# 1NC

## 1

#### Interpretation: the affirmative must be topical

#### “Resolved” denotes a formal resolution.

**AWS ’13** [Army Writing Style; August 24th; Online resource dedicated to all major writing requirements in the Army; Army Writing Style, "Punctuation — The Colon and Semicolon," <https://armywritingstyle.com/punctuation-the-colon-and-semicolon/>]

The colon introduces the following:

a.  A list, but only after "as follows," "the following," or a noun for which the list is an appositive: Each scout will carry the following: (colon) meals for three days, a survival knife, and his sleeping bag. The company had four new officers: (colon) Bill Smith, Frank Tucker, Peter Fillmore, and Oliver Lewis.

b.  A long quotation (one or more paragraphs): In The Killer Angels Michael Shaara wrote: (colon) You may find it a different story from the one you learned in school. There have been many versions of that battle [Gettysburg] and that war [the Civil War]. (The quote continues for two more paragraphs.)

c.  A formal quotation or question: The President declared: (colon) "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." The question is: (colon) what can we do about it?

d.  A second independent clause which explains the first: Potter's motive is clear: (colon) he wants the assignment.

e.  After the introduction of a business letter: Dear Sirs: (colon) Dear Madam: (colon) f.  The details following an announcement For sale: (colon) large lakeside cabin with dock

g.  A formal resolution, after the word "resolved:". Resolved: (colon) That this council petition the mayor.

#### "Resolved" requires a policy.

Merriam Webster '18 (Merriam Webster; 2018 Edition; Online dictionary and legal resource; Merriam Webster, "resolve," <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resolve;> RP)  
: a legal or official determination especially: a legislative declaration

#### Objectivity means free of bias

Merriam Webster “Objectivity”, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/objectivity>

Definition of objectivity

: the quality or character of being objective : lack of favoritism toward one side or another : freedom from bias

#### Among us is biased

James Bigley II, an award-winning writer and editor from Cleveland, Ohio. His work has appeared in Cleveland Magazine and EGM, 2-3-2021, "'Among Us' Taps Into Our Obsession With Betrayal," Wired, <https://www.wired.com/story/among-us-psychology-betrayal/> // ella

“I think tribalism is a word that gets used a lot, and I think it’s pretty accurate,” says Jamie Madigan, a psychologist and the author of The Psychology Of Games and The Engagement Game. “As humans, we’re very susceptible to sorting ourselves into tribes and into in-groups and out-groups, like, ‘These are our people, and those people are not our people,’ and so we’re going to have a bias against them, and we’re going to have a bias for people that we perceive to be in our group to the extent that a lot of times agreeing with our group is more important than being correct, even on something very factual.” When coupling our divisive nature with the collective “cultural trauma” we’re all facing from the ongoing pandemic, a phenomenon we discussed when examining the resurgence of narrative-free games, there’s something to be said about how Among Us really is the kind of game that plays off our instinctual efforts to take sides, passionately defend our beliefs, and come together through one commonly held experience. According to Madigan, Among Us is a great connector because it forces players to take sides from within a very structured experience.

#### A democracy means elections and checks and balances

**Epstein et al. 7**

Susan B. Epstein, Nina M. Serafino, and Francis T. Miko (Specialists in Foreign Policy, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division). “Democracy Promotion: Cornerstone of U.S. Foreign Policy?” CRS Report for Congress. JDN. 26 December 2007.

According to Richard Haass, former State Department official and current President of the Council on Foreign Relations, **democracy is more than elections; it is** a **diffusion of power** where no group within a society is excluded from full participation in political life. **Democracy requires checks and balan**ces within the government, among various levels of government (national, state and local), and between government and society. Elements such as independent media, unions, political parties, schools, and democratic rights for women provide checks on government power over society. Individual **rights such as freedom of speech and worship need to be protected**. Furthermore, a democratic government must face the check of electable opposition and leaders must hand over power peacefully.6 One scholar, Laurence Whitehead, discusses the various academic attempts to define democracy, pointing out that **the definition has varied over time, and among cultures** (with even subtle differences in British and American understandings of key elements of democracy), and arguing that the “outer boundaries” of the concept of democracy are “to a significant ... extent malleable and negotiable....”7 “Democracy has some indispensable components, without which the concept would be vacuous, but these indispensable elements are skeletal and can in any case be arranged in various possible configurations,” Whitehead posits.8 He argues that democracy requires the minimal procedural conditions (safeguarding free and fair elections, freedom of speech and association, and the integrity of elective office) as described by other scholars.9 Yet, he cautions, these minimal procedures only establish “contingently and for the present period ... a rather coherent and broad-based exposition of the predominant view.” He notes that the meaning of democracy “is likely to remain contested, and even to some extent unstable, as current processes of democratization unfold.”10 “Democratization,” he thus writes, “is best understood as a complex, long-term, dynamic, and open-ended process. It consists of progress towards a more rule-based, more consensual and more participatory type of politics. Like ‘democracy’ it necessarily involves a combination of fact and value, and so contains internal tensions.”11

#### Among Us is not a government lol

#### Violation: they defend Among Us

#### 1] That’s necessary for limits and ground -- redefining portions of the resolution permits endless reclarification AND creates incentives to focus 1 part of the library for 4 years -- only aligning pre-round research with agent and mechanism solves.

#### 2] Iterative testing – the process of engaging in research around a limited and predictable topic empirically produces better advocates because they’re better prepared to defend their positions.

**Iverson ’9** [Joel; 2009; Associate Professor of Communication at the University of Montana, Ph.D in Communication from Arizona State University Relations at the University of Sydney; Debate Central, “Can Cutting Cards Carve into Our Personal Lives: An Analysis of Debate Research on Personal Advocacy,” <https://debate.uvm.edu/dybvigiverson1000.html>] brett

Mitchell (1998) provides a thorough examination of the pedagogical implication for academic debate. Although Mitchell acknowledges that debate provides preparation for participation in democracy, limiting debate to a laboratory where students practice their skill for future participation is criticized. Mitchell contends:

For students and teachers of argumentation, the heightened salience of this question should signal the danger that critical thinking and oral advocacy skills alone may not be sufficient for citizens to assert their voices in public deliberation. (p. 45)

Mitchell contends that the laboratory style setting creates barriers to other spheres, creates a "sense of detachment" and causes debaters to see research from the role of spectators. Mitchell further calls for "argumentative agency [which] involves the capacity to contextualize and employ the skills and strategies of argumentative discourse in fields of social action, especially wider spheres of public deliberation" (p. 45). Although we agree with Mitchell that debate can be an even greater instrument of empowerment for students, we are more interested in examining the impact of the intermediary step of research. In each of Mitchell's examples of debaters finding creative avenues for agency, there had to be a motivation to act. It is our contention that the research conducted for competition is a major catalyst to propel their action, change their opinions, and to provide a greater depth of understanding of the issues involved.

The level of research involved in debate creates an in-depth understanding of issues. The level of research conducted during a year of debate is quite extensive. Goodman (1993) references a Chronicle of Higher Education article that estimated "the level and extent of research required of the average college debater for each topic is equivalent to the amount of research required for a Master's Thesis (cited in Mitchell, 1998, p. 55). With this extensive quantity of research, debaters attain a high level of investigation and (presumably) understanding of a topic. As a result of this level of understanding, debaters become knowledgeable citizens who are further empowered to make informed opinions and energized to take action. Research helps to educate students (and coaches) about the state of the world.

Without the guidance of a debate topic, how many students would do in-depth research on female genital mutilation in Africa, or United Nations sanctions on Iraq? The competitive nature of policy debate provides an impetus for students to research the topics that they are going to debate. This in turn fuels students’ awareness of issues that go beyond their front doors. Advocacy flows from this increased awareness. Reading books and articles about the suffering of people thousands of miles away or right in our own communities drives people to become involved in the community at large.

Research has also focused on how debate prepares us for life in the public sphere. Issues that we discuss in debate have found their way onto the national policy stage, and training in intercollegiate debate makes us good public advocates. The public sphere is the arena in which we all must participate to be active citizens. Even after we leave debate, the skills that we have gained should help us to be better advocates and citizens. Research has looked at how debate impacts education (Matlon and Keele 1984), legal training (Parkinson, Gisler and Pelias 1983, Nobles 19850 and behavioral traits (McGlone 1974, Colbert 1994). These works illustrate the impact that public debate has on students as they prepare to enter the public sphere.

