

The UConn Undergraduate Political Review

Edition XII: Issues for a Post-COVID-19 Agenda

UConn Department of Political Science

Spring 2021

Editorial Board

Editor-in-Chief

Shankara Narayanan

Assistant Editor-in-Chief

Marianna Kalander

Assistant Editors

Kempton Campbell

Sofia DiNatale

Mohammed Hussain

Danielle Macuil

Henry Seyue

Advising Professor

Dr. Oksan Bayulgen

With the Support of the Department of Political Science

Table of Contents

Letter to the Editor

Shankara Narayanan

A More Equitable Recovery: How the U.S. COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution System Perpetuates Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Kempton Campbell

The Transition to Clean Energy: Saving the Planet from the Detriments of Fossil Fuels

Sofia DiNatale

Climate Action vs. Climate Justice: The History of the Climate Movement

Mohammed Hussain

America's Nuclear Weapons: The Pinnacle of Deterrence or Destruction?

Marianna Kalander

Darkness Falls Upon America's Backyard: Evaluating Central Appalachia's Woes

Jack Bergantino

Exploring the Perpetual Abuse of ICE and its Detrimental Impacts on the United States

Jola Bufi

“Point of Order, Madam Chairman”: The Increasing Importance of the Senate Parliamentarian

Christian Chlebowski

Plague Politics: Insights of Pandemics Past

James Cokorinos

Female Artificial Intelligence in Science Fiction Cinema: The Socio-Political Repercussions of the Male Gaze

Michaela Flaherty

Momentum of a Miracle: How the New Deal's Radical Policies Shaped the Modern Democratic Party

Joseph Miller

Explaining Reproductive Health Disparities: Violence in the “Colorblind” Institution of Medicine: A Redacted Honors Thesis

Chineze Osakwe

Letter to the Editor

Shankara Narayanan

5/3/2021

Dear Readers,

It is a privilege to write to you as Editor-in-Chief of the University of Connecticut's Undergraduate Political Review. In this tumultuous semester, we are proud to publish the twelfth edition of the journal. We are in our fifth year as an organization, and we are excited by the growth of our publication.

In addition to submissions from our staff writers, this semester's edition contains articles by members of our Editorial Board. We have chosen to broadly focus on issues that promise to shape politics as the United States emerges from quarantine, and must navigate a post-pandemic world. In our Editorial essays, our team has outlined the urgency of equitable pandemic recovery, transitions to clean energy, the future of the climate movement, and the ever-present threat of nuclear proliferation.

The articles included in this edition were written by undergraduate students, and they have undergone a rigorous peer-review drafting process overseen by our student-run editorial team. We accepted submissions on a wide range of pressing political issues. We are proud that our writers grapple with topics ranging from Central Appalachia's economic woes to the reproductive health disparities facing Black mothers.

This publication would not have been possible without the support of several people. I would first like to thank all of our editors and writers for their perseverance through this semester. Several students from our original pool of writers were unable to continue participating in our revision process because of the unique challenges experienced this Spring. Our writers who continued on through the process submitted excellent papers, despite navigating the effects of a global pandemic. We could not have published such quality research articles without a dedicated group of undergraduate students. I would also like to thank Dr. Oksan Bayulgen and the University of Connecticut's Department of Political Science for their continued support. We are grateful to have a supportive environment in which to improve our writing, editing and analytical skills in political science. It is my pleasure to share that Kempton Campbell and Sofia DiNatale will act as Editor-in-Chief and Assistant Editor-in-Chief for the 2021-2022 year. It has been an honor to lead this publication, and I wish them the best of luck for the future.

