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#### The fractured nature of the subject leaves one oriented around the mastery of a lost object- recognizing the right to strike is an attempt to satisfy this loss with an investment into the notion of dignified work

**Barchiesi ‘9** [Franco, THE Ohio State University. 2009. “That Melancholic Object of Desire: Work and Official Discourse before and after Polokwane,” <https://www.academia.edu/421295/THAT_MELANCHOLlC_OBJECT_OF_DESlRE_WORK_AND_OFFlClAL_DlSCOURSE_BEFORE_AND_AFTER_POLOKWANE> brackets are for grammar // sosa

Whereby past proletarian struggles had actively subverted waged work, both through direct refusal or through workers’ unwillingness to confine their claims to productivity requirements, a powerful disciplinary narrative has now emerged to celebrate the “dignity of work” as a disciplinary construct that marginalizes, stigmatizes and criminalizes specific social categories identified as disruptive of wage labour discipline. Now “dignity of work” is a commonly used term in ANC parlance, but the term is of straightforward colonial origins. The first time I have found it used is in Cecil Rhodes’ endorsement of the Glen Grey Act of 1894. Under pre-apartheid segregation governments it was part of what Saul Dubow terms a “South Africanist” ideological discourse where, through hard work for wages, the “native” could become a modern “worker”, possibly even a “citizen”. Under apartheid there was of course no talk of equal citizenship for the “natives”, but the National Party government praised work discipline over resource redistribution for whites and blacks alike. As a normative construct, the imperative to work operated across the board. The South African state imagination of work, before and after 1994, reversed Immanuel Kant’s line that “every thing has either a price or a dignity”, where by dignity he meant a value that precedes and stands above market exchange. In South African official discourse, instead, the labour market and the wage relation stand[s] simultaneously as measure and reward of human dignity. After apartheid, the revived parlance of “dignity of work” and individual labour market initiative also, as Ivor Chipkin shows in his book Do South Africans Exist?, came to depict a virtuous condition of active citizenship rightfully enabling the full, practical enjoyment of formal, on-paper constitutional rights. As work becomes the normative premise of virtuous citizenship, it provides an epistemic device with which South African society can be “known” as an objective, socially ascertainable hierarchy ordered according to the seemingly natural, immutable laws of the labour market. (This view is clearly expressed in Thabo Mbeki’s “two economies” scenario.) At the pinnacle of such a hierarchical order stands a, by now largely imaginary, patriotic, respectable, hard working, socially moderate, conflict-averse, de-racialized worker as the virtuous citizen of democratic South Africa. Precisely as a creation of official imagination, however, such a subject indicates the practical conducts the poor have to follow, as workersin-waiting, on their path to actual citizenship: avoid complaining, stay away from social conflicts, and actively seek the “employment opportunities” available in poverty-wage schemes of mass precariousness like the Expanded Public Works Programme. A work-centered citizenship discourse also marginalizes and stigmatizes the, conversely, all too real subjectivities that try to navigate their way in conditions of precariousness, social duress, and the systematic violence of market relations: yesterday it was “workshy” township youth, women devoted to “immoral” activities, peasants recalcitrant to the market; today is the “tsotsi” element, the “girls” claiming child support grants, and those who “illegally” reconnect water and electricity. As Fred Block and Margaret Somers have shown, the connection of state normativity and seemingly unassailable scientific reasoning confers to official discourses of citizenship the material capacity, made almost impervious to empirical counter evidence, to shape attitudes, dispositions and proclivities. It does not really matter for the centrality of work in South WHAT IS LEFT OF THE LEFT? 53 African citizenship discourse that in no way most experiences of work resemble the exalted social condition imagined in governmental pronouncements. What matters is that, by making social conditions, if not what it means to be human, orbit around labour market participation, the citizens of democratic South Africa are educated to position themselves within prevailing social and economic power relations. In the interviews with workers I have conducted, wage labour clearly emerges as a place of insecurity, exploitation, unfair and racialized treatment, and inadequacy in relation to household needs. More than that, it is a reality of, as Felix Guattari called it, “systematic endangering”, or continuous exposure to unpredictable, potentially catastrophic labour market contingencies. As wage labour’s early promise of liberation and redemption went unfulfilled, workers tended to characterize waged employment as a place that they have to endure, but from which they would happily escape. Escape could be either material or symbolic, most often a combination of both. Sometimes it has to do with fantasies of self-entrepreneurship, often nurtured in the ascending religious language of individual empowerment of born-again Christianity. In this regard, workers may even be available to accept layoffs to cash benefits and buy a bakkie for a transport business, or the tools for a small electric repair shop, even if such money most often goes into the repayment of debts and school fees. Sometimes respondents idealize rural life – despite the grinding poverty many of their relatives’ experience in rural areas – as a symbolic, desirable counterbalance to the chaos and unpredictability of the city as regular employment and male “breadwinning” authority decline and collapse. Ruralism becomes therefore an imagined space where masculine power and age authority continue to structure social life. Another theme surfacing in my interviews are xenophobic feelings of blaming non-South African migrants’ acceptance of low-wage jobs as responsible for turning work from “what it is supposed to be” to “what it is”. Yet, even if they see their actual jobs as “elsewhere” from what they would consider a dignified life, most respondents remain attached to work and “job creation” as the solution to the country’s social problems. Such apparent paradox is reflected in their approach to the ANC, seen simultaneously as cause of the current social crisis and the imagined deliverer from it. It would, however, be wrong to conclude that, as many conservative commentators and government consultants try to reassure us, despite all odds all South Africa’s poor want is “work, not handouts”. When I probed the meanings of “work” in workers’ discourse of “job creation”, I found that it is not “work” as a mere economic transaction that such narratives are primarily about, and surely not about the work such workers actually have. They are rather about a whole imagined social order ideally premised on an equally imagined idea of respectable work. Work regains its centrality in these narratives not so much for its economic importance, but as the repository of an imaginary that tries to find validation by harking back to the state’s and the unions’ work-centered citizenship discourse. As such, it tends to be a conservative workers’ imaginary too: for most of my respondents, images of decent work, what is left of past promises of redemption of wage labour, are deeply linked with ideas of family respectability, strict gendered division of household tasks, masculine power and national purity, where “disrespectful”, crime-prone youth are kept out of the streets and under control, women are confined to domesticity, reproduction and care, and migrants don’t “steal” national jobs. If actual work is a place to escape from, such an escape is, however, expressed, in the absence of a political alternative to the hegemonic work-centered citizenship discourse, in conservative, when not overtly reactionary and authoritarian forms of what I call worker melancholia. Contrary to the nostalgic, who yearns for an idealized past, the melancholic yearns for the imagined yet unrealized possibilities. As Ranjana Khanna defines it: “Melancholia is not only a crippling attachment to a past that acts like a drain of energy on the present …. Rather, the melancholic’s critical agency, and its peculiar temporality that drags it back and forth at the same time, acts towards the future”. What I identify as the emerging politics of worker melancholia provides some insights into the rise of Jacob Zuma and the post-Polokwane phase of ANC rule. Zuma’s rise has a lot to do with the country’s crisis of waged employment, manifested in organized labour’s resentment at Mbeki’s betrayal of the democratic promise of working class power and proletarian redemption. Zuma’s self-consciously masculine persona and his message of family values, social discipline, subservient womanhood, toughness on crime, and border control respond to the anxieties generated by employment precariousness by abetting the melancholic fantasies of a working class embittered by decades of disappointments and by the inadequacies of its putative political representatives. Under such conditions, the continuous glorification of work as the foundation of citizenship is at serious risk of contributing to an authoritarian, chauvinist social order presiding over the continuous brutality of the market. Three lessons emerge from this discussion. First, precariousness of work is not just produced by labour market dynamics but by the intersection of wage labour transformations, institutional dynamics and official imagination. Claus Offe puts it nicely in defining precariousness as “harmful unpredictability” arising from a condition where work declines as a foundation for a decent, meaningful life and yet it is maintained by the state’s policy discourse as the foundation of the social order. Second, precariousness is not, however, just a condition of domination and disempowerment, but can also open spaces to imagine strategies of liberation from the compulsion to work for wages. The history of proletarian struggles in South Africa and Africa shows that the crises of waged work are the result not only of the unfettered power of capital but also of everyday strategies of refusal, confirming indeed Mario Tronti’s point that “wage labour is the provider of capital; the refusal of wage labour means the destruction of capital”. Finally, social research needs to move beyond a purely normative understanding of citizenship as a desirable ideal of “inclusion” and focus instead on the paradoxes, contradictions and quandaries of what Cruikshank terms citizenship as a “technology” of empowerment based on specific disciplining of conducts and hierarchical stratifications where divides between inclusion and exclusion become blurred and uncertain. Gilles Deleuze wrote: “If you get caught in someone else’s dreams, you are lost”. Over and over again, before, during, and after apartheid, South Africa’s poor have been caught in the State’s unsettling biopolitical dream of ordering populations according to the hierarchies defined by a labour market that can enable decent lives only for a small minority. To avoid getting lost in the rulers’ dream, maybe it is time, in these crepuscular times of decline of neoliberalism, for everyday desires recalcitrant to wage labour no longer to be seen as harbingers of chaos and ungovernability but as constitutive elements of a new grammar of autonomy and liberation.

#### This cultivates into a politics of melodrama- threats to the current biopolitical ordering register as wounds on the individual level- that encourages violent redemption and the policing of non-virtuous citizenship

Anker ’14 [Elizabeth, American Studies at George Washington University. 2014. “Orgies of Feeling: Melodrama and the Politics of Freedom.”] KB/spaldwin rc/pat / rc sosa

What I call melodramatic political discourse casts politics, policies, and practices of citizenship within a moral economy that identifies the nation-state as a virtuous and innocent victim of villainous action. It locates goodness in the suffering of the nation, evil in its antagonists, and heroism in sovereign acts of war and global control coded as expressions of virtue. By evoking intense visceral responses to wrenching injustices imposed upon the nation-state, melodramatic discourse solicits affective states of astonishment, sorrow, and pathos through the scenes it shows of persecuted citizens. It suggests that the redemption of virtue obligates state power to exercise heroic retribution on the forces responsible for national injury. Melodrama depicts the United States as both the feminized, virginal victim and the aggressive, masculinized hero in the story of freedom, as the victim-hero of geopolitics. Its national injuries morally legitimate the violence, extensions, and consolidations of state power that melodrama posits as necessary both for healing the nation’s wound and for reestablishing the state’s sovereign freedom. Melodramatic political discourse provides the tableaux and the legitimacy for the late-modern expansion of state power.

