cases, “that in the great majority of cases antitrust prosecution does not lead to lower prices” (Sproul 1993, 753). As long lamented by Chicago School antitrust scholars (Bork 1978), antitrust remedies can destroy positive price effects of certain efficiency-increasing restrictive practices as a byproduct.

Such findings are in our view not sufficient to discredit antitrust action per se. They rather cast doubt on the suitability of antitrust policies for the political objective of increasing consumer welfare or, by extension, decreasing inequalities of disposable income. Global price regulation such as rent control does not surgically target households most in need and simultaneously always benefits higher-income households. At a minimum it is difficult to see how a policy instrument with uncertain outcomes and difficult implementation can be preferable to long-tested and proven effective policy instruments such as progressive income taxes or classic redistributive instruments.

A second more direct channel linking antitrust action and inequality is the wage nexus. Market power is not just about monopolies in consumer markets but is also reflected in monopsonies in labor markets. Big, monopsonist companies can thus depress wages (Benmelech/Bergman/Hyunseob 2018). If wages were decreased for all in the same way, inequality would rise ‘only’ because wage earners would all earn less and these lower production costs would translate into additional income for capital income receivers—something that has long been described as a decline in the labor share. Yet, wage inequality alone could increase because it is not likely that all wages can be cut in the same way, first, because higher-income earners can have more negotiating power and exit options, and second, because absolute wage decreases could play out relatively more severely for smaller budgets. More deconcentration, in the form of a more SME-centered economy, could hence promise less income inequality (cf. Naidu/Posner/Weyl 2018).

Empirically, this argument is not as clear-cut as perhaps in theory. As noted in the previous section, it is large employers who can offer more attractive jobs (Moscarini/Postel-Vinay 2012, 2512). Theoretically it is true that labor at least theoretically has stronger bargaining power, the smaller a given firm is. At the same time, however, a smaller firm represents a competition-restrained bargaining partner that cannot raise wages and costs beyond certain levels. In fact, David Cameron’s (1984) influential work found that greater concentration led to more unions, which in turn led to more redistribution. Hence, Stansbury and Summers’s (2020) recent attempt to contrast monopolization and declining worker power explanations of the decreasing labor share may have looked at historically interlinked phenomena. Insofar as concentrated industries also tend to be more prone to unionization, it may well be that greater concentration leads to less wage inequality and greater labor shares in the economy. Arguments about declining worker bargaining power may have to focus on a decline of collective capabilities to raise wages independently of product market structures (Bidwell 2013; Stansbury/Summers 2020).

SMEs, by contrast, find themselves in stronger competition and have been demonstrated to offer lower wages. It is true that most of the income inequality in recent decades comes from the widening intra-big firm wage inequality, as compared to the Trente Glorieuses, when big firms were seen as the great leveler by raising wages and offering unskilled workers the opportunity to rise through internal labor markets (Cobb/Lin 2017). In fact, recent studies have suggested that much of the historical decline of the relatively stable ‘core’ of industrial economies has occurred through the disappearance of large internal labor markets, rather than through increased concentration (Hollister 2004). Yet, it is questionable whether this form of inequality problem is solved by discounting big firms in favor of small firm structures. As compared to potentially feeble attempts to influence general concentration levels, established and tried policy toolkits around the strengthening of workers’ position vis-a-vis employers seem like the more straightforward policy option (Stansbury/Summers 2020).

A third potential channel is linked to corporate ownership and wealth: what wage earners forego in income and what consumers forego in price benefits functionally produce a surplus for the owners of corporations. Of course, this is a problem for inequality only to the degree that corporate ownership is unequally distributed and concentrated. The Mittelstand ideal traditionally tried to provide an alternative model to the stark separation between owners of capital and workers (Bechhofer/Brian 1978). And, in fact, income by SME owners often should be classified as neither pure wages nor pure capital gains, but as a mixed form. A more widespread dispersion of corporate ownership could in such a model act as a bolster against labor- and consumer-market inequalities.

