

THE BROWN UNIVERSITY
**JOURNAL OF
PHILOSOPHY,
POLITICS &
ECONOMICS**

Special Feature:
INEQUALITY

*including interviews with
Steven Pinker, Paul Krugman
and Yanis Varoufakis*

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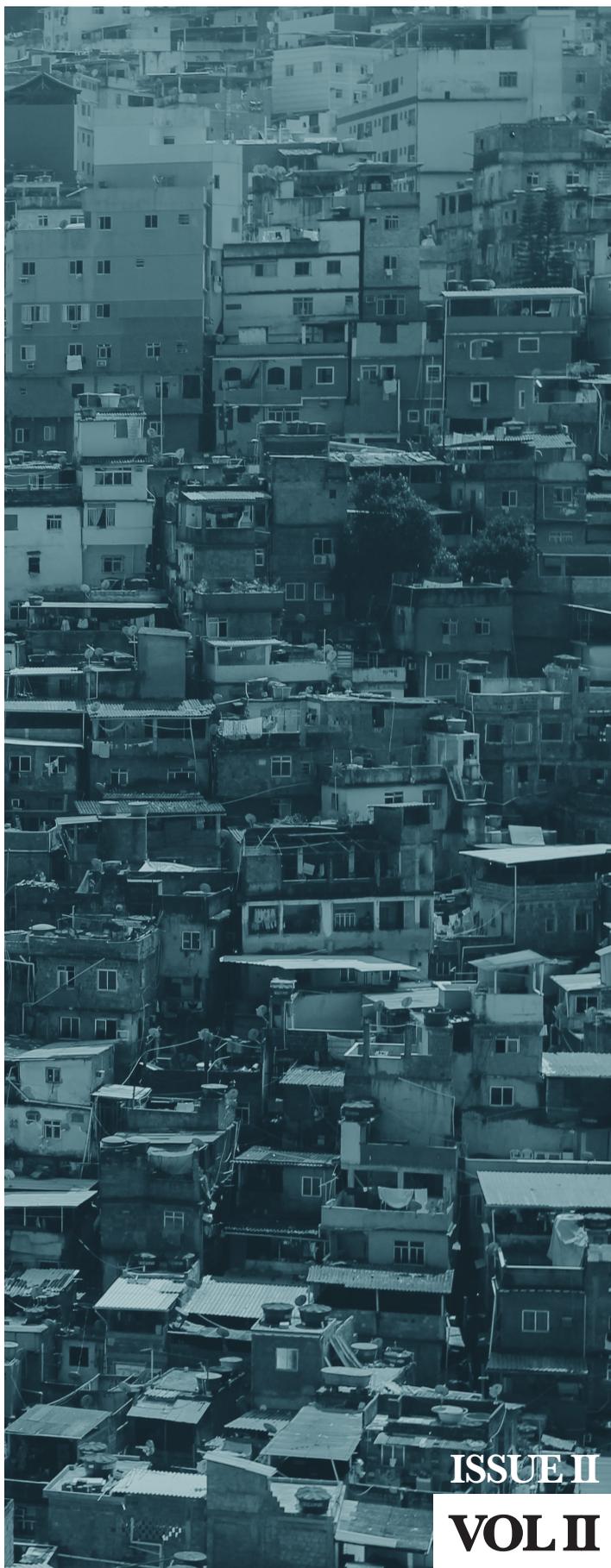
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The Brown Journal of PPE remains thankful for the continued support and funding of the Political Theory Project. Additionally, we are grateful for the contributions made by Steven Pinker, Paul Krugman and Yanis Varoufakis. We are grateful both for the opportunity to have had lively conversations with each of these respected thinkers, and the opportunity to share these conversations with our readership. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we are grateful for the numerous students who submitted papers from all around the world. This paper depends on their innovative ideas and engagement in our editorial process.

FOUNDING STATEMENT

The Brown University Journal of Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (JPPE) is a peer reviewed academic journal for undergraduate and graduate students that is sponsored by the Political Theory Project and the Philosophy, Politics, and Economics Society Program at Brown University. The JPPE aims to promote intellectual rigor, free thinking, original scholarship, interdisciplinary understanding, and global leadership. By publishing student works of philosophy, politics, and economics, the JPPE attempts to unite academic fields that are too often partitioned into a single academic discourse. In doing so, the JPPE aims to produce a scholarly product greater than the sum of any of its individual parts. By adopting this model, the JPPE attempts to provide new answers to today's most pressing questions.

MASTHEAD

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FOREWORD

In recent years, inequality has been discussed at an increasing rate in academic and political spheres. There is a growing rate of inequality along every method of measurement. Within the United States, there is growing income and wealth inequality. On an international level, global inequality studies find that a large portion of the world's wealth is held by a shockingly small portion of the world's population. This problem has grabbed the attention of numerous academic and nongovernmental organizations. Inequality has come to the forefront of numerous 2020 US presidential campaigns. Within the Democratic primary, many candidates cited inequality as a central concern and offered a wide variety of solutions. Brown alum Andrew Yang introduced the concept of a Universal Basic Income plan to the global stage, while Senator Bernie Sanders has proposed a wealth tax as one part of his sweeping economic policy.

This edition of the Brown Journal of Philosophy, Politics and Economics is intended to help contribute to the conversation on inequality through our feature interviews and submissions. In our conversations with Former Greek Minister of Finance Yanis Varoufakis and American Economist Paul Krugman, we discussed the prevalence of inequality and its potential causes.

While we have some recurring themes in our issue, it is our hope that this issue holds something of interest for all its readers. The Brown Journal of Philosophy, Politics and Economics continues to discuss a wide variety of topics that are analyzed through the distinct yet complementary lenses of philosophy, politics and economics. Pieces like “John Taylor and Ben Bernanke on the Great Recession – Who Was Right About What Went Wrong?” examines historical events, while “Respect for the Smallest of Creatures: An Analysis of Human Respect for and Protection of Insects” applies the lens of PPE to the theoretical. We believe that the distinct topics examined, and the insights gleaned from them, are enhanced when combined.

The Editorial Board

Special Feature

Steven Pinker

Steven Pinker is an experimental psychologist who conducts research in visual cognition, psycholinguistics, and social relations. He grew up in Montreal and earned his BA from McGill and his PhD from Harvard. Currently Johnstone Professor of Psychology at Harvard, he has also taught at Stanford and MIT. He is an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences, a two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist, a Humanist of the Year, a recipient of nine honorary doctorates, and one of Foreign Policy's "World's Top 100 Public Intellectuals" and Time's "100 Most Influential People in the World Today." He writes frequently for The New York Times, The Guardian, and other publications. His tenth book, published in February 2018, is called Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress.

JPPE: There's considerable debate over the distinction between free speech and hate speech. How do we know when one meets the other? Is there a responsibility of college campuses or their students to help provide definitions or guidelines for these ideas and which views we believe are of academic merit?

Pinker: There are limits on free speech that are recognized in all societies—even in the most libertarian societies when it comes to free speech—such as the incitement of imminent lawless activity, libel, extortion, and some cases of obscenity. There can be restrictions on the place, time, and manner in which speech is expressed. This is all contained in free speech jurisprudence. Nevertheless, those limits are pretty expansive in the United States, and I think laudably the “default” is the notion that speech is free except for very circumscribe exceptions.

And that pertains to government scriptures on free speech, which is not the same as the discretion that any outlet or platform has regarding who they give a voice to. And of course a university is not going to invite any drunk on a soapbox in a public park or any ranter on Facebook. There are certain standards of scholarly accuracy and attention to academic literature.

So I think the issue doesn't arise in terms of whether a university ought to invite some provocateur who is just not part of the community of scholarly discourse and intellectual argumentation; but rather it arises when there are scholars who clearly do meet that standard but whose opinions just happen to be controversial, yet they can back up what they say with generally accepted academic standards.

Of course, protests too are a legitimate form of free speech, so there can't be any objections to protests. Although, there is jurisprudence; there are guidelines among defenders of free speech that you may protest but that you may not shut someone down. That is, there is no heckler's veto, even though there can be of course protests that don't disrupt the ability of heterodox views to be expressed.

JPPE: From what you have observed, do you believe that students are keener to protest speakers than when you were an undergraduate?

Pinker: I think there is a narrowing. It's been going on for some time. It was certainly true when I was an undergraduate and that was a long time ago. And so despite some commentary, which blames it on the millennial generation or on generation z, there was plenty of this in my day. There is the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), which monitors disinvitations and speech codes, and it found that things have gotten a little bit better in 2018 compared to previous years. They've only been monitoring it for, I think, 10 or 15 years. Things definitely got worse until last year, but there have been ups and downs. FIRE also monitors de-platforming, which is a disruptive attempt to prevent speakers from speaking once they're there; they monitor speech codes. My sense is it's gotten worse, although it definitely existed when I was a student.

JPPE: Did you participate in these kinds of protests?

Pinker: No (laughs).

JPPE: It seems somewhat arbitrary to determine who is of "scholarly merit".

Pinker: It's kind of what academics do all the time. We referee one another's grant proposals, manuscripts, and tenure cases. There are disputes. There are unclear cases. But there is definitely a difference between a Richard Spencer on the one hand and a Charles Murray or a Heather Mac Donald or Jordan Peterson on the other.

JPPE: That last name—Jordan Peterson—is someone speaking to a large and predominantly male audience. How do you explain the Jordan Peterson phenomenon?

Pinker: I agree it's a puzzle who he is speaking to. I think he symbolizes for young men two things: one of them is an intellectual engagement that transgresses some of the very narrow boundaries in elite universities and in media like the *New York Times*. While he's not alt-right or all of the things that people lazily accuse him of,

he is not *New York Times* or Brown University.

He is clearly an erudite and intelligent person. He was a professor first at Harvard, then at the University of Toronto. He is an extremely knowledgeable political psychologist and expert on psychological personality testing. He stretches the boundaries of what you can say, however, not into the territory of white supremacists or neo-nazis and other cooks and crackpots and nutcases.

The other thing is that the demographic of young men he speaks to often feel so marginalized by, on the one hand, leftist feminist discourse in universities and, on the other hand, the kind of nihilistic immature culture in advertising, extreme sports, and popular culture, which seems to glorify immaturity, hedonism, and decadence. And I think they realize that someone just saying pretty banal things like “be mature, be responsible for what you say, and clean up after yourself”; that strikes them—caught between these two worlds—as something noble and revelatory. And it can’t be a bad thing that you have a charismatic guy telling young men to be responsible, not to hurt people, and to make their bed. It’s astonishing that it has to be said. But apparently it does.

JPPE: You said that there were highly literate and highly intelligent people that gravitate to the alt-right. What do you make of the blow-back you received from that statement?

Pinker: The *New York Times* reported it under an op-ed titled how social media makes us stupid. That was Jesse Singal who wrote that op-ed. For one thing, many people misinterpreted that because their impression of the alt-right is tiki-torch-holding-neo-nazis, whereas the people that call themselves alt-right are not that. I think their views are often quite noxious, and I’ve argued against them. But I know, since some of them are former students that write back to me—I mean Harvard graduates—that it is a mistake to write them off as tiki-torch-holding-skinheads and neo-nazis. Some of them are smart; they are intelligent, and they feel that there are so many topics that are forbidden in standard university settings. And they feel that mainstream scholars can’t handle the truth and that they feel privy to a kind of forbidden truth, which I argued is dangerous because it means that rather extreme views proliferate in this community without themselves being criticized by opposing views or data that bare on those views. And they can actually blossom in a kind of noxious form if they’re not expressed in an arena in which they can be criticized.

Special Feature

Paul Krugman

Paul Krugman is an American economist who was awarded the 2008 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for his work on New Trade Theory and New Economic Geography. He is perhaps best known for his work as an op-ed columnist for The New York Times. Krugman writes in a wide variety of mediums, as he is the author or editor of over 20 books and over 200 professional journal articles. Krugman is a professor of Economics and International Affairs at Princeton University. He was the Ford International Professor of International Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and has served on the U.S. Council of Economic Advisers. He was the recipient of the 1991 John Bates Clark Medal, an award given every two years by the American Economic Association to an economist under 40.

JPPE: With US income and wealth inequality at a historical high, economists like Daron Acemoglu and David Autor have discussed the issue of job polarization and the idea that artificial intelligence and other modern labor-saving innovations might contribute to the widening of that skills gap and the further privileging of high skill work. Are you concerned that modern technology will make inequality worse?

Krugman: I'm concerned but I'm not convinced. The belief that we're living in an era of radical technological change has a problem, which is, if we were in such a period, we should see rapidly rising productivity. What we're actually seeing is rather sluggish productivity. Rising productivity is just not being shown in the data. And then once you adopt that attitude you can ask yourself how—thinking about the kind of tangible technological innovations of our time—are we really seeing radical progress? The rise of the original smartphone or the iPhone was a really big deal. How excited are people about this year's latest smartphone? You really can convince yourself that we're starting to plateau. And that may not last, but it's not clear that this is a time of very radical technological change.

Aside from the fact that rapid technological change isn't so obvious, the argument that technology is driving income polarization runs up against several problems. I think Autor does great stuff, and that "U shape" he finds is really interesting. But there is a problem if wage developments don't seem to be following the kinds of labor that he says are being devalued—i.e. if middle-skill work isn't experiencing worse wage gains than lower-skill work, which is the part that's growing. So if we're seeing an economy that is polarizing with a greater number of low skill jobs, why are home health aids not getting better paid? Those are service sector

jobs, so that makes you question whether there is some statistical artifact about the whole thing. It's not for sure, but I'm unconvinced.

And then there's the general point that if we have technology that's biased against labor, it needs to be biased towards something, which would be capital. This means returns to investments would be high, but the corporate sector is behaving as if returns on investment are low. They are not investing heavily despite extremely low interest rates. So I just think the whole thing is a story you can tell, and it might be true in the future but there really is no slam dunk evidence that it's what is happening now.

JPPE: Research by Robert Allen on the “Engels’ Pause” shows that because technological disruption tends to improve productivity, it also temporarily increases inequality as wages stagnate and returns to capital rise. Then eventually some leveling force brings it down. Do you think that that’s a fair way of looking at how theoretical technological disruption causes inequality?

Krugman: It can happen. To the extent that we have a theoretical analysis of what technology does, that analysis says that it depends on the technology and it depends on the bias of the technology. Technology that replaces a worker with lots of extra capital should have a negative impact on wages and increase inequality.

That's not a particularly new insight. David Ricardo had it in 1821, and the reason he had it is because there's a pretty good case that that's what happened during the early phases of the Industrial Revolution in Britain. There's an endless debate about what happened to real wages between 1800 and 1840, but the fact that we're even having that debate tells you that there isn't sufficiently convincing evidence of rising real wages to override the counterarguments.

So stagnating wages due to technology is possible. It's not clear that it has happened again since the Industrial Revolution. There is an argument that there was a kind of technological bias towards highly educated workers, which was driving the rise in income inequality in the 1980s and 1990s. That's more debatable, but it's also a story that doesn't help much in developments since 2000.

So technology can have an effect, and it's very easy to write down a model in which technological change is, for some period—and maybe even an extended period—, bad for substantial groups of workers. But it depends on the story you tell.

JPPE: There was economic research that found assortative mating was responsible for twenty

percent of the rise in inequality since the 1980s. Is there anything college students can do about this, or are they just the vehicles of widening inequality?

Krugman: It's not just assortative mating; it's assortative lots-of-stuff. At the highest levels, everyone was roommates at Harvard. But I think a lot of those assortative mating things are mostly relying on inequality as measured by survey data, which doesn't capture the really huge incomes at the top. Those incomes are measured by other things, and that's a large part of the inequality. But, look, if we can restore adequate funding for high-quality public education so that we can have more great students at a wider variety of places, then maybe the mating won't be so assortative. I'm not big on the notion that any intervention in people's lives is evil socialism, but telling people who fall in love with is beyond even what I would consider.

*JPPE: Fair enough. Walter Scheidel came out with *The Great Leveler* where he wrote a history of inequality. His thesis was that periods of high inequality only ever get remedied by mass military mobilization, plague, civil war, or government collapse. In a time of historically high inequality, are you worried about that? Or do you think that effective policy and effective politics can actually play a role in reducing inequality?*

Krugman: The middle-class society that I grew up in—now gone— was the creation of policy. It was not the result of the invisible hand of the market, but a dramatic increase in unionization, the squeezing of wages, wage differentials, the establishment of norms, and changes in taxation, all of which were associated with World War II. So massive total war was the background for the Great Compression.

Do we know that this is the only way that reducing inequality can happen? No. It's the only way we've seen it happen in the past, but we don't have a whole lot of samples, and you have to hope that we can do it differently. And I would say that there were significant equalizing reforms during the Progressive Era, and it's true that some of the stuff took place after World War I, but some of it took place before. So I don't think history should give you total pessimism about our ability to enact change. And I'd like to see more equality and not total war.

Special Feature

Yanis Varoufakis

Yanis Varoufakis is the co-founder of DiEM25 (Democracy in Europe Movement) as well as the former Minister of Finance for the Greek government. Additionally, Varoufakis has written several books including his most recent work Adults in The Room: My Battle With Europe's Deep Establishment, which is a first-hand account of Europe's hidden agenda and a call to arms to renew European democracy. As a self-identified "libertarian Marxist," Varoufakis calls for a radical new way of thinking about concepts like the economy, finance and capitalism.

JPPE: Many economists have their explanations about where inequality comes from, such as financialization, credit, globalization, technology, and bad policy. When thinking about the causes of inequality in the last thirty years, are there specific areas you think we ought to devote our attention to?

Yanis Varoufakis: Well, there's one word that answers your question: financialization. Financialization came on the back of the post-Bretton-Woods drive for completing a surplus society loop, where the United States operated like the world vacuum cleaner, sucking into its territory the net exports of the world on the basis of pushing down wages, lowering inflation, and, of course, Wall Street and the exorbitant power of the dollar. But the tsunami of capital that was going into Wall Street every day to close this loop and to pay for the increasing trade of the US was what shifted the center of gravity of power from industry to finance.

JPPE: Private credit played a big role in that?

Varoufakis: Of course. It's all private credit. You know, financialization is 99.9 percent private money lending. Consider the financialization of blue-collar workers, in which their homes became the only way of catching up and competing with the Jones', and since their average earnings were stuck at 1973 levels in real terms, it was only the appreciation of house prices that allowed them to continue the American Dream of rising standards and consumption. And in 2008 that came crashing down, and ever since then, you have a process leading to Trump. So today's extreme inequality is due to a very significant class war against the American working class that started at the end of Bretton Woods. And Paul

Volker, who recently passed, was central to this. All of this created a new phase in global history: financialized globalization. It pushed inequality back to 1920s levels, financialization collapsed, and then central banks and governments like that of President Obama's refloated finance, creating socialism for the very few and permanent austerity for everybody else. That's the answer in a nutshell. That's my narrative. But, I have to tell you, since your focus is on inequality, I'm one of the very few left-wingers that doesn't much care about inequality or so much about equality. I don't consider equality to be such a well-defined term. Equality of what? How do you define it?

JPPE: What about income inequality?

Varoufakis: Inequality is a terrible thing, but it's a symptom. For me, it's not the issue. The issue is exploitation. If we have huge levels of exploitation it is because we live in an extractionary economy in which the very few extract value from humans and from nature. Deep down, I'm a liberal, who thinks that liberalism has not served the cause of liberty.

JPPE: You're a liberal who thinks that liberalism has not fulfilled its promises.

Varoufakis: No, it's gone completely against its mission, like the Marxism of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union led to a regime that violated every principle of Karl Marx. Similarly, what passes as liberalism has created remarkable illiberties and spread them globally. So what matters to me is freedom from the extractive power of others over you and over nature. Capitalism, through its ever-expanding power, destroys the planet and the air that we need to breathe.

JPPE: People like Harry Frankfurt argue that what we should care about is not the gap between the rich and the poor, but rather how well off the worst off are doing.

Varoufakis: That's rubbish. This willfully and purposefully neglects the source of the riches of the rich. It is as if it's a random distribution based on DNA, on ability, and on god-given talents. In the standard debate between John Rawls and Robert Nozick, I was always far more impressed by Nozick than by Rawls because the Rawlsian veil of ignorance is lovely, but the critique of it by Nozick is devastating. He says 'ok, let's say we agree with Rawls and we work out what the uniquely just and therefore rational income distribution is. Let's say we agree, so everybody gets slotted into the income distribution we agreed is uniquely just.' And then suddenly he's got this example from basketball, in which one of us becomes very famous for a particular kind of basketballing technique, and people are prepared to pay a

lot of money to watch us. Do we ban ourselves from doing this and receiving the money that people are willing to give? Illiberal. Or do we allow ourselves to receive that higher income, in which case we have just proven that the income distribution we decided is uniquely just is not uniquely just?

So in the end, what really matters is not what you have, it's what you do in order to have it. That is perfectly Marxist to me. And, as a leftist Marxist, the point where I disagree entirely with Nozick is on his definition of entitlement. In his entitlement theory of justice, he says anything people agree to give you under any circumstances means you have it justly and that you are entitled to it. I say this is nonsense. So if you're starving and I have some food to give you and your kids, and then I make you become my slave voluntarily, that is as coercive as it would be to point a gun at you. So, the distribution of basic goods according to Rawls is important because, without the minimum basic goods, you volunteer to give me things that I'm extracting from you coercively. That's the Marxist critique. I'm neither Rawlsian or Nozickian, but the process that Nozick brings into the conversation, as well as Hayek, is crucial. But where we disagree with the right-wing is on what qualifies as, firstly, sustainable process and, secondly, just process.

JPPE: Would it be fair to say the distinction also comes down to the difference between positive liberty—the capacity to act—and negative liberty—the right to act?

Varoufakis: Here I think the theories of the Canadian philosopher CB Macpherson are helpful. He criticized the Isaiah Berlin distinction between positive and negative liberty by asking, very correctly, that if negative liberty is freedom from interference, how do you define interference? If you and I meet in the desert and you are dying of thirst and I have a glass of water and say 'if you want this, you have to sign a contract saying you pass along all your belongings—your house, your car, and everything'. If you say yes because you are dying of thirst, is this interference? Is this a voluntary transaction? Am I impeding your negative liberty? According to Berlin, I'm not because I'm not forcing you to do anything. You are choosing to give me things for a thing.

In my view, the inequality of access to basic goods like water allows me to exercise extractive exploitation over you and therefore to impede your basic freedom. If you accept the distinction between positive liberty and negative liberty, you end up saying, in the end, 'we're only going to accept negative liberty because who gives a damn about positive liberty—it's too dangerous because it legitimizes all sorts of violations of negative liberty. My model is the following: if instead of negative

liberty, you have freedom from extractive power, and instead of positive liberty, you replace it with the notion of developmental freedom—the freedom to develop as a character.

JPPE: Would you say part of the reason it's so important to object to high levels of inequality comes down to the fact that, in highly unequal societies, you have very different abilities to participate (e.g. unequal baskets of basic goods)?

Varoufakis: When so much of one side doesn't have enough to live on, then you have exploitative power and extractive power that functions to deny every liberty to the party that doesn't have access to that basket of basic goods. This is, of course, the original argument by Karl Marx.

JPPE: Do you think a big component of that comes down to education and access to education?

Varoufakis: No, it comes to ownership. As long as we have shareholders, we're going to live in an illiberal society. What do I mean by shareholders? As long as you have tradable shares and anyone can buy a share in a company in which they don't work, then you create this situation where the majority of the shares of any company are going to be owned by people who have nothing to do with the company. And once you enter that process, you create an alliance with finance because finance creates the capacity to buy shares and fictitious capital minted out of thin air that allows the oligarchy the right to extract the value of others.

Yet imagine a situation in which we have shares, but it's one share and one vote for one person. So anybody working in our business has one vote. I think of it as similar to a library card. When you're enrolled in a university you get a library. Everyone gets one. You can't trade it. It would be similar, in this model I am proposing. As long as you work, you have your share. And then you have one vote. Imagine if corporations operated along those lines. There would be inequality because we would all vote on bonuses, and not everybody would get the same bonuses because we would collectively decide that a certain person is of high value to us and so this person deserves more of a bonus. But the differences would be much smaller. And that has to do with the way in which property rights are distributed.

JPPE: Doesn't this create an incentive for companies to hire fewer people because it would require cutting the company up into thinner slices?

Varoufakis: I don't think that holds water because if you and I create a startup and

we add a third person to expand, and the growth rate is higher than the basic wage in our company, then we would do it because it's in our interests to do it. And the fact that companies would be small and not have more than 300 or 400 people — because you can't scale this up—is a fantastic thing. We need small companies. The whole point about competition is that you have many small companies competing. Now, we have no competitive markets. So one of my criticisms of capitalism is that it is completely anti-competitive. It's monopolistic.

JPPE: So on some level, it's almost this Polanyi Esque argument about liberalism undermining itself and actually requiring government state intervention in order for it to even continue as liberalism.

Varoufakis: Yeah, the Polanyi argument and also the Marx argument. Any attempt to set the state against the market or the market against the state is historically pathetic because the market was created by states. Even the enclosures in Britain that created the circumstances for capital to emerge in Britain would not have happened without the king's army. To pit the state against the market is historical nonsense.

The only reason capitalism happened in Britain and not in France is that there was a powerful central government in the former but not the latter. And the central government dispatched the army in support of the lords that pushed the peasants off the land and replaced them with sheep. The sheep had the capacity to produce wool which was internationally traded, and suddenly the land had value. Without the king's army, it wouldn't have happened.

JPPE: Your focus is on financialization when explaining inequality since the 1970s, but do you think that technological innovations played a role in that as well? In the Industrial Revolution, you saw rising inequality because of increased productivity but stagnant wages. Today, researchers talk about how modern inequality seems at least partially a consequence of the hollowing out of middle-skill/middle-wage work because innovations automated work in that middle sector.

Varoufakis: I don't think we have seen this yet. I think we probably will see it. The hollowing out of the middle class is evident, but I don't think it's because of automation. I think it's simply a situation whereby two things coalesced. On the one hand, it was the introduction of two billion workers in capitalistic markets after 1991 through the Soviet Union satellite states and the rise of China. Two billion workers came from those countries. There were huge shifts of factories to

those countries, whether it was Poland or China. But the proletarianization of former peasants is a standard process that has nothing to do with technology per se. That's the first dimension. The second dimension is the increasing role and capacity of the financial sector in turbocharging private money minting. Through all the financial derivatives and fast trading, without having to press a button, I can transfer billions at lightning speeds. That technological innovation made a huge difference in shifting and increasing power from the industrial scene into the sphere of finance.

JPPE: How did that work? I would imagine a lot of the competition would be between investing firms and companies with better algorithms and better technology.

Varoufakis: Yes, but between 1980 and 2008, in 1980 dollars there was an average inflow of money into Wall Street every day of between five and six billion, on average. Now, if you give a banker five billion every day, even for ten minutes, they will find ways of multiplying it. It's called derivatives, options, financialization. Computers helped them create really complicated instruments that totally blew up the multiplier. So from that five billion, they could create a hundred or two hundred trillion in securities, which very soon started to operate like money to the extent that they were mediums of exchange and a source of value. So effectively they created as much value as they wanted. And immediately, political power shifts to Goldman Sachs, and General Motors becomes a hedge fund that produces a few cars that nobody cares about. So that's what I mean by financialization. And that creates huge inequality because just think of all the bonuses.

JPPE: And very few people have a stake in the stock market.

Varoufakis: Most of this was not in the stock market. The derivatives were traded under the table. And so you have a huge new body of the proletariat coming, factories shifting to china. The Chinese people were coming up very slowly in terms of per capita income, but of course, they lose a lot of the old values—community values, environmental values, cultural identity. And fifteen boys living in one room today might make 15 dollars a day, which in the world bank statistics is a fantastic improvement for them. But maybe their life is far worse than it was when they were in their village milking a cow.

JPPE: Yuval Noah Harari makes the point that, for many people, even the shift to agriculture from hunter-gatherers resulted in a dramatic decline in standards of living. And the same was certainly true of people in the Industrial Revolution. So how do you reconcile that argument

with the notion that all of those innovations resulted in improvements in the standard of living that were eventually felt by everyone?

Varoufakis: I simply reject it as uninteresting nonsense. When people say to me, ‘look at the last 200 hundred years and the massive decrease in poverty’, I ask ‘how do you measure poverty?’ Take the Australian Aborigines. When Captain Cook arrived in what is now New South Wales. These people had zero income, but they lived very full and fulfilling lives. Today, an Aborigines person gets a hundred Australian dollars a week from some kind of social security fund, and they are obese, they have diabetes, and they are dying from a number of diseases, if not from police brutality. So you consider that to be an improvement because they went from zero to a hundred dollars?

But going back to what you were saying—the hollowing out of the middle class—we should come to that. Given that financialization was based on this exponential growth in fictitious capital that made the very rich exceptionally rich, and at the same time, to have this money coming into Wall Street, you had to have American wages kept very low and below American standards. And this means prices must rise against the home so that people can afford to buy stuff and fill up their garage with rubbish. And then, of course, in 2008 this house of cards comes crashing down. With jobs moving to China and, at the same time, financialization collapsing under the weight of its own hubris, that’s what explains the hollowing out of the middle class. These people initially turned to Barack Obama. He betrayed them. And now they turn to Donald Trump. But AI and automation are going to hit us when we’re down already. I don’t think the hollowing out has to do with automation, but now that the hollowing out has taken place for reasons that don’t have to do with automation, automation will be the second part of the double whammy.

JPPE: A lot of people are very happy about automation because they believe in its potential to improve productivity. However, if you believe technological change results in significant short-run damages to certain people’s livelihoods, is it worth trying to stop automation?

Varoufakis: Automation would be catastrophic. But why would it be catastrophic? It’s a question of nationalizing it and of socializing it. It’s a question of who owns it. Because if the machines are owned by the very few like they are, then those who own them will look at them as a source of personal enrichment, which means there will be a serious crisis by which those machines will be replacing workers who have no access to the returns of that capital. And so they will not be able to buy stuff. So we’re going to have a collapse. But if we all benefit and we all own the robots

collectively, we would not have that problem. This is why I keep coming back to questions of ownership. And this is where I find some commonality with the extreme libertarians, because they also put a great deal of emphasis, not so much on income distributions, but on property rights, and I do too. They want to defend the property rights of oligarchy. I want to socialize property so that everybody has equal access to it.

JPPE: When you think about the recent UK elections and the failure of Jeremy Corbyn and the British left to challenge more traditional and conservative leadership, what do you think about the prospects for a US presidential candidate like Bernie Sanders?

Varoufakis: Privilege has a remarkable capacity to reproduce itself and kill any challenge to its reproduction. If the challenger is Bernie, Jeremy, you or me, they will crush us. There's no doubt about that. When I was elected, I never expected for a moment that I would not be vilified. If I wasn't, then I would be worried, 'why are they not vilifying me? Am I doing something wrong? Have I sold out already?' What I find astonishing is that, in 2016, Bernie Sanders came so close. And he would have won it had he not been robbed by Hilary Clinton. This is what happened yesterday with the Labour Party, which was effectively defeated from within by the extreme center—the Blairites and the hard “remainers” that did everything they could for two years to undermine their own party and to undermine Jeremy Corbyn. Why? Because they were in concert with the privileged classes.

JPPE: Tactically, what do you make of the primacy of emphasizing cultural issues over economic ones? Do you think the left makes a mistake when it focuses on the culture wars instead of socio-economic challenges?

Varoufakis: Yes, the left has been catastrophic. Look, I'm an old Marxist. The economics is always at the base of it. It's at the base of Brexit. Why did Brexit happen? Because you had a financial sector collapse and you had the rubbish assets of the banks put on the shoulders of taxpayers. But at the same time, the European Central Bank was contracting the money supply and the Bank of England was expanding. And that meant three million continental Europeans went to Britain. And for the country, this was substantial and some people felt they were being pushed out of their own country. So their grievances are economic, even if they don't consider it clearly as an issue of economics. Whenever we have this kind of economic recession, it's easy for a fascist to jump on the soapbox and say, 'I'll make you proud again by getting rid of foreigners.' You see this with Salvini or Farage. Why did Trump get elected? He didn't get elected because of the culture wars.

He got elected because half of Americans, for the first time since 1923, could not afford the cheapest car on the market. These people felt betrayed, and here comes a guy who says 'I'm not the worst person on earth, but there's a good reason to vote for me: it will annoy the shit out of everybody you hate.' Of course, the fascists take advantage of these economic grievances and build a narrative by saying that they will make you proud and look after you.