Melodrama is often associated with intimate affairs, personal misfortune, and domestic problems within the home, and even scholars who have written most incisively about the political effects of melodrama primarily examine how it attends to social injustices within the nation and finds redress for them in intimate relationships rather than in eff orts to challenge injustice in more directly political ways. Yet as a political discourse, melodrama operates in different registers: the suffering of U.S. subjects that it depicts appears to be caused by something outside the national body; an unjust injury wounds the entire nation, and this transforms melodrama to a more public, national, and state-centered register. The eradication of injustice in melodramatic political discourse is not about finding consolation in the domestic sphere, as it is in many film and literary melodramas; it is about an aggressive performance of strength in the national political sphere. The agency in melodramatic political discourse focuses on global and spectacular displays of power; its sphere of action is public and usually institutional because of the villainy it aims to countermand. In melodramatic political discourse, the nation’s terrible injury becomes the foundational justification for violent and expansive state power.

Orgies of Feeling investigates the history, political strategies, and affective pulls of melodramatic political discourses, with a focus on contemporary U.S. politics. While melodramatic cultural expressions are not limited to the United States—a s the phenomena of Latin American telenovelas, Nigerian “Nollywood” videos, Soviet expressionism, and South Korean fi lm make clear—t his book focuses on American melodrama in order to map its work as a nation- building and state- legitimating discourse.4 Melodrama became an influential political discourse after World War II, gaining popularity with the rise of the cold war and televisual political communication. It circulated throughout the second half of the twentieth century, as its conventions helped to narrate the expansion of U.S. global power and justify the growth of the national- security state. Melodramatic political discourses often legitimated anticommunist international relations and the burgeoning neoliberal political economy (though as I also show, melodrama sometimes worked in different or contradictory ways, and had unintended effects). In the twenty-first century, and especially after the 9 / 11 attacks, melodrama’s popularity exploded in political discourse, in large part because of the nation-state’s realignment against terrorism. Orgies of Feeling examines the rise of melodramatic political discourse after World War II, but pays special attention to melodrama’s operations in the new millennium.

The melodramas that I track in this book often promote a specific type of citizenship, in which the felt experience of being an American comprises not only persecuted innocence and empathic connection with other Americans’ suffering but also the express demand to legitimate state power. In these melodramas, the nation’s unjust suffering proves its virtue, and virtue authorizes dramatic expressions of state action, including war and state surveillance. In contemporary politics, the intensifications of antidemocratic and often violent forms of state power—including military occupation, the exponential growth of the national-security state, the formalization of racial profiling, the narrowing of already minute points of access to political power for nonelite citizens, the criminalization of nonviolent protest, the militarization of police power, and the further abridgements of institutionalized civil liberties—are partly rooted in the melodramatic mobilization of a political subject who legitimates them as an expression of the nation’s virtue.

A paradigmatic example of melodramatic political discourse is President George W. Bush’s speech on the War in Afghanistan at the Pentagon on October 11, 2001. The story that the speech emplotted relied on melodramatic genre conventions— including a narrative of virtue and redemption, heightened affects of pain, detailed explanations of individual suffering, and a sense of overwhelmed victimhood that transmutes virtue into strength— to both unify national identity and authorize a war that had already begun four days prior. He stated,

On September 11th, great sorrow came to our country. And from that sorrow has come great resolve. Today, we are a nation awakened to the evil of terrorism, and determined to destroy it. That work began the moment we were attacked; and it will continue until justice is delivered. . . . The loss was sudden, and hard, and permanent. So difficult to explain. So difficult to accept. Three schoolchildren traveling with their teacher. An Army general. A budget analyst who reported to work h ere for 30 years. A lieutenant commander in the Naval Reserve who left behind a wife, a four-year-old son, and another child on the way. But to all of you who lost someone h ere, I want to say: You are not alone. . . . We know the loneliness you feel in your loss. The entire nation, entire nation, shares in your sadness. . . .

The hijackers were instruments of evil who died in vain. Behind them is a cult of evil which seeks to harm the innocent and thrives on human suffering. Theirs is the worst kind of cruelty, the cruelty that is fed, not weakened, by tears. . . . This week, I have called the Armed Forces into action. One by one, we are eliminating power centers of a regime that harbors al Qaeda terrorists. We gave that regime a choice: Turn over the terrorists, or face your ruin. They chose unwisely. . . . We’re not afraid. Our cause is just and worthy of sacrifice. Our nation is strong of heart, firm of purpose. Inspired by all the courage that has come before, we will meet our moment and we will prevail.5

The speech details the events on September 11, 2001, through melodramatic conventions that emphasize the intense pain the attacks caused to ordinary individuals, and the speech uses that pain to mark the virtue of all Americans who share in the sadness of the people directly injured or killed by terrorism. Bush details the violence of the 9 / 11 events by specifying the people who died as moms and dads, schoolchildren, and neighbors— ordinary people, people just like his listeners. It is as if their travails could be, indeed are, our own. Melodrama confers virtue upon innocent people who unjustly suffer from dominating power, and this is part of the genre’s cultural work; in this deployment of melodrama, all Americans suffer from the attack, and thus all share in the nation’s virtue. The speech connects the children who lost parents with “our country”: the children’s innocence is a metonym for that of the nation, for what it has lost after this terrifying attack. This connection is a binding gesture that brings a nation ordinarily riven and stratified by class, race, immigration status, and sex into a shared unity that circumvents instead of represses stratification. It makes hierarchies of power and identity irrelevant to the experience of being an innocent and injured American in the wake of 9 / 11. The suffering that unifies the nation is suffering from terror. Other political modes of understanding also circulate in this speech to bind people together and mark the legitimacy of war: a deep sense of injustice and fear from the 9 / 11 attacks, American exceptionalism, and masculinist protection.6 Yet melodramatic conventions work here to solicit the sense that war has already been legitimated by the felt sorrow that unifies the nation. Melodrama, in this speech, insists that the affective experience of sorrow is equivalent to the authorization of war.

This speech cultivates the heightened affects Americans were experiencing by explicating them, naming sorrow, loss, and resolve in a way that turns them into norms for proper feeling and then yokes them together into a narrative trajectory. Sorrow and loss pave the way for “great resolve,” so that the determination to “destroy” evil is positioned as a foregone conclusion that grows organically out of sorrow. The move to destroy terrorism then becomes a moral requirement and a narrative expectation for addressing the nation’s suffering, rather than a contestable political decision.7 In this speech, melodramatic conventions form a nation-building discourse that distinguishes who is and is not American by demarcating proper victimhood in relation to state power: virtuous Americans identify with the suffering of grieving Americans, but they also sanction heroic state action against evil. War is promised to deliver a justice so clear and right that it is “worthy of sacrifice.” The willingness to sacrifice further gestures to the goodness of the nation willing to make itself sacrificial in response to its sorrow, even as it is presupposed that real sacrifice will never be asked of the vast majority of the polity; in other speeches Bush asks Americans to sacrifice for the war effort by hugging their children, going shopping, and traveling by airplane.8 In this melodrama the primary indicators of good citizenship, of what it means to be a real American, consist of a felt suffering from terrorism, plus the resolve to go to war. More than other genres, such as the jeremiad and the impasse (which I will discuss), melodrama offers a reassuring narrative trajectory that bestows innocence and moral authority on the United States, and then authorizes state power as an expression of the nation’s virtue.9

Melodramatic political discourses can mark people who find its depictions unconvincing or wrong, or who actively question the legitimations it enables, as morally bankrupt, as un- American, as villainous, or even as terrorist.10 This is not to say that deployments of melodramatic discourse eliminate dissent, but rather that their depictions cast dissent as both illegible and unbearably cruel to injured victims—to real Americans. Many people, of course, have condemned melodrama’s moral injunctions or refused its legitimations of state power, even if they have not labeled these injunctions or legitimations melodramatic.11 Since the first days after 9 / 11, for instance, marginalized political groups (especially but not limited to those on the left ) resisted the melodramatic assumption that the attack signified American innocence or a virtuous nation, and spoke out against its moral mandate for retributive state violence. But melodrama may still have contributed to the affective responses to the events, even for people who resisted some of its terms. Upon encountering its depictions, one may hate its overt pathos yet cry at the suffering it shows. One might reject melodrama’s depiction of national identity yet find welcome connection in the virtuous community it offers. One might find that melodramatic tenets unacceptably simplify politics yet want to see brutal villains duly punished. Some parts of melodrama are more compelling than others, and melodramatic conventions do not need to be totalizing to have partial effects. Individuals are often moved in inconsistent ways by its depictions. These inconsistencies are part of melodrama’s affective charge. Many people have had to struggle with or against melodramatic conventions in staking their interpretations of the terrorist attacks and their aftermath, indeed in staking what kind of citizens they are or want to be. Even for those people who have responded ambivalently or antagonistically to it, melodrama has become the most powerful genre form of the war on terror.

Orgies of Feeling investigates different forms of melodramatic political discourse, including melodramas of neoliberalism, communism, and capitalism, with particular focus on melodramas of terrorism. Melodramatic political discourses can be found in the news media, political interviews, popular punditry, informal conversation, micro political registers, political theory, and organizing norms, as well as in the formal state rhetoric of presidential addresses: melodramas move through multiple vectors. The use of melodrama is not forced or coordinated across media outlets or political parties; its popularity across two centuries of cultural media make it readily available to multiple sites of power and address for depicting political life. Even though melodrama became a common rhetorical genre of the Bush administration in the first de cade of the new millennium, and the administration certainly seized on melodrama’s popularity to support its policies, melodrama did not originate from the administration or from any single source of authority. Its widespread use came from a much larger and contested historical trajectory that spans fields of power and political affiliation. Given the circulation of melodrama across political registers, I am thus less interested in judging whether melodrama is right or wrong in its depictions of political life— whether melodrama gives a true account or a false one—than in discerning its multiple workings and effects, its different appeals for different sites of power and subjectivity. People are not compelled by melodrama merely by coercive rhetoric or charismatic leaders. Melodramatic depictions of virtuous victimization, and predictions for the heroic overcoming of subjection, work on and through people in ways quite different from and beyond what institutional deployments of melodrama may intend. People who are drawn to melodrama’s conventions, or who welcome its narrative assurances, do not necessarily respond to melodrama in predetermined ways. The processes of melodramatic subjectivity are not identical with the strategic aims of melodramatic political discourse, although they are coextensive. To presuppose that subjectivizing processes are the same as or are exhausted by discursive intent would be to assume that political discourses equal political subjects that discourses determine psychic life, and that melodrama works the same way in different spaces, structures, and institutions.

