

The UConn Undergraduate Political Review

Edition X: A Global Pandemic

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Contents

Editor's Note

Letter from the Editor

Kyle Adams (p. 4)

Editorial Board Submissions

A Pandemic Election: Lessons From 1918

Kyle Adams (pp. 5-8)

A New Normal: COVID-19's Impact on American Culture

Marianna Kalander (pp. 9-11)

Evaluating the United States' Response to COVID-19

Danielle Macuil (pp. 12-14)

U.S. Strategy in Asia and U.S.-China Competition after COVID-19

Shankara Narayanan (pp. 15-18)

Journalistic Integrity in the Age of Coronavirus

Henry Seyue (pp. 19-24)

Staff Writer Submissions

The Dark Side of the Loom: Human Rights Abuses in Bangladesh's Textile Industry

Srishti Banerjee (pp. 25-29)

The Road to Urban Decay: Dwight D. Eisenhower's Interstate

Jack Bergantino (pp. 30-33)

A Marxist Critique of the United Nations

Grace Brangwynne (pp. 34-37)

An Examination of Income Inequality and its Misconceptions

Kevin Catapano (pp. 38-41)

Felon Disenfranchisement in the United States

Elannah Devin (pp. 42-44)

Incarceration and Society: When Are You No Longer Human?

Kylee Dostie (pp. 45-47)

An Examination of the Efficiency Gap in Connecticut State Assembly Elections Since 1966

Kyle Fishbein (pp. 48-52)

The Politics of Urban Development in Stamford from 1960-2020

Michael Hernández (pp. 53-56)

The Poor at War: Artificial Caste Division Perpetrated by Higher Powers in the U.S.

Musa Hussain (pp. 57-61)

Genetic Testing and Privacy Laws Across Nations

Addison Kimber (pp. 62-65)

An Act of Political Courage

Isabella Langlois (pp. 66-69)

The Un-United Kingdom

Emily Longmire (pp. 70-72)

The Trump Presidency: We Were Never Great

Margaret McGuire (pp. 73-76)

Our Politicians' Depletion of Integrity: How Low is Too Low?

Abby McVerry (pp. 77-79)

What Makes a Responsible Party? Polarization and Party Loyalty in the 2016 Election

Chineze Osakwe (pp. 80-82)

The Historic Nature of the Buttigieg Campaign

Shawn Parent (pp. 83-84)

The Impact of a High-Quality Universal Pre-K Program on the U.S.

Shaun Simoneau (pp. 85-88)

The 2020 Peace Plan: The Question of Jerusalem

Isabel Stasko (pp. 89-92)

May 1, 2020

Dear Readers:

Our tenth edition of the University of Connecticut's Undergraduate Political Review Journal comes at a tumultuous time for our university, the United States, and the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has upended almost every aspect of our daily lives. It has shut down our school, isolated us from family and friends, and stolen graduation celebrations from our seniors. It has had even larger societal effects cruelly targeting our most vulnerable communities, leaving many struggling without jobs, and taking the lives of thousands of people across the globe.

The magnitude of the COVID-19 crisis left our editorial board with an easy decision in choosing our theme for this semester. We have chosen to write articles focused on the broader political and societal implications of COVID-19. While we focus on broader implications of the pandemic, we also recognize that it continues to have a very current human impact at the time of our publication. The fight against this deadly virus is not over. We are deeply saddened by the continued loss of life resulting from COVID-19, and we are grateful for healthcare workers, first responders, and others who are risking their lives on the frontlines.

Beyond the COVID-19 crisis, we also include submissions from dozens of staff writers on a wide range of domestic and international political issues. All of these articles were written by undergraduate students, and they have undergone a rigorous peer-review drafting process overseen by our student-run editorial board. We feature articles on topics ranging from economic mobility in the United States to human rights abuses in the textile industry of Bangladesh.

I am very proud of the edition that we have managed to produce. Our ability to meet in-person as an editorial board was limited. Writers had to balance draft deadlines with an unprecedented mid-semester shift to online classes. The group of editors and writers this semester worked extraordinarily hard to adapt to changing circumstances, and I would like to thank each of them for their hard work and dedication. I would also like to thank our advisor Dr. Oksan Bayulgen. After the shift to online classes, she reached out to make sure that we had everything that we needed to reach publication. The support of Dr. Bayulgen and the UConn Political Science Department has been critical to the continued success of the journal.

Lastly, our readers should know that we do accept new writers each semester, and we always encourage talented students to apply. Any University of Connecticut student may apply by emailing a resume and writing sample to uconnpoliticalreview@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyle Adams". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Kyle Adams
Editor-in-Chief

A Pandemic Election: Lessons From 1918

By Kyle Adams

The COVID-19 pandemic has already had a significant impact on American elections. Sixteen states chose to push back their presidential primaries or shift voting entirely to mail-in ballots.¹ Others held controversial in-person elections despite public health concerns. Arizona, Florida, and Illinois continued with presidential primaries on March 17th, and Wisconsin held an in-person presidential primary and general elections for several local offices on April 7th despite the objections of Governor Tony Evers.² The delay of presidential primaries is not a terribly pressing issue considering that both major parties have already chosen presumptive nominees. However, there is growing concern that COVID-19 will continue to last through the winter, derailing the presidential campaign and upending the November elections. White House Coronavirus Task Force Coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx expressed that social distancing guidelines will likely remain in effect during the summer, and Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Dr. Robert Redfield argued that the fall and winter may bring an even tougher wave of COVID-19 cases.^{3,4} The Constitution prevents the president from cancelling or delaying November elections (even during a national crisis), but the virus still will likely alter the way candidates campaign and the number of people that turnout to vote. This paper uses the midterm elections held during the 1918 flu pandemic to better understand what the 2020 elections may look like.

It is important to first provide brief background on the 1918 elections. These elections occurred during the Spanish flu pandemic during the final days of World War I. They were midterm elections, so the president did not appear on the ballot. However, the stakes were nonetheless high as President Woodrow Wilson and the Democratic Party were attempting to maintain narrow control over Congress.⁵ The Spanish flu had moved quickly across the world, and the pandemic would eventually become the deadliest disease outbreak in human history infecting about one third of the world's population.⁶ A relatively mild wave hit the United States during the spring of 1918, but a fall wave proved to be much more severe killing hundreds of thousands of Americans leading up to Election Day.⁷ The 1918 Spanish flu and COVID-19 are by no means identical. They are different types of viruses, and global communication and

¹ Corasanti, Nick and Stephanie Saul. "15 States Have Postponed Primaries During the Pandemic. One has Canceled." New York Times. April 27, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/article/2020-campaign-primary-calendar-coronavirus.html>.

² Rakich, Nathaniel. "What the Heck Is Going on With Wisconsin's Primary." FiveThirtyEight. April 6, 2020. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/election-preview-yes-wisconsin-is-still-holding-its-primary-on-tuesday/>.

³ Foster, Robin and E.J. Mundell. "Birx Says Social Distancing to Last Through Summer as States Start to Ease Restrictions." US News. April 27, 2020. <https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2020-04-27/birx-says-social-distancing-to-last-through-summer-as-states-start-to-ease-restrictions>.

⁴ Halaschak, Zachary. "CDC Chief: Coronavirus Outbreak in Winter Could Be 'Even More Difficult' Than Current Outbreak." Washington Examiner. April 21, 2020. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/cdc-chief-coronavirus-wave-in-winter-could-be-even-more-difficult-than-current-outbreak>.

⁵ Searcey, Diane. "The Lessons of the Elections of 1918." New York Times. March 21, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/21/us/politics/1918-flu-pandemic-elections.html>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Zagorski, Ed. "Similarities Between Spanish Flu and COVID-19 Exist." Watertown Daily Times. March 31, 2020. https://www.wdtimes.com/news/editors_pick/article_f09cf977-ac40-5754-b439-8a31c475193c.html.

technology are much more advanced in 2020 than in 1918.⁸ However, both are enormous global public health crises that prompted many American cities to implement social distancing measures, close schools, and ban public gatherings.⁹ They are likely to also have similar effects on the logistics of American elections.

One major lesson of the 1918 elections is that the structure of 2020 campaigns will likely look a lot different than the 2016 campaigns. In 1918, many cities and states issued complete bans on public campaign events. This was especially true in the western part of the country where flu was particularly bad around election time. Some congressional campaigns tried to get around these bans by having their candidate speak at outdoor church services, but state health officials quickly cracked down this practice.¹⁰ Most candidates were forced to run low-visibility campaigns relying entirely on newspaper advertising and the direct mail of campaign literature to voters.¹¹ The *Wisconsin State Journal* remarked in an October 27, 1918 article that “politics in Wisconsin has been indefinitely adjourned by the epidemic of influenza.”¹²

Today, candidates will have an easier time continuing to reach voters than in 1918 given their ability to operate widely-accessible campaign websites, communicate through social media accounts, and appear on widely-viewed television programs. However, social distancing restrictions and bans on public gatherings have similarly forced campaigns to suspend critical operations including in-person rallies, door-to-door canvassing efforts, and fundraising events. Campaigns have already begun to develop plans to adapt to these restrictions. The Trump campaign has started testing mass-appeal virtual livestream events on social media featuring campaign surrogates like Lara Trump as a potential alternative to rallies.¹³ Big-arena campaign events were a critical part of the president’s ability to mobilize his base in 2016, so it would not be surprising to see Trump himself appear in a livestream rally-like event before the end of the election cycle. Both the Trump and Biden campaigns have focused on using text messages to overcome the inability to canvass neighborhoods. CEO of Republican texting platform RumbleUp Thomas Peters asserted that “texting is the new handshake,” and Trump’s campaign manager Brad Parscale stated that the campaign would send one billion text messages to voters before November.¹⁴ Biden’s campaign expressed commitment to running a robust digital operation and encouraged voters to sign up for text updates. Biden’s campaign has also engaged in several virtual fundraisers since the outbreak of the pandemic to attempt to close the funding gap between him and the president, but Biden’s campaign has cited the lack of in-person events

⁸ Terry, Mark. “Compare: 1918 Spanish Influenza Pandemic Versus COVID-19.” BioSpace. April 2, 2020. <https://www.biospace.com/article/compare-1918-spanish-influenza-pandemic-versus-covid-19/>.

⁹ Badger, Emily and Quoc Trung Bui. “Cities That Went All-In on Social Distancing in 1918 Emerged Stronger for It.” New York Times. April 3, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/04/03/upshot/coronavirus-cities-social-distancing-better-employment.html>.

¹⁰ Erickson, Bo. “Voting During a Pandemic? Here’s What Happened in 1918.” CBS News. April 7, 2020. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/spanish-flu-pandemic-1918-voting/>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Keith, Tamara. “His Signature Rallies Are Off, So Here’s How Trump’s Campaign Has Moved Online.” NPR. April 2, 2020. <https://www.npr.org/2020/04/02/825467802/with-rallies-off-the-table-trumps-reelection-moves-to-virtual-campaigning>.

¹⁴ Contorno, Steve. “‘Texting is the New Handshake’ for Biden, Trump, and Other Campaigns During the Pandemic.” Tampa Bay Times. April 14, 2020. <https://www.tampabay.com/news/health/2020/04/14/texting-is-the-new-handshake-for-biden-trump-and-other-campaigns-during-the-pandemic/>.

as a major hurdle to his fundraising efforts.¹⁵ Democratic consultant Tom Lim suggested that “on the fundraising side, we are going to take some massive hits as a party,” and he worried that political fundraising during a public health crisis would run the risk of appearing tone-deaf.¹⁶

A second major lesson of the 1918 elections is that there is real risk that voter turnout will be significantly lower in 2020 than 2016. The 1918 elections saw only 40% of the voting-eligible population cast ballots compared to 50-52% in the previous two midterm elections.¹⁷ This is despite extraordinary efforts by newspapers and activist groups to get-out-the-vote. Newspapers ran headlines suggesting that Americans were disloyal to the war effort should they stay home, and activist groups motivated people to vote citing then-controversial ballot measures regarding prohibition and women’s suffrage.¹⁸ It is tough to determine the exact negative effect that the Spanish flu had on turnout in 1918 because World War I also served to decrease turnout. Two million men were serving overseas effectively disenfranchised with no real way to vote.¹⁹ However, most scholars still agree that the Spanish flu definitively suppressed turnout, especially in western states. The *Los Angeles Times* estimated in a 1918 article that concerns about the flu kept as many as 40,000 people from voting in San Francisco alone.²⁰ The *San Francisco Chronicle* published Election Day articles telling of quiet voting places, polling precincts unable to open because of a lack of poll workers, and an election that was “the first masked ballot ever known in the history of America.”²¹ The *El Paso Herald* even more bluntly noted that New Mexicans were simply “too afraid of the flu to vote.”²²

Depressed turnout is a very real possibility in the 2020 elections as well. A lot will depend on the state of public health in November, but many Americans, especially the elderly, may feel voting in-person is not worth potential health risks. Wisconsin’s recent presidential primary and general elections provide mixed evidence of this as turnout was lower than 2016 but higher than 2012.²³ The United States is better positioned in 2020 than in 1918 to ensure turnout remains high for two reasons. First, heightened political polarization and a presidential election on the ballot will serve as major factors motivating voters. Second, the United States has greatly expanded alternatives to in-person voting since 1918 with some states introducing no-fault absentee ballots and even entirely vote-by-mail elections. In 2018, almost 40% of voters across the country voted absentee, early, or by mail.²⁴ Still, even as some states have available alternatives to in-person voting, many states do not. Efforts in Congress to mandate that all states

¹⁵ Slodysko, Brian. “Coronavirus Makes it Harder for Campaigns to Ask for Money.” Fox11 News. March 29, 2020. <https://fox11online.com/news/coronavirus/coronavirus-makes-it-harder-for-campaigns-to-ask-for-money-03-29-2020>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Skelley, Geoffrey. “This Isn’t the First Time America Has Weathered a Crisis in an Election Year.” FiveThirtyEight. March 23, 2020. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/this-isnt-the-first-time-america-has-weathered-a-crisis-in-an-election-year/>.

¹⁸ Erickson, Bo. “Voting During a Pandemic? Here’s What Happened in 1918.”

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Skelley, Geoffrey. “This Isn’t the First Time America Has Weathered a Crisis in an Election Year.”

²¹ Erickson, Bo. “Voting During a Pandemic? Here’s What Happened in 1918.”

²² Ibid.

²³ Rakich, Nathaniel. “What Went Down in the Wisconsin Primary.” FiveThirtyEight. April 13, 2020. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/what-went-down-in-the-wisconsin-primary/>.

²⁴ “What Did Congress Do During the 1918 Flu Pandemic?” GovTrack Insider. April 2, 2020. <https://govtrackinsider.com/what-did-congress-do-during-the-1918-flu-pandemic-c0bd96ad2287>.

offer voting by mail for the 2020 election have stalled, and President Trump has pushed back against efforts to bailout the post office arguably in an attempt to make it more difficult for people to vote by mail.²⁵ Additionally, even if states were to expand voting by mail, there is no guarantee that all voters would take advantage. In the 2012 presidential election, New Jersey allowed voters affected by Hurricane Sandy to email or fax absentee ballots, but turnout was still down in the counties most affected by the storm surge.²⁶ While available alternatives to in-person voting and a contentious presidential election should help lessen a COVID-19 induced drop in turnout, it still seems very possible that turnout will decrease relative to the 2016 election.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has already upended the 2020 presidential primaries, and it is beginning to impact the general election as well. Much like during the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic, candidates will likely have little opportunity to hold large in-person campaign events, and some voters may decide to stay home depending on the state of the pandemic in November. Campaigns and government officials have already taken action to adapt to social distancing restrictions and encourage voter turnout. Campaigns have started using livestreams, direct texting, and virtual fundraisers to continue to connect with voters and raise money, and some in the government have proposed legislation to expand alternatives to in-person voting. COVID-19 has clearly forced real changes to the 2020 election campaign, and it has started to create another “pandemic election”—this one a bit more technologically advanced than the last.

²⁵ Panetta, Grace. “No, Trump Can’t Cancel or Postpone the November General Election Over Coronavirus.” Business Insider. April 24, 2020. <https://www.businessinsider.com/trump-cant-cancel-or-postpone-the-november-election-over-coronavirus-2020-3>.

²⁶ Skelley, Geoffrey. “This Isn’t the First Time America Has Weathered a Crisis in an Election Year.”

A New Normal: COVID-19's Impact on American Culture

By: Marianna Kalander

With the quick spread of COVID-19, Americans all over the country had to act quickly to change and adapt to new ways of life. Normalcy became too dangerous, and companies, businesses, and schools all had to implement new ways to stay safe while still allowing people to do what is required of them. These short-term adjustments, however, will have lasting impacts beyond the end of the pandemic, whenever that may be. American culture will be permanently changed. In the future, companies and schools will begin to utilize remote working and learning more. Social events with large crowds will be more regulated and possibly disappear. Our eventual attempt to return to normalcy will be safer, but not the same.

Barriers and hesitation towards using telecommunication in the workforce have been broken by the emergence of COVID-19. In the past, companies were hesitant about allowing workers to work from home rather than the office. Many feared that productivity and efficiency would decrease, while others felt that face-to-face contact was essential for the community feel of work. For example, the company WeWork argued, “while working from home or ‘third places’ serves convenience, these experiences lacked that foundational human need for a sense of community.”²⁷ However, out of health and safety necessities, companies had to start implementing at home work policies. For some companies, this was their first time mandating such policies, while for others this was an experiment testing whether remote-work can actually work. However, whether companies are struggling or succeeding with the transition, one can argue that, “once effective work-from-home policies are established, they are likely to stick.”²⁸ Thus, as companies continue to refine their remote working policies now, the policies will eventually become a normal part of the workforce in the future. Once set, consistent policies are created, workers can call out of the office for a variety of reasons and still be able to complete tasks at home. For example, businesses will be able to run normally even if there is a snow storm preventing workers from coming into the office. In addition, there is the possibility that companies could expand. A company having the ability to work from home can allow multiple job positions to be made that are strictly remote working without being restricted by the size of the office building. Thus, in all, work at home policies will benefit companies, and these policies may be retained. Simply having the option of using these policies will allow companies to stay productive, regardless of the situation.

The COVID-19 pandemic also introduced the implementation of remote learning for colleges, primary, and secondary schools. Leading up to now, online learning was only beginning to show its prevalence in the educational system as “there was wide variation in the degree to which online education was central to an institution's strategic planning.”²⁹ Some schools had more forms of online learning than others. However, the push to remote learning will recreate the idea of traditional education for all schools. For one, remote learning policies

²⁷ Semuels, Alana. “Coronavirus Shows It's Hard to Make Remote Work Really Work.” Time Magazine. March 13, 2020. www.time.com/5801882/coronavirus-spatial-remote-work/.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Kim, Joshua. “Teaching and Learning After COVID-19.” Inside Higher Ed. April 1, 2020. www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/blogs/learning-innovation/teaching-and-learning-after-covid-19.

can serve as an innovation, rather than a replacement, to in-class learning. For example, in the U.S., eventually “traditional in-person classroom learning will be complemented with new learning modalities—from live broadcasts to ‘educational influencers’ to virtual reality experiences.”³⁰ Traditional learning will be enhanced with new utilizations of technology that are being practiced with current remote learning, such as teachers using live video chats with other teachers during classes. Similar to remote working, remote learning has also introduced the possibility of students receiving their class time and work even during times that schools have to close, such as snow days. Although this will require the gap in technology access to shrink, the idea of using remote learning as an alternative during snow days and school closings is not out of the question in life after COVID-19. There are some schools that have already implemented remote learning during snow days, such as a school district in Fairfield, Indiana. Specifically, this school district “has been utilizing the tool for the past three years as a way to help students stay current with their studies during events, such as snow days, when students aren’t able to make it to school.”³¹ Thus, students will be able to receive a consistent education that is not broken up by long lengths of closings. From these examples one can see that the idea of remote learning taking over in-person learning will not come to fruition in the future. The value of face to face interaction will be safeguarded, while the quality of education that students will receive will only be enhanced by the introduction of online, electronic technologies.

Events involving mass gatherings of people were also hit by restrictive policies to fight against COVID-19. America’s culture of social interaction consists of mass gatherings at places ranging from sporting events to concerts to amusement parks. These events see thousands upon thousands of attendees at a time. However, with the ban on gatherings of more than a few people being enforced to enact social distancing and prevent the spread of the virus also came the subsequent cancelling of nearly all major social gatherings within the last two months. Even religious gatherings had to be limited, forcing routine church-goers to have to watch television services from their homes. However, this trend of social distancing will continue even after COVID-19 peaks. At least for some time, parks and events will have new guidelines for attendees. For example, in the future, if and when amusement parks begin to reopen, it is a common idea that “rides may reopen but with reduced capacity on ride vehicles.”³² For example, they may only use seating in every other row. It is hard to say how long guidelines like these will stay in place, but they will be implemented for some time. Once states start to reopen and try to reach “normal” again, it is unlikely that mass gatherings of a lot of people will be allowed at all until more treatment and prevention methods for COVID-19 are discovered. Many experts “recommend that until a vaccine or an effective treatment is produced, social gatherings should be limited to 50 people or fewer.”³³ With the exact time of creation and administration of a vaccine still up in the air, forms of social distancing will stay for months to come. It is highly

³⁰Tam, Gloria and Diana El-Azar. “3 Ways the Coronavirus Pandemic Could Reshape Education.” World Economic Forum. March 13, 2020. www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/3-ways-coronavirus-is-reshaping-education-and-what-changes-might-be-here-to-stay/.

³¹Kline, John. “E-Learning Becomes New Standard as Schools Close Due to COVID-19.” Governing. March 21, 2020. www.governing.com/community/E-Learning-Becomes-New-Standard-as-Schools-Close-Due-to-COVID-19.html.

³²Hart, Lance. “Impact of Coronavirus on Theme Parks: What to Expect.” Bloolooop. March 24, 2020. www.bloolooop.com/impact-of-coronavirus-on-theme-parks/.

³³Yong, Ed. “Our Pandemic Summer.” The Atlantic. April 15, 2020. www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2020/04/pandemic-summer-coronavirus-reopening-back-normal/609940/.

unlikely that baseball stadiums and outdoor concert venues will be flooded with fans this summer, and shopping facilities will likely limit the number of people going inside, to name a few examples. As time goes on, our social interactions will remain at a distance, and it is hard to tell when, and if, that will change.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced Americans to adjust to new ways of life like never before. As safety policies are continuing to be created and enforced day by day, many adjustments that Americans have made in response to these policies will continue in the future. The United States will see the continuation of aspects of online working and learning as well as continued social distancing at large events. Today's policies will create a future in which America's culture will be permanently changed and a new normal will emerge.

Evaluating the United States' Response to COVID-19

By Danielle Macuil

The United States' response to the COVID-19 global pandemic has faced criticism from both major political parties and the international community. Currently, while millions of Americans are following shelter-in-place orders, the government is in the midst of attempting to control the disease that has killed over 180,000 people worldwide. There have been almost 2.5 million reported COVID-19 cases around the world, with the U.S. having the highest number of infections of any country.³⁴ This essay seeks to compare the United States' response to the pandemic with that of Italy, South Korea, and New Zealand.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) announced the first American COVID-19 death on February 29, 2020 in Washington State.³⁵ The first confirmed case in the U.S. was long before that, on January 21st in Seattle, Washington. Similarly, South Korea's first confirmed case was January 20th, Italy's first confirmed cases were on January 21st, and New Zealand's first confirmed case was on February 28th. Following debate about what the nation should do, President Trump announced a national emergency on March 13th. On the other hand, South Korea, which had an extremely similar disease timeline as the U.S., had already long begun shutting down institutions including schools after a surge of cases related to a church appeared on February 21st.³⁶ For a few weeks Italy became the epicenter of the outbreak in the world, setting an example for other countries on how to respond to the pandemic. Unfortunately, Italy's initial response was limited, with lockdown orders primarily in 'red zone' areas.³⁷ The U.S. has responded similarly to Italy in that the government initially downplayed the impact of COVID-19 and was slow to institute a national lockdown. In fact, states have primarily taken it upon themselves to regulate shelter-in-place orders, even currently debating the president's authority to restart the economy.³⁸ In contrast, arguably one of the most impressive initial responses to COVID-19 has come from New Zealand, who along with Australia enforced fairly immediate lockdown orders, and began fining its citizens heavily for violations of these orders.³⁹ The initial responses of all of these countries determined the success of their combative measures against COVID-19.

The specific policy measures undertaken by each country have included varying degrees of shutdowns and limitations on travel into and outside of them. On February 29th, the U.S. first

³⁴ Boyde, Emma. "Coronavirus: US Death Toll Nears 40,000 - As It Happened." Financial Times. April 20, 2020. www.ft.com/content/b984dece-df78-3fd0-9c84-364b57f7c039.

³⁵ "CDC, Washington State Report First COVID-19 Death." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. February 29, 2020. www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/s0229-COVID-19-first-death.html.

³⁶ Taylor, Derrick B. "A Timeline of the Coronavirus Pandemic." New York Times. April 21, 2020. www.nytimes.com/article/coronavirus-timeline.html.

³⁷ Scott, Dylan and Rani Molla. "How the US Stacks up to Other Countries in Confirmed Coronavirus Cases." Vox. April 20, 2020. www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2020/3/13/21178289/confirmed-coronavirus-cases-us-countries-italy-iran-singapore-hong-kong.

³⁸ Wilkie, Christina. "Why Trump's Claim That He Has 'Total' Power to Restart State Economies Is False." CNBC. April 13, 2020. www.cnbc.com/2020/04/13/trump-falsely-claims-authority-to-open-up-states-after-coronavirus.html.

³⁹ Roy, Eleanor Ainge and Ben Doherty. "Have Australia and New Zealand Stopped Covid-19 in Its Tracks?" The Guardian. April 9, 2020. www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/09/have-australia-new-zealand-stopped-covid-19-in-its-tracks-coronavirus.

instituted travel restrictions from high-target countries such as China and Iran. Further, on March 11th, President Trump announced a European travel ban, forbidding the entry of European travelers for 30 days. The only country excluded from this ban was Britain, despite having the most COVID-19 cases of European countries at the time.⁴⁰ On March 31st, President Trump announced the highest travel restrictions on every international country, implementing a Level Four travel advisory.⁴¹ However, within the United States there had been little national instruction as to shelter-in-place orders and domestic travel restrictions. About 37 states had taken initiative in COVID-19 control, to varying effects that included shelter-in-place orders and ending in-person legislative sessions.⁴² By mid-April, President Trump announced that the economy could begin to reopen. Countries such as Italy, South Korea, and New Zealand all imposed similar international travel restrictions. On March 14th and March 19th respectively, New Zealand stated that citizens must self-isolate upon return from travel, and it banned foreigners from entering the country.⁴³ South Korea imposed visa restrictions on citizens from approximately 88 countries, while Italy had banned travel internationally *and* domestically by March 9th, well after the crisis had expanded in the nation.^{44,45}

While all of these countries imposed similar international travel restrictions, the greatest impact has come from domestic activity concerning the virus, especially in testing capacities. Although a nation with different political and economic standards, New Zealand led an effective COVID-19 response by forcing its citizens to self-isolate for two weeks upon re-entry into the country. South Korea, parallel to the United States in its timeline of confirmed cases (January 20th/21st), approved its first COVID-19 test in early February after meeting with medical companies.⁴⁶ Around the same time, the U.S. approved a test by the CDC that was ultimately determined ineffective. By late February, South Korea had tested about 94,055 people, while the U.S. had tested only about 3,300 individuals.⁴⁷ Italy was also behind on their testing, having conducted 23,354 tests as of March 2nd.⁴⁸ By contrast, New Zealand had extremely effective testing initiatives, having conducted about 94,797 tests by April 21st, corresponding to their population size.⁴⁹ Without fast and effective testing, the U.S. missed a critical period to prevent

⁴⁰ Godin, Mélissa. “Why Trump's Travel Ban Won't Curb the Spread of COVID-19 in the U.S.” Time. March 12, 2020. www.time.com/5801723/trump-travel-ban-covid-19/.

⁴¹ “Global Level 4 Health Advisory - Do Not Travel.” U.S. Department of State. 2020. www.travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/travel-advisory-alert-global-level-4-health-advisory-issue.html#_XnPHGUBrXPM.twitter.

⁴² Bradford, Kate, et al. “State Action on Coronavirus (COVID-19).” National Conference of State Legislatures. April 22, 2020. www.ncsl.org/research/health/state-action-on-coronavirus-covid-19.aspx.

⁴³ Hollingsworth, Julia. “New Zealand Has Recorded 1 Death from Coronavirus. Here's How They Did It.” CNN. April 9, 2020. www.cnn.com/2020/04/09/asia/new-zealand-lessons-intl-hnk/index.html.

⁴⁴ Kim, Cynthia and Hyonhee Shin. “South Korea Imposes New Coronavirus Travel Restrictions, Announces \$29.5 Billion in Business Aid.” Reuters. April 7, 2020. www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-southkorea/south-korea-imposes-new-coronavirus-travel-restrictions-announces-29-5-billion-in-business-aid-idUSKBN21Q09N.

⁴⁵ Scott, Dylan and Rani Molla. “How the US Stacks up to Other Countries in Confirmed Coronavirus Cases.”

⁴⁶ Berger, Matt. “How South Korea Successfully Battled COVID-19 While the U.S. Didn't.” Healthline. March 29, 2020. www.healthline.com/health-news/what-south-korea-has-done-correctly-in-battling-covid-19#Late-January:-Tests-come-online.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ “Coronavirus Testing: Criteria and Numbers by Country.” Worldometer. March 2, 2020. www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/covid-19-testing/.

⁴⁹ “COVID-19 - Current Cases.” Ministry of Health NZ. April 22, 2020. www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-current-situation/covid-19-current-cases#summary.

the spread of the virus, while still neglecting to implement national instructions on quarantining. Fortunately, by April 20th, the U.S. had conducted over 3.2 million tests, although arguably too late.⁵⁰ The impact of testing and identifying red zones in each respective country has proven to be incredibly important in containing the disease.

