# 1

#### The standard is maximizing expected well being or Act Hedonistic Utilitarianism - Prefer

#### [1] Pleasure and pain are intrinsic value and disvalue – everything else regresses. Evolutionary knowledge is reliable – broad consensus and robust neuroscience prove.

Blum et al. 18

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

# 2

#### The Dollar is dominant now without a rival – but without policy reevaluation that may change

Hopkins ‘20

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For the past 75 years, the U.S. dollar has enjoyed a unique status as the preeminent global currency. Used broadly in international commerce and widely held by sovereign governments, the Greenback remains by far the most important currency and as such conveys special benefits to the American economy. But nothing is constant, and a confluence of structural changes internationally and U.S. policy errors is calling into question the sustainability of the dollar's rule, with potentially profound implications.

The United States emerged from World War II as the dominant power, and institutionalized its hegemony in a new global financial and currency system agreed to by the victorious nations at a conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. The Bretton Woods Agreement of 1944 created the World Bank and the International Monetary fund, and established the U.S. dollar as the essential currency of international exchange and trade. This special status was derisively dubbed the "exorbitant privilege" by the French Finance Minister in 1960. But this privileged role has allowed the United States to finance its massive debt without serious negative impact and has contributed to improved standard of living and higher real incomes for average Americans, at the expense to some degree of the rest of the world.

Now the world is changing. The United States comprised 40% of global GDP in 1960; today it makes up 25%. China is steadily ascending, now accounting for 15% of the world economy and growing more rapidly, while the European Union roughly equals the U.S. in output. Pressure is mounting from our economic competitors to reduce the dollar's dominance in exchange and trade transactions and reserve holdings by foreign governments.

As the size of the American economy declines relative to other major players, structural changes are afoot as well. China has been aggressively modernizing its antiquated banking system and has taken a lead in alternative payment processing, essentially leaping directly from cash to mobile payments (credit cards never really gained a foothold in China). In addition, China has launched the world's first central bank backed cryptocurrency, the e-RMB, which it hopes will eventually displace some dollar transactions.

The vast majority of the world's oil trade is conducted in U.S. dollars, but that may be changing too. In 2018, China began buying some of its massive oil imports in its own currency, the Yuan. Meanwhile, Russia is working to reduce its dollar reserve holdings and has increased its own stockpile of Chinese Yuan. And Russia is now China's largest oil supplier.

Perhaps as important as sheer economic size, a currency's reserve status depends upon the perception of stability and trust afforded to the issuing country. Modern currencies are no longer backed by hard assets like gold, but derive value only by "fiat" based on confidence in the issuer. In this regard, the United States has taken actions that are puzzlingly detrimental to confidence in the dollar.

President Trump did not create the disturbing trend toward nationalism and protectionist isolation, but his administration has compounded the damage. Beginning with United States withdrawal from the Trans Pacific Trade deal and continuing with a trade war and increased bellicosity toward other nations, global supply chains are shifting and adjusting to the new reality, potentially reducing dependence on the dollar as bilateral trade in other currencies increases.

Furthermore, recall that the reserve status of the dollar depends upon our perceived stability and trustworthiness in the eyes of our trading partners. Clearly, we have forfeited much of that confidence and to some degree abdicated our global leadership in recent years. A reserve currency depends upon trust, and trust in the United States is presently diminished. China in particular is stepping into the breach.

The exorbitant privilege has allowed America to finance its enormous debt with relatively little adverse impact. It is easy to issue large amounts of debt when the world clamors for your currency and you have the ability always to print more. The loss of reserve status would change that. First, the dollar would devalue, sparking price inflation and a decline in real incomes for Americans and higher interest rates for home and car loans. But more painfully, the cost of financing our debt will soar as demand for U.S. Treasury Bonds dwindles, forcing us to pay ever higher rates in order to attract buyers. With the national debt on a 5-year pace to reach $30 trillion and limited ability to print money, the longer term implications are staggering.

A major shift away from the dollar is not imminent, as there are currently no viable options. China must implement significant legal protections and market reforms before the Yuan becomes a competitor, and most other currencies are simply too small. But absent a reexamination of American policy and priorities and the restoration of American leadership, the direction of the trend is not promising.

#### IPR is key for U.S Dollar Centrality – it allows US firms near if not complete monopolies pushing dollars into international markets and stabilizing US financial influence

Schwartz ‘19

Schwartz, Herman Mark (2019). American hegemony: intellectual property rights, dollar centrality, and infrastructural power. Review of International Political Economy, (), 1–30. doi:10.1080/09692290.2019.1597754 // Phoenix