The debaters who take active roles such as protesting sanctions were probably not actively engaged in the issue until their research drew them into the topic. Furthermore, the process of intense research for debate may actually change the positions debaters hold. Since debaters typically enter into a topic with only cursory (if any) knowledge of the issue, the research process provides exposure to issues that were previously unknown. Exposure to the literature on a topic can create, reinforce or alter an individual's opinions. Before learning of the School for the America's, having an opinion of the place is impossible. After hearing about the systematic training of torturers and oppressors in a debate round and reading the research, an opinion of the "school" was developed. In this manner, exposure to debate research as the person finding the evidence, hearing it as the opponent in a debate round (or as judge) acts as an initial spark of awareness on an issue. This process of discovery seems to have a similar impact to watching an investigative news report.

Mitchell claimed that debate could be more than it was traditionally seen as, that it could be a catalyst to empower people to act in the social arena. We surmise that there is a step in between the debate and the action. The intermediary step where people are inspired to agency is based on the research that they do. If students are compelled to act, research is a main factor in compelling them to do so. Even if students are not compelled to take direct action, research still changes opinions and attitudes.

Research often compels students to take action in the social arena. Debate topics guide students in a direction that allows them to explore what is going on in the world. Last year the college policy debate topic was,

Resolved: That the United States Federal Government should adopt a policy of constructive engagement, including the immediate removal of all or nearly all economic sanctions, with the government(s) of one or more of the following nation-states: Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Syria, North Korea.

This topic spurred quite a bit of activism on the college debate circuit. Many students become actively involved in protesting for the removal of sanctions from at least one of the topic countries. The college listserve was used to rally people in support ofvarious movements to remove sanctions on both Iraq and Cuba. These messages were posted after the research on the topic began. While this topic did not lend itself to activism beyond rallying the government, other topics have allowed students to take their beliefs outside of the laboratory and into action.

In addition to creating awareness, the research process can also reinforce or alter opinions. By discovering new information in the research process, people can question their current assumptions and perhaps formulate a more informed opinion. One example comes from a summer debate class for children of Migrant workers in North Dakota (Iverson, 1999). The Junior High aged students chose to debate the adoption of Spanish as an official language in the U.S. Many students expressed their concern that they could not argue effectively against the proposed change because it was a "truism." They were wholly in favor of Spanish as an official language. After researching the topic throughout their six week course, many realized much more was involved in adopting an official language and that they did not "speak 'pure' Spanish or English, but speak a unique dialect and hybrid" (Iverson, p. 3). At the end of the class many students became opposed to adopting Spanish as an official language, but found other ways Spanish should be integrated into American culture. Without research, these students would have maintained their opinions and not enhanced their knowledge of the issue. The students who maintained support of Spanish as an official language were better informed and thus also more capable of articulating support for their beliefs.

The examples of debate and research impacting the opinions and actions of debaters indicate the strong potential for a direct relationship between debate research and personal advocacy. However, the debate community has not created a new sea of activists immersing this planet in waves of protest and political action. The level of influence debater search has on people needs further exploration. Also, the process of research needs to be more fully explored in order to understand if and why researching for the competitive activity of debate generates more interest than research for other purposes such as classroom projects.

Since parliamentary debate does not involve research into a single topic, it can provide an important reference point for examining the impact of research in other forms of debate. Based upon limited conversations with competitors and coaches as well as some direct coaching and judging experience in parliamentary debate, parliamentary forms of debate has not seen an increase in activism on the part of debaters in the United States. Although some coaches require research in order to find examples and to stay updated on current events, the basic principle of this research is to have a commonsense level of understanding(Venette, 1998). As the NPDA website explains, "the reader is encouraged to be well-read in current events, as well as history, philosophy, etc. Remember: the realm of knowledge is that of a 'well-read college student'" (NPDA Homepage,<http://www.bethel.edu/Majors/Communication/npda/faq2.html>). The focus of research is breadth, not depth. In fact, in-depth research into one topic for parliamentary debate would seem to be counterproductive. Every round has a different resolution and for APDA, at least, those resolutions are generally written so they are open to a wide array of case examples, So, developing too narrow of a focus could be competitively fatal. However, research is apparently increasing for parliamentary teams as reports of "stock cases" used by teams for numerous rounds have recently appeared. One coach did state that a perceived "stock case" by one team pushed his debaters to research the topic of AIDS in Africa in order to be equally knowledgeable in that case. Interestingly, the coach also stated that some of their research in preparation for parliamentary debate was affecting the opinions and attitudes of the debaters on the team.

Not all debate research appears to generate personal advocacy and challenge peoples' assumptions. Debaters must switch sides, so they must inevitably debate against various cases. While this may seem to be inconsistent with advocacy, supporting and researching both sides of an argument actually created stronger advocates. Not only did debaters learn both sides of an argument, so that they could defend their positions against attack, they also learned the nuances of each position. Learning and the intricate nature of various policy proposals helps debaters to strengthen their own stance on issues.

#### 3] SSD is good and solves – it forces debaters to consider a controversial issue from multiple perspectives. Non-T affs allow individuals to establish their own metrics for what they want to debate leading to ideological dogmatism –the process of defending and answering proposals is a benefit of engaging the topic and they could just read the K on the neg

#### 4] Small schools disad-- under-resourced are most adversely effected by a massive, unpredictable caselist which worsens structural disparities. Inclusion is an independent voter – you can’t debate if you can’t participate which is a prerequisite to accessing their benefits and ensures everyone gains from the activity.

#### 5] Fairness -- an unlimited, unpredictable topic disparately raises the research burden for the neg -- treat this is a sufficient win condition because fairness is the logical structure that undergirds all impacts AND controls any benefit to debate.

**Dascal and Knoll** ’**11** [Marcelo and Amnon; May 18th; former Professor of Philosophy at Tel Aviv University, B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Sao Paulo; former Professor of Philosophy at Tel Aviv University; Argumentation: Cognition and Community, "'Cognitive systemic dichotomization' in public argumentation and controversies," p. 20-25]

He opposes positions whose ‘exclusionist’ outlook rejects the normative approach to the political sphere on the grounds that “normative statements can never be subjected to a reasonable discussion” (ibid.: 2), because—he argues—the discussion of politics “is an area of vital interest to all of us and should clearly not be excluded from argumentative reasonableness” (ibid.: 3)—a view with which we are prone to agree. Nevertheless, he admits that in the present situation critical discussion is far from being systematically and successfully applied to that vital area: “In representative democracies, however, the out-comes of the political process tend to be predominantly the product of negotiations be-tween political leaders rather than the result of a universal and mutual process of deliberative disputation” (ibid.). Political debates, therefore, are ‘quasi-discussions’, i.e., “monologues calculated only to win the audience’s consent to one’s own views”, rather than ‘genuine discussions’, i.e., serious attempts to have an intellectual exchange, which is typical of critical discussions (ibid.). In order to overcome this situation, “democracy should always have promoted such a critical discussion of standpoints as a central aim. Only if this is the case can stimulating participation in political discourse enhance the quality of democracy" (ibid.). This can be achieved, however, only by following “the dialectical rules for argumentative discourse that make up a code of conduct for political discourse [and] are therefore of crucial importance to giving substance to the ideal of participatory democracy” (ibid.: 4); thereby fully acknowledging that “education in processing argumentation in a critical discussion is indispensable for a democratic society (van Eemeren 1995: 145-146).

The reasons provided for the failure of the adoption of the critical discussion model in reality ranges from a general allusion to human nature (“in real-life contexts, it has to be taken into account that human interaction is not always automatically 'naturally' and fully oriented toward the ideal of dialectical reasonableness "; van Eemeren 2010: 4) to specific political sphere argumentation handicaps (unwillingness of people “to subject their thinking to critical scrutiny”; “vested interest in particular outcome”; “inequality in power and resources; “different levels of critical skills”; and “a practical demand for an immediate settlement”; van Eemeren 2010: 4). Although these causes may have some explanatory value in some cases, in our opinion their modus operandi is not accounted for and, what is more important, they do not cover the full spectrum of challenges that the successful use of critical discussion in the public and political spheres must face, as we have seen (cf. sections 2 and 3).