To date, the U.S. is leading the world with the highest number of infections. As of April 21st, there were over 800,000 confirmed cases in the U.S., with over 44,000 deaths.⁵¹ Italy was hit extremely hard by the virus, facing about 25,000 deaths, over 180,000 cases, and huge losses to its economy. On the other hand, countries such as South Korea and New Zealand had significantly smaller numbers of deaths and infections. South Korea had just over 10,000 confirmed cases, and New Zealand had slightly over 1,000. Although the U.S. is about five times larger in population size than South Korea, they reported about 16 times the number of infected cases.⁵² While all of these countries have huge differences in location and priorities and therefore cannot be compared exactly, quicker recognition and higher testing would have prevented such high losses in the most affected countries. In the U.S., there are new contentions about reopening the economy, as protestors seek a reopening, and health experts warn against it. The United States will determine whether to reopen in the coming weeks potentially risking even greater infection and death rates. South Korea and New Zealand have begun easing on quarantine measures, while Italy will begin relaxing policies on May 4.⁵³ Ultimately, the examples each of these countries have set in their response to the pandemic will hopefully inform future policy-making and help countries better respond to future public health crises.

⁵⁰ Scott, Dylan, and Rani Molla. "How the US Stacks up to Other Countries in Confirmed Coronavirus Cases."

⁵¹ "Cases in U.S." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. April 20, 2020. www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/cases-in-us.html.

⁵² Berger, Matt. "How South Korea Successfully Battled COVID-19 While the U.S. Didn't."

⁵³ Follain, John and Jonathan Tirone. "Italy to Relax Lockdown in Key Step for Europe's Virus Fight." Bloomberg. April 21, 2020. www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-04-21/italy-vows-to-reopen-as-europe-takes-steps-to-ease-virus-curb.

U.S. Strategy in Asia and U.S.-China Competition after COVID-19

By Shankara Narayanan

In 2011, President Obama announced an American ‘Pivot to Asia’, triggering widespread speculation that the Pivot was designed to check China’s rise in the Asia-Pacific, despite its emphasis on engaging countries across Northeast, Southeast and South Asia. Over the following years, the U.S. Navy deployed more ships to the region to patrol sea lanes, islands, and ports as part of its buildup.⁵⁴ Nine years later, as the COVID-19 pandemic wreaks havoc across the world, the Pivot is turning into a policy emphasizing great-power competition with China. Crucially—and unfortunately—this shift is bipartisan, with policymakers from the Bush, Obama, and Trump administrations all reaching a common consensus: China is a political and ideological threat to the U.S. Already locked into maritime competition in the South and East China Seas, and already in the grips of a trade war, this shift in consensus identifying China as a political enemy marks the surest sign that both countries see each other as irreconcilable with their respective interests in the Asia-Pacific. However, if the Pivot’s original approach is dead, and the U.S. is going to compete with China, what comes next? Any realistic policy seeking to address China’s naval operations in the South China Sea and China’s westward expansion through the Belt and Road Initiative must account for more than just the countries of the maritime Asia-Pacific. As the Pivot to Asia transforms into a policy focusing on countering China, U.S. foreign policy officials must also expand their conception of what constitutes great-power competition in Asia, both for an understanding of Chinese policy, and so as to identify the core U.S. interests which cannot be threatened, thereby setting clear boundaries which could prevent further escalation.

The Pivot to Asia sought a broad rebalancing of American foreign policy away from the Middle East and towards engaging the peoples and economies of Asia. From the outset it focused on a distinctly maritime conception of Asia. Then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declared, “Stretching from the Indian subcontinent to the western shores of the Americas, the region [the Asia-Pacific] spans two oceans—the Pacific and the Indian—that are increasingly linked by shipping and strategy.”⁵⁵ Conceptually, the Pivot to Asia was anchored in the Pacific and Indian Oceans at its inception. It pursued regional security alliances, deepened relationships with emerging powers, expanded investment, and advocated for human rights.⁵⁶ While not fundamentally problematic, this original framework defined the countries, means, and ends of U.S. strategy in the region. Secretary Clinton goes on to claim, “Our treaty alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand are the fulcrum for our strategic turn to the Asia-Pacific.”⁵⁷ The geography of this new U.S.-Asia policy, then, revolved around the littoral Pacific and alliance-strengthening with its key states—except China. In fact, these states

⁵⁴ O’Callaghan, John and Manuel Mogato. “The U.S. Military Pivot to Asia: When Bases Are Not Just Bases.” Reuters. November 13, 2012. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-asia-military/the-u-s-military-pivot-to-asia-when-bases-are-not-bases-idUSBRE8AD05Y20121114>.

⁵⁵ Clinton, Hillary. “America’s Pacific Century.” Foreign Policy. October 11, 2011. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/11/americas-pacific-century/>.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

surround China, and they do not recognize its island-building in the South China Sea.⁵⁸ The claims of benign engagement, therefore, diverged from the Pivot's strategic reality.

Consequently, tensions with China were immediately brought to the fore. In fact, core policies of the Pivot—such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)—demonstrated the Pivot's function as an offset of Chinese power. In 2015, President Obama stated, “TPP allows America—and not countries like China—to write the rules of the road in the 21st century.”⁵⁹ Clearly, the Pivot suffered from two main flaws. The first was its geographic framework for Asia, which largely focused on maritime powers such as South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, and India, thereby preventing a discussion linking the Asia-Pacific to U.S. foreign policy in countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and the Central Asian states. After all, the shipping lanes around which the U.S. Navy increased its presence are critical to transport oil from the Persian Gulf to East Asia, amongst other resources.⁶⁰ The second major flaw was the Pivot's approach to China. Despite focusing on trade relations, humanitarian development, and political relationships, Washington also attempted to impose a not-so-subtle geopolitical condition in the Asia-Pacific, counterbalancing Chinese actions in the South China Sea with the U.S. Navy, while bolstering regional militaries.

Today, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated U.S. policymakers' embrace of the Pivot's implicit policy towards China, abandoning all pretenses of engagement with the Asia-Pacific as a whole. Just weeks ago, Nadia Schadlow, the chief author of the 2017 *U.S. National Security Strategy* (NSS), argued that the pandemic reveals, “...that the world is a competitive arena in which great power rivals like China seek advantage.”⁶¹ Schadlow places this outbreak in the context of the great-power competition emphasized by the 2017 NSS. She notes China's efforts to suppress information concerning the virus—such as ‘rectifying’ the lab which published the first COVID-19 genome—alongside China's attempts to obscure the origins of the virus while blaming the U.S. military for its spread. Consequently, the coronavirus marks a milestone in the larger debate over China's rise, where, “at some point, an American administration needed to shift the conversation away from hopes for an imagined future China to the realities of the Communist Party's conduct.”⁶² Schadlow, and her peers who placed U.S.-China great-power competition in the 2017 NSS, have no intention of engaging China. Instead, U.S. foreign policy towards China must now be focused on the ‘realities of the Communist Party's conduct’, a fundamental shift towards ideological confrontation.

Of critical importance to U.S.-China relations and the future of the Pivot, however, is the fact that Schadlow's view is no longer restricted to her colleagues in President Trump's administration. President Obama's Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, Kurt Campbell, echoed her sentiments just nine years after he orchestrated the Pivot to Asia. Campbell stated in a co-authored article that, “As Washington falters...[Beijing] is working to

⁵⁸ Ford, John. “The Pivot to Asia was Obama's Biggest Mistake.” *The Diplomat*. January 21, 2017.

<https://thediplomat.com/2017/01/the-pivot-to-asia-was-obamas-biggest-mistake/>.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Calamur, Krishnadev. “High Traffic, High Risk in the Strait of Malacca.” *The Atlantic*. August 21, 2017.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/08/strait-of-malacca-uss-john-mccain/537471/>.

⁶¹ Schadlow, Nadia. “Consider the Possibility that Trump is Right About China.” *The Atlantic*. April 5, 2020.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/04/consider-possibility-trump-right-china/609493/>.

⁶² Ibid.

tout its own system, provide material assistance to other countries, and even organize other governments.”⁶³ The COVID-19 pandemic, then, has highlighted the ideological threat posed by China’s ‘own system’ to U.S. foreign policy. Similarly, Michael Green and Evan Medeiros—who each served as Senior Director for Asia on the National Security Council (NSC) under President Bush and President Obama respectively—argue that Beijing has seen an opportunity to undercut the U.S., “...launching an international campaign stressing the failures of democratic governance and casting itself as the leader of the global pandemic response.”⁶⁴ Just as Schadlow castigated the Chinese Communist Party’s conduct, and Campbell and Doshi identified the contest between Beijing’s ‘own system’ and Washington, Green and Medeiros explicitly link China’s coronavirus response to a campaign attacking democratic governance. Clearly, across three generations of U.S. foreign policy officials, China has become an ideological threat to democratic governance and to the U.S., heightening U.S.-China great-power competition.

As a result of this discursive shift, U.S. foreign policy in Asia will adjust accordingly, almost certainly by focusing on competition with China. In that context, the major foundation for great-power competition in Asia is the Pivot to Asia’s framing of Asia-Pacific strategy. However, in the aftermath of COVID-19 and in the years since its implementation, the Pivot’s two flaws have become significant weaknesses in any U.S.-China competition in the years ahead. China has blunted the U.S. Navy’s deterrence capabilities by revitalizing its relations with Pakistan, inadvertently highlighting the Pivot’s key inability to articulate a meaningful policy in Central-South Asia. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) links China’s westernmost province, Xinjiang, to the Pakistani port of Gwadar on the Arabian Sea. This allows China to secure the transport of oil via overland pipelines, rail lines, and highways, rather than shipping oil from the Persian Gulf through the Strait of Malacca.⁶⁵ Pakistan, however, sees this relationship as about much more than protecting China’s security from the U.S. Navy. In fact, Brigadier General Ahsan Gulrez, during a tour at the U.S. Army War College, outlined how Pakistan seeks to enable China’s expansion into Central Asia and the Middle East. Gulrez claimed, “The on-going territorial disputes in the South China Sea together with U.S. naval dominance makes Chinese shipping lanes vulnerable to disruption and interdiction.”⁶⁶ But instead of only citing CPEC’s potential to remove this concern, Gulrez goes farther. He argues the China-Pakistan partnership can supply, “...assistance to China in accessing western seas, Central and West Asia [The Middle East] through extension of the traditional Silk Route.”⁶⁷ Clearly, Brigadier General Gulrez and his fellow Pakistani officials envision Pakistan acting as a conduit for Chinese economic expansion westward, through construction projects in the Belt and Road Initiative. While the Pivot’s U.S. Navy buildup attempted to deter China’s maritime expansion into the South and East China Seas, China simply shifted its focus westward, coordinating with Pakistan to secure its interests. Fundamentally, Washington must re-think the

⁶³ Campbell, Kurt and Rush Doshi. “The Coronavirus Could Reshape Global Order.” Foreign Affairs. Council on Foreign Relations. March 18, 2020. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2020-03-18/coronavirus-could-reshape-global-order>.

⁶⁴ Green, Michael and Evan Medeiros. “The Pandemic Won’t Make China the World’s Leader.” Foreign Affairs. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-04-15/pandemic-wont-make-china-worlds-leader>.

⁶⁵ Calabrese, John. “Balancing on the Fulcrum of Asia: China’s Pakistan Strategy.” *Indian Journal of Asian Affairs* 27/28, no. 1/2 (2014-2015): 8.

⁶⁶ Gulrez, Ahsan. “Pakistan-China Strategic Relations.” *The Army War College Review* (2015): 5.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

geography of Chinese foreign policy and acknowledge that it is not restricted to the maritime theater.

Over the past decade, U.S.-China relations were already moving towards competition. The Pivot to Asia may have claimed to focus on regional engagement of the Asia-Pacific—which it did pursue to an extent—but it fundamentally sought to counterbalance China’s maritime rise in the South China Sea. Clearly, the Pivot anchored U.S.-China policy in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, precluding and avoiding a discussion about how the U.S. should react to China’s continental expansion into Central Asia. In 2011, as the Belt and Road Initiative lay dormant, that oversight was of little importance. But now, after moving into open competition with China, that oversight has come to define the next phase of U.S.-China relations. The Pivot’s focus on the littoral Pacific identified Asia as the maritime Pacific for U.S. policy purposes. For China, Asia is the entire region from the Pacific Ocean to the Mediterranean Basin. The Middle East is indeed ‘West Asia’ to China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. That gap in strategic philosophy promises to present real challenges to the U.S.-China relationship in the future. For example, what happens once China feels it has achieved a position where *even if* the U.S. Navy blockades Malacca, the CPEC corridor can take Malacca’s place? Will that enable a more aggressive Chinese foreign policy? Only time will tell. If the U.S. foreign policy officials who shaped Asia policy in the 21st century are ready to compete with China because of the COVID-19 pandemic, they must first identify what U.S. interests are in Central Asia and the Middle East. In other words, Washington must start thinking about what kind of balance of power it seeks in Asia’s interior. Otherwise, great-power competition across Asia will be bound by vague limits, threatening further escalation as China and the U.S. will inadvertently cross each other’s still-undefined red lines.

Journalistic Integrity in the Age of Coronavirus

By Henry Seyue

The media has contributed greatly to the public understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the media response has also contributed to the mass misunderstanding of how the government has reacted to the pandemic. The general narrative being perpetuated at the moment is concisely summarized in a recent *New York Times* article titled, “He Could Have Seen What Was Coming.”⁶⁸ The article goes in-depth, highlighting a myriad of signals the government received as early as the first week of January. It concludes that early on, Trump did not speak nor take action on the virus due to his misguided skepticism of so-called “deep state” officials. This narrative has contributed largely to how the general public perceives the government’s response. However, some of the claims made in this *New York Times* article, as well as by a variety of other networks and publications, have not always corresponded with the reality of the situation. In some cases, the media has been very useful in fact-checking misleading claims and emphasizing the ones pertinent to our self-preservation, but in too many others, it has purveyed misleading claims and emphasized messages that failed to tell the whole story. As the backbone of democracy, many look towards the free press for guidance, not only with this crisis, but also with their decision in the coming presidential election—and thus far it is undeniable that the collective coverage of the pandemic has already altered some people’s decisions to the clear detriment of President Trump.

Since the fact that the government became aware of the virus in early January is well supported, this paper need only examine the media’s accusation that nothing was said or done about it. Given that the media was preoccupied with the preeminent story of early January, which was Trump’s impeachment, they likely overlooked the fact that his administration had already started to take action to combat the virus. On January 7th the administration had already established a COVID-19 response system to track cases when the U.S. still had none.⁶⁹ This clearly contradicts claims of inaction. Furthermore, it suggests that Trump was proactive in his early January decisions, especially given that as late as January 14th, the World Health Organization (WHO) was still reporting “no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission” of the virus.⁷⁰ That message evidently did not age well, but even with the world’s premier health authorities suggesting that there was little cause for alarm, the government would begin redirecting and screening Chinese flights through various U.S. airports starting on January 17th.⁷¹ Shortly after screenings began, the U.S. confirmed its first case of COVID-19 on January 20th.⁷² The individual was a passenger from China, who ironically arrived the day after WHO

⁶⁸ Lipton, Eric. “He Could Have Seen What Was Coming: Behind Trump’s Failure on the Virus.” *New York Times*. April 12, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/11/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-response.html>.

⁶⁹ CDC. “CDC’s 24/7 Response to COVID-19.” United States Department of Health and Human Services. 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/budget/documents/covid-19/CDC-247-Response-to-COVID-19-fact-sheet.pdf>.

⁷⁰ World Health Organization. Twitter Post. January, 14, 2020. <https://twitter.com/who/status/1217043229427761152?lang=en>.

⁷¹ CDC. “Public Health Screening to Begin at 3 U.S. Airports for 2019 Novel Coronavirus.” United States Department of Health and Human Services. January 17, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/p0117-coronavirus-screening.html>.

⁷² Holshue, Michelle, et. al. “First Case of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus in The United States.” *The New England Journal of Medicine*. March 5, 2020. <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2001191>.

shared that the virus was not transmissible from human-to-human contact. Even more ironically, January 15th was also the day that the major development in American media was Nancy Pelosi's ceremonious signing of the Articles of Impeachment against Trump. The month of January also saw the American government create a coronavirus task force on January 29th (ahead of a WHO declaration of a global public health emergency) and enact travel restrictions on China on January 31st.⁷³ There is a clear lack of journalistic integrity displayed by the media in the month of January, evidenced by their lack of coverage of these coronavirus developments.

Even if the benefit of the doubt is given to news platforms for being more focused on impeachment during the time of these developments, there is no justification for the inaccurate retroactive reporting being done amid the crisis. Nonetheless, the media has still hit the nail on the head in calling Trump out for the earliest pieces of problematic information he spewed, such as the idea that the virus was no worse than the flu. In the scheme of journalistic integrity, although Trump was rightfully chastised for these statements, holistic journalism would still demand that his statements be put into proper context, which simply has not been the case.

Although Trump's sentiment was dangerous in contributing to public complacency, it still was in line with the medical reality supported by physicians and the media at the time. Late January headlines such as MSN's "Yes, the Coronavirus is Scary. But the Flu is Deadlier, More Widespread, Doctors Say," and NPR's "Worried About Catching the New Coronavirus? In the U.S., Flu Is a Bigger Threat," pretty much encapsulate the numerical evidence and medical opinions that influenced America's understanding of the virus at the time. Even the *New York Times*, which has offered some of the most scathing criticisms of Trump, can be seen reinforcing his sentiment by publishing the January 29th op-ed titled, "Beware the Pandemic Panic." The article states that "so far, the Wuhan Coronavirus is not much more frightening than the outbreaks of other recent coronaviruses...The new virus's death toll has just exceeded 130; for context... about 15 million Americans have been sickened by the seasonal flu so far, and 8,200 have died from it." This is not to say that the media was dishonest in their reporting of the coronavirus, but for the sake of providing timely information, it appears that they sacrificed some of the accuracy that would have come with awaiting more developments on the virus's nature. Even this can be forgiven as an honest mistake. However, what dissolves journalistic ethics are stories by some of those same networks that now point the finger at President Trump for a premature assumption made by themselves and medical professionals as well.

During this time there was also the characterization of some of the government's responses as being unfounded and political. Concerning Trump's Chinese travel restrictions, the *New York Times* quoted Dr. Michael Osterholm of the University of Minnesota as saying that "curtailing air travel to and from China is more of an emotional or political reaction."⁷⁴ Trump's adversaries like Nancy Pelosi would also appear on Fox News suggesting that Trump's policies

⁷³ Grisham, Stephanie. "Statement from the Press Secretary Regarding the President's Coronavirus Task Force." The White House. January 29, 2020. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-press-secretary-regarding-presidents-coronavirus-task-force/>.

⁷⁴ Corkery, Michael. "Trump Administration Restricts Entry Into U.S from China." *New York Times*. January 31, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/31/business/china-travel-coronavirus.html>.

were “not science-based” and that America needed a path that is based on evidence.⁷⁵ The *New York Times* even published a February 5th opinion article that encouraged travel to the region titled, “Who Says It’s Not Safe to Travel to China?”⁷⁶ Pundits would go on to emphasize some of these talking points regarding Chinese travel restrictions, despite a variety of epidemiologists, including Dr. Anthony Fauci, reaffirming that the travel ban “absolutely made a difference.”⁷⁷ Fauci would also cite numerical evidence confirming that since travel bans took place, new coronavirus cases from China had globally dropped. Fauci even suggested the ban should have a longer duration.

With January providing a variety of actions by the administration that were either criticized despite evidence of their effectiveness or just altogether ignored in the media portrayal; February would prove to be no different. With cases on the rise, many people anticipated a lockdown, despite there being little evidence to warrant one at the time. In pursuit of that evidence, the government began shipping testing kits as early as February 6th, a measure that would be marred by decades of regulations.⁷⁸ During this period, the media was still publishing headlines like the *Washington Post*’s February 1st article titled, “Get a Grippe, America. The Flu is a Much Bigger Threat Than Coronavirus for Now.”⁷⁹ The month began with the media slow to switch gears to cover current government coronavirus developments, just as in January. This likely contributed to the understanding that the government’s response was slow. The pretense that February was a month of inaction has been amplified by anchors like CNN’s Anderson Cooper, who in discussing a coronavirus taskforce briefing said: “He bought time with this alleged travel ban from China, which wasn’t really a ban...what did he do with the time? [February’s] a lost month because he was holding meetings with Diamond and Silk.”⁸⁰ First, downplaying the travel ban that was validated by the nation’s top coronavirus official, Cooper further insinuates that nothing was done by the government in February. In actuality, after the realization that the current system was not sufficient to facilitate the testing needed, the Trump administration began removing decades of CDC and FDA regulations that bogged private expansion of testing.⁸¹ With the efforts to perfect testing underway, Trump wrote a February

⁷⁵ Pelosi, Nancy. “Interview by Chris Wallace.” Sunday with Chris Wallace. Fox News. April 19, 2020.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/05/opinion/china-travel-coronavirus.html>

⁷⁶ Spinks, Rosie. “Who Says It’s Not Safe to Travel to China?” *New York Times*. February 5, 2020.

⁷⁷ RealClearPolitics Staff. “Dr. Anthony Fauci, Travel Ban Absolutely Made A Difference.” Fox News. March 12, 2020.

https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2020/03/12/dr_anthony_fauci_travel_ban_to_china_absolutely_made_a_difference.html.

⁷⁸ CDC. “Shipping of CDC 2019 Novel Coronavirus Diagnostic Test Kits Begin.” United States Department of Health and Human Services. February 6, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/p0206-coronavirus-diagnostic-test-kits.html>.

⁷⁹ Bernstein, Lenny. “Get a Grippe, America. The Flu is a Much Bigger Threat Than Coronavirus for Now.” *Washington Post*. February 1, 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/time-for-a-reality-check-america-the-flu-is-a-much-bigger-threat-than-coronavirus-for-now/2020/01/31/46a15166-4444-11ea-b5fc-eefa848cde99_story.html.

⁸⁰ Schwartz, Ian. “CNN’s Acosta: Trump ‘Propaganda’ Video Looked Straight Out of Beijing Or Pyongyang.” CNN. April 13th, 2020.

https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2020/04/13/cnns_acosta_trump_propaganda_video_looked_straight_out_of_beijing_or_pyongyang.html.

⁸¹ FDA. “FDA Issues New Policy to Help Expedite Availability of Diagnostics.” United States Food and Drug Administration. February 29, 2020. <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-update-fda-issues-new-policy-help-expedite-availability-diagnostics>.

24th letter to Congress with a 2.5 billion dollar funding request, which included money for vaccine development and purchase of personal protective equipment (PPE) in preparation for testing expansion.⁸² With the removal of final restrictions on testing and the arrival of a funding bill—both in the first week of March—the fruits of February’s labor by the administration were evident.

With the evidence finally supporting a lockdown following weeks of testing, the government would declare a state of emergency on March 13, with 1,896 cases and 41 deaths.⁸³ Several states had already issued lockdowns at the time, but those numbers largely contributed to the narrative that the emergency declaration came too late. This is an idea that members of several major outlets promoted, despite little evidence for it. For example, CNN correspondent Jim Acosta asked during a press briefing what models would have looked like with a January or February declaration. He then insisted that “if we had started this sooner, we might not have 100,000 to 200,000 Americans dying.”⁸⁴ His insistence came after Dr. Deborah Birx explained to him that antibody tests would have to be retrieved to know if the virus was even significantly circulating at that time. After he doubled-down, even suggesting that Dr. Birx did not understand the question at one point, Dr. Fauci stepped in to say “if there was no virus in the background, there was nothing to mitigate, if there was, then your answer is yes.” Fauci would caution that “the only trouble with that is, whenever you come out to say something like that, it becomes a soundbite that’s taken out of context.” Fauci’s response speaks volumes regarding the general lack of journalistic integrity in covering the virus. It is clear that Acosta asked his question with an answer in mind. He was only looking for validation which there was not yet evidence for. A response like the one Acosta was phishing for would absolutely be taken out of context by any media outlet with an agenda and ultimately by the American people. The job of a journalist is difficult because even the most honest information they retrieve can be taken out of context, but the job of those they seek answers from becomes harder when questions are tailored to score political points rather than elicit accurate information.

The idea that the United States’ state of emergency declaration came late may prove to be true once there is enough data to support it from the serology tests Dr. Birx referred to. Nonetheless, current data shows that the U.S. was early, relative to other nations. This reality doesn’t fall in line with the media narrative of a slow start since the U.S. implemented a state of emergency at 1,678 cases, whereas Italy, for example, did so at 47,071 cases and 4,032 deaths.⁸⁵ The UK, which was moderate in cases when it locked down, did so with 6,650 cases and 335 deaths on March 23rd.⁸⁶ This indicates that the U.S. was definitely ahead of the curve at least in

⁸² U.S Government Executive Office of the President. “COVID-19 Funding Request.” Office of Management and Budget. 2020. <https://int.nyt.com/data/documenthelper/6784-coronavirus-request-letter/0327a6d0ff743ad23ed0/optimized/full.pdf#page=1>.

⁸³ CDC. “Previous U.S. COVID-19 Case Data.” United States Department of Health and Human Services. April 15, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/previouscases.htm>.

⁸⁴ RealClearPolitics Staff. “CNN’s Jim Acosta v.s. Trump, Fauci on Starting Social Distancing Sooner: ‘Jim, We Acted Very, Very Early.’” C-SPAN. March 31, 2020. https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2020/03/31/cnns_acosta_vs_trump_fauci_on_starting_social_distancing_sooner_jim_we_acted_very_very_early.html.

⁸⁵ McCann, Allison. “Italy’s Virus Shutdown Came Too Late, What Happens Now?” New York Times. April 5, 2020 <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/04/05/world/europe/italy-coronavirus-lockdown-reopen.html>.

⁸⁶ Rawlinson, Kevin. “Coronavirus Latest: 23 March at a Glance.” The Guardian. March 23, 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/23/coronavirus-at-a-glance-23-mar-evening>.

raw numbers. This is a fact that is seldom mentioned amid all the negative news, but it may be one worth sharing because if nothing else, it can ease the minds of the American people regarding what their government is doing. It is likely information like this that prompted Dr. Fauci, who is well known for fact-checking President Trump, to say “we’ve never had a threat like this and the coordinated response has been, there are a number of adjectives to describe it. Impressive, I think is one of them.” It is in part the coordinated response of the United States that has led models (with social distancing accounted for) that once predicted up to 240,000 U.S. deaths to constantly revise. Recent revisions now show estimates having a median of just over 60,000 deaths.⁸⁷ As Dr. Fauci knows better than anyone, this is not to say that the path has not been littered with misleading statements, shortages, and internal conflict that affected American efforts. It just says that despite these things, and despite what is mostly portrayed by the media, inaction has never been the case.

From the time the Trump administration declared an emergency, to now, the U.S. has since tested more people than any other nation in the world based on raw numbers, and American per capita testing is among the best for nations that have dealt with triple-digit cases since February.⁸⁸ American companies have begun manufacturing a surplus of ventilators, which the government now plans to assist foreign nations with. As of April, the Trump administration has redirected 26 billion dollars in relief funds to hospitals, specifically to cover uninsured patients.⁸⁹ The primetime story on major networks has toggled between the health of Kim Jong Un and the sporadic state protests to open economies. The little time allocated to any positive developments calls into question the motives of some of the most-watched networks. For example, CNN maintains a live count of coronavirus cases and deaths, but for some reason omits a recovery count. They are providing a much-needed service to the public by broadcasting a count at all, but the only issue is that without providing coverage of the recoveries and events fueling them, they are not fulfilling their journalistic duty of telling a complete story. It is not like the information is not available, so for the sake of thoroughly informing the public, the media must equally remind Americans of the 646,000+ recoveries which surpass the 174,000+ deaths.⁹⁰ This failure to inform is not necessarily something that should be attributed to malicious intent, but it is nonetheless selective reporting, which is a characteristic of propaganda.

With accurate information being the backbone of democracy, it is imperative that the media provides Americans with a timely and accurate service to base decisions on. As many people look towards the media to get them through this unprecedented time, it is not the media’s job to give a false sense of comfort, but dually, it is not their job to sensationalize issues. As their power to sway public opinion is intensified during this time, doing so should not be their goal, as some of the aforementioned examples would suggest. Their goal should be to provide relevant information, present complete stories, and hold the government accountable. They have been reliable in completing at least one aspect of their job by fact checking Trump on occasions ranging from his premature announcement of Hydroxychloroquine as an approved treatment for

⁸⁷ IHME. “COVID-19 Projections.” IHME. April 21, 2020. <https://covid19.healthdata.org/united-states-of-america>.

⁸⁸ Trump, Donald. “Remarks by President Trump in a Meeting with Healthcare Executives.” The White House. April 14, 2020. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-meeting-healthcare-executives/>.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Johns Hopkins University & Medicine. “COVID-19 Dashboard.” Johns Hopkins University. April 21, 2020. <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>.

the virus to him blaming the previous administration for Bush era regulations. However, they have neglected their other duties.⁹¹ The American people have not been presented with holistic information, and the information prioritized has been barely relevant in several situations.

From aggressively promoting misleading narratives of inaction to pointing fingers about misinformation that they are implicit in spreading; bad journalism has had dire implications on the perception of the government by the public. This ultimately hurts democracy. When people take to the polls in November, they will be voting with media-concocted narratives in mind regardless of what the outcome of the pandemic is. This will likely manifest itself in less support for Trump than what he would have otherwise had. This crisis has been a reminder that Americans need a press that is genuinely critical of government decisions, a press that yearns to give people the information most relevant to their health and safety, and a press that can admit when it has given misleading information in the pursuit of being timely. What Americans do not need is a press so eager to fact-check and keep the public engaged that it becomes an enemy of progress and a threat to democracy.

⁹¹ Oweremohle, Sarah. "Bad Advice from the President: Trump Touts Unproven Coronavirus Drug." POLITICO. March 19, 2020. <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/03/19/trump-slash-red-tape-to-find-coronavirus-drugs-137575>.

