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**Standard is maximizing expected well being**

**Pleasure and pain are intrinsic value and disvalue**

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

**Actor Spec— States must use util. Any other standard dooms the moral theory**

**Goodin 90.** Robert Goodin 90, [professor of philosophy at the Australian National University college of arts and social sciences], “The Utilitarian Response,” pgs 141-142 //RS

My larger argument turns on the proposition that there is something special about the situation of public officials that makes utilitarianism more probable for them than private individuals. Before proceeding with the large argument, I must therefore say what it is that makes it so special about public officials and their situations that make it both more necessary and more desirable for them to adopt a more credible form of utilitarianism. Consider, first, the argument from necessity. Public officials are obliged to make their choices under uncertainty, and uncertainty of a very special sort at that. All choices – public and private alike – are made under some degree of uncertainty, of course. But in the nature of things, private individuals will usually have more complete information on the peculiarities of their own circumstances and on the ramifications that alternative possible choices might have for them. Public officials, in contrast, are relatively poorly informed as to the effects that their choices will have on individuals, one by one. What they typically do know are generalities: averages and aggregates. They know what will happen most often to most people as a result of their various possible choices, but that is all. That is enough to allow public policy-makers to use the utilitarian calculus – assuming they want to use it at all – to choose general rules or conduct.

**Extinction comes first under any framework.**

**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] AT

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)

Their fwk collapses to ours – ethical journaism is only good because ti brings pleasurable consequences to the people

## 1

mpirically 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.

#### 2] Populism threatens democracy and global security

Bergmann 18 Max Bergmann (senior fellow at the Center for American Progress), Carolyn Kenney, and Trevor Sutton, 11/2/2018, The Rise of Far-Right Populism Threatens Global Democracy and Security, Center for American Progress.

We’ve seen this before. Bolsonaro’s rise to power is only the latest chapter in a global resurgence of right-wing, illiberal populism. Far-right populist parties across Europe have seen a [surge](https://www.axios.com/european-union-right-wing-populist-immigration-52850b78-41c4-427a-88ff-4991f64c0a70.html) in public approval, making parliamentary gains in 15 of the 27 EU member countries over the past two election cycles. Far-right parties made the most significant gains in Italy, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Estonia, winning 5 percent more in vote shares. Additionally, the right-wing Fidesz party cemented its control over Hungarian politics with 49.3 percent of the vote shares in their April 2018 election, even though their vote share only increased by 4.4 percent from 2014 to 2018. Simultaneously, public support for democracy in many countries has [declined](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/07/05/yes-support-for-democracy-is-declining-worldwide-but-not-in-the-u-s-or-other-western-democracies/?utm_term=.d7680e68995a)—with the exception of Western democracies, where support has rebounded in recent years. Far-right parties and authoritarian demagogues that have succeeded in gaining power at the national level—such as in Hungary, Poland, Turkey, the Philippines, the United States, and, now, Brazil—have wasted no time in undermining democratic institutions and norms. Unsurprisingly, according to V-Dem Institute’s 2018 [liberal democracy index](https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/3f/19/3f19efc9-e25f-4356-b159-b5c0ec894115/v-dem_democracy_report_2018.pdf), these countries are among those that have seen the greatest democratic backsliding in the past few years. It is entirely possible—and even expected—that right-wing populists will seek to roll back democratic norms and institutions once in power in order to entrench their authority and quash political opposition. Turkish President [Recep Tayyip Erdogan](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/04/world/europe/turkey-erdogan-internet-law-restrictions.html), Hungarian Prime Minister [Viktor Orbán](https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/04/12/viktor-orban-is-just-getting-started-hungary/), Poland’s [Law and Justice party](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/democracys-slow-fade-in-central-europe/2018/07/07/d155d1e4-8099-11e8-b0ef-fffcabeff946_story.html?utm_term=.c8308b08c424), and even U.S. President [Donald Trump](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/04/assault-on-democracy/557912/) have already demonstrated this. Once this degradation of democracy has been set in motion, it is a steep and slippery slope from illiberal democracy to outright authoritarianism. President Erdogan’s wholesale purge of the civil service and judiciary and his extended rule by decree under state of emergency [illustrate](https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2018/02/11/446164/turkeys-new-nationalism-amid-shifting-politics/) how this is already occurring in Turkey. The rise of openly illiberal candidates and parties in democracies and the decline in support for democracy—particularly in younger democracies—represents a major global crisis that requires sustained U.S. commitment and international cooperation to reverse. This is particularly notable when combined with the fact that there has been a disturbing increase in democratic backsliding around the world, including in the United States. This should be a huge wake-up call for liberal democratic leaders. Global and U.S. security is at risk This democratic backsliding is a threat to [global security](https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2018/09/05/457451/securing-democratic-world/). Nondemocracies are more prone to violence and war; more likely to stoke crises and confrontation; and, in many cases, more fiercely opposed to collective global responses to shared concerns such as climate change and migration. This is especially the case for far-right, illiberal regimes, which typically thrive on xenophobic paranoia, bellicosity, and a disavowal of any form of global cooperation in favor of a blunt, country-first approach to international affairs.

**Democratic governance stops nuclear transition wars with Russia and China AND drives global technological innovation---extinction.**

**Kolodziej ’17** [Edward; May 19; Emeritus Research Professor of Political Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; EUC Paper Series, “Challenges to the Democratic Project for Governing Globalization,” https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/bitstream/handle/2142/96620/Kolodziej Introduction 5.19.17.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y]