No wonder that van Eemeren himself raises the question “whether maintaining the dialectical ideal of critical discussion in political and other real-life contexts is not utopian” (ibid.), to which he replies by admitting that "[t]he ideal of a critical discussion is by definition not a description of any kind of reality but sets a theoretical standard that can be used for heuristic, analytic and evaluative purpose” (ibid.). This ideal seems to be so inspiring that it remains valid as a pure theoretical ideal, “even if the argumentative discourse falls short of the dialectical ideal” (ibid.).

In the light of the substantial gap between the normative ideal and the actual practices of public and political argumentation that PD’s description and explanation provides, a number of doubts arise: Are there structural, rather than merely contingent obstacles in idealized critical discussion that prevents even its approximate use in the public sphere? Can a theory that claims to be a praxis based normative system fulfill its promise if it sets up a threshold that no one who tries to apply it to the public sphere can reach? Doesn’t the very fact that argumentation is excessively idealized in the model PD proposes cause the gap by distancing people concerned by public issues from argumentation at all? All these doubts suggest that a powerful structural phenomenon like the existence of CSDs in the public sphere is perhaps overlooked by PD and requires, for its overcoming, a radically different approach.

4.2 Discrepancies between the PD approach and reasonable argumentation in the public sphere

The discrepancies in question have to do with basic parameters relevant to every argumentative process, namely:

(A) The discussants’ goals and targets: what do they expect to achieve through the argumentation process and what is it capable of providing.

(B) The preconditions for initiating a critical discussion: what are the discussants presumed to know and accept of these preconditions.

(C) The argumentative process that is supposed to lead to the achievement of the discussants’ goals.

(D) The influence of context and agents on the argumentative process.

4.2.1 Goals

Assuming that argumentation is a voluntary endeavor, the parties are presumed to engage in it if and only if: (i) the process will serve their goals; (ii) these goals cannot be achieved by different, better means.

PD describes as follows the aim of engaging in an argumentative process:

Argumentation is basically aimed at resolving a difference of opinion about the acceptability of a standpoint by making an appeal to the other party's reasonableness. (van Eemeren 2010: 1, with reference to van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004: 11-18)

The difference of opinion is resolved when the antagonist accepts the protagonist's viewpoint on the basis of the arguments advanced or when the protagonist abandons his viewpoint as a result of the critical responses of the antagonist. (van Eemeren 2010: 33)

Simply put, the basic assumption is that a critical discussion’s aim consists in putting forth a certain position by one of the parties for the critical examination of the other, who calls it into question. The latter undertakes to refute the former’s position, while its proponent is committed to defend it. Four stages (see below) are supposed to ensure a valid performance of the refutation and defense tasks. The essential point is that at the end of the four stages the parties clearly agree whether the proponent’s position has been refuted or not and, accordingly, change their position (either retracting it or withdrawing from his questioning). In ‘mixed’ disagreements, in which the antagonist not only questions but also puts forth an opposed position, the same process takes place sequentially, i.e., at first one side (A) attacks trying to refute the other’s (B) position, and after this stage is concluded, they switch roles and the second side (B) proceeds to attack the first (A) in the same fashion.

Regardless of whether the described process is indeed capable to yield a conclusive decision about the refutation of a position, and of whether the linearity of the refutation process makes sense, it is obvious that debates in the public sphere are for the most part ‘mixed’. Furthermore, in so far as these debates involve dichotomous positions (rather than just opposed ones), it is necessary that at the end of the PD process one of the parties accept the position of the other.

It is also worth noticing that, contrary to deliberative democracy approaches, which in some cases approve the attempt to reach agreement in a (public) debate as a form of justification of political systems, PD claims that it is not a consensus theory at all. Instead, it conceives itself as a theory based on Popper’s critical rationality, i.e., as having as its principal goal to provide each party with the means—i.e., refutation attempts—to test critically its position:

[T]he conception of reasonableness upheld in pragma-dialectics insights from critical rationalist epistemology and utilitarian ethics conjoin … The intersubjective acceptability we attribute to the procedure, which is eventually expected to lend conventional validity to the procedure, is primarily based on its instrumentality in doing the job it is intended to do: re-solving a difference of opinion. … This means that, philosophically speaking, the rationale for accepting the pragma-dialectical procedure is pragmatic—more precisely, utilitarian [italics in quoted text]. … However, based on Popper's falsification idea, this is a ‘negative’ and not ‘positive’, utilitarianism. … Rather than maximization of agreement, minimization of disagreement is to be aimed for. (van Eemeren 2010: 34)

The distinction between maximization of agreement and minimization of disagreement purports to stress that PD doesn’t view agreement as the suitable end of the process, but just as “an intermediate step on the way to new, and more advanced, disagreements” (van Eemeren 2010: 26n). Nevertheless, no explanation is given of how these “more advanced disagreements” are engendered as a part of the dynamics of the critical process, nor what is the role or value of such disagreements in the public sphere or elsewhere. This may be due to the fact that PD’s ‘critical discussion’ is not tuned to the generation of new positions or ideas but only to the testing of extant ones, thus echoing once again Popper, now in his focus on the justification rather than on the discovery of theories (see sections 4.2.4 and 5).

In any case, it is quite clear that the only practical result of the critical discussion à la PD of opposed positions on a public issue is to determine whether one discussant succeeded in refuting the other’s position, thus obtaining the adversary’s agreement, who will then share his/her position, at least for some time. In this respect, PD’s critical discussion is close to Habermas’s ‘reasonable argumentation’, whose aim is to reach consensus.15 In spite of the apparent difference between a critical examination of a position aiming at its refutation or at its acceptance, even van Eemeren admits, to some extent, their similarity. He points out that “the pragma-dialectical procedure deals only with ‘first order’ conditions for resolving differences of opinion on the merits by means of critical discussion” (van Eemeren 2010: 34), and stresses that there are ‘higher order’ conditions, ‘internal’ and ‘external’, that are “beyond the agent’s control”, conditions that are similar to Habermas’s “ideal speech conditions” (van Eemeren 2010: 35n). Anyhow, whether according to PD the main goal of the critical discussion process in the public alliance is to create the opportunity for refutation or for agreement (meaning that one of the discussants acknowledges that his position is wrong), the essential assumption of this process is that the participants in it in the public sphere (or elsewhere) must be aware that one of them holds a wrong position and will have to explicitly acknowledge this.

Is such a goal, especially when conceived as the ultimate aim of the proposed argumentative process, feasible and acceptable in the public sphere?

In our opinion, there are at least four reasons for arguing that it is a utopian, hence unacceptable goal, if one takes seriously what should be expected from argumentative practice and theory in the public sphere. First, because PD deserves a critique similar to the one leveled against the Popperian version of critical rationalism it espouses,16 which defends a theory of knowledge “without a knowing subject” (Popper 1972); obviously, such a-contextual position becomes even more problematic if applied to the public and political spheres, where it must operate in a context essentially involved with practical rationality. Second, due to its analogy with theories such as Habermas’s that were discussed in this section as well as in 2.2—an analogy that deserves additional criticism because, unlike Habermasianism, PD overlooks the relationship between the political and public context and argumentative practice. Third, because of PD’s total overlooking of the role of CSDs in public argumentation (cf. 4.2.2). And fourth, due to unilateral value judgments of positions in the public sphere, which lead to simplistic criteria of refutation or acceptance in a domain where complexity is the rule (cf. 2.1.1 and 4.2.3).

(ii) Let us admit, for the sake of argument, that the refutation goal as claimed by PD is central, feasible, acceptable, and useful in public argumentation. Aren’t there better ways to achieve this goal?

The refutation and defense moves stipulated by the PD critical discussion model include, on the one side, the antagonist’s critical remarks or demands and on the other, the proponent’s replies. We believe that it must be assumed that neither the critique nor the replies are previously known to the contenders, which is why they have an interest in engage in the argumentation process: presumably, the expression of both, counter-arguments and defensive-arguments, is good to both sides. In spite of its usefulness in certain situations, this kind of exchange does not amount to the full manifestation of the dialectical critical process, wherein the context and co-text of the dialectical exchange, as well as the cognitive interaction that takes place and evolves throughout the exchange, play a decisive role in the design and ‘inner’ justification of each of the participants’ moves. Argumentation strategies that take into account these resources and make full use of their potential are no doubt setting up another, broader span of goals for the argumentative process, and are more likely to achieve these goals more effectively than they certainly would achieve their PD more limited counterparts (cf. 4.2.4 and 5).