All Power to the Imagination: Radical Student Groups and Coalition Building in France During May 1968 and the United States during the Vietnam War

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ABSTRACT

Student-led social movements in May of 1968 in France and through the late 1960s and early 1970s in the United States captured the attention of each nation at the time and have had a profound impact on how Americans and French understand their respective states today. Both movements held the lofty goal of completely reshaping their respective societal structures but the vast differences of the cultures in which they were carried out resulted in distinct end results. In France, student protests sparked mass mobilization of the nation and, at their height, were seen by most of the country in a positive light. The broader movement that involved worker participation as well also won material gains for workers in the nation. Across the Atlantic, on the other hand, student protests were met with mostly ill will from the American working class. This work will particularly focus on the ways in which a history of strikes and a popular Communist Party in France both allowed for mass mobilization and stopped the students from pursuing more radical change. It will also work to challenge dominant narratives in political science around coalition building.

I.

In mid-May, 1968, as 10 million people marched in demonstration through the streets of every major French city, student leader Daniel Cohn-Bendit sat down for a wide-ranging interview with philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. Bendit cogently articulated his goals for the student movement as well as its potential challenges. “The aim is now the overthrow of the regime,” he said. “But it is not up to us whether or not this is achieved. If the Communist Party, the [general confederation of labor union] CGT and the other union headquarters shared it... the regime would fall within a fortnight.”¹

¹ Jean-Paul Sartre and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, “Jean Paul Sartre Interviews Daniel Cohn-Bendit, May 20, 1968,” *Verso*, May 16, 2018, <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3819-jean-paul-sartre-interviews-daniel-cohn-bendit>.

Six years later and across the Atlantic Ocean, the Weather Underground, a militant leftist organization in its fifth year of operation which was composed of young radicals, published a book entitled *Prairie Fire: The Politics of Revolutionary Anti-Imperialism*.² The Weather Underground wrote, “Our intention is to disrupt the empire... to incapacitate it, to put pressure on the cracks, to make it hard to carry out its bloody functioning against the people of the world, to join the world struggle, to attack from the inside.”³

II.

Radical social movements aimed at the overthrow of capitalism and capitalist-based governments existed throughout the Western world through the late 1960s and early 1970s. In Italy, West Germany, France, and the United States, these movements were particularly wide ranging and distinctly impacted each society, causing momentous political and cultural upheaval. This work will focus on the latter two nations.

The mass mobilization that shook France was confined largely to one month: May, 1968. In the middle of March, France’s leading newspaper *Le Monde* called France’s citizens too “bored” to protest in the same manner that was occurring in West Germany and the United States.⁴ A mere six weeks later, after the occupation of the University of Nanterre on March 22nd sparked conversation about collective action around the country, French students occupied the University of Paris at the Sorbonne, in the Latin Quarter of Paris, sparking nightly clashes with the police. Streets were barricaded, all transportation was shut down, and worker mobilization reached a height of 10 million on strike. Notably, students’ grievances were separate from those of the workers. The students rallied around a popular slogan of the time, “all power to the imagination,” which captured their collective interest in enacting changes to the educational system that would allow for a more free and accepting university structure.⁵ Comprised of Trotskyites, Maoists, anarchists, and others on the Left, many also believed in the violent overthrow of the 5th Republic of France and the complete reshaping of society. As Suzanne Borde, who in May, 1968 had recently left her childhood home for Paris, said, “Everything changed [in May, 68], my way of thinking, everything... My favorite expression at the time was “*La Vie, Vite*” (Life, Quickly)! I wanted to change the

2 Political Statement of the Weather Underground, *Prairie Fire: The Politics of Revolutionary Anti-Imperialism*, (United States: Communications Co. Under Ground), 1974, https://archive.org/stream/PrairieFireThePoliticsOfRevolutionaryAnti-imperialismThePolitical/Prairie-fire_djvu.txt.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Alissa J. Rubin, “May 1968: A Month of Revolution Pushed France Into the Modern World,” *New York Times*, May 5, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/05/world/europe/france-may-1968-revolution.html>.

5 Mitchell Abidor, *May made me: an oral history of the 1968 uprising in France*, (Chico: AK Press, 2018), 3.

usual way of life.”⁶

The workers, who made up the lion’s share of the protestors but had fewer public clashes with the police, were concerned less with political ideology or societal restructuring than with material gains that would make their lives better, such as wage increases. Their protests ran in conjunction with the students’, but their union was a tenuous one: the French Communist Party (PCF) and its associated labor union Confédération Général du Travail (CGT) controlled much of the political action amongst the workers and was deeply suspicious of the goals of the student movement from its nascent stages.⁷ Ultimately, two central events led to the movement’s demise. Maybe ironically, the first was originally interpreted as a success: the protests led to governmental upheaval and President Charles de Gaulle’s temporary departure from the country. After weeks of uncertainty, representatives of de Gaulle’s government negotiated what came to be termed the Grenelle Agreements with the leadership of the CGT. Resulting in more bargaining power for unions as well as a 35 percent minimum wage increase and a 10 percent increase in average real wages, these concessions pacified many workers, leading them back to the factory floor.⁸ Second, upon returning to the country on May 30, Charles de Gaulle organized a significant counter-protest on the Champs-Élysées, dissolved the legislature and called for new legislative elections that took place in late June. De Gaulle’s party, the Union of Democrats for the Republic (UDR) won a massive victory and went back to being firmly in control of the nation, while the PCF lost more than half of their seats.⁹

Social protest in the United States was not so neatly circumscribed into a few months. Anti-Vietnam War protests took many shapes over numerous years. For the purposes of this work, analysis will be confined to the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) organization, its offshoot groups, and their respective impacts on the broader movement. Launched with the Port Huron Statement in 1962 before the official beginning of the American War in Vietnam in 1965, the organization purposefully did not couch its goals in traditionally communist or Marxist rhetoric, because unlike in France, there was no appetite for it in the United States. Rather, they argued quite persuasively, “We are people of this generation, bred in at least moderate comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit.”¹⁰ While fewer than 100 people signed the Port Huron State-

6 Abidor, 2018, 79.

7 *Ibid.*

8 Michael Seidman, “Workers in a Repressive Society of Seductions: Parisian Metallurgists in May-June 1968,” *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (1993), 264.

9 Sylvia Poggioli, “Marking the French Social Revolution of ’68,” *NPR*, May 13, 2008, <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=90330162>.

10 Politics Newsmakers Newsletter, “Students for a Democratic Society (SDS),” *Public Broadcasting Service*, 2005, https://www.pbs.org/opb/thesixties/topics/politics/newsmakers_1.html.

ment, by 1965, the SDS organized the “March on Washington to End the War in Vietnam,” which 15,000 to 25,000 people from around the country attended.¹¹ This march both attracted a degree of attention and trained future organizers of better-coordinated marches on Washington, including the November, 1969 Moratorium March on Washington, which had over 250,000 attendees.¹²

While SDS remained a strong political force through the late 1960s, by its 1969 convention in Chicago the group had moved significantly to the left ideologically and had developed political differences amongst itself that detached it from the unified spirit of the Port Huron Statement. As SDS gathered in Chicago, by the end of the weekend of June 18-22, three separate factions had emerged. One, calling itself the Progressive Labor Party (PL), argued for Maoist and worker-oriented solutions to what they perceived as the ills of America. Another, the Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM), became the foundation of what was eventually called the Weather Underground—they advocated for a radicalization of SDS to fight American imperialism alongside the Black Panthers and revolutionary groups around the world.¹³ Finally, the Revolutionary Youth Movement II (RYM II) agreed with RYM on most substantive issues, but believed in a more traditional Marxist approach to solve them.¹⁴ According to sociologist Penny Lewis, none of these groups, including the PL whose entire revolutionary strategy was based on cross-class alliance with workers, enjoyed any significant support from the working class. She writes, “The obvious reason for this was the near-unanimous embrace of Cold War anticommunism in the ranks of labor and the collapse of Communist Party influence within the class.”¹⁵

Left without the possibility of even a tenuous connection between young radicals and the broad working class, the Weather Underground began to participate in militant action to attempt to bring the Vietnam war home.¹⁶ In March of 1970, Weather Underground member Bernardine Dohrn anonymously recorded a transmission and sent it to a California radio station on behalf of the group. She warned, “The lines are drawn... Revolution is touching all of our lives. Freaks

11 Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam, 1987), 177-183.

12 The Learning Network, “Nov. 15, 1969 | Anti-Vietnam War Demonstration Held,” *New York Times*, November 15, 2011, <https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/11/15/nov-15-1969-anti-vietnam-war-demonstration-held/>.

13 The Revolutionary Youth Movement, which went through multiple different iterations and had a number of names throughout its history, will be hereto referred to as the Weather Underground. This name was established by the group in 1970.

14 Paul Saba, “SDS Convention Split: Three Factions Emerge,” *The Heights*, July 3, 1969, <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1/bc-sds.htm>; Dan Berger, *Outlaws of America: the Weather Underground and the politics of solidarity*, (Oakland: AK Press), 2006.

15 Penny Lewis, *Hardhats, Hippies, and Hawks: The Vietnam Antiwar Movement As Myth and Memory*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 155.

16 Arthur M. Eckstein, “How the Weather Underground Failed at Revolution and Still Changed the World,” *TIME*, November 2, 2016, <http://time.com/4549409/the-weather-underground-bad-moon-rising/>.

are revolutionaries and revolutionaries are freaks... within the next 14 days we will bomb a major U.S. institution.”¹⁷ While her timeline was a bit optimistic, the group bombed the Capitol in March of 1971 and the Pentagon in May of 1972, all the while intending not to injure anyone (these two actions had no deaths associated). Their most famous (and infamous) deed was an accident—also in March of 1970, two members (Diana Oughton and Terry Robbins) accidentally detonated a bomb in a Greenwich Village townhouse while assembling homemade explosives, killing themselves and a third “Weatherman” who was walking into the house (Ted Gold).¹⁸ The Weather Underground did continue action after the conclusion of American involvement in Vietnam in 1975, but paired down much of its more violent activities. The group, whose members found their way to the FBI’s Most Wanted List, eventually disbanded; many now work as professors, educating and informing new generations of American thought.

III.

The outgrowth of the fragile connection between student protest and worker protest in France, as well as the lack of any significant worker mobilization in the United States, has a lot to do with the way each nation developed in the wake of World War II. During the altercations in May, 1968 in France, President Charles de Gaulle and the PCF represented two opposing poles of influence. This, in many ways, defined the conflict: de Gaulle’s fairly centrist (by modern standards) regime was forced to contend with a popular Communist Party facing a radical push from student activists combined with a wellspring of support from French workers. Interestingly, both De Gaulle and the Communists found much of their legitimacy from their actions a quarter-century prior, during World War II. De Gaulle and his supporters, along with the PCF, were the two most significant resistance forces to the collaborationist Vichy government. As such, in the first legislative election after the War in 1945, the PCF won a plurality of the vote, with 26.1 percent, and controlled the most seats in the legislature.¹⁹ De Gaulle did not participate in these elections. By 1967, while the PCF’s support had diminished, it remained a powerful force: they held 21.37 percent of the vote, a slight drop, but were able to build a governing coalition with fellow Leftist parties Federation of the Democratic and Socialist Left (FGDS) and the Unified Socialist Party (PSU). Together, the three received 53.43 percent of the vote.²⁰

17 Mark Honigsbaum, “The Americans who declared war on their country,” *The Guardian*, September 20, 2003, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2003/sep/21/londonfilmfestival2003.londonfilmfestival>.

18 *Ibid.*

19 Philip Stöver and Dieter Nohlen, *Elections in Europe: A Data Handbook*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2010).

20 *Ibid.*

The revolution in 1968, then, did not come out of nowhere. Not only could the PCF count on at least 20 percent of France's support throughout the 1950s and 60s, it also organized strikes. Significant agrarian protests led by the PCF occurred in 1959 and 1960, and in 1963 strikes reached a zenith of the era before 1968, as the number of days that workers were on strike was the highest in 10 years.²¹ As Kenneth Libbey, who is both a scholar of and an advocate for the PCF, argues, "the belief in the ability of a mass movement to sweep aside obstacles to its success is a dominant theme of the party. Its acceptance makes the arguments about the transition to socialism at least plausible."²² By May of 1968, significant differences existed between the often anarchist, Maoist, or Trotskyite student groups and the Stalinist PCF and CGT. However, these disagreements on ideology were not significant enough to halt the cross-coalitional movement—at least at first.

In the case of Leftist groups in the United States, whether they marched under the Maoist banner of coalition-building with the working class (in the case of the PL movement) or had more anarchist tendencies as well as interest in engaging with black revolutionary groups such as the Black Panthers (in the case of the Weather Underground), they had very little historical precedent or organizational support upon which to draw. Even at its relative peak in 1944, the Communist Party in the United States (CPUSA) only had a confirmed membership of 80,000.²³ In the context of the Cold War, it became impossible to be an avowed Communist in public life. In a period often called the "Second Red Scare" or "McCarthyism," the United States Congress convened the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in order to attempt to find and punish Communists whom they believed to be working for the Soviet Union. In 1954, the United States government formally outlawed the CPUSA.²⁴

While in the French case the Communist Party was associated with brave resistance to World War II, politicians in the United States were able to successfully present the CPUSA as a subversive group intent on aiding the Russians in the Cold War.²⁵ As an ideology, McCarthyism faded through the 1950s and was eventually seen for what it was: a witch-hunt. However, in the Cold War context, a genuine Communist Party in the United States would have been something of

21 Kenneth R. Libbey, "The French Communist Party in the 1960s: An Ideological Profile," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Volume 11, No. 1, Jan. 1976, 151.

22 *Ibid.*

23 Revelations from the Russian Archives, "Soviet and American Communist Parties," Library of Congress, August 31, 2016, <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/archives/sova.html>.

24 New World Encyclopedia, "Communist Party, USA," 2017, http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Communist_Party_USA#The_later_50s.2C_60s.2C_and_70s.

25 Irving Louis Horowitz, "Culture, Politics, and McCarthyism," *The Independent Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 1996), 101-110.

an anachronism at best. Thus, radicals in the United States had to both divorce themselves from any extremely weak institutions that did exist and strive to create their own culture and identity. The divergent histories of France and the United States shaped not only the popularity of social movements in the late 1960s, but also the strategies and tactics employed by student radicals in both nations.

IV.

A shared characteristic of the radical students in France and the United States was their distaste for slow-moving, marginal improvements. In fact, French radical students had been preaching this ideology since the early 1960s. Trotskyite dissidents, many of whom were engaged in the leadership of the 1968 movement, submitted a manifesto to the socialist publication *Socialisme ou Barbarie* in 1961 outlining many of the same principles as the Weather Underground did eight years later. They argued, “One hundred and fifty years of ‘progress’ and ‘democracy’ have proved that no matter what reforms are applied to the capitalist system they will not change the real situation of the worker.”²⁶ As is typical of the French case, revolutionary politics are more wrapped up in the labor movement than in the United States. The manifesto continues, “The workers will not be free of oppression and exploitation until their struggles have resulted in setting up a *really socialistic* society, in which *workers’ councils* will have all the power, and both production and economic planning will be under *worker management*.”²⁷

Fredy Perlman, a student who aided in the shutdown of the Censier Annex of the Sorbonne, believed in a direct connection between the actions at the Universities and the larger strikes. He saw the main contribution of the students at the Censier to be the formation of worker-student action committees, in which the two groups coordinated actions together. Perlman, who published a booklet entitled *Worker-student Action Committees, France, 1968* in 1970, wrote, “The formation of the worker-student committees coincides with the outbreak of a wildcat strike: ‘In the style of the student demonstrators, the workers of Sud-Aviation have occupied the factory at Nantes.’”²⁸ For Alain Krivine, the founder of one of the most influential activist groups for youth during 1968, Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire, increased rights for workers were essential to the success of the movement. However, he did not believe that leaders of the unions or the Communist Party best represented the workers’ interests. He says, “For me [leftwing political leaders Pierre] Mendès-France and [François] Mitterand were shit... Mendès-France and

26 “Manifesto of *Socialisme ou Barbarie*” in *The French Student Uprising: Nov. 1967-June 1968*, ed. Alain Schnapp and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, translated by Maria Jolas, (New York: Beacon Press, 1971), 66.

27 *Ibid.*

28 Roger Gregoire and Fredy Perlman, *Worker-student Action Committees, France, May 1968*, (Paris: Black & Red, 1970), 5.

Mitterand could be an alternative, but for us it was a bad one.”²⁹ Student demonstrator Isabelle Saint-Saëns largely agrees. “When we marched with the workers we felt united with them, but it remained theoretical as well,” she said.³⁰ Nevertheless, the students did see the workers as the key to their success, because they were willing to mobilize and they held such tremendous political power because of their sheer numbers.³¹

As opposed to the situation in France, protest in the United States was based largely around denouncing the imperialism inherent within the conflict in Vietnam. In the shadow of the SDS convention in June of 1969, student radicals who formed the leadership of the splinter group of the Weather Underground sprang into action. Leadership of the organization included many young radicals who had been involved in the demonstrations against the Vietnam War at Columbia University the year before, including Bill Ayers, Bernardine Dohrn, and Mark Rudd, who famously wrote in a letter to Columbia President Grayson Kirk:

“You call for order and respect for authority; we call for justice, freedom, and socialism. There is only one thing left to say. It may sound nihilistic to you, since it is the opening shot in a war of liberation. I’ll use the words of LeRoi Jones, whom I’m sure you don’t like a whole lot: ‘Up against the wall, motherfucker, this is a stick-up.’”³²

The Weather Underground’s first major action, termed the “Days of Rage,” was scheduled to take place from October 8-11, 1969 in the streets of Chicago. The action’s specific purpose was to protest the trial of the “Chicago Eight,” a group on trial for antiwar activism during the 1968 Democratic National Convention.³³ While they hoped for the participation of around 50,000 militants they got only a few hundred. The action, which included the looting and burning of downtown Chicago appeared not to have a particularly cogent mission, was panned by the mainstream media, but also by many fellow Leftist organizations, who argued that the organizers were alienating the broader public from their cause.³⁴

The Weather Underground itself, though, argued that the “Days of Rage”

29 Abidor, 2018, 45.

30 Abidor, 2018, 91.

31 David Drake, “Sartre and May 1968: The Intellectual in Crisis,” *Sartre Studies International*, (Vol. 3, No. 1, 1997), 45.

32 Mark Rudd, “Letter to Columbia President Grayson Kirk,” April 22, 1968, in “‘The Whole World Is Watching’: An Oral History of the 1968 Columbia Uprising,” by Clara Bingham, *Vanity Fair*, April 2018, <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2018/03/the-students-behind-the-1968-columbia-uprising>.

33 History.com Editors, “Chicago 8 trial opens in Chicago,” A&E Television Networks, November 16, 2009, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/chicago-8-trial-opens-in-chicago>.

34 Charles DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 255; Eric Alterman, “Remembering the Left-Wing Terrorism of the 1970s,” review of *Days of Rage* by Bryan Burrough, *The Nation*, April 14, 2015, <https://www.thenation.com/article/remembering-left-wing-terrorism-1970s/>.

were part of a larger effort to “bring the war home.”³⁵ At this point in the antiwar fight, the Weather Underground had decided that they could not count on the participation of workers because of their lack of any significant socialist or communist sympathies. As such, they planned demonstrations and militant actions to raise the consciousness of the greater populace to the horrors of the war abroad. Friends and siblings who were drafted, sent to Vietnam, and often killed in action particularly galvanized American youth. Partially to announce the formation of the Weather Underground, the group released a manifesto entitled “You Don’t Need A Weatherman To Know Which Way The Wind Blows.” A subsection of this argument, “Anti-Imperialist Revolution and the United Front,” states,

“Defeating imperialism within the US couldn’t possibly have the content, which it could in a semi-feudal country, of replacing imperialism with capitalism or new democracy; when imperialism is defeated in the US, it will be replaced by socialism- nothing else. One revolution, one replacement process, one seizure of state power- the anti-imperialist revolution and the socialist revolution, one and the same stage.”³⁶

Student radicals in the United States saw the need to engender violent revolution in order to move to a state willing to accept socialism as a rational political ideology.

The stated aims of the two movements, then, were quite similar. Each believed that their government was not truly democratic, and that there was a distinct need to expel the ruling elite from power. The two groups framed the issue using a shared language of the Left that dealt primarily with expressing solidarity with the oppressed. Divergence in the movements appeared in each group’s understanding of their own role in society.

In France, while students were suspicious and sometimes downright dismissive of the PCF and the CGT, they believed they needed the participation of the workers (many of whom were members of those organizations) to succeed. The split at the SDS convention in June of 1969, on the other hand, further alienated the Weather Underground even from fellow Leftist organizations. While the Weather Underground hoped to gain more support for its cause amongst the general populace, the group also understood the nature of the political system in the United States and made the conscious decision to exist outside of it. In “You Don’t Need a Weatherman...” they wrote, “How will we accomplish the building of [a

35 Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: the Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

36 Karin Asbley, Bill Ayers, Bernardine Dohrn, John Jacobs, Jeff Jones, Gerry Long, Home Machtinger, Jim Mellen, Terry Robbins, Mark Rudd, and Steve Tappis, “You Don’t Need A Weatherman To Know Which Way The Wind Blows,” *New Left Notes*, June 18, 1969, https://archive.org/stream/YouDontNeedAWeathermanToKnowWhichWayTheWindBlows_925/weather_djvu.txt.

Marxist-Leninist Party]- It is clear that we couldn't somehow form such a party at this time, because the conditions for it do not exist in this country outside the Black Nation."³⁷ Much of the reason for both the divergent outcomes as well as the divergent tactics and framing of the student movements in France and the United States have to do with the political opportunity structures that existed in each nation during the late 1960s. These are broadly rooted in the historical differences in the treatment of Communism as an ideology in both nations.

V.

Many scholars have argued that the character of the revolution of May 1968 was defined by the youth and, to a lesser degree, intellectuals in the nation.³⁸ Maybe more important for mass mobilization in France, though, was the history of strikes in the nation. According to French historian Stéphane Sirot, while in other nations strikes are often the result of failed negotiations, in France they frequently occur either during or before negotiations with labor bosses.³⁹ Strikes are such successful tactics of negotiation because they work on two levels. First, they have an offense element through mass demonstrations that attract the attention of the media. Second, they work defensively in that by refusing to work, they put pressure on bosses to find a quick solution. In their paper, "The Shape of Strikes in France, 1830-1960," published in 1971, scholars Edward Shorter and Charles Tilly argue that French strikes, while fairly prevalent throughout this period, changed fairly significantly in character in this time period.⁴⁰ This, according to Shorter and Tilly, has largely to do with the significant expansion of industrial unionism at the end of the 1930s around the European continent.⁴¹ They use measurements of size, duration, and frequency to calculate the shape that these strikes took. Below is an example of their model:

37 Asbley et al., "You Don't Need A Weatherman To Know Which Way The Wind Blows," 1969.

38 Alain Silvera, "The French Revolution of May 1968," *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, (Vol. 47, No. 3, 1971), 350.

39 Ben McPartland, "So why are the French always on strike?" *The Local*, March 31, 2016, <https://www.thelocal.fr/20160331/why-are-french-always-on-strike>.

40 Edward Shorter and Charles Tilly, "The Shape of Strikes in France, 1830-1960," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, (Vol. 13, No. 1, January 1971), 60-86.

41 Shorter and Tilly, 1971, 63.

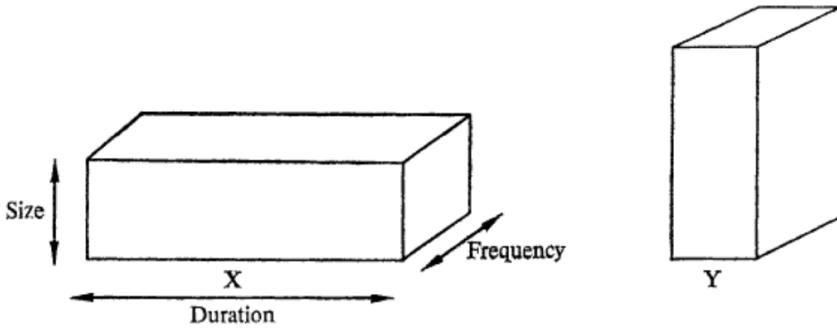


Table 1.1

This table shows two distinct strike scenarios. What Shorter and Tilly refer to as “Industry X” represents a scenario in which strikes are long but small and occur fairly infrequently. “Industry Y” has strikes that occur more frequently and with a larger size, but do not last for as long.⁴²

By the 1960s in France, the model for strikes looked quite a bit more like “Industry Y” than “Industry X.” Below is, once again, Shorter and Tilly’s graphic explanation of this phenomenon, based on the historical cataloguing of strikes:

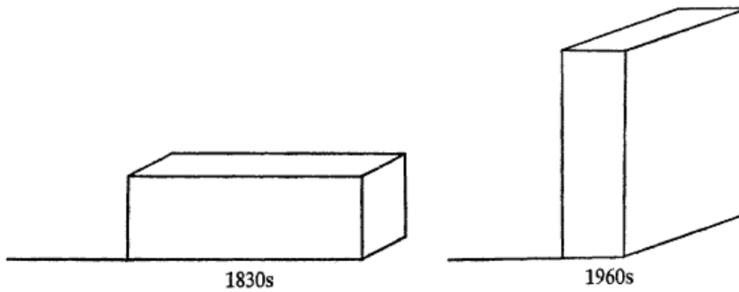


Table 1.2⁴³

This is significant in that massive, short demonstrations, while not necessarily more successful than those that are smaller and play out over a longer period of time, are wont to receive more attention from the public and the media due to their dramatic nature. The sheer mass of strikes through the 1960s made it easier for workers to mobilize around issues that ran adjacent to the concerns of the stu-

⁴² Shorter and Tilly, 1971, 66.

⁴³ Shorter and Tilly, 1971, 67.

dents, such as rights to self-management in any workplace, but were certainly not the same.

Conversely, in the United States before 1968 there were few examples of large scale strikes. Other than the steel workers' strike in 1959, which included around half a million participants, frequent general strikes had not existed in the nation since the 19th Century.⁴⁴ Additionally, while union activity was certainly stronger in the 1960s in the United States than it is today, the protests of the 1960s were more focused on the antiwar effort than the rights of workers.

VI.

Likely due at least partially to their comfort with general strikes and mass mobilization, the French populace largely supported the students and their efforts to protest, expressing ire for the police force when they clashed. On May 10, 1968, in what has since been termed the “night of the barricades” (because of barriers that students constructed to slow down police), French police and students clashed violently in the streets of Paris. 80 percent of Parisians, though, supported the students and believed fault in escalating the violence lay with the police.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, cultural differences between the youth and both the ruling class and worker allies persisted in France as well, which manifested themselves in the priorities of the students. Before the revolution of 1968, the French schooling system was extremely restrictive. Students could not voice their own ideas in the classroom and the gender and sexual politics of the university were also extremely conservative—men and women were often divided. Thus, in considering how all of French society should change, the University system was at the front of many students' minds. As Perlman argued about the revolutionary movement,

“What begins [when the Universities are occupied] is a process of collective learning; the “university,” perhaps for the first time, becomes a place for learning. People do not only learn the information, the ideas, the projects of others; they also learn from the example of others that they have specific information to contribute, that they are able to express ideas, that they can initiate projects. There are no longer specialists or experts; the division between thinkers and doers, between students and workers, breaks down. At this point all are students.”⁴⁶

As might be expected, while many supported the broad protests of the students and their right to do so, concepts like the total change in University structure, for which Perlman argued, were less popular or important to much of French

44 David Montgomery, “Strikes in Nineteenth Century America,” *Social Science History*, (Vol. 4, No. 1, 1980), 81-104; Investopedia, “The 10 Largest Strikes in U.S. History,” 2012, <https://www.investopedia.com/slideshow/10-biggest-strikes-us-history/?article=1>.

45 Michael Seidman, *The Imaginary Revolution: Parisian students and workers in 1968*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 120.

46 Perlman, 1970.

society. Thus, the French students created their own political ideology and culture that was often separate from that of the more institutionalized labor movements.

However, while their culture and their priorities often separated them from the workers, the French students also believed the workers to be necessary to their success. When the Grenelle Accords were signed and a majority of the workers agreed to go back to work, students quickly demobilized. As scholar Mitchell Abidor argues in the introduction to his oral history *May made me*, “For the workers, it was not the qualitative demands of the students that mattered, but their own quantitative, bread-and-butter issues.”⁴⁷ Ultimately, French students were incapable of understanding or accepting this. Abidor continues, “The *ouvriérisme*—the workerism—so strong on the French left led the students to think the workers were the motor of any revolution, which left the vehicle immobile because the engine was dead.”⁴⁸ So, after the workers returned to work, the students also quite quickly demobilized.

The alliance between the students and the workers in France was further complicated by the students’ tenuous relationship to the PCF and CGT, organizations which were active participants in the society that students were striving to upend. The PCF and CGT, naturally concerned with their parties’ success, framed their arguments and made agreements based on the existing political opportunity structure in France. Many student radicals, on the other hand, saw it as their charge to revise those very structures. The PCF was thus forced to walk a fine line between maintaining its own institutional legitimacy and representing the more revolutionary elements of its own party. According to Libbey, French Professor Georges Lavau thus argues,

“[the PCF] has assumed the role of *tribune*: articulating the grievances of discontented groups as well as defending the gains of the workers against attempts by the bourgeoisie to undermine them. The PCF has thus become a legitimate channel for protest, protecting the system from more destructive outbursts. This protection failed in 1968, of course, but Lavau contends that the party’s role of *tribune* nonetheless coloured its response to the crisis.”⁴⁹

Lavau and Libbey’s contention that the PCF lost the role of *tribune* in May of 1968 is worth noting because although the CFDT and the CGT were the ones to negotiate with de Gaulle’s government, they had lost control of the

47 Abidor, *May made me*, 11.

48 *Ibid.*

49 Libbey, 1976, 147.

situation. They were able, ultimately, to demobilize the workers, but they lost significant support, which showed in the elections of June, 1968 where they lost half of their seats.

The Grenelle Accords in many ways crystallized the differences between the *gauchiste* students and the institutionalized, Stalinist political parties. These differences, which existed throughout the movement, were momentarily put aside as everyone took to the streets. After most workers returned to the factory floor, though, student radicals, as well as radical elements within the Communist Party, discussed their disappointment with the limited scope of the Grenelle Accords. Prisca Bachelet, who was helped to organize the nascent stages of the movement during demonstrations at the University of Nanterre on March 22, 1968, said of the leaders of the CGT, “they were afraid, afraid of responsibility.”⁵⁰ Éric Hazan, who was a cardiac surgeon and a radical Party member during 1968, argued the Communists’ actions at the end of May and their negotiations with the government amounted to “Treason. Normal. A normal treason.”⁵¹ Student Jean-Pierre Vernant argued, “The May crisis is not explained and is not analyzed [by the Party]. It is erased.”⁵²

The students and their allies had good reason for frustration. They believed the Party theoretically meant to represent them betrayed many of the principles for which they were fighting. Members of the Communist Party also quite obviously held distaste for many of the student radicals. In a very obvious reference to the student movement, Communist Party leader Roland Leroy said at the National Assembly on May 21, 1968, “The Communists are not anarchists whose program tends to destroying everything without building anything.”⁵³ For their part, the students’ significant miscalculation, was that they believed Party leaders like Leroy did not speak for the interests of the workers. Hélène Chatroussat, a Trotskyite, argued at the time, “I said to myself, [the workers] are many, they’re with us... so why don’t they tell the Stalinists [the PCF] to get lost so we could come in and they could join us?”⁵⁴ To the contrary, many of the workers who went on strike in the factories were uninterested in broader political change or politics in general. They simple hoped for a positive change to their material conditions. As

50 *Ibid.*

51 Mitchell Abidor, “1968: When the Communist Party Stopped a French Revolution,” *New York Review of Books*, April 19, 2018, <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2018/04/19/1968-when-the-communist-party-stopped-a-french-revolution/>.