Mechanism one relates to Strange’s (1989) financial power: US current account deficits generate the dollar centrality that network analyses reveal through self-reinforcing dynamics prior to the network. US current account deficits result from deep seated domestic institutional arrangements in current account surplus economies that produce chronic domestic demand shortfalls. The more those export-led economies run surpluses with the United States, the more dollars they accumulate; the more dollars they accumulate, the more dollars flow through their banking systems back into dollar assets and liabilities; the more dollar assets and liabilities those banks hold on their balance sheets, the more those banks both rely on the Federal Reserve Bank (FED) as a lender of last resort or a supplier of outside money during (the inevitable) crises, and the more their staff develop habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) or the routinized behaviors at the heart of infrastructural power (Mann, 1986) that support continued use of the dollar in non-crisis times; the more those banks lend in dollars, the more counterparty debtor economies are drawn into use of the dollar; a parallel habitus emerges among export firms that reinforces use of the dollar in a Hirschman (1945)-like dynamic. If suppliers (or debtors) are borrowing those recycled dollars, they will demand payment in dollars to meet their liabilities. Contemporary late developers similarly need export markets to grow, and the United States constitutes both the biggest import market and biggest net importer in the global economy (netting intra-EU trade). This mechanism originates from institutional responses to the problem of late development and not, via lower transaction costs, the emergent network of dollar claims and liabilities itself. That said, surely dollar acceptability faces limits set by persistent US current account deficits? Prudent actors might well balk at accepting more assets denominated in a currency at risk of sustained depreciation (Bergsten & Williamson, 2004). Indeed, the 1960s Triffin dilemma pitted declining confidence about the dollar as a store of value given rising US inflation rates and a declining productivity gap between the United States and its main competitors against the need for global liquidity supplied by a US current account deficit. Today, as Eichengreen (2010) has argued, centrality for the dollar faces a similar collective action problem among holders of dollar-denominated assets – why do US current account deficits not motivate individual countries with relatively smaller dollar holdings to defect for fear of depreciation or capital losses? In today’s flexible exchange rate world, only above average US economic growth and/or profits for the firms constituting the bulk of equity market capitalization validates confidence in dollar assets. Because economic activity is organized through capitalist markets, the critical issue for differential growth (Nitzan, 1998) and asset validation is always: ‘who gets the profits and in what proportion’? Mechanism two is thus about profits, which corresponds to Strange’s (1989) productive power. US firms capture a disproportionate share of global profits, and within this firms with robust intellectual property rights (IPRs – patent, copyright brand and trademark) capture a disproportionate share of US and global profits. Here compliance with international trade treaties protecting IPRs is the focal point or center of gravity for this disproportionality. IPRs give some US firms monopoly or near monopoly power in the global (and local) commodity chains they construct. The extension of US IPR law through various trade treaties (Drahos & Braithwaite, 2003; Sell, 2003; Sell & Prakash, 2004) allows US IPR firms to capture a disproportionate share of global profits via that monopoly power. This shifts claims on value added towards those firms, concentrating profits into a small number of US firms. Though we explore this below in more depth, US firms account for a disproportionate 33.9% of cumulative profits generated by any firm appearing on the Forbes Global 2000 list from 2006 to 2018 and firms in sectors characterized by robust IPRs account for a disproportionate 26.6% of those profits. Profitability thus also rests on infrastructural power, via compliance with trade treaties and enmeshment in global value chains orchestrated by US firms. As with bank behavior, this compliance is not purely voluntary (Gruber, 2000), but rather reflects a gradient in which mutually beneficial cooperation shades into coercion as the proportion of local firms benefiting from those treaties declines. US firms are not the only ones that possess marketable intellectual property. Non-US firms that also benefit from robust global IPRs broaden the global political coalition for creating and expanding those IPRs. Yet US firms tend to control the commodity chains in which those foreign firms participate. These two mechanisms are connected: the first explains why non-US actors receive dollars (more precisely, dollar-denominated assets) and the second explains why they opt to hold those assets; put differently, the supply of and demand for dollars. The two mechanisms transform the exorbitant burden – current account deficits associated with use of the dollar as the international reserve currency – back into an exorbitant privilege. They represent a transfer of real resources back to the US economy in exchange for promises to pay back something in the future. Finally, though we will not explore this in depth, these two mechanisms are also linked to the military side of US power, where a similar logic of dominance over potential peer rivals has driven science policy and technological innovation. Put bluntly, a military-innovation complex (c.f. Eisenhower’s military-industrial complex (Hozic, 1999; Hurt, 2010; Mazzucato, 2015; Weiss, 2014)) is the research foundation for the high profit US IPR firms that in turn feed a substantial portion of cash back into the IMS. As with all such systems of power, these structural strengths contain endogenously generated weaknesses and face on-going challenges from the less powerful. Financialization and profit strategies built on IPRs endogenously produce income inequality among firms and people, which erodes compliance, potentially slows growth and destabilizes the global financial system. Domestically, the current account deficits necessary for a dollar-centric IMS (Germain & Schwartz, 2014) generated part of the anger motivating the populist voting bloc that elected Trump. In turn, the Trump Administration’s erratic trade policy, its assaults on parts of the military-innovation complex, and, most significantly, its efforts to eviscerate financial regulation simultaneously threaten the dollar’s role in the IMS and US firms’ ability to capture global profits.3 The Trump administration is one logical consequence of current account deficits that have hollowed out manufacturing employment and limited upward mobility to a narrow slice of the US population. The paper thus has four sections corresponding to the issues: Why does infrastructural power matter? Why the IMS? Why IPRs? The conclusion considers critical endogenous sources of decay.

#### Dollar centrality caps global conflict - prevents great power war

Dr. Salvatore Babones 17, Professor of Sociology at the University of Sydney, “Money Talks: The Rise of Geoeconomics Is Playing Right Into Washington’s Hands”, World Politics Review, 10/3/2017, https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/23295/money-talks-the-rise-of-geoeconomics-is-playing-right-into-washington-s-hands

Geopolitics is dead. Long live geoeconomics. Since the turn of the millennium, the geoeconomics of sanctions and sweeteners has slowly been replacing the geopolitics of diplomacy and war. With U.S. forces actively engaged across a wide swath of Africa and the Middle East, the transition from geopolitics to geoeconomics may not seem all that obvious. But on closer inspection, it becomes clear that military intervention these days is limited to places that lack functioning economies that can be effectively sanctioned. Most of the world, and all of the economically productive world, lies in the sphere of geoeconomics.

That economically productive section of the world, spanning the Atlantic and Pacific basins with North America at its center, incorporates more than 80 percent of global GDP into an interwoven fabric of transnational production networks. In this zone of integration, outright war is obsolete as a tool of foreign policy. Those who suggest that the “great powers” of today might repeat the mistakes of 1914 and stumble into war fail to understand that 21st century economic integration is much deeper than the international trade of the early 20th century. It’s hard to imagine China invading Taiwan when Taiwanese firms employ more than 15 million people in China itself.

The U.S. still maintains by far the most powerful—and most expensive—military force in the world. China will find it very difficult to catch up, even more so as its economic growth slows. But military power is less and less the main source of American influence in the world. If the U.S. was the preeminent geopolitical power of the 20th century, it is the geoeconomic behemoth of the 21st. The U.S. may account for a declining share of global GDP, but its corporations increasingly dominate global value chains and its institutions hold overwhelming sway at international forums. Just as important, the U.S. is at the center of the financial, technological, educational and other networks that form the backbone of the 21st-century global economy.

The centrality of the U.S. in the 21st-century economy makes it a new kind of sanctions superpower.

Geoeconomic power is generated more by centrality than by sheer size, and the centrality of the U.S. in the 21st-century economy makes it a new kind of sanctions superpower. Few people are even aware of EU sanctions that are not part of larger American-coordinated efforts. Countries don’t worry much about being the target of Russian economic sanctions, and China tends to offer economic carrots rather than punish with economic sticks. The EU, Russia and China all have some geoeconomic power, but only the U.S. has the power to exclude individuals, firms or even entire countries from participation in the larger global economy. In the realm of geoeconomics, the U.S. isn’t just a major player, or even the lone superpower. Quite simply, it exercises many of the functions of a global government.

The New Middle Kingdom

The U.S. is in effect the spider at the center of the web of the integrated global economy. This position makes it disproportionately influential and by far the most powerful player in the new great power game of geoeconomics. The dominance of the U.S. dollar is well known, and the global financial system has been centered on the U.S. since the end of World War I, when France, Germany and the United Kingdom all found themselves financially dependent on New York, America’s financial capital. But today the virtual infrastructure of the internet, operating systems, app stores and the entire online economy is also centered on the U.S., as are the worlds of higher education, science, medicine, publishing, business services and a host of other “post-industrial” industries.

