## 1

**The standard is minimizing material violence. [To clarify I defend utilitarianism].**

**[1] Personal identity reductionism is true – if the hemispheres of my brain were transplanted into 2 different people, neither would be me.**

**Parfit 84.** Derek Parfit 1984, “Reasons and Persons”, Oxford Paperbacks

It is in fact true that one hemisphere is enough. There are many people who have survived, when a stroke or injury puts out of action one of their hemispheres. With his remaining hemisphere, such a person may need to re-learn certain things, such as adult speech, or how to control both hands. But this is possible. In my example I am assuming that, as may be true of certain actual people, both of my hemispheres have the full range of abilities. I could thus survive with either hemisphere, without any need for re-learning.¶ I shall now combine these last two claims. I would survive if my brain was successfully transplanted into my twin's body. And I could survive with only half my brain, the other half having been destroyed. Given these two facts, it seems clear that I would survive if half my brain was successfully transplanted into my twin's body, and the other half was destroyed.¶ What if the other half was not destroyed? This is the case that Wiggins described: that in which a person, like an amoeba, divides.40 To simplify the case, I assume that I am one of three identical triplets. Consider¶ My Division. My body is fatally injured, as are the brains of my two brothers. My brain is divided, and each half is successfully transplanted into the body of one of my brothers. Each of the resulting people believes that he is me, seems to remember living my life, has my character, and is in every other way psychologically continuous with me. And he has a body that is very like mine.¶ This case is likely to remain impossible. Though it is claimed that, in certain people, the two hemispheres may have the same full range of abilities, this claim might be false. I am here assuming that this claim is true when applied to me. I am also assuming that it would be possible to connect a transplanted half-brain with the nerves in its new body. And I am assuming that we could divide, not just the upper hemispheres, but also the lower brain. My first two assumptions may be able to be made true if there is enough progress in neurophysiology. But it seems likely that it would never be possible to divide the lower brain, in a way that did not impair its functioning.¶ Does it matter if, for this reason, this imagined case of complete division will always remain impossible? Given the aims of my discussion, this does not matter. This impossibility is merely technical. The one feature of the case that might be held to be deeply impossible—the division of a person's consciousness into two separate streams—is the feature that has actually happened. It would have been important if this had been impossible, since this might have supported some claim about what we really are. It might have supported the claim that we are indivisible Cartesian Egos. It therefore matters that the division of a person's consciousness is in fact possible. There seems to be no similar connection between a particular view about what we really are and the impossibility of dividing and successfully transplanting the two halves of the lower brain. This impossibility thus provides no ground for refusing to consider the imagined case in which we suppose that this can be done. And considering this case may help us to decide both what we believe ourselves to be, and what in fact we are. As Einstein's example showed, it can be useful to consider impossible thought-experiments.¶ It may help to state, in advance, what I believe this case to show. It provides a further argument against the view that we are separately existing entities. But the main conclusion to be hdrawn is that personal identity is not what matters.¶ It is natural to believe that our identity is what matters. Reconsider the Branch-Line Case, where I have talked to my Replica on Mars, and am about to die. Suppose we believe that I and my Replica are different people. It is then natural to assume that my prospect is almost as bad as ordinary death. In a few days, there will be no one living who will be me. It is natural to assume that this is what matters. In discussing My Division, I shall start by making this assumption.¶ In this case, each half of my brain will be successfully transplanted into the very similar body of one of my two brothers. Both of the resulting people will be fully psychologically continuous with me, as I am now. What happens to me?¶ There are only four possibilities: (1) I do not survive; (2) I survive as one of the two people; (3) I survive as the other; (4) I survive as both.¶ The objection to (1) is this. I would survive if my brain was successfully transplanted. And people have in fact survived with half their brains destroyed. Given these facts, it seems clear that I would survive if half my brain was successfully transplanted, and the other half was destroyed. So how could I fail to survive if the other half was also successfully transplanted? How could a double success be a failure?¶ Consider the next two possibilities. Perhaps one success is the maximum score. Perhaps I shall be one of the two resulting people. The objection here is that, in this case, each half of my brain is exactly similar, and so, to start with, is each resulting person. Given these facts, how can I survive as only one of the two people? What can make me one of them rather than the other?¶ These three possibilities cannot be dismissed as incoherent. We can understand them. But, while we assume that identity is what matters, (1) is not plausible. My Division would not be as bad as death. Nor are (2) and (3) plausible. There remains the fourth possibility: that I survive as both of the resulting people.¶ This possibility might be described in several ways. I might first claim: ‘What we have called “the two resulting people” are not two people. They are one person. I do survive this operation. Its effect is to give me two bodies, and a divided mind.’¶ This claim cannot be dismissed outright. As I argued, we ought to admit as possible that a person could have a divided mind. If this is possible, each half of my divided mind might control its own body. But though this description of the case cannot be rejected as inconceivable, it involves a great distortion in our concept of a person. In my imagined Physics Exam I claimed that this case involved only one person. There were two features of the case that made this plausible. The divided mind was soon reunited, and there was only one body. If a mind was permanently divided, and its halves developed in different ways, it would become less plausible to claim that the case involves only one person. (Remember the actual patient who complained that, when he embraced his wife, his left hand pushed her away.)¶ The case of complete division, where there are also two bodies, seems to be a long way over the borderline. After I have had this operation, the two ‘products’ each have all of the features of a person. They could live at opposite ends of the Earth. Suppose that they have poor memories, and that their appearance changes in different ways. After many years, they might meet again, and fail even to recognise each other. We might have to claim of such a pair, innocently playing tennis: ‘What you see out there is a single person, playing tennis with himself. In each half of his mind he mistakenly believes that he is playing tennis with someone else.’ If we are not yet Reductionists, we believe that there is one true answer to the questionwhether these two tennis-players are a single person. Given what we mean by ‘person’, the answer must be No. It cannot be true that what I believe to be a stranger, standing there behind the net, is in fact another part of myself.