While equal opportunity to form one’s own business and a more widespread business ownership rate are noble political goals, in reality hardly more than 10 percent of the population in rich countries will ever be in this role, even in societies with a supposedly entrepreneurial population such as the US (Van Stel et al. 2010). This rate is much lower when compared to almost all other kinds of asset ownership rates, such as even stocks, homes or insurance. The high concentration of business wealth in private hands is particularly pronounced in European economies, such as Germany, where the minority of business wealth is publicly owned and where even the majority of public firms are still under private family control (Dao 2020). A democratization of stock ownership, as had occurred in the US already in the 1920s (Ott 2011), is far from realized. This leads to a paradoxical suggested outcome in which societies like Germany with a less concentrated corporate structure may have a tendency towards more concentrated corporate ownership (cf. Albers/Charlotte/Schularick 2020). What is more, the German case is often regarded as comprising a set of highly productive Mittelstand firms operating in global niche markets, meaning that high value parts of that economy are removed from public ownership. In times of r greater than g, a higher share of small and medium-sized enterprises may have a concentrating effect through the wealth channel. This is reinforced by low inheritance and wealth taxes on (business) wealth. While much more empirical research is needed on the comparative effects of corporate ownership, very high levels of wealth inequality in Germany may be an indication for a less than straightforward effect of SMEs on inequality, counteracting Piketty’s (2019, ch. 11) recent praise of the democratic worker participation in German companies through the tradition of stakeholder participation (cf. section 3.1). An SME-economy would limit not only workers’ participatory rights in management but also their participation in business wealth and its capital gains.

3.3 Small firms as a check on concentration of political influence

In recent analyses of political scientists (e.g., Häusermann 2018) and economists alike (e.g., Piketty 2020, part 4), one of the central dangers for democratic capitalism is a movement of traditional lower-educated voters away from inequality-combatting parties on the left and towards conservative and right-wing parties, which often tend to run on economically regressive platforms, with negative consequences for social equality and democratic governance. What is lost in this current perception is that dangers for democracy can come from the very center of the social structure, when social strata related to the small firm sector turn towards extremist forces. In the traditional view of the small firm ideal, by contrast, SMEs, rather than being a source of potential radicalism, are considered the very backbone of sound democracies. This is the third SME promise we want to scrutinize more closely in the light of empirical evidence.

The danger of too concentrated economies for the democratic process is still very present in current debates, as when the US Democratic Party’s 2016 manifesto states that:

Large corporations have concentrated their control over markets to a greater degree than Americans have seen in decades ... We support the historic purpose of the antitrust laws to protect competition and prevent excessively consolidated economic and political power, which can be corrosive to a healthy democracy.

While the emphasis of an explicitly political motivation for competition policy enforcement is certainly a new dynamic for the 21st century American antitrust debate (Wu 2018), the underlying idea that small firm structures are contributing to a healthy democratic process can be found throughout all kinds of Mittelstand ideals. They often depart from the idea that large concentrated firms can use their excess resources to influence the political process. Again, on the face of it, the association between democracy and low concentration is not clear-cut. While participatory democracy is generally more developed in the mature economies where formally registered SMEs are more common and the informal sector is small, within the OECD world itself, differences in SMEs are hardly positively related with participatory qualities of democracies (cf. Figure 3).

More systematically, we take issue with the idea that small firm structures are more conducive to a healthy democracy in three respects. First, small firm interests have historically played anything but a stabilizing pro-democratic role. Second, small firm interests continue to be among the most radical opponents of state intervention in the economy, and particularly of social policy and workers’ rights. Third, the theoretical model of corporate power underlying critiques of bigness is at a minimum incomplete: dispersion and fragmentation can lead to high degrees of political influence if we take structural business power into account.