To ascribe intent by a few elites for the pervasive use of melodrama is to ignore its appeal to a broad segment of the U.S. population, and to miss what melodrama’s popularity reveals about contemporary American political life. The question of who intends for melodrama to happen, or who controls its circulation and employment, is not unimportant, but to answer it by placing responsibility for melodrama’s popularity only on a few bad, powerful apples—rather than by also examining its appeal to a broad citizenry— is to mirror melodrama’s strategy of claiming innocence and virtue for its victimized protagonists while displacing blame only to an all-powerful villain. The interesting question for this book is therefore not “why are citizens duped by the elite’s use of melodrama into legitimating antidemocratic and violent state power?” but “what type of citizens may be compelled by melodramatic political discourse, and what do they imagine the powers it legitimates will do?”

The Promise of Freedom

Melodramas grapple with moral questions and aim to establish “moral legibility,” as Peter Brooks argues in his seminal account of the form.’2 They identify virtuous behavior and postulate that society also recognizes real virtue. In many film and television melodramas, the recognition of virtue is the endpoint of the narrative, and the climax of the story demonstrates the protagonist’s moral goodness. Yet in melodramatic political discourse, moral legibility—the identification of the nation’s virtue—is not the only factor motivating the widespread use of melodrama. There is another, perhaps more compelling, attraction: melodrama promises freedom for those who are virtuous. The moral legibility of melodramatic political discourse is in the service of an expectation that freedom is forthcoming for both injured citizens and the nation-state. The allure of melodramatic political discourse is the promise of emancipation that it offers those who unjustly suffer.

The norm of freedom that circulates in melodramatic political discourse is rooted in particularly liberal and Americanized interpretations of freedom as self-reliance, as unconstrained agency, and as unbound subjectivity. It combines these interpretations together as normative expressions of a sovereign subject, one who obeys no other authority but one’s own, who can determine the future and control the vagaries of contingency through sheer strength of will. Freedom requires the capacity for final authority over the space of the nation and aims to shore up boundaries of territories and bodies to make them impermeable to the influence of others. Freedom as this form of sovereign subjectivity seems to require control or mastery over the external world for its full exercise. Freedom, in this normative definition, is often equated with both individual and state sovereignty. Indeed, melodrama provides a site at which state and individual agency are conflated, as if the achievement of state sovereignty confers personal sovereignty upon every American. The practices of freedom that melodramas depict thus often take shape through an imaginary of freedom as the performance of sovereignty through unilateral action, war, intensified national security, and even as the institutionalization of what Gules Deleuze calls “societies of control:” as all are deployed in the service of controlling the political field and taming risk. This version of sovereignty implies that the state—and by extension the individual citizen—should be not only free from the coercions of others but also free over others. This latter freedom, though seldom explicitly acknowledged, is what ensures the possibility of the former.

The promise of sovereign freedom is present in melodramatic political discourse whether it shapes the cold war argument in the 19505 that the na tion has a moral requirement to eradicate the evil of communism from the world order, or the neoliberal argument in the 198os that welfare must be eliminated because it is a form of oppression that erodes individual freedom. Both melodramas, while organized around different stories and deployed for different purposes, offer the promise of future freedom through state power for virtuous Americans under siege. Neoliberal melodramas might seem to link freedom to limited state power, since economic policies grouped under the term neoliberal claim to facilitate individual freedom by deregulating cor porations and cutting both taxes and welfare. However, they typically limit only certain types of state power, those that hamper corporate profit or provide social services, both of which come to be cast as un-American, as outside the proper national body, and as forms of individual oppression. They increase state powers that expand military might, corporate growth, and surveillance. As Sheldon Wolin notes, neoliberal policies discredit the state’s ability to serve the needs of the people, but they do not weaken state power.’4 Neoliberal melodramas use the language of individual freedom not to retrench state power but to expand securitized and militarized forms of it.’5

Melodrama hearkens a future in which U.S. citizens and the state exercise their rightful entitlement to unconstrained power. As in Bush’s speech announcing the War in Afghanistan, melodramatic political discourses promise that U.S. military and state actions, together with the corporations that work through and as state power, can transform a sense of being over whelmed by power into a scene of triumphant strength and sovereign control. Similarly, Bush’s very first words to the nation describing the 9/11 attacks do not reflect a deep misunderstanding of the events or an empty rhetorical flourish: “Freedom itself was attacked this morning by a faceless coward. And freedom will be defended.” These words are a precise expression of the promises that melodramatic political discourse offers the un justly injured nation: virtuous victims can gain back their sovereignty from anti-American forces by feats of heroic might.’6

A desire for sovereign freedom is thus a decisive factor in the authorization of state power as it takes shape in melodramatic political discourse. The promise of melodrama is that the American nation, once victimized, will eventually reassert its sovereign freedom through the virtuous acts of heroism it must perform against the cause of its injury. The melodramatic legitimation of violent, expansive, and constraining forms of power is thus paradoxically motivated by a desire to experience unconstrained freedom. This differs from the way that melodramatic genre expectations shape cin ema, theater, and literature, when story lines can end in pathos and tragedy for injured protagonists: an innocent victim may die after his or her virtue is celebrated, as in Uncle Toni’s Cabin or Brokeback iviountain (2005), or a hero will sacrifice his or her own life in order to save another or to uphold justice, as in The Birth of a Nation or Savi ng Private Ryan (1998). But in na tional politics melodramatic story lines that end without securing the universal freedom of their protagonists are generally left outside the expecta tions of the narrative. Freedom is frequently the stated goal of melodramatic initiatives in foreign, domestic, and military policy, and it is crucial to take these myriad and explicit claims for freedom seriously as motivating factors behind expansions of state power. It is no coincidence that the Iraq War’s combat zones were called “the front lines of freedom,” or that the War in Afghanistan was officially titled Operation Enduring Freedom. To be sure, freedom is not the only desire motivating the legitimation of these wars; vengeance, violence, Islamophobia, and an escape from fear coexist along- side freedom.’7 But these other motivations have gained much more schol arly attention at the expense of the study of freedom, and they have over shadowed the ways that a desire for freedom sits beside and even underwrites these more overtly insidious motivations, giving them a legiti mate form of expression.

By positioning melodrama in relationship to freedom, this book emphasizes how contemporary desires for freedom are often constituted and de limited by the very forms in which they are articulated. Taking seriously Saba Mahrnood’s warning not to “tether the meaning of agency to a pre defined teleology of emancipatory politics,” this inquiry asks instead how a desire for sovereign freedom is cultivated out of melodramatic depictions of political events.’8 Mahmood cautions scholars against uncritically accepting that there is an ontological desire for freedom that drives individuals, especially when freedom is imagined as a settled achievement of an abstract liberal subject. She asks instead, “what sort of subject ¡s assumed to be normative within a particular political imaginary?” Rather than using Mahmood’s warning to deny that desires for freedom exist in American political subjects, however, I examine how a desire for freedom is produced within and conditioned by various melodramatic political discourses. I specify the particular content of “freedom” that shapes the very political subjectivity that desires it, and use the study of melodrama to ask: How do unilateral state violence and individual license come to inhabit contempo rary definitions of freedom and agency? How is a teleology of emancipation melodramatically imagined through the legitimation of war and national security? I posit that the melodramatic cultivation of a desire for freedom develops at a moment in which long-standing frustrations of political powerlessness combine with the immediate shock of terrorism to operate on national subjects already constituted by certain expectations of liberal freedom and democratic citizenship.

Melodramatic discourses are so widespread, I argue, because they revive the guarantee of sovereign freedom for both the state and the individual in a neoliberal era when both seem out of reach. This lost guarantee of sovereignty has a long and contested genealogy that I examine more in the book, but one way to unpack it here is to work backward and start from the spectacle of nonsovereignty on September ii. The 9/11 attacks were shocking not only for the violence they committed but for the story of freedom they derailed. They disclosed—in a spectacular and horrifying way—failures of both state and individual sovereignty, and melodramatic conventions promised that both types of sovereignty could be regained. Judith Butler argues that 9/11 entailed “the loss of a certain horizon of experience, a certain sense of the world itself as a national entitlement,” and melodrama became appealing in the post-9 i n era because it seemed to reestablish that sense of entitlement.20 The loss of “the world itself as a national entitlement” was a loss of unconstrained freedom for the nation-state, a loss of its seeming capacity to protect itself, monopolize the use of force, and steer geopolitics. Enacted by “faceless” cowards—inconspicuous agents whose weapons of mass destruction were ordinary objects like box cutters and commercial airplanes, and who seíf-destructed upon their own “victory” (doers that did not exceed the deed)—the attacks appeared to be the effect of invisible forces rather than identifiable state actors, their agents easily eluding state apparatuses of surveillance and militarized border systems.

They performed, as the collective Retort argues, “the sheer visible happening of defeat.”2’ In effortlessly penetrating national borders, the attackers upended two beliefs: that America was invulnerable to serious attack by foreigners and that geopolitical boundaries could demarcate state sovereignty. Indeed, if the state is defined through Max Webers classic definition as that which has “the monopoly on the legitimate use of violence,” a defini tion in which state power is ipso facto sovereign, then the 9/11 events challenged the very workings of the state by revealing its nonsovereignty.2 The loss of the world as a national entitlement traversed individual and state agency.23 The attacks created a loss for individuals in their presumed capacity under reigning norms of liberal individualism to be self-reliant and sovereign over their own bodies. By indiscriminately murdering un known and unsuspecting individuals, the attacks challenged the monadic premises of individual self-reliance, what Sharon Krause calls the long standing liberal belief that “the individual is understood to be the master of her own domain’24 The mass violence shed light on the intense social vul nerability of individual bodies, revealing how individuals are always, as Butler argues, “exposed to others, at risk of violence by virtue of that expo sure”25 The terrorist attacks thus violently upended the sovereign freedom story that entwines states and subjects. Whether sovereignty is defined as having the ultimate power or authority to make decisions about life and death (as in Carl Schmitt or Giorgio Agamben), the capacity to authorita tively reign over a defined geographic or bodily space (as in Thomas Hobbes or Jean Bodin), or the right of self-determination and self-making against the dominations of others (as in Jean-Jacques Rousseau), the 9/11 events revealed contracted possibilities of sovereign power.26 In highlighting the vulnerabilities and dependencies of contemporary life, the attacks challenged sovereignty as the grounding presupposition of both individual agency and international relations.