**That justifies util.**

**Gruzalski 86.** Bart Gruzalski 86 [UChicago], “Parfit's Impact on Utilitarianism”, Ethics, Vol. 96, No. 4, July 1986.

Parfit concludes his discussion of distributive moral principles by claiming that, “when we cease to believe that persons are separately existing entities, the Utilitarian view becomes more plausible. Is the gain in plausibility great, or small? My argument leaves this question open” (p. 342). In contrast, I have argued that the Reductionist View strongly supports the utilitarian account of desert and distributive justice. The argument has two aspects. One is the recognition of the utilitarian emphasis on secondary rules, including principles of distributive justice and policies of desert. These rules, principles, and policies are treated within the utilitarian account as if they have self-standing, whereas in fact they are justified on the principle of utility which alone has self-standing within the utilitarian program. The other aspect of the argument involves the recognition that the utilitarian’s dual treatment of secondary principles dovetails with the dual account of the nature of persons on the Reductionist View: persons exist, yet their existence just involves bodies and interrelated mental and physical events, and a complete description of our lives need not claim that persons exist. Furthermore, a body, brain, and interrelated series of mental and physical events are more fundamental and basic than the person whose existence just consists in them, much as the citizens and the territory are more fundamental and basic than the nation whose existence just consists in them. This corresponds precisely with the utilitarian account, for utilitarianism treats persons as fundamental and separate existents, while grounding this treatment on the impersonal elements of pain, suffering, happiness, and contentment. Because util-itarianism accurately reflects in this way the true nature of persons, it is much more plausible than has been previously recognized. In addition, since many of the current competitors to utilitarianism presuppose that the person is separate from the body, brain, and interrelated mental and physical events, it follows that these views err by being too personal and are therefore implausible. It follows that when we cease to believe that persons are separately existing entities, utilitarianism becomes significantly more plausible than any of its person-centered theoretical competitors.

**[2] Pleasure and pain are the starting point for moral reasoning—they’re our most baseline desires and the only things that explain the intrinsic value of objects or actions**

**Moen 16**, Ole Martin (PhD, Research Fellow in Philosophy at University of Oslo). "An Argument for Hedonism." Journal of Value Inquiry 50.2 (2016): 267.