[Fig. 3 Omitted]

As mentioned above in section 3.1, from a historical standpoint today’s largely positive connotations of small firms’ politics are very much surprising. Over much of the 19th and 20th centuries the petite bourgeoisie was regarded as a deeply reactionary and even antidemocratic force in democratic capitalism. Intellectual figures such as Daniel Bell and Seymour Martin Lipset considered the small entrepreneurs to be the crucial social bedrock of fascist and radical right movements. Trapped between the growing power of large industry on one side and organized labor on the other, postwar sociology theorized that the small businessmen would seek protection in right-wing movements. “The dispossessed,” Bell argued, would turn to “Protestant fundamentalism, nativist nationalism” and “good-and-evil moralism” in defense against the rise of liberal industrial society (Bell 1955, 24). Lipset (1960, ch. 5) found the social bases of German and Italian fascism in the middle classes, which were trying to simultaneously fight socialism and “big international” capital. While some of the strong arguments about the extremism of the 20th-century middle classes have been revised by historians (Winkler 1972), the idea of a strong proclivity of middle-class interests for reactionary political currents has survived throughout the 20th century (Bechhofer/Brian 1978; Norris 2005)

Second, mid-century political sociologists hypothesized that the reactionary tendencies of the petite bourgeoisie were not contingent political leanings, but essentially grounded in their economic position. Subject to the whims of the free market, short on capital reserves, and easy to strong-arm by organized labor and large firms, small businessmen were theorized to lean towards a ‘politics of survival’ (Bechhofer/Brian 1978). This defensive position in the name of economic survival is exactly what can be observed in the policy preferences of small business. The extensive literature of business preferences for social policy reform have found firm size to be one of the strongest predictors of hostile policy positions (Paster 2015, 14). American small business interests have arguably blocked health care reform for decades (Martin 2000, 178–182). Due to their shaky economic position, they are usually the first constituency to rally against regulatory burdens, high tax loads and other interferences with their short-term bottom line. This troublesome relationship of small business with the regulatory state is reflected in far-reaching regulatory exemptions in all Western countries. Western small businesses are routinely relieved of regulations ranging from environmental protection through to workers’ rights.

The systematic aversion of small capitalist interests to the provision of public goods has a further, more indirect consequence for their relationship with democratic capitalism. Most diagnoses of the crisis of democratic capitalist regimes recognize the problem of political alienation and growing beliefs among parts of the electorate that within-system-politics are non-responsive to their needs (Beckert 2019; Elsässer/Hense/Schäfer 2018; Piketty 2020). While the limits on governments to intervene in the economy are often described as emerging from concentrated interests and multinational enterprises, small firms have traditionally been among the staunchest opponents of governmental service provision and regulatory intervention. This is not to deny that in regulatory fields such as banking regulation, rules for tobacco consumption, and climate change policy, corporate lobbying by ‘Big Finance,’ ‘Big Tobacco,’ and ‘Big Oil’ has caused significant blockades, oversight loopholes, and institutional drift (Brandt 2012; Stokes 2020). Nevertheless, like in Albert Hirschman’s (1970) theorem of the vulnerability of monopolists to ‘voice,’ big dominant firms can appear as easier targets for public campaigns, worse deflectors of responsibility, and sought-after conduits for regulatory change. Hence the idea that a less concentrated corporate landscape would be a necessary or sufficient condition for more responsive policies should be treated as structurally doubtful.

Finally, much of the democratic appraisal of small business rests on the assumption that political power is a linear function of economic power. As predicted by the theory of collective action (Olson 1965), fragmented interests should be worse at bargaining for their collective advantage than concentrated interests (Martin 2000, 57). Indeed, qualitative research suggests that small businesses have historically found it very hard to organize around common interests (Bechhofer/Brian 1978). However, the idea of a linear relationship between corporate concentration and political clout rests, in our view, on an impoverished notion of business power as the result of targeted lobbying. As demonstrated by Cornelia Woll (2014) in her comparative analysis of bank bailouts, the financial industry’s inability to act collectively proved to be a boon in bargaining over bailout funds as it forced the state’s hand. If governments depend on businesses’ health, lobbying is not necessary to make policy-makers conform to firms’ demands (Culpepper 2015). Quite the opposite, well-endowed and well-organized business actors can induce legislators to impose costly reform without fearing imminent business failure. By no means do we want to suggest that large firms are powerless in democratic capitalism, or that they do not pose a consistent threat to the democratic process. However, the idea that business fragmentation—by itself—shields the political process from private influence is highly implausible.