From Asia to Europe, the giants of China, Japan and Germany also host key nodes in the 21st-century economy, but American firms and institutions predominate because they occupy leading positions not just in one or two fields, but in nearly every field simultaneously. This generates network effects that multiply American influence. What’s more, many of the leading firms and institutions that are not American are based in countries that are closely allied to the United States. Twenty-two of the 28 EU member states are also members of NATO; Canada, Australia, Japan and South Korea are all close U.S. allies; Taiwan is in effect a U.S. protectorate.

The world’s only major economic power that is not a U.S. ally is China, but China is highly dependent on investment from and exports to the U.S. and its allies. Many of the most productive and profitable niches in China’s own economy are foreign-owned, with China’s moribund state-owned enterprises claiming the majority of what remains. Even China’s world-class internet companies are locked into an American-managed industrial infrastructure. Google search may be blocked in China, but 99 percent of Chinese mobile phones run Google’s Android or Apple’s iOS operating system.

The centrality of the U.S. in what has been called the “zone of integration” created by the globalization of the world’s economy is a new phenomenon, but it’s not unprecedented. In the premodern era, before the emergence of a single global economy, the world was fragmented into separate regional economies. One of those regional economies was the East Asian economy centered on China. The English word for China descends from the ancient Roman and Greek name, “Sinae,” or the “the land of the Qin,” named for China’s founding Qin Dynasty (221-206 B.C.). But in Chinese, China is simply Zhongguo, the “Central State” or, more poetically, the “Middle Kingdom.” Premodern China was always at the center of its own world.

In all the other major languages of East Asia, China is also called by some variant of Zhongguo. Some other countries even defined themselves in relation to China. Japan is the “land of the rising sun”—as seen from China. The “nam” in Vietnam means “south,” placing Vietnam to the south of China. Japan and Vietnam, along with Korea, Mongolia, Tibet and much of Southeast Asia, once formed an integrated economic region centered on China. The Chinese name for this area, which represented the world as seen from China, was tianxia, meaning “sky-encompassed” or “all under heaven.”

By the time of the Ming Dynasty (A.D. 1363-1644), the Chinese tianxia was an integrated economic zone covering all of East Asia and extending at times into the Indian Ocean as far west as Somalia and Tanzania. This precursor to globalization with China at the center was the historical inspiration for Chinese President Xi Jinping’s One Belt, One Road initiative, known as OBOR. The two components of OBOR—the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road—are explicitly designed to put China back at the economic center of the Afro-Eurasian landmass. The Chinese government clearly appreciates the geoeconomic value of centrality.

The problem for China is that although the OBOR strategy of “build it and they will come” might work for the physical infrastructure of ports and railways, it is not an effective way to improve China’s position in the virtual infrastructure of the 21st-century economy. Centrality in human networks depends very little on physical connectivity. China can send all the rail cars in the world chugging across Central Asia to Western Europe, but it won’t change the fact that Western Europeans are more likely to use Facebook than WeChat—and more likely to educate their children in North America than in China.

The fact that Chinese parents are themselves beating down the doors to educate—and even give birth to—their children in North America makes the prospect of a new Chinese tianxia even more remote. Instead, as Chinese individuals seek out the most advantageous positions for themselves and their families in global economic networks, they reinforce the centrality of the U.S. in those networks. As a result, the U.S. is becoming a kind of new Middle Kingdom of what might be called an American Tianxia. The emerging American Tianxia is very different in language, culture and politics from the old Chinese tianxia, but it does share one crucial trait: the leveraging of network centrality into world-spanning geoeconomic power.

The Zone of Irrelevance

The historian Wang Gungwu, writing in 2013, was the first to suggest that the Chinese term tianxia might be applied to today’s American-centered world. He described the word tianxia as depicting “an enlightened realm that Confucian thinkers and mandarins raised to one of universal values that determined who was civilized and who was not” and suggested that today’s American Tianxia performs the same function. Replace “Confucian thinkers and mandarins” with “political pundits and NGOs” and you get the point.

The globalized people who participate in the networks of the American Tianxia—the journalists, think tankers, businesspeople, academics and other opinion leaders who are much more closely tied to the U.S. than to, say, Syria or North Korea—get to mold the image of nations and their leaders, with clear results. It’s no mystery what they think of Assad, Kim Jong Un or Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi—or even Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who are skating on thin ice. By contrast, Saudi and Emirati attempts to stigmatize Qatar have fallen flat, since Qatar is in many ways the most liberal of the Gulf states. And with a reported 11,000 U.S. military personnel based in Qatar, it is unlikely that the U.S. would ever bring its full geoeconomic power to bear against the Qatari government. Reversing his initial condemnation of Qatar, even U.S. President Donald Trump is now offering to mediate the dispute.

China can send all the rail cars in the world chugging toward Western Europe, but it won’t change the fact that Europeans are more likely to use Facebook than WeChat.

The world may seem to be awash in conflict today, but terrible as those wars may be, they are concentrated in countries that are peripheral to the larger global economy. Conflict hotspots like Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Ukraine, Myanmar and Yemen are only tenuously connected to the outside world and are completely excluded from sophisticated global production networks. They form what from a geopolitical perspective has been called the “zone of intervention” but which from a geoeconomic perspective might just as well be called the “zone of irrelevance.” Who wins these wars may make an enormous difference to the people who live in the countries affected, but it will have no meaningful impact on the larger global economy.

Geoeconomic stigmatization via the imposition of economic sanctions is also focused on countries that are relatively isolated from global economic networks. Autarkic Russia is routinely criticized for its democratic failures, yet globally networked China is not a democracy at all. It is perhaps no coincidence that while it costs the U.S. very little to sanction Russia, it would cost a fortune to sanction China. The distinction between civilization and barbarism in the American Tianxia may be based on the acceptance of universal values, but it is mainly American pundits and NGOs who make the distinction, and these days they’re much better networked with China than with Russia. As a result, China tends to get a pass from the Western expert class, at least for now. Russia does not.

The few remaining “hot” conflicts or crises that affect economically consequential areas of the world, like the ones in Iraq and North Korea, are legacies of 20th-century geopolitics. They also involve countries that are not themselves integrated into 21st-century value chains. Iraq may be oil-rich and North Korea surrounded by advanced economies, but neither is itself very well networked economically. Their very irrelevance, ironically, limits their susceptibility to geoeconomic pressure. Islamic State forces in Iraq must be confronted by military power precisely because they have no formal economy to govern, even if they have overseen a black market for oil. North Korea is similarly relatively immune to sanctions because its economy is so meager.

China is particularly careful to keep its geopolitical conflict zones clear of geoeconomic entanglements. China has broadly supported the U.S. in applying economic sanctions on North Korea because China no longer has any geopolitical use for North Korea. By contrast, in the South China Sea, where China does have geopolitical interests, it ensures that these do not interfere with the smooth functioning of important economic systems. It may be true that one-third of global ocean trade passes through the South China Sea, but it is less often pointed out that most of that trade is China’s. Thus China speaks loudly but carries a small stick when it comes to the possibility of real conflict in the South China Sea.