52 Jean-Pierre Vernant, *The French Student Uprising...*, 1971, 558.

53 Abidor, “1968: When the Communist Party Stopped a French Revolution,” 2018.

54 *Ibid.*

Colette Danappe, a worker in a factory outside Paris, told Mitchell Abidor, “The students were more interested in fighting, they were interested in politics, and that wasn’t for us.”⁵⁵ Danappe continued about the Grenelle Accords, “We got almost everything we wanted and almost everyone voted to return... Maybe we were a little happier, because we had more money. We were able to travel afterwards.”⁵⁶

At first glance, it would appear that the situation in the United States and the goals of antiwar demonstrators would have made it easier to mobilize a broader cross-section of the population. By mid-May of 1971, 61% of Americans responded “Yes, a mistake” to the Gallup poll question, “In view of developments since we entered the fighting in Vietnam, do you think the U.S. made a mistake in sending troops to fight in Vietnam?”⁵⁷ However, a larger segment of the older population in the United States was against the war than the younger generation. These older Americans did not support the war, but largely did not support protest movements either.⁵⁸ The lasting images of social movements in the United States in the 1960s all include what came to be referred to as “the counterculture.” The counterculture is depicted, stereotypically, as young men and women with flowers in their hair, listening to Creedence Clearwater Revival, and holding radical aspirations for the dawn of a new age in America. This group was generally maligned by significant portions of older generations of Americans in particular, who believed the youth movement to be related more to drug use than to any serious concern. While the counterculture’s goals of promoting peace and community were in many ways quite sincere, with the fear of the draft adding to their outrage, an older generation of Americans refused to take their style of protest seriously.

		<i>Popularity of Grievance</i>	
		Low	High
<i>Political Allies</i>	Low	No mobilization.	Radical mobilization; institutional change unlikely.
	High	No mobilization; political outcomes unpredictable	Mass mobilization.

55 *Ibid.*

56 *Ibid.*

57 Lydia Saad, “Gallup Vault: Hawks vs. Doves on Vietnam,” Gallup, May 24, 2016, <http://news.gallup.com/vault/191828/gallup-vault-hawks-doves-vietnam.aspx>.

58 *Ibid.*

Table 1.3

This table explains mobilization. The situation in France in May of 1968 can be found in the bottom-right box: the broad-based grievances of students were largely supported and they found political allies in the labor and Communist parties. In the United States, mass mobilization did not occur on the same scale, because although the popularity of the grievance was high (as support for the American War in Vietnam was low), no significant political allies (who could have been found in the older generation of anti-war Americans) existed. This situation can be found in the top-right box.

This disdain for the youth movement was made obvious in the way that Walter Cronkite and Dan Rather covered clashes at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Members of the counterculture movement, calling themselves “Yippies” (included in this group were many members of the SDS), descended onto Chicago to protest the Vietnam War and the lack of democracy inside the Democratic Party’s presidential nomination selection. Cronkite had already argued on air that the Vietnam War had become unwinnable, but when he and Rather covered the 1968 DNC together, their attention was focused on normative politics as a whole—and they quite obviously had very little respect for the protestors. Each argued that it was the Yippies who provoked a bloody confrontation with the police, with Rather stating that, “Mayor Richard Daley vowed to keep it peaceful, even if it took force to keep the peace. He was backed by 12,000 police, 5,000 national guardsmen, and 7,500 regular army troops. But the Yippies succeeded—they got their confrontation.”⁵⁹

Through the 1960s, many protest and counter-culture groups (including the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Americans for Democratic Action, and Vietnam Veterans Against the War, to name a few) created and sustained significant cultural differences from much of American society. Members of the Weather Underground, despite some of their uniquely militant positions, dressed and spoke in a language that was common to the broader counterculture movement. They did so largely because they felt themselves unable to work within the boundaries of a political system that, even on the left, did not come close to representing their political ideology.⁶⁰ In forming their own cultural identity, Leftist groups in the United States did manage to catch the attention of the masses, even if that attention was largely negative. In this way, their issues and demands were placed at the center of the conversation, causing a fraught societal debate.

59 Dan Rather and Walter Cronkite, “ARCHIVAL VIDEO: Protests Turn Violent at the 1968 Democratic National Convention,” for CBS News, uploaded March 14, 2016 to ABC News, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/video/archival-video-protests-turn-violent-1968-democratic-national-37639406>.

60 Asbley et al., “You Don’t Need A Weatherman To Know Which Way The Wind Blows,” 1969.

VII.

The legacies of the social movements of the late 1960s in the United States and France are hotly debated. Historian Tony Judt, holding an unmistakable disdain for the student movement in France, wrote,

“It is symptomatic of the fundamentally apolitical mood of May 1968 that the best-selling books on the subject a generation later are not serious works of historical analysis, much less the earnest doctrinal tracts of the time, but collections of contemporary graffiti and slogans. Culled from the walls, noticeboards and streets of the city, these witty one-liners encourage young people to make love, have fun, mock those in authority, generally do what feels good—and change the world almost as a by-product... This was to be a victimless revolution, which in the end meant it was no sort of revolution at all.”⁶¹

On the other hand, scholar Simon Tormey wrote about the events of May of 1968,

“1968 represented a freeing up of politics from the congealed, stodgy and unimaginative understandings that had so dogged the emergence of an oppositional politics after the second world war. It unleashed a wave of joyous experimentation, evanescent and spontaneous efforts to challenge the dull routine of the repetitious lives that had been constructed in and through advanced capitalism.”⁶²

As we can see, this duality of point-of-view about revolutionary movements existed both in France and the United States. While the Weather Underground, without any significant political allies and carrying a negative media portrayal from the press, has mostly been portrayed negatively in the years since, some scholars believe that they altered a broader American consciousness. As Arthur Eckstein writes, “Thousands of New Leftists agreed with the Weathermen’s analysis of what had gone awry in America... the last 50 years have seen remarkable progress in black rights, women’s rights, gay rights, Hispanic and Asian rights... Weatherman’s violence... did not impede that progress.”⁶³ Although Eckstein certainly does not offer a ringing endorsement of their militant tendencies, he does

61 Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, (New York: Penguin, 2005), 412-413.

62 Simon Tormey, “Be realistic—demand the impossible: the legacy of 1968,” *The Conversation*, February 14, 2018, <https://theconversation.com/be-realistic-demand-the-impossible-the-legacy-of-1968-87362>.

63 Eckstein, “How the Weather Underground Failed at Revolution and Still Changed the World,” 2016.

argue here that the group spawned social progress in a way that they did not expect they would.

Interestingly enough, these more positive interpretations from historians and political scientists contradict the feelings of the student radicals themselves. Neither group had an exact moment of demobilization, but it became increasingly clear to young leaders throughout the early 1970s that they had not fomented the change for which they had hoped.⁶⁴ In France especially, a growing frustration existed towards the Communist Party and its Labor wing,⁶⁵ which points quite obviously to the dangers of coalition building. Students' purported political allies came to be thought of as traitors by many of the student radicals. These frustrations and divisions that were born in 1968 proceeded, if not directly led, to the French Communist Party's long slide into irrelevance during the 1970s and 80s, as Abidor argues. He writes,

“Once it lost the PCF as the mediating force to represent its grievances, the French working class fulfilled Herbert Marcuse’s 1972 warning that “The *immediate* expression of the opinion and will of the workers, farmers, neighbors—in brief, the people—is not, per se, progressive and a force of social change: it may be the opposite.” The PCF understood this latent conservatism in the working class of 1968. Not so the New Left student movement.”⁶⁶

The coalition was successful very briefly in May and resulted in positive material gains for workers—through pay raises, France became a little bit more equal.⁶⁷ The most significant legacies of movements in France and the United States, though, were separate from any coalition. The French and the American students, each galvanized to be part of the revolutionary vanguard and inspired to change their societies, felt a deep sense of disappointment after the events of the late 1960s. Broken alliances and dashed goals led to the perception that they had let themselves and their ideals down. Measured this way, revolution failed, and Judt is right to argue that in this context, “it was no sort of revolution at all.”⁶⁸ A middle ground perspective is well-explained by May '68 protestor Suzanne Bor-

64 Judt, *Postwar*, 2005, 414; Lewis, *Hardhats, Hippies, and Hawks*, 2013, 130.

65 Abidor, “1968: When the Communist Party Stopped a French Revolution,” 2018.

66 *Ibid.*

67 As is explicated in this work, the character and legacies of May, 1968 in France are hotly debated. What is clear with regards to “equality” is that French workers received fairly significant pay raises, unions were strengthened, and some who participated in the events of May, 1968 continued in various forms to engage in politics. These people, including Daniel Cohn-Bendit who is now a pro-market Green Party minister, are referred to as “soixante-huitard.”

68 Judt, *Postwar*, 2005, 413.

de, who noted, “It made it possible to change the way children were educated, leading many teachers to reflect and to teach differently. Experimental schools opened... But it had no consequences on political life and failed to changed anything real.”⁶⁹ Holding a completely different interpretation of the outcome, Maguy Alvarez, an English teacher in France, told *New York Times* journalist Alissa Rubin, “Everything was enlarged by 1968; it determined all my life.” Rubin titled the article “May 1968: A Month of Revolution Pushed France Into the Modern World.”⁷⁰ So, maybe “these witty one-liners [that encouraged] young people to make love, have fun, mock those in authority, generally do what feels good,” did change France as a byproduct.⁷¹ The kicker of Alvarez’s quote is that she told it to Rubin not as she was deeply examining the political consequences of the era, but as she was walking through an exhibition of posters and artworks from the period. During his interview with Borde, Abidor noted towards the end of the discussion, “May ’68 didn’t result in anything concrete, then.” Borde responded, “Sure it did. It completely changed the way I live.”

VIII.

Much of the existing literature in the field of social movement theory is concerned with the ways in which social groups successfully frame their movements to a broader public in order to increase popular support, political allies, and best take advantage of existing political opportunity structures.⁷² This work, although not formatted with a traditional structure of similar systems design, is concerned with the comparison of a social movement that attempts to tap into public support (French student movement) with another that appears to at times actively avoid building coalitions (the Weather Underground). More than anything else, the historical differences in France and the United States led to vastly different political opportunity structures for each social movement in the late 1960s. Yet neither group compromised their idealistic political ideology, and for this reason both groups failed to achieve their ultimate goals. Nevertheless, both did change cultural aspects of the societies in which they operated.

The conclusion of these movements’ cultural success, despite their political failure, challenges existing social movement literature that argues that successful social movements should attempt always to build broad support. French student radicals found cultural success not because of their coalition with the working class but often despite it. In the United States, much of the lasting memory of the

69 Abidor, *May made me*, 2018, 84.

70 Rubin, “May 1968: A Month of Revolution Pushed France Into the Modern World,” 2018.

71 Judt, *Postwar*, 2005, 412-413.

72 Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 157-183.

SDS occurred after it split into the Weather Underground. Certainly, a degree of this remembrance is negative—French student radicals with their “power to the imagination” are remembered in a much rosier light than the Weather Underground, which is often considered a terrorist organization in the United States. However, the Weather Underground and its writings continue to inspire generations of young activists, who do not necessarily ascribe to their militant tactics but are inspired by its political ideology. Coalition building can without a doubt aid in the success of a social movement. However, it can also at times minimize its impact. As we examine these two distinct approaches to creating change, our analysis shows that coalition building might support the historical imagination, but it can hinder change.

IX.

Since the financial crisis of 2008, questions of the value of coalition building have continued to roil activists, in particular in the United States, which precipitated the 2008 global financial crisis and now exists in a period of unstable economic and political development that scholars have called a “crisis of neoliberalism.”⁷³ Current social protest movements have faced some of the same issues confronting protestors in the 1960s and early 1970s—the Occupy Wall Street movement presents a worthy case study.

In many respects, the Occupy movement is the closest analog in recent history to the May 1968 movement in France. Sparked by young people, the protests were concerned with income inequality and were able to create an entirely new language to talk about money in this country through popular slogans—“we are the 99%.”⁷⁴ Branding itself a revolutionary movement, Occupy eschewed traditional leadership structures and declared an “occupation of New York City” on September 29, 2011 which resulted in a series of clashes with the police and ended in the protestors being forced out of their home base of Zuccotti Park on November 15 of the same year.⁷⁵ Protests continued for months afterwards around the world, but did not maintain the same sort of zeal as they did in September, October, and November of 2011. While the Occupy movement quickly burned and petered out in a similar way to May 68, its results are of a somewhat different character than those in France and are thus worth examining here.

Most significantly, the United States government was never forced to

73 Gérard Duménil and Dominique Lévy, *The Crisis of Neoliberalism*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 2011.

74 N.R. Kleinfeld and Cara Buckley, “Wall Street Occupiers, Protesting Till Whenever,” *New York Times*, Sept. 30, 2011, https://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/01/nyregion/wall-street-occupiers-protesting-till-whenever.html?_r=1&ref=occupywallstreet.

75 Chantal da Silva, “Has Occupy Wall Street Changed America?” *Newsweek*, September 19, 2018.

come to the bargaining table with Occupy, and their leaderless movement has been criticized for never laying out concrete demands.⁷⁶ Additionally, though, the amorphous nature of the group allowed it to buck trends of significant splintering along ideological lines—post-Occupy activism has simply dispersed to campaigns like #AbolishICE and protesting the Keystone XL Pipeline.⁷⁷ Its greatest success has likely been the proliferation of discussion of income inequality in the United States, which has led to campaigns for an increased minimum wage. However, in a similar way to the student protestors in France, questions remain as to whether “we are the 99%” has been honored or coopted. Hillary Clinton launched her 2016 presidential campaign in Iowa with the statement “the deck is still stacked in favor of those at the top.” Ted Cruz highlighted in the lead-up to 2016 “the top 1% earn a higher share of our income nationally than any year since 1928” and Jeb Bush said “the income gap is real.”⁷⁸ The rhetoric is well and good, but each of these politicians has, according to Occupy, aided in the widening of this gap. There are positive messaging lessons to be learned from the Occupy movement for other protest groups, but in many respects Occupy lost control of the narrative—the shrinking 1% now speaks for the 99%.

76 Heather Gautney, “What is Occupy Wall Street? The history of leaderless movements,” *Washington Post*, October 10, 2011, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/on-leadership/what-is-occupy-wall-street-the-history-of-leaderless-movements/2011/10/10/gIQAwkFjaL_story.html?utm_term=.44928aed6c6e.

77 Da Silva, “Has Occupy Wall Street Changed America?” 2018.

78 Michael Levitin, “The Triumph of Occupy Wall Street,” *The Atlantic*, June 10, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/06/the-triumph-of-occupy-wall-street/395408/>.

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John Taylor and Ben Bernanke on the Great Recession – Who Was Right About What Went Wrong?

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Edited by
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In the autumn of 2007, the United States' housing market collapsed, pushing the world economy to the brink of disaster. In the US, unemployment rates soared, trillions of dollars of wealth disappeared, and millions of Americans lost their homes in what is generally considered the most severe recession since the Great Depression of the 1930's.¹ In the aftermath, economists have diligently discussed the properties of the crisis, asking if it could have been prevented and if policymakers could have responded more prudently. The American economist John Taylor has accused US policymakers of paving the way for the housing bubble by conducting an excessively loose monetary policy in the years leading up to the crash, and of prolonging the crisis by responding with measures based on premises that were essentially misguided.² Conversely, Ben Bernanke, then Chairman of the Federal Reserve and one of the main targets of Taylor's critique, offers an opposing view. According to Bernanke, the low federal funds rates during the years 2002–2006 were sound, and did not contribute to the inflation of the housing market to the extent that Taylor describes. Rather, Bernanke claims, it was mainly regulatory flaws that caused the financial collapse, and the actions taken by policymakers prevented the financial system from imploding completely.³ This essay makes the argument that although monetary policy played a part in the build-up to the crash, it was by no means a defining factor. What sets the Great

1 Charles I. Jones, *Macroeconomics*, 4th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2018), 266.

2 John B. Taylor, "Economic policy and the financial crisis: An empirical analysis of what went wrong." *Critical Review* 21, no. 2–3 (January 2009): 341–364, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08913810902974865>.

3 Ben S. Bernanke, "Monetary Policy and the Housing Bubble," Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, January 03, 2010, <https://www.federalreserve.gov/newsevents/speech/bernanke20100103a.htm>.

Recession apart from other economic downturns is the regulatory setting in which the housing bubble developed and the crisis unfolded. As such, the governors of the Federal Reserve are not culpable for the crisis' occurrence. They, along with the US Treasury, are nevertheless culpable for the misguided policies that were enacted to resolve the situation. Much like Taylor suggests, the measures that were undertaken by the authorities rested on the false presumption that it was lack of liquidity rather than the persistence of counterparty risk that protracted the crisis. The situation could have been dealt with much more efficiently were it not for these misconceptions. Neither Taylor's nor Bernanke's argument is convincing on all counts. Rather, it is a combination of the two that offers the most accurate account of what happened.

One of the main points of disagreement between Taylor and Bernanke is the role of the Federal Reserve's loose monetary policy during the years 2002–2006 in inflating the housing market. While Taylor is right in claiming that excessively low interest rates generally accommodate the creation of bubbles, he wrongly alleges that his rule for monetary policy, the Taylor Rule, is detailed enough to work as a reference point for how monetary policy should be conducted, regardless of context.^{4 5} Indeed, as Bernanke argues, the monetary situation in the US in the period 2002–2006 was complex in ways that are unaccounted for in the Taylor Rule. For example, the recovery after the dot-com bubble burst in 2001 was rapid, but did not push down unemployment to the extent that conventional wisdom would suggest.⁶ The Taylor Rule does not explicitly account for unemployment, but instead expects it to follow inflation and output as described by Okun's law and the Phillips curve.⁷ Taking into consideration the low inflation rates of the years in question, Bernanke's argument that raising the FFR at that time would have been deflationary is hardly unfounded.^{8 9} Indeed, while mainstream economic theory would have predicted unemployment to diminish as the economy recovered after 2001, it would also have predicted inflation to fall to very low levels had the Federal Reserve raised the FFR over the period that Taylor suggests.¹⁰ Additionally, as Bernanke points out, the sharp increases in housing prices started in 1998, well

4 Taylor, "Economic policy and the financial crisis: An empirical analysis of what went wrong," 341–364.

5 Mathematically, the Taylor Rule is expressed as $i = r + t + m + nY$, where i is the nominal interest rate, r is the real interest rate, t is inflation, i is target inflation, Y is short-run output, and m and n are coefficients which set out the sensitivity of policy to deviations from target inflation and potential output, respectively.

6 "United States Unemployment Rate," Trading Economics, Last accessed November 15, 2018, <https://tradingeconomics.com/united-states/unemployment-rate>.

7 The Phillips curve assumes that inflation increases with short-run output, and Okun's law assumes that unemployment decreases as short-run output increases.

8 Jones, *Macroeconomics*, 324.

9 Bernanke, "Monetary Policy and the Housing Bubble."

10 Jones, *Macroeconomics*, 315, 321.

before the period of the allegedly too loose monetary policy.¹¹

Taken together, the evidence above indicates that while the low interest rates before the crisis played a role in inflating the housing market, it was not a major factor. The economic indicators of the time were ambiguous, and the Federal Reserve chose a policy path associated with avoiding the deflationary trap that had suppressed the Japanese economy over the past decades.^{12 13} Nevertheless, the Fed could have better appreciated the instability of the housing market and started raising interest rates in time to prevent the crash from turning into a worldwide financial disaster. If the FFR had been raised a couple of years earlier, the concealed risk in the securities markets could have been exposed without risking a system collapse. In such a scenario, it is plausible that the average creditworthiness of borrowers would have been higher, as lenders would not have had enough time to work their way down to the absolute bottom of the income/asset brackets. In Hyman Minsky's words, financial practice would not yet have degenerated from "speculative finance" to "Ponzi finance."¹⁴ As such, the mortgage default rates and banks' leverage ratios would have been lower, and the recession more manageable. While monetary policy leading up to the crisis did contribute to its onset, the circumstances that magnified the crisis to a global collapse emerged as a result of the government's exceedingly poor regulatory oversight.

Taylor finds that the countries where housing prices rose the steepest were also the ones that deviated the most from his monetary policy rule. He argues that this serves as evidence that the Federal Reserve's lax monetary policy played a significant role in setting the stage for the crisis.¹⁵ While this statement likely has some truth to it, it suffers from several shortcomings. As mentioned earlier, Bernanke underscores that the housing boom started in 1998 when the FFR was well over 5 percent.^{16 17} Against this background, it is more likely that the regula-

11 Bernanke, "Monetary Policy and the Housing Bubble."

12 In Japan in the 1980s, a combination of central bank-initiated loan growth quotas and bad regulation incentivized banks to grant credit to exceedingly risky borrowers, which eventually paved the way for a huge asset price bubble. In 1989, the Bank of Japan responded by sharply raising interest rates, eventually causing many borrowers to default, leaving banks with large amounts of bad debt on their books. To prevent the system from going bust, the government and the Bank of Japan provided the banks with liquidity and cheap credit. However, many bad assets remained on the banks' books. The inability of these banks to recuperate their credibility increased financial friction in the system, which increased counterparty risk, lowered aggregate demand, and induced stagnation and deflation despite lower-bound interest rates (see Krugman, 2008).

13 Bernanke, "Monetary Policy and the Housing Bubble."

14 Richard A. Miller, "Minsky's financial instability hypothesis and the role of equity: The accounting behind hedge, speculative, and Ponzi finance," *Journal of Post-Keynesian Economics* 41, no. 1 (January 2018): 126–138, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01603477.2017.1392870>.

15 Taylor, "Economic policy and the financial crisis: An empirical analysis of what went wrong," 341–364.

16 FRED figures confirm that the housing prices rose rapidly well before 2002 (FRED, "S&P/Case-Shiller U.S. National Home Price Index")

17 "Effective Federal Funds Rate," FRED, Last accessed November 15, 2018, <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/FEDFUNDS>.

tory situation both in the US and elsewhere is to blame for the housing boom and subsequent crisis. In 1999, around the same time that Bernanke alleges the boom started, the Clinton administration partially repealed the Banking Act of 1933 (or the Glass-Steagall Act).¹⁸ The act was adopted after the Great Depression to improve financial stability, and essentially separated investment banks and hedge funds from commercial banks.¹⁹ After the repeal, it became legal for financial institutions of all types to merge, thereby making them “too big to fail” and allowing them to engage in larger-scale speculation.^{20 21} This paved the way for a moral hazard and exposed depositors to speculative risk in the process. In addition, the partial repeal failed to give the Securities and Exchange Commission authority to regulate and scrutinise financial institutions, thus allowing for the creation of riskier and ever-more opaque derivatives.²² As such, the abolishment of parts of the Glass-Steagall Act drastically increased the scale of speculative operations and weakened regulatory oversight, thus shrouding the securities markets in ignorance.

Taylor elegantly compares the ensuing situation to a game of hearts, but with many queens of spades instead of just one. Everybody knew that most financial institutions’ balance sheets were riddled with queens of spades, i.e. toxic assets. The problem was that when the crisis hit, nobody could distinguish the toxic assets from the non-toxic ones, and thus, all assets of a kind sharply diminished in value.²³ The indistinguishability of safe mortgage-backed securities from risky ones was in part due to the complexity of the financial instruments in question, and in part due to the failure of the rating agencies to accurately evaluate the risk of the constituent mortgages (Crotty, 2009).²⁴ This is an issue of poor oversight as well; the rating agencies evaluated the riskiness of loans under the pressure of competition, and therefore consistently gave customers (e.g. banks) the ratings they required to sell off the loans as quickly as possible. Since there were no regulatory mechanisms in place to prevent this from becoming standard practice, it became hugely profitable for banks to grant loans to more or less anyone.²⁵ The expansive access to credit led the housing market to boom. It is also worth mentioning that the expected

18 The Glass-Steagall Act was already being disregarded by regulatory authorities in 1998 (ex. Dash, 2008).

19 Julia Mauers, “Banking Act of 1933 (Glass-Steagall),” Federal Reserve History, November 22, 2013, https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/glass_steagall_act.

20 George G. Kaufman, “Too big to fail in banking: What does it mean?,” LSE Financial Markets Group Special Paper Series, Special paper 22 (June 2013), <http://www.lse.ac.uk/fmg/assets/documents/papers/special-papers/SP222.pdf>.

21 Robin Greenwood and David Scharfstein, “The Growth of Finance,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 27, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 3–28, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1257/jep.27.2.3>.

22 James Crotty, “Structural causes of the global financial crisis: a critical assessment of the ‘new financial architecture’,” *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 33, no. 4, (July 2009): 563–580, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cje/bep023>.

23 Taylor, “Economic policy and the financial crisis: An empirical analysis of what went wrong,” 341–364.

24 Crotty, “Structural causes of the global financial crisis: a critical assessment of the ‘new financial architecture’,” 563–580.

25 Crotty, “Structural causes of the global financial crisis,” 563–580.

future values of the homes that the mortgages financed were included as collateral in the risk evaluations.²⁶ As such, the stability of the financial system was built on the premise that the US housing market could continue to boom indefinitely. This indicates that it was poor oversight, not lax monetary policy, that paved the way for the housing bubble and the subsequent crisis once the bubble burst.

In the wake of the crisis, when the flow of financial transactions had frozen and market interest rates had skyrocketed due to the increased uncertainty and risk, the Federal Reserve and the US Treasury set out to stimulate the economy to prevent it from collapsing altogether.²⁷ Based on what measures the policymakers chose to enact, it seems they diagnosed the problem to be insufficient liquidity.²⁸ ²⁹ Taylor correctly claims that they were mistaken—it was excessive counterparty risk, not liquidity, that petrified the financial markets. Among other things, policymakers tried to stimulate aggregate demand by giving out over 100 billion USD in cash to US households. The effects of these cash infusions quickly subsided and had little to no effect in terms of economic recovery.³⁰ Next, they tried to reduce the financial friction in the system by adopting the so-called Troubled Asset Relief Programme of around 700 billion USD. As the name suggests, the programme sought to relieve troubled financial institutions of bad assets. However, the legislative text lacked a predictable framework as to what kinds of assets would be bought up, at what prices, and what the targeted institutions should do with the money. The consequences were that uncertainty and counterparty risk persisted, and that most of the money was used to buy US Treasury bonds and other safe assets that did not reduce the financial friction in the system (Taylor, 2009).³¹ Essentially, the mistake that the policymakers made was to conceive of the crisis as one of liquidity rather than counterparty risk. If counterparty risk in the system is high, then financial friction is high, and if financial friction is high, then neither monetary policy nor fiscal stimulus can restart the economy. This is because the increased risk offsets the effects of any lowering of the FFR or an increase in aggregate demand.³² ³³ Had the problem been diagnosed as excessive counterparty risk from the outset, then predictable and targeted quantitative easing could have been used immediately to remove the toxic assets from the system, thereby decreasing risk and uncertainty. Eventually, quantitative easing was used, but it could have been

26 Gary Gorton and Guillermo Ordoñez, “Collateral Crises,” *American Economic Review* 104, no. 2 (February 2014): 343–78, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1257/aer.104.2.343>.

27 Bernanke, “Monetary Policy and the Housing Bubble.”

28 Bernanke, “Monetary Policy and the Housing Bubble.”

29 Taylor, “Economic policy and the financial crisis: An empirical analysis of what went wrong,” 341–364.

30 Taylor, “Economic policy and the financial crisis,” 341–364.

31 Taylor, “Economic policy and the financial crisis,” 341–364.

32 Mathematically, this can be expressed as $R=Rf+f$ and $Y=a-b(R-r)$.

33 Jones, *Macroeconomics*, 388–389.

done much earlier (Taylor, 2009).^{34 35}

Neither Taylor nor Bernanke provides a satisfactory account of what went wrong before and during the Great Recession. Taylor is mistaken in claiming that the Federal Reserve's lax monetary policy in the years leading up to the housing bust is to blame for the crisis. While this might have played a minor role, the fact that the boom began under rather strict monetary conditions and that the Federal Reserve had a strong rationale for its chosen policy path suggests that Bernanke is right that it was inadequate regulation that paved the way for the crash. Nevertheless, Taylor's critique of the interventions that Bernanke's Federal Reserve undertook to resolve the crisis is justified. Had it not been for Bernanke's and other policymakers' misconception of the crisis as a liquidity shortage rather than an issue of counterparty risk, the recession would have been much less painful. Thus, on a concluding note, future policymakers should enhance the discretion of regulatory authorities to prevent a similar situation from emerging again, and improve the targeting of interventions in the event of a crisis to ensure that they are potent enough to produce the desired effect.

34 Jones, *Macroeconomics*, 401.

35 Jones, *Macroeconomics*, 401.

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Respect for the Smallest of Creatures: An Analysis of Human Respect for and Protection of Insects

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ABSTRACT

Humans have a complicated relationship with insects. Fearing them, we are quick to kill spiders and stomp on ants. Benefitting from them, we raise honeybees and silkworms and use their products for our enjoyment. Depending on them, we try to save bee populations, realizing that many of our food sources would be lost if bees died out. My goal in this paper is to find ways to justify respecting and protecting insects. They have been systematically excluded from animal rights theories because we tend to believe that they lack sentience, the main criterion used to extend rights to nonhumans. As I will argue, the sentience criterion relies on anthropocentric thinking about the ways that animals experience the world. Choosing an alternative to the sentience criterion—one that does not rely on commonalities between insects and humans—is a necessary step in finding a motivation for respecting insects. I will test two approaches to respecting insects—one that involves granting them rights and another that requires thinking of them as possessing inherent worth. Then, I will use my analysis of insects to answer some broader questions in environmental political theory. Mainly, what is the basis for respecting nature even when it does not directly benefit us? Finding a way to respect the creatures that we consider the most difficult to live alongside and relate to serves as a useful test for determining the limits and scope of our respect for nature.

“If all mankind were to disappear, the world would regenerate back to the rich state of equilibrium that existed ten thousand years ago. If insects were to vanish, the environment would collapse into chaos.”¹

-E.O. Wilson

Insect populations have declined rapidly in the last twenty years, and no

¹ Wilson, E. O. *The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth*. New York, W.W. Norton, 2006, pp. 33-34.

one seems to care. As we gain more knowledge about the disappearance of insect species, some scientists and media outlets have publicized the news of a climate change-driven insect decline. But the vast majority of us remain unaware of the importance and vulnerability of the insect world. Given the abundance and variety of insects, it may seem as though the loss of certain species is insignificant. And yet, the complex web of life suggests otherwise. Almost every type of insect interacts with plant and animal species, providing necessary food, pollination, or fertile soil. These small creatures maintain life.

Despite their importance, insects have been systematically excluded from theories of animal rights. We often fail to recognize in insects the qualities—such as sentience or the ability to feel pain—that we use to establish the rights of other animals. Our ignorance of insect sentience stems from the practical difficulty of studying their tiny nervous systems, along with an evolutionarily ancient aversion that creates barriers to understanding and relating to them. This failure to connect with insects often leads us to think of their death and suffering as insignificant.

My goal in this paper is to analyze how we should interact with insects and find ways to justify respecting and protecting them. Overcoming the instinctual fear and repulsion many of us feel for these creatures is a necessary aspect of any proposal for respecting insects. Additionally, approaches to insect protection require adopting ecocentric views of conservation. Usually, arguments for protecting insects rely on their benefit to us. Many people care about saving bees, for example, because they pollinate plants that we eat. But given some of the shortcomings of anthropocentric approaches, it is necessary to think of alternative theories that guide us to respect insects apart from their relation to us. Finally, our consideration of insects challenges some of the criteria that we often use to extend rights and consideration to nonhuman animals. As I will argue, the popular sentience criterion relies on anthropocentric thinking about the ways that animals experience the world. Choosing an alternative to the sentience criterion—one that does not depend on commonalities between insects and humans—is another necessary step in finding a motivation for respecting insects. In sum, I will argue that respecting insects requires overcoming stigma, adopting an ecocentric approach, and abandoning the sentience criterion.

After describing our current relationship to insects and their importance to various ecosystems, I will test two approaches to respecting insects—one that involves granting them rights and another that entails thinking of them as possessing inherent worth. I will assess each theory in terms of its treatment of stigma, ecocentrism, and the sentience criterion. Finally, I will discuss some of the implications of our treatment of insects for broader questions in environmental political theory.

I. OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH INSECTS

We use insects for a variety of purposes. In labs, scientists experiment on fruit flies to study ageing, genetics, human disease, and countless other topics. In gardens and on farms, we depend on bees and butterflies for the pollination of crops and flowers. It would not be possible to produce silk fabric and clothing without the labor of silkworms, nor would it be possible to break down soil or compost materials without various flies and maggots. Some people eat high-protein insects such as crickets and grasshoppers, and claim that entomophagy, or bug-eating, will become a necessity in the future as other food sources run out.²

Despite our dependence on and benefit from a wide range of insects, we tend to respond to them with fear or repulsion. Our nicknames for bugs—“creepy-crawlies and pests”—capture this attitude. Part of our aversion may stem from our negative associations with insects and the harm they cause. Ticks, mosquitoes, and other insects carry diseases such as Lyme, the Zika virus, and malaria. Parasites, including lice and bed bugs, encroach on our personal space and threaten the sanctity of our homes and bodies. Various types of locusts, worms, and beetles damage crops, threatening the livelihoods of farmers and those who rely on them for food.