Melodrama’s narrative teleology of freedom responds by revitalizing norms of sovereignty for both individuals and states, and this is part of its widespread appeal. Melodrama’s affective and narrative forms aim to rese cure the nation’s virtue and reestablish its sovereign power. Melodrama becomes more potent after 9/ ii’s radical destabilization of national narratives about freedom and power because the genre’s emplotment of a familiar nar rative trajectory—injury then redemption—seems to restabilize the promise of sovereignty. Bonnie Honig writes that melodramas thematize “the sense of being overwhelmed by outside forces”; melodramas depict individual protagonists as vulnerable to and powerless against the violence and cruelty of the outside world. This makes melodrama well suited for depicting situations of overwhelming vulnerability. But in political discourse melodrama goes further, as it also promises that overwhelmed subjects can overcome their vulnerability by dramatic counter-acts of force, acts that melodrama equates with the achievement of freedom. In promising that freedom is forthcoming for virtuous sufferers1, melodrama implies that complex global vulnerability and interdependence can be overcome by expressions of state power reasserting U.S. global might, which will then reflect back to American individuals their own sovereignty.

#### Vote negative to refuse of mastering the lost object in favor of embracing its death. Accepting the non-existence of sovereignty is the first step toward ending a cycle of repetitious destruction.

Anker ‘12 [Elizabeth, American Studies at George Washington University. 2012. “Heroic Identifications: Or, ‘You Can Love Me Too – I am so Like the State,’” <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/469324/summary>] // sosa

The identification with mastery is then, at its outset, an attempt to challenge the loss sense of autonomy, the feeling of regulation and exclusion, to recapture the capacity for freedom. Animated by the loss of what it desires but cannot have, state identification idealizes what the subject “should have been” – sovereign, self-making – and what it now desires to be “like.”38 Once state power is differentiated from the self, it is then set up internally as an ideal. Through the subject that salves its loss by imagining itself like state power, identification operates to fortify the very terms of American liberal individualism that contribute to loss: insisting that subjects can master contingency, and can exercise heroic overcoming of their dependence. Perhaps because of its very unattainability, the ideal of ontological narcissism always produces loss as its effect. It creates a bind in which the type of freedom that individualism recognizes as desirable is always already unattainable. The subject’s initial awareness of a discrepancy between oneself and one’s ideal leads not to broader recognition of why this discrepancy exists, or perhaps to a revaluation of the object it desires, but instead to its re-idealization in new form. Post-9/11 identification with the state thus illustrates subjects’ incipient awareness that the possibility for sovereignty is not possible, that the capacity for heroic mastery over self and the world is fictive. However it reinstates the lost object as an internal ideal and subsequently represses this recognition, while embedding the operations of impinging and regulatory power ever deeper into subjects. It refigures awareness of power’s expansions back into the terms of individual heroism, and deflates the possibility for a more productive critical engagement. It actually hinders the fight against forms of power that sustain domination, unfreedom, and war. After 9/11, a de-cathexis with the state did eventually happen, but only after the slow realization that the “Mission Accomplished” of the War on Terror did not actually accomplish its mission, and after the Abu Ghraib images were uncovered. The Abu Ghraib images had a profound effect on the identification with state power. This was due, of course, to the affective horror they produced in revealing acts of torture and cruelty. Yet part of their horror, too, was their revelation of the squalidness of military power: the images uncovered a form of state violence normally shielded from public view. They did not depict smart bombs targeting a hidden enemy outpost, or a cutting-edge air force jet shooting faceless evildoers from above. Instead, they revealed the small, individualized, even routinized aspects of violence, suffering, and death in war. They countered the antiseptic images of “shock and awe” with the literal and metaphoric filth of bodily torture, demanding an acknowledgment of the misery and cruelty that the pursuit of unbound mastery can inflict on other humans, the distinct lack of strength required to overpower and harm another person in situations of domination. The pictures directly countered the claims of American military justice as clear, or American strength as based on superior moral and technological capacity. In deglorifying the pursuit of mastery, they showed the personal and daily mundanities of brutality behind the curtain of smart bomb coverage. The slow failure of “Mission Accomplished,” combined with the immediacy of the Abu Ghraib revelations, weakened the idealization of American state mastery, and re-exposed larger experiences of global interdependence and individual constraint. The weakening of state identification, however, could have taken different forms, and the desire for freedom could have been expressed in many alternative ways. What possibilities could have arisen from reconceiving freedom outside of heroic autonomy? If the motive for identification with state power is, at its core, the desire for freedom, then subjects might capitalize on their nebulous experiences of unfreedom to question more deeply what contributes to their production. They might use these experiences as an initial starting point to interrogate the complexities of the present, or to question a model of freedom that leaves these complexities unintelligible. How could a more 10 critical engagement with the specific, frightening, and exploitative forms of contemporary politics work to challenge them? Could it examine the ways one can be, at once, both subject to oppressive power and the legitimator of widespread violence? Attempts to challenge experiences of unfreedom would seem more effective if instead, as a first step, they work to examine the precise forms of power that contribute to experiences of unfreedom, and aim to scrutinize geopolitical realignments. They might develop collective practices of freedom that are undergirded by acknowledgements of interdependence, practices that take account of differentiated forms of exploitation, violence, and social vulnerability. Peter Fitzpatrick argues that the post-9/11 moment requires reconceiving freedom to entail responsibility for others as a necessary precondition.39 A more critical engagement in this vein might begin by drawing upon the animating impulses of individualism – resisting dominating power upon the self – yet refigure its legitimating function by sustaining recognition that, as Sharon Krause notes, freedom does not entail sovereignty even as it demands individual and collective accountability for political life.40 This recognition opens the space for new modes of political agency that are more collective and interdependent in their work to challenge material and structural experiences of unfreedom. It can enable tools for pushing more resourcefully against encumbrances of power, instead of rehabilitating the lost, dead object of individual mastery. As Judith Butler, Jill Bennett and many other feminist thinkers have suggested, by acknowledging lived conditions of interdependence in a post-9/11 era, challenges to structural unfreedom might draw more deeply upon the resources of collective life for establishing conditions of social justice, freedom, and human equality, using interdependence as a source of strength that works with collective resources rather than against them. This might also assist the crucial work of distinguishing foundational social interdependence from the increasing binds of regulatory, violent, and governmentalizing powers. Other possibilities include sustaining the acknowledgement that loss engenders: that the object of desire is gone, that one’s ideal is no longer tenable and perhaps was never viable. For Freud, this involves a mourning process that concludes by rerouting desire to a new, more tenable, more live object. This process is not clearly delineable or fully predictable; the desire to contain contingency and garner complete knowledge of the future is itself a derivation of ontological narcissism, of the desire for mastery, its satisfaction clearly impossible. The rerouting of desire can never be predicted in advance – and this is part of its necessary danger. Yet static predetermined ideas of freedom are also insufficient to develop its practice. Freedom entails not just a static or binary condition, in which one is or is not free, or in which the settled terms of freedom’s experience are laid out in advance of its pursuit. Part of the practice of freedom is a keen responsiveness to the specific experiences of constraint and regulation one wishes to change. While post-9/11 political subjects who legitimated war and increases in the national security state were partly motivated by a desire to resist the intense and rapidly intensifying regulations of power, it remains to be seen whether those desires could be transformed into a more productive challenge that responds to the specific conditions they aim to change, or whether they can nourish new conceptions of agency and freedom outside those that sustain the damages and unfreedom of current politics. Only by actively grappling with the impossibility of mastery, and the reckoning with power’s complex operations in contemporary life, might political subjects collectively engage with the political powerlessness, constraining norms, and structural unfreedoms that shape contemporary experience. This experience includes the 9/11 events but certainly is not limited to them, and it includes reckoning with ways subjects are imbricated or complicit in the exploitation and powerlessness of others. The predicament of the post-9/11 political subject is that in order to maintain the claim that sovereignty is possible, it transforms its desire to resist impinging power into a legitimation of what it resists. The predicament is thus not a subject that remains blind to its experiences, or even reflexively desires subjection, but a subject whose impulse for resistance is refigured by the very methods it draws upon in its effort. By way of desiring opposition to contemporary power, post-9/11 subjects end up authorizing one of its most imposing forms, repudiating the possibility for a more rigorous critique of their conditions, perpetuating their burdens, and justifying violence and war.

### 2

#### Business confidence is strong, driving economic recovery.

BBC 8/31, 8-31-2021 [Bbc News, BBC News is an operational business division of the British Broadcasting Corporation responsible for the gathering and broadcasting of news and current affairs ] UK business confidence jumps to more than four-year high, survey finds, 8-1-2021, BBC News, accessed 12-4-2021 https://www.bbc.com/news/business-58383035//ramamurty

British business confidence hit highs not seen since April 2017 on hopes the economy is recovering strongly to pre-pandemic levels, according to a survey. Employers in England's North West and East registered the biggest jump in confidence, the latest Lloyds Bank Business Barometer found. There was caution among companies about inflation and staff shortages. But firms in manufacturing, services and construction all posted greater optimism that recovery would continue. The monthly survey of 1,200 firms, conducted between 2 and 16 August, also saw business confidence in Northern Ireland turn positive after a negative response in July's poll. The barometer found that overall business confidence among UK firms rose by six points to +36% in August, driven by improvements in companies' trading prospects and expectations of stronger growth in the year ahead. Said Hann-Ju Ho, senior economist at Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking, said: "Business confidence reaching its highest level in over four years tells a positive story about the country's economic recovery. "This confidence is driven by the continued success of the vaccine rollout, the removal of lockdown restrictions and adjustments to self-isolation rules. "Staff shortages remain a challenge, but as the economy moves back towards pre-pandemic levels we can be optimistic that the momentum for business confidence and economic optimism can be sustained in the months ahead." Regional breakdown Confidence increased in nine out of the 12 UK regions and nations in August with particularly strong rises in the North West, up 26 points to 64% and the East of England, showing a rise of 14 points to 39%. Smaller rises were seen in the North East, up 6 points to 46% and London, up 4 points to 41%. For the North West, East of England and North East, confidence was at its highest since the survey sample was expanded in 2018. Increases in confidence were also recorded for Scotland (34%), the South East (32%), the South West (37%) and Wales (19%). In Northern Ireland, confidence rose significantly to 18% (from 6% in July), but it remains the region of the UK with the lowest level of confidence. The remaining three regions saw slight confidence declines, with the West Midlands at 27%, Yorkshire & the Humber at 26%, while there was a larger 10-point fall in the East Midlands to 28%. The improved mood echoes recent official statistics. Earlier this month, [jobs data from the Office for National Statistics suggested that the labour market continues to "rebound robustly"](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-58241006). Government borrowing has also fallen as furlough support ends and tax receipts rise. But like other survey data, the Lloyds barometer suggested that inflation - which saw a surprise slowdown in the year to July, down to 2% from 2.5% in June - remains a worry. "It is clear there is still some level of uncertainty on inflation and the impact of price pressures," said Gareth Oakley, managing director for business banking at Lloyds. "The last few months of the year will be pivotal to the future of UK economic growth."