4.2.2 Preconditions

The ideal PD critical discussion can only be realized if some preconditions are satisfied. The most important ones are a) a clear-cut identification of the standpoint that provokes the disagreement, b) the decision of the parties to engage in a discussion, and c) the participants’ commitment to obey the procedural rules. As we shall see, these preconditions share a common assumption, which calls into question the feasibility of using critical discussion in the public sphere.

(A) This precondition assumes that it is possible to isolate rigorously the subject matter of a critical discussion, so as to conduct a focused discussion that makes use only of relevant arguments. This precondition is quite strict, for whenever both discussants defend contrary standpoints, their disagreement should be treated as two separate fully fledged discussions: “… if another discussion begins, it must go through the same stages again—from confrontation stage to concluding stage” (van Eemeren 2010: 10n).

(B) This precondition subordinates the decision to engage in the discussion to the evaluation that the discussants share enough common ground to pursue it adequately: “After the parties have decided that there is enough common ground to conduct a discussion …” (van Eemeren 2010: 33).

(C) This precondition stresses the ‘contractual’ character of a critical discussion, which requires explicit mutual commitments by the discussants. Its rationale is that without such commitments the aim of the critical discussion, i.e., the resolution of the difference of opinions, will not be achieved, which makes engaging in the discussion pointless: “There is no point in venturing to resolve a difference … if there is no mutual commitment to a common starting point, which may include procedural commitments as well as substantive agreement” (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004: 60).

These ‘first order’ preconditions, as they are labeled in PD (cf. van Eemeren 2010: 33), are the conditions that candidates to participate in a critical discussion must fulfill if they intend to do so and can afford it personally (a ‘second order’ condition) and politically (a ‘third order’ condition).17 In addition, the first order conditions demand from the prospective discussants a clear, distinct, and detailed picture of the scope of the discussion that they are about to engage in. This means not mixing up the various differences of opinion that the discussion may involve, and being able to separate them properly as the subject matter for independent discussions; a further requirement is the anticipated identification of the pieces of the ‘substantive agreement’ forming the starting point in order to ensure that they are sufficient for conducting the discussion up to a satisfactory closure.

#### Fairness is a voter since it’s constitutive of debate and comes before education since if I can’t engage w/ the aff there’s no way to get any education. It outweighs on irreversibility since we can always get education from other rounds but can never undo an unfair decision. Jurisdiction is a voter since judges can’t vote on the aff if it wasn’t topical.

#### Competing interps on T – A] topicality is a yes/no question, you can’t be reasonably topical B] norm setting – reasonability is arbitrary, invites judge intervention, and causes a race to the bottom

#### Drop the debater a] dropping the arg is severance which moots 7 minutes of 1nc offense b] illogical on fw

#### They can’t weigh the case—lack of preround prep means their truth claims are untested which you should presume false—they’re also only winning case because we couldn’t engage with it

# Case

### Presumption

#### 1] Negate on presumption – Among Us is not real

IM 21 Internet Matters, We work collaboratively across industry, government and with schools to reach UK families with tools, tips and resources to help children benefit from connected technology smartly and safely, 5-17-2021, "Is Among Us multiplayer game safe for children?," <https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/news-blogs/is-among-us-multiplayer-game-safe-for-children/> // ella

How does it work? The game can take place in one of three settings – a spaceship (The Skeld), an imaginary planet (Polus), or the headquarters (Mira HQ). While Crewmates are asked to complete a list of tasks, the Imposter blends in and takes out Crewmates one after another. When a player reports a dead body, killed by an Imposter, a discussion is called for them to vote on who they think is the Imposter. When people have voted, the result is shown and if the wrong person has been chosen no Crewmate is removed or ‘ejected’ from the ship. Sometimes, the players can call emergency meetings, which there are a limited number of. Some players have to lie to keep their Imposter identity secret. The aspect of teamwork comes in where each player can use the in-game chat function to communicate their reasons for choosing a particular player or defending why they are not the imposter. For the Imposters to win the game they have to sabotage the countdown run out or take out a number of the Crewmates so there is an equal number of Imposters to Crewmates. Those who are taken out of the game are before the end, can still help their teammates as ‘ghosts’. Use of other chat functions In addition to the chat function in the game including the Free-Text Chat mentioned above, players can also use Discord servers to talk to each other in the game. However, if you are playing on a mobile and joining a public game you will not know that the other players are chatting on Discord until the game has started. This can present an unfair advantage as some players will not be included in the team discussions being had on the Discord server.

#### 2] “Objectivity” is impossible -- systemic biases always interfere.

Wei 20 [Ocean; Aug 8, 2020; collaborator @ the Incandescent Review, currently studying English & Anthropology at Kenyon College. “Why Impartial Journalism Doesn't Exist (And We Shouldn't Strive for Objectivity)” <https://www.theincandescentreview.org/post/why-impartial-journalism-doesn-t-exist-and-we-shouldn-t-strive-for-objectivity>] brett

Traditionally, objectivity is associated with nonpartisanship and “fairness,” but I find this notion extremely problematic. Once you begin to pretend that you do not have an opinion on something, you are misleading the readers. Having a bias is different from manipulating people into agreeing with you; the important step is to notice your biases, being conscious about them and the limitations they cause.

Objectivity has never existed. The origin of impartial journalism was when editors observed that political partisanship was likely to limit readership (Kaplan, 2009). People are more likely to believe and agree with authors who identify with the same political party. Additionally, newspaper readership is strongly tied to the class status. People in power have the authority to decide what is “objective.”

The false notion of objectivity also exists to attract advertisers. The press strives to be objective because it is concerned to offend any potential customer. If a newspaper thinks of themselves as a brand, they are the type of brand that claims to stay neutral and apolitical.

I do advocate for one part of objectivity: truthfulness or accuracy. A journalist cannot pick and choose the date from the collection to create a skewed narrative, or purposefully leave out data to make the conclusion better align with their values. It is easy for people to look at a graph or statistics and trust “the facts.” To make it worse, many of them will believe that they have come to their own conclusions based on the potentially flawed sources. For example, one graph might show the employment difference between Latinx people and Asian people. But if you look into the specific population sample, it is not succificent to draw a conclusion. People chase objectivity because journalists hold so much power over the public opinion. What they actually want is to not be manipulated.

A journalist should give readers the chance to analyze the story and come to their own conclusions. Readers should take the writer’s POVs into consideration. There is a severe lack of empathy in the world and in America. We cannot convince someone that they should care about other people if they are willfully ignorant, but a journalist should strive to open their eyes with factual information. They should investigate and research diligently and not exclude pieces of material because it doesn’t support the theme.

One of the attributes of objectivity is disinterestedness. But do we actually want journalists who are detached from the issues that are going on in the world? Politics are not just politics, it affects millions of people’s lives. Neutrality signifies political apathy and a lack of understanding of personal privilege. How can we trust someone who is looking down from high up, unaffected by the suffering of others?

On the other hand, many journalists -- especially ones with marginalized identities -- have been dismissed or looked down upon because people think they can’t be objective when they are too invested in the issues they are reporting. For example, on issues relating to climate change, income inequality, or LGBTQ+ rights, it is impossible for me not to be emotional. My voice has frequently been ignored or trivialized because of my rage. I cannot look away from the injustices going on in this country because they directly affect me and people around me, and my rage is used as a weapon against me. I have been told that I am too radical, too angry, or I talk about this too much.

This article was written from a specific perspective. As an Asian trans masculine person in America, it is impossible to not write through the lens of my experience. Everything I write is affected by the racism, homophobia, and transphobia that I’ve encountered. It is counterproductive when people are more likely to listen to a cisgender person on a topic about transgender people because they are more “objective.” They are not more objective, it is simply easier for them to ignore the problem because it does not affect them. Men do not get to decide what is misogynistic; the oppressor does not get to decide what is oppression. When you try to be “objective” in a system that is inherently flawed and prejudiced, you’re inheriting the systemic biases that we all are raised with and subconsciously taking the side of the oppressor.