In contrast, the vast majority of insects neither pose a direct threat to us nor even benefit us in some way. And yet, our aversion to harmful insects usually extends to all insects. Many people are quick to kill the ants, spiders, and flies that appear in their homes, even when these insects pose no immediate threat. The ease with which we kill these insects stems from our fear (phobias of spiders, for example, are fairly common) and from our inability to relate to them. Perhaps we fail to connect with them because of their divergence from mammalian bodies—their wings, shells, and antennae contrast with the appendages of more familiar animals. Insects’ size and abundance also seem to play a role in our tendency to discount them. How could an ant—a being as small as a crumb—possibly matter, especially when there are millions more of them? Most of all, it is difficult for us to recognize sentience in insects—the main attribute used to determine the degree to which an animal can be likened to humans. Our simultaneous dependence on and inability to relate to insects merge to form our complicated relationship with them.

II. THE NECESSITY OF INSECTS

What would the world look like without insects? Not only do insects bene-

2 Barbara J. King, “The Joys and Ethics of Insect Eating,” *NPR*, April 3, 2014.

fit us in certain ways, but they also serve a vital role in ecosystems more generally. The naturalist E.O. Wilson refers to insects as “the little things that run the natural world.”³ Though we are often unaware of their presence and necessity, their disappearance would spark a cascade of additional extinctions. Vital to the food chain, insects serve as a food source for most bird and fish species.⁴ Plants also benefit from insects in numerous ways, mainly through enhanced soil quality and pollination. Some plants depend on specific bee species for pollination, and some bee species can only acquire food from certain types of plants. This symbiotic relationship entails that when either partner—plant or insect—becomes endangered, the other suffers as well.⁵

Climate change has caused a massive decline in insect populations that humans are only just beginning to quantify and analyze. Given the size and abundance of insect species, it is difficult to track their decline. Additionally, there are millions of species that humans have never studied or counted before.⁶ But recent experiments that involve catching and recording large quantities of insects in certain areas have demonstrated that their numbers are declining quickly.⁷ ⁸ For example, researchers studied arthropod populations in Puerto Rico’s Luquillo rainforest between 1976 and 2012, a period in which maximum climate temperatures increased by two degrees Celsius.⁹ The decline of the arthropods mirrored a loss of lizard, frog, and bird species in the same forest. As the authors of this study write, “climate warming is the major driver of reductions in arthropod abundance,” and leads to the “collapse of the forest food web.”¹⁰

The decline of insects has caused a similar cascading effect in other parts of the world as well. Pollinators of all types (mainly bee and butterfly species) are declining at an unprecedented rate.¹¹ Many native bee species in New England have become endangered due to disease, pesticides, and a reduction in the plants they require for food.¹² As the bee species go extinct, native plant species die as well, and this dual decline harms bird populations in return. As biologist and bee ecologist Robert Gegear explains, the resulting lack of biodiversity could cause

3 Brook Jarvis, “The Insect Apocalypse is Here,” *The New York Times Magazine*, November 27, 2018.

4 Jarvis, “The Insect Apocalypse is Here.”

5 Robert Gegear, interview with the author, November 29, 2018.

6 Jarvis, “The Insect Apocalypse is Here.”

7 Jarvis, “The Insect Apocalypse is Here.”

8 The insect decline may be part of a massive reduction in biodiversity that some refer to as the “sixth great extinction,” or the sixth time in the earth’s history that many species have gone extinct within the same time frame (*New York Times Magazine*).

9 Bradford C. Lister and Andres Garcia, “Climate-driven Declines in Arthropod Abundance Restructure a Rainforest Food Web,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA*, September 2018.

10 Lister and Garcia, “Climate-driven Declines.”

11 Interview with Robert Gegear.

12 Interview with Robert Gegear.

gardens and fields to transform into endless, green lawns. Vibrant gardens full of plant and animal life will wither away without pollinators.¹³

III. APPROACHES TO RESPECT

How should we interact with these creatures which we depend on but cannot relate to? Broadly, there are two categories of approaches that we could take. First, there are anthropocentric approaches, or strategies, that frame motives for conservation around human interests. There are at least two forms of anthropocentrism: (1) viewing the world from the perspective of humans without considering the perspectives of other beings or the natural world as a whole or (2) prioritizing the interests of humans over everything else. An example of (1) would be failing to grant moral consideration to insects because they may lack consciousness, a trait we sometimes use to determine whether we should extend moral rights or standing to other beings. As conscious animals ourselves, we often believe that consciousness is a key feature of a being that is “advanced enough” to receive our consideration. There are multiple examples of (2) in relation to insects. Some people believe that we should protect insects because they contribute to biodiversity, making the world more aesthetically pleasing to us. On a more drastic scale, some people argue that we should protect insects because ecosystems will collapse and we will lose food sources without them.

One of the main dangers of anthropocentric thinking is that it leads us to exclude from our consideration the aspects of nature that do not (as far as we know) directly benefit us. This exclusion entails that we should not attempt to avert the suffering or extinction of plant and animal species that we have not decided benefit us in some way. Ironically, this exclusion fails to achieve the goals of anthropocentrism: it is likely that, due to our limited knowledge of nature and ecosystems, we will fail to save a species that we need. Given the complex web of organisms that makes up the natural world, it is not possible to foresee all of the consequences of failing to respect and protect a particular species. Additionally, this anthropocentric approach to conservation is dangerous in the sense that it could easily lead to more environmental harm in the future. As biologist Jeffrey Lockwood acknowledges, it was an anthropocentric view that “created the environmental problems confronting us today.”¹⁴ Even if we could successfully use anthropocentrism and our fear of human extinction to motivate ourselves to reverse the trends of climate

¹³ Interview with Robert Gegear.

¹⁴ Lockwood, Jeffrey A. “The Moral Standing of Insects and the Ethics of Extinction.” *The Florida Entomologist* vol. 70, no. 1, 1987, pp. 83.

change, our lingering dominance over nature and prioritization of our immediate interests will lead to additional environmental problems in the future. A more radical shift in our relationship with nature is necessary to ensure lasting, positive change.

Anthropocentric views contrast with ecocentric approaches to conservation, or approaches that take into account the needs and interests of beings besides humans by treating nature as an end in itself. An example of an ecocentric approach to conservation is arguing for the protection of a species of bees not because that species is necessary for human food sources or enjoyment, but simply because the bees matter inherently. When considering ways to interact with insects, we should prioritize ecocentric approaches over anthropocentric approaches, given the pitfalls of anthropocentrism.

An ecocentric approach to interacting with insects involves some form of respect for insects and a motive for their protection beyond their relation to us. If insects are inherently valuable, then we owe them respect and should care about their interests. Theories of respect guide our actions and the way we treat other beings. For centuries, Western political theory framed humans as the only creatures deserving of respect. For example, the Kantian theory of respect features humans as the only rational beings, and thus the only entities that we should treat as ends in themselves.¹⁵ But this theory of respect entails that nonhumans can be exploited for the benefit of rational beings. The theories that I will analyze call into question this assumption, and provide us with alternative grounds for respecting nonhuman animals and aspects of nature.

A) INSECTS AS CITIZENS, DENIZENS, AND SOVEREIGNS

One approach to respecting insects is to grant them rights. There are many different types of rights, including moral rights, legal rights, civil rights, and political rights. It may benefit insects and elevate their standing to extend some of these rights and protections to them. In their book *Zoopolis*, Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka propose a model for animal rights that ensures that animals' "basic interests cannot be sacrificed for the greater good of others."¹⁶ Even though Donaldson and Kymlicka label these rights "inviolable," they also acknowledge that there are situations in which these rights are not "absolute or unconditional,"

¹⁵ Robin S. Dillon, "Respect," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Spring 2018 Edition.

¹⁶ Donaldson, Sue and Will Kymlicka. *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights*. New York, Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 19.

including when animals harm or threaten to harm humans.^{17 18}

By centering animal rights in political theory, Donaldson and Kymlicka demonstrate ways to integrate animals into our existing models of citizenship and sovereignty. One of their strategies is to separate animals into three broad categories based on our levels of interaction with them: domesticated, liminal,¹⁹ and wild animals. Domesticated animals such as dogs, pigs, and chickens are oppressed in many ways; they are held in captivity, their labor is exploited, and some of them are killed and eaten on a daily basis. Donaldson and Kymlicka argue that, because we have integrated these animals into our society, we have certain obligations to them—mainly to listen to and interpret their interests and needs.²⁰ The best way to reverse their oppression and ensure that their needs are met is to grant them full citizenship rights. Using comparisons to children and mentally disabled people, Donaldson and Kymlicka argue that humans can extend assistance and representation to animals by noticing their interests and then communicating them to the rest of society. Nonhuman animals are capable of communicating to us in nonverbal ways, and with the support of human companions, these expressions of their interests can be translated into the political system.^{21 22} Based on this citizenship theory of the rights of domesticated animals, humans should not harm them or exploit them for food or labor.

Donaldson and Kymlicka argue that liminal animals should be allowed to live near and around us without subjection to extermination or harm.²³ Even though they are not granted the rights of full citizens, they are still guaranteed the right to not be harmed and the right to have their interests included in decision-making and urban planning. Additionally, fully wild animals are granted rights to be protected from human destruction of their habitats. As sovereign beings, they are members of their own communities that humans cannot disrupt or harm.²⁴ Their needs must be taken into account any time that humans build on or otherwise disrupt the land they inhabit.

According to Donaldson and Kymlicka, the basis for granting these rights to animals is their sentience, which “has distinct moral significance because it en-

17 Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, pp. 19 & 41.

18 Similarly, even inviolable rights for humans can, in some situations, be violated. For example, the right to freedom is not unconditional; it becomes constrained if people are found guilty of crimes and sentenced to prison.

19 A liminal animal lives alongside us and shares some of the same living spaces without being domesticated. For example, pigeons and squirrels interact with us on a daily basis and live in our cities and towns even though we have not domesticated them.

20 Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, pp. 101.

21 Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, pp. 112.

22 This view alters our understanding of citizenship. Based on more than voting rights, citizenship involves at a minimum participation in the political system by voicing needs and interests that are given consideration.

23 Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, pp. 214.

24 Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, pp. 157.

ables a subjective experience of the world.”²⁵ Sentient creatures possess interests and goals; in other words, they “care about how their lives go.”²⁶ Based on this theory of animal rights, the possession of interests differentiates certain animals from rocks or trees. Though there may be reasons to protect and care about forests, we do not need to grant forests inviolable rights because trees are not sentient. When we look at them, we do not feel as though there is “someone home,” or a person there.²⁷ Thus, we only have obligations towards animals with subjective experiences of the world.²⁸

If we apply this animal rights model to insects, then it is necessary to determine whether insects are sentient. Donaldson and Kymlicka explicitly exclude insects from their analysis, explaining that current evidence and scientific analysis suggests that insects are not sentient.²⁹ Thus, insects are not granted inviolable rights or included in our conceptions of citizens, denizens, or sovereign beings. As Lockwood proposes, however, insects are more intelligent and aware than we might think, and our tendency to think of insects as “genetically programmed robots” has contaminated our ability to consider their sentience.³⁰ In contrast with the view of insect sentience that Donaldson and Kymlicka propose, there exists evidence that suggests that insects can experience pain, form relationships, and solve problems.

Testing whether a being has a subjective experience of the world is not a simple task; there is no standard set of attributes that determine sentience. To solve this issue, we can rely on some of the common criteria for sentience including consciousness, awareness, the capacity to feel pain, the ability to communicate, and the potential to problem-solve. Based on many definitions of sentience, if a living being possesses one or more of these attributes, we can regard it as sentient.³¹

Many scientists suggest that, at a bare minimum, insects have interests. For example, they try to avoid painful stimuli, including dangerous temperature changes, toxic chemicals, and electrical shock.³² They also writhe in response to pesticides, and they try to escape if they are physically restrained.³³ It is possible that insects do not feel pain in response to these stimuli (pain is subjective, and therefore difficult to study in other beings). However, multiple studies³⁴ indicate

25 Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, pp. 24 & 31.

26 Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, pp. 23.

27 Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, pp. 36.

28 Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, pp. 36.

29 Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, pp. 31.

30 Lockwood, “The Moral Standing,” pp. 78.

31 Lockwood, “The Moral Standing,” pp. 70.

32 Smith, Jane A. “A Question of Pain in Invertebrates.” *ILAR Journal*, vol. 33, no. 1-2, 1991, pp. 25-31.

33 Smith, “A Question of Pain in Invertebrates.”

34 Lockwood cites multiple studies that analyze insect pain. He writes that Alumets et al. (1979) “reported that earthworms possess B-endorphins and enkephalins which, by functional analogy, suggest the capacity for pain.”

that insects can experience some form of visceral pain.³⁵ It is also possible that insects communicate with each other. For example, honeybees use “an elaborate form of symbolic communication” or the “dance language” to share information on the “distance, direction, and desirability” of food sources and nesting sites.³⁶

If, as this research suggests, insects possess the capacity for language, pain, and awareness, then they meet some of the criteria for sentience.³⁷ Humans, however, tend to find it difficult to accept this conclusion. Regardless of our scientific advances in studying insect behavior and nervous systems, we remain quite removed from the insect world. No matter what we learn about insects, they are still (at least for most of us) difficult to relate to. Once again, the size of insects becomes a barrier to understanding them. It is difficult to imagine that such a small creature could have a complex enough nervous system to possess any criteria for sentience.³⁸ Additionally, we may find it difficult to believe that insects are sentient because we tend to study pain, consciousness, awareness, and language in vertebrate animals.³⁹ Many of our tests for sentience, for example, rely on verbal language or other human-centered ways of thinking about sentience.⁴⁰ In order to adequately study insect sentience, we need to develop ways to test for consciousness and awareness that do not depend on our understanding of language. As Gegear explains, studying insect behavior and consciousness is akin to “studying a group of people where you don’t know the language.”⁴¹

In his book *How Forests Think*, Eduardo Kohn presents us with ways to think about human-insect communication. Based on observations of the rainforest in Ecuador’s Upper Amazon as well as the people who live there (the Runa), Kohn suggests that “seeing, representing, and perhaps knowing, even thinking, are not exclusively human affairs.”⁴² Kohn develops an expanded and flexible definition of selfhood; according to him, anything that interprets or represents the world in some way possesses a form of selfhood.⁴³ For example, as flying ants in the rainforest relate to the environment and the beings around them in a certain way, he would argue they possess selfhood. One feature of their selfhood is their ability to communicate with other animals and to behave in a manner dependent

He also cites the work of physiologist V.B. Wigglesworth who discovered that “insects do experience visceral pain as well as pain caused by heat and electrical shock.” (pp. 76)

35 Lockwood, “The Moral Standing,” pp. 76.

36 Lockwood, “The Moral Standing,” pp. 78.

37 Lockwood, “The Moral Standing,” pp. 81.

38 Smith, “A Question of Pain in Invertebrates.”

39 Interview with Robert Gegear.

40 Interview with Robert Gegear.

41 Interview with Robert Gegear.

42 Kohn, Eduardo. *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 2013, pp. 1.

43 Kohn, *How Forests Think*, pp. 78.

on factors in the external world. Humans enjoy eating these flying ants, and are able to predict when the ants will emerge from the ground by paying attention to various signs from nature.⁴⁴ These predictions are the result of “treating ants as the intentional communicating selves they are.”⁴⁵ The humans in this example use this form of communication to interact with the insects by hunting and eating them. It would not be possible to predict the ants’ flight without implicitly acknowledging the ways that they understand and react to the world. With this example, Kohn demonstrates that in paying attention to and understanding the interests of insects, communication with them is possible.

If we take all of these examples to suggest that insects have some form of sentience, then we can apply the *Zoopolis* theory to them. There are not many domesticated insects, but honeybees and silkworms would be extended full citizenship rights. Liminal animals such as spiders and ants would be denizens, and insects that live exclusively in the wild (the vast majority of them) would be sovereign beings. The rights of each of these groups may entail that we must avoid “unnecessary or insensitive handling or restraint” and refrain from killing them.⁴⁶ Additionally, we could not use them as a food source or exploit them for their labor. The purpose of this paper is not to compile a comprehensive list of the rights of insects under this model, but rather to suggest that we could extend to them the rights of citizens, denizens, and sovereigns.

Although it is possible to use the *Zoopolis* model to grant rights and protections to insects, this approach has two major shortcomings. The first involves barriers to communicating with and relating to insects. Based on this theory, taking into account the interests and needs of nonhuman animals requires crossing an inter-species communication barrier. As Kohn and Gegeer argue (from an anthropological and biological view, respectively), insects are capable of communication. However, learning how to predict insect flight or studying insect behavior in a lab does not necessarily entail a full understanding of insects’ interests. Donaldson and Kymlicka propose relying on humans to represent their animal companions in the political sphere. But do there exist willing and adequate human translators for insects? It is useful to consider as candidates the human members of our society who appear to know the most about insects.

One group of candidates includes the farmers and gardeners who rely on certain species of insects for the pollination of crops and flowers. Their intimacy with plant life includes their knowledge of insect biology and behavior. Despite their reliance on (and perhaps respect for) pollinators, earthworms, and

44 Kohn, *How Forests Think*, pp. 79.

45 Kohn, *How Forests Think*, pp. 81.

46 Smith, “A Question of Pain.”

other “beneficial insects,” many farmers and gardeners also engage in a constant battle with the insects that sabotage their plants. A farmer who cares about saving bee populations may simultaneously kill potato beetles, locusts, or other insects that damage crops. Although there may exist some exceptions, it seems as though most farmers and gardeners only engage with insects so far as they benefit or hurt plants, which is not an adequate foundation to build the type of relationship or companionship required for use of the *Zoopolis* theory.

The Runa and other people who eat insects relate to them in a similar way. While they may learn a great deal about insects in order to predict their movements or learn how to raise them, the ultimate goal of their interactions is to hunt and eat the insects. It is important to note that eating insects does not necessarily entail a lack of respect for them. It may be necessary or justifiable in some situations to use insects as a food source. However, if the only goal of one’s interactions with insects is to eat them, then the insects are used as a means to assuage human hunger; in other words, the insect serves a purpose for the human. Given the nature of this interaction, a person who eats insects is not in an ideal position to advocate for the insects’ interests.⁴⁷

Another group of humans who interact with insects frequently are entomologists and other scientists who study insects. Although these scientists may possess the best understanding of the biological mechanisms behind possible insect sentience, their scientific knowledge does not entail respect or a willingness to translate the needs of insects to the rest of society. In fact, many scientists who study insects keep them confined in tanks and cages for long periods of time and expose them to painful stimuli.

Analyzing these various human-insect relationships reveals that, at least at present, it would be difficult to find adequate human representatives for the insect world. Even if it is possible to find some willing and knowledgeable humans, it is doubtful that there are enough of them to sufficiently represent the vast number of insect species that we interact with. There are far fewer domesticated animals in the world than there are insects, so domesticated animals are easier to accurately represent. However, it may be possible to overcome these difficulties by focusing our attention on a few of the species that we interact with most frequently or tend to exploit for resources and labor, such as honeybees and silkworms.

The most significant barrier to finding human translators is the stigma associated with insects. Donaldson and Kymlicka write that “most humans come to understand and care for animals by having a relationship with them—observing

⁴⁷ It is worth noting that there may exist more complex relationships between insects and humans that allow humans to use insects for the purposes of food or labor and simultaneously respect and appreciate them.

them, hanging out with them, caring for them, loving and being loved by them.”⁴⁸ But we do not tend to think of people as “loving” insects or developing caring relationships with them. Because of our difficulty relating to them, which often takes the form of fear or disgust, our relationships with insects are not comparable to our interactions with dogs, cats, and other domesticated animals.

This stigma against insects may begin to fade away. It is possible that, with more research on invertebrate nervous systems, we will gain enough knowledge of insect sentience to be able to relate to them. This scientific knowledge, however, may not succeed in helping us overcome the instincts that have led us to fear insects for centuries. Additionally, even if our view of insects changes, and we find a way to relate to them, it will only be because we recognize in them something that resembles us. A major flaw with our theories of respect is that each time we grant it to other creatures, it is often only because we see ourselves and aspects of our humanity in them. Even with enough research, it is possible that insects will never be considered similar enough to us to be included in this group. Therefore, we must overcome our dependence on relatability as a necessary criterion for respect. This shift in justification is a fundamental first step towards learning how to interact with insects in a more respectful way. The version of animal rights theory that Donaldson and Kymlicka articulate offers us no way to move beyond our narrow focus on resemblance as a basis for respect.

The second problem with using the *Zoopolis* theory as the model for our treatment of insects is that, despite the extensive rights it grants to animals, it remains a fundamentally anthropocentric approach. The citizenship and sovereignty model that Donaldson and Kymlicka propose depends on existing political structures and concepts. As Donaldson and Kymlicka explain, “for many legal and political purposes, advancing an animal rights agenda will require using the pre-existing language of persons and extending it to animals.”⁴⁹ This dependence on human-designed models means that treating animals like citizens and sovereigns entails bringing them into a political landscape that was developed with humans in mind. The categories of citizen, denizen, and sovereign reflect language and political theory that is familiar only to humans. Thus, animals might be forced into a system that they ultimately cannot consent to, and that hinges on philosophical and moral principles that are inaccessible to them. To extend the human concepts of law, rights, and citizenship to animals entails viewing our relationship with them through an anthropocentric lens.

Additionally, this theory’s dependence on the concept of sentience allows the exclusion of many beings, including insects (at least until more scientific re-

48 Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, pp. 255.

49 Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, pp. 30.

search is conducted and accepted). Humans have decided that sentience is a criterion for moral considerability because a subjective experience of the world is a core feature of humanity. Thus, when we recognize sentience in other animals, we begin to care about them as well. Donaldson and Kymlicka acknowledge that moral theories often fall into this anthropocentric trap by taking “humanity as [their] standard.”⁵⁰ Based on an anthropocentric view, animals “achieve moral standing only if they can be seen as possessing or approximating some aspect of [the] essence of humanity.”⁵¹ Donaldson and Kymlicka believe that their theory avoids this trap by focusing on the protection of vulnerable beings rather than the protection of beings that relate to humans. Possessing sentience is a form of vulnerability because a being with sentience possesses interests that can be unfulfilled or harmed.⁵² But this response fails to demonstrate why the Zoopolis theory is not anthropocentric. Instead, it replaces sentience (an anthropocentric criterion for moral considerability) with another criterion that is equally anthropocentric: vulnerability. A human understanding of vulnerability suggests that a being must be sentient to have interests or be harmed. Again, this view of vulnerability is based on our own experiences of the world and fails to take into account the experiences or perspectives of other living beings. Thus, focusing on vulnerability does not demonstrate that this version of animal rights theory avoids anthropocentrism.

B) RESPECTING NATURE

Another approach to understanding the way we should interact with insects is to rely on ecocentric views of their worth. In his article “The Ethics of Respect for Nature,” philosopher Paul Taylor presents us with an alternative to anthropocentric environmental ethics. Taylor argues that we have moral obligations to plants and animals to “protect or promote their good for their sake.”⁵³ These moral obligations include respecting the “integrity of natural ecosystems,” saving endangered species, and minimizing environmental pollution.⁵⁴ The reason we should care about the well-being and survival of plant and animal species is that each living thing possesses an “inherent worth” and a “good,” or well-being.⁵⁵ In contrast with theories that depend on sentience as a criterion, Taylor’s theory relies instead on these two features of living beings.

According to Taylor, “every organism, species population, and commu-

50 Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, pp. 33.

51 Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, pp. 33.

52 Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, pp. 33.

53 Taylor, Paul. “The Ethics of Respect for Nature.” *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 3, 1981, pp. 198.

54 Taylor, “The Ethics of Respect for Nature,” pp. 198.

55 Taylor, “The Ethics of Respect for Nature,” pp. 198.

nity of life has a good of its own which moral agents can intentionally further or damage by their actions.”⁵⁶ Humans, plants, insects, and other animals all possess interests that can be protected or harmed (notice that inanimate objects such as rocks do not fall into this category). Generally, these interests include staying “strong and healthy.”⁵⁷ Thus, even if a plant is not necessarily aware of being harmed or benefited, it can still be injured or helped in certain ways.⁵⁸ The second main feature of Taylor’s argument is that all living things possess inherent worth.⁵⁹ Part of this inherent worth stems from the fact that living things deserve moral consideration as “members of the Earth’s community of life.”⁶⁰ Granting all living beings moral consideration does not mean that they possess inviolable rights; it only entails that every living being must be considered when making decisions.⁶¹ Establishing the inherent worth of living things also involves considering it “intrinsically valuable” to protect the interests of living things whenever possible.⁶² Taylor argues that granting each living being inherent worth and moral considerability allows us to develop a certain attitude towards all of nature that he labels “respect for nature.”⁶³

Taylor’s theory accounts for some of the shortcomings with the *Zoopolis* theory. The respect for nature that he articulates does not entail granting consideration to living things based on their similarities to humans. For example, consciousness is not a necessary criterion for moral considerability.⁶⁴ Rather, we begin to respect each living thing simply because it possesses intrinsic value. This theory allows us to transition away from the sentience criterion and other human-centric criteria for respect. Additionally, and more broadly, Taylor’s theory outlines an ecocentric approach to respecting nature. When applied to insects, his theory entails that we should respect them because we understand that they possess a good and inherent worth. Thus, we are obligated to respect their interests by refraining from harming them, and we need to take into account their interests when interacting with them or making decisions that influence them.

C) The Limits of our Respect

How might we decide which species’ well-being to prioritize when those

56 Taylor, “The Ethics of Respect for Nature,” pp. 199.

57 Taylor, “The Ethics of Respect for Nature,” pp. 199-200.

58 Taylor, “The Ethics of Respect for Nature,” pp. 200.

59 Taylor, “The Ethics of Respect for Nature,” pp. 201.

60 Taylor, “The Ethics of Respect for Nature,” pp. 201.

61 Taylor, “The Ethics of Respect for Nature,” pp. 201.

62 Taylor, “The Ethics of Respect for Nature,” pp. 201.

63 Taylor, “The Ethics of Respect for Nature,” pp. 202.

64 Taylor, “The Ethics of Respect for Nature,” pp. 211.

interests come into direct conflict? The main problem with Taylor's theory is that he does not articulate the limits of our respect for insects or other aspects of nature. If we adopt Taylor's theory, then we must treat all living beings with equal respect. How then, can we determine whether and how to prioritize our interests above the interests of insects? This account of respect cannot effectively guide us in situations in which insects pose a threat to our wellbeing or survival. There are many situations in which it might be necessary to harm or kill an insect (or insects) in order to protect ourselves or others.

In *Zoopolis*, Donaldson and Kymlicka present us with a way to think about potential conflicts between our rights and those of animals. Their solution to the human-animal conflict of interests is to apply what Rawls refers to as the "circumstance of justice."⁶⁵ This principle, based on Hume's statement that "ought implies can," suggests that "humans only owe justice to each other when they are in fact able to respect each other's rights without jeopardizing their own existence."⁶⁶ Thus, justice only applies in certain situations—when one's life is not at stake. If a mosquito that is likely to carry a disease is biting us, we are justified in killing it given that it has the potential to kill us. Our relationships with insects may also change over time. An insect that currently poses no threat may evolve to carry a fatal disease, changing the circumstances of justice. Thus, "assessing and sustaining the circumstances of justice is...an ongoing task."⁶⁷

Another approach to recognizing the limits of our respect for or protection of insects is to "shift the burden of proof" onto humans.⁶⁸ Lockwood establishes the moral considerability of insects by arguing (like Taylor) that they possess certain interests that can be harmed or helped by humans. Based on this moral considerability, Lockwood proposes a minimum ethic for our treatment of insects:

We ought to refrain from actions which may be reasonably expected to kill or cause nontrivial pain in insects when avoiding these actions has no, or only trivial, costs to our own welfare.⁶⁹

Lockwood describes a circumstance of justice; so long as insects pose no threat to our well-being, we should not kill or harm them in any way. This minimum ethic places the burden on humans to demonstrate the necessity of harming an insect before acting.⁷⁰ Notice that this minimum ethic fails to grant any positive rights or

65 Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, pp. 41.

66 Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, pp. 41.

67 Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, pp. 41.

68 Lockwood, "The Moral Standing," pp. 84.

69 Lockwood, "The Moral Standing," pp. 83.

70 Lockwood, "The Moral Standing," pp. 84.

protections to insects—it does not show us how we should help or protect insects in ways that exceed simply avoiding directly harming them. Instead, it demonstrates a baseline of respect for insects: it is not morally justifiable to kill an insect for no reason.

These theories give different accounts of the type of situations in which we can justifiably harm insects. Donaldson and Kymlicka measure insects' threat to human existence, while Lockwood draws our attention to insects' threat to human welfare more generally. Lockwood's articulation of the limits to our respect is a more useful and practical approach. With their theory, Donaldson and Kymlicka ignore the fact that humans possess interests other than survival. Our health and happiness, for example, are additional human interests that may weigh into our decisions about how to treat insects. Lockwood presents us with a way to integrate some of our other interests besides survival into our consideration of human-insect conflict.

Although Lockwood's theory provides us with a more useful account of the limits of our respect, it also complicates our decisions. When we expand our list of relevant human interests past survival, it becomes more difficult to measure them and to use them in decision-making. Determining whether an insect will kill us is more straightforward than determining the degree to which an insect will affect our quality of life or overall health. If one has a choice between eating insects or dying of starvation, the decision they should make is clearer than deciding whether to endure hunger for a short period or eat insects. Lockwood offers us no limit on the types of interests that we can take into account when prioritizing our wellbeing. He acknowledges that "the control of insects to prevent cosmetic damage" to crops is not justified by his minimum ethic.⁷¹ Additionally, he explains that major threats to our health justify harming insects. But many cases, including the consumption of insects as food, do not clearly fit into the categories of cosmetic harm or serious health threat. Thus, Lockwood's minimum ethic fails to offer us guidelines for navigating these more nebulous conflicts of interest.

IV. HUMANS AND NATURE

The current dominant approach to protecting insects is to articulate their benefit for humans. People might rally to save honeybees because of our reliance on their labor or our enjoyment of their honey. Similarly, people might feel motivated to protect insects in order to save certain plant or bird species they like. In each situation, the desire to protect insects stems from our needs and inter-

71 Lockwood, "The Moral Standing," pp. 86.

ests. Even when humans discuss the protection of insects in the context of climate change, their goals remain anthropocentric.

A negative consequence of adopting anthropocentric views is that we tend to anthropomorphize nature. It is only when we believe we have recognized a “human” aspect of an animal (or plant) that we begin to view it as deserving of our moral consideration. But this approach to respecting nature fails to extend respect and protection to multiple nonhuman animals and plants, including insects. Until recently, we have assumed that insects are mere robots without any sort of consciousness or feelings. And even with the advent of promising research into the subject, we are not confident that insects are sentient. Our requirement that “respectable” creatures must fulfill a sentience criterion has led us to invest an insufficient amount of resources and energy into protecting insect species that are now endangered or extinct. The great insect decline of the last twenty years is a sobering reminder of the consequences of that perspective.

Understanding the shortcomings of the sentience criterion leads us to understand that, more broadly, we cannot pick and choose the aspects of nature we want to respect. Each individual organism, plant and animal species, and community should be afforded the same baseline respect in terms of moral consideration. Even if there are reasons to prioritize one species’ interests over the interests of another species, we must, at a minimum, consider the interests of all affected creatures before acting. We should not base our moral consideration of nature on arbitrary principles such as sentience. Nor should we base our moral consideration on the degree to which we fear or avoid certain species such as insects. Fear and a lack of understanding or relatability should not entail disrespect. To gain our respect and protection, it is enough just to exist.

Taylor’s theory encapsulates this message and offers us an ecocentric approach to respecting insects and nature more broadly. Adopting his theory would allow us to abandon the sentience criterion and respect insects even when we cannot find an aspect of resemblance or similarity between them and us. However, Taylor’s theory leaves us with unanswered questions about how to balance our interests with the interests of nature, and how to determine the situations in which we can use insects for certain purposes.

It is necessary, therefore, to piece together aspects of Taylor’s theory with other theories that outline methods for weighing our interests against those of insects. Using Taylor’s theory, we can think of our respect for insects as independent of the sentience criterion, and we can find inherent value in their existence. If we also draw upon Lockwood’s minimum ethic, we can describe some of the situations in which it may be necessary to harm or kill insects, and we can find the justification for prioritizing our interests when our welfare is at risk. This blend of theories requires us to take into account the interests of insects and consider our

effect on them when acting or making decisions.