#### The AFF devastates the economy.

**Tenza 20,** Mlungisi LLB LLM LLD Senior Lecturer, University of KwaZulu-Natal. Based on a paper presented at the Nelson Mandela University Labour Law Conference on “Labour Dispute Resolution, Substantive Labour Law and Social Justice Developments in South Africa, Mauritius and Beyond” from 19–21 July 2019 in Mauritius. “THE EFFECTS OF VIOLENT STRIKES ON THE ECONOMY OF A DEVELOPING COUNTRY: A CASE OF SOUTH AFRICA” <http://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/obiter/v41n3/04.pdf> brett

Economic growth is one of the most important pillars of a state. Most developing states put in place measures that enhance or speed-up the economic growth of their countries. It is believed that if the economy of a country is stable, the lives of the people improve with available resources being shared among the country’s inhabitants or citizens. However, it becomes difficult when the growth of the economy is hampered by the exercise of one or more of the constitutionally entrenched rights such as the right to strike. 1 Strikes in South Africa are becoming more common, and this affects businesses, employees and their families, and eventually, the economy. It becomes more dangerous for the economy and society at large if strikes are accompanied by violence causing damage to property and injury to people. The duration of strikes poses a problem for the economy of a developing country like South Africa. South Africa is rich in mineral resources, the world’s largest producer of platinum and chrome, the secondlargest producer of zirconium and the third-largest exporter of coal. It also has the largest economy in Africa, both in terms of industrial capacity and gross domestic product (GDP).2 However, these economic advantages have been affected by protracted and violent strikes.3 For example, in the platinum industries, labour stoppages since 2012 have cost the sector approximately R18 billion lost in revenue and 900 000 oz in lost output. The five-monthlong strike in early 2014 at Impala Platinum Mine amounted to a loss of about R400 million a day in revenue.4 The question that this article attempts to address is how violent strikes and their duration affect the growth of the economy in a developing country like South Africa. It also addresses the question of whether there is a need to change the policies regulating industrial action in South Africa to make them more favourable to economic growth. 2 BACKGROUND When South Africa obtained democracy in 1994, there was a dream of a better country with a new vision for industrial relations.5 However, the number of violent strikes that have bedevilled this country in recent years seems to have shattered-down the aspirations of a better South Africa. South Africa recorded 114 strikes in 2013 and 88 strikes in 2014, which cost the country about R6.1 billion according to the Department of Labour.6 The impact of these strikes has been hugely felt by the mining sector, particularly the platinum industry. The biggest strike took place in the platinum sector where about 70 000 mineworkers’ downed tools for better wages. Three major platinum producers (Impala, Anglo American and Lonmin Platinum Mines) were affected. The strike started on 23 January 2014 and ended on 25 June 2014. Business Day reported that “the five-month-long strike in the platinum sector pushed the economy to the brink of recession”. 7 This strike was closely followed by a four-week strike in the metal and engineering sector. All these strikes (and those not mentioned here) were characterised with violence accompanied by damage to property, intimidation, assault and sometimes the killing of people. Statistics from the metal and engineering sector showed that about 246 cases of intimidation were reported, 50 violent incidents occurred, and 85 cases of vandalism were recorded.8 Large-scale unemployment, soaring poverty levels and the dramatic income inequality that characterise the South African labour market provide a broad explanation for strike violence.9 While participating in a strike, workers’ stress levels leave them feeling frustrated at their seeming powerlessness, which in turn provokes further violent behaviour.10 These strikes are not only violent but take long to resolve. Generally, a lengthy strike has a negative effect on employment, reduces business confidence and increases the risk of economic stagflation. In addition, such strikes have a major setback on the growth of the economy and investment opportunities. It is common knowledge that consumer spending is directly linked to economic growth. At the same time, if the economy is not showing signs of growth, employment opportunities are shed, and poverty becomes the end result. The economy of South Africa is in need of rapid growth to enable it to deal with the high levels of unemployment and resultant poverty. One of the measures that may boost the country’s economic growth is by attracting potential investors to invest in the country. However, this might be difficult as investors would want to invest in a country where there is a likelihood of getting returns for their investments. The wish of getting returns for investment may not materialise if the labour environment is not fertile for such investments as a result of, for example, unstable labour relations. Therefore, investors may be reluctant to invest where there is an unstable or fragile labour relations environment.

#### Just short-term disruptions stop economic recovery.

Pettypiece 10-24, Shannon senior White House reporter for NBCNews.com. October 24, 2021. “Biden on the sidelines of 'Striketober,' with economy in the balance” <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/biden-sidelines-striketober-economy-balance-n1282094> brett

But President Biden faces a different dynamic from candidate Biden, because strikes risk adding to labor shortages and supply chain disruptions that are already driving up prices as the global economy reels from pandemic strains. While the strikes could benefit workers by driving up wages in the long term, the near-term impact of persistent or growing work stoppages could include worst-case scenarios like food shortages or lack of access to hospitals. "This will come at an economic cost to employers and therefore the economy, and I think that may be why Biden has gone a little silent," said Ariel Avgar, an associate professor of labor relations, law and history at Cornell University. "It is tricky for him. On the one hand, he is on the record supporting unions and their ability to use collective action. On the other hand, the point of strikes is to extract an economic price for employers unwilling to negotiate in a way the union feels is appropriate." There have been 184 strikes by health care to factory workers this year after the coronavirus pandemic aggravated concerns over low wages and poor working conditions, and the tight labor market has given workers more leverage. Among the strikers are more than 10,000 John Deere workers who went on strike this month. More than 24,000 health care workers at Kaiser Permanente are preparing to strike, joining thousands of nurses and other health care workers elsewhere who have been striking for months.

#### Decline cascades---nuclear war

Maavak 21, Dr. Mathew PhD in Risk Foresight from the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, External Researcher (PLATBIDAFO) at the Kazimieras Simonavicius University, Expert and Regular Commentator on Risk-Related Geostrategic Issues at the Russian International Affairs Council, “Horizon 2030: Will Emerging Risks Unravel Our Global Systems?”, Salus Journal – The Australian Journal for Law Enforcement, Security and Intelligence Professionals, Volume 9, Number 1, p. 2-8