The Dark Side of the Loom: Human Rights Abuses in Bangladesh's Textile Industry

By Srishti Banerjee

Amidst chaos, a weak country hesitantly stood on its feet. Bangladesh's economic success took itself and the world by surprise. Pakistan and Bangladesh both suffered consequences because of their separation in 1971, but only Bangladesh's economy has come out strong. The development of its strong garment industry allowed Bangladesh and its economy to grow exponentially more than its counterpart. Yet, to every silver lining there is a dark side: the textile industry is also one of the main sources of human rights violations in Bangladesh. For years, poor safety conditions and buildings with weak infrastructure have plagued textile workers. All the while, Bangladesh's government is falling short on its commitments to these workers. The purpose of this paper is to explore the contradiction of these two concepts; how an industry that is boosting a nation's economy is also tearing its people apart. Furthermore, this paper delves into what the government is doing to protect workers' rights while keeping the economy afloat.

Bangladesh began as one of the poorest nations in the world, on the precipice of becoming a failed state. Famine and poverty wracked the country during its formative years. Today, Bangladesh still faces massive development challenges such as natural disasters, widespread poverty, and poor governance. In fact, conditions were so poor that when the economy was looking up in 2006, most of the nation and the world believed it was a hoax.⁹² Today, scholars point towards two primary factors to explain the nation's economic growth: (1) the fact that Bangladesh did not have to abide by the International Disputes Act during its formative years in the early 1970s and (2) the expiration of the Multi-Fiber Arrangement (MFA) in 2004. Before Pakistan and India claimed independence from the British in 1947, the Industrial Disputes Act put heavy restrictions on firms' abilities to contract workers and expand the workforce.⁹³ Though these restrictions transferred to both India and Pakistan in 1947, Pakistan repealed it in 1958. Thus, since Bangladesh never inherited the restrictions, the work environment the nation offered at its founding was much more conducive for manufacturing firms to achieve economies of scale and create job opportunities.⁹⁴

The second factor refers to the MFA. Established in 1974, the MFA set quotas on developing nations' garment exports to rich nations. This means Bangladesh and its rivals had fixed market shares. The expiration of the MFA in 2004 was originally thought to be very damaging for Bangladesh since it feared being outrun by China.⁹⁵ However, this was not the case. Surprisingly, Bangladesh's major economic growth occurred after the MFA expired. With the dismantling of quotas, a fast-money culture took root in Bangladesh. This led to a new class of garment kings who aided the growth of the economy by involving their ties to politics and the

⁹² Basu, Kaushik. "Why Is Bangladesh Booming?" Brookings Institute. May 1, 2018.
<https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/why-is-bangladesh-booming/>.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Chalmers, John. "Special Report: How Textile Kings Weave a Hold on Bangladesh." Reuters. May 2, 2013.
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bangladesh-garments-special-report/special-report-how-textile-kings-weave-a-hold-on-bangladesh-idUSBRE9411CX20130502>.

media.⁹⁶ This is how Bangladesh's system of cheap labor and political influencers developed, and its economy started rising with the support of both the business sector and the government. This new shift helped steer Western chains hungry for rock-bottom costs to Bangladesh for opportunities to retail clothes for up to 10 times factory-gate prices.⁹⁷ From the dark times of the 1970s, Bangladesh unexpectedly emerged with a stronger economy than Pakistan.

Since 2006, Bangladesh's GDP growth has exceeded Pakistan's by about 2.5% per year.⁹⁸ Moreover, in the last decade, Bangladesh's economy has averaged above 6% annual growth, reaching a record high of 7.86% in 2018.⁹⁹ Based on the nation's economic progress, the United Nations even predicted that it would graduate from being a "least developed country" in 2021. This means that it is considered to have a developing economy. Though this may seem like a small feat, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina insists that it means a lot for the country's self-image. Hasina has described her country as one that is slowly relying on itself economically instead of being at the mercy of others. Prime Minister Hasina also has announced her goals to accelerate the already fast paced economy. The country has seen exports soar by an average annual rate of 15-17% in recent years, but Hasina is still urging the textile industry to do more. Her goal is to hit \$50 billion in 2021 to mark Bangladesh's 50-year anniversary.¹⁰⁰ These are amazing goals to have for a nation, but the Prime Minister seems to overlook the human rights costs necessary to achieve them.

Considering the nature of Bangladesh's economic development, the government must maintain low labor costs to continue to fuel economic growth. However, these cheap labor policies lead to numerous human rights violations. While these jobs are economic lifelines to many families in the nation, the human rights violations that stem from them are ignored. Human rights violations such as abusive treatment, low wages, and poor infrastructure are very prevalent in the textile industry. They continue to persist despite the fact that they are well-known issues.

The abusive treatment of workers in Bangladesh's textile industry is a huge issue that has yet to be tackled. Since women and girls make up most of the workforce in the textile industry, they receive most of the abusive treatment. According to Emma Daly, the Communications Director for Human Rights Watch, production quotas are very important to factory owners. If workers do not meet production quotas, she explained, they face verbal or physical abuse.¹⁰¹ Safura, a worker the Human Rights Watch interviewed, described her job as removing excess stitches and threads out of garments. She is solely responsible for 400 garment pieces a day, meaning her supervisor expects her to finish 20 garments an hour. The price for not doing as expected is being called names by supervisors or physically punished.¹⁰² Based on Safura's situation, workers are expected to work 20 hours a day.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Basu, Kaushik. "Why Is Bangladesh Booming?"

⁹⁹ Robinson, Gwen. "The Rise and Rise of Bangladesh." Nikkei Asian Review. December 19, 2018. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Cover-Story/The-rise-and-rise-of-Bangladesh>.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ "Rana Plaza: Harassment, Anti-Union Tactics in Bangladesh Garment Factories." YouTube video, 5:15, posted by Human Rights Watch. April 27, 2015. <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/3-years-on-from-rana-plaza-building-collapse-in-bangladesh-little-improvements-in-health-safety-conditions>.

¹⁰² Ibid.

Furthermore, workers are denied any sick or maternity leave. Some factories and supervisors even deny them holidays. Since most workers do not even know their rights, they do not understand that these conditions are not normal. Many in Bangladesh see work as a privilege. It gives families hope. Many citizens of the nation believe they are progressive since so many women and girls end up being the breadwinners of their families.¹⁰³ However, when workers learn about their rights and the ways other countries' workers avoid these kinds of abuses—through unions, for example—most workers are on board with the idea. The creation of unions is another area which is denied by management and factory owners. Textile industry executives go to great lengths to prevent them from forming. Workers are usually dissuaded from participating in protests or forming unions because of the threat of being fired or blacklisted from any other factory. In fact, every worker that tries to unionize suffers either consequence. Textile executives even hire thugs to beat workers and activists.¹⁰⁴

Wages are an additional area where workers face abuses of their rights. In a world where factory workers' wages are rising, Bangladesh has kept its place as a country with one of the cheapest labor forces in the world. It is able to keep its rank as the second largest global garment exporter (behind China) because of its cheap labor force. In 2010 there was a bout of violent protests over unfair pay and conditions. The protests concluded in a rare victory in favor of the laborers; the government raised the monthly minimum wage 80% to 3,000 Taka, which is \$38.50.¹⁰⁵ Today, the minimum wage has been raised to 8,000 Taka per month, or \$95. According to campaigners in Bangladesh, however, workers need about 16,000 Taka to live a comfortable life.¹⁰⁶

In comparison to Bangladesh's major rival in the textile industry, China's minimum wage for workers translates between \$154 to \$230 per month. Cambodia, a country that ranks close to Bangladesh among the countries that offer the cheapest labor, gives its workers \$80 per month.¹⁰⁷ Recently, factory owners in China have decided to move their factories to Bangladesh because of the cheap labor.¹⁰⁸ Global brands from North America, Europe, and Australia seeking cheap labor, like Pierre Cardin, Hugo Boss, Walmart, GAP and Levi Strauss, view labor costs in developing economies and nations as negotiable.¹⁰⁹ These brands try to drive abusive cost-cutting measures that hurt workers. According to a 2016 International Labor Organization survey, the highest number of suppliers who felt compelled to accept orders below production costs came from Bangladesh. This directly affects workers' wages and other working conditions.¹¹⁰

¹⁰³ Thapa, Tejshree. "Remember Rana Plaza." Human Rights Watch. April 24, 2018. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/04/24/remember-rana-plaza>.

¹⁰⁴ "Rana Plaza: Harassment, Anti-Union Tactics in Bangladesh Garment Factories." YouTube video. 2015.

¹⁰⁵ Chalmers, John. "Special Report: How Textile Kings Weave a Hold on Bangladesh."

¹⁰⁶ Butler, Sarah. "Why Are Wages So Low for Garment Workers in Bangladesh?" The Guardian. January 21, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/jan/21/low-wages-garment-workers-bangladesh-analysis>.

¹⁰⁷ Chalmers, John. "Special Report: How Textile Kings Weave a Hold on Bangladesh."

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Haq, Naimul. "Bangladesh's Garment Industry Boom Leaving Workers Behind." Inter Press Service. February 9, 2018. <http://www.ipsnews.net/2018/02/bangladeshs-garment-industry-boom-leaving-workers-behind/>.

¹¹⁰ "Rights Makeover Overdue in Bangladesh Garment Industry." Human Rights Watch. May 1, 2019. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/05/01/rights-makeover-overdue-bangladesh-garment-industry#>.

Another major issue with wages is payment. It is normal for a Bangladeshi factory worker to receive late payments. In fact, it is normal for many to go three months in a row without receiving payment. Moreover, every factory worker in Bangladesh to this date has, at some point, worked overtime. Workers have six days a week to complete a task if they have not reached the production quota. Sometimes they are told to work for seven days. Even with this overtime, workers can expect to get paid six months to one year later.¹¹¹ In contrast, CEOs of top fashion companies make the lifetime pay of a textile factory worker in just four days. Bangladesh has achieved many amazing strides, like green factories and having a strong economy. Yet, garment factory workers “who form the backbone of the \$28 billion annual garment industry in Bangladesh struggle to survive on wages barely above the poverty line.”¹¹²

On top of poor wages and abusive working conditions, the infrastructure of the textile industry also places workers at risk. As much as Bangladesh is known for its textile producing industry, it is also known for faulty buildings, lack of safety measures in factories, and poor foundations. As the economy is growing rapidly, the infrastructure and technology are not able to keep up. Two very famous incidents regarding lack of safety and poor infrastructure are the Tazreen Factory fire in December 2012 and the collapse of the Rana Plaza building on April 24, 2013. The Tazreen Factory fire resulted in the death of more than 100 workers. The cramped area and lack of proper fire safety precautions left workers in a vulnerable position. The fire began on the first floor and made its way up to levels that had no fire escape. Firefighters fought flames all night before they put it out. Though the fire started in the evening when workers were supposed to be at home, 600 laborers were at the factory because they were told to work overtime.¹¹³ Rana Plaza, located in Dhaka, housed five different garment factories. The collapse of the building killed about 1,130 people and wounded at least 2,500. Deaths from poor infrastructure and fires are frequent, yet factory owners continue to use buildings that are not regularly tested. To make matters worse, since the Rana Plaza disaster until 2017, at least 110 similar accidents have occurred.¹¹⁴

Despite these two horrific tragedies, and the many more not mentioned in this paper, the government still overlooks the issues textile workers face. During the aftermath of the two incidents, neither the government nor the factory owners helped pay damages to victims or their families. The government also led more direct actions against workers. In 2010, during the massive strikes and labor violence, the government set up an industrial force made up of 2,990 troops to collect intelligence and prevent unrest in factory zones. If any worker tried to protest, the force would come and tell them to stop immediately, threatening to beat them with sticks.¹¹⁵ There were similar massive wildcat strikes for better wages in 2016 and 2018 where the Bangladesh authorities stepped in to suppress the spread of the labor rights movement. Thousands of poor Bangladeshi workers had fabricated criminal cases brought against them,

¹¹¹ “Rana Plaza: Harassment, Anti-Union Tactics in Bangladesh Garment Factories,” YouTube video. 2015.

¹¹² Haq, Naimul. “Bangladesh's Garment Industry Boom Leaving Workers Behind.”

¹¹³ Bajaj, Vikas. “Fatal Fire in Bangladesh Highlights the Dangers Facing Garment Workers.” New York Times. November 25, 2012. <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/26/world/asia/bangladesh-fire-kills-more-than-100-and-injures-many.html>.

¹¹⁴ “The Rana Plaza Accident and Its Aftermath.” International Labor Organization. December 21, 2017. https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/geip/WCMS_614394/lang--en/index.htm.

¹¹⁵ Chalmers, John. “Special Report: How Textile Kings Weave a Hold on Bangladesh.”

even workers that did not attend the protests.¹¹⁶ Factory officials that fire or blacklist their workers are not even held accountable for their attacks, threats, and retaliation against unionized workers.¹¹⁷

The government's actions against workers are closely tied to the influence of corporations over the legislature. Many politicians benefit greatly from rapid textile industry growth. For example, some legislators, like Mohammad Fazlul Azim, make money from the textile industry. Azim owned one factory which turned into a string of plants with over 26,000 workers, and he has benefited greatly from the policy side of the growing industry. There is little pressure to improve working conditions such as safety measures because of how intricately the industry has woven itself with political power. More than 30 garment industry bosses are members of parliament making up about 10% of Bangladesh's lawmakers. Babul Akhter, a leader of the organization Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity that works with labor unions alleges that at least 50% of the members of parliament have some sort of business links to the industry. Many of these politically connected garment makers take advantage of their clout to disregard the minimum wage levels stipulated under the law.¹¹⁸ The government ends up stifling labor activism to both protect the country's economic lifeline and to please business magnates who have become part of the political and social establishment.¹¹⁹

Overall, Bangladeshi workers face abuse, dangerous working conditions, and low wages, and the government has done little to address these problems. However, there is some hope for the future. Many major brands and some departments of the government have tried to take steps forward by forming blocs such as the Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Safety.¹²⁰ Signed by major brands like H&M, Tesco, Aldi, Global Union, American Eagle, and Clean Clothes Campaign, the Accord is an independent, legally binding agreement between brands and trade unions for safe and healthy working conditions in the textile industry in Bangladesh. The Accord also provides factory inspections, safety training, and remediation monitoring.¹²¹ Besides international corporations, some governments in Europe provide assistance to Bangladesh regarding poverty reduction, promotion of human rights, and democratization. International help has relieved some of the atrocities in the textile industry, but not enough. The solutions lie in the hands of the big brands that use Bangladeshi workers in their supply chain. Those multinational corporations are the ones that can change the fate of the workers struggling to take hold of their rights. In the end, the government of Bangladesh is too politically corrupt to change any time soon. The international community must aid the Bangladeshi government in promoting workers' rights.

¹¹⁶ "Rights Makeover Overdue in Bangladesh Garment Industry." Human Rights Watch.

¹¹⁷ Roth, Kenneth. "World Report 2018: Rights Trends in Bangladesh." Human Rights Watch. February 9, 2018. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/bangladesh#6a43ba>.

¹¹⁸ Chalmers, John. "Special Report: How Textile Kings Weave a Hold on Bangladesh."

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Thapa, Tejshree. "Remember Rana Plaza."

¹²¹ "The Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety." The Bangladesh Accord. 2018. <https://bangladeshaccord.org/>.

The Road to Urban Decay: Dwight D. Eisenhower's Interstate

By Jack Bergantino

Averaging six miles per hour, a military convoy snaked through the United States during the late summer of 1919. Lasting 62 days, the expedition traveled along the Lincoln Highway, a transcontinental network of paved and dirt roads. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the future President of the United States, travelled amongst the 282 soldiers. This experience as well as his exposure to Nazi Germany, where he witnessed the fast mobilization of German troops via the autobahn system, convinced Eisenhower that an interstate highway was needed in the United States.¹²² Though several attempts to enact a federally-funded highway preceded Eisenhower's time in office, he finally signed the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 into law. The act set aside 25 billion dollars for the construction of 41,000 miles of roads. However, the cost of construction proved much greater, at 129 billion dollars, making the Eisenhower Interstate System the most expensive public works project in American history.¹²³ The act proclaimed the Interstate as "essential to the national interest" because of its perceived military and economic importance.¹²⁴ With mounting Cold War tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union, the Interstate System was presented as a necessary component to the nation's defense. The economic benefit garnered from the extensive network of highways became far more apparent. Not only did the Interstate's construction lead to the employment of 250,000 workers, it also increased the nation's productivity, reducing the time needed to transport goods from one part of the nation to another.¹²⁵ U.S. companies experienced cost savings averaging up to 18 cents for every dollar that was invested in the construction of the highway system.¹²⁶ In addition to increased efficiency, the automobile industry, gas companies, and residential developers all benefited from the creation of new roadways with an increased demand for their respective products. However, the benefits of the Interstate were partially outweighed by the system's enormous consequences: the construction of Interstate highways led to the exacerbation of decay in American cities by eliciting flight into suburban neighborhoods and destroying urban communities.

Most notably, the poor planning and dubious motives that shaped the Interstate's design contributed to substantial consequences for inner-city areas. When making way for the construction of the Interstate, highway architects demolished long-established communities, heeding little attention to urban planning. Instead, state highway agencies consulted mayors, business titans, and other influential figures. For instance, Beatrice Fox Auerbach, the president of G. Fox and Co., used her influence to design a portion of Interstate 84 for easy access to her department store in Hartford, Connecticut.¹²⁷ This roadway now acts as a barrier between

¹²² Pfeiffer, David. "Ike's Interstates at 50." National Archives and Records Administration. 2006. <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2006/summer/interstates.html>.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ U.S. House of Representatives. 84th Congress. 84-627, *Federal Highway Act of 1956*. Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1956.

¹²⁵ Keane, Thomas F. "The Economic Importance of the National Highway System." Federal Highway Administration. 1996. <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/96spring/p96sp16.cfm>.

¹²⁶ "Productivity and the Highway Network." Federal Highway Administration. November 7, 2014. <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/otps/060320b/>.

¹²⁷ McWilliams, Kathleen. "Hartford's Vexing Highway Intersection: Why All Roads Lead to G. Fox." Hartford Courant. December 12, 2018. <https://www.courant.com/courant-250/moments-in-history/hc-250-g-fox-highway-construction-20140723-story.html>.

Hartford's downtown and more diverse, now impoverished North End neighborhood. Indeed, the urban public's stance was rarely taken into account as demonstrated by the continuous and ruthless destruction of neighborhoods across the United States.¹²⁸ They were seldom involved because the Interstate's creators were often motivated by perverse incentives. For instance, the Federal Highway Act mandated that states only pay 10% of the cost of the Interstate (the other 90% was covered through federal funding), as long as state leaders agreed with the highway blueprints.¹²⁹ Though these plans often positioned Interstates through urban cores, local officials rarely voiced opposition for fear of losing federal funding. Other transportation alternatives that did not have federal backing became less attractive, including public transit, because of their relatively high cost. In addition, federally supported housing projects and urban renewal programs incentivized razing urban neighborhoods to make way for highways. Officials frequently relied on federal housing bills to fund "slum clearance." By the 1960s, federal highway projects destroyed some 37,000 urban housing units.¹³⁰ New York represents a particularly egregious example of the ignorance and lack of concern that highway planners exhibited for the impact of their projects on American cities.

The Cross Bronx Expressway in New York, planned by Robert Moses, resulted in the demise of the East Tremont neighborhood of the Bronx. Out of two equally viable routes, Moses chose the more expensive one, opting to dismantle apartment buildings instead of destroying a bus depot owned by a politically influential transportation company. He refused to concede to protestors, many of whom included the individuals with homes bound for removal.¹³¹ He responded to the residents' pleas by stating, "when you're operating in an overbuilt metropolis you have to hack your way with a meat axe."¹³² Moses justified the extra cost by arguing that tearing down cramped, dirty "projects" would renew the area. The project triggered the destruction of 1,530 apartments in a one mile stretch and tore apart what many residents described as a closely-knit community.¹³³ As can be seen in the 1957 image of the highway construction site, Moses' project resulted in the creation of a trench through the middle of East Tremont.¹³⁴

¹²⁸ Schwager, Dianne S. "Consequences of the Development of the Interstate Highway System for Transit." PDF. Federal Transit Administration. April 1997.

¹²⁹ Stromberg, Joseph. "Highways Guttled American Cities. So Why Did They Build Them?" Vox. May 11, 2016. <https://www.vox.com/2015/5/14/8605917/highways-interstate-cities-history>.

¹³⁰ National Commission on Urban Problems. *Building the American City*. Washington, D.C: 1969.

¹³¹ Finch, Christopher. *Highways to Heaven: The Autobiography of America*. New York, New York: Harper Collins, 1992.

¹³² Cannavò, Peter F. *The Working Landscape: Founding, Preservation, and the Politics of Place*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT, 2007.

¹³³ Caro, Robert A. *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. London, United Kingdom: The Bodley Head, 2015.

¹³⁴ *Cross Bronx Expressway Under Construction*. Bronx Chamber of Commerce Collection at the Lehman College Library. In *Digital Culture of Metropolitan New York*.

Figure 1: Trench in the Middle of East Tremont



Dislocated residents typically lacked any alternative but to move into central city ghettos: housing shortages in East Tremont increased rents by 15%.¹³⁵ Robert Caro, author of Robert Moses' biography *The Power Broker*, stated that by 1965, 10 years after the start of construction, East Tremont had undergone a colossal transformation:

The community's 'very good, solid housing stock,' the apartment buildings that had been so precious to the people who lived in them, were ravaged hulks. Windows, glassless except for the jagged edges around their frames, stared out on the street like sightless eyes. The entrances to those buildings were carpeted with shards of glass from what had been the doors to their lobbies.¹³⁶

The East Tremont section—and the greater South Bronx—suffered from widespread abandonment in the wake of the expressway's construction: East Tremont's population decreased 13% between 1950 and 1957, and the area would continue to see a population decline into the 1980s.¹³⁷ Abandoned buildings attracted burglars and vagrants, which only decreased the neighborhood's appeal.¹³⁸

The transfer of wealth to suburban areas and the destruction of taxable properties seriously undermined the revenues collected by cities across America. Though Chamber of Commerce and Board of Trade officials believed that freeways would fix the "dying downtown economy," highways only exacerbated this decline. Between 1958 and 1963, Boston witnessed a 9% retail tax revenue decrease, while San Francisco witnessed a 9% increase during the same period. San Francisco continued to witness these increases, and by 1967, sales had increased by 16% over 1963 retail sales.¹³⁹ What can account for the dichotomy? Throughout this period, sizeable freeway projects, like the Fitzgerald Expressway, disrupted Boston's core. However, officials in San Francisco halted highway construction by 1959; thus, most downtown highway projects never materialized. Unfortunately, the majority of urban areas endured a different fate: by 1970, 30% of land in American cities had been converted into roads. Highways affected this percentage both directly and indirectly.¹⁴⁰ Crews cleared neighborhoods filled with thousands of businesses and homes, equating to a smaller property tax base. Furthermore, since Interstates led to a greater inflow of cars into urban centers, cities built more parking lots, and larger roadways

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Community Council of Greater New York: Bronx Communities. *Population Characteristics and Neighborhood Social Resources*. New York, New York: 1959.

¹³⁸ Caro, Robert A. *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*.

¹³⁹ Leavitt, Helen. *Superhighway Superhoax*. New York, New York: Ballantine Books, 1971.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

to accommodate the increase in traffic. An astounding 60% of Los Angeles was comprised of pavement by 1970.¹⁴¹ Officials scaled back spending on basic functions, such as public transportation and law enforcement, because of reduced revenues, further compromising the quality of urban life.

The Federal-Aid Highway Act was undoubtedly one of the greatest internal improvements of the 20th century, if predicated on nothing else but the sheer size of the project: The Interstate Highway System and the Great Wall of China are the only two human creations that can be seen by orbiting astronauts. Eisenhower connected and mobilized much of the nation with an immense web of roadways connecting city to country.¹⁴² In many ways, the Interstate is at the very heart of the American spirit. By the mid-twentieth century, a suburban home on a tidy plot of land came to encompass the American Dream. The Interstate physically allowed for movement out of the city and into the suburb. It became the life of the nation, for once man had an automobile, he could find some new frontier to call his own in a way that was previously unforeseeable. However, as with the American Dream, the positive implication of the Interstate was an opportunity that was reserved for only a portion of Americans. The tens of thousands of Jews, Hispanics, Italians, Blacks, and others who were boxed in and displaced by the Interstate were only reminded of the controversy that embroils America: the nation that holds great promises for subjugated peoples but frequently fails to deliver on such promises. The freeway only served to depress already vulnerable communities and dramatically decrease the appeal of the American city. While acknowledging the system's importance in changing the American landscape and reforming the American way of life, the Interstate was a costly endeavor. One of its chief consequences was the decay of America's greatest cities.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Lewis, Tom. *Divided Highways: Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life*. New York, New York: Viking, 1997.

A Marxist Critique of the United Nations

By Grace Brangwynne

The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights seems to corroborate with the arguments made by Karl Marx and Friderich Engels at face value, proclaiming that every human has the right to "equal pay for equal work" and the "right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family".¹⁴³ However, by Marxist standards, these goals can only be accomplished by implementing the agenda of the Communist Party, beginning with the primary objective to abolish private property.¹⁴⁴ Of course, this is unacceptable by United Nations standards. The Marxist vision and the vision of the U.N. are similar in the sense that both parties want to see humanity overcome conflict, but their strategies for implementing this vision differ. As an institution, the progressive ideology of the U.N. suggests classist undertones, creating a global bourgeois dynamic consisting of socioeconomic trade-offs. In efforts to bring underdeveloped countries out of poverty, the organization creates a capitalist system that provides work opportunities for the poor, but does not allow them to organize in opposition to their employers. Consequently, the U.N. is especially vulnerable to Marxist critiques regarding the division of power within its member nations, as well as its objectives to strengthen the economic conditions of each country by providing policy advice that benefits employers instead of improving conditions for the working-class. Additionally, the Marxist view implies that many agencies of the U.N. are ineffective because they do not seek the radical change needed to truly bring the values presented in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to fruition. Thus, we can conclude that the Marxist ideology and the United Nations are two incompatible entities.

Marx and Engels dictate that "every form of society has been based, as we have already seen, on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes".¹⁴⁵ Given the composition of the United Nations, the current world in which we are living is not only a bourgeois society, but also one in which entire countries fall into the role of the oppressors and the oppressed. This is exemplified through the concept of the Security Council, which is charged with the "maintenance of international peace and security" and consists of fifteen members.¹⁴⁶ An uneven power dynamic is created as a result of Security Council policy that states "all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions," meaning that the rest of the countries within the UN must follow the rulings made by the fifteen members.¹⁴⁷ In the eyes of Marx and Engels, the UN Security Council is an example of a bourgeois institution that concentrates power in the hands of the few, rather than the many. Out of the fifteen-country membership to the Council, five are permanent: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China, and Russia. Madeleine Hosli and Thomas Dorfler suggest that organizations like the UN "purposely design institutions in a way that inhibits institutional change," which is evidenced by the lack of

¹⁴³ United Nations. "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." 1948. <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>.

¹⁴⁴ Marx, Karl. *The Communist Manifesto*. Chicago, Illinois: Pluto Press, 1996.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ United Nations Security Council. "What is the Security Council?" n.d. <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/what-security-council>

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

variance and unequal weighting regarding Council membership.¹⁴⁸ In doing so, the Security Council prevents the process of the nations merging to become a single-party communist state as well as impede upon their ability to “supersede themselves as the various differences between estates and classes disappear.”¹⁴⁹ Since the ultimate goal of communism is to collapse the current societal structure and create a stateless and classless society, the existence of the Security Council preserves the state as a foundational concept. Consequently, members of the proletariat class are at the behest of any labor policies that the state creates.

The United Nations also aims to foster economic growth of its member countries, which in turn only strengthens the global bourgeois-proletariat dynamic. The International Monetary Fund, a subsidiary of the U.N., describes its agenda as “working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, [and] promote high employment and sustainable economic growth.”¹⁵⁰ This policy is in direct support of Marx and Engels’ arguments, as they write that capitalism “compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production.”¹⁵¹ Consequently, the mission of the IMF encourages capitalist gain in each U.N. member country at the hands of the working-class. This institution utilizes a strategy called “surveillance” in which representatives meet with influential stakeholders in member countries to discuss fiscal and monetary policies. These conversations typically include government and banking officials, members of the legislature, and leaders in the business community. Admittedly, labor unions are involved in discussion, but it is worth noting that the ratio of groups that specifically advocate for the workers to the amount of groups that prioritize making a profit is heavily imbalanced.¹⁵² Thus, the IMF’s main prerogative through this tactic is to strengthen capitalist policies in the name of economic gain.

One distinct example of this is addressed in Dore Gold’s *Tower of Babbble*, a critique of the U.N. In the book, he describes the failed 1995 “oil-for-food” initiative that “allowed Iraq to sell oil in order to fund purchases of food, medicine, and other humanitarian goods.”¹⁵³ Though the U.N. was tasked with ensuring the flow of money was put towards improving the Iraqi standard of life, Saddam Hussein prevented this by denying weapons inspectors access to national facilities. By 2002, the oil-for-food program was expanded twice, and by 2004, Hussein had gained \$10.1 billion for his regime through illegal oil trade tactics.¹⁵⁴ This scenario also supports the arguments of public policy expert Martin Gilens, who emphasizes that “influence over actual policy outcomes appears to be reserved almost exclusively for those at the top of the income distribution.”¹⁵⁵ The goals of the IMF and the oil-for-food initiative are prime examples of Marx and Engels’ claim that “in the hands of the big capitalists...the workers were deprived of

¹⁴⁸ Dorfler, Thomas and Madeleine O. Hosli. “Why Is Change So Slow? Assessing Prospects for United Nations Security Council Reform.” *Journal of Economic Policy Reform* 22, no. 1 (2017): 35-50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17487870.2017.1305903>.

¹⁴⁹ Marx, Karl, *The Communist Manifesto*.

¹⁵⁰ International Monetary Fund. “The IMF at a Glance.” n.d. <https://www.imf.org/en/About>.

¹⁵¹ Marx, Karl. *The Communist Manifesto*.