China’s recently resolved Doklam Plateau standoff on its border with India and Bhutan similarly illustrates China’s separation of geopolitics from economics. The Doklam Plateau is almost literally in the middle of nowhere. China’s road-building there was in many ways similar to its island-building in the South China Sea. Both represent the development of infrastructure in remote locations in order to establish a permanent Chinese presence in previously unoccupied territories. They are bold geopolitical provocations, but they are geoeconomically irrelevant. With China, as in the rest of the world, geopolitical conflicts are confined to the zone of irrelevance. In the parts of the world that matter, geoeconomics is the order of the day.

Belts and BRICS

With its OBOR initiative, China is at the forefront of moving from geopolitics to geoeconomics as the basis of its foreign relations. Unlike in the Doklam and the South China Sea, China has no territorial ambitions along its belt and road routes. Instead, it seeks to leverage economic statecraft for political gain. For example, not long after Chinese state-owned shipping company COSCO made a major investment in Athens’ port of Piraeus, the Greek government blocked an EU effort to criticize China’s human rights record. Similarly, at China’s behest the Dalai Lama has repeatedly been denied a visa to enter South Africa. South Africa is a major beneficiary of Chinese largesse that has gained entry into the BRICS summit club—joining Brazil, Russia, India and China—entirely at China’s behest.

The problem for China is that it does not control access to major global networks that people value for their own sake. As a result, China’s geoeconomic checkbook diplomacy is fundamentally transactional. This is very different from the classical Chinese tianxia, under which the countries of East Asia valued access to China’s learning, technology and unique products and thus were willing to accept the trappings of nominal Chinese suzerainty in exchange for the privilege of trading with China. In the old tianxia, China was the center of the world and could use that position to its advantage. In the new geoeconomics, China must pay full price to meet its foreign policy goals.

In its exercise of geoeconomic power, China rewards while the U.S. punishes.

The most recent BRICS summit in early September is a case in point. Just a week before the opening of the summit in Xiamen, in eastern China’s Fujian province, Chinese and Indian troops were facing off on the remote Doklam Plateau 1,700 miles to the west. But Xi presumably didn’t want to see the crisis disrupt an economic summit on his own home turf; early in his career he had served as deputy mayor of Xiamen and governor of Fujian. So he bought India off with a geopolitical withdrawal in order to meet his geoeconomic goals.

China can afford its many geoeconomic initiatives—the BRICS-sponsored New Development Bank, its own Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, multiple OBOR initiatives, diplomatic offensives to isolate Taiwan—but the fact that it has to pay for them underlines the point that for China, geoeconomics is a costly game. China has to buy its friends. The U.S., by contrast, gets its friends for free. People are even willing to pay to join the U.S. “club,” as when countries buy U.S. airplanes or military hardware as the price of U.S. friendship.

In its exercise of geoeconomic power, China rewards while the U.S. punishes. That’s because the U.S. is in the enviable position that mere access to its geoeconomic infrastructure is valuable in itself. Countries are not paying China for the privilege of joining OBOR; China is paying them to join. China has effectively paid India to keep quiet and stay in the BRICS, paid Greece to plead its case at the EU, and paid dozens of African countries to allow Chinese state-owned firms to build infrastructure at below-cost rates. China even donated a new headquarters building for the African Union—and sent a Chinese crew to Addis Ababa to build it.

By contrast, more than a million international students—nearly a third of them Chinese—pay to study in the U.S., subsidizing American colleges while absorbing American values. More than 500 foreign companies are listed on the New York Stock Exchange, subjecting themselves to U.S. government oversight, and the U.S. dollar is on one side of the deal in 88 percent of all international currency transactions. The whole world relies on the American-dominated internet, the American-provided Global Positioning System (GPS) and American-owned computer and mobile phone operating systems. It is difficult to do business of any kind in today’s integrated economy without using U.S.-linked systems of one kind or another, which is why the U.S. is uniquely powerful in the imposition of economic sanctions.

Geoeconomics isn’t everything, and sanctions may not be able to solve all of the world’s geopolitical crises. Sometimes boots on the ground and missiles in the air are the only ways to achieve important policy and humanitarian goals. But geoeconomics is increasingly important, and in that realm, the U.S. is vastly more powerful today than postwar America was in its Cold War heyday. It is worth remembering that the U.S. at its geopolitical zenith struggled to contain an impoverished China in the Korean War and failed to contain an impoverished North Vietnam in Southeast Asia. Today, geoeconomic centrality gives the U.S. much more power to influence the policies and behaviors of other countries than military force ever did. Hegemony is dead. Long live centrality.

#### The perception of decline causes immediate lash-out - goes nuclear

Ken Jorgustin 14, MA in Political Science, History, and Economics from the University of West Florida, Retired Master Sergeant in the United States Air Force, Graduated Number One at the Academic Instructor School Air

War College, Maxwell AFB, “The Coming Collapse Of The Dollar, And A Time For War”, 12/26/2014, https://tinyurl.com/y32yc6o8

In my opinion we are witnessing an Empire end-time struggle of the U.S. dollar hegemony over the world – the result of which may become the end of the dollar as we know it and grave financial pain for the American citizen, or even worse, World War 3.

You’ve probably seen or heard the word ‘hegemony’ before. But what is hegemony? Hegemony is the political, economic, or military predominance or control of one state over others. We are seeing before our eyes – the most critical clash of our time – the increasingly desperate attempts to sustain global dollar hegemony and dominance. What you need to know is that this ongoing battle is coming closer to a tipping point. The dollar is going to collapse. One day.

You better do what you can to understand what’s really going on – to see through the propaganda and misinformation – and to prepare and protect yourself from the results of a global chess game and perhaps soon to be ‘checkmate’.

You’ve heard that desperate people do desperate things, but will we (the pawns) be led to major war while the protected elite call the shots? There is a looming collapse of the dollar and it will be caused by losing it’s reserve currency status. When the ‘currency war’ fails, the elites in desperation will lead us to the next major world war – which might even go nuclear. Why? Because the U.S. is not ‘playing’ with an Iraq this time. This time it’s playing with Russia, a major nuclear power with a strong military, in alliance with China. This time it’s different…

While the dollar is in a temporary rally, don’t be fooled. While the chess game may even take one to three years to play out till checkmate, once the ‘king’ is tipped over, once the dollar goes, the United States ’empire’ status is finished. Believe me – I do NOT wish for American hardship, as I am an American – but it’s just how I see the unfolding right now – and while I hope we do not suffer because of it, I do prepare for the uncertainty.