Let us start by observing, empirically, that **a widely shared judgment about intrinsic value** and disvalue **is that pleasure is intrinsically valuable and pain is intrinsically disvaluable**. On virtually any proposed list of intrinsic values and disvalues (we will look at some of them below), pleasure is included among the intrinsic values and pain among the intrinsic disvalues. This inclusion makes intuitive sense, moreover, for **there is something undeniably good about the way pleasure feels and something undeniably bad about the way pain feels**, and neither the goodness of pleasure nor the badness of pain seems to be exhausted by the further effects that these experiences might have. “Pleasure” and “pain” **are** here **understood inclusively**, as encompassing anything hedonically positive and anything hedonically negative. 2 The special value statuses of pleasure and pain are manifested in how we treat these experiences in our everyday reasoning about values. If you tell me that you are heading for the convenience store, **I might ask: “What for**?” This is a reasonable question, for when you go to the convenience store you usually do so, not merely for the sake of going to the convenience store, but for the sake of achieving something further that you deem to be valuable. You might answer, for example: “To buy soda.” This answer makes sense, for soda is a nice thing and you can get it at the convenience store. I might further inquire, however: “What is buying the soda good for?” This further question can also be a reasonable one, for it need not be obvious why you want the soda. You might answer: “Well, I want it for the pleasure of drinking it.” If I then proceed by asking “But what is the pleasure of drinking the soda good for?” the discussion is likely to reach an awkward end. **The reason is that the pleasure is not good for anything further; it is simply that for which going to the convenience store and buying the soda is good**. 3 As Aristotle observes: “**We never ask** [a man] **what** his **end is in being pleased, because we assume that pleasure is choice worthy in itself**.”4 Presumably, a similar story can be told in the case of pains, for if someone says “This is painful!” we never respond by asking: “And why is that a problem?” We take for granted that **if something is painful, we have a sufficient explanation of why it is bad**. If we are onto something in our everyday reasoning about values, it seems that **pleasure and pain are both places where we reach the end of the line in matters of value. Although pleasure and pain thus seem to be good candidates for intrinsic value and disvalue**, several objections have been raised against this suggestion: (1) that pleasure and pain have instrumental but not intrinsic value/disvalue; (2) that pleasure and pain gain their value/disvalue derivatively, in virtue of satisfying/frustrating our desires; (3) that there is a subset of pleasures that are not intrinsically valuable (so-called “evil pleasures”) and a subset of pains that are not intrinsically disvaluable (so-called “noble pains”), and (4) that pain asymbolia, masochism, and practices such as wiggling a loose tooth render it implausible that pain is intrinsically disvaluable. I shall argue that these objections fail. Though it is, of course, an open question whether other objections to P1 might be more successful, I shall assume that if (1)–(4) fail, we are justified in believing that P1 is true itself a paragon of freedom—there will always be some agents able to interfere substantially with one’s choices. The effective level of protection one enjoys, and hence one’s actual degree of freedom, will vary according to multiple factors: how powerful one is, how powerful individuals in one’s vicinity are, how frequent police patrols are, and so on. Now, we saw above that what makes a slave unfree on Pettit’s view is the fact that his master has the power to interfere arbitrarily with his choices; in other words, what makes the slave unfree is the power relation that obtains between his master and him. The difﬁculty is that, in light of the facts I just mentioned, there is no reason to think that this power relation will be unique. A similar relation could obtain between the master and someone other than the slave: absent perfect state control, the master may very well have enough power to interfere in the lives of countless individuals. Yet it would be wrong to infer that these individuals lack freedom in the way the slave does; if they lack anything, it seems to be security. A problematic power relation can also obtain between the slave and someone other than the master, since there may be citizens who are more powerful than the master and who can therefore interfere with the slave’s choices at their discretion. Once again, it would be wrong to infer that these individuals make the slave unfree in the same way that the master does. Something appears to be missing from Pettit’s view. If I live in a particularly nasty part of town, then it may turn out that, when all the relevant factors are taken into account, I am just as vulnerable to outside interference as are the slaves in the royal palace, yet it does not follow that our conditions are equivalent from the point of view of freedom. As a matter of fact, we may be equally vulnerable to outside interference, but as a matter of right, our standings could not be more different. I have legal recourse against anyone who interferes with my freedom; the recourse may not be very effective—presumably it is not, if my overall vulnerability to outside interference is comparable to that of a slave— but I still have full legal standing.68 By contrast, the slave lacks legal recourse against the interventions of one speciﬁc individual: his master. It is that fact, on a Kantian view—a fact about the legal relation in which a slave stands to his master—that sets slaves apart from freemen. The point may appear trivial, but it does get something right: whereas one cannot identify a power relation that obtains uniquely between a slave and his master, the legal relation between them is undeniably unique. A master’s right to interfere with respect to his slave does not extend to freemen, regardless of how vulnerable they might be as a matter of fact, and citizens other than the master do not have the right to order the slave around, regardless of how powerful they might be. This suggests that Kant is correct in thinking that the ideal of freedom is essentially linked to a person’s having full legal standing. More speciﬁcally, he is correct in holding that the importance of rights is not exhausted by their contribution to the level of protection that an individual enjoys, as it must be on an instrumental view like Pettit’s. Although it does matter that rights be enforced with reasonable effectiveness, the sheer fact that one has adequate legal rights is essential to one’s standing as a free citizen. In this respect, Kant stays faithful to the idea that freedom is primarily a matter of standing—a standing that the freeman has and that the slave lacks. Pettit himself frequently insists on the idea, but he fails to do it justice when he claims that freedom is simply a matter of being adequately (and reliably) shielded against the strength of others. As Kant recognizes, the standing of a free citizen is a more complex matter than that. One could perhaps worry that the idea of legal standing is something of a red herring here—that it must ultimately be reducible to a complex network of power relations and, hence, that the position I attribute to Kant differs only nominally from Pettit’s. That seems to me doubtful. Viewing legal standing as essential to freedom makes sense only if our conception of the former includes conceptions of what constitutes a fully adequate scheme of legal rights, appropriate legal recourse, justiﬁed punishment, and so on. Only if one believes that these notions all boil down to power relations will Kant’s position appear similar to Pettit’s. On any other view—and certainly that includes most views recently defended by philosophers—the notion of legal standing will outstrip the power relations that ground Pettit’s theory.