¹⁵² International Monetary Fund. “IMF Surveillance.” March 30, 2020. <https://www.imf.org/en/About/Factsheets/IMF-Surveillance>

¹⁵³ Gold, Dore. *Tower of Babbble*. New York, New York: Random House, 2004.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Gilens, Martin. “Inequality and Democratic Responsiveness.” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 69, no. 5 (2005): 778-96. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3521574>.

the last remnants of their independence.”¹⁵⁶ In 1987, the Iraqi government took a turn to capitalism by abolishing a labor law that guaranteed full employment, transferred civil service jobs to factory jobs, and privatized government enterprises.¹⁵⁷ The U.N. enabled the Hussein regime to exploit its oil and the workers who produced and processed it, and it is evident that the wage-laborers under the regime made little to no profit. Instead it was Hussein himself who reaped the earnings. From 1996 to 2003 during the oil-for-food program, oil became the sole source of export earnings.¹⁵⁸ The project bolstered Iraq’s status as a rentier state in which governments use oil revenues to relieve social pressures in order to prevent movements that encourage government accountability.¹⁵⁹ More specifically, there are two types of social changes that increase the likelihood of democratization and modernization, one of them being the rise of occupational specialization that produces an autonomous workforce that can become equipped with bargaining power against elites.¹⁶⁰ Under the oil-for-food initiative, Hussein did not provide laborers with opportunities for specialization, nor did the U.N. intervene to ensure the funds were distributed effectively and ethically. Therefore, Hussein deprived the members of the working-class from gaining the power to self-advocate and prevent the further financial growth of his oppressive regime.

The Marxist vision would also hold that United Nations efforts to promote educational freedom are ineffective. Om Bakshi describes a Marxist ideal society as one in which “we find joy and fulfilment through intellectual, literary, and artistic pursuits.”¹⁶¹ Yet, the world’s current status deems it necessary to “work in factories to create conditions to pursue these activities.”¹⁶² Bakshi also argues that “only a communist society would provide conditions in which intellectual, literary, and artistic activities could be pursued meaningfully.”¹⁶³ With this being said, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seeks to support education through “the design of education sector development plans and donor mobilization in support of national educational priorities, such as curriculum reform, teacher policies, and ICTs in education.”¹⁶⁴ These initiatives are in contradiction to Marx and Engels’ agenda because the efforts do not promote a transition to a communist society. Rather, it is the revision of the “status quo,” or the current educational systems within bourgeoisie society that the U.N. seeks to implement. Subsequently, Marx and Engels would view UNESCO education policy as a false pathway to truly promoting intellectual growth of the proletariat, because according to them, genuine education can only be achieved through a communist society.

In conclusion, the initiatives of the United Nations and its agencies fail to follow the Communist agenda, preventing the ideal Marxist world. Simply put, the organization does not go

¹⁵⁶ Marx, Karl. *The Communist Manifesto*.

¹⁵⁷ Sanford, Jonathan E. “Iraq’s Economy: Past, Present, Future.” June 3, 2003.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/iraqs-economy-past-present-future>.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ross, Michael L. “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?” *World Politics* 53, no. 3 (2001): 325–61.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/wp.2001.0011>.

¹⁶⁰ Inglehart, Ronald F. and Christian Welzel. “How Development Leads to Democracy: What We Know About Modernization Today?” *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 2 (2009): 33–48. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2391678>

¹⁶¹ Bakshi, Om. “Marx’s Concept of Man: Alienation, Exploitation and Socialism.” *International Studies* 48, no. 2 (2011): 85–111. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020881712469456>.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ UNESCO. “Education and Policy Planning.” n.d. <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-policy-planning>.

far enough in deconstructing the global bourgeois dynamic, and it instead supports and encourages it. The United Nations does not give each member country equal weight, has little restraint on capitalist actions across the globe (especially in Iraq), and is not radical enough in its attempt to provide true education to the working-class. As a result, the United Nations is strengthening the chains of the proletariat rather than breaking them.

An Examination of Income Inequality and Its Misconceptions

By Kevin Catapano

Income inequality has become an increasingly prominent issue in American politics during the last decade. Most recently, several 2020 Democratic presidential candidates adopted the issue as a primary focus of their campaigns. In broaching the issue, these policymakers generally pose two central questions: How could a nation as prosperous as the United States distribute its wealth and resources in such an inequitable fashion? And how could political leaders permit such inequality to persist? These are the questions which have and will continue to frame the discourse and drive or discourage political action. With this in mind, there are two competing schools of thought regarding income inequality. The first line of thinking insists that income inequality is the result of both past and present systemic discrimination, exploitation, and oppression by an aristocratic ruling class. Any means, therefore, of remedying the inequity are justified on account of the unjust manner in which it was created. The opposing line of thinking does not deny the existence of income inequality, but rather questions the legitimacy of those claims regarding its materialization. If the disparity did not result from discrimination or injustice, then there are legitimate concerns regarding the righteousness of proposals for its rectification by government action. It is necessary to examine the misleading means by which income inequality is measured, the available evidence regarding the creation of the disparity, and the harm which will result from the imposition of legislative measures aimed at rectifying the disparity in the United States.

Before proceeding, it is useful to define the terms which will be utilized throughout the analysis, as well as their significance to the discussion. The term “income inequality,” despite the pejorative connotations which accompany its invocation, merely refers to a disparity of income between certain individuals or groups of people. It must be noted that “income,” in this context, is a catchall for several distinct streams of revenue, the most relevant of which are (1) salaries, wages and business profits; (2) capital gains and investment income; and (3) inheritances and trust funds. Earners annually move up and down the income ladder through the acquisition and forfeiture of the incomes listed in these three categories. This movement is *income mobility*. With regard to political concerns about income inequality, income mobility is the counterargument least often and least effectively addressed by those arguing for government action to remedy the disparity. Supporters of government action typically argue that the income disparity is a problem because the rich only grow richer and the poor only grow poorer. If this is true, then perhaps we should consider the existence of nefarious underlying economic or political forces in probing for the catalyst of such an unfair distribution of wealth. The proved existence of racial discrimination in the hiring process or the illicit denial of equitable educational opportunities would warrant action on the part of government officials to put an end to the injustices stripping Americans of the equitable opportunity to achieve economic prosperity and the accompanying benefits. While the prevalence of such injustice is the fundamental complaint forwarded by critics of income inequality, there is questionable evidence to prove its existence. Furthermore, critics often use flawed measurements of income disparities that lead them to faulty conclusions about the nature of the problem.

With regard to the measuring of income inequality, there are two matters we must consider, both of which are true. First, the wealthy are, in fact, growing wealthier on average at a disproportionate rate compared to those earning less.¹⁶⁵ In 2018, the top one percent of Americans earned on average 39 times more than did the bottom 90 percent, while the top ten percent averaged more than nine times that of the bottom 90 percent. While there does exist a substantial income disparity between Americans residing higher and lower on the income ladder, there is also a fundamental flaw in the manner in which this disparity is measured. By examining this flaw, we can identify the problems associated with the conclusions reached by studying such data. The second truthful consideration, therefore, is that the prevailing method by which income inequality is measured centers on comparisons between stationary percentages instead of the individual earners comprising those percentiles, the vast majority of whom enjoy marked income mobility.

While the top percentiles of earners may be earning a certain factor more than the bottom percentiles of earners on an annual basis, the individual earners comprising those income brackets are moving up and down the income ladder with regularity. More than half of all Americans will find themselves in the top ten percent for at least a year; 73 percent of Americans will be in the top 20 percent; 39 percent of Americans will be in the top five percent; and 12 percent of Americans will be in the top one percent. Furthermore, only 0.6 percent of earners will still be in the top one percent ten years later.¹⁶⁶ To reiterate, the wealthy as a collective may be growing collectively wealthier, but the individual Americans considered members of the wealthy collective and members of the poorer collective are constantly changing as they accumulate experience, knowledge, skills, wealth, and assets over time. The income mobility that the vast majority of Americans enjoy is unaccounted for when comparing the average earnings of particular income percentiles, as are the notable and varying ways in which earners rise and fall on the income ladder.

By considering the several distinct categories of income, we can understand the manner in which such income mobility occurs. For example, a person in the 50th percentile of earners may make \$80,000 in salary in a given year. Then, during the ensuing year, her father passes away and she inherits the family business, boosting her earnings to \$200,000 annually and landing her within the top 80 percent for the foreseeable future, until she sells the business, runs it into the ground, or grows its profits. Though this person has enjoyed an upward migration within the income percentiles, her newfound position is by no means indefinite based on income mobility data. Imagine as well that a person earning \$40,000 annually in salary decides to sell off assets accrued over the years, likely a rental property or shares in a publicly traded company. After he sells off the assets, his capital gains for the year are, say, \$200,000. Add these earnings to his salary of \$40,000 and his income for the year is \$240,000. While this person has jumped to a significantly higher income percentile for that year, the following year his salary will be the

¹⁶⁵ Saez, Emmanuel. "Striking It Richer: The Evolution of Top Incomes in the United States." Pathways Magazine of the Stanford Center for the Study of Poverty and Inequality. Winter 2008. <https://eml.berkeley.edu/~saez/saez-USStopincomes-2018.pdf>.

¹⁶⁶ Rank, Mark R. "From Rags to Riches to Rags." New York Times. April 18, 2014. <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/20/opinion/sunday/from-rags-to-riches-to-rags.html?smid=pl-share>.

same. However, he will not have any assets to sell, ultimately dropping back down to his original rung on the income ladder, though exponentially wealthier. The blind spots in the prevailing means of measuring income inequality, in conjunction with the consideration of data on income mobility, pose a substantial challenge to the contention that income inequality is an inherent negative warranting government rectification.

The first matter which we must consider in analyzing this challenge to the prevailing attitudes about income inequality is the degree to which income mobility dispels accusations of injustice, specifically discrimination, oppression, or exploitation. It is important to note is that instances of such injustice must be considered and rectified on an individual basis, as critics of income inequality have yet to produce evidence of present institutional discrimination or oppression, the existence of which is erroneously assumed at the mere sight of a naked disparity. The political force wielded by those noting that white American households are on average 13 times wealthier than African-American households should be lessened when considering that black households presently earn almost double that which they did in 1967.¹⁶⁷ Households headed by Asian Americans have outpaced white households in median earnings since 1987, and they are presently the wealthiest racial demographic in America at \$77,900 per household.¹⁶⁸ That poorer Americans, including minority groups, are growing wealthier over time is a reasonable challenge to the contentions made by critics of income inequality, which may explain the proclivity for racial comparisons. While whites may still be earning more than blacks, black earners are increasing their annual income at a faster rate than white earners. Black earners have not yet closed the gap simply because whites have not been stationary.¹⁶⁹ Many of the economic concerns expressed by critics of income inequality are sensible, but the emphasis on often ignored income mobility, particularly within certain groups, should provide a more expansive perspective which suggests the inutility of government action.

If income inequality is not the result of injustice, but rather the unavoidable consequence of healthy economic activity—namely, the voluntary, mutually-beneficial transfer of income in exchange for goods and services in a free market—then what would be the consequences of wealth redistribution aimed at remedying the income gap? The free market incentivizes the creation of useful goods and services which are sold at cheap prices. Market-based systems are such that participants are protected from coercion and exploitation during economic activity and are free to rise up the income ladder. In spite of its shortcomings, both historic and present, this is largely true of the United States. According to the Brookings Institution, there are only three things which Americans must do in order to avoid permanent poverty and join the middle class: graduate high school, obtain full-time employment, and refrain from having babies outside of wedlock. Seventy-five percent of people who do those three things will end up in the middle

¹⁶⁷ Pew Research Center. “Social and Demographic Trends.” June 27, 2016.
<https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/06/27/1-demographic-trends-and-economic-well-being/>.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Sowell, Thomas. “Interview with Tony Brown.” PBS. 1983.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cdY7tdZufkU&feature=emb_title.

class while only 2 percent will find themselves impoverished.¹⁷⁰ This is important because it proves that the barriers to economic ascension in the United States are largely self-imposed. And if the failure of an individual to climb the income ladder is not the fault of the government or of other Americans, then the government has no right to seize wealth from some earners and redistribute it to others. The prevailing justification for doing so is largely based upon misleading data and a failure to hold Americans accountable for their own actions. Now, there are limitations to the argument for personal responsibility as it pertains to income inequality because Americans do not uniformly begin in the same place. This, however, is a matter of equal access to resources and by no means an affront to equality of opportunity or a justification for redistributive policies. With this in mind, consider that redistribution conflicts fundamentally with the role of government to protect property and seems to be more politically-motivated than otherwise. Further, the redistribution of wealth is not merely governmental overreach, but also a destructive force against the useful market activity which ensures employment opportunities and the production of affordable, quality goods and services, both of which are instrumental in enabling economic mobility.

In revisiting the two fundamental questions which drive the discourse on income inequality, we must regard the full spectrum of considerations. The existence of income disparity does not alone prove that injustices are the reason for the disproportional allocation of wealth in America. Importantly, wealth is not *distributed* by an omnipotent entity like the U.S. federal government, but instead freely exchanged between individuals within a free market in pursuit of their own interests. These individuals comprise the disparate income percentiles and traverse the income ladder with noted frequency suggesting that there are not institutional barriers to economic mobility. Instead, the more plausible alternative is that the rise and fall of individuals along the income ladder is largely the result of personal choices and natural economic activities. As such, the government should not redistribute wealth, given that this is a violation of the right to property as well as the catalyst for the sort of reduction in economic activity which permits economic mobility and the remarkable degree to which it occurs. Many concerns regarding income inequality are reasonable, but the incentive for political gain has largely prevented a more thorough consideration of the matter. An issue attributed this magnitude of salience, and one which supposedly demands such extraordinary remedies, deserves just such a discussion.

¹⁷⁰ Haskins, Ron. "Three Simple Rules Poor Teens Should Follow to Join the Middle Class." The Brookings Institution. March 13, 2013. <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/three-simple-rules-poor-teens-should-follow-to-join-the-middle-class/>.

Felon Disenfranchisement in the United States

By Elannah Devin

Suffrage was established in the United States to create a nation in which power is held by the people, ensuring that democratic processes prosper. Democracy is defined by its ability to allow all people, regardless of socioeconomic, gender, or racial differences, to participate in political procedures. The United States does not claim to be a direct democracy, but Americans elect representatives so that their voices are heard. Felon disenfranchisement challenges this notion. Individuals convicted of felonies are currently the largest group of Americans unable to vote, therefore preventing American elections from reflecting the entirety of citizens' beliefs.¹⁷¹ This disenfranchisement disproportionately affects minority groups, perpetuating the inequalities that have weakened American democracy since its birth. If other stable and developed representative democracies can implement policies that allow for full citizen participation in government, why not the United States?

The origins of felon disenfranchisement date back as far as the times of Ancient Athens, Ancient Rome, and Medieval Europe. The notion was first brought to North America by British settlers who introduced what is known as civil death, an ideology based on restricting citizen privileges. In modern America, the Constitution reflects ideas based on this practice. For example, the Fourteenth Amendment indicates that states may abridge voting privileges on the basis of crimes that people have committed.¹⁷² As such, states can choose to have no restrictions, or restrictions while one is in prison, on parole, on probation, and/or post-sentence, making each states' conditions different. With these options available to the state, 77% of those affected by felon disenfranchisement no longer remain in prison in the United States.¹⁷³ In other words, more than three-quarters of individuals unable to vote because of their criminal record have already served their time. It may be argued that in committing a crime, felons lose their right to full citizen privileges because they threaten the peaceful functioning of society. However, rehabilitation and full inclusion in society may benefit the community as a whole, and the disenfranchised are currently barred from being able to move on from their criminal history.

Felon disenfranchisement has extremely disproportionate impacts on minority populations. Democracy in the United States has been threatened by inequality and oppression since the beginning of its time. Claims of democracy cannot be considered valid if particular groups are facing significantly different restrictions to citizen privileges. When felon disenfranchisement became increasingly popular in the United States, it had a considerably pointed purpose: allowing elite classes to prevent lower classes from participating in government activities. When black individuals were granted the right to vote, white upper-class citizens wanted to maintain their political control.¹⁷⁴ Stereotypes correlating crimes with such minority groups allowed for further oppression, imprisoning black individuals and keeping them from having a say in government decisions. This racial issue has not gone unnoticed. Many cases have

¹⁷¹ Holodny, Elena. "Millions of American Adults Are Not Allowed to Vote - and They Could Change History." Business Insider. January 3, 2018. <https://www.businessinsider.com/what-if-felons-could-vote-2017-7>.

¹⁷² "Historical Timeline - Felon Voting." ProCon.org. n.d. <https://felonvoting.procon.org/view.timeline.php?timelineID=000016>.

¹⁷³ Holodny, Elena. "Millions of American Adults Are Not Allowed to Vote - and They Could Change History.""

¹⁷⁴ "Historical Timeline - Felon Voting."

been brought forward in which individuals felt as though their right to vote was based on their background. In 1985, the US Supreme Court ruled that criminal disenfranchisement is legal if there is no racially discriminatory intent.¹⁷⁵ Despite this decision, racism persists. Black Americans of voting age are more than four times as likely to lose their voting rights than the rest of the adult population, with one in every 13 black adults disenfranchised nationally.¹⁷⁶ Based on this information, there is a clear correlation between race and felon disenfranchisement. A country with an issue of this extent is not able to reflect the voices of its entire population, as particular groups are being denied rights because of such institutional racism.

Furthermore, the primary responsibility of a functioning democracy is to guarantee that all decisions are representative of its constituents. Felon disenfranchisement hinders this democratic process as it bars a large portion of the population from participating in elections. As of 2016, 6.1 million Americans faced voting restrictions due to their criminal history, showing potential to significantly affect voting outcomes.¹⁷⁷ Because of this, there is no way to assure that American elections can truly reflect the opinions of the population. One example of this lack of representation was in the 2000 presidential election. Many analysts say that the effect of the felon population being unable to vote could have changed the outcome of the event. According to Christopher Uggen and Jeff Manza, co-authors of “Democratic Contraction? Political Consequences of Felon Disenfranchisement in the United States,” in the 2000 presidential election, Al Gore won the popular vote and lost a close battle in the Electoral College. With the votes of disenfranchised felons, Gore most likely would have defeated his opponent in the Electoral College, specifically with the leverage given to him by Democratic registered felons.¹⁷⁸ Cases like this are scattered throughout history and prove to continuously threaten the proper reflection of the needs and wants of all American citizens.

The United States’ democracy, especially in comparison to other effective systems, is flawed in terms of its felon disenfranchisement policies. In Europe alone, twenty-six countries give partial voting rights to incarcerated citizens, while eighteen allow voting no matter the crime. As such, the European Court of Human Rights actually recognizes felon disenfranchisement as a “violation of human rights.”¹⁷⁹ The United States has a significantly higher incarceration rate than countries with comparable government systems. At 670 inmates per 100,000 residents, America sees a rate about five times higher than the average in other countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.¹⁸⁰ With a corrupt system putting away such a large portion of the population, the concern about lack of representation for these individuals is even more alarming. Democracy cannot function under such conditions in which the citizens are not able to participate in government, like other countries around the world allow.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Chung, Jean. “Felon Disenfranchisement: A Primer.” December 2019. <https://www.sentencingproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Felony-Disenfranchisement-Primer.pdf>.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Uggen, Christopher and Jeff Manza. “Democratic Contraction? Political Consequences of Felon Disenfranchisement in the United States.” *American Sociological Review* 67, no. 6 (2002): 777-803. www.jstor.org/stable/3088970.

¹⁷⁹ Sanders, Emmett. “Full Human Beings.” People's Policy Project. n.d. <https://www.peoplespolicyproject.org/projects/prisoner-voting/>.

¹⁸⁰ Holodny, Elena. “Millions of American Adults Are Not Allowed to Vote - and They Could Change History.”

Felon disenfranchisement directly challenges the fundamental ideologies of democracy that the United States was founded upon. Citizens are being kept from full participation in government due to criminal history. There is clearly undemocratic targeting of this lack of citizen privilege toward minorities, a fact that cannot be ignored. While other countries have found a solution, the United States remains unsuccessful in providing for its felon population.

Incarceration and Society: When Are You No Longer Human?

By Kylee Dostie

Americans often dissociate from those who have been incarcerated because American societal values suggest that the incarcerated are lesser humans and must deserve what is happening to them. Mass incarceration has increased by more than 700% since the 1970s, and sentence lengths have substantially increased alongside it.¹⁸¹ The United States has the highest rate of mass incarceration across the globe, even beating countries with authoritarian regimes such as China and North Korea. The United States' high incarceration rate is tied to a lack of understanding about criminal justice issues. In addition, many Americans feel a sense of compassion fatigue that causes them to feel apathetic towards human rights abuses, even if it is in their own backyard. American perceptions of imprisoned people lead to widespread mistreatment of the incarcerated, and it ultimately harms society. When mass incarceration is occurring, American democracy is threatened because fewer people have a voice.

Many people do understand the issue at hand, but compassion fatigue is very real and rarely discussed in the human rights sphere. Compassion fatigue is the emotional distress or apathy to charitable appeals on behalf of those who are suffering as a result of either the frequency or number of said appeals.¹⁸² People get push alerts and watch the news as the world seemingly drives itself into chaos, and they increasingly feel powerless. Charles Figley, a distinguished professor from Tulane, describes it by explaining that "we have not been directly exposed to the trauma scene, but we hear the story told with such intensity, or we hear similar stories so often... eventually, we lose a certain spark of optimism, humor and hope. We tire."¹⁸³ To overcome compassion fatigue, it is important to frame experiences and stories in a way that makes it so people get fired up rather than tired.

This sentiment of compassion fatigue reigns true in the present climate, with prisoners facing much of the brunt. In February 2019, a polar vortex brought record-low temperatures across the country, including New York. Brooklyn's Metropolitan Detention Center, a federal prison located in New York City, partially lost power during this time, which left more than 1,600 prisoners in freezing cells. Many of them had no heat, hot meals, hot water for showers, or light in their cells. They were also reportedly denied access to extra clothing and blankets, despite the frigid conditions. The inmates were left to bang pots and pans on their cell windows and wave lights to signal their distress. Many became sick and frantic as the days passed and the Federal Bureau of Prisons denied the severity of the conditions. Power was restored eight days later.¹⁸⁴ More recently, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic that is sweeping the globe, prisoners are living in what are essentially petri dishes for infection. In a correctional facility, there is no way for inmates to isolate or even stay six feet apart from others. Inmates can sleep in

¹⁸¹ FutureLearn. "Why Did the U.S. Prison Population Increase So Much?" FutureLearn. April 18, 2020. <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/economics-of-crime/0/steps/20279>.

¹⁸² Zampella, Tony. "Distinguishing Compassion from Sympathy and Empathy." Bhavana Learning Group. March 27, 2020. <https://www.bhavanalearninggroup.com/distinguishing-compassion-from-sympathy-and-empathy/>.

¹⁸³ "Compassion Fatigue." The American Institute of Stress. November 7, 2011. <https://www.stress.org/military-for-practitionersleaders/compassion-fatigue>.

¹⁸⁴ Wang, Amy B. "Protesters Swarm Brooklyn Jail that Endured Polar Vortex with No Heat." *The Washington Post*. February 3, 2019. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/02/03/protesters-swarm-dark-freezing-brooklyn-jail-that-endured-polar-vortex-with-no-heat/>.

bays of over sixty people within overcrowded and unsanitary facilities. The Cook County jail in Chicago went from two confirmed cases to over 100 in roughly one week, and that is happening in jails across the United States. The number of COVID-19 cases behind bars continues to skyrocket. Calls to release prisoners have increased, but many states have been slow in response.¹⁸⁵

When the United States does not count the incarcerated population as citizens it erases them from the collective consciousness of Americans. Treatment of the incarcerated no longer seems important. Blatant human rights abuses were ignored for eight days as the Bureau of Prisons tried to stifle the issue and make it appear as nothing more than just some white noise from the media, even though their guards had to wear multiple layers to stay warm on their shifts. The incarcerated were ignored when COVID-19 ripped through the prison cells like wildfire, with hundreds becoming seriously ill or dying of the virus. The biggest issue is that both of these situations were entirely preventable, but people elected to ignore the flaws in the system. The information is out there and readily available, yet these issues are ignored. The American people seem unfazed by the plight of prisoners. They hear negative headlines, and feel there is little they can do. While this news is not positive, it should not give people any excuse to ignore these blatant human rights abuses that plague the prison system.

Children grow up learning that only bad people go to prisons, and they are never taught what actually happens inside the looming walls that are surrounded by a massive fence. They do not learn about that 76% of the people held in prison are not even convicted of a crime, or that most of the youth in prisons are either in there for no “real” crime, or simply refugees awaiting placement.¹⁸⁶ Drug arrests have increased by over 550% since 1982, and thousands of those arrests have been for marijuana-related charges, a drug that is legalized in 11 states recreationally and 33 states for medical use.^{187,188} It is important for people to understand the reality of who is incarcerated in America to truly grasp the magnitude of the issue. People oftentimes have a falsified perception on what a prisoner is, and it leads them to believe that prisoners deserve what is happening to them even when it is violating their human rights. These people believe that they themselves are good people, and they see that this is not happening to them. This idea reinforces beliefs that the mistreatment of prisoners is acceptable simply because they must deserve it in one way or another.

Most people do not realize how dangerous prisons are or how they are an inhumane space of abuse and degradation, but rather only see a perceived danger around prisoners. Nelson Mandela is quoted saying, “no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A

¹⁸⁵ Williams, Timothy, Benjamin Weiser, and William K. Rashbaum. “‘Jails Are Petri Dishes’: Inmates Freed As the Virus Spreads Behind Bars.” New York Times. March 30, 2020.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/us/coronavirus-prisons-jails.html>.

¹⁸⁶ Sawyer, Wendy and Peter Wagner. “Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2019.” Prison Policy Initiative. March 19, 2019. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2019.html>.

¹⁸⁷ FutureLearn. “Why Did the U.S. Prison Population Increase So Much?”

¹⁸⁸ “Marijuana Incarceration Statistics for 2019: By State, Region, & Race.” NCDAS. November 2, 2019. <https://drugabusestatistics.org/marijuana-incarceration/>.

nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones.”¹⁸⁹ Prisons are typically found in unpopulated areas, far away from the cities, so both the facility and population within the walls are out of sight and out of mind. When the justice system “removes” a criminal from society, it is removing their humanity. Within the state of Connecticut alone, 75% of the institutions are found in either suburbs or more rural areas such as Somers’ Osborn and Northern Correctional Facilities. In addition to facing unfair and inhumane treatment behind bars, prisoners are also disenfranchised in many states until they either finish parole, probation, both, or permanently lose their right. The U.S. Census Bureau still counts incarcerated persons as ‘residents’ of the location of the prisons rather than their home communities, which in turn shifts representation in Congress away from towns and cities with more urgent needs as their population is incarcerated and taken away. When America allows for its prisoners to have their human rights stripped away from them, it is, in turn, weakening its own democracy. The only way to reduce a world-leading incarceration rate is through policy change.¹⁹⁰ However, when those who would be directly affected by policy change cannot even have their voice heard, it raises serious questions about the nature of American democracy.

Mass incarceration has been more widely discussed because of the work of human rights lawyers such as Bryan Stevenson and the conversation around the decriminalization of drugs like marijuana. However, Americans still lack much of the compassion required to make real change happen. The prisoners living in the Brooklyn Metropolitan Correctional Center were still freezing for over a week as temperatures dropped with no blankets or heat to warm them. COVID-19 is still ripping through correctional facilities across the country, with prisoners unable to protect themselves through isolation or simple hygiene measures. Through these conditions, Americans have become disconnected from these people and allowed for the disenfranchisement of the incarcerated. Compassion fatigue and misunderstanding of criminals have harmed American democracy. To reverse this trend, the United States must approach the incarcerated differently. Americans must view the incarcerated not as monsters, but talk about them as if they are what they are: human beings.

¹⁸⁹ Lackey, Jennifer. "The Measure of a Country is How it Treats its Prisoners. The U.S. is Failing." The Washington Post. February 6, 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-measure-of-a-country-is-how-it-treats-its-prisoners-the-us-is-failing/2019/02/06/8df29acc-2a1c-11e9-984d-9b8fba003e81_story.html.

¹⁹⁰ Sawyer, Wendy and Peter Wagner. "Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2019."

An Examination of the Efficiency Gap in Connecticut State Assembly Elections Since 1966

By Kyle Fishbein

Connecticut has enjoyed a long and storied history regarding state legislative apportionment controversies including contentious objections, court cases, and even a partially cancelled election in 1964. This article examines the partisan gerrymandering measure called the “efficiency gap” and how the Connecticut General Assembly has fared since 1966 in keeping partisan gerrymandering to a minimum.