In case you didn’t know, the reason we (the United States) are able to sustain astronomical deficits, mind-boggling national debt, seemingly limitless spending on government and it’s programs, is because the dollar is the world’s currency reserve. For those who have not been paying attention, this notion has been slowly slipping, and is being challenged and seen for what it really is – and is facing serious challenges ahead. In fact serious is not strong enough a word – more like desperate.

The thing is, the elites are running out of moves in this chess game. Their spending policies (while having enabled an enormous dependent class of serfs), have destroyed much of the middle class – who themselves are just a paycheck or two away from serfdom. When the dollar falls down – even just a teetering – the tipping point will have been reached as the systemic house of cards collapses on itself while a state of anarchy erupts in the United States. The elites know this and they will do anything to keep it going until the very end. This is where our new apparent ‘enemy’ comes in… Russia.

The United States is making an enemy of Russia.

You see, any nation that has chosen to NOT use the dollar as a currency medium of exchange is first hit with economic sanctions. If that doesn’t work they’re hit with attempted government overthrow by way of internal (provoked and assisted) revolution. If that doesn’t work, the bombs start dropping. The problem is, and the illustrating fact that the United States is so desperate, is that we’re doing it to Russia. We’re in phase 1 and 2 right now. Phase 3 will not end well.

#### Nuke war causes extinction

Edwards 17 [Paul N. Edwards, CISAC’s William J. Perry Fellow in International Security at Stanford’s Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies. Being interviewed by EarthSky. How nuclear war would affect Earth’s climate. September 8, 2017. earthsky.org/human-world/how-nuclear-war-would-affect-earths-climate] **Note, we are only reading parts of the interview that are directly from Paul Edwards -- MMG**

In the nuclear conversation, what are we not talking about that we should be?

We are not talking enough about the climatic effects of nuclear war. The “nuclear winter” theory of the mid-1980s played a significant role in the arms reductions of that period. But with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the reduction of U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals, this aspect of nuclear war has faded from view. That’s not good. In the mid-2000s, climate scientists such as Alan Robock (Rutgers) took another look at nuclear winter theory. This time around, they used much-improved and much more detailed climate models than those available 20 years earlier. They also tested the potential effects of smaller nuclear exchanges. The result: an exchange involving just 50 nuclear weapons — the kind of thing we might see in an India-Pakistan war, for example — could loft 5 billion kilograms of smoke, soot and dust high into the stratosphere. That’s enough to cool the entire planet by about 2 degrees Fahrenheit (1.25 degrees Celsius) — about where we were during the Little Ice Age of the 17th century. Growing seasons could be shortened enough to create really significant food shortages. So the climatic effects of even a relatively small nuclear war would be planet-wide. What about a larger-scale conflict? A U.S.-Russia war currently seems unlikely, but if it were to occur, hundreds or even thousands of nuclear weapons might be launched. The climatic consequences would be catastrophic: global average temperatures would drop as much as 12 degrees Fahrenheit (7 degrees Celsius) for up to several years — temperatures last seen during the great ice ages. Meanwhile, smoke and dust circulating in the stratosphere would darken the atmosphere enough to inhibit photosynthesis, causing disastrous crop failures, widespread famine and massive ecological disruption. The effect would be similar to that of the giant meteor believed to be responsible for the extinction of the dinosaurs. This time, we would be the dinosaurs. Many people are concerned about North Korea’s advancing missile capabilities. Is nuclear war likely in your opinion? At this writing, I think we are closer to a nuclear war than we have been since the early 1960s. In the North Korea case, both Kim Jong-un and President Trump are bullies inclined to escalate confrontations. President Trump lacks impulse control, and there are precious few checks on his ability to initiate a nuclear strike. We have to hope that our generals, both inside and outside the White House, can rein him in. North Korea would most certainly “lose” a nuclear war with the United States. But many millions would die, including hundreds of thousands of Americans currently living in South Korea and Japan (probable North Korean targets). Such vast damage would be wrought in Korea, Japan and Pacific island territories (such as Guam) that any “victory” wouldn’t deserve the name. Not only would that region be left with horrible suffering amongst the survivors; it would also immediately face famine and rampant disease. Radioactive fallout from such a war would spread around the world, including to the U.S. It has been more than 70 years since the last time a nuclear bomb was used in warfare. What would be the effects on the environment and on human health today? To my knowledge, most of the changes in nuclear weapons technology since the 1950s have focused on making them smaller and lighter, and making delivery systems more accurate, rather than on changing their effects on the environment or on human health. So-called “battlefield” weapons with lower explosive yields are part of some arsenals now — but it’s quite unlikely that any exchange between two nuclear powers would stay limited to these smaller, less destructive bombs.

# 3

#### Kant was homophobic and never rejected those views.

Soble 03: Alan Soble, The Monist 86:1 (Jan. 2003), pp. 55-89. Kant and Sexual Perversion

**Kant** immediately **continues** by completing his sparse inventory of three objectionable, sexually unnatural, practices quote[s] begins here “**A** second **crime**n carnis contra naturam **is** **intercourse between sexus homogenii, in which the object of sexual impulse is a human being but there is homogeneity instead of heterogeneity of sex**. . . . This practice too **is contrary to the ends of humanity; for the end of humanity in respect of sexuality is to preserve the species without debasing the person;** **but in this instance** the species is not being preserved (as it can be by a crimen carnis secundum naturam), but the person is set aside, **the self is degraded below the level of the animals**, and humanity is dishonoured. The third crimen carnis contra naturam occurs **when the object of the desire is in fact of the opposite sex but is not human. Such is sodomy, or intercourse with animals**. This, too, is contrary to the ends of humanity and against our natural instinct. It degrades mankind below the level of animals, for no animal turns in this way from its own species.

#### Thus drop the debater. Homophobic should never exist in a debate round. This outweighs any substance they mention. This is a prioir question, there are no justifications for racism and homophobia whatsoever. Even if they don’t believe in Kant’s argument, it does not matter, because simply they read his argument, who was a big homophobe, thus they inherently entrench the impact and influence Kant has over real world. This impacts in round, thus you prioritize this in round violence. Drop the debater, they already read the argument, there are no way for them to escape from losing this round.