The Rise of a Global Society Let me first sketch the global democratic project for global governance as a point of reference. We must first recognize that globalization has given rise to a global society for the **first time** in the evolution of the human **species**. We are now **stuck with each other**; **seven and half billion** people today — nine to **ten** by **2050**: all **super connected** and **interdependent**. In greater or lesser measure, humans are mutually dependent on each other in the pursuit of their most salient values, interests, needs, and preferences — concerns about personal, community, and national **security**, sustainable economic **growth**, protection of the **environment**, the equitable **distribution** of the globe’s material wealth, human **rights**, and even the validation of their personal and social identities by others. Global **warming** is a metaphor of this morphological social change in the human condition. **All** humans are **implicated** in this looming Anthropogenic-induced **disaster** — the exhausts of billions of automobiles, the methane released in fracking for natural gas, outdated U.S. coal-fired power plants and newly constructed ones in China. Even the poor farmer burning charcoal to warm his dinner is complicit. Since interdependence surrounds, ensnares, and binds us as a human society, the dilemma confronting the world’s diverse and divided populations is evident: the **expanding scope** as well as the **deepening**, **accumulating**, and **thickening** interdependencies of globalization urge global government. But the Kantian ideal of universal governance is beyond the reach of the world’s disparate peoples. They are **profoundly divided** by religion, culture, language, tribal, ethnic and national loyalties as well as by class, social status, race, gender, and sexual orientation. How have the democracies responded to this dilemma? How have they attempted to reconcile the growing interdependence of the world’s disputing peoples and need for global governance? What do we mean by the governance of a human society? A working, **legitimate government** of a human society requires simultaneous responses to three competing imperatives: Order, Welfare, and Legitimacy. While the forms of these OWL imperatives have differed radically over the course of human societal evolution, these constraints remain predicable of all human societies if they are to replicate themselves and flourish over time. The OWL imperatives are no less applicable to a global society. 1. Order refers to a society’s investment of awesome material power in an individual or body to arbitrate and resolve value, interest, and preference conflicts, which cannot be otherwise resolved by non-violent means — the Hobbesian problematic. 2. The Welfare imperative refers to the necessity of humans to eat, drink, clothe, and shelter themselves and to pursue the full-range of their seemingly limitless acquisitive appetites. Responses to the Welfare imperative, like that of Order, constitute a distinct form of governing power and authority with its own decisional processes and actors principally associated either with the Welfare or the Order imperative. Hence we have the Marxian-Adam Smith problematic. 3. Legitimacy is no less a form of governing power and authority, independent of the Order and Welfare imperatives. Either by choice, socialization, or coerced acquiescence, populations acknowledge a regime’s governing authority and their obligation to submit to its rule. Here arises the Rousseaunian problematic. The government of a human society emerges then as an evolving, precarious balance and compromise of the ceaseless struggle of these competing OWL power domains for ascendancy of one of these imperatives over the others. It is against the backdrop of these OWL imperatives — Order, Welfare, and Legitimacy — that we are brought to the democratic project for global governance. The Democratic Project For Order, open societies constructed the global democratic state and, in alliance, the democratic global-state system. Collectively these initiatives led to the creation of the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and the European Union to implement the democratic project’s system of global governance. The democratic global state assumed all of the functions of the Hobbesian Westphalian security state — but a lot more. The global state became a Trading, Banking, Market, and Entrepreneurial state. To these functions were added those of the Science, Technology and the Economic Growth state. How else would we be able to enjoy the **Internet**, **cell phones** and iPhones, or **miracle cures**? These are the products of the **iron triangle** of the global democratic state, academic and non-profit research centers, and corporations. It is a **myth** that the Market System did all this **alone**. Fueled by increasing material wealth, the democratic global state was afforded the means to become the **Safety Net** state, providing **ed**ucation, **health**, **social security**, leisure and recreation for its population. And as the global state’s power expanded across this broad and enlarging spectrum of functions and roles, the global state was also constrained by the social compacts of the democracies to be bound by popular rule. The ironic result of the expansion of the global state’s power and social functions and its obligation to accede to popular will was a Security state and global state-system that vastly outperformed its principal authoritarian rivals in the Cold War. So much briefly is the democratic project’s response to the Order imperative. Now let’s look at the democratic project’s response to the Welfare imperative. The democracies institutionalized Adam Smith’s vision of a global Market System. The Market System trucks and barters, Smith’s understanding of what it means to be human. But it does a lot more. The Market System facilitates and fosters the free movement of people, goods and services, capital, ideas, values, scientific discoveries, and best technological practices. Created is a vibrant global civil society oblivious to state boundaries. What we now experience is De Tocqueville’s Democracy in America on global steroids. As for the imperative of Legitimacy, the social compacts of the democracies affirmed Rousseau’s conjecture that all humans are free and therefore equal. Applied to elections each citizen has one vote. Democratic regimes are also obliged to submit to the rule of law, to conduct free and fair elections, to honor majority rule while protecting minority rights, and to **promote** human rights at home and **abroad**. The Authoritarian Threat to the Democratic Project The **democratic project** for **global governance** is now at **risk**. Let’s start with the challenges posed by authoritarian regimes, with Russia and China in the lead. Both Russia and China would **rest global governance** on Big Power spheres of influence. Both would assume **hegemonic status** in their respective regions, asserting their versions of the **Monroe Doctrine**. Their regional hegemony would then **leverage** their claim to be global **Big Powers**. Moscow and Beijing would then have an equal say with the United States and the West in sharing and shaping global governance. **The** Russo-Chinese global **system** of Order would ascribe to Russia and China governing privileges not accorded to the states both aspire to dominate. Moscow and Beijing would enjoy **unconditional** recognition of their state **sovereignty**, territorial integrity, and non-interference in their domestic affairs, but they would reserve to themselves the right to **intervene** in the domestic and foreign affairs of the states and peoples under their tutelage in pursuit of their hegemonic interests. President Putin has announced that Russia’s **imperialism** encompasses the **millions** of Russians living in the former republics of the Soviet Union. Russia contends that Ukraine and Belarus also fall under Moscow’s purported claim to historical sovereignty over these states. Forceful re-absorption of **Crimea** and control over eastern **Ukraine** are viewed by President Putin as Russia’s historical inheritances. Self-determination is not extended to these states or to other states and peoples of the former Soviet Union. Moscow rejects their right to freely align, say, with the European Union or, god forbid, with NATO. In contrast to the democratic project, universal in its reach, the Russo-Chinese conception of a stable global order rests on more **tenuous** and **conflict-prone ethno-national foundations**. Russia’s proclaimed enemies are the United States and the European Union. Any means that undermines the unity of these entities is viewed by Moscow as a gain. The endgame is a **poly-anarchical** interstate system, potentially as **war-prone** as the Eurocentric system **before** and **after World War I**, but now populated by states with **nuclear weapons.** Global politics becomes a **zero-sum game**. Moscow has **no compunctions** about **corrupting** the **electoral processes** of democratic states, conducting threatening **military exercises** along NATO’s east border, or violating the more than 30-year old treaty to ban the deployment of Intermediate-Range **missile launchers**, capable of **firing nuclear weapons**. Nothing less than the **dissolution** of the democratic project is Moscow’s solution for global Order. China also seeks a revision of the global Order. It declares sovereignty over the **South China Sea**. Rejected is The Hague Tribunal’s dismissal of this claim. Beijing continues to build artificial islands as military bases in the region to assert its control over these troubled waters. If it could have its way, China would decide which states and their naval vessels, notably those of the United States, would have access to the South China Sea. Where Moscow and Beijing depart sharply are in their contrasting responses to the Welfare imperative. Moscow has **no solution** other than to use its oil and gas resources as instruments of **coercive diplomacy** and to weaken or **dismantle** existing Western **alliances** and international economic **institutions**. China can ill-afford the dismantling of the global market system. In his address to the Davos gathering in January of this year, Chinese President Xi asserted that “any attempt to cut off the flow of capital, technologies, products, industries and people between economies, and channel the waters in the ocean back into isolated lakes and creeks is simply not possible.” Adam Smith could not have said it better. Both Moscow and Beijing have been particularly assiduous to legitimate their regimes. President Putin’s case for legitimacy is much broader and deeper than a pure appeal to Russian nationalism. He stresses the spiritual and cultural unity of Russianspeaking populations spread across the states of the post-Soviet space. A central core of