4 Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to critically evaluate the case for deconcentration as a tool to restore the functioning of democratic capitalism with its three core elements of good and stable employment relations, relative equality and healthy democracy. We do not fundamentally doubt that monopolization and the emergence of the giant firm represent crucial challenges for 21st-century democratic capitalism. However, we assembled extensive evidence suggesting that the small capitalist firm is probably not the final solution to these challenges. Empirically, the small capitalist firm has rather been a routine inhibitor of the realization of progressive reforms and might not be the much-vaunted motor of good, stable jobs. While antitrust might be able to reduce certain inequalities of disposable incomes through consumption, SMEs might themselves be a potential contributor to wealth inequalities. Realizing equality through the consumption channel might also be less straightforward than attacking income and wealth inequality at its core. Finally, research on the ‘extremism of the center’ suggests that SMEs and allied interests might even turn into a reactionary force in modern democracy, inhibiting social reform and regulation. SMEs are among the key defenders of low inheritance and wealth taxation in the protection of their business wealth and thus rather stand in the way of Piketty’s participatory socialism and ‘progressive tax triptych.’ Reasons of space prevent us from dissecting other inconclusive empirical evidence for further claims brought forward by modern Mittelstand ideals, such as superior innovativeness and contributions to employment. As important as size can be for determining social phenomena (Simmel [1908] 1950), it might generally be too unsteady a factor to build a strong reform agenda upon. As generalizing sets of political economic assertions, Mittelstand ideologies rarely stand the test of scientific scrutiny.

#### Vote neg to join the party – dual power organizing is the only path to revolutionary change.

Escalante ‘18

[Alyson, philosophy at U of Oregon. 08/24/2018. “Against Electoralism, For Dual Power!” <https://theforgenews.org/2018/08/24/against-electoralism-for-dual-power/>] pat

I am sure that at this point, the opportunists reading this have already begun to type out their typical objection: the world is different than it was in 1917, and the conditions of the United States in no way echo the conditions which enabled the Bolsheviks to achieve revolutionary success.

To this tried and true objection, there is one simple answer: you are entirely correct, and that is why we need to abandon electoralism and working within the bourgeois state.

What were the conditions which allowed the Bolsheviks to successfully revolt? The conditions were that of Dual Power. Alongside the capitalist state, there existed a whole set of institutions and councils which met the needs of the workers. The soviets, a parallel socialist government made up of individual councils, successfully took over many governmental responsibilities in some parts of Petrograd. In the radical Viborg district, the Bolshevik controlled soviets provided government services like mail, alongside programs that could meet the needs of workers. When a far right coup was attempted against the provisional government, it was troops loyal to the Bolshevik factions within the soviet who repelled the coup plotters, proving concretely to the workers of Petrograd that the socialists could not only provide for their needs, but also for their defense.

In short: the Bolsheviks recognized that instead of integrating into the bourgeois state, they could operate outside of it to build dual power. They could establish programs of elected representatives who would serve the workers. They would not bolster the capitalist state in the name of socialism, they would offer an alternative to it.

And so, when the time came for revolt, the masses were already to loyal to the Bolsheviks. The only party who had never compromised, who had denounced the unpopular imperialist wars, who had rejected the provisional government entirely, was the party who successfully gained the support of the workers.

And so, many of us on the more radical fringes of the socialist movement wonder why it is the the DSA and other socialist opportunists seem to think that we can win by bolstering the capitalist state? We wonder, given this powerful historical precedent, why they devote their energy to getting more Ocasios elected; what good does one more left democrat who will abandon the workers do for us?