**[3] Util is a lexical pre-requisite to any other framework-threats to bodily security and life preclude the ability for moral actors to effectively utilize and act upon other moral theories since they are in a constant state of crisis that inhibit the ideal moral conditions which other theories presuppose – so, util comes first and my offense outweighs theirs under their own framework.**

**[4] No intent-foresight distinction — if we foresee a consequence, then it becomes part of our deliberation which makes it intrinsic to our action since we intend it to happen.**

**[5] Only consequentialism explains degrees of wrongness—if I break a promise to meet up for lunch, that is not as bad as breaking a promise to take a dying person to the hospital. Only the consequences of breaking the promise explain why the second one is much worse than the first.**

**[] No act-omission distinction – We are responsible for intentional omissions because we actively choose not to act—we intend and act upon omissions.**

## 2

#### Populism is on the decline worldwide – set to collapse

**Cambridge University 22** [Cambridge University. “Support for Populist Politics 'Collapsed' during the Pandemic: Global Report.” Phys.org, Phys.org, 18 Jan. 2022, phys.org/news/2022-01-populist-politics-collapsed-pandemic-global.html.] // VS

Support for populist parties and politicians, and agreement with populist sentiment, has diminished during the pandemic, according to a "mega-dataset" taking in attitudes of over half a million people across 109 countries since 2020. A University of Cambridge team say there are clear signs of a turning tide for the "populist wave", as the mishandling of coronavirus by populist leaders—along with a desire for stability and a decline in "polarizing" attitudes resulting from the pandemic—starts to move public opinion. The authors of the new report, from Cambridge's Center for the Future of Democracy (CFD), describe the study as the first global overview of how the COVID-19 crisis has affected political beliefs. They say that threats posed by the pandemic saw a "technocratic" shift in political authority worldwide, with increased trust in government, and in experts such as scientists and civil servants. Yet faith in the democratic process continued to falter. "The story of politics in recent years has been the emergence of anti-establishment politicians who thrive on the growing distrust of experts," said Dr. Roberto Foa, Co-Director of the CFD and the report's lead author. "From Erdogan and Bolsonaro to the 'strong men' of Eastern Europe, the planet has experienced a wave of political populism. COVID-19 may have caused that wave to crest." "Electoral support for populist parties has collapsed around the world in a way we don't see for more mainstream politicians. There is strong evidence that the pandemic has severely blunted the rise of populism," said Foa. The findings are published by Cambridge's Bennett Institute for Public Policy. The first months of the pandemic saw many political leaders get a boost in ratings—a classic "rally round the flag" effect in troubled times, say researchers. However, the approval ratings of populist leaders the world over began declining almost as soon as coronavirus hit, and have continued to sink ever since. On average, populist leaders have seen a 10 percentage point drop between the spring of 2020 and the last quarter of 2021, while ratings for non-populists—on average—returned to around pre-pandemic levels. Electoral support also plunged for their parties—seen most clearly in Europe, where the proportion of people intending to vote for a populist party\* has fallen by an average of 11 percentage points to 27%. Overall, across Europe, early lockdowns saw voting intention for incumbent parties increase. Yet all the continent's governing populists—from Italy's Five Star to Hungary's Fidezs—bucked the trend with the largest declines in support. Support for Europe's opposition populist parties also fell over the pandemic—by 5 pp on average to 11% – while it rose for "mainstream" opposition. Researchers suggest several factors for populism's fading appeal. One is simply the botch job made of the pandemic by populist governments: from Bolsonaro's mask veto to Trump's "bleach injection" suggestion. The report's polling shows the public considered populist leaders to be less trustworthy sources of virus-related information than centrist counterparts. In June 2020, approval of government handling of the crisis was 11 percentage points lower on average in countries with populist leaders than in those with more centrist governance. By the end of 2020, this gap had widened to 16 points. Researchers also found that political "tribalism"—fertile ground for populists—has declined in most countries. The percentage of party supporters expressing a "strong dislike" of those who vote for opposing politicians fell in most nations (although not the US) during the crisis. "The pandemic fostered a sense of shared purpose that may have reduced the political polarization we've seen over the last decade," said CFD researcher and report co-author Dr. Xavier Romero-Vidal. "This could help explain why populist leaders are struggling to mobilise support." Some of the (support for) ideas propagated by populists are losing ground. Levels of agreement with statements such as "corrupt elites" divide our nation or the "will of the people" should be obeyed fell in almost every nation surveyed. For example, agreement with four such statements fell on average by 9 percentage points in Italy to 66%, 10 points in France to 61%, and 8 points in the UK to 64%, between 2019 and 2021. Commitment to these ideas has also waned. Even among supporters, in almost every nation a smaller number now "strongly agree" than did in 2019. In developed democracies, this shift is predominantly among those aged over 55. Moreover, areas with the sharpest drops in populist attitudes are some of the poorer "left behind" regions—from Eastern Poland to Southern Italy and Northern Hungary—that have been a focus for populist rhetoric and support. "This may be down to some rebalancing of wealth as people escaped cities overrun with the virus," said Foa. "In addition, COVID-19 border closures stopped migration and globalized trade more effectively than any populist government." However, some "illiberal" policies gained traction while populations were in the teeth of the pandemic. Majorities in all major nations surveyed in 2020 were content with banning handshakes, and much of the public—including majorities in Japan and Germany—supported restricting online discussions of the virus. The consequence of populist decline has not been renewed faith in liberal democracy, say researchers. Perhaps tainted by the record of populists in office, support for democracy has also waned. Instead, citizens increasingly favor technocratic sources of authority, such as having "non-political" experts take decisions. By the start of summer 2020, belief that experts should be allowed to make decisions "according to what they think best for the country" had risen 14 points to 62% in Europe and 8 points to 57% in the US. While trust in government has steadily climbed since the pandemic hit, increasing by 3.4 percentage points on average right across the world's democratic nations, faith in democracy as a political system barely changed. "Satisfaction with democracy has recovered only slightly since the post-war nadir of 2019, and is still well below the long-term average," said Foa. "Some of the biggest declines in democratic support during the pandemic were seen in Germany, Spain and Japan—nations with large elderly populations particularly vulnerable to the virus." In the US, the percentage of people who consider democracy a "bad" way to run the country more than doubled from 10.5% in late 2019 to 25.8% in late 2021. Added Foa: "The pandemic has brought good and bad news for liberal democracy. On the upside, we see a decline in populism and a restoration of trust in government. On the downside, some illiberal attitudes have are increasing, and satisfaction with democracy remains very low."