that unity is the Russian Orthodox Church, a key prop of the regime. Reviled is Western secularism, portrayed as corrupt and decadent, viewed by Putin as an existential threat to the Russian World. The Chinese regime, secular and atheistic, can hardly rely on religion to legitimate the regime. Beijing principally rests its legitimacy on its record of economic development and nationalism. The regime’s success in raising the economic standards of hundreds of millions of Chinese reinforces its claim to legitimacy in two ways. On the one hand, the Communist Party can rightly claim to have raised hundreds of millions of Chinese from poverty within a generation. On the other hand, the Communist Party insists that its model of economic growth, what critics scorn as crony capitalism, is superior to the unfettered, market-driven model of the West. Hence capitalism with Chinese characteristics is more effective and legitimate than the Western alternative. Where Moscow and Beijing do **converge** is in fashioning their responses to the Legitimacy imperative. They **repudiate Western liberal democracy**. Both reject criticisms of their human rights abuses as interventions into their domestic affairs. Dissidents are harassed, incarcerated, or, in some instances, assassinated. Journalists are co-opted, selfcensored, silenced, or imprisoned. Social media is state controlled. Both the Putin regime and the Chinese Communist Party monopolize the public narratives evaluating governmental policy. Transparency and accountability are hostage to governmental secrecy. Civil society has few effective avenues to criticize governmental actions. Moscow adds an ironic twist to these controls in manipulating national elections to produce an elected authoritarian regime. Whether either of these authoritarian responses to the Legitimacy imperative will survive **remains to be seen**. Beijing’s use of economic performance and nationalism to underwrite its legitimacy is a double-edged sword. If economic performance falters, then legitimacy suffers. Whether top-down nationalism will always control nationalism from the bottom-up is also problematic. In resting legitimacy on nationalism, dubious historical claims, and crypto-religious beliefs, Moscow is spared Beijing’s economic performance test. That said, there is room for skepticism that in the long-run Russians will exchange lower standards of living for corrupt rule in pursuit of an elusive Russian mission antagonistic to the West. The implosion of the Soviet Union, due in no small part to its retarded economic and technological development, suggests that the patience of the Russian people has limits. Demonstrations in March 2017 against state corruption in 82 Russian cities, led largely by Russian youth, reveal these limits. They are an ominous omen for the future of the Putin kleptocracy. Meanwhile, neither Russia nor China offers much to solve the Legitimacy imperative of global governance.

## 2

#### CP Text: In a democracy, a free press ought to regulate objectivity over advocacy

**Wordpress 20** [“('17) Is Regulation of the Press Desirable?” Essays, 7 May 2020, studentgp.wordpress.com/2018/06/01/17-is-regulation-of-the-press-desirable/.] // VS

(Introduction) The press, commonly known as the fourth estate, is an influential force in everyday life, and an ubiquitous information source. From consuming it, people get to know much more about events around the world. The first Freedom of the Press Act, a Swedish legislation, abolished the government’s role as a censor of printed matter, and allowed for the official activities of the government to be made public. This freedom of the press, of the media, essentially meant freedom of information for the masses. Yet, is regulation (in any form), desirable at the expense of this freedom, which could be argued as a basic human right? I believe it is desirable, but only to the extent that it is ultimately beneficial for the people. (R 1) Some say that regulation is not desirable, because it violates human rights. Freedom of information is part of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, set by the United Nations (UN). Because every human has this right to access news whenever and wherever they wish to, regulation, by setting certain limitations and rules on what can or cannot be published, inherently will control the contents of the press and goes against this right. All content from the press should be made available without regulation; the ones who choose what to read or watch should be the individuals themselves, out of their own free will, and not any other party. The press (and media) is the neutral medium to transmit such information objectively, and should not be limited by regulated to only present some news only, or to be made inaccessible to the public. Hence, regulation, given that it inherently opposes human right, is undesirable. (S 1) But, while regulation may violate rights of viewers, but, if left unchecked (gone too far), the press may violate the rights of their subjects of interest/news, especially for sensationalism and hits. In this case, regulation is necessary (desirable), if done objectively and independently, to serve as a check to such journalism. The press is a business, and ultimately, for it to run it sometimes resorts to these insensitive, ruthless ways to get the news or scoops that will attract the masses, especially if left unregulated. For instance, in the incident of Princess Diana’s death in a car crash, the paparazzi who followed the car and her intoxicated and drunk chauffeur were the main causes of the tragedy. Furthermore, because she still remained a popular and influential public figure with the masses even after her death, the press took advantage of that and continued exaggerated coverage of her death and inquests into the causes and circumstances surrounding it. The British newspaper The Daily Express is one such publication that has been criticized for this. A 2006 report in The Guardian showed that the newspaper had mentioned her in numerous recent news stories, with headlines including “Perhaps Diana should have worn seatbelt”, “Diana inquiry chief’s laptop secrets stolen”, “£250,000 a year bill to run Diana fountain” and “Diana seatbelt sabotage probe”. Hence, in this case, regulation to prevent such insensitive coverage may be desirable. (S 2) Furthermore, it is unlikely for a publication to be unbiased and objective if left to its own devices or its own self-regulation, hence, some form of external regulation is necessary. Again, in the attempt to appeal to more viewers and gain a loyal following, they may present news in an falsified, opinionated way. This makes it more interesting and leaves a greater emotional impact on their audiences, who came precisely for such content. Such press bias tends to be especially prominent when associated with politics. For instance, on the issue of climate change and global warming, the latest (fifth) IPCC (Intergovernmental panel on Climate change) assessment report states that humans are most likely responsible for global warming since 1951. 97% of peer-reviewed literature and climate scientists accept this view; only 3% do not accept this consensus position. But, a study conducted by Media Matters for America shows that in stories about this report, rather than accurately reflect this consensus, select media outlets have created a false perception of discord amongst climate scientists. Specifically, politically conservative news outlets like Fox News (69%) and the Wall Street Journal (50%) were responsible for most of the doubters, even though the presenters may have no background in climate science. In the UK coverage of the IPCC report, again, the politically conservative Times, Daily Mail, and Telegraph gave the contradicting views disproportionately large coverages. In this case, regulation to ensure that accurate, objective information is presented to the masses is needed and hence desirable. (R 2) Some argue that regulation is not desirable, especially in state-controlled media, because of corruption, governments forcefully use the press for their own advantage, and control the citizens. For instance, the 2016 World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) showed that there has been a deep and disturbing decline in media freedom at both the global and regional levels. RSF reports that such is caused by “increasingly authoritarian tendencies of governments in countries such as Turkey and Egypt”, and “tighter government control of state-owned media”. Some governments do not hesitate to “suspend access to the Internet or even to destroy the premises, broadcast equipment or printing presses of media outlets they dislike.” These caused the infrastructure indicator to fall from 16% from 2013 to 2016. Instead of a free press that is also able to investigate on and serve as a check to the government, such hostile regulations prevent it from doing this, causing the press to end up as a tool that states can freely destroy and control for their own purposes. It is forced to suppress the truth of matters, unable to present what is truly important. Ultimately, this serves to support the state’s own authoritarian propaganda. Specifically, it kills two birds with one stone; they can then spread their own ideologies, while also keep the citizens uninformed, ensuring that power is not undermined by educated/informed citizens (who may rebel). Hence, in this light, when regulation is abused by states to control the press, information and the citizens in these unethical ways, it is undesirable, and press should remain free and independent. Advertisements REPORT THIS AD (S 3) While state-controlled press is undesirable, on the other end of the scale, if the press is left completely uncontrolled and presents everything it finds, such is also inevitably, undesirable. The press, as the fourth estate, has widespread influence on society. As such, it has a social responsibility to present what is acceptable within the boundaries of society, and hence, regulation is needed (and desirable). Specifically, to ensure that there is no showing of immoral, explicit, extremist or radical ideas that may potentially affect the public. Different people have different degrees of tolerance and reactions to such controversial news, so it should be regulated accordingly. For instance, to prevent children from seeing overly violent or explicit content, or the showing of hate speech, which may lead to unnecessarily strong public reactions or outcries. As the phrase “some things are better left unsaid” goes, while the press and journalism do have the duty to investigate, find and present events/happenings around the world, if such instances add no positive value to the public’s understanding of the world, and only incite or evoke negative emotions or reactions, then perhaps there is need for regulation to phase these news out. In these situations, regulation then becomes desirable.