Another issue is how everything is politicalized. A lot of prejudices are framed as “opinions” (ie. if your “opinion” is violating someone’s identity or human rights, it is not an opinion). Many people see the Black Lives Matter movement is controversial, but why is it controversial that people’s lives matter in 2020? When Trump is taking away our healthcare rights, how can I treat the loss of my constitutional right as a political debate?

Striving for impartiality in journalistic writing is not only impossible, but actively hurtful to marginalized voices and experiences because the notion of impartiality is intertwined with oppressive power structures. I am determined to be transparent about my biases and write from the perspective of a fellow human, because I believe that the reader wouldn’t want to read something without humanity, either.

### 1NC---IVI

#### Independently drop them for promoting Among Us – it’s dangerous for kids

IM 21 Internet Matters, We work collaboratively across industry, government and with schools to reach UK families with tools, tips and resources to help children benefit from connected technology smartly and safely, 5-17-2021, "Is Among Us multiplayer game safe for children?," <https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/news-blogs/is-among-us-multiplayer-game-safe-for-children/> // ella

What should parents be concerned about? Talking to strangers in the game If your child is playing a game that is set to public, they may meet and chat with people they don’t know which could put them at risk. Seeing inappropriate content Although you can use the censor filter to block out bad language, it does not block everything and there are words that are not picked up by the filter. So, despite this feature, there is the potential that children can be exposed to inappropriate content.

### Framing

#### The role of the ballot is to determine the desirability of the 1AC plan.

#### Frame the 1AC through solvency, not impacts – any attempt to filter offense through the RotB or the speech act of the aff is an arbitrary goalpost that only serves to insulate it from criticism and nuanced testing – forcing us to negate the efficacy of personal strategies is at best impossible and at worst violent – the aff can’t change the material structures– no warrant for how the aff spills up to impact structures of politics writ large or out of debate means you vote neg on presumption.

#### Only constructive policy debates nurture information literacy necessary for every model of politics – the process of sifting through evidence is essential to managing emerging crises and information overload

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

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

#### Extinction outweighs

Pummer 15 [Theron, Junior Research Fellow in Philosophy at St. Anne's College, University of Oxford. “Moral Agreement on Saving the World” Practical Ethics, University of Oxford. May 18, 2015, [Moral Agreement on Saving the World | Practical Ethics (ox.ac.uk)](http://blog.practicalethics.ox.ac.uk/2015/05/moral-agreement-on-saving-the-world/)] brefpratt

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

### AT Disinfo

#### They don’t solve - misinformation is not why there’s vaccine hesitancy

- sociological distance from the gov/don’t trust authorities – the aff doesn’t solve for that

Gharbi 2-23 Musa Al-Gharbi, a Paul F. Lazarsfeld Fellow in Sociology at Columbia University, 2-23-2022, "How Politics Undermines Understanding of Vaccine Hesitancy," Heterodox Academy, <https://heterodoxacademy.org/blog/how-politics-undermines-understanding-of-vaccine-hesitancy/> // ella