#### Objectivity increases fake news

Napoli 21 [Philip M. Napoli, educator at the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University, 03-02-2021, “Back from the dead (again): The specter of the Fairness Doctrine and its lesson for social media regulation,” Wiley Online Library, [https://sci-hub.se/https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/poi3.253]/Kankee //](https://sci-hub.se/https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/poi3.253%5d/Kankee%20//) recut by VS

Fairness, balance, and false equivalency Finally, it essential to address the problematic broader principle that underlies any governmental or voluntary efforts to impose fairness or balance requirements on media gatekeepers. The biggest problem with the Fairness Doctrine is what it does to our conception of journalism and to the notion of how responsible gatekeeping works. Over the past few years, there has been a substantial amount of criticism heaped upon the news media for engaging in “false equivalence”—that is, giving equal attention to competing claims on different sides of the political spectrum, regardless of the objective validity of the competing claims (see, e.g., Spayd, 2016). This sort of uncritical, nonevaluative approach to journalism—and to gatekeeping more broadly—simply is not the right path to cultivating an informed citizenry in this environment of nearly unprecedented political polarization and disinformation. Institutionalizing such a model allows falsity to be legitimized by being presented alongside truth. It creates a system where demands of fairness and balance neuter journalists' and other gatekeepers' ability (and responsibility) to differentiate fact from fiction, truth from conspiracy theories and hoaxes. Consider, for instance, recent research focusing on the content curation practices of Google News (Kawakami et al., 2020). This study found that “Because there are fewer right‐ leaning publications than center or left‐leaning ones, to maintain this ‘fair’ balance, hyper‐ partisan far‐right news sources of low trust receive more visibility than some news sources that are more familiar to and trusted by the public” (Kawakami et al., 2020, p. 59). Such findings help to empirically demonstrate the dangers of the application of Fairness Doctrine‐ like principles in the governance of digital platforms, as such approaches typically lead to the disproportionate and unwarranted (from an informed citizenry standpoint) prominence of sources that are more likely to disseminate disinformation. This critical gatekeeping function is more valuable than ever in today's vast and complex information ecosystem, where distinguishing legitimate from illegitimate sources of news and information is more challenging for the end user than it has ever been; and where efforts by bad actors to manipulate social media platforms have become commonplace and increasingly sophisticated. The Trump White House's (2020) executive order contended that social media platforms should operate as “passive bulletin boards.” They have virtually never operated in this way; nor should they. Even those platforms that have marketed themselves as completely unfiltered forums for public discourse (e.g., Parler) operate under a number of explicit content curation and moderation guidelines, and, ironically, have been found to be engaging in editorial decision‐making geared toward filtering out particular political viewpoints (Lerman, 2020). Any efforts at content‐based regulation of social media platforms need to move beyond the notion of fairness—or, at the very least decouple the notion of fairness from the notion of balance. Fairness and balance are not the same thing. There is a degree of passivity, of a lack of judgment, in the notion of balance that is not present to the same degree in the notion of fairness. A news story can be fair without necessarily being balanced if, in the fair and objective judgment of the journalist, giving greater prominence to a discredited or extreme viewpoint would misinform the public. Similarly, if a digital platform is systematically and objectively applying criteria to individual posts or accounts that result in one political perspective's posts being taken down or fact‐checked more than another's, this can be seen as the platform behaving fairly. The unbalanced outcome is not a reflection of unfairness on the part of the platform. It is a reflection of the behavior of the speakers. Frustratingly, this is a position that the representatives of the various digital platforms have refrained from expressing in any of the many instances in which they have been called before Congress and grilled about their bias against conservative viewpoints. As one recent reconsideration of the Fairness Doctrine noted, contemporary concerns should focus on “greater accuracy and completeness, but… not… balance” (Vandenbergh, 2020, p. 815). As one of the growing number of critics of the notion of balance in journalism has noted, “Although appealing on the surface, balance can easily be manipulated to create a false sense of equivalency” (Vandenbergh, 2020, p. 815). Along these lines, some critics of the Fairness Doctrine noted that it led to an emphasis on the presentation of “extremes of controversy” (Bolton, 1987, pp. 818–819). Neither policy nor professional practice should, in the pursuit of “fairness” or “balance,” prioritize opposing viewpoints independently of any concerns about accuracy or truthfulness. Unfortunately, many of today's advocates for “fairness” in the content curation and moderation practices of social media platforms appear concerned first and foremost with the availability of extreme viewpoints independent of whether they have any grounding in verifiable fact. This strategic conflation of diversity and falsity needs to be resisted. Passivity does not equal fairness; and so in this regard, what Republican policymakers are calling for is a far cry from the principles of the Fairness Doctrine which specifically extended protections to “all responsible positions on matters of sufficient importance to be afforded radio time” and to “the various positions taken by the responsible groups” (Federal Communications Commission, 1949, pp. 1250–1251, emphasis added). The term responsible seems particularly relevant to the current environment, in light of contemporary challenges related to hate speech and disinformation. The Fairness Doctrine's approach to gatekeeping did not—at least in theory—involve broadcasters serving as passive conduits; and so any current efforts to impose more “fairness” upon social media platforms that are ultimately about converting these platforms to passive or uncritically balanced conduits misrepresent what fairness should mean in regulatory approaches to media gatekeeping, as well as in the voluntary gatekeeping practices of news organizations and digital platforms. CONCLUSION