Various scholars and institutions regard global social instability as the greatest threat facing this decade. The catalyst has been postulated to be a Second Great Depression which, in turn, will have profound implications for global security and national integrity. This paper, written from a broad systems perspective, illustrates how emerging risks are getting more complex and intertwined; blurring boundaries between the economic, environmental, geopolitical, societal and technological taxonomy used by the World Economic Forum for its annual global risk forecasts. Tight couplings in our global systems have also enabled risks accrued in one area to snowball into a full-blown crisis elsewhere. The COVID-19 pandemic and its socioeconomic fallouts exemplify this systemic chain-reaction. Onceinexorable forces of globalization are rupturing as the current global system can no longer be sustained due to poor governance and runaway wealth fractionation. The coronavirus pandemic is also enabling Big Tech to expropriate the levers of governments and mass communications worldwide. This paper concludes by highlighting how this development poses a dilemma for security professionals. Key Words: Global Systems, Emergence, VUCA, COVID-9, Social Instability, Big Tech, Great Reset INTRODUCTION The new decade is witnessing rising volatility across global systems. Pick any random “system” today and chart out its trajectory: Are our education systems becoming more robust and affordable? What about food security? Are our healthcare systems improving? Are our pension systems sound? Wherever one looks, there are dark clouds gathering on a global horizon marked by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA). But what exactly is a global system? Our planet itself is an autonomous and selfsustaining mega-system, marked by periodic cycles and elemental vagaries. Human activities within however are not system isolates as our banking, utility, farming, healthcare and retail sectors etc. are increasingly entwined. Risks accrued in one system may cascade into an unforeseen crisis within and/or without (Choo, Smith & McCusker, 2007). Scholars call this phenomenon “emergence”; one where the behaviour of intersecting systems is determined by complex and largely invisible interactions at the substratum (Goldstein, 1999; Holland, 1998). The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is a case in point. While experts remain divided over the source and morphology of the virus, the contagion has ramified into a global health crisis and supply chain nightmare. It is also tilting the geopolitical balance. China is the largest exporter of intermediate products, and had generated nearly 20% of global imports in 2015 alone (Cousin, 2020). The pharmaceutical sector is particularly vulnerable. Nearly “85% of medicines in the U.S. strategic national stockpile” sources components from China (Owens, 2020). An initial run on respiratory masks has now been eclipsed by rowdy queues at supermarkets and the bankruptcy of small businesses. The entire global population – save for major pockets such as Sweden, Belarus, Taiwan and Japan – have been subjected to cyclical lockdowns and quarantines. Never before in history have humans faced such a systemic, borderless calamity. COVID-19 represents a classic emergent crisis that necessitates real-time response and adaptivity in a real-time world, particularly since the global Just-in-Time (JIT) production and delivery system serves as both an enabler and vector for transboundary risks. From a systems thinking perspective, emerging risk management should therefore address a whole spectrum of activity across the economic, environmental, geopolitical, societal and technological (EEGST) taxonomy. Every emerging threat can be slotted into this taxonomy – a reason why it is used by the World Economic Forum (WEF) for its annual global risk exercises (Maavak, 2019a). As traditional forces of globalization unravel, security professionals should take cognizance of emerging threats through a systems thinking approach. METHODOLOGY An EEGST sectional breakdown was adopted to illustrate a sampling of extreme risks facing the world for the 2020-2030 decade. The transcendental quality of emerging risks, as outlined on Figure 1, below, was primarily informed by the following pillars of systems thinking (Rickards, 2020): • Diminishing diversity (or increasing homogeneity) of actors in the global system (Boli & Thomas, 1997; Meyer, 2000; Young et al, 2006); • Interconnections in the global system (Homer-Dixon et al, 2015; Lee & Preston, 2012); • Interactions of actors, events and components in the global system (Buldyrev et al, 2010; Bashan et al, 2013; Homer-Dixon et al, 2015); and • Adaptive qualities in particular systems (Bodin & Norberg, 2005; Scheffer et al, 2012) Since scholastic material on this topic remains somewhat inchoate, this paper buttresses many of its contentions through secondary (i.e. news/institutional) sources. ECONOMY According to Professor Stanislaw Drozdz (2018) of the Polish Academy of Sciences, “a global financial crash of a previously unprecedented scale is highly probable” by the mid- 2020s. This will lead to a trickle-down meltdown, impacting all areas of human activity. The economist John Mauldin (2018) similarly warns that the “2020s might be the worst decade in US history” and may lead to a Second Great Depression. Other forecasts are equally alarming. According to the International Institute of Finance, global debt may have surpassed $255 trillion by 2020 (IIF, 2019). Yet another study revealed that global debts and liabilities amounted to a staggering $2.5 quadrillion (Ausman, 2018). The reader should note that these figures were tabulated before the COVID-19 outbreak. The IMF singles out widening income inequality as the trigger for the next Great Depression (Georgieva, 2020). The wealthiest 1% now own more than twice as much wealth as 6.9 billion people (Coffey et al, 2020) and this chasm is widening with each passing month. COVID-19 had, in fact, boosted global billionaire wealth to an unprecedented $10.2 trillion by July 2020 (UBS-PWC, 2020). Global GDP, worth $88 trillion in 2019, may have contracted by 5.2% in 2020 (World Bank, 2020). As the Greek historian Plutarch warned in the 1st century AD: “An imbalance between rich and poor is the oldest and most fatal ailment of all republics” (Mauldin, 2014). The stability of a society, as Aristotle argued even earlier, depends on a robust middle element or middle class. At the rate the global middle class is facing catastrophic debt and unemployment levels, widespread social disaffection may morph into outright anarchy (Maavak, 2012; DCDC, 2007). Economic stressors, in transcendent VUCA fashion, may also induce radical geopolitical realignments. Bullions now carry more weight than NATO’s security guarantees in Eastern Europe. After Poland repatriated 100 tons of gold from the Bank of England in 2019, Slovakia, Serbia and Hungary quickly followed suit. According to former Slovak Premier Robert Fico, this erosion in regional trust was based on historical precedents – in particular the 1938 Munich Agreement which ceded Czechoslovakia’s Sudetenland to Nazi Germany. As Fico reiterated (Dudik & Tomek, 2019): “You can hardly trust even the closest allies after the Munich Agreement… I guarantee that if something happens, we won’t see a single gram of this (offshore-held) gold. Let’s do it (repatriation) as quickly as possible.” (Parenthesis added by author). President Aleksandar Vucic of Serbia (a non-NATO nation) justified his central bank’s gold-repatriation program by hinting at economic headwinds ahead: “We see in which direction the crisis in the world is moving” (Dudik & Tomek, 2019). Indeed, with two global Titanics – the United States and China – set on a collision course with a quadrillions-denominated iceberg in the middle, and a viral outbreak on its tip, the seismic ripples will be felt far, wide and for a considerable period. A reality check is nonetheless needed here: Can additional bullions realistically circumvallate the economies of 80 million plus peoples in these Eastern European nations, worth a collective $1.8 trillion by purchasing power parity? Gold however is a potent psychological symbol as it represents national sovereignty and economic reassurance in a potentially hyperinflationary world. The portents are clear: The current global economic system will be weakened by rising nationalism and autarkic demands. Much uncertainty remains ahead. Mauldin (2018) proposes the introduction of Old Testament-style debt jubilees to facilitate gradual national recoveries. The World Economic Forum, on the other hand, has long proposed a “Great Reset” by 2030; a socialist utopia where “you’ll own nothing and you’ll be happy” (WEF, 2016). In the final analysis, COVID-19 is not the root cause of the current global economic turmoil; it is merely an accelerant to a burning house of cards that was left smouldering since the 2008 Great Recession (Maavak, 2020a). We also see how the four main pillars of systems thinking (diversity, interconnectivity, interactivity and “adaptivity”) form the mise en scene in a VUCA decade. ENVIRONMENTAL What happens to the environment when our economies implode? Think of a debt-laden workforce at sensitive nuclear and chemical plants, along with a concomitant surge in industrial accidents? Economic stressors, workforce demoralization and rampant profiteering – rather than manmade climate change – arguably pose the biggest threats to the environment. In a WEF report, Buehler et al (2017) made the following pre-COVID-19 observation: The ILO estimates that the annual cost to the global economy from accidents and work-related diseases alone is a staggering $3 trillion. Moreover, a recent report suggests the world’s 3.2 billion workers are increasingly unwell, with the vast majority facing significant economic insecurity: 77% work in part-time, temporary, “vulnerable” or unpaid jobs. Shouldn’t this phenomenon be better categorized as a societal or economic risk rather than an environmental one? In line with the systems thinking approach, however, global risks can no longer be boxed into a taxonomical silo. Frazzled workforces may precipitate another Bhopal (1984), Chernobyl (1986), Deepwater Horizon (2010) or Flint water crisis (2014). These disasters were notably not the result of manmade climate change. Neither was the Fukushima nuclear disaster (2011) nor the Indian Ocean tsunami (2004). Indeed, the combustion of a long-overlooked cargo of 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate had nearly levelled the city of Beirut, Lebanon, on Aug 4 2020. The explosion left 204 dead; 7,500 injured; US$15 billion in property damages; and an estimated 300,000 people homeless (Urbina, 2020). The environmental costs have yet to be adequately tabulated. Environmental disasters are more attributable to Black Swan events, systems breakdowns and corporate greed rather than to mundane human activity. Our JIT world aggravates the cascading potential of risks (Korowicz, 2012). Production and delivery delays, caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, will eventually require industrial overcompensation. This will further stress senior executives, workers, machines and a variety of computerized systems. The trickle-down effects will likely include substandard products, contaminated food and a general lowering in health and safety standards (Maavak, 2019a). Unpaid or demoralized sanitation workers may also resort to indiscriminate waste dumping. Many cities across the United States (and elsewhere in the world) are no longer recycling wastes due to prohibitive costs in the global corona-economy (Liacko, 2021). Even in good times, strict protocols on waste disposals were routinely ignored. While Sweden championed the global climate change narrative, its clothing flagship H&M was busy covering up toxic effluences disgorged by vendors along the Citarum River in Java, Indonesia. As a result, countless children among 14 million Indonesians straddling the “world’s most polluted river” began to suffer from dermatitis, intestinal problems, developmental disorders, renal failure, chronic bronchitis and cancer (DW, 2020). It is also in cauldrons like the Citarum River where pathogens may mutate with emergent ramifications. On an equally alarming note, depressed economic conditions have traditionally provided a waste disposal boon for organized crime elements. Throughout 1980s, the Calabriabased ‘Ndrangheta mafia – in collusion with governments in Europe and North America – began to dump radioactive wastes along the coast of Somalia. Reeling from pollution and revenue loss, Somali fisherman eventually resorted to mass piracy (Knaup, 2008). The coast of Somalia is now a maritime hotspot, and exemplifies an entwined form of economic-environmental-geopolitical-societal emergence. In a VUCA world, indiscriminate waste dumping can unexpectedly morph into a Black Hawk Down incident. The laws of unintended consequences are governed by actors, interconnections, interactions and adaptations in a system under study – as outlined in the methodology section. Environmentally-devastating industrial sabotages – whether by disgruntled workers, industrial competitors, ideological maniacs or terrorist groups – cannot be discounted in a VUCA world. Immiserated societies, in stark defiance of climate change diktats, may resort to dirty coal plants and wood stoves for survival. Interlinked ecosystems, particularly water resources, may be hijacked by nationalist sentiments. The environmental fallouts of critical infrastructure (CI) breakdowns loom like a Sword of Damocles over this decade. GEOPOLITICAL The primary catalyst behind WWII was the Great Depression. Since history often repeats itself, expect familiar bogeymen to reappear in societies roiling with impoverishment and ideological clefts. Anti-Semitism – a societal risk on its own – may reach alarming proportions in the West (Reuters, 2019), possibly forcing Israel to undertake reprisal operations inside allied nations. If that happens, how will affected nations react? Will security resources be reallocated to protect certain minorities (or the Top 1%) while larger segments of society are exposed to restive forces? Balloon effects like these present a classic VUCA problematic. Contemporary geopolitical risks include a possible Iran-Israel war; US-China military confrontation over Taiwan or the South China Sea; North Korean proliferation of nuclear and missile technologies; an India-Pakistan nuclear war; an Iranian closure of the Straits of Hormuz; fundamentalist-driven implosion in the Islamic world; or a nuclear confrontation between NATO and Russia. Fears that the Jan 3 2020 assassination of Iranian Maj. Gen. Qasem Soleimani might lead to WWIII were grossly overblown. From a systems perspective, the killing of Soleimani did not fundamentally change the actor-interconnection-interaction adaptivity equation in the Middle East. Soleimani was simply a cog who got replaced.