The efficiency gap, as a measure, first came to mainstream light in the Supreme Court case *Gill v. Whitford*. Primarily, the appellants were concerned with the district maps that the Wisconsin legislature drew and passed after voters elected a Republican majority in the Wisconsin state legislature in the 2010 election. The maps made it much more likely that Republicans would hold control of the legislature under many possible voting scenarios, even if the Democrats received a majority of the votes in the state. Claimed to be unfair to some, the plan was legally challenged for potentially being gerrymandered by the Republican Party in an effort to retain seats likely to be lost in future elections. Within the court case, the efficiency gap made an impact.¹⁹¹

The efficiency gap was proposed by Professor Nicholas Stephanopoulos of the University of Chicago Law School and Eric McGhee from the Public Policy Institute of California. The goal of their measure was to determine how effective political parties were at using the total amount of votes they received across elections within the legislature to acquire seats. In other words, the gap measures how true the equation, votes = seats, is in that particular election. It is a way to measure the extent of potential partisan gerrymandering in redistricting.¹⁹²

The first step in calculating the efficiency gap is to find the wasted votes for each seat in the chamber. To determine the number of wasted votes, one must find the lowest number that secures the election for a particular candidate (50% + 1 of the two-party vote). After, one finds the candidate of the two major parties that has more votes and subtracts the minimum vote needed to win the election from the actual obtained vote for the candidate. This number is the number of wasted votes for that candidate in the examined election. For the loser of the election, *all* of the obtained votes are wasted because none of those votes resulted in a candidate winning a seat in the legislature. After completing the wasted vote calculation for both major party candidates in the district, one calculates the net wasted vote for the district. This is done by simply subtracting the lesser number of wasted votes from the greater number of wasted votes and determining which party has the greater number of wasted votes. For this examination, when the net wasted vote is positive, that indicates the Democratic candidate wasted more votes, and vice versa. When the net wasted vote is calculated for all districts, simply find the overall net wasted vote for that year by adding the net wasted vote for all districts together. The last step in

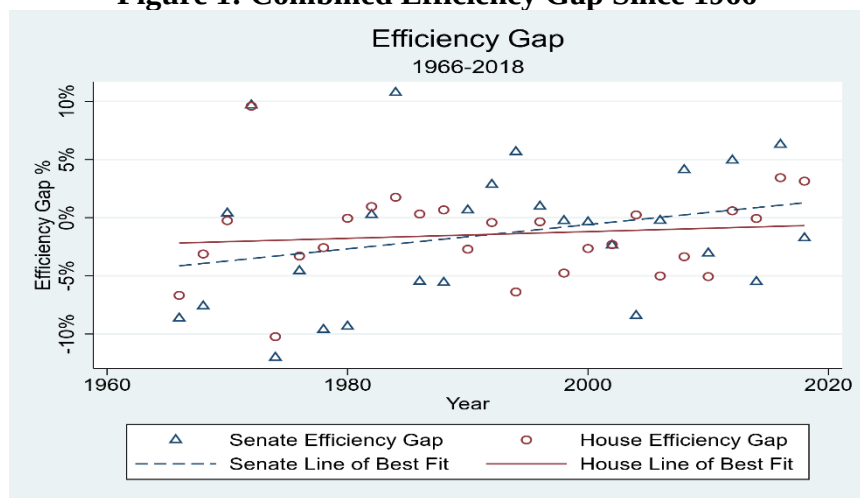
¹⁹¹ Stephanopoulos, Nicholas O. and Eric M. McGhee. "Partisan Gerrymandering and the Efficiency Gap." *University of Chicago Law Review* 82, no. 2 (2020): Article 4.

¹⁹² Petry, Eric. "How the Efficiency Gap Works." Brennan Center for Justice. February 4, 2020. https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/legal-work/How_the_Efficiency_Gap_Standard_Works.pdf

finding the efficiency gap is dividing the overall net wasted vote that was just calculated by the total two-party vote for the chamber.¹⁹³ If the result is positive, that is indicative of the Democratic Party wasting more votes, same as before.

Stephanopoulos and McGee did not claim to have an unimpeachable threshold for determining if a redistricting plan should be considered gerrymandered on a partisan basis, but they did suggest the threshold be set at $\pm 8\%$ based on their analysis of historical efficiency gaps. This was set in part to differentiate partisan gerrymandering and partisan *bias* in redistricting plans, as it is impractical for a redistricting plan to be completely unbiased due to the various other factors that go into redistricting plans (e.g. district compactness and population). When the result is zero, both parties were equally efficient at turning votes into seats. For neutral observers, this is the goal, but for partisans, they are not concerned about the threshold. Passing the threshold means they have done an impressive job in creating the district map to benefit their party.¹⁹⁴

Figure 1: Combined Efficiency Gap Since 1966



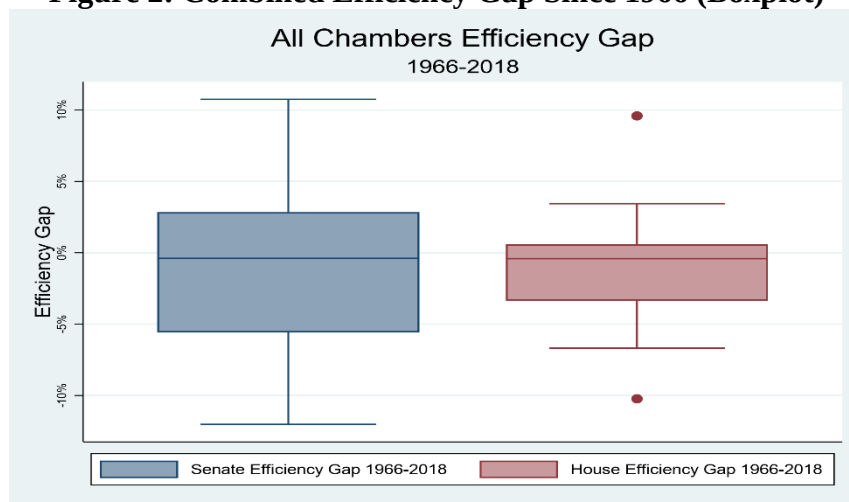
Rarely do either of the Connecticut General Assembly chambers reach an efficiency gap greater than $\pm 8\%$. The Senate only surpassed 8% efficiency gap in 1972 and 1984, at 9.7% and 10.7%, respectively, while surpassing -8% five times: 1966, 1974, 1978, 1980, and 2004. A larger positive value indicates that the Republican Party was more successful at turning limited votes into more seats, and vice versa. Of the twenty-seven elections examined, the Democratic Party was incredibly inefficient at turning votes into seats only 7.4% of the time, while the Republican Party only 18.5%. The House of Representatives had even less cases where the efficiency gap was greater than $\pm 8\%$, with a 9.6% efficiency gap in 1972 and a -10.2% efficiency gap in 1974. This difference is astonishing considering the fact that this is only one election cycle apart from each other *and* within the same reapportionment cycle. There does not seem to be a glaring reason why this drop occurred, as after 1974, the House efficiency gap levels off and stays between 0% and -3% until the next reapportionment cycle in 1982. Therefore, the $\pm 8\%$

¹⁹³ The two-party vote is the total number of votes cast for the Republican candidate and Democratic candidate combined, including cross-endorsed candidates.

¹⁹⁴ Stephanopoulos, Nicholas O. and Eric M. McGhee. "Partisan Gerrymandering and the Efficiency Gap."

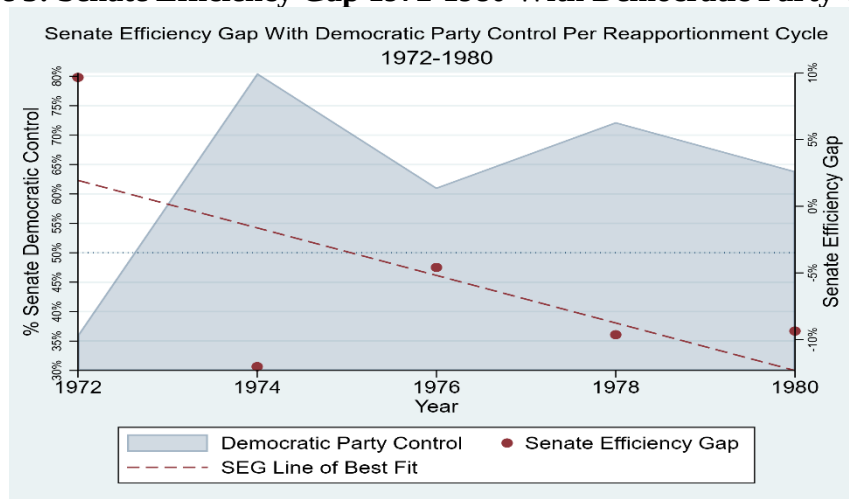
threshold seems to work well for Connecticut in its history, as even in the few cases where the efficiency gap is outside of the proposed threshold, it is not by a large amount (see Figure 1).

Figure 2: Combined Efficiency Gap Since 1966 (Boxplot)



The range of the efficiency gap in both chambers across all twenty-seven elections is also very interesting to examine (see Figure 2). This is important specifically for the House of Representatives, as this shows that outside of those two elections mentioned previously (1972 and 1974), the efficiency gap in the chamber is quite consistent, varying at about a 6% rate. Even with the average efficiency gap for each chamber equal to each other at 1.4%, the range in the efficiency gap for the Senate is much larger and less consistent. This is surprising to find considering the chambers are different sizes and the districts are drawn differently and dissimilar in population. There does not seem to be a clear explanation for why this occurred, other than a simple chance.

Figure 3: Senate Efficiency Gap 1972-1980 With Democratic Party Control

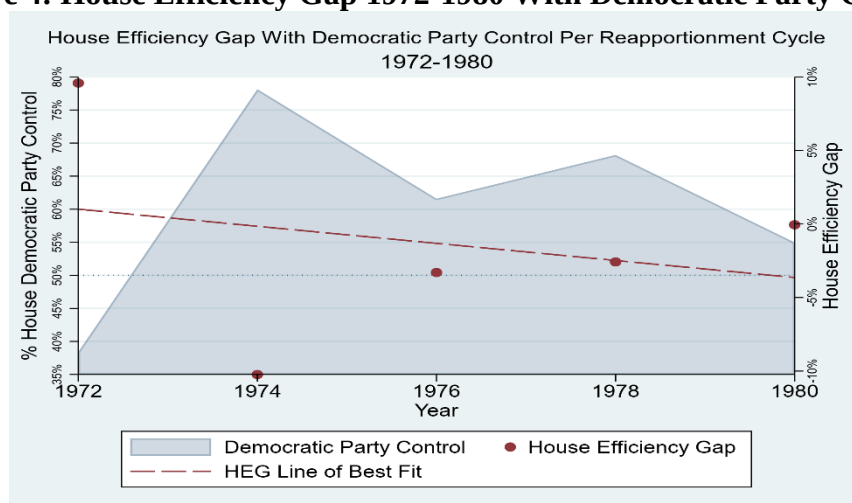


The most interesting of the Senate breakdowns is the reapportionment cycle that includes the elections from 1972-1980 (see Figure 3). This includes the massive gap change from 1972-

1974 that was mentioned earlier. The slope of the trendline is severely negative because besides the 1972 election, not once during that reapportionment cycle does the efficiency gap even come close to 0%, staying well below through the end of the decade. Clearly, the Republican Party was not very efficient at turning the votes they received into seats in the state Senate, but by 1982 that changed.

Generally, the trend shows that as the level of Democratic Party control rises in the chamber, the more efficient they are at turning their acquired votes into seats, and the less effective the Republican Party is at doing the same up until the mid-1990s. After that, there is no clear trend through the rest of the years, as in some years the same trend shows up, while in others, the opposite seems to be true. This does not account for the total two-party vote for that election.

Figure 4: House Efficiency Gap 1972-1980 With Democratic Party Control



The Republican Party has been generally more effective at turning votes into seats in the House. Since 1978, the gap has little fluctuation, especially when compared to the changes from 1966-1976. The most interesting breakdown in the House is in the period including 1972 through 1980 (see Figure 4). The efficiency gap in 1972 was 9.6%, and just one election cycle later, in 1974, the efficiency gap changed drastically to -10.2%. This massive change in the efficiency gap is explained partially because of the chamber's makeup. The Democratic Party did not have majority control in 1972, and with a 2.2% *decrease* in the total number of votes for the party in the 1974 election, was able to grab control of nearly 80% of the seats in the House of Representatives. When the party in question holds more seats in a chamber, it generally wastes less votes and is more efficient. There exists also a slight move towards the Democratic Party being less efficient at turning votes into seats over time, which is expected considering that the Democratic Party has held a majority of the seats in the chamber since the mid-to-late 1980s.

Hence, the Republican Party has generally been more efficient at turning votes into seats in the Connecticut General Assembly since 1966. The trend in the Senate is much clearer than in the House. Steadily, the Republican Party has become more and more efficient in making use of

a smaller vote count since 1988. Not only that, but they have been more efficient in the House in four of the last five elections compared to only two of the last five for the Senate.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ For this research, all cross-endorsed candidates had their entire vote count included in all wasted vote and efficiency gap calculations. Candidates who were only endorsed by a third party, or more than one third party, and NOT one of the two major parties were not included in efficiency gap calculations and those votes were disregarded in district vote totals for efficiency gap purposes. A third party with no nomination was not recorded as “no nomination” as the two major parties were. Uncontested elections (where only one major party endorsed a candidate) and elections where the two major parties endorsed the same candidate are not included in any wasted vote or efficiency gap calculations either. All figures that include party control have a reference line at 50% control. Figures were made using Stata16 software.

The Politics of Urban Development in Stamford from 1960-2020

Michael Hernández

In 1986, the former director of the Stamford Urban Redevelopment Commission Jack Condlin claimed that in “a hundred years from now, some urban planner will do a doctorate on the Stamford Experience.”¹⁹⁶ The so-called “Stamford Experience” has been a 60-year experiment in urban development that has transformed the small New England town into a corporate powerhouse. To accommodate this growth, Stamford’s zoning laws have been changed and centuries-old neighborhoods have given way to skyscrapers. This paper will analyze the untold story of the politics behind these radical changes in urban planning, with close attention to the conflict between developers and Stamford’s local residents.

The story of urban planning in Stamford begins in 1960 at the dawn of the Urban Renewal Era, when Stamford officials granted the F.D. Rich Company sole rights to redevelop 130 acres of its downtown.¹⁹⁷ This was one of the largest urban renewal efforts in the United States, resulting in millions of square feet of new office space that attracted Fortune 500 companies relocating from New York City.¹⁹⁸ Hundreds of families were displaced during this process as their homes were replaced by office towers and a new shopping mall. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, more apartment and office towers continued to reshape Stamford’s skyline.

In 1994, the City of Stamford sold two large properties downtown to Swiss banking giant UBS for \$1. In turn, UBS built its headquarters and the largest trading floor in the world on the site.¹⁹⁹ This development established Stamford as one of the most prominent financial centers in the country. In the 2000s, Antares Investment Partners acquired 82 properties in the city’s South End at a cost of over \$400 million and planned to turn the formerly industrial neighborhood into a residential waterfront community called “Harbor Point.” The project was approved by Stamford’s Zoning Board in 2007 and it soon evolved into a \$3.5 billion venture under a new developer, Building and Land Technology (BLT), that has redefined Stamford’s waterfront.²⁰⁰

In the 2010s, Stamford entered an unprecedented construction boom of apartments and office space totaling over \$6 billion in 2020, likely an extension of New York’s City’s growth.²⁰¹ During this period, Stamford became a digital media hub with the construction of Charter Communications’ \$400 million world headquarters and the headquarters of ITV America and

¹⁹⁶ Eleanor, Charles. “Stamford Acts to Humanize Downtown Renewal.” New York Times. December 14, 1986. <https://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/14/realestate/stamford-acts-to-humanize-downtown-renewal.html>.

¹⁹⁷ “History.” F.D. Rich Company. 2020. <http://fdrich.com/history/>.

¹⁹⁸ Knight, Michael. “Stamford A Small Hub of Wealth And Power.” New York Times. June 13, 1976. <https://www.nytimes.com/1976/06/13/archives/stamford-a-small-hub-of-wealth-and-power-stamford-a-small-hub-of.html>.

¹⁹⁹ Vigdor, Neil. “Boomtown Under Malloy, Stamford Now at Crossroads.” CT Post. October 18, 2014. <https://www.ctpost.com/local/article/Boomtown-under-Malloy-Stamford-now-at-crossroads-5832407.php>.

²⁰⁰ Kim, Elizabeth. “Antares Comes to Stamford.” Stamford Advocate. September 1, 2009. <https://www.stamfordadvocate.com/news/article/Antares-comes-to-Stamford-6626.php>.

²⁰¹ Zimmerman, Kevin. “Stamford Continues to Reign Supreme with \$6 billion in Development.” Westfair Communications. February 1, 2020. <https://westfaironline.com/120820/stamford-continues-to-reign-supreme-with-6-billion-in-development/>.

NBC Sports.²⁰² While these major developments drew few controversies from local residents, other developments drew large crowds of opposition. The tension between local residents and developers reached a tipping point in 2011 when BLT demolished the city's only boatyard to make way for hedge fund giant Bridgewater Associates' \$750 million headquarters.²⁰³ Local residents accused BLT of illegally demolishing the site, and the conflict turned into a 2-year legal battle that eventually reached Connecticut's Supreme Court. The Court sided with BLT, but Bridgewater's headquarters were never built, leaving the future of the 14-acre site uncertain.²⁰⁴ More importantly, relations between BLT and local residents were not salvaged, and many residents in zoning board public hearings continue citing the incident as evidence of the developer's growing influence in the city. In 2011, a \$750 million plan to build two 400-foot towers downtown and redevelop a post office on the site drew opposition even as it was downsized. Preservationists embarked on a legal battle to save the site, but the courts sided with the developer.²⁰⁵ This prompted residents in the South End to adopt a preservationist attitude and call for the expansion of historic districts, which is a method of slowing down what they perceived as the encroachment of large developers into their neighborhood.²⁰⁶

The history of development in Stamford shows that the city has followed a particular pattern to handle development. Namely, private developers are granted large parcels of land and empowered by the zoning board to carry out large developments. While these developments have undoubtedly contributed to the economic well-being of the city, many residents have raised concerns about gentrification and displacement.²⁰⁷ During the Urban Renewal Era, "1,200 mostly poor families and 400 "mom and pop" stores [were] evicted from the downtown site."²⁰⁸ In fact, "the [Stamford] Government paid more than \$50 million to clear sites for General Telephone and Electronics, Champion International, the Singer Corporation, Macy's, J.C. Penney's and 100 other stores."²⁰⁹ Moreover, these developments have not always taken the voices of local residents into account. For example, the federal funding given to Stamford during its Urban Renewal Era included provisions that called for institutionalized community involvement. These often took the form of "an agency that derived its authority from the state at a time when the city

²⁰² Lytton, Barry. "Charter HQ's Stamford Expansion Gets OK, City Gets Millions." Stamford Advocate. April 9, 2019. <https://www.stamfordadvocate.com/local/article/Charter-HQ-s-Stamford-expansion-gets-OK-city-13754389.php>.

²⁰³ La Roche, Julia. "Ray Dalio's Bridgewater Plans to Build A New \$750 Million Headquarters in Stamford and Is Expected to Add 1,000 More Jobs." Business Insider. August 15, 2012. <https://www.businessinsider.com/ray-dalios-bridgewater-new-headquarters-2012-8>.

²⁰⁴ Carella, Angela. "Judge Sides with Zoning Board, Developer, in Stamford Boatyard Case." Stamford Advocate. January 12, 2019. <https://www.stamfordadvocate.com/local/article/Judge-sides-with-Zoning-Board-developer-in-13309189.php>.

²⁰⁵ Kim, Elizabeth. "Fight to Save Stamford Post Office Suffers Another Setback." Stamford Advocate. March 5, 2015. <https://www.stamfordadvocate.com/local/article/Fight-to-save-Stamford-post-office-suffers-6117264.php>.

²⁰⁶ Naughton, Nora. "Stamford Groups Fight to Stop More South End Demolitions." Stamford Advocate. October 11, 2016. <https://www.stamfordadvocate.com/local/article/Stamford-groups-fight-to-stop-more-South-End-9960842.php>.

²⁰⁷ Carella, Angela. "Stamford's Harbor Point: City Seeks to Discern South End Changes." Stamford Advocate. January 13, 2018. <https://www.stamfordadvocate.com/local/article/Stamford-s-Harbor-Point-City-seeks-to-discern-12493895.php#photo-14875884>.

²⁰⁸ Tomasson, Robert E. "Definitions Have Changed, and So Have Goals, but There Are Some Successes." New York Times. February 4, 1979. <https://www.nytimes.com/1979/02/04/archives/the-ups-and-downs-of-urban-renewal.html>.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

did not have an economic development program to uplift depressed urban neighborhoods.”²¹⁰ In 1954, the Stamford Urban Redevelopment Commission was created to serve this purpose. However, it is not entirely clear whether the commission incorporated members from communities under redevelopment. Even today, the commission is largely unknown to the public and its members do not necessarily represent neighborhoods affected by redevelopment.²¹¹ Moreover, the power of the commission has shifted largely to the Economic Development Department in Stamford’s city hall, further isolating grassroots-level involvement in redevelopment efforts.

While the Urban Redevelopment Commission and the Economic Development Department play key roles in redevelopment projects, they are not the only government agency involved. The city’s zoning board plays a power role in development because it has jurisdiction to approve or reject development projects, and it officially “regulates the height, bulk and uses of property.”²¹² For residents, this is another opportunity to express their support or opposition for a development project in their neighborhood and beyond. It is in zoning board public hearings where the voices of Stamford residents can be found and where the politics of urban development often begin.

One of the most contested and documented urban developments in Stamford is the ongoing \$3.5 billion Harbor Point development, which has already transformed a formerly industrial neighborhood into one of the most attractive communities on Connecticut’s so-called “Gold Coast.” According to a report by the Stamford Advocate that reflected on the past 10 years of the project, Harbor Point properties “contribute more than \$1.2 billion to the city’s Grand List value” and “twenty-seven restaurants, retailers, and office tenants, including Bridgewater Associates, the largest hedge fund in the world, exist where overgrown industrial brownfields once ruled.”²¹³ Additionally, the development has expanded beyond its original site, creating a clash between residents who wish to preserve the character of the neighborhood and new residents that support the expansion of Harbor Point. This has prompted community leaders to join grassroots organizations such as the South End Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ), which was formed in 1997, to push against what they perceive as overdevelopment.²¹⁴ According to the NRZ Vice Chairwoman Sue Halpern, “[they are] fighting like hell.”²¹⁵ The NRZ has found support among concerned residents and politicians such as municipal Representative Terry Adams and State Representative David Michel. This network has been able to rally residents

²¹⁰ Skalka, Liz. “Stamford’s Urban Development Commission Faces Reduced Role.” Greenwich Time. August 24, 2016. <https://www.greenwichtime.com/local/article/Stamford-s-Urban-Redevelopment-Commission-faces-9182500.php>.

²¹¹ “Urban Redevelopment Commission.” City of Stamford. n.d. <https://www.stamfordct.gov/urban-redevelopment-commission>.

²¹² “Zoning Commission,” City of Stamford. n.d. <https://www.stamfordct.gov/zoning>.

²¹³ Lytton, Barry. “Harbor Point at 10: Where BLT Has Been, Where It’s Going.” January 12, 2019. Stamford Advocate. <https://www.stamfordadvocate.com/local/article/Harbor-Point-at-10-Where-BLT-has-been-where-13527793.php>.

²¹⁴ “South End, Waterside, West Side.” City of Stamford. n.d. <https://www.stamfordct.gov/sites/stamfordct/files/file/file/southendwatersidewestside.pdf>.

²¹⁵ Lytton, Barry. “Harbor Point at 10: Where BLT Has Been, Where It’s Going.”

against BLT and even halted a 22-story development in its tracks through a petition to the Board of Representatives.^{216,217} The latter action is now being decided in court.

The Harbor Point development provides a framework to understand how the politics of urban development have unfolded in Stamford since 1960. Namely, residents living in communities affected by development in Stamford participate by joining grassroots organizations, conducting rallies, signing petitions, and attending zoning board meetings. These often-heated interactions have uplifted the voices of residents that are otherwise not included in the decision-making process of large urban developments. Given the unprecedented scale of the Harbor Point development, there is reason to believe that the involvement of residents has also increased in comparison to the Urban Renewal Era projects and other subsequent projects.

Since 1960, the politics of urban development in Stamford have gone from insulated city hall conversations to grassroots efforts that aim to halt the rapid pace of development. Even though there is evidence that residents affected by development participate in the decision-making process, they are underrepresented in the city boards that make decisions on development. As Stamford begins to mature as a city in its own right and its urban development reaches new heights, the politics of urban development will continue to develop parallel to the growing conflict between the interests of large developers and local residents.²¹⁸

²¹⁶ Rocha, Humberto. "Stamford Residents Voice Discontent Over South End 'Overbuilding'." Stamford Advocate. July 13, 2019. <https://www.stamfordadvocate.com/local/article/Stamford-residents-voice-discontent-over-South-14093678.php#photo-17851525>.

²¹⁷ Carella, Angela. "Stamford's Harbor Point: City Seeks to Discern South End Changes."

²¹⁸ Schott, Paul. "Stamford Apartment Boom Shows No Signs of Slowing." CT Insider. January 4, 2020. <https://www.ctinsider.com/business/stamfordadvocate/article/Stamford-apartment-boom-shows-no-signs-of-slowng-14947839.php>.

The Poor at War: Artificial Caste Division Perpetrated by Higher Powers in the U.S.

By Musa Hussain

Throughout U.S. history, politicians and large corporations have instigated the creation of divisions among the lower classes to prevent them from unifying to confront the power structures they are under. By indirectly pitting people against each other on the basis of race, ethnicity, and religion, the wealthiest and most powerful Americans have undermined potential alliances and prevented people from realizing the contradictory class locations that connect them. Without the unity of the lower classes, those who currently retain the vast majority of money and power can continue to quietly rule the country unchallenged by the rest of the nation who have been led to believe it is their neighbor next door and not the CEO they work under that is the reason for their economic plight.

Some ways that people of the same economic class are divided are on the bases of their race, ethnicity, or religion. The racial divide between poor blacks and poor whites, particularly, has been taken advantage of by those in power since before the United States even became a country. In 1676, English colonist Nathaniel Bacon led a rebellion in the colony of Virginia, which would become one of the first occasions in which impoverished people of different races united. The seeds of the rebellion were planted when the governor of the colony refused to allow colonists to claim Native American land westward of the frontier. Tensions rose, and eventually, under the leadership of Nathaniel Bacon, poor white indentured servants and black slaves rose up in arms together and stormed the state capital of Virginia.²¹⁹ This act of unity between slaves and indentured servants was greatly troubling to the ruling class which consisted of the wealthy, land-owning, white individuals who either were involved in or had strong ties to the government.²²⁰ If slaves and servants, who made up the vast majority of the population, continued to cooperate in resistance, the hierarchical power dynamics would shift completely. The ruling class realized “the answer to [their] problem, obvious if unspoken and only gradually recognized, was racism, to separate dangerous free whites from dangerous slave blacks by a screen of racial contempt.”²²¹ To do this, they passed the Virginia Slave Codes in 1705. This list of codes elevated the rights and treatment of white servants slightly over their black fellow class members.²²² For example, the codes prevented white servants from being whipped naked, but they allowed black slaves to be whipped naked. Additionally, they created patrols consisting of white servants to monitor black slaves. As a result of these codes, poor white servants, only marginally socially and economically better off than black slaves, began to ally more with their white richer counterparts.²²³ They saw their white identity as more meaningful and important

²¹⁹ Du Bois, William Edward Burghardt. *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America: 1860-1880*. New York, New York: Atheneum, 1975.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Zinn, Howard and Anthony Arnove. *A People's History of the United States*. New York, New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2017.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

than their class identity.²²⁴ The codes reinforced race as the basis of solidarity, and eliminated any idea of unity across class.

During the Reconstruction era following the Civil War, history seemed to repeat itself. Southern states used black codes and eventually Jim Crow laws to discourage poor white farmers from speaking up about their economic plight. These policies focused on hiding the class similarities between blacks and poor whites, and they worked to divide their social identities so that “while [poor whites] received a low wage, they were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage. They were given public deference...because they were white.”²²⁵ These psychologically manipulative codes worked very successfully on lower-class whites. One Texan fireman admitted that him and his fellow white workers would “rather be absolute slaves of capital than to take the negro into our lodges as an equal and brother.”²²⁶ Even when poor whites were aware that wealthy whites were exploiting their labor, it was too late. Racism was so embedded in them that their perceived racial superiority was more important.

Arguably one of the most holistically progressive periods in U.S. history, the New Deal era still maintained a divide between poor blacks and whites. Despite President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s successes, “most blacks were ignored by the New Deal programs. As tenant farmers, as farm laborers, as migrants, as domestic workers, they didn’t qualify for unemployment insurance, minimum wages, social security, or farm subsidies.”²²⁷ Taking this massive step to comprehensively tackle poverty was already a risk for President Roosevelt in terms of challenging the traditional American laissez-faire capitalist system. Supporting black and other minority citizens as well would have been a political risk that potentially angered wealthy whites by creating too large of a population of empowered and collectivized workers.

Although gains were minimal, the New Deal coalition did lead to some greater economic and social unity between impoverished Americans of all races and ethnicities. This continued with the civil rights movements of the 1960s, which advocated for reproductive rights as well as the civil rights of black people, criminals, and immigrants. However, this wave of progressivism began to topple with the 1968 election of President Richard Nixon. The civil rights movement and the push towards policies to accept and support minority communities had led many lower-class whites to feel forgotten and abandoned by the government.²²⁸ President Nixon, and then President Ronald Reagan, took advantage of this sentiment. They attacked the Democratic Party, labelling them as the “little intellectual elite in a far-distant capitol,” that had left behind the heart of *real* America and instead chosen to pamper poor minorities with unwarranted public

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Du Bois, William Edward Burghardt. *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America: 1860-1880*.

²²⁶ Duster, Troy. *White Washing Race: The Myth of a Colorblind Society*. Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2003.

²²⁷ Zinn, Howard and Anthony Arno. *A People's History of the United States*.

²²⁸ James, Kay C. “President Trump Keeps Promises to the ‘Forgotten Americans.’” Heritage Foundation. February 12, 2020. <https://www.heritage.org/conservatism/commentary/president-trump-keeps-promises-the-forgotten-americans>.

spending.²²⁹ For example, Reagan used his popularization of the notorious “welfare queen” to justify enormous cuts to welfare. He claimed these welfare queens and other free riders, both of whom were implied to be black, were lazy and living off the hard earned tax dollars of working-class people, always implied to be white.²³⁰ This “pitting of whites and blacks at the low end of the income distribution against each other intensified the view among whites that the condition of life for the disadvantaged—and particularly for disadvantaged blacks—is the responsibility of those afflicted, not the responsibility of the larger society.”²³¹ With the increased government savings, Reagan increased the military budget and heavily cut taxes for the rich. He claimed the money at the top would “trickle down” to workers in the lower class. Working-class whites were enraged by the idea of black people living off their tax money, and many bought into Reagan’s policies. They accepted the cuts to food stamps, vocational education, and subsidized housing that would spiral them further into poverty.²³² Once again, a powerful leader tapped into racist sentiments held by poor whites and persuaded them to sacrifice their economic livelihoods for perceived superiority to blacks.