#### Fake news revives populism worldwide – provides the catalyst needed

**ECPS 20** [“Fake News.” ECPS, 27 Dec. 2020, [www.populismstudies.org/Vocabulary/fake-news/](http://www.populismstudies.org/Vocabulary/fake-news/).] // VS

Fake news (also known as junk news, pseudo-news, or hoax news) is a form of news consisting of deliberate disinformation or hoaxes spread via traditional news media or online social media. Digital news has brought back and increased the usage of fake news, or yellow journalism. The news is then often reverberated as misinformation in social media but occasionally finds its way to the mainstream media as well. Fake news is written and published usually with the intent to mislead in order to damage an agency, entity, or person, and/or gain financially or politically, often using sensationalist, dishonest, or outright fabricated headlines to increase readership. Similarly, clickbait stories and headlines earn advertising revenue from this activity. The relevance of fake news has increased in post-truth politics. For media outlets, the ability to attract viewers to their websites is necessary to generate online advertising revenue. Easy access to online advertisement revenue, increased political polarization and the popularity of social media, primarily the Facebook News Feed, have all been implicated in the spread of fake news, which competes with legitimate news stories. Hostile government actors have also been implicated in generating and propagating fake news, particularly during elections. Fake news undermines serious media coverage and makes it more difficult for journalists to cover significant news stories. An analysis by BuzzFeed found that the top 20 fake news stories about the 2016 US presidential election received more engagement on Facebook than the top 20 election stories from 19 major media outlets. The term “lying press” is at times used to cast doubt upon legitimate news from an opposing political standpoint. During and after his presidential campaign and election, Donald Trump popularized the term “fake news” in this sense, regardless of the truthfulness of the news, when he used it to describe the negative press coverage of himself. In part, as a result of Trump’s misuse, the term has come under increasing criticism, and in October 2018 the British government decided that it will no longer use the term because it is “a poorly-defined and misleading term that conflates a variety of false information, from genuine error through to foreign interference in democratic processes.” According to Greg Nielsen, fake news and populist movements that appear to hold the fate of democracy hostage are urgent concerns around the world. “The flight from liberal democracy toward oligarchy has spread out from the unexpected results of the 2016 American presidential elections bringing in a wave of reactionary populism and the beginning of a left populist counter movement. The phenomenon of fake news is often explained in terms of opposition public relations strategies and geopolitics that shift audiences toward a regime of post-truth where emotion is said to triumphs over reason, computational propaganda over common sense, or sheer power over knowledge,” wrote Nielsen. Like Nielsen, numbers of pundits assessed that ‘fake news’ has undeniably been biased in favor of populist or anti-establishment parties. As politically charged misinformation has been proliferating online, it is no wonder that many have been questioning whether the spread of fake news has affected the results of recent elections, contributing to the growth of populist party platforms. According to an article by Michele Cantarella and Nicolò Fraccaroli, in the US, Trump voters were more likely to be exposed and believe to misinformation. In the Ital(y)ian context, these findings (show) have been replicated in a recent report from the financial newspaper Il Sole 24 Ore,1 where the likelihood of believing and sharing so-called fake news was found to be higher for voters of the populist MoVimento 5 Stelle and Lega than for voters of other parties. In Italy, not only does the consumption of fake news appear to be linked with populism, but the content of the overwhelming majority of pieces of misinformation also displays an obvious anti-establishment bias. On the other hand, the Reuters Digital News Report in 2018 showed that Turkey ranks first on the list of countries (with) where people complain about completely made-up stories. The study researched how fake news is helping facilitate the rise of populism in Turkey. “Populist politicians generally consider fake news as a valuable propaganda tool for their political interests,” wrote Harun Güney Akgül in an article and added that “There is plenty of fake news aired by pro-government media. Therefore, the Turkish government is emerging as a suspect behind the fake news cycle. The fact is that most of the fake news is published for the benefit of the government. Research shows that, paradoxically, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is