V. CONCLUSION

Drawing to a conclusion our centuries-long domination of nature will require a change in our theories and our practices. In particular, it requires abandoning anthropocentric approaches to conservation. How can we convince people to adopt a more ecocentric view of nature in place of an anthropocentric one? One strategy is to acknowledge the degree to which the two approaches converge. Although their intents differ, their results may be similar. Saving the human species probably requires finding a way to protect and respect the environment so that our habitats, ecosystems, and resources are preserved. And, as I have argued, it is not possible to protect the environment without adopting a fully ecocentric approach. Thus, adopting an ecocentric view and learning to care about the environment for its inherent worth would directly benefit us and improve our chances of survival. Unfortunately, acknowledging the convergence between the two approaches seems to require an ecocentric view in the first place. If we continue to view ourselves as separate from the rest of nature, then we will not notice the myriad ways in which we are woven together with the natural world and share the same habitat and desire for survival. In contrast, if we begin to see ourselves as more connected with nature, then a clear delineation between anthropo- and ecocentric views will fade away; all efforts to care for the environment will benefit nature (which includes us). But how can we break down this barrier that we have established?

For inspiration, we can look to the pollinating bee and the pollinated flower. As Gegeer explains, the two beings are not individuals—rather, they are a combination, an interdependent relationship, an assemblage.⁷² Neither one can exist without the other species. The bee and the flower represent the interconnectedness essential to all ecosystems and the strength of a relationship rooted in common interest. If we similarly begin to see our interests in survival as intertwined with the interests of nature, then it will be far easier to overcome anthropocentric barriers to respecting nature. Even if some of our interests come into conflict, our ultimate interest in preserving the natural habitat that is common to all living things. We are forced to share the same space and resources. Acknowledging the areas in which our interests merge helps us to understand that we are not separate from this network of life. Even the smallest of creatures—the ants, bees, and worms of the world—depend, like us, on the health of the environment, and thus deserve our respect.

72 Interview with Robert Gegeer.

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The Life Cycle of the Responsibility to Protect: The Ongoing Emergence of R2P as a Norm in the International Community

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INTRODUCTION

The “life cycle of a norm,” as presented by Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, holds that for a norm to become fully accepted and internalized as the rational action in a certain situation, it must travel through three phases of existence: norm emergence, norm cascade, and norm internalization. At this point in time, there is a norm of a responsibility to protect, referred to as R2P, manifesting itself in the international community. However, it is currently stuck in the second phase of its evolution. While the actions taken by the Security Council in Bosnia represent R2P’s emergence as a norm championed by “entrepreneurs,” and the US-led NATO intervention in Libya, as well as the passing of Resolution 1764 in 2005 prove R2P’s successful passage beyond the “tipping point” into the stage of “norm cascade,” the current inaction on the part of the international community in the case of the Syrian genocide reflects the fact that the responsibility to protect has not yet become a fully realized norm to the point where it is universally recognized as the appropriate response to all human rights violations. This is due in part simply to the precedent set by the “failure” in the eyes of the international community of past invocations of R2P – a fact which is not a shortcoming of the strength of the norm, but rather of its application - but also to the structural challenges associated with allowing the application and trial of a norm to be dictated by a body as politicized as the Security Council. As reflected in the case of Syria, the veto power accorded to the P5 on the Security Council provides outliers to the acceptance of R2P, such as Russia, to hijack its trial process and stagnate its chance to become fully internalized. This paper begins with a discussion of the theoretical process by which a norm comes into being as described by Finnemore and Sikkink, followed by an application of such a process to the emerging norm of responsibility to protect through the framework provided by the cases of Bosnia, Libya and Syria. It then tackles the question of why the norm has yet to be fully internalized in the international sphere, presenting an argument

for the fact that this is due to the undue power over its application given to the permanent members of the Security Council, and finally in the conclusion, it goes on to make an argument for how to overcome the incommensurate, politicized sway of the Security Council over R2P's evolution as a norm.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A norm in international relations is most commonly defined by Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink in their article "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change" as a "standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity."¹ Such a definition provides a succinct, yet comprehensive inclusion of the major characteristics of norms, namely, their status as an ideational standard of conduct given a particular circumstance, and the universality of acceptance on the part of a certain group with respect said conduct's legitimacy and necessity. It is also important to note, that for a standard to be considered a fully formed norm, it can't only be acted upon physically or rhetorically by states, it must essentially be a "foregone conclusion" in the eyes of those party to it as the appropriate behavior. This distinction, though subtle, is crucial, in that it separates an emerging norm from a fully formed one; while an emerging norm is represented as such by conspicuous, conscious efforts to fulfill a standard set forward by norm entrepreneurs, an absolute norm is such because "[it is] internalized by actors and achieve[s] a "taken for granted" quality that makes conformance with the norm almost automatic."² This distinction is what separates a norm from something like a law, or a resolution; states do not just comply with it because of a positive duty to a legally or politically binding force, they comply with it as part of a negative duty to follow a principle so embedded in code of behavior as correct, that no thought goes into its action whatsoever.

Finnemore and Sikkink outline in their article what has come to be known as the "life cycle" of the emergence of such a norm, or the evolution of a standard of behavior must follow in order to become a fully formed norm within the international community. This cycle has three phases. Phase one, titled "norm emergence," is characterized by the promotion of a certain standard by what Sikkink and Finnemore call "norm entrepreneurs," or those within the international community who could be considered "thought leaders" with respect to normative formation, through "organizational platforms" such as international institutions, NGO's or transnational advocacy networks. The goal of such entrepreneurs

1 Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change." *International Organization* vol. 52, no. 4, 1998, pp. 891.

2 Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change." *International Organization* vol. 52, no. 4, 1998, pp. 904.

during this stage is to persuade the most powerful states within the international community to accept and promote the norms they set forth, a process that is characterized by their calling attention to issues “using language that names, interprets, and dramatizes them.”³ The second stage in this process is characterized as the “norm cascade,” and is catalyzed by a “tipping point” when “norm entrepreneurs have persuaded a critical mass of states to become norm leaders and adopt new norms.”⁴ After this point, all other states will follow in the footsteps of those that set precedents within the international community, and a norm’s legitimacy and reputation as a standard of behavior is strengthened through socialization, institutionalization and demonstration. As mentioned above, while this stage may appear to produce fully formed norms, the limiting factor of the complete integration of norms is the fact that many countries accept or act upon it not because they feel they must from an internalized need, but rather as a way to either extend their own legitimacy, or please the great powers. The full internalization of a norm is what distinguishes stage three, or the idea that at this point, a norm has acquired a “taken-for-granted quality, and [is] no longer a matter of broad public debate.”⁵ This phase is somewhat paradoxical, in that if a norm has reached this point, it has been so intrinsically embedded in the rational behavior of a state, that in many cases, it is not even considered a point of discussion when states engage in decision-making; it has been so imbued in the framework of the international community, that its employment is no longer even up for debate.

Such a theory has elements of both constructivist and realist strains of thought. The idea that international norms dictate the proper (in both moral and legitimate terms) behavior of states is one rooted in constructivist ideology – namely that states act based on the “logic of appropriateness” rather than the “logic of consequences.” Such a difference holds that norms represent an international system of social construction in which states make choices based on how appropriately their actions will fit within the framework of legitimacy of the international system. This paradigm supports the concept of the “life cycle of the norm” through the idea that a norm is created not by one individual state or organization which imposes it on others, but rather by an engaged process through which all states (and independent actors) have at least some level of agency. However, the notion that in phase two of the process, much of the universal acceptance of a norm (the “tipping point”) is based on its acceptance by the most powerful state actors holds

3 Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change.” *International Organization* vol. 52, no. 4, 1998, pp. 897.

4 Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change.” *International Organization* vol. 52, no. 4, 1998, pp. 901.

5 Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change.” *International Organization* vol. 52, no. 4, 1998, pp. 895.

some of its roots in realist theory, predominantly in the idea that the most powerful states hold sway over the actions of other states given their belief that it is rational to cooperate with the global powers. In this sense, the constructivist paradigm of norms as presented by Fennimore and Sikkink exists atop a realist foundation, still based on the whims of the hegemon.

THE NORM OF R2P IN ACTION – ITS LIFE CYCLE THROUGH CASES

The emergence of the norm of the responsibility of the international community to protect the human rights of all citizens holds its origins in the program of transitional justice implemented following the horrors of the Holocaust and the Second World War. This feeling has evolved over time from one based in the allocation of aid and peacekeeping forces to civilians in conflict zones to the legitimation of military intervention as a method of quelling human rights violations, through the manifestation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) in 2005. This document - signed into action unanimously by all member states - outlined a radical program of duty on the part of the international community to place human rights at the utmost level of importance and gave them the rhetorical allowance to supersede the Westphalian tradition of state sovereignty in cases of mass atrocities. However, while this represented a theoretical acceptance on the part of the international community – a sort of “tipping point” - with regards to the potential for military intervention in defense of human rights, it can merely be regarded as a singular step in R2P’s process to become a fully formed norm, a process which is recognized to have been in phase one during the Bosnian War, phase two during the Libyan intervention, and is currently showing its inability to pass into phase three as evidenced in its lack of invocation with regards to the current human rights crisis in Syria. Through these three cases, R2P can clearly be seen to be in the midst of Sikkink and Fennimore’s norm life cycle.

The case of UN intervention in the war in Yugoslavia represents R2P’s status as a norm in the first stage of internalization. Widely considered to be “too little too late,” the actions of the United Nations through the UNPROFOR did not adequately serve their purpose as a force defending the human rights of all citizens; rather, their lack of decisive action – especially in the case of the Srebrenica massacre – highlights how an international standard of responsibility to protect had not yet fully emerged on the global stage; its proponents were weak, and its application half-hearted and timid. It is true that peacekeeping forces were allocated by the United Nations protect Bosniak civilians, however, their inaction speaks to the fact that the United Nations, and the states controlling it, were not under

the impression that the responsibility to protect civilians extended all the way to military intervention to the point that they felt obligated to break the norm of state sovereignty and engage directly with the Bosniak Serbs. As stated by Sikkink and Finnimore, norms “never enter a normative vacuum but instead emerge in a highly contested normative space where they must compete with other norms and perceptions of interest;”⁶ in this case, the norm in competition was state sovereignty. There were motions on the part of individuals who could be seen as “norm entrepreneurs,” like Shashi Tharore, who is the US-based leader for peacekeeping operations in Yugoslavia. These motions called for more expanded intervention, “even if such actions entailed calling in NATO airstrikes.”⁷ However, the majority of those with the capabilities to pressure the UNSC to engage more directly in the conflict on behalf of the citizens being slaughtered had not yet been convinced that R2P should override the sovereignty of Bosnia. As stated by David Rieff in his article damning the inaction of the UN, the “firm and long-standing United Nations tradition of peacekeeping rooted in international law, impartiality and procedural objectivity,”⁸ turned out to be a tradition of peacekeeping so apolitical, it failed to uphold the key tenets of the UN Charter.

Luckily, this disaster proved to hold some positive implications for the promotion of the norm of R2P. As part of the post-conflict reconciliation process, the UN itself released a report questioning if it could not have done more to protect the innocent civilians killed in Bosnia. They state “it is true that UNPROFOR troops in Srebrenica never fired at the attacking Serbs. Had they engaged the attacking Serbs directly it is possible that the events would have unfolded differently.”⁹ Here, an example of a shift in the position of a leading influence such as the UN with regards to a specific norm can be seen. The cries of outrage on the part of many in the international community serve to show how norm entrepreneurs were able to effectively re-characterize the UN’s action as an “inappropriate” response to the issue at hand and sow the seeds for a more comprehensive acceptance of the suppression of state sovereignty in the name of peacekeeping operations. This report, written in 1999, can be seen as something of a “first draft” of the “Responsibility to Protect” doctrine, signed unanimously by all UN member states in 2005. As stated by Sikkink and Finnimore, “in most cases, for an emergent norm to reach a threshold and move toward the second stage, it must become institutionalized in specific sets of rules and organizations,”¹⁰ and the R2P doctrine was just that. The

6 Finnimore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change.” *International Organization* vol. 52, no. 4, 1998, pp. 897.

7 Rieff, David. “The Institution That Saw No Evil.” *The New Republic*. 1996, pp. 20.

8 Rieff, David. “The Institution That Saw No Evil.” *The New Republic*. 1996, pp. 23.

9 UN Report on Srebrenica, pp. 102.

10 Finnimore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change.” *International Organization* vol. 52, no. 4, 1998, pp. 900.

fact that this document, in which state sovereignty was challenged for the first time as a conditional privilege, was signed unanimously proves it to be the symbolic, as well as rhetorical “tipping point” for the norm of R2P into its second phase: norm cascade.

The first case that truly represented an attempt to implement the norm of responsibility to protect, as laid out in the 2005 doctrine, and was universally supported (at least at first) by much of the legitimized international community, was the case of Libya in 2011. As stated by Roland Paris, this effort to intervene “provided the first major test of R2P’s most coercive policy instrument: large-scale military intervention, against the wishes of the target state, in order to protect civilians from the threat of mass atrocities.”¹¹ In March of 2011, after months of less invasive measures were attempted, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1793, calling for airstrikes to be carried out by NATO under the justification provided by R2P. Finally, the norm of R2P had reached the second phase of its life cycle: its application as supported by all members of the international community as a way to test out, legitimize, and institutionalize its status as a norm. However, as the mission quickly expanded into one more clearly resembling “regime-change” than humanitarian intervention, many important countries, namely China and Russia who had both abstained to vote on the Resolution¹², pulled their support, condemning NATO’s actions as “overreach.”

While this mission may have been something of a failure on the part of the international community to successfully invoke R2P, it is not so much a failure of the inherent characteristics of the *norm* of R2P, but rather of its application. As stated above, a norm in phase two of its life cycle is still recognized for its potential to account legitimacy in the eyes of the global powers; at this time, “state leaders conform to norms in order to avoid the disapproval aroused by norm violation and thus enhance national self-esteem.” As it has not quite been internalized as a standard that *must* be followed in *all* circumstances – it is still a tool for states to mold and apply selectively as they see fit. Once its application no longer fits with their own interests (as was the case here), states still feel as though they are able to pull their support for it without receiving backlash from the international community for directly violating the norm themselves. Had R2P been in stage three of its normative life cycle, the states who withdrew support, regardless of whether that withdrawal was reasonable or not, would have been ostracized, maybe even punished, for going against what all states thought to be an inherent, morally incorruptible norm. Secondly, as stated above, in order to become a fully formed

11 Paris, Roland. “The ‘Responsibility to Protect’ and the Structural Problems of Preventive Humanitarian Intervention.” *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 21, no. 5, 2014, pp. 580.

12 Paris, Roland. “The ‘Responsibility to Protect’ and the Structural Problems of Preventive Humanitarian Intervention.” *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 21, no. 5, 2014, pp. 581.

norm, R2P must supersede the other theories in its way. The fact that R2P must overcome the strength of the norm of state sovereignty – one that has existed for almost 500 years – posits a great challenge towards its success, and while states may have signed a doctrine labeling its status superior, in the same way that such a doctrine does not immediately represent the creation of a fully formed norm of R2P, it does not immediately confirm the collapse of the norm of sovereignty. According to Sikkink and Finnimore, “to challenge existing logics of appropriateness, activists may need to be explicitly “inappropriate.”¹³ While perhaps unethical, and extremely damaging, the drastic measures accorded by NATO in the case of Libya could be seen from one (albeit controversial) perspective, as simply a form of such “inappropriateness,” requisite to prove the extent of sacrifice made on the part of those involved to uphold the norm of R2P. In this way, although the Libya intervention is seen mostly as a failure, this is due for the most part to the fact that those critiquing it are not analyzing R2P as a norm still in its second phase, but rather as a fully formed one.

That being said, the responsibility to protect does currently face a great obstacle with regards to its complete evolution into an internalized norm that again comes from the structural weaknesses that surround the norm of R2P, rather than from a failure of the norm itself. The fact that the implementation of R2P can decisively be enacted – or blocked – by the UN Security Council leaves its application up to an inherently politicized body. The veto power accorded to the permanent five (P5) members of the SC, Russia, China, UK, US and France, allows these five states an undue amount of influence over R2P’s future as a normative standard; they can choose when and where it can be executed, and have the power to block its use in cases where it does not fit with their goals. Finnimore and Sikkink define in their article what they call a critical state; “What constitutes a ‘critical state’ will vary from issue to issue, but one criterion is that critical states are those without which the achievement of the substantive norm is compromised.”¹⁴ In this case, the entire structure of R2P is in danger of being corrupted by the fact that all five states accorded the power to limit R2P’s applicability are critical states, and if even just one of them does not approve – for political as well as moral reasons – R2P is limited in its ability to prove itself as a norm worth internalizing to the international community. In order to cross over into the final phase of its life cycle, R2P must be free to be accepted as such by all, a process which rests on proof of its success, and any measure that puts roadblocks on such a process in the name of personal and political interests’ damages R2P’s chances of being fully accepted.

13 Finnimore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change.” *International Organization* vol. 52, no. 4, 1998, pp. 897.

14 Finnimore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change.” *International Organization* vol. 52, no. 4, 1998, pp. 901.

Such a problem is currently being exhibited in the United Nation's inability to invoke R2P in Syria. Although there is very clear evidence that a major violation of human rights is being executed by Bashar Al-Assad on his own citizens, the international community has yet to take any decisive action in the name of intervention, holding severe consequences not just morally in the name of the civilians being murdered, but also in R2P's evolution towards its final phase. Since 2011, 8 draft resolutions calling for the SC to act in Syria have been vetoed;¹⁵ Russia and China voted no them all. Such a blatant display of politicized promotion of self-interests over the expansion of the norm of R2P underscores the problem with allowing the norm's development to be controlled by a body that accords some states increasingly greater rights than others. Akbarzadeh and Sabah highlight how John Bellamy considers Russia's invocation of the veto to stem from "Russia's significant economic and strategic interests in Syria," and that it is "these Syria-specific factors that underlie the Security Council's paralysis over Syria, rather than more generalized concerns about R2P and the experience in Libya."¹⁶ This argument supports the claim that it the Security Council, and not any structural problem with the norm of R2P itself that is preventing its invocation in Syria; Russia would block any measure putting its own interests in the region at risk, whether that is relating to R2P, or a nuclear proliferation resolution, or a trade agreement. However, while this theory takes the pressure off of R2P in terms of what is to blame, it also highlights the fact that R2P will not be able to enter its final stage until it is no longer reliant on a body such as the SC who is so greatly influenced by individual interests. While a norm is still in the norm cascade phase, critical states still have the ability to influence global perception of said norm, meaning that Russia's continuous blockage of R2P's use in Syria is slowly but surely convincing other states not to support it as well. In this sense, the case of Syria highlights the fact that in order for R2P to fully complete its evolution into a norm in international relations, it must separate its implementation from the politicized Security Council.

CONCLUSION: LOOKING FORWARD

Such a process of separation will be extremely difficult to complete: at this point in time, the Security Council is the only body accorded under international law with the ability to legitimately invoke the use of force,¹⁷ and is thus

15 Akbarzadeh, Shahram, and Arif Saba. "UN Paralysis Over Syria: The Responsibility to Protect or Regime Change?" *International Politics*. 2018, pp. 10.

16 Akbarzadeh, Shahram, and Arif Saba. "UN Paralysis Over Syria: The Responsibility to Protect or Regime Change?" *International Politics*. 2018, pp. 7.

17 Akbarzadeh, Shahram, and Arif Saba. "UN Paralysis Over Syria: The Responsibility to Protect or Regime Change?" *International Politics*. 2018, pp. 4.

the only body in the position to spur military intervention in the name of R2P. A better solution would be not to remove R2P from the SC's mandate altogether, but rather to nullify the P5's veto power – at least when it comes to the responsibility to protect. While this is a drastic proposal, it is supported by the fact that if R2P were truly to become a completely internalized norm, theoretically, states would be willing to renounce their veto power in order to implement it, due to the fact that it would become such a “no-brainer” to support measures of R2P, that either they would not feel the need to have the veto power in the case of R2P, or political pressure from other countries existing within the normative framework of R2P to relinquish it would be so strong, they would have to. This would allow R2P to be invoked only in cases necessary; states would still be able to vote on it, and if it was decided R2P was unnecessary or inappropriate it would not be used, but if one state only did not support it for political reasons, they would not be able to hijack the entire process. Unfortunately, until the barrier imposed by the veto power on the Security Council is abolished, R2P will not be able to extend to its last phase of becoming a fully formed norm. As seen in the case of Syria, the power of critical states such as Russia through the veto power to hijack the ability of R2P to be implemented – and thus prove to the international community its worth as a norm – is the last major obstacle the responsibility to protect must overcome in order to complete its life cycle.

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The Moral Futility of Contempt: A Response to Macalester Bell's *Hard Feelings* in the Era of Trump

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ABSTRACT

In Hard Feelings: The Moral Psychology of Contempt, Macalester Bell argues that under certain circumstances contempt can be the appropriate—and indeed, even the best—response to answering those who exemplify what she calls the “vices of superiority.” But in grappling with our current political moment, this paper critiques Bell’s ethic of contempt. I argue that expressing contempt for those with whom we disagree is not effective in eliciting remorse or effecting change. In fact, contempt only further polarizes a body politic. Furthermore, I argue that contempt plays the role of holding others responsible less well than Bell thinks it does. Finally, I argue that a culture of contempt encourages in lockstep a culture of moral superiority.

Contempt is in no short supply these days. In a politically turbulent era such as ours, contempt for public figures, institutions, and those with whom we vehemently disagree has become increasingly prominent. Calls to civility warn against this attitude, casting contempt as an ugly and corrosive emotion that damages our relations to one another and defies the respect we owe all persons. In *Hard Feelings: The Moral Psychology of Contempt*, Macalester Bell argues intrepidly against this consensus. She contends that under certain circumstances, contempt can be the appropriate—and indeed, the best—response to answering those who exemplify what she calls the “vices of superiority.”¹ Racism, one such vice of superiority, is best responded to with counter-contempt, she argues, because “contempt corrects [the racist’s] status claim and helps to restore the equilibrium between the esteem and deference he takes himself to deserve and the esteem and deference he

1 Bell, Macalester. *Hard Feelings: The Moral Psychology of Contempt*. Oxford University Press, 2013. 9.

actually merits.”² Bell concludes that upon further investigation, contempt holds an important and essential place in moral life.

The outpouring of contempt surrounding the 2016 United States presidential election and its aftermath calls into question whether contempt is the *best* way of confronting the vices of superiority. As I will demonstrate, contempt has done nothing to disrupt President Trump’s behavior, who, I argue, epitomizes many of the vices of superiority. Contempt has also made politics more divisive, Americans more narrow-minded, and public discourse more impossible. As many Americans have experienced, talking about politics with friends and family has become so strained that many have decided to avoid broaching the topic altogether. And increasingly, in a public discourse of contempt, people are curating their news and social media to avoid encountering viewpoints that differ from their own.

In grappling with our current political moment, this paper argues against an ethic of contempt. First, I summarize Bell’s account of contempt. Then, against her account I argue that expressing contempt for those with whom we disagree is not effective in eliciting remorse or effecting change. In fact, contempt only further polarizes a body politic. After responding to Bell’s arguments on contempt’s *instrumental* value, I turn to her arguments on contempt’s *non-instrumental* value. Bell claims that contempt is non-instrumentally valuable because it plays an important role in our practices of holding others responsible; but, I argue that contempt plays this role less well than she thinks. Finally, I argue that a culture of contempt encourages in lockstep a culture of moral superiority. My arguments taken together do not defend a strict prohibition against contempt; however, they do demonstrate that contempt is much more morally suspect than Bell admits.

In *Hard Feelings*, Bell begins by examining the nature of contempt. As she prefaces at the beginning of the chapter, contempt is difficult to define and make distinctive from other emotions like resentment, disgust, and anger. Nevertheless, she outlines four of contempt’s central features. First, contempt is a response towards persons who have failed to meet an important standard, and who have as a result compromised their *status*. Second, contempt is a globalist emotion, meaning it takes whole persons as its object. Third, the contemnor “sees the contemned as inferior to her along some axis of comparison.” And fourth, and most paradigmatically, contempt involves withdrawal.³

In contrast with neighboring emotions such as anger or resentment which motivate engagement, contempt motivates withdrawal. Withdrawal, she argues, can look like “refusing to invite someone to a gathering or declining to shake some-

2 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 216.

3 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 37-44.

one's hand"⁴ on the one hand; and radio personality Don Imus' contemptuous comments about "the Rutgers women's basketball team, referring to them as 'nappy-headed hos'"⁵ or the Egyptian protesters who waved their shoes at then-President Mubarak in Tahrir Square, on the other.⁶ The former examples she calls "passive contempt"; the latter examples "active contempt." Passive contempt treats the target as non-threatening, as beneath notice. Passive contempt involves withdrawal in a literal sense: evading or dismissing the target. Active contempt, on the other hand, presents the target as threatening and involves a different sense of withdrawal. With active contempt, the contemnor withdraws from the target by casting her as dangerous and morally less than. Bell writes in a later passage, "contempt is a *demoting emotion* [original emphasis] that presents its target as having a comparatively low status." In other words, the active contemnor purposefully distances herself by portraying the target as someone to be looked down upon, not as someone to be capitulated to or reconciled with. Thus, in expressions of active contempt, there is an aspect of *communication*: the contemnor tries to *communicate* to the target that she is being disengaged, and why she is being disengaged.⁷ Bell's subsequent discussion focuses primarily on "active contempt."

Bell then turns to the looming question: What makes contempt morally valuable? Bell argues that contempt is the most effective way of confronting and defeating the vices of superiority, a term which encompasses a number of vices such as arrogance, hypocrisy, and racism. As she explains, those who exemplify the vices of superiority see themselves as entitled to more esteem and deference than everyone else, and insist that others treat them as such. Bell is skeptical that we can challenge their superbia by simply discussing or reminding them of the equal worth of all persons. She elaborates in a compelling passage:

For those who evince superbia do not have false beliefs about others' moral *standing*; instead, their main fault is taking themselves to have a comparatively high *status* and lording this presumed status over people in a way that expresses ill will. Given this, reminding the arrogant or hypocritical that others are just as worthy of respect won't answer their vices. Such people may concede the point but continue to harbor superbia and see it as justified. In order to properly challenge the target's perception of his superior status, one must attempt to make his *inferior* status felt. That is why contempt's characteristic demotion is such an apt response to the vices of superiority.⁸

4 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 47.

5 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 6.

6 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 8.

7 I am grateful to Professor Krista Thomason for illuminating this distinction in Bell's account.

8 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 129.

Contempt best addresses the vices of superiority, she argues. As she sketches out earlier, contempt demotes the target and presents the target as having a comparatively low status. Contempt “thereby negat[es] his sense of entitlement and undermin[es] his attempts at dishonoring or exacting esteem and deference.”⁹ Moreover, being the object of contempt can “provide us with a morally valuable second-personal perspective and can shake us into the realization that we have failed to meet certain basic standards.”¹⁰ The paradigmatic example is Elizabeth’s contempt for Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*. Darcy began reflecting on his arrogance and in turn, began changing his ways precisely because he felt Elizabeth’s contemptuous attitude. Bell hedges, however, that contempt does not *cause* the target to feel remorse. Instead, “what apt contempt does is *provide* reasons to change: it puts those who evince the vices of superiority in a position to appreciate their reasons to change; the experience of being put down and disesteemed makes one’s reasons to change particularly salient.”¹¹

Contempt is not only morally valuable as a means of answering the vices of superbia; it also holds non-instrumental value. According to Bell, contempt is “a way for persons to maintain their integrity,” and “a person of integrity is someone who not only does the right thing but also has the right *attitudes* toward her commitments.”¹² Contempt is moreover constitutive of “holding persons accountable for their actions and faults” and ensuring that we hold ourselves to shared standards.¹³ In the brief paragraph in which she makes this argument, she writes: “While resentment demands that its target take responsibility for the wrong done, contempt demands that its target change her attitudes and overcome her superbia. Responding with apt contempt, then, is the clearest way of holding persons accountable for their superbia.”¹⁴ In short, contempt is part of the moral practice of blaming those who fail to adhere to certain standards.

Bell is convincing insofar as she persuades us that contempt can, in some cases, help “put the target in a position to appreciate the reasons he has to change his ways.”¹⁵ The example of Darcy and Elizabeth in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* that Bell gives in her fourth chapter asserts her point forcefully; Elizabeth’s contemptuous rejection of Darcy’s proposal prompts in him a new awareness and inspires him to reform his character. However, Bell is less persuasive as to whether contempt is the *best* way of responding to the vices of superiority, and whether we ought to prefer an ethic of contempt to an ethic of anti-contempt. Does contempt

9 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 128.

10 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 160.

11 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 130.

12 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 161-62.

13 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 162.

14 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 163.

15 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 225.

always serve to jolt a person out of vice? What do we risk in contemning others? The rest of this paper interrogates these infirmities.

As observers note, contempt is rife in contemporary politics. Screaming heads on television, Twitter trolls, and angry campus activists have become commonplace in American life. Yet, contempt has not proven effective in the ways that Bell anticipates. Perhaps the most glaring and well-known example of someone who exemplifies the vices of superiority is President Donald Trump. For example, he boasted about the purported successes of his administration to the United Nations General Assembly: “In less than two years, my administration has accomplished more than almost any administration in the history of our country.”¹⁶ He played more than six rounds of golf in his first month in the Oval Office, despite previously criticizing President Obama for doing the same thing. And he routinely fraternizes with white supremacists such as David Duke. Even his own supporters attest to his arrogance, hypocrisy, and racism. Michael Cohen, former lawyer and supporter of President Trump, said of him during his historic testimony before Congress: “He is a racist, he is a con man, he is a cheat.”¹⁷

Treating him with contempt, however, has not precipitated the kind of change that Bell anticipates, or as she argues, has not provided reasons for him to change. Despite the press exposing his hypocrisy for playing golf and the public responding with contempt on Twitter and Facebook, Trump continued to visit Mar-a-Lago for golf course outings.¹⁸ In a Twitter thread rebuking his behavior, dozens of people tweeted at Trump a picture of him tweeting in 2011, “I play golf to relax. My company is in great shape. @BarackObama plays golf to escape work while America goes down the drain,” except they crossed out “@BarackObama” from the picture and named Trump instead.¹⁹ Despite the widespread contempt he earned for his performance as president, coming from even his closest policy advisors, Trump said that “nobody’s ever done a better job than I’m doing as president.”²⁰ In an anonymous op-ed, a senior official in the Trump administration

16 Choi, Matthew. “Trump bragged about his presidency and world leaders laughed.” *Politico*. September 25, 2018. www.politico.com/story/2018/09/25/trump-united-nations-brag-839820. Accessed April 7, 2019.

17 Desiderio, Andrew. “Cohen testimony on Trump: ‘He is a racist. He is a conman. He is a cheat.’” *Politico*. February 26, 2019. <https://www.politico.com/story/2019/02/26/cohen-trump-racist-conman-cheat-1189951>. Accessed April 4, 2019.

18 Blake, Aaron. “Why President Trump’s frequent golfing is even more hypocritical than it seems.” *Washington Post*. February 22, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2017/02/22/president-trumps-frequent-golfing-is-even-more-hypocritical-than-it-seems-at-first-glance/?utm_term=.0199a7da3d9a. Accessed April 4, 2019.

19 Trump, Donald J. (@realDonaldTrump). “I play golf to relax. My company is in great shape. @BarackObama plays golf to escape work while America goes down the drain.” Twitter. December 30, 2011, 10:12 a.m. <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1528143329153638840?lang=en>.

20 Bump, Phillip. “Trump: ‘Nobody’s ever done a better job than I’m doing as president.’” *Washington Post*. September 4, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2018/09/04/trump-nobodys-ever-done-a-better-job-than-im-doing-as-president/?utm_term=.be6e7a1bb7a5. Accessed January 10, 2019.

called the president's leadership style "impetuous, adversarial, petty and ineffective."²¹ And despite the contempt he received from civil rights organizations like the ACLU, the NAACP, and the Anti-Defamation League, Trump continued to highlight crimes committed by black and brown people, therefore emboldening the alt-right. As just one of many instances, consider how Anthony Romero, the executive director of the ACLU, expresses contempt for Trump in an op-ed piece about the border wall "emergency" when he writes:

Trump's emergency declaration is a blatant abuse of power in the service of his anti-immigrant agenda and a brazen attempt to subvert the constitutional separation of powers.