Lastly, our readers should know that we accept new writers each semester. We encourage talented University of Connecticut students from all campuses to apply by emailing a resume and writing sample to uconnpoliticalreview@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Shankara Narayanan '21 (CLAS) | Editor-in-Chief

A More Equitable Recovery: How the U.S. COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution System Perpetuates Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Kempton Campbell

Introduction

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic nearly 31.5 million Americans have contracted the virus while nearly 564,000 Americans have died due to complications associated with the virus.¹ In his address on the one-year anniversary of the COVID-19 shutdown, President Joe Biden said, “That’s more deaths than in World War One, World War Two, the Vietnam War, and 9/11 combined. They were husbands, wives, sons and daughters, grandparents, friends, neighbors — young and old”.² On April 21, 2021, President Biden announced that the U.S. had administered 200 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines, a mile marker he set for his first 100 days in office after he reached his goal of 100 million vaccines in only his 59th day in office.³ Furthermore, as of April 23, 2021, 39% of Americans have received one shot while 25% of Americans have been fully vaccinated.⁴ This statistic, while impressive, does not account for racial and ethnic disparities in the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccination rates for Black and Hispanic populations have lagged behind the vaccine rates of White and Asian populations. The lack of vaccination sites within lower income areas and the lack of reliable internet access have both contributed to this disparity. Regardless of rationale, Black and Hispanic communities are getting vaccinated at lower rates compared to other racial and ethnic groups within the American population. The disparities in vaccination rates have severe future implications. Without policies which aim to prioritize the vaccination of Black and Hispanic communities, these populations will contract COVID-19 and die from the virus at much higher rates. Additionally, without policies that prioritize the vaccination of Black and Hispanic communities, disparities between these populations and others will continue to grow as a result of higher rates of poverty due to medical expenses and potential job loss. For these reasons, it is imperative that politicians, on every level of government, act to prioritize the vaccination of marginalized groups, specifically Black and Hispanic populations.

¹ "COVID Data Tracker". 2020. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#datatracker-home>.

² "Remarks by President Biden On The Anniversary Of The COVID-19 Shutdown | The White House". 2021. *The White House*. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/03/11/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-anniversary-of-the-covid-19-shutdown/>.

³ Canon, Gabrielle, Joan Greve, Joanna Walters, Oliver Milman, Victoria Bekiempis, and Lois Beckett. 2021. "‘Today We Did It’: Joe Biden Touts 200M Vaccine Shots Administered – As It Happened". *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/live/2021/apr/21/joe-biden-covid-coronavirus-vaccines-republicans-democrats-politics-live>.

⁴ Ibid.

Background

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic the United States has relied on two administrations to handle the outbreak, diminish the infection and death rates, and distribute COVID-19 vaccinations. President Donald Trump and his administration relied heavily on the states to distribute the vaccine. Under President Trump's administration, states would formulate their own plans for distribution and submit them to the federal government for approval. After approval the federal government would provide each state with a specific amount of vaccines and the state would decide how to distribute them.⁵ In contrast to President Trump's administration, President Biden's administration has played a much more active role in the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. In his initial COVID-19 plan, President Biden outlined the creation of 100 federally run vaccine centers around the country. More recently, President Biden has announced that his administration is working on a program which provides U.S. workers with paid time off when they get vaccinated.⁶ Other policy steps taken by President Biden's administration include the creation of thousands of community immunization sites, a \$1.9 trillion stimulus package which included \$400 billion for combating the pandemic, \$50 billion for increased testing, \$20 billion to boost vaccinations, and funding to hire 100,000 public health workers.⁷ Overall, the actions taken by both administrations starkly contrast one another.

Infection and Death Rates

Over the course of the worldwide pandemic, the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) has tracked a wide range of data sets which pertain to the COVID-19 virus. Two of these data sets include the infection and death rates of various racial and ethnic groups within the United States. The CDC's data sets show a staggering difference between the infection and death rates of minority groups in comparison to the U.S. population of White Americans. According to their database, the CDC found that Black Americans have 1.1x the infection rates and 1.9x the death rates of White Americans.⁸ Furthermore, Hispanic and Latino Americans have 2.0x the infection rates and 2.3x the death rates of White Americans.⁹ Lastly, American Indian or Alaskan Natives have 1.6x the rate of infections and 2.4x the rate of deaths when compared to White

⁵ Sherman, Amy. "Politifact - Trump Vaccine Plan Left Logistics To States, But It Did Exist". 2021. @Politifact. <https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2021/jan/27/ron-klain/trump-vaccine-plan-left-logistics-states-it-did-ex/>.

⁶ Canon, Gabrielle, Joan Greve, Joanna Walters, Oliver Milman, Victoria Bekiempis, and Lois Beckett. 2021. "'Today We Did It': Joe Biden Touts 200M Vaccine Shots Administered – As It Happened". *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/live/2021/apr/21/joe-biden-covid-coronavirus-vaccines-republicans-democrats-politics-live>.