# 4

**Offense is link- you want free market. Definition of capitalistic agenda.**

#### The aff’s attempt to maintain the liberal international order reifies imperial notions and capitalism

Parmar 18 [Inderjeet Parmar is a professor of international politics, and head of the Department of International Politics at City, University of London and an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Manchester, “The US-led liberal order: imperialism by another name?” *International Affairs,* January 2018, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/images/ia/INTA94_1_9_240_Parmar.pdf>]//AT

The foundational values, interests and institutions of the (Anglo-)US liberal international order, with due respect for important but not fundamental recalibrations and corrections along the way, are the sources of its current crises or at least challenges. The mentalities and power structures of the LIO’s leaders are constructed by hierarchical, imperial and racial–civilizational ways of thinking, albeit in most cases subliminally embedded to the point of being unconscious deep structures themselves.117 The American white Anglo-Saxon Protestant (Wasp) establishment built and maintained the liberal order in a ‘competitively cooperative’ alliance with their British counterparts, whose own imperial and racial mentalities were hardly in conflict with those of their American cousins.119 Whatever changes occurred or were forced on US elites over time, those underlying and mainly subliminal values have remained significant in decision-making, including when nurturing new states and powers such as South Korea and China. As a result, liberal internationalism as a ‘theory’ or approach to world order, eliding and skirting matters of hierarchy, race and class just as it does in its outline understandings of American democracy, misses a critical part of the picture—of the dynamics of international power as well as the dynamics of domestic power. Because of that elision, that failure to see, I suggest it is a legitimating ideology of the American ruling elite. I have argued above that the LIO is better understood as a system of hierarchy and inequality, and as what Persaud calls a ‘racio-civilizational’ phenomenon. What does that mean? It means that this system and its leaders cannot yet comprehend an order that encompasses on the basis of something approaching equality the broad mass of people—citizens—at home, let alone the non-western peoples of the global South, or even their elites. The tweet from Donald Tusk quoted above is revealing and instructive because it was addressed to President Trump in simple and stark terms, worth repeating here: ‘Euro-Atlanticism means the free world cooperating to prevent post-West world order’—so, please ‘do not touch’. International alliances of elites, including those of the emerging powers such as China, are in large part attempts to manage and channel change to prevent radical power shifts, to sustain a world order that serves elites and masses, in West and East, in starkly unequal ways. A Gramscian–Kautskyian synthesis combines consideration of domestic and international class-based imperial hegemonies and offers a good explanation of the existing order. However, it also offers a way out, in theory, and provides ways to assess the likelihood of avenues towards egalitarianism being taken by ruling elites. The prognosis is not positive at present, although the bases of ways forward appear to be coming into view as political strife and electoral shocks challenge the status quo.12

#### Extinction

Marques; 2020

* Famine
* Climate change
* Deforestation
* Overfishing
* Biodiversity loss/species extinction
* Ocean acidification/ eutrophication
* Pollution
* War/nuke
* Facism
* Pandemic- covid

(Luiz; Ambiente & Sociedade; Vol. 23; “Pandemics, existential and non-existential risks to humanity”; https://www.scielo.br/pdf/asoc/v23/1809-4422-asoc-23-e0126.pdf)

These crises demand undelayable, globally orchestrated political reactions of our societies that are, at the same time, being divided into two evermore hardened and incommunicative groups. On one hand, the state-corporative establishment, determined to maintain the machinery of business as usual at all costs, is advancing its pawns on the international chessboard to guarantee that nothing changes in post-pandemic energy and food systems. On the other, the perception of scientists and growing sectors of society that we have reached a limit beyond which we can no longer advance, given that the harmful effects of globalized capitalism increasingly supersede their benefits. Observation of the concurrence of combined regressions in human security contribute to that perception: (1) after decades of progress in the struggle against food insecurity, the number of people battling acute hunger and suffering from malnutrition has been on the rise over the last four years (FAO, 2019, p. 6). According to the fourth annual Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC, 2020), around 183 million people in 47 countries were classified as being in Stressed (IPC/CH Phase 2) conditions, at risk of slipping into Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) if confronted by an additional shock or stressor. The current pandemic is precisely this additional shock; (2) the six most recent years (2014-2019) and the current one have been the hottest of the last twelve millennia; (3) the globalized food system drove the loss of 3.61 million km2 of tree cover between 2001 and 2018, according to Global Forest Watch; (4) the heavily subsidized industrial fishing system is now sacrificing the oceans’ future (PAULY, 2019); (5) the catastrophic decline in biodiversity is annihilating vertebrate populations (Living PIanet Index, 2018) and may lead to the extinction of one million species over the next few decades (IPBES, 2019); (6) acidification and eutrophication of the oceans and of various bodies of fresh water is creating marine dead zones and threatening ruptures of trophic chains in the aquatic environment; (7) industrial pollution poisons, sickens, and kills tens of millions of people worldwide each year (WHO Report on Cancer, 2020, for instance); (8) growing geopolitical tensions are seen, with the intensification of endemic conflicts focused on water and energy resources and the anguishing resumption of the nuclear arms race. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) estimates that the nine nuclear armed countries spent US$ 72.9 billion (US$ 35.4 billion was spent by the U.S. alone) on their 13,000+ nuclear weapons in 2019, an increase of US$ 7.1 billion compared to 2018 (ICAN, 2019); (9) democracy and tolerance are increasingly threatened by waves of more or less orchestrated fake and hate news, by flareups of fascism, irrationality, and physical and psychic violence.

3. Existential and non-existential risks These crises are interlinked and act in synergy, that is, they reciprocally strengthen one another. And precisely because they are interdependent and reciprocally strengthening each other, it is senseless to deal with them separately. It makes no sense, for example, to understand the current pandemic as simply a health emergency, isolated from other ongoing crises. Most of all, we should not classify these crises in an hierarchical order according to the greater or lesser risk they represent for humanity, as proposed by the University of Cambridge’s Centre for the Study of Existential Risk, or by Toby Ord, from the University of Oxford’s Future of Humanity Institute, in his recent book, The Precipice. Existential Risk and the Future of Humanity (2020).

The considerations proposed by these centers and researchers are very momentous. But they start from the false premise of dividing the risks to which humanity and other species are increasingly exposed into existential and non-existential ones. That dividing line does not exist. An existential risk is, frequently, made from a conjunction of crises that, separately, do not existentially threaten humanity but that, together, have the potential to do so. Will Steffen and colleagues (2018), for example, explored the possibility that “a 2°C warming could activate important tipping elements, raising the temperature further to activate other tipping elements in a domino-like cascade that could take the Earth System to even higher temperatures”. That domino effect can lead us to what the authors called a Hothouse Earth, that is, a largely uninhabitable planet. And, once again, there is no clear dividing line between a planet that is largely uninhabitable and one that is completely uninhabitable for humans and innumerous other species. A chapter written for the English edition of my book, Capitalism and Environmental Collapse (2020), titled “Climate Feedbacks and Tipping Points”, shows how devoid of meaning we find the question, frequently debated in the scientific community and taken up again by Toby Ord, of the probabilities of a warming capable of generating what is called runaway climate change. Let us remember what is truly at stake here for the destiny of humanity. The runaway global warming conjecture, feared by a growing number of scientists (but still rejected by the IPCC3 ), would be able to lead the Earth toward conditions that prevail today on Venus. This conjecture may be interesting from a strictly scientific point of view, but it is totally useless from the point of view of the fate of animals and forests, because both would cease to exist under conditions that are much less extreme. Yangyang Xu and Veerabhadran Ramanathan (2017) have thus categorized the risks implicated at three levels of global warming: “>1.5°C as dangerous; >3°C as catastrophic; and >5°C as unknown, implying beyond catastrophic, including existential threats”. As established by a host of the next-generation climate models, a global warming of 5°C or even more above the pre-industrial period can be reached by 2100, because “even if coal use doesn’t rise in a catastrophic way, 5°C of warming could occur by other means, including thawing permafrost” (TOLLEFSON, 2020, p. 446).