Reagan and his administration created tax policy that harmed whites slightly less than blacks to ensure that they were more satisfied with the government. They used phrases and talking points that seemed to be related to economics but were really subtle racist policies.²³³ One of Reagan’s most high level advisors, Lee Atwater, was even quoted as saying, “Now, you’re talking about cutting taxes, and all these things you’re talking about are totally economic things and a byproduct of them is, blacks get hurt worse than whites.”²³⁴ In theory, poor whites and blacks could have allied together in voting blocs to reject cuts to public spending. However, blinded by a combination of political manipulation and racism, poor whites were hesitant to cooperate. Many of them viewed black people as criminals and lazy welfare recipients who did not deserve to be aided by anyone, especially not them.²³⁵

Finally, even the current American society is susceptible to manipulation by the rich and powerful, specifically President Donald Trump. During the 2016 campaign, Trump created a political base of working-class whites living primarily in the South and Midwest who felt isolated and ignored in a rapidly globalizing world. Establishment politicians in the past had failed to realize that if they dismissed “the dark rigidity of fundamentalist rural America,” “this is a recipe for extreme alienation among working-class whites.”²³⁶ Trump harnessed the anger and frustration of this low-income, overwhelmingly white population and directed it towards

²²⁹ Hayward, Steven F. “Why Ronald Reagan’s ‘A Time for Choosing’ Endures after All This Time.” Washington Post. October 23, 2014. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-ronald-reagans-a-time-for-choosing-endures-after-all-this-time/2014/10/23/d833c49e-587a-11e4-bd61-346aee66ba29_story.html.

²³⁰ Edsall, Thomas Byrne and Mary D. Edsall. *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics*. New York, New York: Norton, 1992.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Perlstein, Rick. “Exclusive: Lee Atwater's Infamous 1981 Interview on the Southern Strategy.” The Nation. December 7, 2018. www.thenation.com/article/archive/exclusive-lee-atwaters-infamous-1981-interview-southern-strategy/.

²³⁵ Edsall, Thomas Byrne. and Mary D. Edsall. *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics*. 1992. New York: Norton.

²³⁶ Williams, Joan. *White Working Class: Overcoming Class Cluelessness in America*. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Review Press, 2019.

immigrants and Muslims among other minority groups, claiming they were the reason for America's plight.²³⁷ Trump was "masterful at this, stooping to race baiting to alienate working-class whites from the black and Latino workers with whom they had the most in common."²³⁸ He claimed immigrants from Mexico and the rest of Latin America were not only taking the jobs of working-class whites, they were illegally benefitting from the welfare system. He also notably mentioned that Mexicans were apparently bringing drugs and crime into the country, even calling them rapists.²³⁹ True to his campaign promises, Trump has pushed for a border wall, the end of sanctuary cities, and the end of the DACA program among other anti-immigrant measures.²⁴⁰ However, in reality, poor whites in the South are economically much more similar to their fellow employees from Mexico receiving terrible wages than to a white American profiting enormously off their labor. They have accepted political rhetoric that encourages them to see the Mexican as their problem rather than the wealthy CEO who illegally hires undocumented workers, pays them unlivable wages, and lobbies the government to overlook bad environmental and ethical practices.²⁴¹

Additionally, Trump incites anger and opposition towards Muslims both abroad and domestically. Many of his policies have been centered around the discrimination of Muslims, such as the infamous travel ban or his call to popularize the term radical Islamic terrorism that "reinforce(s) the perceived connection between Islam and terrorism".²⁴² Spread of rhetoric like this has led to a strong anti-Muslim sentiment among poor whites, most of whom identify as Christians. Statistics show Trump is especially effective at encouraging Islamophobia. An analysis of data from the 2016 election by the Brookings Institution found that Trump's supporters differed the most from the supporters of other GOP primary candidates most in their strong dislike for Muslims. While the possibilities of working-class whites and Muslims uniting are admittedly more difficult than previously discussed groups, Trump's Islamophobic message still acts as an element of distraction, pushing the eyes of poor whites away from the more deep-rooted causes of their problems.

While frequently described as a social justice issue, the phenomenon of divide and conquer requires much more than simply social context to be fully understood. The complexities of the subject and its connections to history, economics, politics, and sociology means there must be a multifaceted approach taken to unravel and begin to combat its manifestations in society. As with most instances of social change, the most substantial and positive change comes from those directly affected by the social issue at a more grassroots level. However, this change and the conversation concerning this change, will be much easier to start, if there is first action taken by those at the top of the political and class system. By putting people in power who stand with the

²³⁷ Courty, Audrey and Halim Rane. "Why the Media Needs to Be More Responsible for How It Links Islam and Islamist Terrorism." The Conversation. October 1, 2018. <https://theconversation.com/why-the-media-needs-to-be-more-responsible-for-how-it-links-islam-and-islamist-terrorism-103170>.

²³⁸ Williams, Joan. *White Working Class: Overcoming Class Cluelessness in America*.

²³⁹ Lee, Michelle. "Analysis: Donald Trump's False Comments Connecting Mexican Immigrants and Crime." The Washington Post. July 8, 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2015/07/08/donald-trumps-false-comments-connecting-mexican-immigrants-and-crime/.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Williams, Joan. *White Working Class: Overcoming Class Cluelessness in America*.

²⁴² Courty, Audrey and Halim Rane. "Why the Media Needs to Be More Responsible for How It Links Islam and Islamist Terrorism."

working class as a whole and place emphasis on empowering the poor regardless of color or creed, a more positive and unified discourse will emerge—one that encourages collective action rather than scapegoating.

With more progressive leaders in power, it will be much more likely that working-class people will understand and support each other across racial divides. However, it is also the responsibility of community leaders to initiate this unity and use their positions to encourage their constituents to ally with their poor neighbors, regardless of color or creed. In minority communities, leaders must stress that while there are obviously overt and unapologetic white racists, the majority of poor whites are potential allies. Leaders must encourage minorities to reach out to working-class whites and create unity rather than, as is often the case, continue to view them as racist, evil rednecks. It is language such as that used by centrist politicians with elitist backgrounds, such as Hillary Clinton, that just enrages the working-class white community even more. For example, calling a massive portion of the United States a “basket of deplorables” is demeaning, a massive assumption, and it alienates people who while enjoying white privilege, and all that comes with it, have been largely ignored by the last few administrations. However, while this sentiment of solidarity must build in minority communities, it must first come from poor white communities. Because of white privilege and a history of white political power, poor whites, regardless of their own suffering, must be the first to reach out to minority communities and express unity and willingness to face their privilege and recognize structural racism and xenophobia. It is the responsibility of white community leaders to build solidarity with minority communities and take a bold stance on anti-racist, xenophobic, nativist sentiment²⁴³.

Overall, change must come from both above and below. Grassroots action is the most powerful, but it can only take form if the United States has leaders that can encourage it and create an environment that encourages inclusivity and collective unity. Leaders must educate people who have been historically manipulated by those in power to understand and recognize the real perpetrators of their suffering. Different racial, ethnic, religious, and political groups in poverty must reach out to one another and put aside their differences to stand up for changes that will help those who need it most—themselves.

²⁴³ Williams, Joan. *White Working Class: Overcoming Class Cluelessness in America*.

Genetic Testing and Privacy Laws Across Nations

By Addison Kimber

Each individual on earth has slightly different DNA. Recent research has shown that even identical twins have slight variations in their DNA.²⁴⁴ DNA can factor into how well the immune system functions, into phobias, and even how humans engage in politics.^{245,246} The uniqueness of our DNA combined with its impacts on our lives make it a useful way to gain information about ourselves and others. Consequently, the field of genetic testing has grown with rapid speed in our society. Genetic testing refers to the analysis of an individual's unique DNA. In most cases, this process looks for genetic variants which may indicate disease states. The uses of this testing are broad in modern society. It can be used to identify likelihood of disease and allow early treatment and monitoring. It can be used to reunite families who did not know they were related. It can even be used to determine one's ancestral heritage. As the field has grown it has become less invasive, now just requiring a cheek swab in most cases. Due to these factors, genetic testing is becoming increasingly common across the globe. Newborn genetic screening is even required in all 50 states of the U.S.²⁴⁷ The number of people using 23andMe, a popular commercial genetic testing company, has risen to ten million.²⁴⁸ Companies such as Living DNA are also growing in the United Kingdom.

Despite this increase in genetic testing, there is still a lack of regulation in how to deal with controversies surrounding genetic testing. The potential issues with genetic testing are numerous; there are many ethical questions about how this information is stored and what it can be used for. For example, should insurance companies be able to change an individual's rates based on their genetic likelihood of disease? Should genetic testing companies be able to sell a client's genetic information to companies? Should those companies be able to use genetic results to create targeted marketing? While these questions are numerous, the field of genetic testing is so new that legislation has not fully caught up to answer all of these questions. This essay reviews the genetic testing and privacy laws of several countries and assesses their effectiveness at protecting private genetic information.

Policies in the United States

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) is the foremost policy for genetic privacy in the United States. This policy was created in 2008 in response to concerns about discrimination regarding genetics.²⁴⁹ The scope of this law is extremely limited, focusing only on insurance and employment. More specifically, it prevents health insurers from using

²⁴⁴ O'Connor, Anahad. "The Claim: Identical Twins Have Identical DNA." New York Times. March 11, 2008. <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/11/health/11real.html>.

²⁴⁵ Kim, Katherine and David Streid. "The Genetics of Human Behavior." *Columbia Undergraduate Science Journal* 9, (2015). <https://cusi.columbia.edu/article/the-genetics-of-human-behavior/>.

²⁴⁶ Hatemi, Peter, and Rose McDermott. "The Genetics of Politics: Discovery, Challenges, and Progress." *Trends in Genetics* 28, no. 10 (2012): 525–33. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tig.2012.07.004>.

²⁴⁷ "Genetic Testing." The Mayo Clinic. n.d. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/genetic-testing/about/pac-20384827>.

²⁴⁸ "About Us." 23andMe Media Center. n.d. <https://mediacenter.23andme.com/company/about-us/>.

²⁴⁹ "Genetic Discrimination." National Human Genome Research Institute. n.d. <https://www.genome.gov/aboutgenomics/policy-issues/Genetic-Discrimination#otherlaws>.

genetic information “to make eligibility, coverage, underwriting or premium-setting decisions” or request genetic testing information.²⁵⁰ GINA similarly prevents employers from requesting genetic information as a condition of employment and from using genetic information for hiring, firing, promotions, pay decisions, and job assignments. There are many gaps within this policy even as it applies to insurance and employment. GINA only covers companies with at least 15 employees, and it does not prevent genetic information use in wellness incentive programs at work.²⁵¹ Wellness programs are varied by organization; for example, some companies offer blood pressure monitoring programs to improve employee health which are accompanied by lower insurance costs or extra paid leave for employees. Since these programs include collecting employee medical data voluntarily, they are not protected under GINA. As such, employers could potentially use data gained from wellness programs to discriminate against employees based on illnesses revealed by genetic testing. Employers may learn of a genetic disorder and then feel that an employee is incapable to handle greater job responsibilities with their illness, or that accommodations for the illness would be too difficult to organize. GINA and the Americans with Disabilities Act prevent discrimination based on many types of illness. However, it can be difficult to prove discrimination through litigation. For example, proving that an individual has been held back from promotion due to a genetic condition requires proving intent. This standard is not well defined, and there is frequently not enough concrete evidence to meet such a standard.

GINA also “does not cover long-term care insurance, life insurance, or disability insurance.”²⁵² Some states have created additional regulations to supplement GINA. For example, Alaska defines genetic information and DNA samples as personal property, thereby requiring consent to perform, access, retain, and disclose genetic information, and has created penalties for violations of their laws. Meanwhile, Washington is the only state which protects genetic information under general health privacy law.²⁵³

International Genetic Privacy Laws

Overall, genetic privacy and discrimination laws in other countries are also extremely limited. In 2018 the European Union instituted the General Data Protection Regulation, which is the first regulation of its kind to explicitly recognize genetic data. This law “governs the use of personal data in healthcare and research.”²⁵⁴ However, this legal framework still leaves questions about what types of genetic data are considered personal data and therefore are covered under the General Data Protection Regulation.²⁵⁵ Similarly, the United Kingdom instituted their own Data Protection Act in 1998, which rules on the “gathering and use of personal information” and was updated in 2018.²⁵⁶ This act does not explicitly cover genetic information, but the United

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Johnson, Alissa. “State Genetic Privacy Laws.” National Conference of State Legislatures. n.d.

<http://www.pierce.wesleyancollege.edu/faculty/hboettgertong/docs/hbt%20public%20folder/FYS/State%20Genetic%20Summary%20Table%20on%20Privacy%20Laws.htm>.

²⁵⁴ Mitchell, Colin. “How Does the GDPR Apply to Genomic Data?” PHG Foundation. April 2019.

<https://www.phgfoundation.org/blog/how-does-the-gdpr-apply-to-genomic-data>.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Walker, Julian. “Genetic Discrimination and Canadian Law,” Parliament of Canada. September 20, 2014.

https://lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en_CA/ResearchPublications/201490E.

Kingdom's Parliament has found that the Data Protection Act is sufficient to cover personal genetic information.²⁵⁷ Furthermore, they have found that "regulation of human genetic databases... was neither necessary nor feasible."²⁵⁸ This is particularly important given the extent of genetic databases in the United Kingdom. The 100,000 Genomes Project from Genomics England is the largest sequencing project in the world. The National Health Service of the UK is also pioneering a Genomic Medicine Service and aims to apply genomic data to prevent and treat disease under the NHS Long Term Plan.²⁵⁹ Other countries with genetic databases of citizens include the United States, Japan, Denmark, Sweden, and Iceland.²⁶⁰ The United Kingdom has hesitated to add further genetic data protections partially due to concern that this would harm healthcare research.²⁶¹ Studies on genomics are more reliable with large and complete samples, as this allows more comparisons among data and mitigates the impact of outliers. For example, a study on genetic links to depression would be narrow in scope if the researcher was only able to look at a small section of DNA. This study would be similarly hindered if potentially identifiable information such as race and gender were not linked to the data, as the researchers could not control for these factors. Consequently, there is a struggle between maintaining subject privacy and allowing researchers access to large, potentially identifiable data. Complicating matters is the fact that genomic data can never be truly anonymized given that each person has a unique genetic code. It should be noted that some insurance companies within the United Kingdom have instituted their own restrictions on the use of genetic information. The Concordat and Moratorium on Genetics and Insurance prevents insurers from asking customers for predictive or diagnostic genetic testing results in most cases.²⁶²

Conversely, France has implemented a series of laws which protect genetic privacy. While France does not have one particular law which governs genetic privacy, it began amending several laws to provide better genetic protections in 1999.²⁶³ These laws are some of the most restrictive, with amendments to laws including civil rights, employment, insurance, and criminal law.²⁶⁴ Furthermore, these laws require that "genetic tests may be taken only for valid medical or scientific purposes" and stipulate particular penalties for breaking the laws.²⁶⁵ Despite these rigorous laws, France has still engaged in worldwide genomic testing projects. Notably, the International Agency for Research on Cancer based in France has engaged in research on genetic determinants of cancer. Through collaborations with labs in Germany, England, and the United States, IARC has located certain areas on the genome which may make an individual susceptible to certain common cancer types. Therefore, increased privacy regulations within France allow citizens to maintain genetic privacy while continuing to reap the benefits of genetic research. In this way, the risks to insurance and employment are mitigated for individuals with genetically

²⁵⁷ House of Lords. "Human Genetic Databases." Parliament Session 1999-2000 (HL Paper 115).

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200001/ldselect/ldsctech/57/5705.htm>.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Mitchell, Colin. "How Does the GDPR Apply to Genomic Data?"

²⁶⁰ House of Lords. "Human Genetic Databases."

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Walker, Julian. "Genetic Discrimination and Canadian Law."

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

based diseases. By limiting the scope of genetic testing to medical centers, early identification of disease and gene targeted treatments are still possible.

Conclusion

Overall, laws regarding genetic privacy and discrimination in the United States and abroad are vague. These policies do not always specifically discuss the use of genetic testing, and they often do not consider the full range of ethical issues associated with genetic testing. Approaches are similarly limited in many European countries including the United Kingdom. The lack of comprehensive genetic privacy laws has been cited as essential to promoting genomic research. However, countries such as France have indeed imposed strict genetic testing laws and maintained beneficial genomic research. Furthermore, while it is valid to pursue medical advancements with genetic information, it is imperative to address issues outside of the medical and research field. Genetic information can also have impacts on insurance, employment, and other fields not discussed in this paper. As France demonstrates, reviewing the scope of genetic testing and creating stricter laws about its use in certain areas will not prevent scientific advancement. Rather, it will provide a more ethical framework for countries to utilize genetic information so that citizens can be more comfortable participating in genetics research programs.

An Act of Political Courage

By Isabella Langlois

The very state of democracy in the United States is routinely tested by the politicians within its own governing body. The government today is often labeled as corrupt and money-hungry. Members of Congress often place financial gain over their own morality. President John F. Kennedy outlined in his book, *Profiles in Courage*, what political courage meant to him. He advocated that “when party and officeholder differ as to how the national interest is to be served, we must place first the responsibility we owe not to our party or even to our constituents, but to our individual consciences.”²⁶⁶ In the early 1900s, Jeannette Rankin, the first woman to be elected to Congress, made a monumental vote against the nation’s involvement in WWI. This vote was classified as political suicide, and is comparable to Senator Mitt Romney’s recent vote to impeach President Donald Trump, which has encountered massive backlash. The American political system is a bipartisan unit that can oftentimes be very polarizing. It is imperative to keep the system functioning by keeping the constituency and party platform in mind. However, the national interest does not always align with one’s morality. The fortitude of both Representative Rankin and Senator Romney serve as examples of the courageous and ethical behavior that President Kennedy defined as political courage.

On April 6th, 1917, two days after avowed pacifist and suffragette Jeannette Rankin was sworn in as the first female to be elected to the U.S. Congress, President Woodrow Wilson addressed the House regarding the nation’s involvement in WWI. The immense pressure to vote for the war was evident, along with the burden to prove that a woman was capable of performing just as well as the men in a male-dominated environment. Rankin was not fazed by these constraints and stood firm in her beliefs. She famously told the House that “I want to stand by my country, but I cannot vote for war.”²⁶⁷ Her vote was one of two major distinguishing acts of her political career. She addressed the fact that her country was her priority, but when it came to war, she aligned herself with her beliefs. This is a spectacular example of voting with one’s own conscience. When Rankin was re-elected in 1940 as a representative for Montana, she was faced with a grave and similar task of voting for or against World War II following the attack on Pearl Harbor. During a 40-minute debate in the House after President Roosevelt called for a declaration of war on Japan, Rankin stood and announced, “As a woman, I can’t go to war and I refuse to send anyone else.”²⁶⁸ Hers was the solitary opposing vote. The discipline of pacifism has long influenced society through the core teachings of Buddhism, and Ms. Rankin embodied this ideology with eagerness. Her vote gave pacifists a clear voice in the House. She attempted to propose alternative solutions to Congress that would avoid the barbaric warfare that they believed was inevitable. However, her vote, as classified by many, was political suicide. Whether John F. Kennedy would agree or disagree with Rankin’s position, his idea of political courage is clearly exemplified through her actions as she “showed the real meaning of courage and a real faith in democracy.”²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ Kennedy, John F. *Profiles in Courage*. New York, New York: Harper & Row, 1964.

²⁶⁷ History.com Editors. “Jeannette Rankin.” History.com. October 29, 2009.

<http://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/jeannette-rankin>.

²⁶⁸ “Jeannette Rankin: Quote on War.” ABC-CLIO. n.d. <https://americangovernment.abc-clio.com/>.

²⁶⁹ Kennedy, John F. *Profiles in Courage*.

Many of Rankin's constituents disapproved of her opposition to the war. She valued moral principle over electoral success in her goal to prove to the country that there are options besides war. She courageously valued her conscience over the public sentiment, and she accepted the subsequent disappointment. Immediately following her historic vote against WWII, she rushed out of the chambers only to be "mobbed by journalists" and forced to "...hide in a phone booth," requiring a police escort back to her office.²⁷⁰ For months, she received hate mail and became an outcast in Congress. Representative Whetstone of Montana informed Rankin that "messages from all parts of Montana indicate disappointment over your attitude in failing to support the war declaration."²⁷¹ Rankin's brother and advisor, Wellington, responded to her actions by saying, "Montana is 100% against you."²⁷² In Congress, it is traditional for party leaders to suggest that representatives vote on behalf of their constituency as opposed to party alignment in order to ensure re-election. Although voters disapproved of her stance on war, Rep. Rankin regarded war as unjustifiable and believed that it would be a stain on American society. However difficult this might have been, her actions stand to demonstrate the courage that politicians should continue to look towards today. She faced horrendous backlash, but this did not prevent her from continuing on with her work.

As the first woman to be elected to Congress, a pioneer, an advocate for world peace, and a symbol of strength and courage, Jeannette Rankin paved the way for a government that would eventually accept more women who would stand up to Congress, including the first African American woman in Congress and the first woman to represent a major party in the primaries. She continued to promulgate pacifism and eventually led the Jeannette Rankin Brigade in 1968 with 5,000 feminists, pacifists, radicals, and students to protest the Vietnam War. She advocated for anti-war efforts, organized marches, and continued speaking at events until her death in 1973. Jeannette Rankin showed political courage in many aspects—not only as the first female to join Congress, but as the only representative to vote against such a struggle that grasped our nation at the time.

Nearly a century later, a Republican Senator named Mitt Romney would have virtually the same impact that Representative Rankin had in displaying political courage against the likes of their party. Today, unlike the early to mid-1900s when Congress more frequently practiced bipartisanship, there is a great partisan division of the legislative branch and, arguably, the country as a whole. For about three months between 2019 and 2020, Congress was pressed with the laborious task of the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump. Although it was evident from the beginning that the Senate would vote to acquit the president due to the Republican majority, Senator Mitt Romney, much like Jeannette Rankin, chose to advocate for his own principles over party interest. The odds were stacked against him when he stood with integrity and defended the oath that he took for office. He justified his vote, stating that if he were "to ignore the evidence that has been presented, and disregard what I believe my oath and the Constitution demands of me for the sake of a partisan end, it would, I fear, expose my character

²⁷⁰ Wycoff, Whitney Blair. "The First Woman in Congress: A Crusader for Peace." NPR. May 18, 2011. <https://www.npr.org/2011/07/14/135521203/the-first-woman-in-congress-a-crusader-for-peace>.

²⁷¹ Cowen, Ruth. "History Repeats for 3 Women in History." Plain Dealer. December 9, 1941.

²⁷² U.S. Government Printing Office. "Women in Congress: 1917-2006." The Committee on House Administration of the U.S. House of Representatives, House Document (2007), 108-223.

to history's rebuke and the censure of my own conscience."²⁷³ Knowing the hostile fervor of President Trump, and the tension that his vote would create among the Republican Party, he garnered political courage to act on behalf of his own conscience.

The backlash that Senator Romney faced in response to his vote was anticipated but unruly. In a timely manner, President Trump took to Twitter to react to Romney's historical vote as the first senator to vote to remove a sitting president of their own party. He mocked Senator Romney's failed presidential campaign claiming that "[if] failed presidential candidate @MittRomney devoted the same energy and anger to defeating a faltering Barack Obama as he sanctimoniously does to me, he could have won the election. Read the Transcripts!"²⁷⁴ Senator Romney anticipated a reaction from the Republican Party, as the current political environment is incredibly polarizing. He recognized that he would have little support for his vote, considering the lengths that both parties went to during the impeachment trial. President Trump went on to discuss Romney's vote in other mocking circumstances, fueling the backlash and polarization of Congress.

The statesmanship that Romney displayed before the Senate trial for impeachment was of the utmost formality and patriotism. He highlights the fact that although his vote would essentially be meaningless in terms of the reality of the situation, he was on the right side of history. This should speak to many American standards that are often taken for granted. Romney said, "We're all footnotes at best in the annals of history. But in the most powerful nation on earth, the nation conceived in liberty and justice, that is distinction enough for any citizen."²⁷⁵ As President Kennedy emphasizes in his commentary upon political courage, "One's need to maintain his own respect for himself was more important to him than his popularity with others—because his desire to win or maintain a reputation for integrity and courage was stronger than his desire to maintain his office."²⁷⁶ Politics is often considered the problem of many hands regarding ethics and morality. The organizational nature of public office designates responsibility to the many hands of congressmen and congresswomen, making issues more of a party problem as opposed to an individual problem. Mitt Romney voted for the impeachment as something that he strongly believed in, encompassing the utmost virtue of an ethical politician as opposed to suppressing his beliefs for the sake of partisanship.

Many congressmen and congresswomen argue that Romney should be excommunicated from the Republican Party. The political environment now differs greatly from that of the early to mid-1900s, when Jeannette Rankin was in office. Officeholders have unlimited access to social media and other routes for expressing their political ideology, and oftentimes, routes to diminish their colleagues. The topics of war and impeachment are entirely unrelated, but the ethics behind Romney and Rankin's moral strength are what guide political courage. These leaders both considered the general welfare of the country at the highest standard—in turn, risking their careers. Republican leaders have displayed their disappointment in Romney, and there is mixed support from his constituents in Utah. Senator Romney is not up for re-election

²⁷³ Romney, Mitt. "President Trump Impeachment Trial." Speech. U.S. Senate. February 5, 2020.

²⁷⁴ @realDonaldTrump. Twitter Post. February 6th, 2020.
<https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1225288731235700737?s=20>.

²⁷⁵ Romney, Mitt. "President Trump Impeachment Trial."

²⁷⁶ Kennedy, John F. *Profiles in Courage*.

until 2024, and he will continue his work representing the state of Utah and his constituents, despite the massive backlash that he encountered.

The American people should advocate for representatives to lead with morality rather than self-interest. Whether Representative Rankin and Senator Romney made the right choice is not of question. It is their ability to create a precedent for other protectors of the Constitution to safeguard American values that matters so much. We must, as a nation, not fold to polarizing figures that discourage voting on behalf of morals and the greater good of the country, in order to preserve the democracy that our founders broadly outlined in the Constitution. Rankin, Romney, and so many other courageous politicians continue to persevere and represent Kennedy's assertion that "a man does what he must—in spite of personal consequences, in spite of obstacles and dangers and pressures—and that is the basis of all human morality."²⁷⁷

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

The Un-United Kingdom

By Emily Longmire

In 2015, Prime Minister David Cameron, acting under pressure from the Conservative Party and its more right-wing supporters, announced a vote that would change the political and economic landscape of the United Kingdom, Europe, and the entire world forever: a European Union referendum. The referendum did not come as a shock, as Cameron ran on a platform in which he could call for such a referendum if elected prime minister again in May 2015. However, the negative fallout from the referendum would surpass what experts had predicted, and overnight the British and European economies took a massive hit. Domestically, this referendum strengthened the desire for independence by two regions in the United Kingdom: Northern Ireland and Scotland. This divide amongst the territories could be an even greater threat than the economic difficulties that have come to threaten the stability of the UK in the years following the referendum.

The European Union, or EU, was created in 1993 to enhance European political and economic integration by creating a single currency, a unified foreign and security policy, and common citizenship rights. Further, its goal was advancing cooperation in the areas of immigration, asylum, and judicial affairs.²⁷⁸ With the creation of the EU came understandable skepticism about its effect on a country's autonomy and sovereignty, as well as economic and business concerns. Euroscepticism comes in many forms. Specifically, 'hard' skepticism is defined as "principled opposition to the EU and European integration," while 'soft' skepticism refers to opposition to specific EU policy areas or "a sense that 'national interest' is currently at odds with the EU's trajectory."²⁷⁹ Most Brits, 80% in 2012, tended not to trust the European Union, up from 48% in 2004.²⁸⁰

The United Kingdom has always had an arms-length relationship with the EU. After joining the European Economic Committee (EEC), the precursor to the EU, in 1973, Britain lobbied to get a rebate on its contribution to the European budget and got it in 1984. The Maastricht Treaty, signed in 1992, created the European Union as we know it, which increased European integration and created a common currency, the Euro. Britain was able to opt-out of certain provisions of the treaty, including not using the Euro, as a result of an agreement made during the treaty. The UK lobbied heavily for a single market, which was the central project of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. The Single European Act of February 1986 cemented Thatcher's vision of an economically-entwined Europe.²⁸¹

²⁷⁸ Gabel, Matthew J. "European Union." Encyclopædia Britannica. January 31, 2020. www.britannica.com/topic/European-Union.

²⁷⁹ DeSilver, Drew. "'Euroskeptics' Are a Bigger Presence in the European Parliament than in Past." Pew Research Center. May 22, 2019. www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/05/22/euroskeptics-are-a-bigger-presence-in-the-european-parliament-than-in-past/.

²⁸⁰ Torreblanca, Jose Ignacio and Mark Leonard. "The Continent-Wide Rise of Euroscepticism." European Council on Foreign Relations. May 2013. https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/the_continent-wide_rise_of_euroscepticism36578.

²⁸¹ Von Bismark, Helene. "Margaret Thatcher: The Critical Architect of European Integration." UK in a Changing Europe. July 8, 2019. www.ukandeu.ac.uk/margaret-thatcher-the-critical-architect-of-european-integration/.

Given the history of the UK's relationship with the EU, a referendum seemed likely. The referendum has impacted the relationship between the UK and its different territories, such as Scotland. Scotland joined England to become Great Britain in 1707, but it still maintains a strong sense of Scottish nationalism. Attitudes have greatly changed in Scotland since the Brexit referendum. Whilst the overall percentage in the UK was 52% to 48% to leave the EU, in Scotland, 62% voted to remain, and only 38% voted leave.²⁸² Despite the overwhelming desire to stay in the EU, Scotland was forced to leave when the UK officially withdrew in January 2020. Many Scots feel as though their 'future is being dictated from the South,' and their call for independence has grown stronger. For the first time, polls showed that over 50% of Scots wanted independence from England in the lead-up to Brexit.²⁸³ After the SNP's (Scottish National Party) landslide victory in elections in December 2019, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon promised to begin the process of a referendum. The process has been thwarted by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's rejection of the request for a referendum, but the SNP and Sturgeon will continue to build a case for independence.²⁸⁴

The EU has hinted that if Scotland were to leave the UK, they would be able to rejoin the EU fairly easily. This was not the case in 2014 when Scotland last held a referendum on independence, which was shot down in a vote of 55% to 45% against an independent Scotland.²⁸⁵ The uncertainty of being allowed into the EU caused many people to vote against the referendum. Since the Brexit vote, many mainland EU countries have expressed sympathy for Scotland. Even states that would typically vote against Scotland joining, like Spain and Italy, which have similar independence movements, have expressed their willingness to allow Scotland to join. Thus, overall, it seems increasingly likely that Scotland will leave the UK within the next few years. A majority of Scots want independence, a majority are willing to take steps towards a referendum, most oppose an unpopular conservative government, and they have seemingly received a 'go-ahead' from the EU.