### 3

#### Interpretation: The affirmative may not advocate for specific governments

#### “A” is an indefinite article that modifies “just government” in the res – means that you have to prove the resolution true as a whole, not in a particular instance

CCC (“Articles, Determiners, and Quantifiers”, http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/determiners/determiners.htm#articles, Capital Community College Foundation, a nonprofit 501 c-3 organization that supports scholarships, faculty development, and curriculum innovation) LHSLA JC/SJ

The three articles — a, an, the — are a kind of adjective. The is called the definite article because it usually precedes a specific or previously mentioned noun; a and an are called indefinite articles because they are used to refer to something in a less specific manner (an unspecified count noun). These words are also listed among the noun markers or determiners because they are almost invariably followed by a noun (or something else acting as a noun). caution CAUTION! Even after you learn all the principles behind the use of these articles, you will find an abundance of situations where choosing the correct article or choosing whether to use one or not will prove chancy. Icy highways are dangerous. The icy highways are dangerous. And both are correct. The is used with specific nouns. The is required when the noun it refers to represents something that is one of a kind: The moon circles the earth. The is required when the noun it refers to represents something in the abstract: The United States has encouraged the use of the private automobile as opposed to the use of public transit. The is required when the noun it refers to represents something named earlier in the text. (See below..) If you would like help with the distinction between count and non-count nouns, please refer to Count and Non-Count Nouns. We use a before singular count-nouns that begin with consonants (a cow, a barn, a sheep); we use an before singular count-nouns that begin with vowels or vowel-like sounds (an apple, an urban blight, an open door). Words that begin with an h sound often require an a (as in a horse, a history book, a hotel), but if an h-word begins with an actual vowel sound, use an an (as in an hour, an honor). We would say a useful device and a union matter because the u of those words actually sounds like yoo (as opposed, say, to the u of an ugly incident). The same is true of a European and a Euro (because of that consonantal "Yoo" sound). We would say a once-in-a-lifetime experience or a one-time hero because the words once and one begin with a w sound (as if they were spelled wuntz and won). Merriam-Webster's Dictionary says that we can use an before an h- word that begins with an unstressed syllable. Thus, we might say an hisTORical moment, but we would say a HIStory book. Many writers would call that an affectation and prefer that we say a historical, but apparently, this choice is a matter of personal taste. For help on using articles with abbreviations and acronyms (a or an FBI agent?), see the section on Abbreviations. First and subsequent reference: When we first refer to something in written text, we often use an indefinite article to modify it. A newspaper has an obligation to seek out and tell the truth. In a subsequent reference to this newspaper, however, we will use the definite article: There are situations, however, when the newspaper must determine whether the public's safety is jeopardized by knowing the truth. Another example: "I'd like a glass of orange juice, please," John said. "I put the glass of juice on the counter already," Sheila replied. Exception: When a modifier appears between the article and the noun, the subsequent article will continue to be indefinite: "I'd like a big glass of orange juice, please," John said. "I put a big glass of juice on the counter already," Sheila replied. Generic reference: We can refer to something in a generic way by using any of the three articles. We can do the same thing by omitting the article altogether. *A beagle* makes a great hunting dog and family companion. An airedale is sometimes a rather skittish animal. The golden retriever is a marvelous pet for children. Irish setters are not the highly intelligent animals they used to be. The difference between the generic indefinite pronoun and the normal indefinite pronoun is that the latter refers to any of that class ("I want to buy a beagle, and any old beagle will do.") whereas the former (see beagle sentence) *refers to all members of that class*

#### Violation: they spec UK

#### Standards:

#### [1] precision – the counter-interp justifies them arbitrarily doing away with random words in the resolution which decks negative ground and preparation because the aff is no longer bounded by the resolution. Independent voter for jurisdiction – the judge doesn’t have the jurisdiction to vote aff if there wasn’t a legitimate aff.

#### [2] limits – there are over 150+ governments in the world, explodes limits since there are tons of independent affs plus functionally infinite combinations, all with different advantages in different political situations like Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Holy See, Liechtenstein, Palau, all with less than 100k people-- Kills neg prep and debatability since there are no DAs that apply to every aff. K2 fairness because if there are infinite limits for the aff I can never predict what they’ll advocate for.

**DTD to deter future abuse**

#### CI cause reasonability is arbitrary and invites judge internation

#### No RVIs--- a – illogical you shouldn’t win for being fair b – debates will be forced to go to theory which kills substance if they wanna check abuse or c – theory is chilled which kills norms

#### Neg theory 1st---aff abuse happened first so it’s lexically prior and has more magnitude since it pre-determined my 1nc strat which affects the entire round

## Case

#### Empirical studies from Belgium also prove strikes harmed student wellbeing

**Belot**, Michèle, **and** Dinand **Webbink 10**. “Do Teacher Strikes Harm Educational Attainment of Students?” LABOUR, vol. 24, no. 4, 2010, pp. 391–406., doi:10.1111/j.1467-9914.2010.00494.x.

5. Conclusion This paper provides unique evidence on the effect of teacher strikes on final educational attainments. Any attempt to evaluate the effects of strikes will always be subject to the concern of endogeneity of strikes. The Belgian case is interesting because the motive for the strikes was not related to the schooling environment, but was driven by a political reform that was uncorrelated with schooling conditions. Both communities were confronted at the same time by similar budgetary concerns, but the Flemish community succeeded in avoiding strikes by granting an immediate 2 per cent salary increase, whereas the French-speaking community did Figure 3. Success rates (per cent) of first-year students enrolled at university Source: Cref (Conseil des Recteurs des Universités Francophones de Belgique). Do Teacher Strikes Harm Educational Attainment? 403 © 2010 CEIS, Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini and Blackwell Publishing Ltd Table 5. The effect of the strike on the choice of the level of higher education — multinomial logit estimates (la) No higher education (lb) University (2a) No higher education (2b) University (3a) No higher education (3b) University Dummy age 23–28 0.032 0.250 -0.187 0.332 0.055 0.446 (0.56) (2.78)\*\*\* (1.41) (1.59) (0.31) (1.55) Dummy age 31–36 0.049 0.140 (0.53) (0.92) Dummy Wallonia -0.003 0.377 0.203 0.278 0.202 0.268 (0.11) (7.92)\*\*\* (2.87)\*\*\* (2.47)\*\* (2.81)\*\*\* (2.26)\*\* Age 23–28 ¥ Wallonia 0.148 -0.431 -0.059 -0.327 -0.057 -0.318 (1.92)\* (3.55)\*\*\* (0.58) (2.07)\*\* (0.56) (0.16)\*\* Age 31–36 ¥ Wallonia -0.000 0.010 (0.00) (0.06) Female -0.266 -0.832 -0.573 -0.397 -0.544 -0.476 (10.13)\*\*\* (18.66)\*\*\* (11.51)\*\*\* (5.08)\*\*\* (13.32)\*\*\* (7.30)\*\*\* Age 0.037 0.004 0.009 0.023 0.033 0.020 (33.30)\*\*\* (2.31)\*\* (0.64) (1.03) (2.63)\*\*\* (1.02) Constant -0.309 -0.961 0.774 -1.686 -0.083 -1.689 (5.23)\*\*\* (9.69)\*\*\* (1.60) (2.21)\*\* (0.17) (2.17)\*\* Observations 40,443 40,443 8,509 8,509 13,006 13,006 The sample includes individuals who obtained their last diploma in Belgium and who are not living in the region of Brussels and in (1) all individuals with ages between 23 and 28 and over 31; (2) all individuals with ages between 23 and 28 and between 31 and 36; and (3) all individuals with ages between 23 and 28 and between 31 and 41. Reference category is higher professional education. Absolute value of z statistics in parentheses. \* Significant at 10 per cent; \*\* significant at 5 per cent; \*\*\* significant at 1 per cent. 404 Michèle Belot — Dinand Webbink © 2010 CEIS, Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini and Blackwell Publishing Ltd not. Eventually, the French community granted a 2 per cent salary increase as well, but this was only after a long battle between teachers and the government, and a long period of perturbation in all schools of the community. We find some evidence that the strikes decreased the educational attainment of students, although the estimated effect is somewhat imprecise. A plausible mechanism for this lower investment in human capital seems to be an increase in grade repetition. We find that the young French-speaking cohort graduated half a year later on average. Furthermore, we find that the strikes led to a reallocation of students from university studies to higher vocational education. Hence, students do not seem to have succeeded in compensating for the losses in terms of schooling due to the strikes. Also, the results we find breaks in the evolution of achievement and attainment, breaks that seem to coincide with the timing of the strikes. Thus, it seems that these results are more consistent with a causal effect of strikes rather than a causal effect of a deterioration in schooling environment. Of course, this study could be seen as a specific ‘case-study’, and the question is whether we can draw more general conclusions and lessons from this analysis. We would argue that the results provide a benchmark for a scenario that is not too unrealistic. There are a number of examples of long strikes in schools (Hayward teacher strikes and Marysville to name a few) and most strikes are driven by wage disputes. Higher wages might not only be beneficial for teachers themselves but also for students as higher wages might attract better teachers. However, the empirical literature provides little support for the latter argument. This paper suggests that long-term strikes might bear high costs in terms of detrimental effects on educational achievement of students. These costs should be taken into account in discussions on the right to strike for teachers.

# 2NR

## DA

#### Overwhelming data proves---confidence is steady AND the bedrock of recovery.

Gordish ’9-2 [Stefanie; 2021; citing Jeff Collins, chief economist at Coupa and comprehensive data; Coupa, “Businesses Surge Ahead Despite Rising Delta Variant Concerns, According to Coupa Business Spend Index,” https://investors.coupa.com/news-releases/news-release-details/businesses-surge-ahead-despite-rising-delta-variant-concerns]

SAN MATEO, Calif., Sept. 2, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- Business spend data showed continued improvement in Q3 2021, increasing nearly 3 percent from last quarter, representing continued confidence in the economic outlook according to data gleaned from the Coupa platform which is used by more than 2,000 companies.

The insights published today by Coupa Software (NASDAQ: COUP) in its quarterly Business Spend Index (BSI), Q3 2021 Outlook, leverage billions of dollars of aggregated and anonymized data on search, order, and pay activities to provide a predictive measure of confidence in future economic opportunity as defined by the willingness of businesses to commit to spend.

The entire Coupa BSI Q3 2021 Outlook can be accessed here.

BSI Q3 2021 Insights in Key Industries:

* Manufacturing: Increased for the first time in three quarters, though this may put additional pressure on stressed supply chains as well as prices.
* Retail: Increased strongly, indicating business confidence in the sector is rebounding. Recent evidence suggests consumers are returning to brick-and-mortar locations.
* Health and Life Sciences: Increased, modestly, and will likely perform near trend for the next one to two quarters though COVID variants could challenge the sector's growth.
* Business Services: Declined after three consecutive quarters of growth. We expect sector performance to continue to decelerate based on overall deceleration in the BSI.
* Financial Services: Unchanged, the sector has remained stable throughout the pandemic. Income support will likely continue to prop up consumer demand in the near term.
* High Tech: Unchanged, however global chip shortages could disrupt activity in the sector and reduce growth into 2023.

"Despite persistent supply chain disruptions, spiking COVID cases, and delayed return to work plans, spend per customer is up 20 percent year-over-year indicating business confidence is returning to pre-pandemic levels," said Jeff Collins, chief economist at Coupa. "The increases within Manufacturing and Retail are indicative of continued upward demand from consumers and businesses as the economy returns to normal."

#### High business confidence is driving the fastest growth in decades.

Mutikani ’21 [Lucia; July 27; reporter at Reuters, citing Priscilla Thiagamoorthy, an economist at BMO Capital Markets in Toronto, Pooja Sriram, an economist at Barclays in New York, and Will Compernolle, senior economist at FHN Financial in New York; Reuters, “U.S. consumer confidence at 17-month high; business spending on equipment strong,” https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-core-capital-goods-orders-rise-solidly-june-2021-07-27/]

U.S. consumer confidence inched up to a 17-month high in July, with households' spending plans rising even as concerns about higher inflation lingered, suggesting the economy maintained its strong growth clip early in the third quarter.