The answer we receive in return is always the same: we want to win small changes that will make life for the workers easier; we want to protect food stamps and healthcare.

And do this, we reply: what makes you think reformism is the only way to do this. When the bourgeois state in California was happy to let black children go to school unfed, the Black Panthers didn’t rally around democratic candidates, they became militant and fed the children themselves. In the 40s and 50s, socialists in New York saw people going without healthcare and instead of rallying behind democratic candidates, they built the IWO to provide healthcare directly. Both these groups took up our pressing revolutionary task: building dual power.

Imagine if all those hours the DSA poured into electing Ocasio were instead used to feed the people of New York, to provide them with medical care, to ensure their needs were met. Imagine the masses seeing socialism not as a pipe dream we might achieve through electing more imperialists, but as a concrete movement which is currently meeting their needs?

The fact is, we are not nearly ready for revolution. Socialists in the United States have failed to meet the needs of the people, and as long as their only concrete interaction with the masses is handing them a voter registration form, they will continue to fail the people. Our task now is not to elect representatives to advocate for the people; it is much more gruelingly laborious than that. Our task is to serve the people. Our task is to build dual power.

The movement to do this is underway. Members of the DSA refoundation caucus have begun to move the left of the DSA in this direct, socialist groups like Philly Socialists have begun to build dual power through GED programs and tenants unions, many branches of the Party For Socialism and Liberation have begun to feed the people and provide for their concrete needs, and Red Guard collectives in Los Angeles have built serve the people programs and taken on a stance of militant resistance to gentrification. The movement is growing, its time is coming, and dual power is achievable within our life time.

The opportunists are, in a sense, correct. We are not where we were in 1917, but we can begin to move in that direction and dual power can take us there. In order to achieve dual power we have to recognize that Lenin was right: there will be no socialist gains by working within state institutions designed to crush socialism. Furthermore, we must recognize that the strategies of the electoral opportunists trade off with dual power. Electing candidates drains resources, time, and energy away from actually serving the people.

And so, we should commit to undertake the difficult and dangerous task of building dual power. We must reject opportunism, we must name the democratic party as our enemy, we must rally around power directly in the hands of the socialist movement. We do not have a parallel system of soviets in the United States. We can change that. Someday the cry “all power to the soviets” will be heard again. Lets make it happen.

#### Medicine can and must be revolutionary – voting affirmative aligns with a view of healthcare militantly opposed to capitalist power accumulation in favor of social views of health and broad coalitions among health workers and patients.

Yamada et al ‘20

[Seiji Yamada, MD, MPH; Arcelita Imasa, MD, Gregory Gabriel Maskarinec, PhD, all health professionals (and all committed anti-capitalists). 2020. “Revolutionary Medicine.” <https://www.socialmedicine.info/index.php/socialmedicine/article/view/1075>] pat – gendered language [replaced]

The revolutionary medicine espoused here is grounded in social medicine. As noted by Anderson, Smith, and Sidel, the fundamental precepts of social medicine are that

1. Social and economic conditions profoundly impact health, disease, and the practice of medicine.

2. The health of the population is a matter of social concern.

3. Society should promote health through both individual and social means.

In The Second Sickness, Howard Waitzkin identifies the forerunners of social medicine to be Friedrich Engels, Rudolf Virchow, and Salvador Allende. Social medicine counts among its practitioners Ernesto “Che” Guevara, the Barefoot Doctors of Revolutionary China, and Cuban doctors around the world. The Declaration of Alma Ata, i.e. The Declaration on Primary Health Care of the Joint WHO/UNICEF Conference in Alma-Ata, USSR, 1978, drew on these forerunners as the key to attaining the goal of Health for All by the Year 2000.

Obviously 2000 has come and gone, and we do not yet have Health for All. Unfortunately, we are no longer in a position to hanker for Health for All. Rather, we must focus on the survival of the human species.