Vaccine hesitancy is not a result of partisan lean, conspiracy theories or fake news. Instead, it seems to be driven primarily by perceived sociological distance from those ‘calling the shots.’ Contemporary journalists and social researchers alike tend to be overwhelmingly aligned with the Democratic Party and the ideological “left.” As I explore in my book, they also tend to be drawn from a particular demographic slice of society, hailing from urban (and, to a lesser extent, suburban) areas and from families with above-average levels of financial and cultural capital. They skew disproportionately white as well. This homogeneity in backgrounds and beliefs often limits and corrupts our understanding of the social world, influencing the questions that are asked, the means used to pursue those questions, how data is interpreted and analyzed, how findings are portrayed to others, and how others evaluate and utilize one’s research. Explorations of morally and politically charged phenomena seem especially susceptible to being distorted by the non-representativeness of knowledge-producing institutions themselves. Vaccine hesitancy is a case in point. Both scholars and journalists often seem to misunderstand or misrepresent both who is resistant to public health guidance and why — often advancing inaccurate and pernicious but politically convenient narratives. With respect to the “why” question, for instance, although anti-vaxxers seem to dominate the public discourse and imagination on vaccine hesitancy, in truth, few of the unvaccinated are expressly against vaccines per se — neither in general, nor with COVID-19 in particular. Moreover, the concerns that people convey in order to explain their skepticism of authorities are often quite reasonable. Even among outright anti-vaxxers, behind their eccentric rhetoric lie apprehensions voiced by many other vaccine-hesitant Americans. Among them: Concerns about whether the vaccine is as safe and effective as experts claim Concerns about apparent conflicts of interest and perverse incentives among policymakers, experts, and “Big Pharma” Concerns about the lack of transparency from authorities with respect to the uncertainties in their claims, possible downsides of their guidance, dissenting expert opinions, and so forth Critics often get so wrapped up in mocking the apparent absurdity of conspiracy theories that they are blinded to the legitimate concerns that typically undergird them. The Bill Gates microchip theory, for instance, straightforwardly reflects worries about the safety of the vaccines, paired with concerns about conflicts of interest and perverse incentives among experts, policymakers, and pharmaceutical companies. They share unease on these matters with many other vaccine hesitant people who do not wrap their apprehension in a conspiracy theory. Yet rather than recognizing and attempting to speak to the underlying and understandable concerns shared across vaccine hesitant people, many choose to focus on the more sensational aspects of conspiracy theorists’ narratives in order to paint virtually all vaccine-hesitant people as irrational. In addition to misrepresentations about why people are vaccine hesitant, there also seem to be broad mischaracterizations around who the vaccine hesitant are. One common assumption is that vaccine skeptics are overwhelmingly Make America Great Again (MAGA) whites juiced up on Fox News misinformation. This narrative has some face-validity problems that have not been well addressed. Consider, for instance, the reality that only about 10-15% of voting-age Americans watch even 10 minutes of news per day, from CNN, MSNBC, or Fox News combined. Most Americans do not even watch an hour of cable news over the course of an entire month. Even the age bracket that consumes the most cable news, Americans aged 55 and older, watches roughly 90 minutes per day from all sources. Expanding to digital platforms doesn’t change the picture much: Only about a third of Americans read anything from Fox News platforms at all in a given month — and among those who do consume this content, users spend on average 38 minutes per month (just over one minute per day) engaging with it. Incidentally, the demographic that is most likely (by far) to watch Fox News, Americans over 55, is also the age bloc where Trump support is strongest. In a world where Fox News consumption and Trump support were among the primary drivers of vaccine hesitancy, one might expect that vaccination rates would be especially low among older Americans — again, they are by far the most intense bloc of Trump supporters, and the primary audience of Fox News. Yet they also happen to be the most vaccinated group in America by far. The CDC estimates that nearly all seniors have received at least one dose of the vaccine, approaching 90% are fully vaccinated, and roughly two-thirds are boosted as well. In short, the older one gets, the more likely one becomes to watch Fox News, to support Trump, and also, to be vaccinated. Despite glaring problems like these, a growing chorus has taken to blaming MAGA-aligned whites for continued COVID-19 transmission and COVID-19-related hospitalizations and deaths. As a matter of fact, vaccine-hesitant people tend to be much more heterogenous than many seem to realize – and people seem to miss the factors that actually unite populations prone to vaccine hesitancy. Race, Geography, Vaccine Hesitancy With respect to race and ethnicity, Black people have been more hesitant than most other racial and ethnic groups with respect to vaccines in general, and the COVID-19 vaccine in particular. They were less willing to take part in the vaccine clinical trials. They remained significantly more hesitant to pursue COVID-19 vaccines after they were approved. Although uptake has increased substantially among African Americans in recent months, their overall vaccination rates continue to trail those of whites. Throughout most of the pandemic, Hispanic Americans also trailed significantly behind non-Hispanic whites with respect to vaccine uptake, although following a significant boom in vaccinations over the summer, they are now approaching parity. Nonetheless, significant pockets of hesitancy remain among minority populations. Media companies love doing stories about MAGA whites who publicly flouted CDC guidance and then died of COVID-19, or who ended up with a bad case and recanted their views. It is apparently much less satisfying to talk about hesitancy within Orthodox Jewish or Somali communities, or among undocumented migrants, Indigenous Americans, or the many other racial, ethnic, and religious minority populations for whom COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy is much more pronounced than among mainstream whites. Yet vaccine hesitancy within minority populations likely helps explain important trends in COVID-19 spread, hospitalizations, and deaths. Blacks, Hispanics, and Indigenous Americans have been significantly less likely than whites to pursue vaccination, both with respect to COVID-19 and in general. Insofar as the vaccine reduces the likelihood of COVID-19 infections, protracted hesitancy within a given population would be expected to correlate with increased rates of infection and higher numbers of cumulative cases. And indeed, we do see this: the number of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 has been significantly higher among Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous Americans relative to whites. Asian Americans, who have the highest rates of vaccine uptake among all racial and ethnic groups measured, also have the lowest numbers of COVID-19 infections per capita. Likewise, vaccinations have been shown to provide significant protection against the more serious manifestations of COVID-19. One would expect to see that populations that have had lower levels of vaccination over time would have higher levels of cumulative COVID-19-related hospitalizations and deaths. This, too, is evident in the CDC statistics. Of course, vaccination rates are only a part of the story here: Black, Indigenous, and Hispanic Americans are also far more likely than whites to possess other comorbidities (such as heart disease, asthma, diabetes, or obesity) that are connected to severe manifestations of COVID-19 and particularly adverse outcomes, irrespective of vaccination status. These populations also tend to have less access to quality medical care in the event that they do get sick. However, more cautious vaccine uptake among many ethnic and racial minority populations likely helps explain a large amount of the observed variance in COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations, and deaths as well. We can see this from another angle by breaking things down geographically. Overall, there is not a single state in the union where a majority of the adult population is not fully vaccinated. The state with the absolute lowest vaccination rate is Alabama, where 60% of adults have received two doses. Many other Southern states also have lower-than-average vaccination rates. As these states are also decisively “red,” it may be tempting to attribute these low vaccination rates to MAGA-aligned whites. However, most Southern states also have particularly high concentrations of African Americans. Indeed, most black people in the U.S. continue to live in the South. And within these Southern states, Black vaccination rates generally trail behind those of whites, and Hispanic vaccination rates in the South tend to be lower still. A telling set of maps by Reuters depicts the counties with the largest concentrations of African Americans, Hispanics, and COVID-19-related deaths — and how those counties trended in the 2020 election. Scrolling through the visualizations, it is clear that counties in the U.S. with the highest concentrations of COVID-19-related deaths also tended to have especially high levels of Hispanic and/or African Americans. Granted, many of the minority fatalities may have been among Blacks and Hispanics who voted Republican — they’ve been growing in number for much of the last decade, and many of the places with high levels of minorities and high levels of COVID-19 also shifted toward the GOP from 2016 to 2020. But it may also be the case that relatively low vaccination rates (and relatively high COVID-19 mortality rates) in “red” states are disproportionately driven by populations within those states who skew “blue.” Either way, attempts to blame low vaccination rates in the South on MAGA-aligned whites seems to miss a lot of what’s going on in these states, including factors that unite unvaccinated whites and minorities, both in the South and beyond, and that probably matter much more than partisan affiliation per se. Missing the Forest One big problem with many popular explanations is that they focus on factors unique to the U.S., despite the fact that vaccine-hesitancy patterns observed in the U.S. are actually common around the world. Across societies and cultures, people with relatively low levels of income and education; those who live in more rural communities; those who are racial, ethnic, or religious minorities; and young people have been far more hesitant to get the COVID-19 vaccine. In other words, populations that are underrepresented within the elite, and who often have strong and well-founded suspicion of authorities, are most likely to refuse the vaccine. The drivers seem to be structural, not a product of specific beliefs, ideologies, cultures, informational sources, or rhetoric by politicians in any particular country. The pattern holds across contexts, apparently independent of these factors. Likewise, other major comparative studies have found that one of the most reliable predictors of COVID-19 transmission rates across countries is the level of trust citizens express in their government. This is because populations with low levels of trust in the authorities are less likely to follow protocols for containing the disease, such as masking indoors, quarantining (upon possible exposure to COVID-19 or when displaying symptoms of COVID-19), avoiding crowded gatherings in poorly ventilated spaces, or getting vaccinated. In contexts where trust in the authorities is low, there tends to be less social pressure to conform to expert advice either. Again, these patterns hold across geographical and cultural contexts, independent of the specific rhetoric, policies, or parties that prevail within a given country. Across the board, then, we would expect to see, and we have seen, people with sociological proximity to elites aggressively and conspicuously adhering to elite guidance and attempting to coerce and cajole others into doing the same. Likewise, we would expect to see, and we have seen, people with high levels of sociological distance from those “calling the shots,” demonstrating much higher levels of skepticism of, and resistance to, declarations by authorities. And again, we don’t just see these patterns in America, but throughout the world. Incidentally, those with high levels of perceived sociological distance from elites are also the people most likely to participate in conspiracy theories. As political scientists Joseph Uscinski and Joseph Parent put it, “Power asymmetries, both foreign and domestic, are the main drivers behind conspiracy theories; those at the bottom of power hierarchies have a strategic interest in blaming those at the top” for adverse social outcomes. That is, the kind of person who espouses conspiracy theories tends to be the kind of person who would be highly skeptical of, or resistant to, authorities and their advice independent of the conspiracy theory (they tend to be receptive to conspiracy narratives precisely as a result of preexisting mistrust), including with respect to vaccination. The causal power attributed to conspiracy theories for explaining vaccine refusal, therefore, seems to be overstated. Marginalization and alienation from authorities seem to be the primary drivers of both vaccine hesitancy and conspiracy theories alike. In focusing on conspiracy theories, which are downstream from mistrust, people are missing what’s really going on. Indeed, as discussed at the outset, the kinds of concerns that the conspiracy theories gesture toward are widely shared among other vaccine-hesitant people who do not endorse the conspiracies. Put another way: Most skeptics do not seem to be concerned about vaccines because of conspiracy theories. Rather, many adopt conspiracy theories as a means of articulating their preexisting concerns about the vaccines, and forging community with others who share similar concerns. As I’ve elaborated at length elsewhere, sharing “fake news” likewise seems to be more about social signaling than sincere epistemic claims. Nonetheless, many choose to focus on conspiracy theories and misinformation as the primary drivers of vaccine refusal in order to paint the vaccine hesitant as stupid, crazy, or brainwashed. Within liberal spaces, a growing chorus has taken to proclaiming that those who are unvaccinated straightforwardly deserve to die of COVID-19. Some go so far as to heap scorn and mockery at the deceased and their families. Public debates are underway about denying medical care to the unvaccinated and finding other ways to shame, antagonize, and punish people who are vaccine hesitant. Liberals seem to feel comfortable engaging in the behaviors because they’ve bought into the popular narrative that vaccine refusers are a bunch of “privileged” MAGA-aligned whites. However, the ugliness of these sentiments, their eugenicist and elitist tinge, becomes much more evident when we understand who the vaccine hesitant actually are. In the U.S., as in virtually all other countries, the unvaccinated are overwhelmingly people who are marginalized, disadvantaged, dispossessed, and/or downwardly mobile from across racial and ethnic lines — including, and especially, those who also happen to be ethnic, racial, and/or religious minorities. These patterns do not just persist across geographical contexts, but historical contexts as well. In the U.S., similar patterns of skepticism and resistance were evident in previous vaccination campaigns (such as in the struggles over the smallpox vaccine). Parties and Shots We are now well equipped to recontextualize some popular talking points about vaccine hesitancy and political affiliation. Widely circulated reports note that counties with the highest concentrations of Democratic voters tend to have much lower rates of COVID-19 deaths than those with the highest concentrations of Trump voters. Yet media reporting on this gap systematically fails to observe the massive differences in wealth and healthcare access between heavily Republican and Democratic regions. Counties with huge concentrations of Democratic voters tend to be among the most affluent in the country, with huge concentrations of hospitals and doctors. Meanwhile, areas with the deepest concentrations of Trump voters tend to be among the most economically distressed in the nation, with huge swaths of the population also living in “healthcare deserts.” Consequently, it would seem bizarre to assert that the most relevant difference between the most intensely Democratic and Republican districts with respect to COVID-19-related outcomes is partisan affiliation or ideological leanings. Yet that is precisely what reporters frequently do: pretend as though the main driver of the differences in vaccination rates, cases, and deaths is political beliefs, not the vast and systematic differences in wealth, education, or access to healthcare between these districts. The Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that 60% of those who remain unvaccinated are Republicans. Just taking this figure for granted, we are now in a position to see that political ideology or political partisanship per se probably explains very little of the disparities observed. Contemporary GOP voters are far more likely than Democrats to possess low levels of education and to live in communities that are rural, post-industrial, and in decline. They tend to have far less trust in government than Democratic peers (this is a big part of the reason they identify with the Republican Party in the first place). Moreover, growing shares of GOP voters are lower income, working class, and/or minorities (racial, ethnic, religious). These factors probably explain much more than partisanship itself. Sure, the states with relatively low vaccination rates tend to skew “red.” But they also tend to be more rural, and poorer, with radically lower rates of postsecondary education and far lower levels of trust in government. That is, they are precisely the kinds of places, with heavy concentrations of precisely the kinds of people, who have proven to be vaccine resistant in countries around the world. In an alternate reality where Trump, Joe Rogan, and Fox News were not a part of the American cultural landscape, these same populations would likely remain far more vaccine hesitant than most other Americans — just as similar subpopulations are among the most vaccine hesitant in virtually every other country in the world. Indeed, precisely because counties with huge concentrations of Trump voters also tend to have low rates of postsecondary education, we should be extremely skeptical of claims that ideological commitments or political partisanship are driving vaccine hesitancy: Those relatively low levels of education tend to be far less ideological, dogmatic, or politically partisan compared with social elites. Hence, the behavior of constituents in these districts is less likely to be driven by partisanship or ideological commitments compared with constituents in heavily “blue” districts. Consequently, it would be fallacious to notice the statistical relationship between party affiliation and vaccine hesitancy and simply impute that the former drives the latter. Because of how things have shaken out in the contemporary U.S., party affiliation serves as a single proxy for a range of other factors that have been shown to drive vaccine hesitancy around the world (measuring sociological distance from elites). Hence we see a strong correlation between party ID and vaccine hesitancy. But of course, the first rule of statistics is that correlation does not prove, or even imply, causation. The primary cause of vaccine hesitancy seems to be perceived sociological distance from elites – a distance which gives rise to mistrust. Insofar as the authorities do not seem to share (or even respect) the values, interests, culture and lifestyles of the kinds of people who are vaccine hesitant – and especially if they’ve been burned by elites in the past – mistrust is not particularly mysterious. It is natural. It also deserves to be noted that, again just taking the Kaiser Family Foundation estimates at face value, a huge share (4 in 10) of those who remain unvaccinated are not Republicans. Many on the left are vaccine hesitant because they are also concerned about profit motives, perverse incentives, and possible collusion between government and big pharma. Others who are into things that are “natural” and ‘“organic”’ view vaccines, especially mRNA vaccines, as unnatural, artificial, and potentially harmful. Healthcare workers also tend to skew overwhelmingly Democrat. Yet large numbers of healthcare workers are also vaccine hesitant, including in liberal bastions like New York City (and across much of the world). Vaccine hesitancy is especially pronounced among health care workers who happen to be racial and ethnic minorities. Moreover, non-trivial numbers of Americans across party lines (nearly 1 out of every 10 unvaccinated Americans, according to U.S. Census Bureau estimates) declined the COVID-19 vaccine not because they failed to “trust the science,” but because they were actually advised by their doctor that they don’t need, or shouldn’t get, the shot. That is, not only are a number of healthcare workers vaccine-hesitant themselves, they are often responsible for encouraging vaccine refusal in others as well. This is all to say that even many who are sociologically “closer” to decision makers have displayed reticence about the COVID-19 vaccines – indeed, they seem to share many of the same expressed concerns as those who are more “distant.” All said, attributing vaccine hesitancy to MAGA-aligned whites, “fake news,” and conspiracy theories may be personally satisfying for many. It may facilitate one’s desire to villainize and dehumanize perceived political or ideological opponents. However, these narratives are not that helpful for really understanding who remains unvaccinated and why — let alone understanding what can be done to actually mitigate (rather than merely condemn) vaccine hesitancy.