The economy's prospects were further brightened by other data on Tuesday showing a solid increase in new orders for manufactured capital goods in June despite supply constraints hampering production at some factories, indicating that business spending on equipment could remain strong for a while.

The reports could ease worries about a sharp slowdown in growth in the second half of the year as the boost from massive fiscal stimulus fades. The economy is believed to have notched its second-fastest growth pace since 1983 in the second quarter.

"Higher confidence suggests that consumer spending should support robust growth in the second half of this year," said Priscilla Thiagamoorthy, an economist at BMO Capital Markets in Toronto.

The Conference Board said its consumer confidence index ticked up to a reading of 129.1 this month, the highest level since February 2020, from 128.9 in June. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the index would fall to 123.9.

Consumers' inflation expectations over the next 12 months dipped to 6.6% from 6.7% last month. The Conference Board survey places more emphasis on the labor market. The University of Michigan's survey of consumers showed sentiment falling in early July because of inflation concerns.

Consumer confidence held up despite the Delta variant of the coronavirus driving a surge in new infections mostly among the unvaccinated. Confidence fell in the West South Central and West North Central states, as well as the Mountain region, which have low vaccination rates and are experiencing a surge in infections.

"The Delta variant does pose some downside risk, although we do not expect it to derail confidence entirely, given that its spread is uneven and largely concentrated in areas with low vaccination rates," said Pooja Sriram, an economist at Barclays in New York.

The survey's so-called labor market differential, derived from data on respondents' views on whether jobs are plentiful or hard to get, nudged up to 44.4 in July. That was the highest level since 2000 and up from 44.2 in June. This measure closely correlates to the unemployment rate in the Labor Department's closely watched employment report.

More households intended to buy long-lasting manufactured goods such as motor vehicles and household appliances such as refrigerators and television sets, which should help to underpin consumer spending and manufacturing, the survey showed. Consumers were also keen to purchase homes.

Households are sitting on at least $2.5 trillion in excess savings accumulated during the pandemic.

Stocks on Wall Street were trading lower ahead of earnings reports from major companies and as the Federal Reserve held a two-day policy meeting. The dollar (.DXY) slipped against a basket of currencies. U.S. Treasury prices were higher.

Surging House Prices

In a separate report on Tuesday, the Commerce Department said orders for non-defense capital goods excluding aircraft, a closely watched proxy for business spending plans, rose 0.5% last month. These so-called core capital goods orders gained 0.5% in May. Shipments of core capital goods increased 0.6% after accelerating 0.9% in May.

Core capital goods shipments are used to calculate equipment spending in the government's gross domestic product measurement.

"Supply chain issues are holding back faster capacity adjustment, but business investment is showing no signs of slowing down or a lack of confidence in continuing strength in consumer demand," said Will Compernolle, senior economist at FHN Financial in New York.

Business investment on equipment has boomed during the pandemic, underpinning manufacturing, which accounts for 11.9% of the U.S. economy. Consumer spending shifted to goods from services, with millions of Americans cooped up at home. Record low interest rates and massive fiscal stimulus measures offered a further boost, causing supply constraints.

Though demand is reverting to services, with just under half of the population fully vaccinated against the coronavirus, spending on goods is likely to remain strong.

Business spending on equipment has recorded three straight quarters of double-digit growth. Another solid quarter of growth is expected when the government publishes its advance estimate of GDP growth for the second quarter on Thursday.

According to a Reuters survey, GDP growth likely increased at an 8.5% annualized rate last quarter, an acceleration from the first quarter's 6.4% pace. The anticipated growth in the second quarter would be the fastest since 1983 and could mark a peak in the current cycle.

#### Optimism and growth are surging.

DiBlasi ’21 [Joseph; May 19; Associate Director of Corporate Communications at the Conference Board; the Conference Board, “CEO Confidence Hits All-Time High in Q2,” <https://www.conference-board.org/research/CEO-Confidence/>]

The Conference Board Measure of CEO Confidence™ in collaboration with The Business Council improved further in the second quarter of 2021, following a sharp increase in Q1. The measure now stands at 82, up from 73. This marks the highest level of CEO confidence recorded since the measure began in 1976. (A reading above 50 points reflects more positive than negative responses.)

CEOs’ assessment of current economic conditions rose substantially, after slightly moderating last quarter. In Q2, 94 percent said conditions are better compared to six months ago, up from 67 percent in Q1. CEOs also expressed greater optimism about conditions in their own industries, with 89 percent reporting better conditions compared to six months ago, up from 68 percent in Q1. Historically high expectations in Q1 climbed even further in Q2: 88 percent of CEOs expect economic conditions to improve over the next six months, up from 82 percent.

“This quarter’s survey marks a remarkable turnaround from a year ago—when CEO confidence reached a nadir of 34 at the height of COVID-19’s first wave,” said Dana Peterson, Chief Economist of The Conference Board. “For CEOs, the challenge of navigating a once-in-a-century pandemic is receding, as the focus turns to hiring and investing to compete in an economy poised to see the fastest growth in decades over the months ahead.”

In the job market, the pace of hiring is expected to accelerate over the next 12 months, with 54 percent of CEOs expecting to expand their workforce, up from 47 percent in Q1. While the outlook for wages was virtually unchanged in Q2, more CEOs are reporting difficulty finding qualified workers—57 percent in Q2, up from 50 percent in Q1.

“Optimism is surging in C-suites and boardrooms across industries,” said Roger W. Ferguson, Jr., Vice Chairman of The Business Council and Trustee of The Conference Board. “For CEOs, the challenge is no longer staying afloat, but keeping pace—in particular, with a likely resurgence of the labor shortages experienced before the pandemic.”

Current Conditions

CEOs’ assessment of general economic conditions rose sharply in Q2:

* 94% of CEOs reported economic conditions were better compared to six months ago, up from 67% in Q1.
* Only 2% said conditions were worse, down from 10%.

CEOs were similarly optimistic about conditions in their own industries in Q2:

* 89% of CEOs reported that conditions in their industries were better compared to six months ago, up from 68%.
* Only 4% said conditions in their own industries were worse, down from 8%.

Future Conditions

Expectations about the short-term economic outlook improved further in Q2:

* 88% percent of CEOs said they expect economic conditions to improve over the next six months, up from 82% in Q1.
* Only 1% expect conditions to worsen, down from 7%.

CEOs’ expectations regarding short-term prospects in their own industries also improved in Q2:

* 81% of CEOs expect conditions in their own industry to improve over the next six months, up from 78%.
* Only 4% expected conditions to worsen, down from 7%.

Capital Spending, Employment, Recruiting, and Wages

The survey also gauged CEOs’ expectations about four key actions their companies plan on taking over the next 12 months.

* Capital Spending: 47% of CEOs expect to increase their capital budgets in the year ahead, up from 45% in Q1.
* Employment: 54% of CEOs expect to expand their workforce, up from 47% in Q1.
* Hiring Qualified People: 57% of CEOs report some problems attracting qualified workers, up from 50% in Q1. Notably, 28% report difficulties that cut across the organization, rather than concentrated in a few key areas—up from 18% in Q1.
* Wages: 37% of CEOs expect to increase wages by 3% or more over the next year, virtually unchanged from 36% in Q1.

#### Confidence is robust, shows no signs of declining, and is closely linked to concentration---only new regulations curb optimism.

Nguyen ’10-19 [Lananh; updated October 19; Reporter covering Wall Street, expected to receive an M.S. in Finance and Economic Policy from the University of London in 2021; New York Times, “Wall Street Sees a Record Deal Spree as a Reason for Optimism,” <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/15/business/wall-street-banks-earnings-mergers.html>]

The dealmakers at the nation’s biggest banks are the busiest they’ve ever been. Interest rates are low, private equity firms flush with cash are looking for promising investments, and companies are aggressively pursuing mergers at a breakneck pace. Wall Street banks announced blockbuster quarterly profits this week from a record wave of transactions that shows no signs of ebbing: Even in the face of surging inflation and shaky consumer sentiment, corporate clients are ready to deal — and bank leaders say that’s a reason to be optimistic about the economic recovery. “Whenever C.E.O. confidence is high, M&A activity increases,” David M. Solomon, Goldman Sachs’s chief executive, said in an interview Friday after the bank reported third-quarter earnings of $5.38 billion, surpassing analyst forecasts. “The world’s resettled a bit coming out of the pandemic, and that is now giving a lot of companies an opportunity to really take note of where they want to go.” A record $1.6 trillion in mergers and purchases were struck worldwide in the quarter, according to a research report from Refinitiv. That, in turn, set records for advisory businesses across Wall Street: Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley tallied record revenues, JPMorgan Chase and Bank of America announced all-time high fees, and Citigroup’s mergers and acquisitions bankers had their best quarter in a decade. Goldman Sachs has already had the most profitable year in its history — earning $17.7 billion so far — with three months to go. In the most recent quarter, its bankers closed transactions including the $32 billion spinoff of Universal Music Group by the French conglomerate Vivendi and Salesforce.com’s $28.1 billion purchase of Slack Technologies. Those were two of the 10 biggest deals completed in the three-month period ending in September, according to Dealogic. Morgan Stanley also had two top-10 deals: the chip maker Analog Devices’s $20 billion acquisition of a competitor, Maxim Integrated, and the $12.3 billion purchase of Proofpoint, a cybersecurity company, by the private equity firm Thoma Bravo. Sharon Yeshaya, Morgan Stanley’s chief financial officer, said the financial, health care and technology industries in the Americas and Europe have been the hottest areas, but momentum was building elsewhere, too. “What we’re seeing is really strong pipelines,” Ms. Yeshaya said in an interview after the bank reported a jump in profits to $3.7 billion. “The strength is broadening.” The frenetic pace has persisted despite the economic upheaval caused by the pandemic, trade disputes and geopolitical tension, Matt Toole, director of deals intelligence at Refinitiv, wrote about the record quarter. Buoyant stock markets, low borrowing costs and the emergence of new buyers from special purpose acquisition companies will continue to prop up activity, he wrote. “With the all-time full-year deal making record broken in less than nine months and five consecutive quarters of more than $1 trillion in M&A activity, we have very little data to make true historical comparisons,” Mr. Toole wrote. Even so, there are plenty of factors that could put the brakes on. Tougher regulators in the United States, rising prices for goods and services and central banks’ moves to cut back on stimulus efforts “will all contribute to how much further this cycle has to go,” he wrote.