Understanding this, one can ask if the current pandemic represents an existential or a non-existential risk for humanity. Having now, through the month of June, infected more than eight x million people and reaped more than 450 thousand officially confirmed fatalities (according to preliminary estimates, the real numbers are much higher), the current pandemic has not yet shown signs of cooling off. Nothing lets us state that the worst is over. In fact, it continues accelerating in the southern hemisphere, and can still affect a quarter billion people in Africa alone, according to a recent model (McVEIGH, 2020). Beyond this, new waves of contagion are taking place in the north where it had begun to weaken, and new outbreaks can continue occurring in 2021. That said, as bad as it may be, we know that, in and of itself, Covid-19 obviously does not represent an existential threat for humanity. But if the pandemic can turn society’s attention away from what is in play, society will be paralyzed to the point of keeping it from reacting to the above-mentioned socioenvironmental crises. Most importantly, if the post-pandemic economy gives way to even more desperate and destructive attempts at economic recovery, it may become a decisive link in the chain of factors that are already leading us to cross tipping points conducive to a world largely or completely uninhabitable by humans and numerous other species.

4. Overcoming the vicious cycle that imprisons globalized capitalism Even though at this moment it is the most apparent aspect, the pandemic is, in short, only one facet of the great existential threat represented by globalized capitalism. The mother of all threats is the vicious cycle of destructive intensification that imprisons globalized capitalism: the more that system struggles to reverse the decline in rates of growth, the more environmentally destructive it becomes, and the more destructive it becomes, the more the impacts of that destruction will impede its growth. Covid-19 is, in large part, one of the results of that trap, since global warming, deforestation, the destruction of wildlife habitats, the domestication and raising of poultry and mammals on an industrial scale destroy the evolutionary balance among species, facilitating the conditions for numerous viruses to jump from one species to another, including our own. The current pandemic offers the chance for a civilizational turn, probably the last chance before environmental imbalances spin beyond societies’ control. The project of globalized capitalism, the only possible one for it, is to continue advancing blindly in its logic of destruction. Pollution and greenhouse gas emissions are already nearly within normal ranges in China again and James Temple (2020, p. 56) analyzed how: the threat of rapidly accelerating climate change will remain. And we’ll be living in a much poorer world, with fewer job opportunities, less money to invest in cleaner systems, and deeper fears about our health, our financial futures, and other lurking dangers. These are ripe conditions to further inflame nationalist instincts, making our global challenges even harder to solve.

#### The alternative is to orient political and social efforts towards the communist horizon — that’s key to redefine futures that are psychoanalytically imaginable

Dean 12 — Jodi Dean (Professor of Political Science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges), *The Communist Horizon*, Verso: Brooklyn, NY, 2012, p. 1-12]