The federal treasury isn't a bank account that the president can just raid whenever he's in a bind. It's taxpayer money that the Framers specifically left in the hands of Congress. Trump is seeking to thwart Congress' will. Now we are asking the courts to give Trump another lesson in how the Constitution works.²²

In the face of overwhelming contempt, Trump incredulously persists in being hypocritical, arrogant and racist—not once expressing remorse for his actions. Against President Trump, contempt proves unsuccessful in confronting the vices of superiority.

Bell might offer two responses here. First, she might respond that one counter-example does not defeat the instrumental value of contempt. In her account, she did not venture to argue that contempt is *guaranteed* to answer the vices of superiority. If we read her work charitably, sometimes contempt will work, sometimes it will not. But in order to maintain that contempt has instrumental value and that it is the best way of responding to the vices of superiority, Bell must insist that by and large, contempt is effective. Second, she might assert that Trump is incapable of taking up contempt, and therefore treating him with contempt is inappropriate. She explains in a chapter about contempt's characteristic withdrawal:

The target must be able to understand what it means to fail to meet a standard and must be able to change his ways if he comes to accept the claim implicit in contempt. If a person is unable to understand what it means to fail to meet a standard or is utterly unable to take steps to address his fault, then

21 Anonymous. "I Am Part of the Resistance Inside the Trump Administration." *New York Times*. September 5, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/05/opinion/trump-white-house-anonymous-resistance.html>. Accessed April 7, 2019.

22 Romero, Anthony D. "ACLU on border wall 'emergency': We'll see you in court, President Donald Trump." *USA Today*, February 20, 2019. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2019/02/20/aclu-lawsuit-trump-emergency-declaration-illegal-unprecedented-column/2920655002/>. Accessed April 7, 2019.

one could not morally address him through one's contempt.²³

Even if we concede both responses—that presenting President Trump as one counterexample is not fatal to her argument, and furthermore, that her account can accommodate for President Trump and exceptional persons who are similarly immune from expressions of contempt—her account still faces the fact that contempt is ineffective towards ordinary Americans.²⁴ For example, much of America has treated Trump supporters, including those who voted for him more tepidly, with unbridled contempt. Here, I assume that those who adamantly support President Trump and the policies that he advocates also evince the vices of superiority. Take the following headlines: “Trump Won Because Voters Are Ignorant—Literally” which has the subtitle, “Democracy is supposed to enact the will of the people. But what if the people have no clue what they’re doing?”;²⁵ “Maybe They’re Just Bad People”;²⁶ “Racist Americans, Not Trump, Are The Problem. There Might Be A Cure.”²⁷ Trump supporters are seen not merely as incorrect or misguided, but as terrible human beings. They are cast as bigots, uneducated hicks, and even “deplorables.” But liberal contempt has done very little, if anything, to change their minds. In general, Trump supporters still hold the same positions on policy issues, the President’s comportment, and his fitness to lead. As his steady approval rating shows, Trump remains exactly as overwhelmingly popular among Republicans as he was on the first day of his presidency.²⁸ I argue that by and large, contempt has not prompted the national reckoning that Bell would expect on her account, nor has it inspired Trump supporters to rise to the standards that we have accused them of not meeting.

Why is this the case? I argue that a culture of contempt in American politics is not as instrumentally valuable as Bell claims because it does not take effect in the way that she describes. Bell argues that contempt answers the vices of superiority by *providing reasons to change*. To reiterate the quote I cited earlier, she claims that contempt “puts those who evince the vices of superiority in a po-

23 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 187.

24 Sparks, Grace. “How many Americans actually support Trump?” *CNN*. September 27, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/09/26/politics/actual-trump-support/index.html>. Accessed January 1, 2019.

25 Brennan, Jason. “Trump Won Because Voters Are Ignorant—Literally.” *Foreign Policy*. November 10, 2016. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/11/10/the-dance-of-the-dunces-trump-clinton-election-republican-democrat/>. Accessed April 7, 2019.

26 Goldberg, Michelle. “Maybe They’re Just Bad People.” *New York Times*. November 26, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/26/opinion/trump-supporters-bill-white-bryan-eure.html>. Accessed April 7, 2019.

27 Barlow, Rich. “Racist Americans, Not Trump, Are The Problem. There Might Be A Cure.” *wbur*. November 30, 2018. <https://www.wbur.org/cognoscenti/2018/11/30/donald-trump-racism-supporters-rich-barlow>. Accessed April 7, 2019.

28 Higgins, Tucker. “Trump’s approval ratings are low but steady—possibly a good sign for his re-election chances.” *CNBC*. January 2, 2019. <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/01/02/trump-approval-low-but-steady-possible-good-sign-for-2020-re-election.html>. Accessed January 2, 2019.

sition to appreciate their reasons to change; the experience of being put down and disesteemed makes one's reasons to change particularly salient."²⁹ Contempt in American politics, however, does not seem to function in this way. Contrary to Bell's account, widespread and strenuous contempt has failed to make white supremacists better "appreciate their reasons to change." Why? I argue that white supremacists do not feel the withdrawing effects of contempt because—and this is crucial—they champion the approval of the President. Although they may feel contempt from liberals, white supremacists are not "put down" or "disesteemed" precisely because they are bolstered by Trump when they witness him repeatedly accusing illegal immigrants of ruining the country. They witness him repeatedly associating himself with racists and repeatedly demonstrating fealty to alt-right groups. Consider how Trump began his 2016 presidential campaign by disparaging Mexican immigrants, saying:

When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best—they're not sending you. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.³⁰

Consider how he has retweeted white nationalist accounts with handles such as "WhiteGenocideTM" without apology (Twitter has since removed this account).³¹ In the face of contempt, white supremacists have refuge in Trump, a figure with immense social and political cachet who tacitly approves their actions, and shares their views. Bell argues that contempt is supposed to withdraw from the target and thereby ostracize them from the moral community. But withdrawal is not meaningful if the target has recourse in a president who supports and often urges anti-immigrant rhetoric. Therefore, under the aegis of the president, white supremacists do not feel the withdrawing effects of contempt.

Furthermore, I argue that contempt in American politics has not just been ineffective against the vices of superiority—it has only made matters worse. On all sides of the political spectrum, a culture of contempt has only entrenched the vices of superiority and alienated those whom we want to reform. To illustrate this point with an example, consider Hillary Clinton's contemptuously calling half of Trump

29 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 130.

30 Burns, Alexander. "Choice Words From Donald Trump, Presidential Candidate." *New York Times*. June 16, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2015/06/16/choice-words-from-donald-trump-presidential-candidate/>. Accessed April 7, 2019.

31 Holmes, Jack. "Trump's Disgusting Retweets Suggest a Larger Problem is Brewing." *Esquire*. November 19, 2017. <https://www.esquire.com/news-politics/a13974149/trump-retweet-britain-first/>. Accessed April 7, 2019.

supporters a “basket of deplorables.” Ostensibly, this highly controversial remark was meant as a way to answer racist, sexist, and xenophobic behavior demonstrated by those who had vocally advocated for Trump. Instead, her comment was met with public outrage and retaliation. An avalanche of stories commenting on the striking phrase flooded the Internet, conservatives were incensed, and the divide between the Democrat and Republican body politic widened only further. Consider these tweets: “Treating people as subhuman—irredeemable/deplorable—is no way to run for POTUS,” by Tim Miller, a former Jeb Bush spokesman and fervent Trump opponent, and “What’s truly deplorable isn’t just that Hillary Clinton made an inexcusable mistake in front of wealthy donors and reporters happened to be around to catch it... It’s that Clinton revealed just how little she thinks of the hard-working men and women of America,” by Jason Miller, a senior communications adviser during the Trump campaign. As she explained in an apologetic statement that draws parallels with Bell’s arguments for the instrumental value of contempt, she intended for her contempt as a way to stand up to Trump’s turpitude and to commit herself and her campaign to moral values:

But let’s be clear, what’s really “deplorable” is that Donald Trump hired a major advocate for the so-called ‘alt-right’ movement to run his campaign and that David Duke and other white supremacists see him as a champion of their values. It’s deplorable that Trump has built his campaign largely on prejudice and paranoia and given a national platform to hateful views and voices, including by retweeting fringe bigots with a few dozen followers and spreading their message to 11 million people. It’s deplorable that he’s attacked a federal judge for his “Mexican heritage,” bullied a Gold Star family because of their Muslim faith, and promoted the lie that our first black president is not a true American. So I won’t stop calling out bigotry and racist rhetoric in this campaign.³²

But calling millions of people a “basket of deplorables”—people whom she wanted to persuade—only drove them further into Trump’s arms.

The “basket of deplorables” gaffe only made matters worse, and not just because it was said by a presidential candidate trying to win over voters—in other words, not just because it was a bad political play. It was also because using contempt as a means to address the vices of superiority, in general, risks alienating those whom we want to reform. Interviews with dozens of lukewarm Trump

32 Lima, Christiano. “Hillary Clinton walks back ‘basket of deplorables’ remark.” *Politico*. September 9, 2016. <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/09/hillary-clinton-basket-deplorables-227988>. Accessed January 9, 2019.

supporters bear this out. A New York Times article reports that incessant attacks on Trump are causing his supporters to rally around the President. Ms. Anders, one of the interviewees, said that when she hears “overblown” attacks on Trump, “it makes [her] angry at them, which causes [her] to want to defend him to them more.”³³ The Times reports that Trump supporters feel *protective* of the President when asked the all too common question “How can you possibly still support this man?”, as well as further removed from the contemptuous liberal. Contempt, instead of addressing the vices of superiority on the other side, has only polarized our politics and cultivated an atmosphere in which contempt is traded back-and-forth, to no end.

Our contemptuous public discourse also casts doubt on Bell’s arguments for the *non-instrumental* value of contempt. Although contempt, I agree, is an important reactive attitude that is part of our practice of holding persons accountable, I argue that contempt does not play that role as well as Bell asserts. Recall that in Bell’s view, contempt holds persons accountable by demanding that its target overcome her superbia. How does contempt issue this demand? She explains, “Through contempt’s characteristic withdrawal, its subjects do not simply seek explanations or apologies; instead, the contemnor seeks the target’s *character* change. If the target does not attempt to change his ways, then the contemnor will see him as someone to be avoided altogether.”³⁴ Elizabeth held Darcy accountable for his arrogance by withdrawing from him, and thus morally engaging him. Shunning a person who exemplifies the vices of superiority *can* serve as a sort of punishment, holding persons accountable, but I argue that it is a particularly ambiguous and precarious way of doing so. It seems to me that there is an inherent tension between contempt’s characteristic withdrawal and the demand that it makes on the target—and that this tension undermines, or at the very least severely limits, the non-instrumental value of contempt. By withdrawing from the target, the contemnor does not expressly communicate the demand. The target may misinterpret, or may even be completely oblivious of, what is demanded of him. Moreover, by withdrawing from the target, the contemnor does not enforce the demand. The target is not in any way compelled to comply with the contemnor’s demand, aside from being subjected to the sanction of her ostracism. And as I argued earlier, ostracism is rendered impotent when another person or group embraces the target instead.

Bell anticipates some of these worries when she writes: “It is true that contempt’s withdrawal may be misinterpreted. Silence and withdrawal are multi-

33 Peters, Jeremy W. “As Critics Assail Trump, His Supporters Dig in Deeper.” *The New York Times*. June 23, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/23/us/politics/republican-voters-trump.html>. Accessed January 8, 2018.

34 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 127.

ply ambiguous in ways that other forms of address are not.”³⁵ But she seems more optimistic about contempt’s successes than wary of its risks. She argues, “But while the ambiguity of withdrawal can be disorientating, this disorientation can also be constructive. As targets think about what elicited the withdrawal, they may, like Darcy, come to recognize contemptible aspects of their characters that they had long overlooked.”³⁶ She is confident that “if a target of contempt believes that the contempt directed at him is apt, then he *will* [emphasis added] respond with shame and an attempt to ameliorate his character,” often arguing as though the target’s response of shame and the target’s attempt to ameliorate his character are empirical inevitabilities.³⁷ But I contend that we should be more skeptical of contempt’s ability to hold persons accountable. The ambiguity and precariousness of contempt that I have been discussing are especially acute in public discourse. Amid the din of daily, back-and-forth contempt about whatever news is dominating the day, it becomes especially difficult to determine what claim an expression of contempt is making and to feel compelled to answer that claim, when instead the target can simply dig in her heels and meet contempt with counter-contempt.

Bell insists that if we reject an ethic of contempt, we would lose “relationships of mutual accountability for our attitudes in which we hold persons to certain standards and are held to certain standards in turn.”³⁸ This seems to me to be an overly pessimistic conclusion. Holding persons accountable does not necessarily require an ethic of contempt; holding persons accountable might involve a myriad of other emotions such as resentment, disgust, shame, indifference, anger, and disappointment. Consider Martin Luther King Jr.’s seminal “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” in which he responds to criticisms made by several religious leaders in the South regarding the nonviolent protests against segregation. At different points, Dr. King expresses disappointment, indignation, and anger. For example, he writes, “But despite these notable exceptions, I must honestly reiterate that I have been disappointed with the church,” and, “I guess I should have realized that few members of a race that has oppressed another race can understand or appreciate the deep groans and passionate yearnings of those that have been oppressed . . .”³⁹ Note however that he does not express contempt for the clergymen. He does not dismiss their concerns or cast them as unforgivable human beings—despite all the good reason he has to do so. Instead, he takes up every line in their statement and thoroughly refutes each concern. By holding the church responsible for its hypocrisy *without* appealing to contempt, and indeed

35 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 189.

36 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 189.

37 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 187.

38 Bell, *Hard Feelings*, 163.

39 King Jr., Martin Luther. “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” 26 U.C. Davis L. Rev. 791 (1992): 835.

while remaining charitable, Dr. King demonstrates that “relationships of mutual accountability” are possible absent an ethic of contempt. In fact, one might argue that it was precisely Dr. King’s willingness to engage with his detractors that held them responsible and crucially served the success of the Civil Rights Movement. By countering each of their gripes head-on, relentlessly, it becomes unequivocally clear that their criticisms of the Birmingham demonstrations were made in bad faith and hold no water.

Lastly, I argue that we should reject an ethic of contempt because a culture of contempt encourages in lockstep a culture of moral superiority. In treating those with whom we disagree contemptuously, we make the assumption that we are in the morally superior position to judge whether someone has violated the community’s standards.⁴⁰ We appoint ourselves as arbiters of what is moral and what is immoral. Seeing ourselves as morally superior and others as morally inferior not only compromises our own character but also ignores the complexity of disagreement. Indeed, in expressing contempt for the Trump voter, much of America failed to listen to the many issues that Trump voters cared about—issues that Trump was addressing and Clinton was not. Pigeonholing Trump voters as immoral and bigoted obscured a broader debate about jobs leaving, terrorism, and the nuances of immigration. Ms. Anders, the interviewee whom I cited earlier, laments, “All nuance and all complexity—and these are complex issues—are completely lost... It’s either, ‘Trump wants to put people in cages, in concentration camps.’ Or, on the other side, ‘Oh the left just wants everybody to come into the country illegally so they can get voters.’ We can’t have a conversation.”⁴¹

Contempt has reached a fever pitch in public discourse and has shown no sign of abating anytime soon. In the context of our present political climate, I have argued that contempt is not as morally valuable as Bell claims it to be. Instrumentally, I have demonstrated that contempt is not effective in getting the target to reflect on his character and to make reforms. Moreover, contempt risks further dividing a body politic. Non-instrumentally, I have argued that contempt plays a much narrower role in holding persons accountable, given how ambiguous and precarious contempt is for the target who exemplifies the vices of superiority. I have also shown that it is possible to hold persons morally responsible without appealing to contempt. And lastly, I have argued that a culture of contempt encourages a culture of moral superiority, which not only compromises our own moral selves but also ignores the complexity of those whom we condemn. Taking seriously the arguments that this paper advances requires that our public discourse guards against contempt instead of embracing it.

40 Professor Thomason makes this point in the context of shame in her book *Naked*.

41 Peters, “As Critics Assail Trump, His Supporters Dig in Deeper.”

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In Favor of Entrenchment: Justifying Geoengineering Research in Democratic Systems

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ABSTRACT

This paper critically evaluates the ability of structurally democratic governments to address long-term, existential problems such as climate change using the example of geoengineering. The solution to these problems is to curtail strict democracies and, instead, entrench the right of future generations in valid constitutions.

Climate change is a problem that harms current generations and that will continue to harm future generations. Current generations are harmed as a result of changing temperatures, rising ocean levels, and unpredictable weather patterns. Future generations will experience much more severe effects. Most ethical theories acknowledge that individuals have some obligation to future generations. Unfortunately, this acknowledgement does not always translate into the field of political theory. Because of moral facts about representation and non-moral facts about the motivation that individuals have for stepping foot in the political arena, current democratic political institutions are ill-equipped to implement policies on behalf of current generations. This is a serious problem when it comes to solving for the harms caused by climate change. One potential solution to climate change is geoengineering—the new realm of “deliberate large-scale intervention in the Earth’s natural systems to counteract climate change.”¹ However, democracy has difficulty justifying this solution. In order to rightfully implement long-term climate change solutions like geoengineering research, it is necessary for democratic political institutions to entrench the rights of future generations in their constitutions.

This paper will first establish a two-pronged problem for democracy. Then, it will apply that problem to geoengineering. After addressing potential solutions

1 Oxford Geoengineering Programme. “What is geoengineering?” University of Oxford Martin School. 2018.

to the geoengineering dilemma, this paper advocates for entrenching the rights of future generations into a democratic constitution as a solution for the two problems discussed in the first two sections of the paper. Finally, this paper addresses multiple counterarguments to entrenchment and concludes that entrenchment is, in fact, a viable solution to justifying geoengineering research in the policy arena.

I. A PROBLEM FOR DEMOCRACY

If we assume that we have some obligations to future generations, then it is necessary to solve a two-pronged problem for dealing with claims of intergenerational justice in modern democratic societies. Although some people claim that democracy has many benefits related to the idea that citizens get to have input in important political decisions through electing representatives and voting on specific policies, a major downside of the democratic procedure is that on a purely structural level, it is ill-equipped to solve long-term problems.

The first prong of this democratic dilemma is that procedural accounts of representative democracy require that representatives be responsive to their constituents. This occurs through voting and tests of public approval. Neither of these methods allow representatives the leeway to directly make decisions on behalf of future generations as future generations are not the constituents of political representatives—as they do not yet exist. It is impossible for future generations to elect representatives or even have any measurable approval or disapproval for current policies. For policies with long time horizons, it will only be after the policies are implemented that future generations will weigh in on whether they approve of said implemented policy. This concern over time horizons establishes the second prong of the problem of integrating concerns about intergenerational justice in democratic procedures—because representatives want to be elected and maintain high approval ratings, they will often choose to focus on short-term projects. These short-term projects are policies that current people prioritize in their day-to-day lives. While this prong is an issue in general for democracy's ability to pass policies that address long-term problems, it is especially problematic in the case of policy concerning climate change. While many people are in favor of addressing climate change, they rarely vote for a politician based on a policy to address climate change. Even if a small portion of the population did vote in this manner, it would still be difficult for policymakers to collectively act to pass policies that mitigate climate change as they need to cater to all constituents. For example, as in the case of America's coal industry, politicians will often advocate for investing in economic advances that lead to increased resource use.

One might have an easy answer to this and say that politicians can simply

invest in decoupling in order to satisfy both current and future peoples. However, this two-pronged problem is not so easily addressed in cases where these sorts of justifications for certain environmental policies in a representative democracy reach counterintuitive conclusions that run in opposition to the interest of current people.

II. THE DILEMMA OF GEOENGINEERING

If we are to accept the context above claim that democracy is unable to establish a stable obligation to future generations, then a dilemma regarding geoengineering becomes apparent—geoengineering research to “arm the future” is unjustified and undesirable while actually implementing geoengineering is justified.

Current geoengineering research focuses on the possibility of manipulating the Earth in such a way as to mitigate—or, hopefully, to solve for—the effects of climate change. While there are many proposals in the scientific community regarding specific forms of geoengineering such as injecting sulfate aerosols into the Earth’s atmosphere to increase the Earth’s albedo and decrease the Earth’s temperature, all forms of current geoengineering research are affected by the dilemma of democratic procedure.² There exists an important higher-order claim in discussions of policy justification that the rationale for certain advocacies and the way that those rationales interact within an overarching political framework is important for determining the extent to which policies are justified.³ Proponents of geoengineering research often make the argument that even if our current population is not in favor of actually implementing geoengineering, it is important to “arm the future” with the information needed to implement geoengineering if future generations are put into a position where they must implement geoengineering for their own survival.⁴

Contrastingly, a rationale for *implementing* geoengineering does not categorically ignore the overarching context of democracy. An argument of this sort could proceed in the following fashion: current people are being harmed as a result of climate change. Constituents also have an interest in mitigating climate change. There has already been substantial research into geoengineering policies that prove it is both feasible and cost-effective. Therefore, there is a justification

2 Gardiner, Stephen M. “Is ‘Arming the Future’ with Geoengineering Really the Lesser Evil?” *Climate Ethics*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2010, pp. 285.

3 Gardiner, Stephen M. “Is ‘Arming the Future’ with Geoengineering Really the Lesser Evil?” *Climate Ethics*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2010, pp. 285.

4 Keith, David W. “Toward a Responsible Solar Geoengineering Research Program.” *Issues in Science and Technology*. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine: The University of Texas at Dallas, Arizona State University, 2017, pp. 77.

for politicians to support the implementation of geoengineering to benefit current people.⁵ This is not mere conjecture—in recent memory, members of the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States have lobbied for funds for real-world geoengineering testing and testified to congress proclaiming the wonders of geoengineering.⁶ Members of the Trump administration and high-level Republicans have publicly advocated for geoengineering as a method of solving for climate change and some pundits claim that their reason for doing this lies in protecting the interest of constituents in the oil industry.⁷ ⁸ Current people have an interest in implementation and would benefit from a successful deployment of, for example, stratospheric spraying—the introduction of “small, reflective particles into the upper atmosphere to reflect some sunlight before it reaches the surface of the Earth” would act as a way to almost immediately decrease the temperature of the planet and mitigate the current effects of climate change.⁹

The question then becomes why politicians have not made more of an attempt to secure funds to create a real-world test for geoengineering. The answer is deceptively simple—people may not like climate change, but they also do not like the idea of messing with the environment or they believe that there exists a slippery slope in geoengineering, potentially leading to continued adjustments of the environment.¹⁰ While public opinion might be in favor of the idea of researching geoengineering, they are wary of implementation.

III. ONE POTENTIAL RESPONSE TO THE GEOENGINEERING DILEMMA

One might claim that interest in geoengineering research within the current population is reason enough for politicians to advocate for it. This is not a cat-

5 Keith, David. *A Case for Climate Engineering*. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, 2013, pp. 9.

6 Lukacs, Martin. “Trump presidency ‘opens door’ to planet-hacking geoengineer experiments.” *The Guardian*, 27 March, 2017.

7 While the particular group advocating for geoengineering might be members of the oil industry, they are not the only ones who would benefit from a successful deployment of geoengineering. Climate change is a threat to everyone on the planet. The world’s current economy is somewhat dependent on oil. Politicians would (ideally) not only consider the interests of oil companies in a decision to implement geoengineering. They would seek to look at the wider effects on the overall economy and constituents who do not work at oil companies. In the context of implementing geoengineering successfully and ending the effects of climate change for current people, people outside the oil industry would benefit from the decision.

8 Lukacs, Martin. “Trump presidency ‘opens door’ to planet-hacking geoengineer experiments.” *The Guardian*, 27 March, 2017.

9 Oxford Geoengineering Programme. “What is geoengineering?” University of Oxford Martin School. 2018.

10 Keith, David W. “Toward a Responsible Solar Geoengineering Research Program.” *Issues in Science and Technology*. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine: The University of Texas at Dallas, Arizona State University, 2017, pp. 73.

egorical solution—it is only contingent on the beliefs of current people and those beliefs could change. If geoengineering research proved to be useful and effective, it might be the case that current people would lose interest in its novelty. Support for policies can fade, and in the case of climate change it would be a mistake to let solutions be determined solely by what could be transient interest. If one accepts that a successful implementation of geoengineering will take time, resources, and extensive research then it can be argued that choosing to stop researching geoengineering is a harm to the future generation that requires that research for its survival.

IV. ADDRESSING THE DEMOCRATIC AND THE GEOENGINEERING DILEMMAS

Up until this point, this paper has put forth two problems—democracy’s two-pronged dilemma and the geoengineering paradox. The two-pronged dilemma states, first, that democracy does not have a structure to address the interest of future citizens and, second, that it is ill-equipped to work on long-term projects to address long-term issues. The geoengineering paradox has been presented as an application of democracy’s two-pronged dilemma and states that democracy justifies implementing geoengineering but not researching it. If one accepts these problems and believes that we have some obligation to future generations, then a solution is needed.

A solution to democracy’s two-pronged dilemma and the geoengineering paradox is for democratic states to entrench the rights of future generations in their constitutions and laws using legal language that requires policymakers to maintain a certain element of respect for future generations. This would entail positively affirming that human rights extend to the future. Ideally, this entrenchment would be flexible and focus on ideals of intergenerational equality—it would prioritize the interest of future generations to maximize their ability for free choice and maintain a standard of living that is at least at the median of the standard of living of current generations. The content and interpretation of the entrenchment of the rights of future generations is somewhat variable, but the benefits to entrenchment are multifold.

First, entrenchment would allow policymakers to permissibly make decisions in the interest of future generations and avoid the first prong of the democratic problem. It would provide a structural justification for pursuing policies beyond that which can be justified by an obligation to be responsive to their constituency. Although future generations still cannot express approval or disapproval for current policies, a policymaker has reason to virtually represent their interests to the best of their ability.

The second benefit is also clear—entrenchment solves the second prong of the democratic problem. Entrenchment provides a constitutional obligation to give care towards future generations and take on long-term projects. Even in cases where short-term projects might support a bid for reelection, policymakers must consider whether these short-term projects conflict with the rights of future generations. A practical example can be seen in a political debate on whether to invest in jobs in coal or green energy. Although coal jobs might have some small, short-term benefits to a single politician’s constituency, it would be impermissible to make a conscious choice to support an industry that has the ability to exacerbate environmental harms. Instead, the politician might advocate for investing in renewable energy and training programs to transition coal miners to work at a new renewable energy plant. In cases where there are geographic concerns about the feasibility of renewable energy, the burden of the politician would be to determine whether any industry practices could be changed in order to improve the sustainability of the local coal plant. Entrenchment implies consideration of the future rather than a categorical prioritization of interests.

Third, and most relevant to the geoengineering dilemma, entrenchment allows for there to be an overarching political context that legitimizes the rationale for research in the name of “arming the future.” It allows politicians to support geoengineering research even in the context where the benefits of the policy will not be realized for decades-long after their time in office is done. It represents fulfilling a contractual obligation. If a politician were to propose a policy that would violate the constraints of entrenchment, then she would be liable to something like impeachment. Impeachment acts as a way to punish politicians who break laws. As entrenching the rights of future generations would be akin to proposing a law constraining conduct, the violation of entrenchment would be a violation of the law. This would give individuals and structures within the government the ability to impose sanctions on those policymakers who would seek to disrespect future generations.

V. RESPONDING TO POTENTIAL OBJECTIONS TO ENTRENCHMENT

Even if one accepts that entrenching basic rights for future generations addresses democracy’s two-pronged dilemma and the geoengineering dilemma, there are still a few powerful objections to entrenchment.

A. ENTRENCHMENT IS UNDEMOCRATIC

One could make the argument that any entrenchment of any value into a constitution is undemocratic as it could constrain the ability of policymakers to

be responsive to their constituents. Values that are entrenched in a constitution—a document made by one group of people that often continues on to future generations—do not always represent the views of current people. To entrench the rights of future generations in a constitution would be to impose values on future generations; something inherently undemocratic.

This is a relatively weak argument for two main reasons. First, entrenchment in this case is something that allows for procedural fairness and respects democratic tenets of equality. If one was a proponent of democracy, then she would advocate for both of these features as prerequisites for a democratic process to take place.

Second, and most powerfully in the context of this paper, entrenchment explains the reason that the paradox of geoengineering exists. People often recognize respect for future generations as a value that they either have or ought to have. Although they themselves may disagree with implementing geoengineering, that does not mean that they categorically want to take that choice away from others. Although democracies do not necessarily need to possess liberal values, they often do because of concerns about fairness and equality. In order to ensure that future generations maintain an ability to choose, it is necessary to implement certain political protections against current generations unknowingly limiting the options of future generations.

B. AN EPISTEMIC WORRY

One more powerful objection to entrenchment is the notion that current people do not even know what is in the interest of future people. After all, one of the benefits of democracy is that people can voice their own interests and concerns to policymakers. Future people cannot do this as they do not yet exist. Norms and values change over time, and opinions about policy can often be shaped by these changes. Apart from a concern about what interests future people will have, there may also be a second, purely epistemic worry that consists of something akin to the following: we cannot know what the future holds with any certainty, and we cannot make policy to address problems that we do not know about. Therefore, any policy to help the future will rely on incomplete information.

First, this epistemic question applies to current people too. If individuals do not vote, policymakers are still tasked with considering them in their decisions. We do not say that they have done something wrong if policymakers make an imperfect decision—we only say they made a mistake when the decision they make directly violates the rights of those people who are not their constituents. For example, a decision to invest in infrastructure in one town that 40% of the town refrained from voting on. That by itself is not a problem. If the infrastructure investment requires bulldozing the home of someone who did not vote for this

plan, then that person could say that her personal rights were disrespected and the policymaker did something wrong.

Second, certain interests have remained the same. Basic goods that are key to survival are a prerequisite for having higher order interests, interests that relate to ethical determinations of what a good life would entail. In terms of higher order interests, “although moral variety undoubtedly exists, it is less extensive than is often supposed...[as] commonalities define the distinctively human forms of life.”¹¹ Certain interests are human interests, and entrenchment focuses on the consideration of these interests. Even if one disagrees with the idea that there can be one common conception of the “good life” as espoused by the Skidelskys’, approaches of determining a good life based on what a rational individual would want or what capabilities we wish individuals to have also require attention to ensuring basic goods. Basic goods are “in general necessary for the framing and the execution of a rational plan of life” and capabilities require asking “what is so-and-so able to do and be?”¹² Food, clean water, and shelter are all requirements for safe living, and all of those requirements are threatened by climate change.

Third, in terms of the specific policy of “arming the future” with geoengineering research, current people are not telling the future what to do. Instead, current people would be maximizing the choices that the future can make by providing them with information. Entrenchment as a justifying account of why it would be permissible to “arm the future” does not entail an epistemic overreach as no decision is being made; the future does not need to use the information that they would be given. They have the freedom to refuse to implement geoengineering if *they* do not believe it is what is best for them.

Finally—to address the purely epistemic worry that nobody can predict the future on a policy level—it is important to recognize that it is likely the case that climate change will pose an existential risk to some future generation. Although it is always difficult to calculate epistemic uncertainty, it is plausible to say that we are relatively certain that if climate change is currently affecting people, it will likely affect future people as well. It is also worth noting that in our current democratic system, policymakers *do* recognize climate change as an existential risk to future generations and often act in the international arena to combat it like with the Kyoto Protocol or the Paris Accords.¹³

11 Skidelsky, Edward and Skidelsky, Robert. *How Much is Enough?: Money and the Good Life*. New York, NY, 2012, pp. 146-147.

12 Skidelsky, Edward and Skidelsky, Robert. *How Much is Enough?: Money and the Good Life*. New York, NY, 2012, pp. 147-148.

13 Even if someone accepts that treaties, recycling, and cutting back on emissions are 100% effective and will save the planet, it does not undermine this paper. This paper is centrally focused on how entrenchment is one solution to democracy’s problems in justifying geoengineering research underneath the assumption that we have

C. PRIORITIZING THE PRESENT

Another strong objection to entrenchment is the worry that policymakers would be prohibited from prioritizing the present. If there are side constraints against harming the future, policymakers may feel like they either cannot make any decision or can only make decisions that benefit the future for fear of being impeached for shirking their duties to the future.

First, this misunderstands the goal of entrenchment. Entrenchment states that there is a prohibition against harming future generations with current policies. It prohibits policymakers from ignoring future generations in their calculations. It allows policymakers to permissibly take action that benefits future generations without someone claiming that they are shirking their obligations to the present. It does not state that policymakers should *only* prioritize future generations; it simply places a side constraint on what sorts of policies can be permissibly implemented. We still may not harm the present with our policies.