### Heg good

#### 1AC Seelow says the current US political sphere is bad but no - american primacy solves every threat---decline emboldens rivals and causes miscalc and arms races that escalate.

Hal Brands 18. Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, Senior Fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments and the Foreign Policy Research Institute, Ph.D. in history from Yale University. “Chapter 6: Does America Have Enough Hard Power?” American Grand Strategy in the Age of Trump; pp. 129-133.

Much contemporary commentary favors the first option—reducing commitments—and denounces the third as financially ruinous and perhaps impossible.5 Yet significantly expanding American capabilities would not be nearly as economically onerous as it may seem. Compared to the alternatives, in fact, this approach represents the best option for sustaining American primacy and preventing a slide into strategic bankruptcy that will eventually be punished. Since World War II, the United States has had a military second to none. Since the Cold War, America has committed to having overwhelming military primacy. The idea, as George W. Bush declared in 2002, that America must possess “strengths beyond challenge” has featured in every major U.S. strategy document for a quarter century; it has also been reflected in concrete terms.6 From the early 1990s, for example, the United States consistently accounted for around 35 to 45 percent of world defense spending and maintained peerless global power-projection capabilities.7 Perhaps more important, U.S. primacy was also unrivaled in key overseas strategic regions—Europe, East Asia, the Middle East. From thrashing Saddam Hussein’s million-man Iraqi military during Operation Desert Storm, to deploying—with impunity—two carrier strike groups off Taiwan during the China-Taiwan crisis of 1995– 96, Washington has been able to project military power superior to anything a regional rival could employ even on its own geopolitical doorstep. This military dominance has constituted the hard-power backbone of an ambitious global strategy. After the Cold War, U.S. policymakers committed to averting a return to the unstable multipolarity of earlier eras, and to perpetuating the more favorable unipolar order. They committed to building on the successes of the postwar era by further advancing liberal political values and an open international economy, and to suppressing international scourges such as rogue states, nuclear proliferation, and catastrophic terrorism. And because they recognized that military force remained the ultima ratio regum, they understood the centrality of military preponderance. Washington would need the military power necessary to underwrite worldwide alliance commitments. It would have to preserve substantial overmatch versus any potential great-power rival. It must be able to answer the sharpest challenges to the international system, such as Saddam’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990 or jihadist extremism after 9/11. Finally, because prevailing global norms generally reflect hard-power realities, America would need the superiority to assure that its own values remained ascendant. It was impolitic to say that U.S. strategy and the international order required “strengths beyond challenge,” but it was not at all inaccurate. American primacy, moreover, was eminently affordable. At the height of the Cold War, the United States spent over 12 percent of GDP on defense. Since the mid-1990s, the number has usually been between 3 and 4 percent.8 In a historically favorable international environment, Washington could enjoy primacy—and its geopolitical fruits—on the cheap. Yet U.S. strategy also heeded, at least until recently, the fact that there was a limit to how cheaply that primacy could be had. The American military did shrink significantly during the 1990s, but U.S. officials understood that if Washington cut back too far, its primacy would erode to a point where it ceased to deliver its geopolitical benefits. Alliances would lose credibility; the stability of key regions would be eroded; rivals would be emboldened; international crises would go unaddressed. American primacy was thus like a reasonably priced insurance policy. It required nontrivial expenditures, but protected against far costlier outcomes.9 Washington paid its insurance premiums for two decades after the Cold War. But more recently American primacy and strategic solvency have been imperiled. THE DARKENING HORIZON For most of the post–Cold War era, the international system was— by historical standards—remarkably benign. Dangers existed, and as the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, demonstrated, they could manifest with horrific effect. But for two decades after the Soviet collapse, the world was characterized by remarkably low levels of great-power competition, high levels of security in key theaters such as Europe and East Asia, and the comparative weakness of those “rogue” actors—Iran, Iraq, North Korea, al-Qaeda—who most aggressively challenged American power. During the 1990s, some observers even spoke of a “strategic pause,” the idea being that the end of the Cold War had afforded the United States a respite from normal levels of geopolitical danger and competition. Now, however, the strategic horizon is darkening, due to four factors. First, great-power military competition is back. The world’s two leading authoritarian powers—China and Russia—are seeking regional hegemony, contesting global norms such as nonaggression and freedom of navigation, and developing the military punch to underwrite these ambitions. Notwithstanding severe economic and demographic problems, Russia has conducted a major military modernization emphasizing nuclear weapons, high-end conventional capabilities, and rapid-deployment and special operations forces— and utilized many of these capabilities in conflicts in Ukraine and Syria.10 China, meanwhile, has carried out a buildup of historic proportions, with constant-dollar defense outlays rising from US$26 billion in 1995 to US$226 billion in 2016.11 Ominously, these expenditures have funded development of power-projection and antiaccess/area denial (A2/AD) tools necessary to threaten China’s neighbors and complicate U.S. intervention on their behalf. Washington has grown accustomed to having a generational military lead; Russian and Chinese modernization efforts are now creating a far more competitive environment. Second, the international outlaws are no longer so weak. North Korea’s conventional forces have atrophied, but it has amassed a growing nuclear arsenal and is developing an intercontinental delivery capability that will soon allow it to threaten not just America’s regional allies but also the continental United States.12 Iran remains a nuclear threshold state, one that continues to develop ballistic missiles and A2/AD capabilities while employing sectarian and proxy forces across the Middle East. The Islamic State, for its part, is headed for defeat, but has displayed military capabilities unprecedented for any terrorist group, and shown that counterterrorism will continue to place significant operational demands on U.S. forces whether in this context or in others. Rogue actors have long preoccupied American planners, but the rogues are now more capable than at any time in decades. Third, the democratization of technology has allowed more actors to contest American superiority in dangerous ways. The spread of antisatellite and cyberwarfare capabilities; the proliferation of man-portable air defense systems and ballistic missiles; the increasing availability of key elements of the precision-strike complex— these phenomena have had a military leveling effect by giving weaker actors capabilities which were formerly unique to technologically advanced states. As such technologies “proliferate worldwide,” Air Force Chief of Staff General David Goldfein commented in 2016, “the technology and capability gaps between America and our adversaries are closing dangerously fast.”13 Indeed, as these capabilities spread, fourth-generation systems (such as F-15s and F-16s) may provide decreasing utility against even non-great-power competitors, and far more fifth-generation capabilities may be needed to perpetuate American overmatch. Finally, the number of challenges has multiplied. During the 1990s and early 2000s, Washington faced rogue states and jihadist extremism—but not intense great-power rivalry. America faced conflicts in the Middle East—but East Asia and Europe were comparatively secure. Now, the old threats still exist—but the more permissive conditions have vanished. The United States confronts rogue states, lethal jihadist organizations, and great-power competition; there are severe challenges in all three Eurasian theaters. “I don’t recall a time when we have been confronted with a more diverse array of threats, whether it’s the nation state threats posed by Russia and China and particularly their substantial nuclear capabilities, or non-nation states of the likes of ISIL, Al Qaida, etc.,” Director of National Intelligence James Clapper commented in 2016. Trends in the strategic landscape constituted a veritable “litany of doom.”14 The United States thus faces not just more significant, but also more numerous, challenges to its military dominance than it has for at least a quarter century.