regarded as one of the most important populist politicians in the world. These two different indicators can be valuable data in revealing the relationship between fake news and populist politicians.” To Akgül, today “pool media” has become a term that symbolizes media that publishes broadcast pro-government stories. Pool media is crucial for making fake news because it is produced by the government. After that, this news is served to the pool media and most of the time and all newspaper use the same headline and text. Bots use this fake news for the next step. Bots are the accounts that are controlled en masse from a central point. According to Kerem Sözeri, this generally works with this way in Turkey; so instead of equal participation in the social media, “they amplify their owner’s agenda.” “According to various sources, the AKP has established troll troops, nearly six thousand. Finally, the fake news spreads to a broad mass of society as if they are reliable news. Fake news is used in a lot of different ways by the Turkish government. The government sometimes organizes protests to oppose social movements by producing misinformation. Turkish government is creating fake stories or misinformation with the help of social media accounts. It was discovered that lots of pro-Erdogan websites were producing fabricated news. Bosphorus Global is just an important one of such pro-Erdogan websites,” wrote Akgül. To Akgül’s article, with the new populist wave in Europe and America, people have started talking about fake news and populism as one entity. For example, “Le Monde, one of the leading French newspapers, identified and corrected 19 lies made by Marine Le Pen, the extreme-right candidate who reached the runoff of the 2017 French presidential election, during her televised debate against Emmanuel Macron”. Akgül underlined the fact that fake news is produced without ethical elements, although there was a code of ethics in media. “Principles of journalism are to ensure that citizens have access to the right information and are protected against fake news. There are hundreds of codes of conduct, charters, and statements made by media and professional groups outlining the principles, values, and obligations of the craft of journalism,” he wrote. Akgül wrote populist leaders caused polarization by playing with social values. Otherwise, polarization is very important for using fake news… They tend to create an autocratic structure with false accusations against democracy. The decline of democratic values following victories (for) of the populist leaders, e.g. Brexit campaigners, Trump’s controversial election victory and the rise of Jair Bolsonaro is a crucial power behind the populist movement… “Since the inception of social media, many populist governments have learned how to control the new public sphere and its digital ecology. Perhaps, misinformation is one of the best tools for them within social media. Brexit and Trump’s controversial election victory were a significant triumph for populist politicians… Trump and his election victory is an important example of fake news and populism. Following the 2016 election, according to a database, 115 pro-Trump fake stories were shared on Facebook a total of 30 million times and 41 pro-Clinton fake-stories have been shared a total of 7.6 million times,” said Akgül. On the other hand, right-wing populists, according to an article by Michael Hameleers, are not only attributing blame to the political elites, but increasingly vent anti-media sentiments in which the mainstream press is scapegoated for not representing the people. To his article, in an era of post-truth relativism, ‘fake news’ is increasingly politicized and used as a label to delegitimize political opponents or the press. To better understand the affinity between disinformation and populism, Hameleers conceptualizes two relationships between these concepts: i) blame attributions to the dishonest media as part of the corrupt elites that mislead the people; and ii) the expression of populist boundaries in a people-centric, anti-expert, and evidence-free way. The results of a comparative qualitative content analysis conducted by Hameleers in the US and Netherlands indicate that the political leaders Donald Trump and Geert Wilders blame legacy media in populist ways by regarding them as part of the corrupt and lying establishment. He said that “Compared to left-wing populist and mainstream politicians, these politicians are the most central players in the discursive construction of populist disinformation. Both politicians bypassed empirical evidence and expert knowledge whilst prioritizing the people’s truth and common sense at the center stage of honesty and reality. These expressions resonated with public opinion on Facebook, although citizens were more likely to frame mis- and disinformation in terms of ideological cleavages. These findings have important implications for our understanding of the role of populist discourse in a post-factual era.”