Why we need revolutionary medicine now. Climate catastrophe, threat of nuclear war, inequality.

Noam Chomsky (who calls himself a libertarian socialist or an anarchist) points to two existential threats to the survival of the human species: climate catastrophe and the threat of nuclear war. The effects of global warming caused by human activity, the loss of ice, the rise in sea levels, and altered weather patterns with more severe weather events are already evident. Our planet has crossed a tipping point at which the greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere will affect the climate for the remainder of the Anthropocene age. Will it be called the Anthropocene after human civilization has collapsed? The time scale for that collapse draws ever closer, with an Australian think tank predicting that it may occur before 2050.14

The Doomsday Clock, which appears on the cover of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, is currently set at 100 seconds to midnight. While the position of the minute hand takes into account worsening climate security, the clock is largely known for indicating the proximity of the threat of nuclear war. The Bulletin currently cites the U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear agreement and the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), the unresolved North Korea situation, and the turn toward high-tech, automated weaponry.15

Another, mediating threat to human survival is severe inequality – among nations and within nations. For having contributed little historically to the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere – many developing states are most vulnerable to climate catastrophe. Sea-level rise poses a threat to the very existence of small island states and low-lying coastal regions. States in the pathway of tropical cyclones are particularly vulnerable. Those who experience racial discrimination, and the poor are particularly vulnerable to severe weather events. They live in inadequate dwellings. Their houses are in low-lying areas which experience more flooding. Large regions of the world also face deteriorating social, political, economic, and environmental conditions due to conflict, pollution, corruption, famine, population displacement. The Anthropocene Age is characterized by catastrophic loss of biodiversity whose global consequences will be disastrous for all species, including our own. Possible unanticipated consequences of synthetic biology and artificial intelligence conjure unimaginable future threats to all humanity.

Globally, health, health care, and health delivery systems are in crisis. Despite major advances throughout the last two centuries extending life-spans, reducing infant mortality, and eliminating smallpox, the promise of improved health and better health care for all people everywhere recedes. Individuals and communities, particularly the poorest and most marginalized in every country, continue to suffer from avoidable infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, HIV, cholera, Zika, dengue, Ebola, and COVID-19, even as antimicrobial resistance increases and vaccination refusal results in a resurgence of preventable childhood diseases; populations everywhere (not just the poorest and least privileged, though they are less likely to receive treatment) have rising rates of chronic noncommunicable diseases, including diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and obesity. Other threats urgently needing to be addressed include the surveillance state, automation and job loss, imperialism, racism and xenophobia, sexism, LGBTQ exclusion, and reproductive injustice.

Incremental reforms will not be enough to mitigate these existential threats to human survival. It is increasingly evident that we cannot eliminate these threats unless we throw off capitalism as the fundamental basis of our economic and social life. This situation demands of us that we adopt revolutionary thinking and revolutionary practice.

The scientific basis – against reductionism.

The perspective of most who work in medicine is a scientific one. Throughout our primary and secondary education, we become familiar with the scientific world view. The perspective is also a materialist one. An aside: Both Bakunin and Marx wrote extensively about their commitment to materialism and atheism. Of course, there are many people who are deeply religiously committed and who disagree with the philosophically materialist viewpoint. Yet many religious people are anticapitalist and participate in revolutionary action.

In health professional schools, we delve into the basic biological sciences. The perspective of much of Western science is reductive and Cartesian. If a phenomenon can be explained by the more reductionist science (e.g., a biological phenomenon via biochemical mechanisms) – that makes it more scientifically plausible. Physicists are thus wont to see themselves as having a front seat to reality. The underlying assumption is that science is “the paradigmatic human activity, and that natural science discovers truth rather than makes it.”