The referendum has also had an impact on the UK's relationship with Northern Ireland. The history of Northern Ireland and the UK is fraught with violence, religious tensions, and unresolved border disputes. Northern Ireland is predominantly Protestant, while the rest of Ireland is Catholic. Catholics in Northern Ireland have historically experienced discrimination (to what extent is debated) and were kept out of state institutions. Peaceful protests sometimes became riots, and Britain sent in troops to quell the protestors. During this time, the IRA (Irish Republican Army) acquired arms and explosives and initiated a campaign of bombings and shootings in order to protect Roman Catholics, destabilize Northern Ireland's institutions, weaken British resolve to maintain the union, and achieve Irish unity. On January 30, 1972 in Derry, on a day which became known as 'Bloody Sunday', British troops fired on and killed fourteen Catholic protestors. By the end of the 20th century, more than 3,600 people had been killed and 36,000 injured; of these deaths, more than 2,000 were the responsibility of

²⁸² "EU Referendum Results." BBC. n.d. www.bbc.com/news/politics/eu_referendum/results.

²⁸³ Carrell, Severin. "Scottish Independence Surveys 'Show Brexit Has Put Union at Risk'." The Guardian. February 4, 2020. www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/feb/04/scottish-independence-survey-shows-brexit-has-put-union-at-risk.

²⁸⁴ Moyer, Jason C. "Scottish Independence: Vote Delayed but Not Dead." The Hill. February 22, 2020. www.thehill.com/opinion/international/484170-scottish-independence-vote-delayed-but-not-dead.

²⁸⁵ "Scottish Referendum: Scotland Votes 'No' to Independence." BBC News. September 19, 2014. www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-29270441.

republicans, 1,000 of loyalists, and more than 350 of security forces.²⁸⁶ The Good Friday Agreement, which was signed in April 1998, included a power-sharing unity government in Northern Ireland, allowed people to identify as British, Irish, or both regardless of where they lived, and stopped the violence that was characteristic of the region.²⁸⁷

Northern Ireland voted 56% to 44% to remain in the EU, whilst the whole of the UK voted to leave the EU. Of Northern Ireland, 80% of Catholics voted to remain while only 40% of Protestants voted to remain. This shows the disparity between Catholics and Protestants even within the territory. Along with the withdrawal from the EU, the UK now has to erect a border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, which is an EU member state. There are fears that erecting a border, which until now is relatively unenforced, will reignite tensions between the two sides. At the moment, Northern Ireland is staying within the EU customs union to avoid a hard-land border scenario. Because Ireland and Britain were both members of the EU, they fall under the same 'single market' customs and regulatory arrangements. However, when Britain left, the Irish border became the only land frontier between the EU and Britain, and so logically a "hard border" would be needed to ensure that goods entering Ireland from Britain comply with EU standards and do not threaten the bloc's single market through price dumping or unfair competition. The EU insists that any new arrangement must maintain a fully open border, protect the EU single market, and maintain the cooperation made possible by the Good Friday Agreement.²⁸⁸

Thus, while the rest of the UK leaves the single market, Northern Ireland will remain until the border situation is figured out. Also changing are the demographics of Northern Ireland as, soon, the majority of citizens will be Catholic, which may add to the likelihood of a united, Catholic Ireland. More nationalist representatives have been elected, also signaling an increased desire for independence. While there have not been outright demands from political leaders for a referendum on independence, it is increasingly likely that there may be one in the future.²⁸⁹ Northern Ireland may wait to make their move for independence until after Scotland, letting them first test the waters.

Within the last month, independence has not been a hot-button issue as the UK, along with the rest of the world, contends with the COVID-19 pandemic. It seems as though independence movements, which only a few months ago were full steam ahead, have been put on hold. As to the future of these movements, only time will tell. Many of the same complaints Scots and Northern Irish have had about the government in London may continue as they control the pandemic response. Some, however, may see the Union's response to the crisis as an example of why it should be preserved. Either way, the UK still remains out of the EU, and sooner or later, the concerns of Scottish and Northern Irish voters will have to be addressed. How this will happen is unknown.

²⁸⁶ Aughey, Arthur H. and Karl S. Bottigheimer. "Disintegration of Stability." Encyclopedia Britannica. February 11, 2020. www.britannica.com/place/Northern-Ireland/Disintegration-of-stability.

²⁸⁷ Kirka, Danica. "Brexit Ignites Fears of Renewed Violence in Northern Ireland." ABC News. October 16, 2019. www.abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory/brexit-ignites-fears-renewed-violence-northern-ireland-66315549.

²⁸⁸ "UK Rules out Irish 'Backstop' Border Plan after Brexit." ABC News. October 1, 2019. www.abc.net.au/news/2019-10-02/no-hard-border-in-ireland-uk-confirms/11565642.

²⁸⁹ Angelos, James. "Will Brexit Bring the Troubles Back to Northern Ireland?" New York Times. December 30, 2019. www.nytimes.com/2019/12/30/magazine/brexit-northern-ireland.html.

The Trump Presidency: We Were Never Great

By Margaret McGuire

Donald J. Trump's 2016 defeat of projected winner Hillary Clinton, a candidate with extensive previous political experience and policy knowledge, sent shockwaves through the nation. Families sat in their living rooms astounded by their T.V. screens, which unveiled the 45th President of the United States to be a regular feature on the front pages of the New York City tabloids with zero political experience. In general, since his inauguration, the media has covered the Trump administration critically, frequently correcting his exaggerated and false statements and condemning his xenophobic rhetoric. Strong supporters of the president, attracted by his refusal to adhere to "political correctness," steadfastly defend him and his rhetoric. They fully embrace his distrust of immigrants and free trade agreements and his villainization of the Democratic Party. A common misconception expressed in the analysis of President Trump's social impact is that he introduced these hateful and damaging ideologies to the nation. However, President Trump is not fully responsible for the existence of racism, xenophobia, and the anger of disenfranchised white working-class voters. Rather, his election is a product of these unresolved social maladies.

It is important to note that asserting that Donald Trump's presidency is the *result* of longstanding systemic racism and misguided anger, rather than the *cause*, is not to claim that President Trump does not contribute to worsening social injustices. Donald Trump has been extremely successful at identifying deeply rooted American fears and manipulating voters to blindly support him. His presidency unmaskes unresolved feelings and ailments that had previously been suppressed *and* further emboldens these destructive convictions.

It is often conveniently forgotten that America has an ugly history of scapegoating minority groups and attributing blame to them for the nation's problems. Fear can be used as a powerful device to provoke individuals to support discriminatory acts, feel resentment towards whole groups of people, and even possess hatred for them. Historically, many Americans have made an effort to preserve the white racial makeup of the nation, and previous administrations have capitalized on the fear of immigrants taking resources from white Americans. The first major attempt to preserve the "whiteness of America" was the passage of the abhorrent Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which was implemented to "temporarily" stop Chinese immigrants from migrating to America.²⁹⁰ Dangerously xenophobic and hyper-nationalistic policies such as this give harmful validation to racist and irrational fears of groups of people. In many instances, the U.S. government has attempted to regulate the types of immigrants that are permitted to enter the country. Less than ten years after the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, immigrants from Eastern, Southern, and Western Europe were the victims of discriminatory quotas aimed to regulate the racial makeup of the American population.²⁹¹ This xenophobic tradition did not die here, rather,

²⁹⁰ History Staff. "Chinese Exclusion Act." History. August 24, 2018.
<https://www.history.com/topics/immigration/chinese-exclusion-act-1882>.

²⁹¹ Lee, Erika. "Trump's Xenophobia is an American Tradition - But it Doesn't Have to Be." The Washington Post. November 26, 2019. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/11/26/trumps-xenophobia-is-an-american-tradition-it-doesnt-have-be/>.

in the following decades, Mexican Americans and Japanese Americans bore the greatest burden of xenophobic, anti-immigrant policies.²⁹²

Following previous xenophobic immigration policies, Donald Trump campaigned on a platform of protecting Americans from the dangers of foreigners, particularly Mexicans and Muslims, two groups of people he deems responsible for drug crimes, American unemployment, and lack of resources for U.S. citizens. In his announcement speech, candidate Trump declared of Mexican immigrants, “They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.”²⁹³ Donald Trump ran on the promise that he would increase deportations of undocumented immigrants, blaming them for tough economic times facing blue-collar Americans who once thrived in manufacturing jobs. A sentiment widely held by working-class white Americans was relayed by a Trump supporter in Youngstown, Ohio: “But it seems if you’re a minority, they help you out a lot more than if you’re white.”²⁹⁴ These feelings of anger and resentment are perpetuated and validated by President Trump’s rhetoric such as the characterization of Mexican immigrants as “criminals” and “rapists.” This is a tactic used by many politicians historically to position themselves as the “guardian” of citizens from foreigners, in order to direct anger at a certain group of individuals and increase support for their presidency.

Donald Trump’s racist message resonated with the grievances of white working-class people living in Rust Belt states, haunted by the memories of their once booming factories, who attribute widespread unemployment to the movement of their jobs overseas and the influx of immigrants from other countries.²⁹⁵ This deep pain felt by working-class white Americans has led to ugly attitudes towards immigrants, which are now emboldened by President Trump’s racist rhetoric and policies.²⁹⁶ This is the appeal of Trump’s 2016 campaign slogan, “Make America Great Again,” to blue-collar workers, as it idealizes a time in which factory jobs and other blue-collar occupations provided a living wage and were thriving, for *white* Americans.²⁹⁷ The “Make America Great Again” campaign motto leads critical racial scholars Cheryl Matias and Peter Newlove to ask, “...if there ever was a time in the history of the United States when its ‘greatness’ was not predominantly (if not solely) for whites?”²⁹⁸

While Donald Trump is not the cause of racism and white nationalism, it is crucial to acknowledge the extent to which he heightens racial tensions and ignites anger and feelings of

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Time Staff. “Here’s Donald Trump’s Presidential Announcement Speech.” Time. June 16, 2015.

<https://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/>.

²⁹⁴ Fausset, Richard. “Trump a Working-Class Hero? A Blue-Collar Town Debates his Credentials.” New York Times. August 26, 2016.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/27/us/trump-a-working-class-hero-a-blue-collar-town-debates-his-credentials.html>.

²⁹⁵ Tankersley, Jim. “How Trump Won: The Revenge of Working-Class Whites.” The Washington Post. November 9, 2016. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/11/09/how-trump-won-the-revenge-of-working-class-whites/>.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Melton, Marissa. “Is ‘Make America Great Again’ Racist?” Voice of America. August 31, 2017.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/make-america-great-again-racist>.

²⁹⁸ Matias, Cheryl E. and Peter M. Newlove. “Better the Devil You See, Than the One You Don’t: Bearing Witness to Emboldened En-Whitening Epistemology in the Trump Era.” *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 30, no. 10 (2017): 920-928. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2017.1312590>.

nationalism in many white Americans. As a candidate, Donald Trump understood the social and historical context of the times he was running in; economic suffering for white Americans in the Rust Belt was heightened and the prominence of terrorist attacks over the previous decade fueled fear-based irrational xenophobic attitudes towards Muslims.²⁹⁹ Author and Law Professor Khaled Beydoun discusses the history of Islamophobia and the new form it has taken on in Donald Trump's presidency, noting that "it's deeply rooted in American framings of who was a citizen and who was not. But it's been given a new face—a new caricature—as a consequence of the war on terror, and then intensified by the rhetoric of, mainly, President Trump."³⁰⁰ As a result, President Trump's policies that crack down on illegal immigration and ban travel from predominantly Muslim countries have calmed fears perpetuated by Donald Trump himself through his anti-Muslim rhetoric. President Trump has gone so far as to assert that he "thinks Islam hates us," and discuss the possibility of creating a "Muslim database," to keep surveillance on Muslim Americans.³⁰¹ Leading up to his presidency, candidate Trump preyed on residual fear following the 9/11 attacks and frequently associated Muslims with terrorism to embolden xenophobic attitudes. He has uncovered the powerful sources of emotional distress for many white Americans and has used them to create an impactful voter coalition.

Donald Trump's appeal to blue-collar workers is often not understood. How is it that a wealthy businessman with a luxurious, glamour filled lifestyle could possibly understand the pain of suffering blue-collar workers? It again is important to note that these economic grievances are not new. Rust Belt workers have time and time again felt ignored and left out of the political arena, as international trade agreements continue to increase the number of imported goods brought into the United States and leave them without jobs to practice their trades.³⁰² It is reported by sociology professor Victor Tan Chen that while the economic disparities of whites still do not compare to those of African Americans and Hispanics, "whites are more likely to be employed in the declining manufacturing sector than African Americans or Hispanics—and for that matter, they're more likely to live in the rural communities devastated by this most recent, post-NAFTA era of deindustrialization."³⁰³ Professor Tan Chen also observes the unparalleled rates of suicide and drug addiction among middle aged people in old-factory communities where unions used to provide them a supportive "social fabric."³⁰⁴ Feelings of desperation for the "good old times," inspire members of Rust Belt communities to trust Trump when he asserts that he will bring their manufacturing jobs back and promises that his presidency will be "a victory for the wage-earner, the factory worker, a victory for the everyday citizen."³⁰⁵

Mr. Strines, a retired superintendent in the aluminum business from Youngstown Ohio, told *New York Times* reporters that he believes Donald Trump is a "take-charge kind of guy," adding that, "he saw many businesses go under because China could produce aluminum for a

²⁹⁹ Underwood, Alexia. "What Most Americans Get Wrong About Islamophobia." Vox. April 6, 2018. <https://www.vox.com/2018/4/6/17169448/trump-islamophobia-muslims-islam-black-lives-matte>.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Tankersley, Jim. "How Trump Won: The Revenge of Working-Class Whites."

³⁰³ Chen, Victor Tan. "All Hollowed Out, The Lonely Poverty of America's White Working Class." The Atlantic. January 16, 2016. <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/01/white-working-class-poverty/424341/>.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Politico Staff. "Full Transcript: Donald Trump Speaks in Michigan." Politico. August, 19th 2016. <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/08/donald-trump-michigan-speech-transcript-227221>.

fraction of what it cost American companies. He is hoping Mr. Trump will institute more protective tariffs.”³⁰⁶ Donald Trump’s promises to enact more protectionist economic policies, such as increasing tariffs and limiting free trade, excites many unemployed blue-collar workers who dream of having their old manufacturing jobs back. Candidate Trump merely decided that he would center his campaign around sympathizing with this voter-group in hopes that their suffering would drive them to vote for him in large numbers—which it did.³⁰⁷ In a globalized economy with the frequent advancement of technology, it is hard to combat the loss of manufacturing jobs and address the social alienation of individuals who no longer find themselves with a place in the workforce.

President Trump’s election gave voice to the feelings of many white Americans in Rust Belt states. Donald Trump has legitimized their specious characterization of minority individuals as being the cause of white working-class suffering. He has successfully used this attitude to assert that black and brown people coming into this country are the enemies of white working-class people, capitalizing on historic racial tensions and ignorance.

Donald Trump’s election is indicative of his success in using the American tradition of blaming minority groups for economic problems and fueling a misdirected anger in white working-class Americans. Through his “us vs. them” rhetoric, President Trump divides the American people and legitimizes racism and xenophobia. However, to a certain extent, Donald Trump bringing to light these unresolved hateful attitudes is important. Maybe now the United States can begin to not suppress these social maladies, and instead address them in a way that unites Americans, rather than tears them apart.

³⁰⁶ Fausset, Richard. “Trump a Working-Class Hero? A Blue-Collar Town Debates His Credentials.”

³⁰⁷ Tankersley, Jim. “How Trump Won: The Revenge of Working-Class Whites.”

Our Politicians' Depletion of Integrity: How Low is Too Low?

By Abby McVerry

Morals, principles, right from wrong—all so very important, yet so easily comprehensible at such a young age. Why is it, then, that some of the most educated individuals in the United States are incapable of maintaining their decency? It seems as though with each election cycle integrity declines while mudslinging rises. When it comes down to it, the electorate is left to decide between the lesser of two evils, as seen in the 2016 election. Staunch Republicans and Democrats have dug their heels into the ground, not willing to give up on their party's politicians regardless of moral deficiencies. This inevitably leaves out individuals who want both an ideology they can believe in and a person they would not be embarrassed to openly support. Politicians are no longer held to a higher standard, if they ever really were at all. The United States' electorate has become accepting of their representatives being crass political leaders. Politicians do not even attempt to hide this ugly part of the political world. Instead, they flaunt it. Whether it be on a debate stage or at a rally podium, hauling insults is not taboo but a viable campaign tactic. Moral compasses have been visibly shattered, and in their place, the appetite for power has grown. Why has such a large portion of the American people not only accepted, but embraced politicians when they have become completely devoid of common decency? Why are the individuals holding the highest offices in the land not held to the same standards as the rest of the country? The answer is that militant voters on both sides of the aisle are more concerned with their side winning than anything else. Lines have been drawn and neither side is going to give an inch, no matter what politicians that they support say or do. This should be seen as frightening.

To claim that the 2016 election cycle was the dawn of reprehension in American politics would be utterly untrue. American politics have been quite crass before. Jonathon Haidt, a social psychologist from New York University, notes that, “[in] the days of the federalists and anti-federalists and the founding fathers, even Thomas Jefferson and others, were making up pen names and so they got to attack each other and honestly, like being trolls on the Internet almost. And the Civil War was of course, much worse than things are today. So, things do go in cycles. Now things are at a low point. They’ve not been this bad since I think the 19th century. So, there is turning back, but it’s going to be tough.”³⁰⁸ Of course, this is not the first time that American politicians have acted in incredulous ways. A complete dismissal of banter is not practical. A respectable amount is witnessed in all realms of competitiveness; from sporting events to board rooms, banter elicits innovation. However, the bar for acceptable banter in voting continues to decline to the point where it has become destructive. When voting also calls for the compromising of one's morals, that should drive anyone not in a militant mindset to run for the hills. Yet, incredibly, it does not.

Since the dawn of politics, politicians have been fierce in their pursuit of power. The political realm lately, has been no exception. From the most prominent officeholders to the least, there is no mincing of words between politicians of any stature. Take, for example, Michael Kalny, a Republican precinct committeeman from Kansas. In a Facebook message sent by Kalny, he referred to Democratic congressional candidate Sharice Davids as a “radical

³⁰⁸ Haidt, Jonathan. “Speaking of Psychology: How Politics Became So Uncivilized.” American Psychological Association. n.d. <https://www.apa.org/research/action/speaking-of-psychology/incivility-politics>.

socialist kick boxing lesbian Indian [who should] be sent packing to the reservation.”³⁰⁹ Kalny would soon resign from his position, but it begs the question, what did he think would happen? Did Kalny believe that his word choice would be deemed acceptable in a professional atmosphere, let alone anywhere? New York Democratic state Senator Kevin Parker provides another example of politicians holding the belief that they are above consequences. In 2018, the week before the holidays, in the spirit of Christmas, Senator Parker tweeted at a Republican staffer to “kill yourself.”³¹⁰ He later came out and apologized, but this begs the question of why Senator Parker would tweet such a horrendous statement in the first place. Did he honestly believe that people would back him up and maybe even join his hate-spewing train? Or even that individuals would see the tweet and disregard it, going about their day? Due to his apology, it is clear that Parker’s tweet was met with backlash. However, it is tough to understand what could have possibly made Senator Parker hit send rather than delete in the moment before he sent out that tweet. Recall, Kevin Parker is only a state Senator. There happen to be individuals in even higher positions of power who have had their fair share of extremely questionable moments. It is possible that they are the reason that Senator Parker considered his tweet as acceptable.

Looking to the more prominent cases of politicians demonstrating a decrease in decency, the 2016 presidential election serves as a prime example. While speaking at a fundraiser in New York City, Hillary Clinton demonized half of Trump’s supporters by saying, “you know, to just be grossly generalistic, you could put half of Trump’s supporters into what I call the basket of deplorables. Right?”³¹¹ She then proceeded to explain that she believes her statement is true because half of his supporters are racist, sexist, homophobic, etc. However, Clinton had no data to back this assertion up. She made a baseless claim which violated the respect that politicians are expected to have for voters. Rather than articulating why she disagrees with Trump, and why it would be in the best interest of Americans to vote for her, she decided to name-call. In no professional sphere is name-calling ever seen as the right route to prove one’s point, but Clinton had no qualms about doing so because her profession is not held to the same social standards as other professions. An even more notable example is one from Donald Trump. While speaking with *Rolling Stone* magazine, he said of opponent Carly Fiorina, “Look at that face! Would anyone vote for that? Can you imagine that, the face of our next president?”³¹² Despite these comments, Trump would still go on to receive the votes of 52% of white women.³¹³ It appears as though in the pursuit of power, our politicians believe that it is a no holds barred atmosphere. However, just because certain politicians deem their abhorrent behavior as admissible, that does not mean that voters have to accept it. Americans can demand better of the people that represent them as a country.

³⁰⁹ Greenblatt, Alan. “Some of 2018’s Worst Moments in Politics: Insults, Threats and Bad Tweets.” *GOVERNING*. December 21, 2018. www.governing.com/topics/politics/gov-2018-most-embarrassing-political-moments-racist-sexist-metoo.html.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Reilly, Katie. “Read Hillary Clinton’s ‘Basket of Deplorables’ Remarks About Donald Trump Supporters.” *Time Magazine*. September 10, 2016. www.time.com/4486502/hillary-clinton-basket-of-deplorables-transcript.

³¹² Gass, Nick. “The 7 Craziest Things Trump Has Said.” *POLITICO*. December 7, 2015. www.politico.com/story/2015/12/donald-trump-ban-muslims-216513.

³¹³ Pousoulides, Stefanie. “Trump Said 52% of Women Voted for Him in 2016. That’s Misleading. It Refers Only to White Women.” *Politifact*. June 20, 2019. <https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2019/jun/20/donald-trump/trump-said-52-women-voted-him-2016-s-misleading-re/>.

The American political atmosphere does not have to look like this. There is an alternative in which there is no dark cloud of immorality hanging overhead. One very well-known politician gives an excellent example of this, and that man is John McCain. Back during the 2008 election run, a McCain supporter at a town hall meeting in Lakeville, Minnesota did not hold back her feelings on McCain's opponent, Barack Obama. She told McCain, "I can't trust Obama. I have read about him, and he's not, um he's an Arab."³¹⁴ McCain promptly grabbed the microphone away from the woman and immediately did something that is quickly evaporating from politics—he showed his compassion. He responded, "No ma'am, he's a decent family man [and] citizen that I just happen to have disagreements with on fundamental issues, and that's what the campaign's all about."³¹⁵ Rather than being on the attack, like Clinton and Trump, McCain put integrity above politics and handled a tough situation as a decent human, not as a politician struggling for power. John McCain's last line to the woman hit the nail on the head of what exactly politics is. There are individuals on both sides of the aisle who disagree, and with disagreements will come rifts. However, what people all seem to forget is that no matter one's ideology, each person's cause is the same: bettering the United States of America. Americans get bogged down in their differences and forget the extent of their similarities. Nobody is actively vying for the downfall of the United States. Politicians should still be able to work together to form a better union. In order to achieve this goal though, the moral character of politicians would have to change. American government is generally set up in a way in which compromise is necessary to achieve almost anything, and by having absolutely no middle ground, the only action coming from the government is the growth of the gap between parties.

In conclusion, Americans should not always vote party lines, but they should instead stand up and demand more from elected officials. Does a politician actually have to shoot someone in the middle of fifth avenue to make the American people wake up from this sort of militant trance? It might sound drastic and farfetched. Admittedly, politicians are not all going to turn into the monsters that we once believed lived under our beds. However, the American people need to start taking issue with the fact that their cashiers, secretaries, and wait staff are tasked with showing more respect than their elected officials. People will always have their moments of weakness. Tensions rise and feelings get hurt in all professions, but most jobs also have consequences, tongue biting, and Human Resources departments. Employees who arrive at their desk job tomorrow and tell their coworkers to kill themselves will not get away with a quick apology. Why then do the individuals who should be held to the highest of standards receive the most leeway from society? Demanding more from politicians can only lead to good. Americans should place moral expectations above policy expectations, and they should remember that everybody aspires for a better future. Bipartisan cooperation is not out of reach. Voters just need to demand more.

³¹⁴ Stewart, Emily. "Watch John McCain Defend Barack Obama Against a Racist Voter in 2008." Vox. September 1, 2018. <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/8/25/17782572/john-mccain-barack-obama-statement-2008-video>.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

What Makes a Responsible Party? Polarization and Party Loyalty in the 2016 Election

By Chineze Osakwe

Alan Abramowitz's book, *The Disappearing Center*, probes the increasingly polarized and partisan nature of American politics. Abramowitz asserts that the largest dividing factor in the current state of American politics is not political ideology and party identification alone. Rather, he suggests that the largest divide is a lack of political engagement in the citizenry that is exacerbated by party loyalty. Abramowitz claims that the most politically engaged citizens are partisan and compose the bulk of left and right.³¹⁶ Consequently, those who are moderate are the most detached from the political system.³¹⁷ As moderates have become detached from the political system, the partisanship and polarization of the parties has grown. This paper argues that the increasing partisanship of parties leads them to sometimes struggle to fulfill their main functions. Hershey's book, *Party Politics in America*, outlines the three main functions of a responsible political party: 1) to promote ideologies and inform the citizenry; 2) to ensure that the rights and well-being of their supporters are secured; and 3) to encourage civic engagement³¹⁸. The 2016 presidential election—considered by some to be either a deviating or realigning election—demonstrates how the voting populace will push back against parties that fail to adequately fulfill their fundamental responsibilities.

First, Hershey argues that strong political parties educate citizens about issues important to the party.³¹⁹ A responsible political party not only educates citizens about issues, but it also subsequently promotes specific ideologies and stances on various topics. In the current political state of American politics, the two dominant parties have attempted to fulfil this duty by taking a stance on various issues impacting or important to the American public. For instance, during the 2016 campaign, the two presidential nominees and their parties often advocated opposing issue positions, particularly with regards to domestic affairs, immigration, gun control, and social programs.³²⁰ In theory, it seems reasonable for the parties to take opposing positions on socio-political issues in order to attract voters with similar beliefs. However, as partisanship and polarization have increased in our society, people seemingly vote based on simple partisanship rather than issue stances. Abramowitz attributes the end of the New Deal coalition and the subsequent realignment of party ideology during the Nixon and Reagan Administrations to the racial, religious, and gender deviations that now define the Democrat and Republican niches.³²¹ He claims that these characteristics appear to be the biggest indicators of party alignment and it therefore follows that people of similar social backgrounds would possess similar ideals.³²² Therefore, the present-day political system depends a lot more on ideological partisanship driving people to the polls in order to defeat the opposition or sustain a particular ideological

³¹⁶ Abramowitz, Alan I. *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2010.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Hershey, Marjorie Randon. *Party Politics in America*. 17th edition. New York, New York: Routledge, 2017.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Zezima, Katie and Matthew Callahan. "Donald Trump vs. Hillary Clinton on the Issues." The Washington Post. September 23, 2016. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/political-issues/>.

³²¹ Abramowitz, Alan I. *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy*.

³²² Ibid.

status quo, rather than expressing issue positions or wanting to be civically engaged.³²³ The 2016 election exemplifies Abramowitz's argument, as many voters went to the polls to vote, not because they particularly liked the candidate from their party, but because they did not want the opposing candidate to become elected.³²⁴ This demonstrates that our current political parties have come in stark contrast with the original intent of pluralists, who had hoped that political parties would stimulate a genuine desire for civic engagement and produce a system of governance composed of political officials that represent the diverse views of the citizenry.³²⁵

When discussing the activities that every political party engages in, Hershey also mentions that parties work to influence the government to provide certain policies and benefits.³²⁶ A responsible political party ensures that whilst influencing government, the rights of the people are not being infringed upon through legislation and policies, thus acting as a medium between the federal government and the citizenry. Moreover, a responsible political party ensures that the rights of its constituency are being respected not only through the utilization of checks and balances to block harmful legislation, but by going further and holding those who infringe upon the rights of American citizens or fail to protect said rights, accountable.³²⁷ Both parties made attempts to defend the rights of their constituency during the 2016 election campaign, but neither focused on more broadly defending the rights of the American people. For example, the Republican Party opposed increased gun control measures and background checks.³²⁸ These actions, they believed, would secure both the right of self-defense, and a right to live freely and safely. Democrats, on the other hand, found increased gun control measures and background checks to be a key aspect in ensuring the right to life and safety.³²⁹ Consequently, the 2016 campaign season demonstrated how political parties attempted to fulfill their functions by proposing potential legislation (or blocking any) in order to ideologically align with what constitutes ensuring the rights and liberties of their niche. Although in theory, this strategy has some merit since officials in both parties are caring for the individuals who voted them into office, our current political system demonstrates that each side prioritizes the rights and welfare of its constituents rather than the nation as a whole.

Finally, Hershey claims that all political parties select candidates and contest elections.³³⁰ The pluralists believed that political parties help bring citizens in the political process during elections. They primarily achieve this by organizing citizens to canvass, donate, or vote in an election.³³¹ Today's dominant political parties merge this ideal with the notion that "in the normative theory of responsible party government, elections are mechanisms crucial to enforcing

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Griffin, Rob, et al. "Voter Trends in 2016." Center for American Progress. April 14, 2016. www.americanprogress.org/issues/democracy/reports/2017/11/01/441926/voter-trends-in-2016/.

³²⁵ Domhoff, G. William. "Theories of Power." University of California. 2005. www.whorulesamerica.ucsc.edu/theory/alternative_theories.html.

³²⁶ Hershey, Marjorie Randon. *Party Politics in America*.