#### Prioritization is defined by

**Lexico** [“PRIORITIZATION English Definition and Meaning.” Lexico Dictionaries | English, Lexico Dictionaries, [www.lexico.com/en/definition/prioritization](http://www.lexico.com/en/definition/prioritization).] // VS

(As) The action or process of deciding the relative importance or urgency of a thing or things.

#### Regulation is defined by

**Merriam Webster** [“Regulation Definition &amp; Meaning.” Merriam-Webster, Merriam-Webster, [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/regulation](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/regulation).] // VS

(As) a rule or order issued by an executive authority or regulatory agency of a government and having the force of law

#### Regulation and prioritization are different bc prioritization makes the free press reorientate their standards towards objectivity while regulation enforces this reorientation throug

### 3

## 3

#### USICA innovation and competition act passes now and solves tech leadership and semiconductor shortages

Neha **Verma, 3-8-**2022, "U.S. Awaits Bill Boosting Technology Competition With China," TechVersions, https://techversions.com/news/u-s-awaits-bill-boosting-technology-competition-with-china/

President Joe Biden wants lawmakers to finish legislation to increase semiconductor and wireless tech manufacturing in the U.S.

Two proposed U.S. technology competition bills aim to strengthen the supply chain by reducing reliance on overseas manufacturing. The legislation will also boost government investment in tech education as well as research and development.

Last year, the Senate passed its bipartisan $250 billion competition bill, the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act of 2021. The House passed its response to the Senate’s bill, America Competes Act of 2022, in January. Now, the two bodies are working to create one bill to send to the president to be signed into law. In his State of the Union address, Biden called on legislators to pass a final bill.

“To compete for the best jobs of the future, we also need to level the playing field with China and other competitors,” Biden said. “That’s why it’s so important to pass the bipartisan innovation act sitting in Congress that will make record investments in emerging technologies and American manufacturing.”

The final U.S. competition bill will be the first major technology bill in more than 30 years since the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988, said Rob Atkinson, founder, and president of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation. Congress has long neglected investment in U.S. science and technology innovation, he said.

The legislation will funnel billions into semiconductor manufacturing, wireless technology, and a new directorate for technology and innovation in the U.S. This new group will focus on researching and developing technologies such as AI, autonomous systems, and quantum computing.

Growing concern over China and its investment in emerging technologies spurred a bipartisan group of lawmakers including Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and Sen. Todd Young, R-Ind., to take action to improve U.S. competitiveness, Atkinson said. The COVID-19 pandemic and global chip shortage also shed light on challenges facing the U.S. supply chain. Most semiconductor manufacturing takes place overseas, he said.

“It’s certainly on the right track, and it suggests a sea change in how Washington thinks about these issues,” Atkinson said of the U.S. technology competition bills. “That’s all to the good. The question is, is it enough?”

Biggest beneficiaries

The semiconductor industry will be one of the biggest beneficiaries of this legislation, Atkinson said. Though the House and Senate bills differ, there is agreement around semiconductor funding.

“There’s a consensus in Washington that absent doing something serious there, we’re going to continue to lose production capabilities overseas, and that would lead to potentially serious vulnerabilities, including in national security,” he said.

Both the House and Senate bills allocate $52 billion through the Chips Act to spur the production of semiconductors in the U.S. Atkinson said the federal push for semiconductor funding is “absolutely needed” because few companies would build fabrication facilities for semiconductors without government incentives.

Indeed, Intel announced last month plans to invest $20 billion in constructing two new semiconductor chip manufacturing factories in Ohio. The company could eventually invest up to $100 billion in the semiconductor factories, which are expected to be completed by 2025.

However, the extent to which Intel can build its chipmaking facilities depends heavily on federal funding through the Chips Act, included in both the House and Senate competition bills, said Keyvan Esfarjani, Intel’s senior vice president of manufacturing, supply chain, and operations, in a news release.

Another significant beneficiary of a final U.S. technology competition bill would be communications companies, said Glenn O’Donnell, vice president, and research director at a research and advisory firm.

#### Moves to make media more objective collapse bipartisanship – Republicans hate the plan

Brown & Solender ’21 [Abram Brown - senior editor at Forbes, Andrew Solender - senior news reporter covering politics, “Social Media Reform Appears Stalled In Congress—Even As Zuckerberg And Dorsey Prepare To Testify About It”, 03-25-2021, Forbes, https://www.forbes.com/sites/abrambrown/2021/03/25/section-230-social-media-facebook-twitter-zuckerberg-dorsey-congress/?sh=177ff87750fe]//pranav

After the mob swept through the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, congressional Democrats seemed poised to seize the moment and push through a set of long-sought reforms with bipartisan support: alterations to Section 230, the bedrock federal legislation that shields tech companies from liability for what’s posted on their sites and undergirds much of the online economy. The riot had been born, planned and fed by the internet—President Trump himself contributing to the online melee—and lawmakers saw an opportunity to finally hold platforms more accountable for what’s said on social media. But momentum on Section 230 has ebbed in the new Congress, even as three major tech CEOs—Mark Zuckerberg, Jack Dorsey and Sundar Pichai—are scheduled to testify Thursday before a House subcommittee taking a look at the issue. In fact, it’s unclear whether anything will be done about it until after the midterm elections, say both Democratic and Republican leaders who have been champions of Section 230 reform, despite the existence of several legislative proposals for change. “Right now, there’s not a bill out there I could support,” says Ron Wyden, a Democrat from Oregon who co-wrote Section 230 a quarter century ago and has advocated for modifying it. Across the aisle, frequent social media critic Sen. Josh Hawley throws up his hands at the concept. During the current Congress, “there won’t be anything meaningful” done with Section 230, the Missouri Republican says. When Wyden helped get Section 230 passed in 1996, it established an important principle that would allow web companies to flourish: They wouldn’t be held liable for what’s posted on their sites, a particularly important protection for companies reliant on user content like Dorsey’s Twitter, Zuckerberg’s Facebook and Pichai’s Alphabet, the parent company of Google and YouTube. It’s allowed them to grow into multi-multi-billion-dollar businesses—and in the cases of Facebook and Alphabet, two of the largest in the world, which together are worth a collective $2.1 trillion. But there’s been a growing movement over the past few years to alter Section 230—or possibly repeal it entirely. Democrats such as Sen. Richard Blumenthal have promoted the idea of modifying Section 230 to place more burden on the companies to self-regulate and take down offensive or harmful content. Republicans have postulated regulatory change as well, for an entirely different reason. They think platforms like Facebook and Twitter already over-filter content, unfairly weeding out conservative voices. Nearly a dozen bills have been introduced over the past two years aimed at adjusting the legislation. President Trump personally took up the mission, most noisily at the end of his term when he vetoed a bill containing the $740 billion defense budget partly because it didn’t include the Section 230 repeal he requested. (Congress overrode the president, prompting, ironically, one of his final tweets: “Our Republican Senate just missed the opportunity to get rid of Section 230, which gives unlimited power to Big Tech companies. Pathetic!!!”) President Biden, meanwhile, told The New York Times in January 2020 the legislation “should be revoked immediately.” He hasn’t had anything else to say on the subject publicly, suggesting his position may be drifting back toward his party’s less strident stance. (A White House spokesperson didn’t respond to a request for comment.) As political pressure has mounted, tech companies have increasingly conceded the need to better regulate themselves. Social media has also found itself in Congress’ crosshairs—placed there during hearings like Thursday’s before the House energy and commerce subcommittee on communications and technology—forcing Zuckerberg and Dorsey to move away from initial reluctance to police their sites. “A decade ago, social media was nascent. As more people joined, the conversations became more robust and the importance of social media—and the scrutiny of it—became far greater,” says Colin Crollin, Twitter’s former public policy chief. In the past year, Facebook and Twitter have added fact-check labels and hubs of well-vetted information around important topics like voting and Covid-19 and, most notably, expelled Trump after his comments on their platforms helped incite the Jan. 6 violence. Zuckerberg and Dorsey now seem resigned to their fate and have signaled an increasing acceptance of the inevitability of reform during past congressional testimony and other public statements. Despite the hearing, Washington appears to be stalled out on the issue. Unsurprisingly, Republicans place the blame on their liberal counterparts, complaining that Democrats won’t join forces to fight and risk cozy relationships with the technorati. “I don’t expect Congressional Democrats to be willing to stand up to Big Tech,” says Sen. Ted Cruz, of Texas, who has made monologues on this subject a staple. Just as unsurprisingly, Democrats say much the same about Republican peers, characterizing them as unwilling to work productively on the matter. “There’s not a lot of good faith,” says Brian Schatz, the Democratic Senator from Hawaii who, along with Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.), has authored the PACT Act, which would give the government more legal tools to regulate social media companies and require platforms to make their content moderation practices more accessible to users. But there’s more going on here than typical partisan bickering. Most fundamentally, changes to internet regulation appear to be nowhere on the top list of priorities for the Biden White House or the Democrat-led Congress. Each has staked out the pandemic and the economy as the most pressing agenda items. And mucking around with federal regulations that affect the fortunes of some of the country’s biggest political donors may not hold the appeal it seemed to even two months ago, as both Democrats and Republicans vie for control in next year’s midterm election of House and Senate chambers the Democrats currently hold by the narrowest of margins. “Democrats are recovering from four years of Trump, and they have two goals: to heal America and to win races up and down the ballot while retaining control of the House and Senate,” says Cooper Teboe, a Democratic fundraising strategist in Silicon Valley. “While there are legitimate concerns with social media and how it intersects with democracy, I don't think a single voter is going to the polls with this single issue in mind.” Even if Congress and Biden had fewer pressing priorities, Democrats and Republicans don’t agree on what the problem is, making it more difficult to find bipartisan consensus. “Many on the political right want platforms to stop taking down so much user content, many on the political left want platforms to take down more user content. And while both of those goals could be promoted by certain changes to Section 230, there is no one change that will serve both of those goals,” says Daphne Keller, a director at Stanford’s Cyber Policy Center.