Second, stating that a certain group has rights that should be protected does not imply that the current generation does not have rights. Entrenching the rights of future people does not take away the rights of current people. Certain policies might prioritize future people over current people, but in the case of justifying climate change policy that is not the case, especially when it comes to geoengineering research to “arm the future.”¹⁴

Third, to address the worry about undue prioritization in regard to taxation, there is a mistake in assuming that geoengineering research does not benefit current people. Scientific research has numerous fringe benefits. It benefits scientists and educational institutions in terms of providing funding and jobs as well as attracting new talent. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that an individual’s taxes go towards something that will benefit her in specific terms. If someone agrees to exist within the bounds of government and pay taxes, she agrees to pay for a set of government services rather than a specific service. There is no real mechanism to withhold a person’s taxes from being used towards services that do not directly benefit her as money is fungible.

Finally, a worry about considering the interests of future people is akin to worrying about the interests of current people. A democratic system gives everyone input into the decision-making process, but equality of input does not entail

some obligation to future generations. The issue of international treaties also brings up another implied limit to this paper’s argument— this paper addresses a single democratic state’s obligation to its own people and it does so in a vacuum. Obligations to other states in the international arena are not discussed because this paper is short.

14 Someone could respond that geoengineering research does harm the present because it increases the risk that geoengineering would actually be deployed. This response depends on research falling into the wrong hands or a complete lack of ability to track people capable of performing the science necessary to implement geoengineering— conditionals easily preventable with smart policy decisions and resources that a politician would need to consider as a part of their obligation to current generations.

that everyone's input will be included in the final decision. Consideration of future interest does not imply that those interests will always override current interests; it is the job of policymakers to make reasoned decisions rather than a problem with entrenchment.

To this final response, there is a separate worry, namely the way that democracy often considers interests is via some majority rules system. It is because of this that there can exist a tyranny of the majority where the interests of the minority are systematically discounted. If consideration of future people is meant to mean that policymakers are to consider each of the votes of the infinite future people, then it may mean that in a democratic system would always side with the infinite future people because they numerically outweigh current people.

This interpretation of entrenchment is a mistake. First, consideration of basic interests does not require counting individual votes as the interests remain the same and simply act as a constraint. Second, side constraints on what policymakers can permissibly vote for exist in our current system in order to curtail the harms of the tyranny of the majority. While individual policies can fall into the trap of the tyranny of the majority, policymakers do not have the right to infringe on the basic rights of the minority.

VI. CONCLUSION

If one wishes to justify funding geoengineering research to “arm the future,” then it is necessary to solve democracy's two-pronged problem and address its relationship with the dilemma of geoengineering. While policymakers have the ability to make any law, it is important that the laws they create are justified by a broader framework. By entrenching the rights of future generations to basic necessities that would be harmed by climate change, policymakers would have a codified reason to invest in policies that can “arm the future” with information about how to quickly counteract climate change.

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Financial Literacy, Credit Access and Financial Stress of Micro-Firms: Evidence from Chile

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ABSTRACT

In Chile, as well as in the majority of the economies in the world, there exists a wide range of programs targeted towards the support of micro-entrepreneurs, providing either funding for their projects or business training. Using the 2006 and 2009 Chilean Social Protection Survey (EPS) dataset, data from the Superintendence of Banks and Financial Institutions (SBIF), and using an instrumental variables (IV) approach, this article presents evidence against financial literacy training programs as it finds no significant relationship between financial literacy on credit access or financial stress of micro-firms. Moreover, using a subsample of the data, this article shows that the results must be interpreted as an “upper bound,” thus strengthening these conclusions.

I. INTRODUCTION

In Chile, as in most of the world, micro-firms—firms with 10 or fewer employees—play a substantial role in the performance of the economy by their contribution to production and employment.^{1 2} Therefore, over the last few years, authorities have developed several policies targeted to encourage entrepreneurial activities. These policies include business skills training, asset transfers and credit subsidies.³

For example, since 2010, a large-scale government program run by the Chilean Ministry of Social Development offers an in-kind transfer of start-up capital plus 60 hours of business training to approximately 2,000 micro-entrepreneurs

1 The law in Chile states that a firm with 10 or fewer workers is considered a micro-firm.

2 Saavedra, M. L., & Hernández, Y. 2008. “Caracterización e importancia de las MIPYMES en Latinoamérica: Un estudio comparativo,” *Actualidad contable faces*, 11(17).

3 Beck, T., Demirgüç-Kunt, A., & Levine, R. 2007. “Finance, inequality and the poor,” *Journal of economic growth*, 12(1), 27-49.

each year.⁴

Due to this governmental interest in micro-firms, there is a wide literature that has studied the effect of micro-firm support on growth, unemployment, poverty, productivity, and other economic variables. Overall, the evidence leans toward a positive and statistically significant effect of credit-access programs on these variables; however, the evidence with respect to business skills is weaker.⁵

Conversely, other studies have linked financial literacy with the probability of having access to credit and the level of debt, though these studies are usually at the individual or family level.⁶ For instance, Alvarez & Ruiz-Tagle provide evidence that financial literacy is positively related to credit access, but they find no significant evidence for financial stress.⁷

Economic models of investment often rely on the assumption that firms decide the amount of capital and labor that maximizes their profit. This assumption is called the rationality of firms. Furthermore, these models evaluate the present value of the expected cash flows in relation to the initial investment.⁸ From the work of Modigliani & Miller it follows that, in a world with taxes, levered firms (companies with more debt than equity) have a greater value than non-levered firms, at the expense of a higher bankruptcy probability.⁹

However, under the assumption of rationality of firms, these models are unable to take into account the lack of financial skills of those who run the firms, which might affect their decision-making and lead them to choose sub-optimal levels of debt. This issue is especially important in micro-firms due to the often limited human capital of their owners. Thus, it is likely that micro-firms with limited financial skills hold high levels of debt or fail to renegotiate their debts, which can affect the individuals' utility through larger levels of poverty or unemployment, among other effects.¹⁰

From a policymaker's standpoint, there are two possibilities to support entrepreneurs: business training or funding support. On the one hand, business training intends to provide skills for better management of the business. For example, such training programs may provide client negotiation skills, marketing

4 "Micro-entrepreneurship Support Program" (MESP)

5 Nevertheless, some studies as Beck et al. (2005) are more skeptical regarding the effect of this programs.

6 Landerretche, O. y Martínez, C.. 2013. "Voluntary Savings, Financial Behavior, and Pension Finance Literacy: Evidence from Chile," *Journal of Pension Economics and Finance*, 12(03), 251-297.

7 Financial Stress is defined as a debt to income ratio, while credit access considers having any debt with some financial institution. For more detail, please see Appendix 1; Alvarez, R., & Ruiz-Tagle, J. 2016. "Alfabetismo financiero, Endeudamiento y Morosidad de los Hogares en Chile," *Santiago*.

8 Campbell, J. Y., & Shiller, R. J.. 1987. "Cointegration and tests of present value models," *Journal of political economy*, 95(5), 1062-1088.

9 Modigliani, F., & Miller, M. H. 1963. "Corporate income taxes and the cost of capital: a correction," *The American economic review*, 53(3), 433-443.

10 Pilar de la Barra. 2014. "Efecto de la Educación en Comportamiento de Toma de Deuda: Evidencia para Chile," *Tesis de Magister: Pontificia Universidad Católica*, Diciembre.

skills, working capital management, growth strategies, and more. On the other hand, funding support seeks to fix liquidity constraints which diminish the rise of new business and the prevalence and growth of existing ones.¹¹ This paper intends to establish a causal relationship between financial literacy and both credit access and financial stress of micro-firms. Evidence in favor of a causal relationship would encourage the design of business training programs as a complement to the existing asset-transfer programs for micro-entrepreneurs.

Using data from the 2006 and 2009 Social Protection Survey (EPS) and information from the Superintendence of Banks and Financial Institutions (SBIF) this paper presents evidence against financial literacy programs for micro-firms given that it does not find statistically significant coefficients for either credit access or financial stress.

Nevertheless, a sharp reader may have concerns about the internal validity of the results as data restraints do not allow an experimental design for a specific policy. However, this paper tries to provide evidence regarding the effect of greater financial literacy on micro-firm financial decision making, giving broad conclusions on this matter and contributing to future policy design. In addition, as there are very few financial skill programs, it is unlikely that this may drive this paper's results.

Additionally, due to the endogeneity of financial literacy (the correlation of the variable and the error term used in this model), this paper proposes an instrumental variable (IV) approach, using the number of banks at a township level as an instrument for financial literacy.¹² As it will be argued later, this instrument satisfies both the relevance and exogeneity conditions.¹³

Likewise, given the limited amount of observations that this sample contains, it is not possible to estimate the coefficients using the fixed effects model, which may drive this paper's results.¹⁴

For instance, it is reasonable to think that those who appear as micro-firm owners in both years are the ones with more financial literacy, causing biased coefficients due to a non-random attrition, the process by which the strength of the relationship gradually decreases. Hence, by comparing a pooled model with a subsample of individuals only from the EPS 2006, this paper establishes an "upper bound" for the estimated coefficients.¹⁵ Given that this paper finds no significant

11 Often consumers and small firms face constraints regarding access to credit due to uncertainty and information asymmetries. For a broader understanding please see Deaton (1989) and Akerlof (1978).

12 See Appendix 7 for a brief introduction to this empirical strategy.

13 Endogeneity exists when an explanatory variable is correlated with the error term ($\text{corr}(x,e) \neq 0$). This problem can be faced with an instrumental variable under certain conditions. For a better understanding see Card (1999).

14 Less than one-third of those interviewed from 2006 appear as micro-entrepreneurs on the EPS 2009.

15 This under the assumption that who appears for the first time on the EPS 2009 is similar on average to the

results, this work supports the evidence found on other business training studies, such as the results presented by Karlan & Valdivia.¹⁶

The rest of the paper is divided into seven sections. Section 2 carries out a brief literature review. Section 3 describes the data, defines the main variables and presents some stylized facts. Section 4 presents the underlying economic model that sustains this investigation. Section 5 presents in detail the empirical model and discusses the main estimation problems. Section 6 shows the main results and robustness checks. Finally, section 7 presents conclusions and public policy recommendations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a rich literature related to studying the effect of micro-entrepreneur support on poverty alleviation, unemployment, and other variables, especially regarding the evaluation of financial aid programs (credit subsidies, asset transfers, and more) and business training programs.

For instance, Bruhn & Love exploit the almost simultaneous opening of more than 800 bank branches in Mexico targeted to low-income individuals, using this event as a “natural experiment.” With this experimental design and using a difference-in-difference strategy (comparing areas that received banks to similar ones that did not across time), they present evidence of a positive relationship between credit access and poverty alleviation.¹⁷

In the same way, Beck, Demirgüç-Kunt & Levine, using a dynamic panel at country level, find a negative and statistically significant relationship between credit access and inequality.¹⁸ This relationship is due to the heterogeneity in the improvement of credit access, being low-income individuals the ones who benefit the most from improved credit access.

Likewise, Levine, Loayza & Beck use both cross-section and dynamic panel approaches, as well as instrumental variables to find a negative relationship between financial intermediary development and economic growth.¹⁹ These results are in line with Aghion et al. which finds that higher credit restraints affect

ones on the EPS 2006

16 Karlan, D., & Valdivia, M. 2011. “Teaching entrepreneurship: Impact of business training on microfinance clients and institutions,” *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 93(2), 510-527.

17 Bruhn, M., & Love, I. 2014. “The real impact of improved access to finance: Evidence from Mexico,” *The Journal of Finance*, 69(3), 1347-1376.

18 Karlan, D., & Valdivia, M. 2011. “Teaching entrepreneurship: Impact of business training on microfinance clients and institutions,” *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 93(2), 510-527.

19 Levine, R., Loayza, N., & Beck, T. 2000. “Financial intermediation and growth: Causality and causes,” *Journal of Monetary Economics*, 46(1), 31-77.

economies' mean growth.²⁰

We now turn our attention to the mixed evidence of business training programs for micro-entrepreneurs, which cover a wide range of useful managing skills such as promotion skills, working capital management, and negotiation strategies.²¹ The work performed by Karlan & Valdivia or Almeida & Galasso fail to find significant evidence of business training programs for micro-entrepreneurs in Peru and Argentina.²² In contrast, Berge et al. and Bjorvatn & Tungodden find positive effects of human capital accumulation programs for micro-firm owners in Tanzania,²³ while Mano & Iddrisu find the same in Ghana.²⁴

Moreover, considering micro-firm owners in Chile, Martínez, Puentes & Ruiz-Tagle use the MESP program and an experimental design to provide useful evidence regarding a positive relationship between a combination of an asset transfer and business training on employment and wages of low-income micro firm owners, most of whom are women.²⁵ However, they are unable to study the effect of each component of the program by itself.

Examining financial literacy levels, literature focuses mainly on individual or family level. For example, Alvarez & Ruiz-Tagle, using an IV identification strategy, find some evidence related to wider credit access for households with higher financial literacy;²⁶ however, they find no evidence for the levels of financial stress.²⁷

Regarding individuals, some evidence shows that lower understanding of financial concepts can trigger larger levels of debt and higher probability of default.²⁸ Nevertheless, it is also important to consider that lower levels of financial literacy might suggest a lower propensity to sustain relationships with financial

20 Aghion, P., Angeletos, G. M., Banerjee, A., & Manova, K. 2005. "Volatility and growth: Credit constraints and productivity-enhancing investment," *National Bureau of Economic Research*, No. w11349.

21 Most of this literature focuses profits, sales, employment, among other variables.

22 Karlan & Valdivia. "Teaching entrepreneurship: Impact of business training on microfinance clients and institutions.;" Almeida, R. K., & Galasso, E. 2010. "Jump-starting self-employment? Evidence for welfare participants in Argentina," *World Development*, 38(5), 742-755.

23 Berge, L. I. O., Bjorvatn, K., & Tungodden, B. 2014. "Human and financial capital for microenterprise development: Evidence from a field and lab experiment," *Management Science*, 61(4), 707-722; Bjorvatn, K., & Tungodden, B. 2010. "Teaching business in Tanzania: Evaluating participation and performance," *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 8(2-3), 561-570.

24 Mano, Y., Iddrisu, A., Yoshino, Y., & Sonobe, T. 2012. "How can micro and small enterprises in sub-Saharan Africa become more productive? The impacts of experimental basic managerial training," *World Development*, 40(3), 458-468.

25 Martínez, A., Puentes, E., & Ruiz-Tagle, J. 2018. "The effects of micro-entrepreneurship programs on labor market performance: experimental evidence from Chile," *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 10(2), 101-24.

26 Gerardi, K., Goette, L., and Meier, S. 2010. "Financial Literacy and Subprime Mortgage Delinquency: Evidence from a Survey Matched to Administrative Data." *SSRN Electronic Journal*.

27 Alvarez & Ruiz-Tagle, "Alfabetismo financiero, Endeudamiento y Morosidad de los Hogares en Chile."

28 Gerardi, K., Goette, L., and Meier, S. 2010. "Financial Literacy and Subprime Mortgage Delinquency: Evidence from a Survey Matched to Administrative Data." *SSRN Electronic Journal*.

institutions.²⁹

Finally, considering micro-firm support programs, the work performed by Drexler et al. studies the effect of two types of financial skill training programs in the Dominican Republic.³⁰ The first provides standard classes covering accounting and financial contents while the second offers basic classes teaching rules of thumb of finance and accounting. Among their results, the authors conclude that lower-complexity courses are more effective on financial decision-making of the treated. Despite not finding significant effects on profit or sales of any of the programs, they find some evidence of an increase in bad week sales.

Overall, literature tends to lean in favor of a positive relationship between credit access and different variables related to utility of economic agents. However, evidence is mixed regarding business training programs. Further, these programs rarely focus on financial literacy or link this variable to the probability of having access to credit (at least not at a micro-firm level) despite its potential relevance in explaining the firm's liquidity constraints. Therefore, this paper seeks to provide evidence for the relation between financial literacy and the two dependent variables of interest: credit access and financial stress, with the purpose of public-policy recommendations.

III. DATA AND STYLIZED FACTS

The data used for this work comes mainly from the Chilean Social Protection Survey (EPS), specifically the surveys of 2006 and 2009. This paper also uses data from the Superintendence of Banks and Financial Institutions (SBIF), which provides information on the distribution of bank branches at a township level, to create the instrument proposed in this paper.

In both the EPS 2006 and the EPS 2009, the surveys interview roughly 15,000 households with a total of 81,096 and 74,047 observations, respectively. That being said, this paper only considers individuals that declare being owners or partners of some business. Furthermore, defining micro-firms according to the amount of workforce, this paper drops every business with more than 10 workers. Ultimately, after cleaning the database, 935 observations remained, of which 575 come from the EPS 2006 and 360 from the EPS 2009.

One of the greatest strengths of the EPS is that it has a section of questions related to financial knowledge and the risk aversion of the individual.³¹ That

29 Gale, W., & Levine, R. 2010. "Financial Literacy: What Works? How Could It Be More Effective?"

30 Drexler, A., Fischer, G., & Schoar, A. 2014. "Keeping it simple: Financial literacy and rules of thumb," *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 6(2), 1-31.

31 Please see Appendix 1 for the detail of the questions. Appendix 3 shows the percentage of correct answers

section allows this paper to develop a Financial Literacy Index (FLI) and a risk aversion index, both in line with the ones presented by Flores, Landerretche & Sanchez.

Moreover, consistent with Alvarez & Ruiz-Tagle, this paper defines financial stress as the debt to income ratio.³² In this matter, financial stress is defined as the total amount of debt related to business reported by the interviewee, divided by his mean annual income. Moreover, a proxy for the formality of the business is created by generating a dummy variable that takes the value of one when the firm declares sales taxes and zero if not. In Table 1 there is a summary of the main variables used for this investigation.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistic of Variables Used

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
FLI	0.41	0.25	0	1
Financial Stress	0.19	1.12	0	16.67
Credit Access	0.16	0.37	0	1
Bank branches	36.4	61.47	0	236
Workers	2.28	1.59	1	9
Firm's Age	10.06	10.70	0	55
Risk Aversion	0.92	1.28	0	3
Gender (1 women)	0.49	0.50	0	1
Interviewed Age	49.04	12.37	19	83
High School	0.49	0.50	0	1
Technical college	0.10	0.30	0	1
Undergraduate	0.15	0.36	0	1
Graduate	0.01	0.10	0	1

Regarding FLI, on average, individuals interviewed answered correctly to 41 percent of the questions. Table 2 shows the distribution of correct answers. Surprisingly, just 1.07 percent of the sample answered correctly to the six questions of basic financial concepts and less than 25 percent of those interviewed responded correctly to more than half of the questions. Moreover, regarding the compound interest rate question,³³ which is arguably the most important question when establishing a relationship with a financial institution because loans are calculated over a compound interest rate, just a 2.78 percent answered correctly. This number is considerably lower than the one found by Lusardi & Mitchell for baby boomers in the US, which was around 18 percent.³⁴

for each question.

32 Alvarez & Ruiz-Tagle, "Alfabetismo financiero, Endeudamiento y Morosidad de los Hogares en Chile."

33 Appendix 3 shows the percentage of correct answers for each question.

34 Lusardi, A., & Tufano, P. 2015. "Debt literacy, financial experiences, and overindebtedness," *Journal of Pension Economics Finance*, 14(4), 332-368.

Table 2: Correct Answer Distribution for the FLI

Correct Answer	Frequency (%)
0	11.23
1	16.04
2	21.50
3	26.95
4	14.33
5	8.88
6	1.07

Looking at credit access and financial stress, only 16 percent of the sample has some debt when interviewed, while the mean debt represents 19 percent of the individual annual income. Nevertheless, this last number is mainly driven by the relationship (or lack of relationship) with the financial institutions. Moreover, conditional on having a loan, financial stress rises to 14.3. However, despite the magnitude of the mean, it is important to consider that this debt considers long run loans such as land or equipment loans. Appendix 3 shows the means for these variables by sex and age, showing that individuals between 24 and 54 years old have greater levels of financial stress as well as the largest share of individuals that participate in the financial markets.

Now this paper proceeds to look at the township-level distribution of bank branches. Townships have on average 36 bank branches. However, it is important—especially for a geographically unique country like Chile—to consider the heterogeneity of the data given the concentration of bank branches within the wealthiest, more urbanized and more educated townships, like the ones in the Metropolitan Region. Appendix 4 details the distribution of bank branches by regions. For example, there are 75.8 bank branches in each township from the Metropolitan Region, while in the third region the number goes down to 6.1.³⁵

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For a better understanding of the empirical strategy, it is essential to rely on a theoretical model that provides an economic interpretation for the results obtained. As mentioned earlier in this paper, assuming that the firms evaluate business projects using a simple stochastic model of present value, this statement

³⁵ Chile has 16 regions (15 at the time of this article) numbered from 1 to 16 (the Metropolitan Region is 13)

can be formalized with the following equation:

$$(1) \quad Y_t = -I_0 + \sum_{i=1}^n \delta^i E_t(\Phi_t)$$

Where Y_t is the expected present value of the project in t , I_0 is the cash flow on period t , $\delta \in (0,1)$ corresponds to the discount rate, and E_t is the expectation operator, conditional on the set of information Φ_t . This expression is a simplification of the one proposed by Campbell & Shiller, which is very useful for the purposes of this investigation.³⁶

If we assume that not all of the individuals have access to the same set of information Φ_t , or they do not understand completely all the information available, it is reasonable to think that some entrepreneurs might forecast their cash flows incorrectly. This will likely affect the expected present value of the project; thus, these estimations can compromise the firm’s liquidity or restrain their access to external funding due to lack of information. Likewise, wrong cash flow estimations might affect the firm’s decision whether to invest or not, as well as their growth possibilities given that projects are subject to the condition $Y_t > 0$.

A key assumption of this model is that individuals overestimate their cash flows as the result of a smaller set of information, which will be called Φ'_t . This can be taken from the evidence presented by Agarwal, Driscoll & Laibson who show that on the mortgage market, individuals fail to minimize their debt costs, which can be extensible to other types of debt.³⁷ In that case, individuals underestimate the debt cost as they do not understand how much they pay nor their options associated with their loan. One clear example is that, on the compound interest question (see Appendix 1), 96.3 percent of those interviewed answered incorrectly and 29.3 percent of those interviewed answered as if it was a simple interest rate, which reaffirms the conclusions of Agarwal et al.

Therefore, considering the assumptions mentioned above, we have that:

$$(2) \quad Y_t - Y'_t = \sum_{i=1}^n \delta^i [E_t(\Phi_t) - E_t(\Phi'_t)] < 0$$

In which the right-hand expression would be the present value of the estimation error, which depends on the information gap $\Phi_t - \Phi'_t$. Thus, the bigger the information asymmetries, the less accurate the estimations for projects run by entrepreneurs with limited access to information—or in this case, entrepreneurs with low financial literacy—will be. In addition, this model, sustained by the evidence presented by Agarwal et al. predicts that the transmission channel for illiter-

36 Campbell & Shiller, “Cointegration and tests of present value models.”
 37 Agarwal, S., J. C. Driscoll & D. I. Laibson. 2013. “Optimal Mortgage Refinancing: A Closed-Form Solution,” *Journal of Money, Credit and Banking*, 45, 591–622.

acy will be related to costs, not income.

Another important factor is the decision of individuals to increase their stock of financial knowledge. It is easy to see that increasing financial skills endowment has costs and benefits. On the one hand, benefits are related to the model shown above as they allow better access to information and hence allow the individuals to make better investment decisions. On the other hand, the process of acquiring basic financial knowledge takes time and resources, which implies costs. Overall, theory predicts that individuals optimally choose the stock of financial knowledge that maximizes their welfare, as formalized by Jappelli & Padulla.³⁸ However, this model runs out of the main goal of this investigation.

Finally, it is important to mention that, according to the theoretical model presented by Modigliani & Miller, in the presence of information asymmetries between firm owners and the market, levered companies are more valuable as they signal a low bankruptcy probability to the market.³⁹ This would generate, consistent with the work of Ross, an incentive to be levered.⁴⁰ This statement generates some concern regarding the prediction that firms with bigger financial stress have owners with lower financial literacy.

V. IDENTIFICATION STRATEGY

For the identification strategy, two models are estimated in parallel: one for financial stress and the other for the dummy variable of credit access. As such, this paper estimates the following equation:

$$(3) \quad Y_{it} = X_{it}\beta + \delta FLI_{it} + \gamma_t + \mu_{it}$$

In which Y_{it} represents the two dependent variables, financial stress and credit access,⁴¹ for each specification. X_{it} is a vector of individual control variables (such as education, age, or gender) and firm control variables as a dummy for formality,⁴² business age, and amount of workforce. γ_t corresponds to a dummy variable that takes value 1 for year 2009 and 0 for 2006, to control for year-fixed effects. Our parameter of interest, FLI, corresponds to the financial literacy index, which consists of the amount of correct answers from the set of financial questions

38 Jappelli, T. and Padula, M. 2011 "Investment in financial literacy and saving decisions," *CSEF Working Paper No. 272, Centre for Studies in Economics and Finance*, University of Naples Federico II.

39 Modigliani & Miller, "Corporate income taxes and the cost of capital: a correction."

40 Ross, S. A. 1977. "The determination of financial structure: the incentive-signalling approach" *The Bell Journal of Economics*, 23-40.

41 The probability of having access to credit is estimated with a probit model.

42 As said earlier, this variable takes the value 1 when the firm declares sales taxes and 0 if not.

of the EPS (see Appendix 1 for more detail). μ_{it} is the error term of the model. Finally, I use robust standard errors to control for possible heteroscedasticity.

Regarding the variable of interest of this work, there are reasons to believe that it presents endogeneity issues due to measurement errors of the index⁴³ or spillovers from those who participate actively in financial markets, as explained by Alvarez & Ruiz-Tagle.⁴⁴ The first issue is a result of the noisy nature of financial literacy, while the second occurs because some financial concepts might be learned by participating in financial markets.

It is well known that measurement errors on right-side variables will tend to bias the coefficients towards zero, while spillovers are expected to bias the FLI upwards.⁴⁵ Therefore, given that both sources of bias operate on opposite directions, the end result will depend on which effect is dominant.

In order to tackle the problem of endogeneity, this paper suggests an IV approach, using the amount of bank branches at a township level as an instrument for the FLI. This instrument can be considered exogenous⁴⁶ for the financial stress variable as there is no theoretical reason to believe that this might correlate with the level of financial literacy of the interviewee. However, when analyzing access to credit, the relationship is more plausible, because micro-entrepreneurs can choose where to set up their business. That being said, the EPS dataset does not ask for the township in which the business is located, but for the township where the individual lives. Individuals likely did not decide to live in a township due to the supply of financial institutions, but rather due to the accessibility of the township, supply of education establishments, green area supply, compatibility with neighbors, and other variables. Thus, this IV fulfills the exogeneity condition on both specifications. Then, the first stage regressions can be written:

$$(4) \quad FLL_{ict} = X_{it}\beta + \delta B_{ct} + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{ict}$$

In which B_{ct} would be the number of bank branches on the township c .

Another problem related to the estimations is that, when using a pool sample with observations of the EPS 2006 and 2009, it is likely that there will be non-random attrition bias if the reason to disappear from one survey to another is

43 Behrman, J. R., Mitchell, O. S., Soo, C., & Bravo, D. 2010. "Financial literacy, schooling, and wealth accumulation" (No. w16452). *National Bureau of Economic Research*.

44 Alvarez & Ruiz-Tagle, "Alfabetismo financiero, Endeudamiento y Morosidad de los Hogares en Chile."

45 Behrman, J. R., Mitchell, O. S., Soo, C., & Bravo, D. 2010. "Financial literacy, schooling, and wealth accumulation" (No. w16452). *National Bureau of Economic Research*.

46 Card, D. 1999. "The causal effect of education on earnings," *Handbook of labor economics* (Vol. 3, pp. 1801-1863). Elsevier.

correlated with the FLI. Furthermore, one can think that those interviewed with lower financial literacy will have a higher bankruptcy probability and therefore lower probability to declare being a business owner on the EPS 2009, generating upward biases. The next section tackles this issue and reaffirms the robustness of the results obtained.

VI. MAIN RESULTS AND ROBUSTNESS CHECKS

Table 3 shows the main results of both dependent variables. Columns 1 and 3 show the estimations using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) with year fixed effects while column 2 and 4 show the results using IV.⁴⁷ We notice that for none of the specifications is there a statistically significant coefficient for the FLI; however, in column 2, the coefficient is almost significant at a 10 percent level (p-value of 0.117). Also, we can see that coefficients are considerably larger when using an IV approach, which suggests that the attenuation bias (the underestimation of the absolute value of this data caused by errors in the independent variable) dominates the spillover effect of those who participate on the financial markets.

These results are similar to the ones obtained by Alvarez & Ruiz-Tagle, in which they argue that the positive relationship between financial literacy and financial stress might be explained by greater credit access or overconfidence of the more literate individuals.⁴⁸ The positive relationship between the FLI and the probability of having access to credit also has the expected sign; however, the significance is weaker than the one presented by Alvarez & Ruiz-Tagle.

The lower panel of Table 3 shows the main results of the first stage. Shown in both models, the number of bank branches fulfils the condition of relevance as the F test is greater than 10⁴⁹ and the coefficients are highly significant in both specifications.

Regarding the control variables, the reader can see that they all go in the expected directions.⁵⁰ However, this paper believes it is important to discuss in detail the formality dummy variable, given that the coefficient is negative and statistically significant for credit access. At first, intuition would suggest a positive relationship between the formality of the business and the probability of getting a loan and its financial stress. Further, one would expect that formally constituted companies should have better access to request a loan on a financial institution. However, it is likely that for micro-firms as the ones studied in this paper, obtaining

47 Complete detail of the regressions can be found on Appendix 5.

48 Alvarez & Ruiz-Tagle, "Alfabetismo financiero, Endeudamiento y Morosidad de los Hogares en Chile."

49 There is no formal way to ensure the relevance of an instrument, however literature usually requires the F statistic of the first stage regression to be greater than 10 in order to be considered "strong". See Staiger and Stock (1994).

50 See Appendix 5.

a loan as a formal company is more of a restraint than an advantage. The reason is very simple: an individual can leave personal assets such as his/her house or car as collateral, which reduces the bank’s risk, so unincorporated companies would take more loans than formal companies.

Table 3: Pooled Model for Financial Stress and Credit Access

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	OLS Fin. Stress	IV Fin. Stress	OLS Credit Access	IV Credit Access
FDI	0.0979 (0.140)	3.899 (2.485)	0.326 (0.251)	2.693 (2.156)
Control Variables	Si	Si	Si	Si
Year dummy	Si	Si	Si	Si
First Stage				
Bank Branches		0.0004 ***		0.0004***
F Test		20.28		20.28
Adjusted R ²		0.21		
N	876	860	876	870

Standard error in parenthesis

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Overall, these results suggest that business training programs related to financial skills would not be effective to diminish the financial stress (and with that the survival probability) nor the probability of having access to credit of micro-firms, as better financial literacy has no significant effect on either of these variables. Thus, a more effective policy design would be related to providing asset transfers and loan subsidies, consistent with the empirical evidence shown in the literature review.

ROBUSTNESS CHECKS

Given that the pooled model presented in the previous subsection has observations for micro-entrepreneurs from years 2006 and 2009, it is likely that these results may be biased due to non-random attrition, in which the results gradually decrease in strength. Intuitively, it is reasonable to think that those who report themselves as micro-firm owners on both the 2006 and 2009 surveys are the ones with higher financial literacy levels (as financial literacy would be a useful tool for making optimal financial decisions and diminish the probability of bankruptcy), which would generate upward bias on the estimations presented in Table 3. In that case, results shown before should be interpreted as an “upper bound,” proving solid evidence against a causal relationship between financial literacy and the two dependent variables studied for this investigation.

In order to test this hypothesis, this paper estimates again columns 2 and 4 of Table 3, but only for a subsample of year 2006 observations. If the hypothesis is

true, both the significance and the coefficients must fall on this new specification. Table 4 shows the results obtained from this subsample, using the IV approach as on columns 2 and 4 of Table 3.⁵¹

Table 4: Comparison between Pooled Model and Subsample for 2006

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Pooled Fin. Stress	Fin Stress 2006	Pooled Credit Access	Credit Access 2006
FLI	3.899	1.698	2.693	2.117
	(2.485)	(1.842)	(2.156)	(2.044)
Control Variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
First Stage				
Bank Branches	0.0004 ***	0.0005***	0.0004***	0.0005***
F Test	20.28	11.54	20.28	11.54
Adjusted R^2	0.21	0.18		
N	860	533	860	533

Standar error in parenthesis

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

From the table above, one can see that the results obtained are consistent with this paper's hypothesis, as the coefficients (and their p-values) fall on both specifications when using the subsample of observations from 2006. For financial stress, the estimated coefficient falls from 3.899 to 1.698 (and the p-value increase from 0.12 to 0.36), while credit access falls from 2.693 to 2.117 (p-value changes from 0.21 to 0.30).