#### For them to win an impact turn, they need to defend and robustly define their alternative to US primacy—the LIO is the best possible system

Kagan 18 - Stephen & Barbara Friedman Senior Fellow with the Project on International Order and Strategy in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings

Robert Kagan, “The World America Made—and Trump Wants to Unmake,” POLITICO Magazine, September 28, 2018, <https://politi.co/2zB3qCg>.

So, yes, the liberal order has been flawed, with its share of failure and hypocrisy. Liberal goals have sometimes been pursued by illiberal means. Power, coercion and violence have played a big part. The order has been the product of American hegemony and it has also served to reinforce that hegemony. But to note these facts is hardly to condemn the order. No order of any kind can exist without some element of hegemony. The Roman order was based on the hegemony of Rome; the British order of the 18th and 19th centuries was based on the hegemony of the Royal Navy; such order as existed briefly in Europe after the defeat of Napoleon—the so-called Concert of Europe—rested on the collective hegemony of the four victorious great powers. The idea of a peaceful, stable multipolar world where no power or powers enjoy predominance is a dream that exists only in the minds of one-world idealists and international relations theorists.

The same is true of those who would condemn the liberal world order because of the persistence of violence, coercion, hypocrisy, selfishness, stupidity and all the other evils and foibles endemic to human nature. Perhaps in the confines of academia it is possible to imagine a system of international relations where our deeply flawed humanness is removed from the equation. But in the real world, even the best and most moral of international arrangements are going to have their dark, immoral aspects.

The question is, as always, compared to what? Patrick Porter, the author of a widely discussed critique of the liberal world order, acknowledges that “if there was to be a superpower emerging from the rubble of world war in midcentury, we should be grateful it was the United States, given the totalitarian alternatives on offer. Under America’s aegis, there were islands of liberty where prosperous markets and democracies grew.” Indeed, that would seem to be the key point. At any given time there are only so many alternatives, and usually the choice is between the bad and the worse.

Are the alternatives on offer so much better now? Graham Allison, dismissing any return to the “imagined past” when the United States shaped an international liberal order, proposes that we instead make the world “safe for diversity” and accommodate ourselves to “the reality that other countries have contrary views about governance and seek to establish their own international orders governed by their own rules.” Others, such as Peter Beinart, similarly argue that we should accommodate Russian and Chinese demands for their own spheres of interest, even if that entails the sacrifice of sovereign peoples such as Ukrainians and Taiwanese. This wonderfully diverse world would presumably be run partly by Xi Jinping, partly by Vladimir Putin, and partly, too, by the Ayatollah Khamenei and by Kim Jong Un, who would also like to establish orders governed by their own rules. We have not enjoyed such diversity since the world was run partly by Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini.

The idea that this is the solution to our problems is laughable. Porter points out American policy has led to “multiplying foreign conflicts” and put the United States “on a collision course with rivals.” Setting aside the fact that multiplying foreign conflicts and collisions between rivals is the natural state of international relations in any era, it is hard for any student of history to imagine that these problems would lessen if only we returned to the competitive multipolar world of the 19th and early 20th centuries. To suggest that there could be a world with no collisions and no foreign conflicts, if only the United States would pursue an intelligent policy, is the very opposite of realism.

Strikingly absent from all these critiques of the liberal world order, too, is any suggestion of an alternative approach. The critiques end with lists of questions that need to be answered. Allison calls for a “surge of strategic thinking.” Others call for “new thinking” about “difficult trade-offs.” Some critics even complain that so long as people continue to talk about a U.S.-dominated liberal order, it will be “impossible for us to construct a reasonable alternative for the future.”

The most the critiques will offer are suggestions that sound more like attitudes than policies. They throw around words like “realism,” “restraint” and “retrenchment.” Allison proposes that the United States “limit its efforts to ensuring sufficient order abroad.” Beinart comes closest to offering an alternative, but he clearly has not yet thought it through fully. He wants to grant other powers their spheres of interest, for instance, but he mentions only Russia and China. Does this mean Russia should be granted full sway in, say, Ukraine, the Balkans, the Baltics and the Caucuses? Should China be able to impose its will on the Philippines and Vietnam?

And what of the other great powers? Does Japan get its own sphere of interest? Does India? Do Germany, France and Britain? They all had their spheres a century ago, and of course it was the clashes over those inevitably overlapping spheres that led to all the great wars. Is Beinart suggesting we should return to that past?

Of course, we may be moving toward that world, anyway. That is the implication of Trump’s “America First” foreign policy philosophy, his attacks on “globalism” and his recent suggestion that all nations look out strictly for themselves. Trump’s speech at the U.N. was an invitation to global anarchy, a struggle of all against all. His boasting about American power put the world on notice that the United States was turning from supporter of a liberal order to rogue superpower. This breakdown may be our future, but it seems odd to choose that course as a deliberate strategy, as Allison and others seem to do. Little wonder that they don’t wish to spell out the details of their alternative but prefer to carp at the inevitable failures and imperfections of the liberal world we have. As John Hay once remarked, “Our good friends are wiser when they abuse us for what we do, than when they try to say what ought to be done.”

No honest person would deny that the liberal world order has been flawed and will continue to be flawed in the future. The League of Nations was also flawed, as was Woodrow Wilson’s vision of collective security. Yet the world would have been better had the United States joined in upholding it, given the genuine alternative. The enduring truth about the liberal world order is that, like Churchill’s comment about democracy, it is the worst system—except for all the others.