US is leading ppower bc of its leaershup in science and technology

#### Solves GP war and extinction

Cody Knipfer 17, MA Candidate in Space Policy at George Washington University’s Space Policy Institute, 3/7/17, “On the Nature of Science and Technology Power,” http://www.reallycoolblog.com/on-the-nature-of-science-and-technology-power/

Indeed, the United States’ leadership in science and technology has been a historical cornerstone of its capacity for “hard power” force application and projection and economic and societal “soft power.” It buttresses the country’s economic might, enables the modern standards of living of our citizenry, and expands our global cultural and normative reach.[ii] Equally so, the power of science and technology has been decisive in the context of national security. As President Truman noted in 1945, while urging Congress to create a Department of National Defense, “no aspect of military preparedness is more important than scientific research.”[iii] Through discoveries, technological innovation, and the capacity to develop ideas into deployable weapons, systems, and concepts, the United States has arrived at its modern-day military advantage and superiority.[iv]

To that end, science and technology may be considered key elements of the United States’ comprehensive national power – fundamentals of the country’s strength vis-à-vis competitors. Yet science and technology alone cannot ensure any country’s continued security, prosperity, or hegemony; far from operating in a vacuum, science and technology are constantly evolving to address changing domestic and international circumstances and threats. To reap advantage from science and technology, especially in their national security application, a country must continually innovate to tackle contemporary developments and anticipate future ones. This poses a considerable challenge, the solution to which extends beyond advanced engineering and research.

To explore these notions, this essay, particularly interested in the application of science and technology toward national security ends, examines the United States’ recent employment of security-related technologies. From this, it explores the attributes of science and technology power and the similarities and differences between science and technology power and other forms of national power such as the economic and diplomatic. Looking at the relative importance of science and technology in the United States today and likely significance in the coming future, it lays out a series of policy recommendations that may guide policymakers as they make decisions that impact the direction of the country’s scientific and technological course.

Employment of – and Challenges Facing – National Security-Related Technolog

Recognizing the vital role that technology played in winning World War Two, along with the emerging threat of Soviet technological competitiveness, the United States established in the war’s wake an extensive infrastructure to support national security science and technology efforts. This provided foundation and catalyst for the development of military capabilities and tools needed to meet the challenges of the Cold War and the modern day: the nuclear triad, intelligence-gathering and cyber infrastructure, space-based radar and communications systems, advanced precision-guided munitions, and integrated command and control, along with myriad other assets.[v]

These technologies have seen extensive use in contemporary military conflicts. The wars in the Balkans and the Gulf saw the ever-increasing use of position, navigation, and timing assets such as GPS to provide precise and reliable information to the warfighter and direct precision-guided weaponry.[vi] Targeted airstrikes and weapons such as the long-range cruise missile have allowed for far more rapid, responsive, and accurate strikes than those of the past while substantially reducing collateral damage. Combat drones and unmanned aerial vehicles, innovations emblematic of the “War on Terror,” enable the warfighter to engage adversaries and conduct reconnaissance while safely remaining away from the front lines of the battlefield. Stealth aircraft, using a range of advanced technologies that reduce reflections and emissions, have helped pilots conduct sorties while evading detection.[vii]

Technology abets the United States’ security beyond warfighting. Advanced cyber capabilities – encryption, for example – seek to defend the networks which control the country’s power, transit, and water infrastructure from malicious hacks and crippling denial of service.[viii] Technologies capable of detecting harmful biological and chemical agents guard the country against potentially devastating attack by non-state actors.[ix] Increasingly sophisticated monitoring and surveillance technology enables the government to globally track and work to counter criminal activity, terrorist organizations, and other developments which threaten the country’s safety.[x]

Crucially, though, the United States’ contemporary application of national security systems has also demonstrated the inherent challenges of innovation and the limitations of technology. Despite advanced military hardware, principally designed to fight large-scale conventional wars against Cold War-era foes, the United States military had to “catch up” and react to unconventional tactics, such as roadside bombs and sniper attacks, employed against it in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Though decidedly outnumbered and outgunned, enemy combatants effectively countered the United States’ asymmetric technological advantage through guerilla warfare, propaganda, and exploiting collateral damage that advanced weapons systems created – doctrines which the United States’ technology did not anticipate and was unprepared or unsuited to counter.[xi] Likewise, despite the sophistication of the United States’ homeland security technologies, the government has struggled to prevent incidents of domestic terrorism such as mass shootings, often characterized by the use of simple, off-the-shelf equipment.[xii]

Meanwhile, in reaction to the United States’ present-day technological superiority, competitive foreign powers such as Russia and China are heavily investing in hardware and capabilities in the cyber and military realms specifically designed to counter the United States’ technological strengths and exploit its demonstrated vulnerabilities. The technological capabilities underlying the United States’ comparative military advantage are now proliferating to an increasing number of state and non-state actors, including potential adversaries, leveling the military “playing field.”[xiii]

The Attributes of National Security Science and Technology Power

From this, several key attributes and characteristics of science and technology as a form of national power can be identified. Foremost is the capacity for technology and science to be a significant, occasionally decisive, enhancer of a country’s military strength against enemies. Countries which develop innovative military technologies which effectively counter an adversary’s offenses or defensives, or against which an adversary has no means to protect itself, find themselves disproportionately advantaged on the battlefield. Indeed, technologies which upend dominant “status quo” warfighting paradigms – such as, historically, the introduction of the chariot, the tank, or nuclear weapons – are poised to significantly disrupt and reorder the geopolitical and military balance of power.[xiv]

To that end, science and technology power, particularly in the national security sphere, is developed and sustained through the adaption to, and more so through the anticipation of, revolutionary changes in military affairs, doctrine, and hardware. As Lieutenant Colonel Scott Stephenson noted in the influential “The Revolution in Military Affairs,” “those slow to adapt to military revolutions… are likely to suffer painful results. When the pace of change accelerates, the militaries that anticipate and adapt are likely to gain a massive advantage over potential enemies who are less agile.”[xv] That agility is, in large part, borne from innovations in science and the development of new technologies which lead to unanticipated, and therefore difficult to counter, doctrines.

A defining characteristic of science and technology power, then, is the continual quest for states to match, counter, and out-compete the technology of their adversaries. This continuing interplay between technology and national power, characterized by the sustained technological evolution and described often as an “offset,” has been a key focus for national security-related research and development throughout the Cold War and into the present. The United States’ deployment of nuclear weapons, for example, offset the numerical advantage held by the Soviet Union’s land forces in the early Cold War. Soviet parity in nuclear weapons catalyzed the development of guided weapon and integrated command and control as a counter, focusing on accuracy of targeted weapons systems independent of range.[xvi] The United States’ capacity to offset Soviet technology through innovative developments – and the Soviet bankruptcy borne from military expenditure that came as a corollary – was an important factor in maintaining a generally peaceful stable of power along with the country’s ultimate triumph in the Cold War. In the present-day, China and Russia’s focus on countering the systems and technologies which currently provide the United States’ military asymmetry is emblematic of this “offset” approach to science and technology power.

Paradoxically, however, national security-related technology in the present day has become as great an equalizer as it has historically been a separator of actors’ strengths. Technological superiority in the present may provide the United States’ unrivaled military strength, especially against foes (historically, state actors with large conventional forces) for which its national security technologies anticipated countering. Yet as the example of the Iraq and Afghani insurgencies amply demonstrated, technological superiority coupled with innovation focused on addressing hypothetical future battlefields may not be adequate to oppose or defeat all actors or all forms of warfare, regardless of the level of their sophistication.