The term "horizon" marks a division. Understood spatially, the horizon is the line dividing the visible, separating earth from sky. Understood temporally, the horizon converges with loss in a metaphor for privation and depletion. The "lost horizon" suggests abandoned projects, prior hopes that have now passed away. Astrophysics offers a thrilling, even uncanny, horizon: the "event horizon" surrounding a black hole. The event horizon is the boundary beyond which events cannot escape. Although "event horizon" denotes the curvature in space/time effected by a singularity, it's not much different from the spatial horizon. Both evoke a fundamental division that we experience as impossible to reach, and that we can neither escape nor cross. I use "horizon" not to recall a forgotten future but to designate a dimension of experience that we can never lose, even if, lost in a fog or focused on our feet, we fail to see it. The horizon is Real in the sense of impossible-we can never reach it-and in the sense of actual (Jacques Lacan's notion of the Real includes both these senses). The horizon shapes our setting. We can lose our bearings, but the horizon is a necessary dimension of our actuality. Whether the effect of a singularity or the meeting of earth and sky, the horizon is the fundamental division establishing where we are. With respect to politics, the horizon that conditions our expe1ience is communism. I get the term "communist horizon" from Bruno Bosteels. In The Actuality of Communism, Bosteels engages with the work of Alvaro Garcia Linera. Garcia Linera ran as Evo Morales's vice presidential ru1ming mate in the Bolivian Movement for Socialism-Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples (MAS-IPSP). He is the author of multiple pieces on Marxism, politics, and sociology, at least one of which was written while he served time in prison for promoting an armed uprising (before becoming vice president of Bolivia, he fought in the Tupac Kataii Guerrilla Army). Bosteels quotes Garcia Linera's response to an interviewer's questions about his party's plans following their electoral victim)': "The general horizon of the era is communist."1 Garcia Linera doesn't explain the term. Rather, as Bosteels points out, Garcia Linera invokes the communist horizon "as if it were the most natural thing in the world," as if it were so obvious as to need neither explanation nor justification. He assumes the communist horizon as an ineducible feature of the political setting: "We enter the movement with our expecting and desiring eyes set upon the communist horizon." For Garcia Linera, communism conditions the actuality of politics. Some on the Left dismiss the communist horizon as a lost horizon. For example, in a postmodern pluralist approach that appeals to many on the Left, the economists writing as J. K . Gibson-Graham reject communism, offering "post-capitalism" in its stead. They argue that descriptions of capitalism as a global system miss the rich diversity of practices, relations, and desires constituting yet exceeding the economy and so advocate "reading the economy for difference rather than dominance" (as if dominance neither presupposes nor relies on difference).2 In their view, reading for difference opens up new possibilities for politics as it reveals previously unacknowledged loci of creative action within everyday economic activities. Gibson-Graham do not present Marxism as a failed ideology or communism as the fossilized remainder of an historical expe1iment gone horribly wrong. On the contrary, they draw inspiration from Marx’s appreciation of the social character of labor. They engage Jean-Luc Nancy's emphasis on communism as an idea that is the "index of a task of thought still and increasingly open." They embrace the reclamation of the commons. And they are concerned with neoliberalism's naturalization of the economy as a force exceeding the capacity of people to steer or transform it. Yet at the same time, Gibson-Graham push away from communism to launch their vision of postcapitalism. Communism is that against which they construct their alterative conception of the economy. It's a constitutive force, present as a shaping of the view they advocate. Even as Nancy's evocation of communism serves as a horizon for their thinking, they explicitly jettison the term "communism," which they position as the object of "widespread aversion" and which they associate with the "dangers of posing a positivity, a nonnative representation." Rejecting the positive notion of "communism," they opt for a te1m that suggests an empty relationally to the capitalist system they ostensibly deny, "post-capitalism." For Gibson-Graham, the term "capitalist" is not a term of critique or opprobrium; it's not part of a manifesto. The term is a cause of the political problems facing the contemporary Left. They argue that the discursive dominance of capitalism embeds the Left in paranoia, melancholia, and moralism. Gibson-Graham's view is a specific instance of a general assumption shared by leftists who embrace a generic post-capitalism but eschew a more militant anticapitalism. Instead of actively opposing capitalism, this tendency redirects anticapitalist energies into efforts to open up discussions and find ethical spaces for decision-and this in a world where one bond trader can bring down a bank in a matter of minutes. I take the opposite position. The dominance of capitalism, the capitalist system, is material. Rather than entrapping us in paranoid fantasy, an analysis that treats capitalism as a global system of appropriation, exploitation, and circulation that enriches the few as it dispossesses the many and that has to expend an enormous amount of energy in doing so can anger, incite, and galvanize. Historically, in theory and in practice, critical analysis of capitalist exploitation has been a powerful weapon in collective struggle. It persists as such today, in global acknowledgment of the excesses of neoliberal capitalism. As recently became clear in worldwide rioting, protest, and revolution, linking multiple sites of exploitation to narrow channels of privilege can replace melancholic fatalism with new assertions of will, desire, and collective strength. The problem of the Left hasn't been our adherence to a Marxist critique of capitalism. It's that we have lost sight of the communist horizon, a glimpse of which new political movements are starting to reveal. Sometimes capitalists, conservatives, and liberal democrats use a rhetoric that treats communism as a lost horizon. But usually they keep communism firmly within their sight. They see communism as a threat, twenty years after its ostensible demise. To them, communism is so threatening that they premise political discussion on the repression of the communist alternative. In response to left critiques of democracy for its failure to protect the interests of poor and workingclass people, conservatives and liberals alike scold that "everybody knows" and "history shows" that communism doesn't work. Communism might be a nice ideal, they concede, but it always leads to violent, authoritarian excesses of power. They shift the discussion to communism, trying to establish the limits of reasonable debate. Their critique of communism establishes the political space and condition of democracy. Before the conversation even gets going, liberals, democrats, capitalists, and conservatives unite to block communism from consideration. It's off the table. Those who suspect that the inclusion of liberals and democrats in a set with capitalists and conservatives is illegitimate are probably democrats themselves. To determine whether they belong in the set of those who fear communism, they should consider whether they think any evocation of communism should come with qualifications, apologies, and condemnations of past excesses. If the answer is "yes," then we have a clear indication that liberal democrats, and probably radical democrats as well, still consider communism a threat that must be suppressed-and so they belong in a set with capitalists and conservatives. All are anxious about the forces that communist desire risks unleashing. There are good reasons for liberals, democrats, capitalists, and conservatives to be anxious. Over the last decade a return to communism has re-energized the Left. Communism is again becoming a discourse and vocabulary for the expression of universal, egalitarian, and revolutionary ideals. In March 2009, the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities hosted a conference entitled "On the Idea of Communism." Initially planned for about 200 people, the conference ultimately attracted over 1 ,200, requiring a spillover room to accommodate those who couldn't fit in the primary auditorium. Since then, multiple conferences-in Paris, Berlin, and New York-and publications have followed, with contributions from such leading scholars as Alain Badiou, Etienne Balibar, Bruno Bosteels, Susan Buck-Morss, Costas Douzinas, Peter Hallward, Michael Hardt, Antonio Neg1i, Jacques Ranciere, Alberto Toscano, and Slavoj Zizek. The conferences and publications consolidate discussions that have been going on for decades. For over thirty years, Antonio Negri has sought to build a new approach to communism out of a Marxism reworked via Spinoza and the Italian political experiments of the 1970s. The Empire trilogy that Negri coauthored with Michael Hardt offers an affirmative, non-dialectical reconceptualization of labor, power, and the State, a new theory of communism from below. Alain Badiou has been occupied with communism for over forty years, from his philosophical and political engagement with Maoism, to his emphasis on the "communist invariants"-egalitarian justice, disciplinary tenor, political volunteerism, and trust in the people-to his recent appeal to the communist Idea. Communism is not a new interest for Slavoj Zizek either. In early 2001 he put together a conference and subsequent volume rethinking Lenin. Where Negri and Badiou reject the Party and the State, Zizek retains a certain fidelity to Lenin. "The key 'Leninist' lesson today," he writes, is that "politics without the organizational form of the Party is politics without politics."4 In short, a vital area of radical philosophy considers communism a contemporary name for emancipation)', egalitarian politics and form part of the communist legacy. These ongoing theoretical discussions overlap with the changing political sequences marked by 1968 and 1989. They also overlap with the spread of neoliberal capitalist domination, a domination accompanied by extremes in economic inequality, ethnic hatred, and police violence, as well as by widespread militancy, insurgency, occupation, and revolution. The current emphasis on communism thus exceeds the coincidence of academic conferences calling specifically for communism's return with the new millennium's debt crises, austerity measures, increased unemployment, and overall sacrifice of the achievements of the modern welfare state to the private interests of financial institutions deemed too big to fail. Already in an interview in 2002, p1ior to his election to the Bolivian presidency, Evo Morales had announced that "the neoliberal system was a failure, and now it's the poor people's turn."·' Communism is reemerging as a magnet of political energy because it is and has been the alterative to capitalism. The communist horizon is not lost. It is Real. In this book, I explore some of the ways the communist horizon manifests itself to us today. As Bosteels argues, to invoke the communist horizon is to produce "a complete shift in perspective or a radical ideological turnabout, as a result of which capitalism no longer appears as the only game in town and we no longer have to be ashamed to set our expecting and desiring eyes here and now on a different organization of social relationships."6 With communism as our horizon, the field of possibilities for revolutionary theory and practice starts to change shape. Barriers to action fall away. New potentials and challenges come to the fore. Anything is possible. Instead of a politics thought primarily in terms of resistance, playful and momentary aesthetic disruptions, the immediate specificity of local projects, and struggles for hegemony within a capitalist parliamentary setting, the communist horizon impresses upon us the necessity to abolish capitalism and to create global practices and institutions of egalitarian cooperation. The shift in perspective the communist horizon produces turns us away from the democratic milieu that has been the form of the loss of communism as a name for left aspiration and toward the reconfiguration of the components of political struggle-in other words, away from general inclusion, momentary calls for broad awareness, and lifestyle changes, and toward militant opposition, tight organizational forms (party, council, working group, cell), and the sovereignty of the people over the economy through which we produce and reproduce ourselves.

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