As Marx noted, however, in his eleventh thesis on Feuerbach: “The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.” For the practitioner of revolutionary medicine, there may be reasons to think not reductively, but rather dialectically, as in Levins and Lewontin’s The Dialectical Biologist. In the most public health of the chapters, “Research needs for Latin community health,” Levins notes

For instance, a man's decision to smoke may increase his risk of heart disease and cancer in the long run, but as one of the few ways he has of coping with stress, it may save the lives of his wife and children. Our assumption of conditional rationality means that we cannot expect to change behavior by education alone: rather, we must alter those circumstances that make such harmful choices seem optimal.

From the reductionist, individualist perspective, we might say in the name of harm reduction, “Go ahead and smoke.” From the revolutionary perspective, we need to work with the [person] man, the woman, their workplaces, and their societies to combat alienation, addictions, and violence against women and children. Revolutionary medicine is the medicine wherein health workers understand the social origins of illness and the need for social change to improve health conditions. It is created from the practice of the people’s struggles against their oppressive conditions. Revolutionary medicine serves the oppressed classes in advancing their struggles.

Proletarianization of health workers.

Writing in the New York Times, Danielle Ofri notes that the increasing complexity of patient care and administrative burdens, including the electronic health record, are accomplished by nurses and doctors who work harder and longer hours. She wonders if this exploitation of health workers is simply the business plan of the corporations that increasingly control the health care system. In Marx’s labor theory of value, difference between the price that a good (in this case, health care) commands in the marketplace - and the cost of producing this good, which is largely labor – is the profit margin, that is the surplus labor that is extracted from the worker. Thus, commodified medicine leads to the proletarianization of health workers. That is to say, they find themselves alienated from their patients, the products of their work (better health for their patients), and their workplace. Consequently, we become alienated from our fellow workers, and ultimately, from ourselves. Health worker alienation from oneself is sometimes described as "burnout," but a more accurate term would be "moral injury." Health as a commodity is unacceptable, not only diminishing the health care of individual patients but causing the entire society to be ill, dis-eased.

We have less and less control over how we work: insurance corporations require adherence to their specific formularies. They pile burdensome prior authorization work on us. They deny treatments we order for our patients. Our employers escalate their documentation demand in a coding arms race with insurance corporations. Granted, nurses and doctors are professionals who command salaries far higher than trades workers or unskilled workers – they are increasingly proletarianized. Nonetheless, we health professionals need to develop class consciousness as a class of workers that is having surplus labor value extracted from us, that is increasingly alienated from the service we perform, and from our own humanity.

Solidarity among health care workers will ensure that health is recognized as a human right, not something to be bought and sold, that surplus labor should not be extracted for profit within the health care profession, but used by the health care workers themselves to ensure healthy lives for themselves and their communities. In the future, electronic algorithms may do much of the diagnosis, treatment, and "curing" of common complaints, allowing health care workers to once more focus on patient-centered "healing," not on electronic charts, billing, and administrative hoops, instead aiming for a healthier population in its widest sense, and at the individual level of the health care team themselves.

For as soon as the distribution of labour comes into being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a herdsman, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood; while in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic. The post-revolutionary health care worker will not be limited to being a neurosurgeon or a nurse anesthetist. She will be a family doc that just has to upload a program. One can imagine a scene taking place in the near future in a remote hospital:

Nurse Neo to family doctor Trinity: Can you fix this subarachnoid hemorrhage?

Dr. Trinity: Not yet. (She speaks into her phone.) Tank, I need a program for the surgical approach to clipping an aneurysm. Hurry. (Her eyelids quiver briefly.) Let’s go.

She will not waste her evenings and weekends remotely accessing her EHR. She might write some science fiction, or she might kick some counter-revolutionary agent butt.

Throughout history, empires have flourished and collapsed without threatening the existence of the entire human population. Epidemics typically (with notable exceptions) had very limited geographic distribution. Neither scenario now fits the world today. We are now global citizens, who need to create cohesive, equitable, socially just societies that address health everywhere, or all of us will face increasing threats to our own health and well-being. Revolutionary medicine is required to create such a society.

## Case