Indeed, advanced technologies may be entirely vulnerable to actors utilizing doctrines with simple technologies that nonetheless exploit their weaknesses, as was the case with sophisticated – and expensive – American vehicles being destroyed by crude, homemade IEDs. Technology itself also creates weaknesses; the United States’ progressing economic and social reliance upon interconnected networks, for example, makes the country more vulnerable to potentially crippling attack. Despite advanced American cybersecurity technologies and techniques, non-state actors have still proven themselves capable of infiltrating, attacking, and even denying use of American cyber capabilities; considering recent trends, this vulnerable seems likely to continue, if not worsen.[xvii]

It may be that an attribute of science and technology power, borne more from the focus and perceptions of the technologists, theorists, and military leadership that employ it than from science and technology itself, is that it obscures other factors which equally dictate important developments in military, international, and geopolitical affairs. Political upheaval, social change, and economic development can change warfare dramatically, for example – and have nothing to do with “offset” strategies or war-room predictions of possible enemies’ future high-tech military hardware. As a product of the military-industrial complex that emerged in the Cold War United States to sustain continued technological development, Americans tend to be acutely – perhaps overly – sensitive to technological innovation among competitors and potential rivals. Fears during the Cold War and contemporary discussions of the “Third Offset” paint pictures of emerging, potential, and fanciful enemy weapon systems – which military planning and technology development was and is oriented toward countering.[xviii] This fixation on solutions entailing engineering and technological complexity blinds the national security technology apparatus to external trends that could definitively impact the future course of war – such as the collapse of the Soviet Union leaving the United States with a high-tech military and warfighting doctrine unsuited for the military pressures and asymmetric nature of counterinsurgency; the rise of radical terrorism with ideological underpinnings that condone unconventional guerilla tactics such as suicide bombings, which had great effect against high-tech targets; or the continuing crisis where lone-wolf gunmen using off-the-shelf rifles can commit massacres despite the government’s highly complex and pervasive surveillance and monitoring technology.

Similarities and Differences to Other Forms of National Power

With these attributes in mind, a comparison can be drawn between science and technology power and other forms of power which constitute a country’s comprehensive strength, such as the economic and diplomatic. Regarding the economic, science and technology power is similar in that the development of science and technology is driven by the same forces as economic growth. Like new economic products, services, and methods of operation, science and technology power relies upon the ingenuity of human actors predicting and anticipating future trends, possibilities, and human behavior. Innovation, iteration, and competitiveness are fundamental catalysts for the continued evolution and growth of both. The rapid proliferation and subsequent use of innovative technologies across the world quickly equalizes both the national security advantage and the economic advantage they provided their inventor.

Economic power, like national security technology, is a key element of a country’s warfighting capability – industrial might, strength in quality production, and capable infrastructure are crucial facets of a country’s ability to mobilize and project force. A fundamental difference between economic power and science and technology power, however, is competition. While economies naturally compete, there is incentive for states to specialize in the economic product or service most suited for it – their comparative advantage. Competing economies are not actively incentivized to counter the economic specialization of their rivals. With science and technology power for national security use, however, states decidedly hope to actively and explicitly counter the relative advantage of their adversaries.

Like diplomatic power, science and technology has a “soft power” element; other states and their societies may be influenced or compelled to action by the might, prestige, or cultural and technological hegemony of a country in possession of highly advanced and capable technologies.[xix] Diplomatic power occasionally experiences the same issue of science and technology policy in being blinded to unpredicted or external trends in the social, cultural, and economic spheres. The power of diplomacy, for example, did not anticipate and struggled to deal with the cultural, social, and political circumstances that led to a breakdown of order in post-invasion Iraq; just as national security technology was unprepared for the guerilla warfare of the Iraqi insurgency. Diplomatic power and science and technology power differ, though, in the fields of innovation and evolution. Whereas the military regime is constantly evolving and occasionally being upended by revolutions in security technology and associated doctrine, the Westphalian diplomatic order has remained largely similar through centuries – even as it has grown gradually more complex and interconnected. States do not tend seek to outcompete each other in the diplomatic sphere through revolutionary new approaches to diplomacy; negotiations, sanctions, deals, bi- and multilateral agreements, and the like have remained consistent “doctrines” employed by states in their dealings with international friends and foes.

Science and Technology Power’s Present and Future Importance

To return to Vannevar Bush’s assertion over half a century ago, science and technology is crucially important for a states’ economic growth and prosperity, the wellbeing of its citizens, and national security. This remains absolutely the case today. Despite the challenges facing innovation in the face of unanticipated adversaries and the proliferation of advanced, equalizing technologies among adversarial states and non-state actors, science and technology provides the United States’ unrivaled levels of security and military hegemony.

With the appearance of significant global challenges – refugee crises, environmental degradation, the possible emergence of a bi- or multi-polar world characterized by states with rough or equal technological parity, to name a few – the future importance of science and technology power cutting across all aspects of national security will undoubtedly redouble. Science and technology and its application as an element of the United States’ national power will need to be directed to address these challenges. While the exact characteristics that will define domestic and foreign national security technologies of the future – not to mention the economic and social – remain uncertain, the United States cannot afford to permit its current technological advantage to slip. Indeed, as revision states such as China continue to develop their technologies to directly counter the United States’ capabilities, it will likely become an imperative for the country to more actively engage in and support the development of innovative new security technologies and doctrines – lest, as history would suggest, the international order again be upended.

## Case

#### Objectivity is a poor ideal and threatens democracy Wijberg 17

#### [Rob Wijnberg (1982) is the founding editor of The Correspondent. At age 27, he became Europe's youngest editor-in-chief at Dutch print daily nrc.next. He studied philosophy at the University of Amsterdam and has written six books on news, media and philosophy. He was voted Journalist of the Year in The Netherlands in 2013, 07 – 10 – 2017, “Why objective Journalism is a misleading and dangerous illusion” de Correspondent, [https://thecorrespondent.com/6138/why-objective-journalism-is-a-misleading-and-dangerous-illusion/157316940-eb6c348e]/SP](https://thecorrespondent.com/6138/why-objective-journalism-is-a-misleading-and-dangerous-illusion/157316940-eb6c348e%5d/SP)

“It’s very easy for an editorial team to appear to be taking a position. And that’s exactly what I don’t want. We don’t ever want to do that. We don’t want to take a position on the news. We want the viewers to take a position on the news.” Those are the words of Marcel Gelauff, [Gelauff said this on a primetime TV talk show in the Netherlands. You can watch a clip here (in Dutch only).](http://dewerelddraaitdoor.vara.nl/media/369238)head of the Dutch public broadcasting company NOS’s news department. **Objectivity, the tenet being expressed here, may be the most poorly understood, tenacious, dangerous illusion journalism has ever believed in**. Misunderstood, because **it’s confused with independence and impartiality**. Tenacious, because it **seems easy and it’s cheap**. Dangerous, because it’s the biggest lie you can tell the public. And an illusion, because it doesn’t exist. The origins of the ideal Journalistic objectivity, like many Western articles of faith, began as a late 19th-century ideal with very different aims than we attach to it today. Originally, journalism was nothing more than a megaphone for the powerful: the king dictated, and the reporters wrote it down. Newspapers were filled with pronouncements from on high: declarations of war, changes in navigation routes, calls to prayer, that kind of thing. The **Enlightenment and the rise of modern science eventually ushered in the idea of journalism as a critical counterpower: it should act as a watchdog, not a messenger**. This conviction was rooted in a **new ideal known as objectivity, which was linked to independence. We, the press, would decide what to report on. And we’d only do so once we’d made sure it was true**. Now, more than a century later, we’ve gained a fully professionalized PR and information industry and lost every **modern illusion about Truth with a capital T, and objectivity has come to mean precisely the opposite**. What gets reported, we believe, shouldn’t be determined by the press but by “what’s happening in the world.” **The media’s job is merely to “report the news**.” In Gelauff’s words, we shouldn’t take a position. “We’ll figure it out” has become “You figure it out.” Readers familiar with my news philosophy will already know what I think of objectivity. (De Correspondent’s founding principles [Read our founding principles, in which we pledge to be explicitly subjective.](https://thecorrespondent.com/)explicitly renounce it). But at a time when Facebook and Google have devised fake-news [I wrote an essay on the fake-news earnings model: “Truth is whatever people click on” (in Dutch only).](https://decorrespondent.nl/5951/waar-is-wat-klikt/1317122124615-0703f9eb)earnings models, the White House is inhabited by a pathological bullshitter, [Here’s what I mean by “bullshitter” (in Dutch only).](https://decorrespondent.nl/4693/wat-bullshitter-trump-ons-leert-over-een-samenleving-zonder-waarheid/1038691670445-55f138ac)and his counterparts are popping up in political races all across Europe, it’s worth saying again: **the ideal of journalistic objectivity is an outright threat to democracy**. Here’s why. **1. There’s no such thing as objectivity** Marcel Gelauff says he doesn’t want his editorial team to take a position on the news. Let me be the first to say that, alas, it’s a vain hope. Describing the world with no idea of what’s good or bad, relevant or trivial, true or false is literally impossible. **Behind every report, every feature, every news item, lies a worldview rooted in assumptions ontological** (what’s real?), epistemological (what’s true?), methodological (how do we find out?), and moral (why does it matter?). Or, to put it in Gelauffian terms, all news comes from a position. **Why doesn’t the evening newscast ever lead with crop circles made by UFOs? Because the editorial department takes the position that UFOs don’t exist.** Why doesn’t the news ever lead with a delayed train between St. Petersburg and Novosibirsk? Because the editors take the position that a late Russian train doesn’t matter here. Why does the news never open with the biggest, most powerful Dutch company [Correspondents Maurits Martijn and Tomas Vanheste have written about Vitol: “Nobody’s ever asked a question in Parliament about this Dutch oil giant” (in Dutch only).](https://decorrespondent.nl/438/over-deze-nederlandse-oliereus-is-nog-nooit-een-kamervraag-gesteld/96941604870-00bd17df)in the world, the oil and gas trader Vitol? Because the editors take the position that Vitol isn’t doing anything wrong. The reverse is true too: why does the news open with a Trump tweet, a bombing in Syria, a domestic policy proposal, chaos at a national transportation hub? Because the editors take the position that statements by a US president, wars in the Middle East, our own leaders’ plans, and travel snafus in our own country matter. And why does the news always call bombings by ISIS “terrorist attacks” and those by Western governments “bombardments”? Because the editors take the position that that’s what they are. Why does the **news always frame the growth of the economy as something positive and not as a disaster for the climate, the environment, or the corals in the ocean? Because the editors take the position that economic growth is good. So when an editor claims not to take a position on the news, he or she is making the most basic misrepresentation possible**. And it’s also the worst [Even worse than making your anchors deliver the news standing up, which Gelauff called “an important moment in the history of NOS news” (in Dutch only).](https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2016/01/02/ik-wil-de-wereld-bij-jou-thuis-brengen-zoals-ie-is-1575235-a890960)instruction you can give your editorial team. **2. Objectivity is a poor ideal** So there’s no such thing as objectivity. But even if there were, journalists would need to steer clear of it. That’s because the word “objectivity” is usually **understood in terms of its moral dimension**. Journalists are expected to **suspend moral judgment. They’re not supposed to say what they think**. Yet this has never been an amoral business. On the contrary, **journalism is moral through and through. It’s about what we as a society consider important, or should. All journalism, then, begins and ends with ideas about good and evil. The planet getting hotter isn’t news because it’s fact.** The planet getting hotter is news because that’s a bad thing. Journalism is moral through and through. It begins and ends with ideas of good and evil If you order journalists to check their moral judgments at the door, one of two things will happen. Either they’ll have no clue what to report on and go home without a story, or they’ll figure it out in the only way possible: by letting others decide. In practice, that means becoming a mouthpiece for the establishment [I talk in depth about objectivity and being a mouthpiece for the establishment in this interview with Esther van Fennema (in Dutch only).](http://media.tpo.nl/2017/01/18/rob-wijnberg-nos-journaal-is-spreekbuis-gevestigde-belangen-en-elite/)– the people with the power to decide what’s important, trivial, good, or bad. (Or, like the Dutch premier, to define what’s “normal” and what isn’t.)[Premier Rutte wrote an open letter “to all Dutch people” effectively calling on immigrants to “act normal or leave" (in Dutch only).](https://vvd.nl/nieuws/lees-hier-de-brief-van-mark/) **Objective journalism, defined as not taking a position or having an opinion, has become precisely the opposite of what it was originally intended to be.** Today, it **equates to unquestioningly repeating the opinions of the powerful.** By leaving the position-taking to the public, we reduce our task as journalists to issuing press releases on behalf of elites. In short, we fail to fulfill our most basic duty. That brings us to the third and most urgent problem with objectivity. **3. Objectivity threatens democracy News is one of the most important sources of information in a democratic society. Today more than ever**, it determines what we know, understand, and think about the world. It **influences our voting behavior and how we see other people, cultures, and countries. To a large degree, it even shapes our image of ourselves**. Our view of the world is increasingly fueled by half-truths, whole fairytales, and bald-faced lies issuing from the uppermost ranks of global politics, amplified by the loudest yellers in domestic politics, and spread across millions of phones, laptops, and TVs in milliseconds**. Today it’s more crucial than ever that journalism stand for something**. **We must commit to the values that are essential to a democratic society: to a check on power, to the pursuit of truth, to providing context and perspective.** When the president of the United States fabricates the number of attendees at his inauguration and then lashes out at every media organization that presents the evidence to show he’s lying, it’s not enough to report “Trump accuses media despite ample counterevidence,” as the NOS news did. Or to broadcast some even-handed variant that leaves the public in the lurch: “So-and-so reports X number of people, Trump says there were Y. And now over to Philip with the weather.” Instead, you need to clearly announce that one of the world’s most powerful politicians is demonstrably lying yet again. [The New York Times did a better job of this, with its story "With False Claims, Trump Attacks Media"](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/21/us/politics/trump-white-house-briefing-inauguration-crowd-size.html)And you’d better figure out why. [The Washington Post provided an excellent explanation of why Trump ordered his press chief to peddle lies.](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/the-first-days-inside-trumps-white-house-fury-tumult-and-a-reboot/2017/01/23/7ceef1b0-e191-11e6-ba11-63c4b4fb5a63_story.html?tid=sm_tw&utm_term=.bad162486ed1)Meanwhile, you should be keeping track [**The award-winning website Politifact.com keeps an eye on all Trump’s campaign promises.**](http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/promises/trumpometer/)**of his actions and not just his words. Otherwise, “not taking a position” means being not only a mouthpiece for power but a conduit for lies. If demagogues loathe political correctness, journalistic correctness is their best friend. And democracy’s no match for that.**