One possible concern regarding these results is that they can be driven by the narrowing of the sample, as for the pooled model the sample was already limited on observations. However, one can see that the standard error falls when the regressions are estimated for the subsample of the year 2006, despite reducing the size of the sample. Furthermore, the instrument bank branches on township is still highly significant (at a 99 percent level for both specifications) and has an F test of 11.54.

This implies that the results shown on Table 3 should be interpreted as an "upper bound," due to the attrition bias, presenting robust evidence against financial training programs, as there is no significant relationship between financial literacy and access to credit or financial stress of micro-firms.

VII. FINAL CONCLUSIONS

This paper intended to establish a causal relationship between the financial literacy level of micro-entrepreneurs, their probability of having access to fi-

⁵¹ Appendix 6 presents on detail the regressions estimated for 2006.

nancial markets, and their financial stress. Based on the literature regarding this subject and given the large empirical evidence in favor of financial aid programs for micro-firms, as well as the mixed results in business training programs, this paper intended to contribute new evidence relative to the effectiveness of policies that involve business training for micro-firm owners.

By using an instrumental variables approach, this paper tried to tackle the endogeneity problems that the financial literacy index (created following Flores, Landerretche & Sanchez) is exposed to. This paper uses the number of bank branches at a township level as an instrument for the index, which fulfills both the exogeneity and relevance conditions. Overall, my results suggest that there is no causal relationship between financial literacy and the two dependent variables studied. Further, due to non-random attrition bias, these results must be interpreted as an “upper bound” which provides solid evidence against financial training programs.

Finally, for future investigations, it would be useful to check the external validity of the model and see if the results hold for other datasets in Chile or other middle-income countries. It would be also relevant to know if the conclusion on financial training projects holds for other variables, such as the probability of default.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Creation of Variables

(a.) Financial Literacy Index (FLI): Consistent with Flores et al., we designed an index following the next set of questions and the number of correct answers:

- Question 1: Probability. If there is a 10 percent chance of getting a disease, How many people will catch the disease out of 1000?

- Question 2: Lottery Division. If five people hold the same winning ticket from a lottery of \$2 million, how much will each receive?

- Question 3: Interest rate. Assume that you have \$100 in a savings account and the annual interest rate that you receive for this savings is 2 percent. If you keep the money for 5 years on this account, how much money will you have in five years from now?

- a. More than \$102

- b. Exactly \$102

- c. Less than \$102

- Question 4: Compound rate. Let's say you have \$200 in a savings account, which accumulate 10 percent in return each year. How much would you have after two years?

- Question 5: Inflation. Suppose you possess \$100 in a savings account which gives you a return rate of 1 percent yearly. If the inflation is 2 percent, after one year you could buy:

- a. More than \$100

- b. Exactly \$100

- c. Less than \$100

- Question 6: Risk diversification. Please answer if the next statement is true or false: buying a stock from a company is less risky than buying the same money on several stocks from different companies

(b.) Likewise, I use the following risk aversion index proposed by Flores et al. (2011).

Risk aversion:

- Is 0 if the interviewee prefers a fixed and stable income for the rest of his life
- Is 1 if he/she prefers a job in which he/she can, with the same probability, have twice his income or 3/4 of his income for the rest of his life.

- Is 2 if the interviewed prefers a job in which he/she can, with the same probability, have twice his income or 1/2 of his income for the rest of his life

- Is 3 if the interviewed prefers a job in which he/she can, with the same probability, have twice his income or 1/4 of his income for the rest of his life

(c.) Type of debts considered for the Financial Stress variable:

- Machinery
- Land and/or agricultural facilities
- Animals (cattle)
- Bank credit line
- Other

Appendix 2: Financial Literacy Index

Table 5: FLI Detail by Question

Question	Percentage of correct answers
1. Probability	61.71%
2. Lottery Division	56.79%
3. Interest rate	61.39%
4. Compound rate	2.78%
5. Inflation	27.17%
6. Risk diversification	38.18%
Total	41.34%

Appendix 3: Descriptive Statistic for FLI and Dependent Variables

Table 6: Overall Average, by age and gender

Variable	Total	Age			Gender	
		18 a 24	25 a 54	+55	Hombre	Mujer
Financial Stress	0.19	0	0.22	0.12	0.17	0.21
Credit Access	0.16	0	0.18	0.11	0.16	0.16
FLI	0.41	0.33	0.44	0.35	0.45	0.37

Appendix 4: Bank Branches Distribution in Chile

Table 7: Average Bank Branches by Township

Region	Branches by Township
1	23.10
2	32
3	6.13
4	13.13
5	29.88
6	15.94
7	12.98
8	16.97
9	12.48
10	16.84
11	4
12	1
14	16.83
15	19
RM	75.77
Country	36.39

Appendix 5: Regressions for Financial Stress and Credit Access Detail

Table 8: OLS Models

	(1) Fin. Stress	(2) Fin. Stress	(3) Credit Access	(4) Credit Access
FLI	0.148 (0.135)	0.0979 (0.140)	0.407* (0.244)	0.326 (0.251)
Workforce	0.0745** (0.0291)	0.0725** (0.0288)	0.0623* (0.0325)	0.0582* (0.0327)
Risk Aversion	0.0144 (0.0248)	0.0177 (0.0251)	-0.0204 (0.0428)	-0.0135 (0.0430)
Formality Dummy	0.0877** (0.0366)	0.0765** (0.0360)	-0.251* (0.136)	-0.267* (0.137)
Woman	0.0761 (0.0877)	0.0759 (0.0877)	0.0750 (0.111)	0.0739 (0.111)
Age	0.00466* (0.00259)	0.00474* (0.00261)	0.00369 (0.00538)	0.00361 (0.00539)
Business Age	-0.00547** (0.00275)	-0.00497* (0.00267)	-0.00611 (0.00613)	-0.00522 (0.00617)
High School	0.0976** (0.0463)	0.107** (0.0488)	0.161 (0.157)	0.171 (0.157)
Technical College	0.214* (0.115)	0.224* (0.115)	0.855*** (0.212)	0.869*** (0.212)
Undergraduate	0.243** (0.115)	0.259** (0.117)	1.055*** (0.189)	1.079*** (0.190)
Graduate	1.491 (1.574)	1.505 (1.574)	0.806* (0.447)	0.815* (0.452)
2009		-0.102 (0.0681)		-0.157 (0.120)
Constant	-0.454** (0.212)	-0.401* (0.205)	-1.652*** (0.344)	-1.559*** (0.351)
Adjusted R ²	0.0358	0.0363		
N	876	876	876	876

Standar errors in parenthesis
 * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

Table 9: Regressions with IV

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Fin. Stress	Fin. Stress	Credit Access	Credit Access
FLI	3.604 (2.237)	3.899 (2.485)	2.563 (1.927)	2.693 (2.156)
Workforce	0.00649 (0.0534)	0.00906 (0.0522)	0.0258 (0.0488)	0.0253 (0.0479)
Risk Aversion	0.0478 (0.0489)	0.0400 (0.0444)	-0.00144 (0.0491)	-0.00299 (0.0476)
Formality Dummy	-0.0845 (0.136)	-0.0572 (0.122)	-0.403** (0.173)	-0.392** (0.164)
Woman	0.341 (0.228)	0.352 (0.239)	0.236 (0.184)	0.242 (0.192)
Age	0.0108 (0.00667)	0.0107 (0.00675)	0.00416 (0.00672)	0.00410 (0.00675)
Business Age	-0.000764 (0.00477)	-0.00206 (0.00440)	-0.0000161 (0.00701)	-0.000420 (0.00679)
High School	-0.136 (0.168)	-0.170 (0.196)	0.0581 (0.214)	0.0403 (0.231)
Technical College	-0.379 (0.368)	-0.430 (0.411)	0.519 (0.402)	0.494 (0.437)
Undergraduate	-0.381 (0.420)	-0.453 (0.478)	0.655 (0.407)	0.623 (0.457)
Graduate	1.573 (1.689)	1.537 (1.702)	0.905* (0.479)	0.882* (0.486)
2009		0.303 (0.264)		0.115 (0.260)
Constant	-1.863* (1.061)	-2.082* (1.241)	-2.423*** (0.859)	-2.508** (1.016)
N	860	860	860	860

Standar errors in parenthesis

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Appendix 6: Regressions for Subsample Year 2006

Table 10: OLS and IV for Subsample 2006

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	MCO Carga Fin.	VI Carga Fin.	MCO Acceso al crédito	VI Acceso al crédito
FLI	0.118 (0.186)	1.698 (1.842)	0.252 (0.289)	2.117 (2.044)
Workforce	0.105** (0.0415)	0.0787 (0.0520)	0.0777** (0.0387)	0.0544 (0.0485)
Risk Aversion	0.00823 (0.0366)	0.0222 (0.0545)	-0.0264 (0.0557)	-0.00575 (0.0620)
Formality Dummy	0.133** (0.0664)	0.136 (0.0857)	-0.200 (0.187)	-0.268 (0.197)
Woman	0.0779 (0.136)	0.235 (0.263)	0.106 (0.140)	0.277 (0.239)
Age	0.00610 (0.00372)	0.00927 (0.00748)	0.00775 (0.00672)	0.00641 (0.00840)
Business Age	-0.00634 (0.00419)	-0.00650 (0.00473)	-0.00973 (0.00811)	-0.00515 (0.00867)
High School	0.163** (0.0782)	0.0227 (0.176)	0.341 (0.208)	0.264 (0.287)
Technical College	0.0777 (0.123)	-0.210 (0.320)	0.903*** (0.276)	0.620 (0.477)
Undergraduate	0.244 (0.175)	-0.123 (0.421)	1.274*** (0.248)	0.863 (0.557)
Graduate	2.558 (2.548)	2.516 (2.566)	1.318** (0.557)	1.358** (0.597)
Constant	-0.602* (0.312)	-1.370 (1.126)	-1.927*** (0.448)	-2.674** (1.103)
N	544	533	544	533

Standar errors in parenthesis

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Appendix 7: Instrumental Variables

Following Hansen, we can estimate the following regression model:

$$(5) \quad y_i = x_i' \beta + \varepsilon_i$$

if β is the parameter of interest and

$$(6) \quad E(x_i \varepsilon_i) \neq 0$$

Which would bias the results as:

$$(7) \quad E(\hat{\beta}) = E((x'x)^{-1}x'y) = E((x'x)^{-1}x'(x\beta + \varepsilon)) = \beta + E((x'x)^{-1}x'\varepsilon) \neq \beta$$

To face this problem, the econometrician would need to find an instrument z_i which is orthogonal with the residuals ε_i and that contains information of the variable of interest x_i . Therefore the instrument z_i needs to fulfill the following conditions:

$$(8) \quad E(z_i \varepsilon_i) = 0 \wedge \text{Corr}(z_i, x_i) \neq 0$$

Which are usually called exogeneity and relevance condition.

Using that $E(z_i \varepsilon_i) = 0$ and making the substitution $\varepsilon_i = y_i - x_i' \beta$ we have:

$$(9) \quad E(z_i(y_i - x_i' \beta)) = 0 \Leftrightarrow E(z_i y_i) - E(z_i x_i') \beta = 0$$

Solving for β we find:

$$(10) \quad \beta = (E(z_i x_i'))^{-1} E(z_i y_i)$$

The instrumental variables (IV) estimator for β replaces the population moments by their sample versions. Therefore:

$$(11) \quad \hat{\beta}_{IV} = \left(\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n z_i x_i' \right)^{-1} \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n z_i y_i = (z'x)^{-1} z'y$$

Finally, this if this estimator fulfils the condition of exogeneity, this would be an unbiased estimator for β :

$$(12) \quad E(\hat{\beta}_{IV}) = E((z'x)^{-1}z'y) = E((z'x)^{-1}z'(x\beta + \varepsilon)) = \beta$$

Peaceful Animals: A Look into Black Pacifism and the Pedagogy of Civil Rights in American Public Education

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The following are the key points of the American civil rights movement according to current United States public education curricula. First, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King nobly campaigned for peace and nonviolence. Then Rosa Parks, feeling tired, refused to give up her seat on a bus. Another figure, Malcolm X, was similar to King but he was violent. And then tragically, a random actor shot Dr. King in the cheek. That is where the story usually ends. American racial tensions subsided until the election of Barack Obama. This oversimplification reflects the entirety of the knowledge imparted to many who have experienced the United States public education system.

American history education is, in a word, lacking. United States history curricula downplay the impact felt by marginalized groups in this country, producing alarming results. This paper asserts that the pedagogy of Black history in American middle and high school public education centers around convenient and pointed narratives. Especially with regard to forms of protests during the civil rights movement, these narratives have been intentionally structured in a manner that, by way of purposeful omission and harmful misinterpretation, promote the passivity and pacifism of Black Americans.

Obtaining accurate and comprehensive information about the Black American condition is an endeavor that one must explicitly elect to partake in. Simple reflection by anyone who has been exposed to American public education reveals that the most prominent figures discussed are white. The history of minority groups seldom sees the light within core curricula. This contemporary self-taught requirement for knowledge acquisition directly parallels to American Slavery. As explored in *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Free-*

dom by Heather Andrea Williams, African ¹Americans' quest for education has historically been an uphill battle. Unsurprisingly, society rarely provided enslaved individuals a means to an education. The barriers to literacy and other such skills have historically been high. In 1830, North Carolina passed a statute making the education of slaves—either by freedmen or other slaves—a harshly punishable crime.² The internal logic of the law operated with an understanding of the relationship between denial of education and self-preservation of the system. As Frederick Douglass states in *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave*: “The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers.”³ By affording knowledge and context to the oppressed, the oppressor risks lessening their status as such. Douglass' education directly facilitated his liberation and eventual coalescence into the abolition movement. While the laws may have changed, the mechanisms that work to suppress Black political action remain as a product of Black history education.

To understand this, one must first endeavor to comprehend the pedagogical evolution of the gravest ill inflicted upon Black bodies in America: equating Black people with animals. Intense and categorical dehumanization is a central part of the institution of slavery. In the US Constitution, Article 1, Section 2, Clause 3: the Three-Fifths Compromise, the language of dehumanization of Black people is codified into the most important document of the American polity. Societal justifications and the cognitive dissonance required for the institution of slavery are well discussed in modern academic literature. Broadly speaking, however, the afterlives and scope of the brutality of slavery continue to be poorly understood. In his work *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* as told to Alex Haley, Malcolm X balked at the historical knowledge that the average Black American possessed, saying “it's unbelievable how many black men and women have let the white man fool them into holding an almost romantic idea of what slave days were like.”⁴ Prior to the Civil Rights Movement, slavery was often suggested to be a mutually beneficial situation. In return for food and shelter, slaves provided free labor to their masters. This specific framing is fortunately less common than in previous eras. Nevertheless, it would be incorrect to assume that this erroneous pedagogy

1 Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

2 Act Passed by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina at the Session of 1830—1831.

3 Frederick Douglass, Gregory Stephens, and Peter J. Gomes, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave*, 35.

4 Malcolm X and Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, New York: Ballantine, 1992, 217.

is a relic of the past.

In 2015, the *New York Times* revealed that a textbook by major publishing company McGraw-Hill Education printed the phrase “the Atlantic Slave Trade... brought millions of workers from Africa to the southern United States to work on agricultural plantations.”⁵ This example of nomenclature choice presents an active rewriting of history. The word “workers” implies a compensation that was non-existent in American slavery. Captured Africans and American Blacks were used as currency; they did not receive it. These specific and at times subtle framings contribute to the understating of American slavery. Every individual choice of diction carries moral and political content. It is in the exact verbiage of American historical documents that laid the groundwork for the evolving and sustained systems of Black oppression. If in contemporary times the basic foundations of Black people being in America are understood as a consensual employment, then the opportunity for discussion of the continued maltreatment of Black people has no foothold.

After some controversy, McGraw-Hill Education acknowledged the error. However, the “misprinted” issues will likely circulate for years to come.⁶ This instance, which some would consider an outlier, does not deviate significantly from the actual standards. Improvement from past pedagogies is undeniable, however, the present approach to education does not adequately capture the brutalities and atrocities of enslavement. The current educational system cannot afford proper context for the current state of being for the Black individual, without recognizing the inhuman cruelty that has been historically inflicted upon the Black community in America. Simultaneously, members of unafflicted groups have less of a basis from which they can understand contentions asserting the continued existence of institutional racism.

Racism is deeply woven into many facets of society, making it difficult to pinpoint parties solely responsible for the historical miseducation of American youth. However, when it comes to a substantial portion of the information diffused throughout the nation, few governing bodies have more of a direct impact than the Texas Board of Education. Former social studies textbook editor Dan Quinn states: “What happens in Texas doesn’t stay in Texas when it comes to textbooks.”⁷ The Texas market for textbooks is unequivocally large. Therefore, the guidelines set in place by this body have profound implications on the textbooks received by

5 Manny Fernandez and Christine Hauser, “Texas Mother Teaches Textbook Company a Lesson on Accuracy,” *The New York Times*, 2015, Web. 13 Sept. 2016.

6 Meloncyee McAfee, “McGraw-Hill to Rewrite Textbook after Mom’s Complaint,” *CNN*. Cable News Network, n.d. Web. 05 Dec. 2016.

7 Gail Collins, “How Texas Inflicts Bad Textbooks on Us,” *The New York Review of Books*. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 Dec. 2016.

much of the nation.

This reality is extremely troublesome when we look at both statements made by board officials and some of the recent sets of the *Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills* (TEKS), which outlines the curriculum required for Texas public schools. After the board adopted the then-new standards in 2010, board member Pat Hardy was quoted saying “there would be those who would say the reason for the Civil War was over slavery. No. It was over states’ rights.”⁸ While this statement is from 2010, its impact and that of other comments like it are still apparent and intensely relevant. A 2018 survey of one thousand high school seniors by the Southern Poverty Law Center found that only eight percent of students can correctly identify slavery as the central cause of the civil war.⁹ Attempts to relegate slavery to an insignificant role takes away agency from Black individuals who sought their liberation through their tireless strife against slavery.

Correcting pedagogy is a particularly challenging endeavor. The agents of that change—educators and guideline setters—are often the products of miseducation themselves. The Southern Poverty Law Center notes that “teachers struggle to do justice to the nation’s legacy of racial injustice. They are poorly served by state standards and frameworks, popular textbooks and even their own academic preparation.”¹⁰ The Texas State Board of Education did recently agree to acknowledge the centrality of slavery in the Civil War. While credit is due, this is merely a starting line and does not rectify the other deficiencies in standards or the in-classroom experience of teaching with racial ineptitude.

The official *TEKS* has only included Jim Crow Laws and the Ku Klux Klan as teaching requirements as of the November 2018 revisions.¹¹ This former exclusion again has contributed to the dismissal of suffering crucial to contextualization. However, the document has long since mentioned the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King.¹² King’s remarkable contributions towards assisting the Black condition are undeniable and merit inclusion into educational standards. However, the way the American education system broaches King further promotes the pacification of the Black race.

The current collective consciousness greatly downplays the radicalism of King and fellow Civil Rights leader Rosa Parks. Peter Dreier, a professor of politics

8 Emma Brown, “Texas officials: Schools should teach that slavery was ‘side issue’ to Civil War,” *The Washington Post*. Web. 5 December 2016.

9 Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), “Teaching Hard History American Slavery,” Web. 17 Nov. 2018, 19.

10 Southern Poverty Law Center, “Teaching Hard History American Slavery,” 12.

11 Lauren McGaughy, “Texas History Curriculum: Hillary Clinton and Alamo ‘Heroes’ Are in. Oprah’s Out.” *Dallas News*, 16 Nov. 2018, www.dallasnews.com/news/education/2018/11/13/texas-education-board-debate-eliminating-helen-keller-hillary-clinton-others-history-curriculum, 11.

12 Texas Education Agency (TEA), “Texas Education Agency - Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. Chapter 113. Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies,” Web. 4 Dec. 2016, 7.

and director of the Urban & Environmental Policy department at Occidental College, discusses how “in the popular legend, Parks is portrayed as a tired old seamstress...who, on the spur of the moment...decided to resist the city’s segregation law by refusing to move to the back of the bus on December 1, 1955.”¹³ However, Dreier continues to explain that the reality of the situation was that the move came as a result of a massive coordinated effort on the part of veteran activists. This account is corroborated by (among other sources) Taylor Branch’s *Parting the Waters*, Stewart Burns’ *Daybreak of Freedom: The Montgomery Bus Boycott*, and Rosa Parks’ autobiography, *My Story*.¹⁴ The removal from America’s shared memory of the careful and calculated effort to dismantle Jim Crow sells short the scale of the effort required to uproot institutional boundaries. He continues, “Contemporary struggles for justice...may seem modest by comparison to the movements of the 1960s that began in Montgomery in 1955.”¹⁵ The false yet ubiquitous narrative of the *she was tired, so she sat* cause and effect ignores the radical line of thinking that openly and actively defies American racism. The simplification of Parks’ actions in education resources does not accurately depict the radical schools of thought that she exemplified.

The pacified version of King, provided to the average American student, debases his radical ideas and uses them to combat current political and social movements. King has often been haphazardly invoked in attempts to pacify or condemn post-police brutality rioters or NFL protesters. We live in a time where it is antiquated to believe that online comments hold no relevance in the grander discourse. The term internet “trolls” is currently included in official reports created by top United States Federal Agencies.¹⁶ Posts on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter or other such sites are legitimate reflections of the society in which they originated. As such, the vitriol and ignorance found in online commentary are troubling indications of mass miseducation. Politicians and individuals use specifically-curated King quotes to fit whatever narrative is convenient. This pacified version of King is then in turn used to pacify Black people. These protest-dissenting claims bear no mind to the wider breadth of the King library of thought—which includes the September 27th, 1966 CBS interview, in which King stated: “I think that we’ve got to see that a riot is the language of the unheard.”¹⁷ Dr. King’s vocabulary was not limited to the four word phrase “I have a dream.” While he may not have endorsed violence in the context of social movements, it is apparent that King’s thoughts on

13 Peter Dreier, “Rosa Parks: Angry, Not Tired,” *Dissent* 53.1 (2006): 88.

14 Dreier, “Rosa Parks: Angry, Not Tired,” 88.

15 Dreier, “Rosa Parks: Angry, Not Tired,” 92.

16 United States NSA, CIA, FBI, ICA, Background to “Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections”: The Analytic Process and Cyber Incident Attribution. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Web. 20 Feb. 2017.

17 Lily Rothman, “What Martin Luther King Jr Really Thought About Riots,” *Time*. Time, n.d. Web. 05 Dec. 2016, 2.

riots would not align with those who often champion his name.

In modern America, King is near universally understood to be a figure worthy of praise. It is so often forgotten that King was fiercely unpopular with the majority of society for much of his life. In 1966, the Gallup measure of King polled his admiration levels at 32% positive and 63% negative.¹⁸ Yet modern mythos takes this for granted. The education system inserts into popular consciousness a particular mold of how an oppressed Black person seeking change should act. That mold is a very corrupted memory of Dr. King.

To call King strictly nonviolent is itself misleading. While King's rhetoric may have been very deliberate, one can not divorce racism from violence. King and his followers employed a disciplined sacrifice of the Black body. The violence was there. It simply was not directed towards white bodies or white property. We are presented with King because he is comparatively easy to digest. His general message of nonviolence is malleable. Little to no emphasis is regarded to the failures, shortcomings, and bitter reality of the civil rights movement as a means for achieving social change. Despite King's desire to expose the grave violence of racism, the presented, pared down version of him does not force us as a collective to deeply explore the gravity of the injustices placed against Black people. A firehose directed at protestors, while shocking and horrific, still rests easier on people's minds than the state-sponsored murder of Black Panther Captains.

Further, the High School *TEKS* does briefly mention the Black Panther Party for the sake of contrasting their beliefs with those of MLK.¹⁹ The author of this paper, themself a product of Texas high school public education, can attest that in practice this comparison amounts to a further dismissal of the validity of their actions—while touting King's "peaceful" approach. Neither the middle school nor high school *TEKS* makes reference to King's influential counterpart, Malcolm X. Again anecdotally, mentions of Malcolm X consists of characterizing him as violent and little else.

In the civil rights section of the *San Jacinto Museum's Curriculum Guide for Teaching Texas History*, which aligns with *TEKS*, Non-Violent Protest is the first critical vocabulary point. Shortly thereafter, the curriculum suggests that "students should have a basic knowledge of the rights of United States' citizens to petition the government for a solution to grievances."²⁰ Again, while there is validity in

18 Gallup, Inc, "Martin Luther King Jr.: Revered More After Death Than Before," Gallup.com, 16 Jan. 2006, news.gallup.com/poll/20920/martin-luther-king-jr-revered-More-after-death-than-before.aspx.

19 Texas Education Agency "Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. Chapter 113. Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies," 9.

20 Yvonne Pittman, Elizabeth Appleby, and Lisa Stuthers, "Curriculum Guide for Teaching Texas History,"

discussion around this form of protest, the same section draws the parallel to the “Declaration of Independence as a list of complaints by the colonists against King George in England.”²¹ It is ironic that a proudly boasted and bloody revolution was subsequent to that list of complaints, while Black Power groups, which almost exclusively subscribed to revolutionary mentalities, receive no mention in the Guide. In America, “violence” is an acceptable means to achieve an end as long as those who carry it out are not of a dark complexion.

The themes of what has been selectively chosen to receive praise or condemnation in our teachings of history, while not surprising, have dire implications. In America, passivity and pacifism are standards that are disproportionately held to Black and Brown bodies. Malcolm X articulated this point to an LA crowd in 1962:

The white man is tricking you. He’s trapping you. He doesn’t call it violence when he lands troops in South Vietnam. He doesn’t call it violence when he lands troops in Berlin. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, he didn’t say get nonviolent. He said, “Praise the Lord but pass the ammunition.”²²

The double standard outlined by X places boundaries on current political efforts lest they risk misaligning with the beliefs of the deified King.

The complexities of Malcolm X’s ever-evolving racial beliefs cannot be justly covered within the scope of this paper. But the classification of his actions and beliefs as merely violent is wildly inaccurate and harmful. X’s more direct and introspective approach presents a perspective that we can not afford to remove from education standards. Major influential names of the Black Power movement similarly receive no mention. For example, the status quo completely ignores the perspectives of Fred Hampton, the young Panther captain who was assassinated by the FBI, and Robert F. Williams, author of the book *Negroes with Guns*. This erasure limits both Americans’ understanding of the context in which these ideologies evolved and their understanding of the options available to combat systemic oppression. The omission of these figures is indicative of a larger narrative that operates under the impression that Blacks are innately dangerous creatures, and therefore should not be encouraged to take a bold and active role in liberation, lest they risk harming white Americans. America frowns upon the idea that Blacks should either want or need to defend themselves. The absence of these individuals

San Jacinto Museum of History One Monument Circle, Jan 8, 2013, 262.

21 Pittman, Appleby, and Stuthers, “Curriculum Guide for Teaching Texas History,” 262.

22 Malcolm X, “The White Man is Tricking You!” Nation of Islam, Los Angeles 22 May, 1962.

(X included) from not only *TEKS* but the *AP US History Guideline* and Common Core standards is indicative of the devaluation of an entire school of thought.²³

There are subjective flaws in the ideologies of both King and X. However, by only providing a simplified and one-sided narrative of the pursuit for Black Liberation, the historical curriculum discourages radical approaches of combating deeply rooted problems. Education's intrinsic relationship with a successful society is best defined by iconic author James Baldwin in 1963:

Man is a social animal. He cannot exist without a society...Now the crucial paradox which confronts us here is that the whole process of education occurs within a social framework and is designed to perpetuate the aims of society. Thus, for example, the boys and girls who were born during the era of the Third Reich, when educated to the purposes of the Third Reich, became barbarians. The paradox of education is precisely this—that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated. The purpose of education, finally, is to create in a person the ability to look at the world for himself. . . . But no society is really anxious to have that kind of person around. What societies really, ideally, want is a citizenry which will simply obey the rules of society. If a society succeeds in this, that society is about to perish.²⁴

By leaving out parts of the story, the United States stifles the consistent efforts of radicals and revolutionaries to reveal evidence of how the country has undermined the civil rights of Black Americans in the past and present. Our education system helps to perpetuate a narrative of both Black inhumanity and Black pacifism. In order to give Black youth the tools to contextualize and confront the contemporary manifestations of racism that our education system neglects to address, US public education must deliberately address the duality of the civil rights movement: a struggle for Black Liberation that has been both peaceful and violent.

23 AP® United States History Including the Curriculum Framework” and “Common Core Standard

24 James Baldwin, “The Negro Child - His self Image,” 16 October 1963, Lecture.

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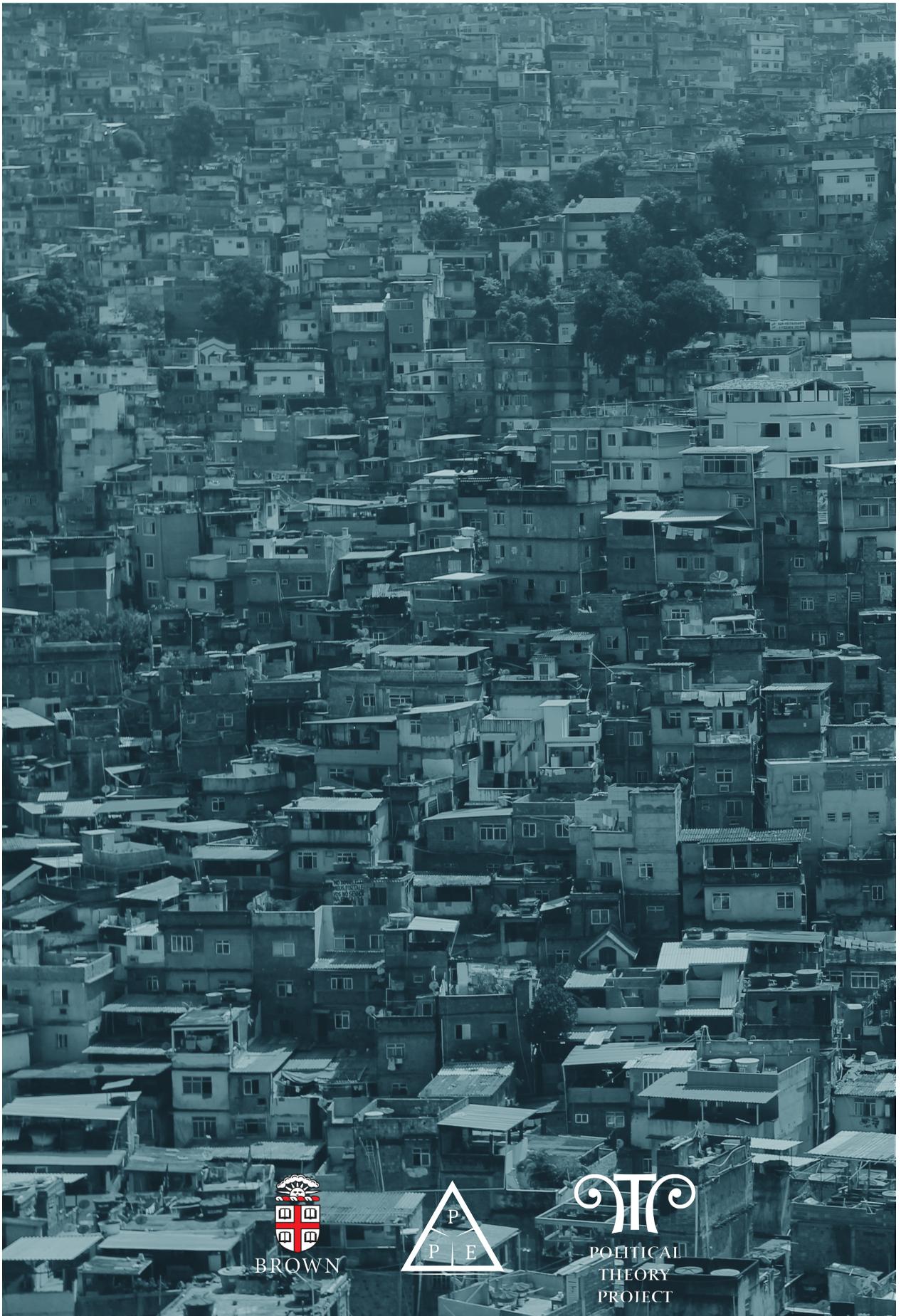
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