#### **1] Populist leaders kill global climate action – denialism, oversimplification, and cooperation failures**

Calland 20 [(Richard, Associate Professor in Public Law, University of Cape Town) “Countering climate denialism requires taking on right-wing populism. Here’s how” The Conversation, February 12, 2020] MCM

In a complex world facing complex problems, it is seductive for politicians to identify a single culprit (like immigrants) or an evil force (like universal healthcare) to blame for the erosion of society, the economy, and the welfare of the masses. This is hardly ever true, but it is compelling. Take the bewilderingly complicated set of relationships between food, energy, urban infrastructure, and exponential demographic growth and change (at least in the developing world). Climate change and its effects are perhaps the epitome of a complex issue of interlinked social, political, and physical forces. That makes it an easy target for this sort of denialism. So, populism ends up denying not just the science of climate change but also the complexity of the entire issue – which is critical for both diagnosing the problem and determining the prognosis and the prescription. Populism strips issues of nuance, and thereby obstructs progress. A 2019 study mapping the climate agendas of right-wing populist parties in Europe contains some revealing evidence: two thirds of right-wing populist members of the European Parliament “regularly vote against climate and energy policy measures”. Half of all votes against resolutions on climate and energy in the European Parliament come from right-wing populist party members. Of the 21 right-wing populist parties analysed, seven were found to deny climate change, its anthropogenic causes, and negative consequences. According to estimates based on the World Resources Institute’s global greenhouse-gas emissions data, about 30% of global emissions come from countries with populist leaders. At the very moment when global cooperation is essential if climate action is to be effective, many of the leaders of these right-wing populist forces are trying to dismantle or weaken multilateral organisations such as the United Nations or the European Union. These political groups threaten to derail progress on the global response to climate change, and on new thinking about how to rewire the economy in pursuit of a more sustainable world. More hopefully, as grassroots organisations emerge as a potentially strong, countervailing force, the trick will be to effectively connect these movements to matters of global social justice. They should also be given enough coherence to be effective. Thus, again, shifting the lens for the climate crisis away from an environmental preoccupation towards human development and social justice. For example, how can Thunberg and the student strike movement in the global north connect with the 1.6 million children that are displaced in Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique from cyclones? Such connections need to be made to turn these nascent movements into powerful advocates for climate justice. Tipping the scale Regardless of whether the political will needed take transformational action to drastically reduce carbon emission and adapt economies and societies, especially in the global South, will be summoned by 2030, it is clear that by the end of this century life on earth will be very different to how it is now. It will certainly be more difficult and dangerous. This applies to everyone, but especially the poorest and most vulnerable members of a human society that is set to peak at around 9,8 billion by 2050 (up from the current 7,8bn). This is the human development challenge for sub-Saharan Africa. It’s not all doom and gloom. There are huge opportunities amid the grave threats. A first step to responding appropriately – individually and collectively – is understanding that the challenge is multi-dimensional. Only then can a multi-dimensional strategy be executed, across sectors and across national boundaries. But it is likely that the greatest impediment to taking action will not be technological know-how or even raising the money required. Instead it will be the lack of enough political will, given the obstructionism of right-wing populists in power around the globe. Hence, a political struggle will need to be won. And the fight for climate justice in the face of right-wing populist climate denialism is a titanic one. Trump-like trajectories into the “post-truth” world of climate change denial, charged by the amplifying impact of social media, distract from and obstruct the necessary action. Yet despite its flaws, the digital age presents a huge opportunity to impose a counter-narrative, and for recruiting new activists.

#### Warming causes extinction – positive feedback loops means adaptation is impossible

Ng ’19 [Yew-Kwang; May 2019; Professor of Economics at Nanyang Technology University, Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia and Member of the Advisory Board at the Global Priorities Institute at Oxford University, Ph.D. in Economics from Sydney University; Global Policy, “Keynote: Global Extinction and Animal Welfare: Two Priorities for Effective Altruism,” vol. 10, no. 2, p. 258-266; RP]

Catastrophic climate change Though by no means certain, CCC causing global extinction is possible due to interrelated factors of non‐linearity, cascading effects, positive feedbacks, multiplicative factors, critical thresholds and tipping points (e.g. Barnosky and Hadly, 2016; Belaia et al., 2017; Buldyrev et al., 2010; Grainger, 2017; Hansen and Sato, 2012; IPCC 2014; Kareiva and Carranza, 2018; Osmond and Klausmeier, 2017; Rothman, 2017; Schuur et al., 2015; Sims and Finnoff, 2016; Van Aalst, 2006).7 A possibly imminent tipping point could be in the form of ‘an abrupt ice sheet collapse [that] could cause a rapid sea level rise’ (Baum et al., 2011, p. 399). There are many avenues for positive feedback in global warming, including: the replacement of an ice sea by a liquid ocean surface from melting reduces the reflection and increases the absorption of sunlight, leading to faster warming; the drying of forests from warming increases forest fires and the release of more carbon; and higher ocean temperatures may lead to the release of methane trapped under the ocean floor, producing runaway global warming. Though there are also avenues for negative feedback, the scientific consensus is for an overall net positive feedback (Roe and Baker, 2007). Thus, the Global Challenges Foundation (2017, p. 25) concludes, ‘The world is currently completely unprepared to envisage, and even less deal with, the consequences of CCC’. The threat of sea‐level rising from global warming is well known, but there are also other likely and more imminent threats to the survivability of mankind and other living things. For example, Sherwood and Huber (2010) emphasize the adaptability limit to climate change due to heat stress from high environmental wet‐bulb temperature. They show that ‘even modest global warming could … expose large fractions of the [world] population to unprecedented heat stress’ p. 9552 and that with substantial global warming, ‘the area of land rendered uninhabitable by heat stress would dwarf that affected by rising sea level’ p. 9555, making extinction much more likely and the relatively moderate damages estimated by most integrated assessment models unreliably low. While imminent extinction is very unlikely and may not come for a long time even under business as usual, the main point is that we cannot rule it out. Annan and Hargreaves (2011, pp. 434–435) may be right that there is ‘an upper 95 per cent probability limit for S [temperature increase] … to lie close to 4°C, and certainly well below 6°C’. However, probabilities of 5 per cent, 0.5 per cent, 0.05 per cent or even 0.005 per cent of excessive warming and the resulting extinction probabilities cannot be ruled out and are unacceptable. Even if there is only a 1 per cent probability that there is a time bomb in the airplane, you probably want to change your flight. Extinction of the whole world is more important to avoid by literally a trillion times.