#### True Objectivity will backfire, creating more turmoil – Leads to war and destruction of all news Froomkin 20

Froomkin 20 [Dan Froomkin is the editor of Press Watch, an independent website previously known as White House Watch.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dan_Froomkin#cite_note-Froomkin-1) He previously was a senior writer and Washington editor for [The Intercept](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Intercept). Prior to that, he was a writer and editor for [The Huffington Post](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Huffington_Post), 07 – 31 – 2020, “The Failed Promise of Political Reporting” Press Watch, [https://presswatchers.org/2020/07/the-failed-promise-of-objective-political-reporting]/SP](https://presswatchers.org/2020/07/the-failed-promise-of-objective-political-reporting%5d/SP)

**There are two main reasons why the leaders of America’s elite newsrooms are so devoted to the journalistic practice commonly referred to as “**[**objectivity**](https://presswatchers.org/category/objectivity/)**”, which precludes reporters from “taking sides” in their political coverage — even when one side is an obvious lie, or an affront to core journalistic values like pluralism and democracy. The official reason is that they sincerely believe that press neutrality leads to a more informed electorate. They argue that voters will trust their news sources more if those sources are “unbiased,” and that accurate information is more likely to be accepted as the truth if readers come to their own conclusions rather than being told what to think. A news organization perceived as objective, they say, has an increased power to persuade. The unofficial reason, which New York University journalism professor** [**Jay Rosen**](https://pressthink.org/2016/11/speaking-truth-audiences-power/) **pithily calls “refuge seeking,” is that the “objective” approach protects editors and reporters from criticism – specifically, from accusations of bias. It also allows them to feel superior to partisans and activists, because they remain “above the fray.” OK, let’s review. Our leading journalistic institutions engage in “objectivity” to achieve two major goals: An informed electorate. Immunity from accusations of bias. So, here’s my question to New York Times executive editor Dean Baquet, Washington Post executive editor Marty Baron, Associated Press executive editor Sally Buzbee, and the other proclaimed and self-proclaimed guardians of our biggest, finest news organizations: How’s that working out for you? Not so great, huh? The obvious answer is that “objectivity” has failed miserably to achieve either goal – and is more likely having the opposite effect. Informed electorate? Some four out of 10 Americans currently believe all sorts of things that aren’t remotely true, like that the Black Lives Matter protests have been** [**mostly violent**](https://context-cdn.washingtonpost.com/notes/prod/default/documents/6dae3525-b4e3-4b5c-9c26-18901aa10c25/note/0916a9ff-27b5-4671-b4d9-3a13db879199.)**, or that** [**voter fraud is a problem**](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/m0ux4pavnq/econToplines.pdf) **and that** [**mail-in voting makes it worse**](https://www.langerresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/1214a22020Election.pdf)**, or — despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary —** [**that Trump is doing a good job.**](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/trump-approval-ratings/) **Nearly three in 10 believe Covid-19** [**was made in a lab**](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/08/nearly-three-in-ten-americans-believe-covid-19-was-made-in-a-lab/) **and that** [**Bill Gates**](https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/k021ckl4rn/20200522_yahoo_coronavirus_toplines.pdf) **wants to use vaccination to implant trackable microchips in people. Immune from accusations of bias? Those misinformed voters believe these things because they heard them from Fox News or some other right-wing super-spreader of conspiracy theories, after having decided that the “mainstream press” is, like their president says, so biased that it has become “fake news” and the “enemy of the people.” And before you simply blame social media and filter bubbles – which of course are factors here – ask yourself this: Could it be that the “objective” approach to covering major political issues is simply too anodyne to convince anyone who’s on the fence? What if the mainstream, reality-based media armed its audience with facts as emphatically and effectively as Fox News arms its audience with misinformation? What if the New York Times aggressively advocated for the truth, rather than just putting it out there for the record? A large fraction of America has tuned out the elite media, treating it like so much white noise. What if the Washington Post more assertively said in its news stories: “Here’s what we believe are the facts, and why”? What if they said: “Here’s where we’re coming from”? What if they said: “Here’s our best explanation of why all this crazy stuff is happening and why you’re so screwed? And what if the mainstream media provided its audience with a true, overarching narrative in which to situate the day-to-day stories – true, evidence-based narratives as compelling as the false ones that Fox and OAN and others are selling — rather than throwing their hands up in the air and saying “you decide”? The only thing hard about this would be overcoming decades of self-censorship. Reality-based reporters know the truth: Economic stories exist within a narrative of grotesque inequality sustained by the people who benefit from it; the earth is in grave danger from climate change but fossil-fuel interests have blocked necessary action; law enforcement is only one of many institutions that devalue Black lives; and Donald Trump doesn’t fix problems, he exploits them. People hunger for compelling and explanatory narratives – that’s why they respond so strongly to people like** [**George Conway**](https://twitter.com/gtconway3d/status/1288070824461832194) **and books like those by** [**Mary Trump**](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/08/books/review-too-much-never-enough-mary-trump.html) **and** [**Michael Wolff.**](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/michael-wolff-tells-a-juicy-tale-in-his-new-trump-book-but-should-we-believe-it/2018/01/03/d46f31c6-f0b2-11e7-97bf-bba379b809ab_story.html) **My view is that journalism as it is currently practiced by our most elite organizations simply isn’t persuasive. It frustrates the liars enough that they’ll still try to delegitimize it – and succeed, in scary proportions. But printing the truth and the lies and letting the people decide just isn’t working. You have to shout the truth from the rooftops, and fight the lies in the streets. And although Trump and Trumpism have brought these issues to a head, the failure of objectivity is not just a Trump-era phenomenon. Most notably and fatally, the failure of the press to assertively call out the flaws in the case against Saddam Hussein – out of fear of** [**appearing biased**](http://www.niemanwatchdog.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=showcase.view&showcaseid=92) **— quite arguably led to a devastating war. When a** [**poll in late 2003 showed**](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2003/09/06/hussein-link-to-911-lingers-in-many-minds/7cd31079-21d1-42cf-8651-b67e93350fde/) **that a shocking 69 percent of Americans falsely believed Hussein had a role in the 9/11 terror attacks, newsroom leaders across the country should have launched a major reassessment of their approach to fighting misinformation. Today, with Trump openly challenging the basic mechanics of democracy, the question is upon us: When it comes down to a choice between authoritarianism and democracy, will the elite media “take sides”? Or will they be afraid of appearing biased? The alternative: “moral clarity” In a seminal tweet early this summer, during the** [**battle over a particularly abhorrent op-ed**](https://presswatchers.org/2020/06/send-in-some-new-editors-to-the-new-york-times/)**, journalist Wesley Lowery set down a marker: Some have depicted this view as radical, demanding some sort of uniform view on all issues. But what Lowery and others (including myself) are arguing for is not moral conformity, just clarity. Government “by the people” depends on voters being exposed to different points of view — but it also requires the media to fight misinformation. So that means journalists should strive to present a variety of political arguments to their audiences. But they need to be based in reality and presented honestly. Alternately, political arguments that gain currency but are made in bad faith – particularly those that are racist, or sexist, inhumane, or anti-democratic — should be clearly identified as such. Moral clarity in news journalism isn’t partisan or polemic. Journalists shouldn’t pretend they know the answers. We should just stop pretending we don’t know what the problems are. Heck, maybe “moral clarity” just means having an occasional open discussion in diverse newsrooms about how to do the work, rather than just doing it the way it’s always been done. “What I argue for is a more deliberate process that acknowledges that there are morals and ethics at all,” Lowery told newsletter journalist** [**Luke O’Neil**](https://luke.substack.com/p/you-can-just-list-the-true-things) **in early July. “All these folks get off on saying ‘We don’t make any decisions ever. This is what it’s always been’ as a way of shielding the fact that they are constantly making decisions, and those decisions are subject to their biases.” Lowery noted: “I’ll be honest, in my experience there is far less discussion than there should be. Everything operates on autopilot. Losing trust not gaining it Objectivity is supposed to create a bond of trust between journalists and their audience. But I’ve often argued that an honest,** [**transparent**](https://presswatchers.org/2020/06/theres-a-better-way-to-present-opinions-online-with-radical-transparency-and-the-new-york-times-should-lead-the-way/) **journalistic application of moral clarity would enhance trust a lot more than the transparently bogus application of** [**strained euphemisms**](https://presswatchers.org/category/getting-played/)**, flagrant** [**false equivalence**](https://presswatchers.org/category/false-equivalence/)**,** [**amnesia**](https://presswatchers.org/category/context/) **and** [**credulousness**](https://presswatchers.org/category/timidity/)**. As I wrote** [**last month**](https://presswatchers.org/2020/06/elite-media-defines-neutrality-in-terms-of-a-white-guy-who-doesnt-even-exist/)**, editors like Baquet are pursuing a form of objectivity that encompasses a whole range of anachronistic attitudes and habits that actually reduce the accuracy and authenticity of news coverage, rather than enhance it – and the readers notice. Intelligent readers cringe when they read star New York Times reporter** [**Peter Baker**](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/24/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-denial.html?searchResultPosition=3) **join the** [**he’s-changing-his-tone chorus**](https://www.mediamatters.org/donald-trump/journalists-have-been-obsessing-over-trump-supposedly-changing-his-tone-five-years) **by pronouncing that “denial no longer appears to be a viable strategy for Mr. Trump”. (The Times itself published an unsigned and oddly** [**short-lived item**](https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:gSuFCaXJR6wJ:https://thecanadian.news/2020/07/28/2020-election-live-updates-trump-returns-to-where-hes-mostly-been-on-coronavirus-denying-reality/+&cd=3&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us) **in its live news updates a few days later, headlined: “Trump Returns to Where He’s Mostly Been on Coronavirus: Denying Reality”. It started off: “Trump’s supposed shift on the virus didn’t last long.”) Focusing on** [**tactics rather than substance**](https://presswatchers.org/2019/10/horse-race-coverage-takes-all-the-meaning-out-of-political-reporting/) **leads to horrors like this recent** [**Washington Post article**](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/07/27/which-party-will-lose-political-fight-if-congress-lets-unemployment-benefits-expire/) **examining who will benefit politically from Republicans letting unemployment benefits run out for desperate Americans. It literally featured headers saying “Democrats say” and “Republicans say”. The worst thing, however, is the hypocrisy. Reporters confidently describe Trump’s thinking when they’re making absurdly generous and incorrect assumptions (as when he recently restarted his daily briefings because he missed the ratings, but** [**the Times**](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/us/politics/trump-coronavirus-briefings.html) **called it “a tacit acknowledgment that the public health crisis he had hoped to put behind him was still ravaging much of the country”). But they can’t bring themselves to write that he’s** [**lying**](https://presswatchers.org/2020/03/trumps-new-flim-flam-false-hope/)**, or** [**crazy**](https://presswatchers.org/2020/02/big-media-is-covering-up-trumps-terrifying-incoherence-in-a-time-of-emergency/)**, or** [**stupid**](https://presswatchers.org/2020/04/washington-press-corps-covers-up-trumps-profound-stupidity/)**. Consider how at the New York Times sometimes it’s important not to tell people what they should think about a news story, but other times it is – and a key factor seems to be whether it will annoy the left. Don’t want to take my word for it? In his interview on the Times’s own** [**Daily podcast**](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/31/podcasts/the-daily/2020-election.html) **in January, Baquet defended** [**the paper’s both-sides coverage of Trump**](https://presswatchers.org/2020/01/dean-baquet-interview-demonstrates-why-bothsiderism-is-alive-and-well-at-his-new-york-times/) **by saying: “I think of the reader who just wants to pick up his paper in the morning and know what the hell happened. I’m beholden to that reader, and I feel obligated to tell that reader what happened.” But defending an article about** [**Bernie Sanders’s entrance**](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/30/us/politics/bernie-sanders-campaign-for-president.html) **into the 2016 Democratic presidential primary that framed Sanders as a longshot who at best might shift Hillary Clinton a bit to the left, Baquet said: “I think we got to tell the readers, in the moment, how should we think about this.” He added: “I think the reader picks up The New York Times and says, Bernie Sanders, I’ve never heard of him. How should I think about him?” There’s no consistency. “Objectivity” seems to be based on an oversensitivity to the imagined views of a mythical center-right white male** [**who doesn’t exist**](https://presswatchers.org/2020/06/elite-media-defines-neutrality-in-terms-of-a-white-guy-who-doesnt-even-exist/) **— and it pisses off readers who do. Taking the public’s side Local journalism is dying, and to some extent I blame that on “objectivity,” too. Here’s the core argument I made in 2009, when I wrote that “**[**Playing it Safe’ Is Killing the American Newspaper**](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/playing-it-safe-is-killin_b_209200)**”: But we’re hiding much of our newsrooms’ value behind a terribly anachronistic format: voiceless, incremental news stories that neither get much traffic nor make our sites compelling destinations. While the dispassionate, what-happened-yesterday, inverted-pyramid daily news story still has some marginal utility, it is mostly a throwback at this point — a relic of a daily product delivered on paper to a geographically limited community. (For instance, it’s the daily delivery cycle of our print product that led us to focus on yesterday’s news. And it’s the focus on maximizing newspaper circulation that drove us to create the notion of “objectivity” – thereby removing opinion and voice from news stories — for fear of alienating any segment of potential subscribers.)… While we legitimately want to keep partisanship and polemics out of our news coverage, we need to stop banishing our humanity and the passions that made us become journalists in the first place. When we find a great story, why shouldn’t we shout it from the rooftops? Maybe if local papers were pluckier and more assertive about advocating for the people in their communities those people would be more willing to pay. If they want to take the public’s side, local, regional and national newspapers should consider creating beats based not on how officialdom organizes itself, but on major areas where people are getting screwed. So maybe there should be a beat about** [**struggles with poverty**](https://niemanreports.org/articles/it-cant-happen-here-2/)**, and another on** [**the effects of criminal justice**](https://niemanreports.org/articles/the-too-many-prisoners-dilemma/)**. National news organizations are suddenly, finally, devoting resources to race issues. But what about creating beats for inequality, misogyny, and official** [**secrecy**](https://archives.cjr.org/united_states_project/the_case_for_a_secrecy_beat.php)**? There are signs of progress here and there. In regards to Trump’s attempts to delegitimize the Nov. 3 election, the mainstream media has, effectively,** [**taken sides**](https://apnews.com/d203eaa406dc5e7362dfa9e33522195e) **(with some** [**notable exceptions**](https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/note-presidents-offer-dueling-views-countrys-voting-systems/story?id=72068671)**.) Some news organizations are recognizing that taking sides is just fine sometimes. Here’s the vice president of new at McClatchy: Am I hopeful that the industry can change? Not so much in the short run, no. That’s because there’s actually a third reason so many journalistic leaders cling to “objectivity”: Abandoning it would require them to admit they were wrong – and that “liberals” like me were right. It would mean surrendering the moral high ground they treasure more than anything. That’s why I don’t expect much to change until there’s a new generation of leadership in our newsrooms.**

#### [3] Turn – prioritizing objectivity over advocacy increases disease

**PATH, 17** (PATH, PATH is a global nonprofit improving public health, 11/1/2017, accessed on 3/8/2022, Path, "How advocacy can help prevent the next pandemic", <https://www.path.org/articles/-how-advocacy-can-help-prevent-the-next-pandemic-/>) wwvl