³²⁷ Kirkpatrick, Evron M. "'Toward A More Responsible Two-Party System': Political Science, Policy Science, or Pseudo-Science?" *American Political Science Review* 65, no. 4 (1971): 965–990. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-political-science-review/article/toward-a-more-responsible-two-party-system-political-science-policy-science-or-pseudoscience/7E0C8B19699573E71C0CEDDFFC367728>.

³²⁸ Zezima, Katie, and Matthew Callahan. "Donald Trump vs. Hillary Clinton on the Issues."

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Hershey, Marjorie Randon. *Party Politics in America*.

³³¹ Ibid.

party responsibility.”³³² The current political parties are largely fulfilling their responsibilities of encouraging civic engagement by contesting elections. For instance, during the 2016 election, Donald Trump utilized various strategies to mobilize “disenchanted working-class whites in heavily Republican areas,” by getting their attention through slogans and jargon that they could relate to.³³³ Conversely, Democrats attempted to mobilize their voters by promoting a “large-scale-get-out-the-vote operation.”³³⁴ Abramowitz argues that ideological polarization among elites has encouraged civic engagement among the electorate.³³⁵ Consequently, “polarization in Washington reflects polarization within the public, especially within the politically engaged segment of the public that is the most partisan and ideologically polarized.”³³⁶ Although the Democratic Party won the popular vote in 2016, both dominant parties successfully leveraged the nature of the political climate to mobilize their core supporters to engage in the election.

All in all, the overall structure of America’s political parties has remained relatively steadfast since the inception of the dominant two-party system. Both Democrats and Republicans have attempted to fulfill their fundamental responsibilities by 1) promoting ideologies and informing the people; 2) ensuring that the rights and well-being of their voters are secured; and 3) encouraging civic engagement. Parties are more successful at fulfilling some of these responsibilities than others. Donald Trump’s triumph in 2016 reflects the Republican Party’s more effective fulfillment of these functions in comparison to the Democratic Party. Beyond taking the presidency, the Republicans also increased their margin of control of the House and Senate.³³⁷ This indicates that the Republican Party fulfilled one or more of the basic functions of political parties to a greater degree than the Democrats in order to mobilize voters. Moreover, although both parties promoted their political ideology and demonstrated how they would ensure or continue to ensure the rights of their citizenry, Republicans employed the responsible party functions in a way that not only sustained their core voters, but also attracted new ones from their opponent.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Drutman, Lee, et al. “How Turnout-Only Politics Gave Us the 2016 Campaign-And a Historic Polling Upset.” *POLITICO Magazine*. November 15, 2016. www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/11/mobilization-only-politics-2016-214456.

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Abramowitz, Alan I. *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy*.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ “United States Congress Elections, 2016.” *Ballotpedia*. 2016. [www.ballotpedia.org/United States Congress elections 2016](http://www.ballotpedia.org/United_States_Congress_elections_2016).

The Historic Nature of the Buttigieg Campaign

By Shawn Parent

The race for the 2020 Democratic Party nomination will be considered historic for a variety of reasons, chiefly among which is the diversity of the candidates. This year's competitors have been more diverse than ever before, featuring more women and people of color. Included in this banner of diverse candidates is Pete Buttigieg who, although demographically similar to historically successful candidates as a white male running for president, is unique in his sexuality, as he is the first viable openly gay presidential candidate. Despite the risk, in 2015, Buttigieg came out as gay and still managed to win a mayoral election by a large margin at a time when anti-gay sentiments in Indiana were highly publicized.³³⁸ Buttigieg tried to recreate this success nationally by launching his presidential bid in early 2019. In doing so, he made history, cementing himself as the first viable openly gay presidential candidate for a major party in American history. To do this, Buttigieg capitalized on changing social views of homosexuality and gay rights to propel his candidacy and secure victories in relatively conservative areas of the country.

The presence of openly gay political figures in America is a relatively recent phenomenon. The earliest high-profile gay politician is considered to be Harvey Milk in 1977. Milk, a high-profile LGBTQ activist, became the first gay man elected to a notable political office when he became a city supervisor of San Francisco in 1978. Although he was not elected to a higher office on the national or state level, he is credited as a trailblazer in cementing gay political participation because his success and subsequent assassination inspired others from the LGBTQ community to run for office.³³⁹ Despite this, the progression of LGBTQ political success has been slow, with the next spark of notable representation not coming until 2012. That year marked the election of Tammy Baldwin, the first openly gay senator in the United States.³⁴⁰ That same year, the LGBTQ community was represented in the presidential race by Fred Karger, who ran for the Republican presidential nomination. Although he put up a valiant effort, Karger was unable to attain the recognition and support needed to win the nomination. This is largely because of the negative perception of the LGBTQ community in the Republican Party, which largely opposed gay rights and political equality at the time. Karger's campaign was likely doomed from the start because of his sexual orientation and the Republican base of support.³⁴¹ This is contrasted by Pete Buttigieg, who in 2019 became the first *viable* openly gay presidential candidate. The differences between Buttigieg and Karger's chances of winning largely falls on the passage of time and movement towards greater acceptance of the LGBTQ community.

The public's opposing views of the Karger and Buttigieg campaigns mirror the larger shift in public perception of members of the LGBTQ community and their rights in the public. In

³³⁸ "Pete Buttigieg." Biography.com. February 20, 2020. www.biography.com/political-figure/pete-buttigieg.

³³⁹ "Harvey Milk." California Museum. February 17, 2012. <https://www.californiamuseum.org/inductee/harvey-milk>.

³⁴⁰ Grinbert, Emanuella. "Wisconsin's Tammy Baldwin Is First Openly Gay Person Elected to Senate." CNN. November 7, 2012. www.cnn.com/2012/11/07/politics/wisconsin-tammy-baldwin-senate/index.html.

³⁴¹ Brooks, Ryan. "Pete Buttigieg Is Not the First Openly Gay, Major Party Presidential Candidate. This Guy Was." BuzzFeed News, April 2, 2019. www.buzzfeednews.com/article/ryancbrooks/fred-karger-mayor-pete-buttigieg-gay-2020.

2012, Karger was facing a much steeper challenge for legitimacy, as his campaign began at a time when half of the country held strong anti-gay sentiments. This is demonstrated in a Gallup poll, which revealed that in 2012, roughly 33% of Americans thought homosexual relations should be illegal and 48% thought they should not be able to marry.³⁴² The public disapproval of LGBTQ equality and gay rights made it difficult for a gay presidential candidate to be seen as viable. This was especially true because Karger was running in the Republican primary, which is historically more hostile to the LGBTQ community. By contrast, Buttigieg ran at a time when the public support for gay rights was higher. When Buttigieg announced his candidacy in 2019, only 26% of Americans thought that homosexual relations should be illegal, and 63% of Americans supported marriage equality.³⁴³ Thus, the LGBTQ community had garnered more public support, and its members could be seen as more politically viable. As a result, Buttigieg was able to gain the credibility that Karger never could, launching himself into the top tier of candidates. This credibility, combined with his moderate policies and midwestern origins, allowed Buttigieg to thrive in the early states of the Democratic primary. His successes in Iowa and New Hampshire are an important signal of how far LGBTQ political participation has come in recent decades.

Despite the increased credibility, Buttigieg did struggle to sync with the LGBTQ community because he was regarded as not representative of the larger community. These claims are linked to characteristics like his demographic background and political stances. As a white cisgender male who grew up in a financially stable household, in a supportive community, and who pushed for moderate policies, Buttigieg cannot fully represent the LGBTQ community as a whole. This community is hugely diverse, with members coming from every demographic group. Furthermore, the section of the community likely to vote in the Democratic primary tends to be much more progressive. As a result, Buttigieg could only ever hope to represent a small fraction of the LGBTQ community, as he tended to be more moderate on policies.³⁴⁴ This garnered harsh feedback from voters within his community who felt that they were not being represented. The feeling of being unrepresented by the first viable LGBTQ presidential candidate struck to the heart of the community, which had already been underrepresented thanks to the past's lack of public acceptance. Buttigieg's inability to quell these feelings culminated in the lack of support from his own community, limiting his ability to succeed after initial victories in early states. Thus, his run for the presidential nomination will serve as precedent to show that earning credibility amongst the LGBTQ community is also important in securing a nomination.

In total, the Buttigieg campaign was a historic marker of progress. Its importance cannot be understated. Although he has since dropped out of the race, his success as a candidate signals a turning point that will likely influence gay political participation for future generations, so long as future candidates are able to solidify and maintain support from the whole LGBTQ community.

³⁴² "Gay and Lesbian Rights." Gallup. January 31, 2020. www.news.gallup.com/poll/1651/gay-lesbian-rights.aspx.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Kornhaber, Spencer. "The Shame of Pete Buttigieg." The Atlantic. February 29, 2020.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/culture/archive/2020/02/why-policing-pete-buttigieg-gayness-essentialist/607129/>.

The Impact of a High-Quality Universal Pre-K Program on the U.S.

By Shaun Simoneau

The Democratic presidential primary has brought many early childhood education policies to the forefront of debate. Presidential candidates have discussed policies ranging from universal school lunch programs to universal childcare. Out of this “universal” policy blanket emerges a dynamic solution to mitigate the harmful effects of societal inequalities within our communities: a high quality, well-funded universal pre-K program. This essay analyzes the dynamic economic impact that a national universal pre-K program would have on national and local economies. In addition, this essay aims to explain how a national universal preschool program would increase integration for participants leading to improved development of social skills that are vital to living in society. Lastly, this paper highlights the role a universal pre-K program could play in decreasing the egregious black and white achievement gap, a strong indicator of inequality prominent in Connecticut and around the United States.

A high-quality universal pre-K program would markedly benefit the national and local economies. The economic incentive of a universal pre-K program is impactful to say the least. A universal preschool program would allow any four-year-old the chance to get a head start they would otherwise not have. According to Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman, if every family could put their children through pre-K at the same rate as affluent families, preschool participation would increase by 13%. This 13% increase would add between 28 and 74 billion dollars per year to the United States’ gross domestic product (GDP).³⁴⁵ This projected growth in the economy reflects the expected job growth and increased productivity that a better educated workforce would establish. Heckman’s study also finds that every \$1 spent on preschool yields economic benefits worth \$8.60.³⁴⁶ About four dollars of this comes from preschool enrollees earning an average of 25% more than others.³⁴⁷ The other \$4.60 comes from the lower likelihood that preschool attendees will go to prison in their lives.³⁴⁸ This study finds that when the government invests in early childhood education, more children can enroll in preschool, become productive members of society, and avoid relying on taxpayer-funded welfare in the future. The state of Oklahoma instituted a universal preschool program in 1990, drawing positive results. Students were four times more likely to graduate college, five times less likely to rely on state assistance, and significantly less likely to get arrested or commit a crime.³⁴⁹ Oklahoma’s result is further indicative of the positive economic benefits that a universal preschool program can provide. Furthermore, macroeconomic data shows that an increase in college graduates sends positive spill-over effects into local economies. College graduates with at least a bachelor's degree are projected to make between \$400,000-\$800,000 (dependent on degree) more in their lives than those without degrees.³⁵⁰ Data shows that in metropolitan areas, a greater percentage of college graduates results in higher wages for all workers, regardless of

³⁴⁵ Klein, Rebecca. “The White House Wants You To Know That Preschool Is Really Good For The Economy.” The Huffington Post. December 10, 2014. www.huffpost.com/entry/white-house-preschool-report_n_6297292.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

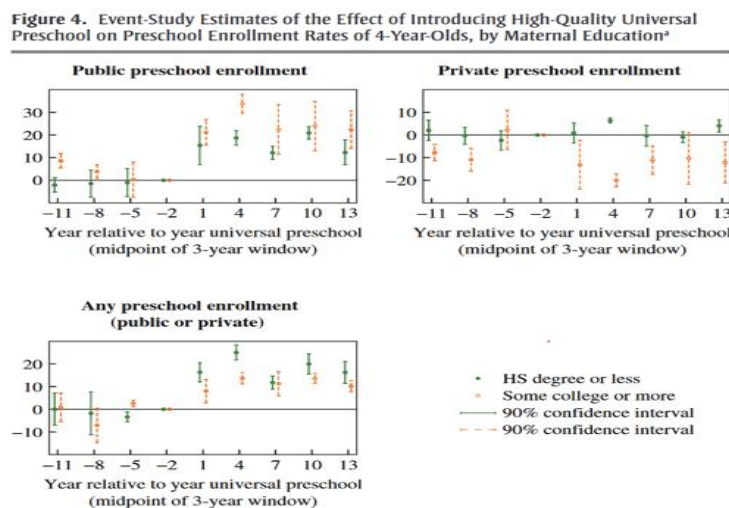
³⁴⁹ Lohman, Judith. “States with Universal Pre-K Programs.” Connecticut General Assembly. November 13, 2003. www.cga.ct.gov/2003/olrdata/ed/rpt/2003-R-0821.htm.

³⁵⁰ Bartik, Timothy. “The Economic Case for Preschool.” TED Talks. September 2012. https://www.ted.com/talks/timothy_bartik_the_economic_case_for_preschool

their personal education level.³⁵¹ This statistic essentially shows that the more educated a public workforce is, the higher the wages they earn, which correlates to higher job growth in the community. A more innovative, educated workforce in any industry generates greater productivity. Higher productivity allows for businesses in local economies to expand into new markets, stimulating the economy and supplying the innovators needed for businesses to compete and grow.

Universal preschool programs would save families money, producing better short-term and long-term economic outcomes for the American family. Childcare is expensive, but especially expensive in Connecticut. The average preschool aged childcare cost in Connecticut is \$12,731 dollars per year, or almost 14% of the median Connecticut family's income.³⁵² A universal pre-K program may help lessen the high childcare cost burden for some families. This does not apply to every family, as there is no guarantee a parent's occupation will be synchronous to the child's school schedule. A plurality of parents work various hours to make ends meet. However, if designed correctly, a universal preschool program can be utilized as an inexpensive alternative to daycares. This alternative would grant a parent more freedom in the decisions that they make in their personal careers. For a family with two young children, the average cost of childcare nears \$30,000.³⁵³ Given this high cost, some families may opt for a stay-at-home parent to offset the cost of childcare. The present tradeoff is often considered to be weighted more heavily than the long-term benefits the stay at home parent can lose. Due to an absence in the labor market, a stay-at-home parent will miss out on possible wage increases, contributions to retirement plans such as 401k plans, and personal fulfillment in their careers. A universal pre-K program would decrease the need for parents to stay home to avoid childcare costs, securing further economic benefits from remaining in the workforce.

Figure 1: Preschool Enrollment Under a Universal Program³⁵⁴



³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Scinto, Rich. "Child Care in CT Among Most Expensive in Country: Report." Connecticut Patch. July 26, 2019. www.patch.com/connecticut/across-ct/child-care-ct-among-most-expensive-country-report.

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Cascio, Elizabeth U. and Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach. "The Impacts of Expanding Access to High-Quality Preschool Education." Brookings Institute. September 13, 2016. www.brookings.edu/bpea-articles/the-impacts-of-expanding-access-to-high-quality-preschool-education/.

A high-quality universal preschool program will also increase integration and diversity between socioeconomic and racial classes. The Brookings Institute study in Figure 1 showed an uptick in public preschool enrollment under a universal pre-K program for both families with college and no college experience. It is important to note that families with college degrees are enrolling in the public preschool program at a higher rate than families without a college degree. At the same time, enrollment in private preschools decreases for children from families with college education. Families that would currently use private preschools are opting for the less expensive public program instead. This would save these families money and would benefit their children by placing them in a more diverse learning environment. Private schools are typically composed of affluent and middle-class families that are able to afford the expensive private preschools. These private preschools are predominantly white. The homogenous nature of private schools produces an educational experience that lacks exposure to various socioeconomic classes. Compare this to a universal preschool program that increases the diversity and range of socioeconomic backgrounds that participants are exposed to. Young pupils are granted a safe space to explore social interaction mutually with access to different cultures, socioeconomic classes, and races. A child exposed to different cultures and races has significant advantages over children who attend schools of their predominant race. “Children from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds and race/ethnicities can learn from peers who are different, and these benefits may be enduring and profound. Usually by kindergarten, children have developed an awareness of racial/ethnic identities and social status, and the ability to make social comparisons.”³⁵⁵ While it’s meaningful to note that not all families will value diversity in the classroom, the social benefits are clear. This integration simulates the real world and adds value to a child’s behavioral development. A young student will endure experiences and develop their sense of tolerance for others. These lived experiences are crucial to a child’s eventual navigation and understanding of society.

A high-quality universal Pre-K program will especially benefit Connecticut by attacking its poor achievement gap head on and combating societal inequalities. Connecticut consistently ranks among the bottom five states with the worst achievement gaps.³⁵⁶ Connecticut falls victim to this due to isolated pockets of extreme wealth and extreme poverty. Policies such as redlining have segregated most of Connecticut. The consequences of the achievement gap are disastrous. Black students score, on average, one standard deviation below white students on standardized tests. One standard deviation is equivalent to the difference in performance between an elementary school fourth grader and a middle school eighth grader.³⁵⁷ The wealthiest residents of Connecticut are able to send their children to prestigious private preschools with award winning instruction while the poorest Connecticut districts are left with minimal resources. As a result of “barebones” funding, student outcomes suffer. A 2013 study indicated that only 17% of New

³⁵⁵ Burris, Michelle, et al. “A Better Start: Why Classroom Diversity Matters in Early Education.” The Century Foundation. March 8, 2016. www.tcf.org/content/commentary/a-better-start-why-classroom-diversity-matters-in-early-education/.

³⁵⁶ Megan, Kathleen. “Small Gains on State Test, but Troubling Achievement Gap Persists.” The CT Mirror. September 9, 2019. www.ctmirror.org/2019/09/09/small-gains-on-state-test-but-troubling-achievement-gap-persists/.

³⁵⁷ Fryer, Roland G. and Steven D. Levitt. “Falling Behind.” Education Next. December 23, 2014. www.educationnext.org/fallingbehind/.

Haven's low-income students were reading at grade level, compared to 58% for their higher income peers.³⁵⁸

A universal pre-K program would also help increase resources available to low-income students in Connecticut. Figure 1 indicates an increased enrollment of college educated families in public preschool programs. These college educated families typically have greater incomes than non-college educated families and thus, pay more property taxes. The current primary source of funding for public K-12 schools is dependent on property taxes.³⁵⁹ If this mechanism were held constant for a public preschool program, districts would subsequently see an increase in available resources. These resources will be the lifeblood of steering pupils away from negative outcomes in life. The negative outcomes that result from a poorly funded education include jail time, addiction, and dependence on state assistance programs.³⁶⁰ It is no coincidence that individuals more likely to hold these outcomes disproportionately come from low-income, black and brown households. Universal preschool is a worthy investment that can decrease the chance that these outcomes occur, while simultaneously increasing the chance these same students will prosper in the future. Low-income students, particularly those that aren't proficient in English, will have the opportunity to get the head start necessary to be on a level playing field with their more privileged peers. An education is the toolbox one has for life. This toolbox can empower an individual, allowing them to pursue a career and contribute positively to society. If tax dollars are going to be spent to pay for prisons and state welfare programs, why not eliminate this cycle by investing in low income students' educations to mitigate these poor outcomes? In order to eat away at the achievement gap, we need to make certain that even the poorest kids are on a level playing field. A high-quality, well-funded preschool program is the key to addressing societal inequalities early on in a child's developmental process.

Overall, a national universal pre-K program in the United States would prove beneficial to American society. The positive economic benefit alone is enough to make economists like James Heckman avid universal pre-K advocates. In an America with growing diversity in ethnicities, languages, and culture, students would have access to a diverse educational atmosphere. Universal pre-K programs cultivate a more tolerant, aware adolescent mind, increasing the development of social behavior and tolerance of others. Lastly, universal pre-K grants states all around the country the opportunity to decrease the dreadful achievement gap that has plagued young minds and contributed to further dependence of government welfare. The children of the United States deserve to be on a level playing field, and a universal pre-K program ensures the likelihood that, "all boats will be able to float in the same ocean."³⁶¹

³⁵⁸ Meiksins, Rob, et al. "More than Money Determines Connecticut's Achievement Gap." Nonprofit Quarterly. December 20, 2016. www.nonprofitquarterly.org/money-determines-connecticuts-achievement-gap/.

³⁵⁹ Fawcett, Eliza. "Congressional Study: Connecticut Among the Leaders in Funding Public Schools Through the Local Property Tax." Hartford Courant. October 14, 2019. www.courant.com/politics/hc-pol-public-school-financing-20191015-hzq4upobgvho5dtbl2gbevy2na-story.html.

³⁶⁰ Center for Substance Abuse. *Substance Abuse Treatment for Adults in the Criminal Justice System*. U.S. National Library of Medicine. January 1, 1970. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK64145/.

³⁶¹ Raissian, Kerri. Public Policy 5340: Early Childhood Education. March 3, 2020. University of Connecticut. Class Lecture.

The 2020 Peace Plan: The Question of Jerusalem

By Isabel Stasko

On January 28th, 2020, President Donald Trump issued his anticipated 2020 peace plan (“Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People”), authored by a team led by his son-in-law and senior advisor, Jared Kushner. Negotiations between the Israeli government and Palestinian people have been underway for decades since the founding and recognition of Israel as the Jewish state in 1948. Major components of these negotiations included the status of Jerusalem as a national capital, the right of return of Palestinian refugees, and the security of Israel. Now, in 2020, the Trump administration addresses and promises to resolve the essential components of ongoing conflict between Israel and the Arab world. The Israeli government and prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed delighted support for the plan. However, the plan was quickly rejected by the Palestinian Authority, as well as Turkey and Arab states such as Jordan, with the division of Jerusalem being a major factor of this rejection.

Jerusalem is well known to be a significant city to Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike. It is the city that King David supposedly conquered in roughly 1000 BCE, and it is the birthplace of Solomon’s Temple (the first Jewish temple). In Christianity, it is the site of Jesus’ crucifixion, and it later was conquered by the great Muslim sultan, Saladin, in approximately 1187 CE.³⁶² In earlier Islam, Jerusalem and the whole of Palestine were conquered by the Rashidun Caliphate in 637 CE. Its rich, complex history has made the international status of Jerusalem an area of modern conflict among Arabs and Israelis, also involving the Western world through contemporary imperialism and attempts at mediating the conflict.

Until the establishment of Israel, Jerusalem was the capital of Mandatory Palestine under British rule following the abolition of the Ottoman Sultanate. At this point, the establishment of a Jewish state had long been in the works of the Zionist movement and Western powers (Great Britain in particular). The Balfour Declaration of 1917 publicly announced British support to institute the Jewish state in Palestine, and the international mandate for Palestine was assigned to Britain in 1920.^{363,364} Along with the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine, which granted the new Israeli state approximately 56% of the land, the UN General Assembly Resolution 181 declared the City of Jerusalem a “*corpus separatum*” under the supervision of the UN in 1947.³⁶⁵ At this point, the population of Jerusalem could be estimated to be roughly 30,630 Muslims and 97,000 Jews, according to statistics from 1945.³⁶⁶ The plan was ultimately rejected by Palestinians, and despite UN wishes for Jerusalem to be an international city, West Jerusalem and East Jerusalem essentially fell under the jurisdiction of Israel and Jordan, respectively,

³⁶² “History of Jerusalem: Timeline for the History of Jerusalem.” Jewish Virtual Library. n.d. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/timeline-for-the-history-of-jerusalem-4500-bce-present>.

³⁶³ The Avalon Project. “Balfour Declaration.” Yale University. November 2, 1917. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/balfour.asp.

³⁶⁴ “The Mandate for Palestine.” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. n.d. <https://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/the-mandate-for-palestine.aspx>.

³⁶⁵ “A/RES/181(II) of 29 November 1947.” United Nations. November 29, 1947. <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/7F0AF2BD897689B785256C330061D253>.

³⁶⁶ Kark, Ruth and Michal Oren-Nordheim. *Jerusalem and Its Environs: Quarters, Neighborhoods, Villages, 1800-1948*. Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2001.

following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. However, neither received international recognition. The variance of the status of Jerusalem and unclear sovereignty would remain the case among all states. Yet, the Trump administration made a major change to United States policy in 2017, raising further questions about Jerusalem in the twenty-first century.

Under Proclamation 9,683 of December 6, 2017, the United States officially recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.³⁶⁷ This succeeded the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 that was born of the negotiations of the Oslo Accords. Indeed, this formal recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel was long in the works for the United States. Without a presidential signature, Congress passed the act in 1995 for the United States embassy to be moved to Jerusalem and for the U.S. to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.³⁶⁸ The bill called for this move and announcement to be made within five years of its signing; however, sitting president Bill Clinton delayed this change. The next administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama also failed to actualize the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995.

Finally, after almost two and a half decades of delay, President Trump formally acknowledged Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in 2017 and officially moved the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in 2018. The proclamation was met with harsh criticism from the international community, including condemnation from the United Nations and Arab world. In response to Trump's decision, the Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas proclaimed Jerusalem as the "eternal capital of the state of Palestine," and leaders belonging to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), including Turkey, Jordan, and Iran, formally recognized East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine.^{369,370}

Given the shifts in policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Trump's administration, the 2020 peace plan's stance of Jerusalem remaining the undivided capital of the state of Israel should not have been unexpected. Citing the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995, the plan maintains that the city of Jerusalem shall remain undivided in an effort to ensure Israeli security. In accordance with the ambitious two-state solution, the new State of Palestine under this plan would obtain the Arab neighborhoods that exist on the outskirts of East Jerusalem, including Shuafat, Kafr Aqab, and Abu Dis.³⁷¹ This is a departure from previous negotiations that included the possibility of Palestinian sovereignty over the whole of East Jerusalem, particularly the 2000 Camp David Summit.³⁷² In addition to only giving the proposed new State of Palestine sovereignty over the Arab neighborhoods outside of East Jerusalem, the peace plan offers no satisfactory solution for the Palestinian refugee crisis or any such right of return.

³⁶⁷ "Presidential Proclamation Recognizing Jerusalem as the Capital of the State of Israel and Relocating the United States Embassy to Israel to Jerusalem." The Trump White House. n.d. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/presidential-proclamation-recognizing-jerusalem-capital-state-israel-relocating-united-states-embassy-israel-jerusalem/>.

³⁶⁸ "Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995." United States Congress. 1995.

³⁶⁹ "Jerusalem: Trump Move Prompts Negative World Reaction." BBC News. December 7, 2017. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42250340>.

³⁷⁰ Sariyuce, Isil, Arwa Damon, and Tamara Qiblawi. "OIC: We Recognize East Jerusalem as Palestinian Capital." CNN. December 13, 2017. <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/12/13/middleeast/oic-jerusalem-intl/index.html>

³⁷¹ "Peace to Prosperity." The Trump White House. January 2020. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/peacetoprosperity/>.

³⁷² "Mideast Peace Process/Camp David Summit (July 2000) - Abu Mazen's Speech." United Nations. September 9, 2000. <https://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/172D1A3302DC903B85256E37005BD90F>.

Further, while a new sovereign State of Palestine would come into existence under this plan, the state would be under heavy Israeli surveillance and security. Ultimately, under these provisions of the plan, with the status of Jerusalem being a crucial component, the Palestinian Authority, along with the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), immediately rejected the plan.

The Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas provided the grounds for this quick rejection, referencing the belief that the plan threatens authentic Palestinian independence and sovereignty. Abbas further maintains that East Jerusalem belongs to the State of Palestine, while West Jerusalem belongs to the State of Israel.³⁷³ These terms of the division of Jerusalem have long been the beliefs of the PA and other groups. Given this fact, Palestinian dissatisfaction with the proposed plan is understandable.

Since the release of President Trump's "realistic two-state solution" to the conflict, the responses to the provisions, including that of Jerusalem, echo the past condemnation of the proclamation of 2017. Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey have all criticized the peace plan. So, what will come from this plan that was essentially fully accepted only by the United States, Israel, and few other states? Will there be a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the near future? Despite the PA's rejection of the plan, countries such as Egypt and the United Arab Emirates may have acknowledged the possibility of opening negotiations to make progress in the conflict.³⁷⁴ However, the general response has been overwhelmingly negative. It is foreseeable that while this plan will undoubtedly strengthen American relations with Israel and its right-wing leaders such as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, correspondence with the rest of the Middle East, which strongly favors the Palestinian side of negotiations, will be strained.³⁷⁵ This is rightfully so; regardless of one's position on the conflict, it is not difficult to see that America's proposed "resolution" is advantageous for Israel. Under this plan, Israel would have authority over what would officially become the new State of Palestine. Numerous provisions make this clear from a demilitarized Palestinian state to denying Palestinians any right to control of Jerusalem.

It seems unlikely that Palestinians will ever accept a peace plan that fails to recognize their claim to East Jerusalem. This leaves the question of whether there is any hope that the Palestinians could obtain jurisdiction over East Jerusalem in peace negotiations. As of 2019, according to the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, the population of Arabs in East Jerusalem exceeded the Jewish population at 62%.³⁷⁶ On top of the larger Arab population, East Jerusalem possesses many key Islamic landmarks including the Temple Mount, Al-Asqa Mosque, and the Dome of the Rock. Though the rhetoric of the Jerusalem provision in the Trump plan appears strongly in favor of an undivided Jerusalem, negotiations of a newborn Palestinian

³⁷³ "Key Players Reject Proposed United States Peace Plan as Failing to Meet Minimum Rights of Palestinians, Special Coordinator Tells Security Council." United Nations. 2020.
<https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sc14103.doc.htm>.

³⁷⁴ Hincks, Joseph. "How the Middle East Responded to Trump's Peace Plan." Time. January 29, 2020.
<https://time.com/5773814/middle-east-peace-plan-response/>.

³⁷⁵ Gordon, Philip H. "Trump's Lopsided Mideast Peace Plan." Council on Foreign Relations. n.d.
<https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/trumps-lopsided-mideast-peace-plan>.

³⁷⁶ "Jerusalem: Facts and Trends 2019." Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research. n.d.
<https://jerusalemstitute.org.il/en/publications/facts-and-trends-2019/>.

state obtaining East Jerusalem should not be inconceivable. Negotiations regarding the division of Jerusalem in such a way to appease both sides should be possible, and it could lead to greater chance of resolving this conflict.