PATH’s use of **advocacy** to help **stop outbreaks from becoming pandemics.** Ebola. Pandemic flu. Zika. Nipah. Despite advances in public health, medicine, and technology over the past century, the **world** remains **highly vulnerable to infectious disease outbreaks**. An outbreak anywhere can quickly become a threat everywhere, and the greatest risks stem from the weakest health systems in the poorest communities around the world. That is why **PATH advocates** for steady and sustained funding for programs that strengthen health systems and advance new tools that help stop outbreaks before they spread. We’re sounding the alarm, and **policymakers** are **listening**. The **Ebola outbreak** in West Africa in 2014 was a wake-up call for the world. While **laudable progress** has been achieved since then—especially through the **Global Health Security Agenda**—the work to reduce global health threats with pandemic potential has only just begun. Advancements made in protecting people around the world from epidemics is at risk of being lost if funding is not sustained. That is why PATH advocates for sustained funding for programs that help build capacity for countries around the world to better prevent, detect, and respond to disease outbreaks, as well as research and development for new tools like vaccines, drugs, and diagnostics to prevent and treat disease outbreaks. The US government has been a leader in the Global Health Security Agenda and is a leading public-sector donor for research and development for health. However, global health programs—including outbreak prevention and preparedness efforts—have come under threat in light of the US Administration’s policy of protecting domestic interests first and pulling back from international aid programs. With **concerted advocacy efforts**, PATH and its advocacy partners have been **successful in protecting funds that help improve health security.** We have made clear that the US government cannot safeguard Americans’ health unless other countries can prevent outbreaks from spreading, and unless we have a strong pipeline of new drugs, diagnostics, vaccines, and other technologies for diseases likely to become pandemics. PATH’s report, “Healthier World, Safer America: A US Government Roadmap for International Action to Prevent the Next Pandemic” focuses on the importance of strong US government leadership on global health security and outlines what the US Administration and Congress must do to support global prevention, detection, and rapid response to emerging heath threats. Using this report as a foundation, and building on our technical expertise in implementing global health security programming, **PATH** has **successfully leveraged media advocacy and direct engagement with decision-makers to** not only protect, but even garner some **increase**s in **funding for global health security**, without taking funds away from other vital global health programs. For example, in the fiscal year **2018 budget** that Congress passed, as well as the fiscal year **2019 budget** currently being developed, **Congress** has largely **protected global health funds**. Importantly, Congress has also adopted the budget increases PATH suggested to make up for impending shortfalls for global health security programs at both USAID and CDC. The Senate also rejected proposals to rescind unused emergency funds that could be put toward future outbreak prevention efforts. We continue to monitor the policy and funding environment and draw on PATH’s experiences working in partnership with countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Vietnam to demonstrate the positive impact of investments in preparedness.

#### [3] no reverse casual ev – nothing linking advocacy OR objectivity to fake news

#### [4] alt causes – fake news is ONE barrier towards climate change mitigation efforts – it’s not even the main one

#### [5] even if objectivity solves/checks back against misinfo, no reason why we shouldn’t prioritize advocacy

#### [6] turn – advocacy prevents climate change

**Compton, 18** (Julie Compton is a freelance journalist who was nominated for the GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Digital Journalism Article, 11/5/2018, accessed on 3/8/2022, NBC News, "6 ways ordinary people can prevent climate change, according to researchers and advocates", <https://www.nbcnews.com/better/science/6-ways-ordinary-people-can-prevent-climate-change-according-researchers-ncna926311>) wwvl

In October, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a leading international body on climate change researchers, released an alarming report. The study found that countries around the world have just 12 years to reduce global warming before it reaches catastrophic levels. Now that we know time may be running out, the question is: What can we do about it? If current global temperatures rise above 1.5 degrees Celsius, as the report suggests, the warming atmosphere will create more extreme weather patterns across the U.S., according to Ben Strauss, chief scientist of Climate Central, an organization that reports on climate change. He says people across the country can expect hotter summers and milder winters, which will have a direct impact on food crops and the survival of wildlife. “It’s getting hotter, so we can expect many more days above 90 degrees or 95 degrees, depending on where you live,” says Strauss. In the West, continued wildfires will have a direct impact on air quality and human health, according to Strauss. In the Southwest, he says droughts will lead to water scarcity, while the East and Midwest will experience more torrential rainstorms. Strauss says people in eastern coastal areas, especially in low-lying communities, will see more flooding due to heavier and longer-lasting hurricanes, which will have an impact on the value of their homes. In the Northeast, he says, warmer weather will bring more tick and mosquito-born illnesses. The region will see fewer snowstorms, but the storms will become more intense due to increased moisture in the air. One thing will surely impact people equally across the country, according to the scientist: intensifying summer heat. “Many more days that are danger days in terms of human health and that are ‘black flag’ days — you get to a certain combination of heat and humidity,” Strauss says. **Focus on solutions**, according to Crystal Chissell, a vice president for Project Drawdown, a coalition of researchers and scientists who are working on climate change solutions. Chissell says reports of impending doom tend to cause ordinary people to feel hopeless and to shut down. “We will get a lot **further toward solving** the **problem if** we **focus on solutions** rather than continuing to highlight the problem,” Chissell says. Project Drawdown recently put together a report highlighting 30 behavioral solutions ordinary people can take to combat climate change. The top three include wasting less food, adopting a plant-rich diet and consuming less energy and water. Methane from agricultural actives, waste management, and energy use is the second largest cause of climate change behind fossil fuels, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Reducing food waste is the number-one thing consumers can do to significantly lessen their climate impact, according to the Project Drawdown report. “Food that is disposed of and spoiled creates methane, and that’s why it has an impact on greenhouse gases, because methane is such a strong greenhouse gas,” Chissell says. “And that’s why reducing food waste has such a large impact.” Food waste occurs when we don’t buy produce because it has blemishes or is misshapen, when we discard food because it is a day past the expiration date, or because we simply never get around to eating it, she says. Factory farms feed cows grains, which cause them to release methane into the air through their gases, says Chissell. “It’s not actually natural to their digestive system so it creates more methane,” Chissell explains. Chissell says adopting a plant-rich diet, and eating more meat from organic farms where animals are fed natural diets, can help reduce methane. “It’s not even necessary to be a vegan or a vegetarian,” she says, “it’s just reducing the amount of meat that we consume and eating plant-based [foods].” “It’s absolutely imperative to also reduce energy usage,” says Chissell. “For instance, switching to LED light bulbs — that has a very large impact, as does any measure that can reduce household water use.” There are a number of actions you can take to reduce water consumption, according to Chissell, including purchasing low-flow shower heads and sink faucets, taking shorter showers and washing full loads of laundry. **Constituents who** do the extra legwork of **call**ing **and meet**ing **with their representatives have a huge influence**, according to Flannery Winchester, communications coordinator at Citizens' Climate Lobby, a non-partisan advocacy organization that focuses on national policies that address climate change. **“If** they’re **not communicating with** the **people** who are **elected to rep**resent them, then those people are **not** going to be **prioritizing** those issues,” Winchester says. Many people believe their elected officials won’t be swayed by their concerns, says Winchester. But **when people actively lobby their representatives**, she says, **change does happen**. For example, Winchester says **voters influenced** both Democrats and Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives to come together to create the the **Climate Solutions Caucus**, a bipartisan group focused on climate change solutions. “**Things** really are **moving**,” says Winchester, “and it’s **because people** are taking the time to **talk to** their members of **Congress**.” While there is major consensus among scientists that climate change is happening, some people may still doubt it’s real, or see climate change policies as “job killers,” according to Winchester. How people talk to others about climate change is important to solving the problem, Winchester says. She says it’s imperative to avoid arguing about climate change as if it is a partisan issue. “Really listen, ask open-ended questions and focus on finding common ground,” Winchester advises. For instance, if someone fears climate change policy will hurt coal industry jobs, re-focus the conversation on how climate change policies can create jobs, she says. “Focusing on the common ground is the main thing that’s going to make it possible for you to introduce new information into the conversation, because they don’t feel like you’re fighting with them,” Winchester says. A big way to be a part of the solution is to join a nonprofit organization where you live that focuses on helping the environment. Many of these organizations have membership opportunities in states and congressional districts across the country.

#### 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

#### 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.

Much more probable than journalism killing climate change; populist leaders have way more power and fans

#### Prioritization fails – objectivity always gets pushed aside

**Srivastava** [“Why Prioritization Fails.” PJ Srivastava, No Date, [www.pjsrivastava.com/why-prioritization-fails](http://www.pjsrivastava.com/why-prioritization-fails).] // VS

Why Prioritization Fails (because) Prioritization is a critical process when resources are limited, but it doesn’t always result in the best outcome. It’s the way an organization prioritizes that often determines its effect. Certainly psychology and group dynamics come into play; stronger personalities “get their way” more often than others, skewing the way things are prioritized. Ranking the weights of various options may also be swayed by personal judgments. But even with a rigorously objective process, the most common problem is that short term concerns get prioritized over long term ones. In the book the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, Stephen Covey offered a model which illustrates the problem with conventional prioritization. According to this model, every task can be put into one of 4 “quadrants”: Quadrant 1: Urgent and important Quadrant 2: Not urgent and important Quadrant 3: Urgent and not important Quadrant 4: Not urgent and not important The problem is most (media) of us spend our day largely dealing with Quadrant 1 and Quadrant 3 activities because they’re time-sensitive. These are the fires that must be put out; the initiatives to boost earnings for the quarter or the year; pressing emails and phone calls, and so forth. The urgent nature of these tasks cause them to naturally rise to the top. The paradox is that Quadrant 2 activities, which we never get around to, are actually the items with the highest future value. These are long-term investments in growth and development, building infrastructure, updates to technology and security, and all those activities that essentially “Sharpen the Saw”—or improve our ability to be effective. Although Quadrant 3 is meant to represent “urgent AND not important”, in reality, the way we tend to organize tasks is it to make these important BECAUSE they are urgent. Thus, we all think we are working on Quadrant 1 tasks, all the time. We are, as Covey pointed out, suffering from “urgency addiction”. The longer a company has been around, the more chronic the problems of focusing purely on “urgent” projects, which include a reliance on antiquated systems, a lack of talent development, and a disengaged workforce. To correct this imbalance, we must shift our paradigm of prioritization. If we were to break down the percentage of Quadrant 1, Quadrant 2, and Quadrant 3 tasks in our current planning cycles, almost inevitably we will find way too many Quadrant 1 and 3 tasks and not nearly enough (if any) Quadrant 2 tasks. Even a modest goal of increasing our Quadrant 2 tasks by 20% while reducing our urgent tasks by 20% would have a beneficial long term effect, for our organizations and for our sanity.