⁷ Soucheray, Stephanie. "Biden Details 5-Step COVID Vaccine Plan, Names New Lead For Vaccines". 2021. *CIDRAP*. <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/01/biden-details-5-step-covid-vaccine-plan-names-new-lead-vaccines>.

⁸ "Cases, Data, And Surveillance". 2020. *Centers For Disease Control And Prevention*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/investigations-discovery/hospitalization-death-by-race-ethnicity.html>.

⁹ Ibid.

Americans.¹⁰ Meanwhile, the Asian population has had an almost equal infection (i.e., 0.7x) and death rate (i.e., 1.0x) when compared to White Americans.¹¹ Given these discrepancies, a policy geared towards prioritizing the vaccination of Black, Hispanic, and American Indian populations is necessary for curbing the continued rise in infection and death rates among marginalized groups.

One Dose and Full Vaccination Rates

Unfortunately, this type of policy prioritization has not been fully realized. In addition to the aforementioned datasets, the CDC has also compiled two data sets that track the vaccine rates of various racial and ethnic groups. An analysis of these data sets reveals that the populations which have the highest COVID-19 infection and death rates are also the populations which have the lowest vaccination rates. It should be noted that American Indian and Alaskan Natives are receiving vaccinations in proportion to the proportion of the population they make up.¹²

If the distribution of vaccines were equitably dispersed among the population, then the amount of vaccines distributed to each racial and ethnic group would be equivalent to the percentage of the population they make up. In a truly equitable system, the Black population, which makes up 13.4% of the total U.S. population, should account for 13.4% of the population that has one dose and who are fully vaccinated.¹³ Instead, the current vaccine distribution has created a system in which the Black population accounts for roughly 8.6% of the U.S. population that has one dose and 8.3% of the U.S. population that is fully vaccinated.¹⁴

Additionally, in an equitable system of vaccine distribution, the Hispanic and Latino populations, which account for 18.5% of the U.S. population, should account for roughly 18.5% of the population that has one dose and who are fully vaccinated.¹⁵ Rather, the current vaccine distribution has created a system in which the Hispanic and Latino populations account for 11.6% of the U.S. population with one dose and 9.6% of the U.S. population that is fully vaccinated.¹⁶

¹⁰ "Cases, Data, And Surveillance". 2020. *Centers For Disease Control And Prevention*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/investigations-discovery/hospitalization-death-by-race-ethnicity.html>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² "COVID Data Tracker". 2020. *Centers For Disease Control And Prevention*. <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccination-demographic>

¹³ "U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: United States". 2021. *Census Bureau Quickfacts*. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>.

¹⁴ "COVID Data Tracker". 2020. *Centers For Disease Control And Prevention*. <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccination-demographic>

¹⁵ "U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: United States". 2021. *Census Bureau Quickfacts*. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>.

¹⁶ "COVID Data Tracker". 2020. *Centers For Disease Control And Prevention*. <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccination-demographic>

While these percentage disparities seem miniscule, they account for millions of Black and Hispanic/Latino Americans who would have one dose or who would be fully vaccinated under a more equitable distribution system.

Potential Explanations

In order to address these disparities, it is important to assess their potential causes. Potential causes include: the lack of vaccination centers in lower income areas and the lack of reliable internet access which prevents minority groups from being able to sign up for a vaccine online. The first, and arguably one of the most detrimental causes to these disparities is the lack of vaccine distribution centers in and around Black and Hispanic communities. An analysis conducted by National Public Radio found that vaccination centers were largely missing from predominantly Black and Hispanic communities in the South.¹⁷ Additionally, a study conducted by the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy found that Black Americans generally faced longer driving distances to vaccine centers than White Americans.¹⁸ This is compounded by the fact that 14% of Americans of color don't have access to a vehicle, as compared to 6% of White Americans.¹⁹ Furthermore, 23% of Black Americans and 15% of Hispanic and Latino Americans rely on public transportation.²⁰ The lack of vaccination centers in and around lower income communities is amplified by the lack of transportation available to Black and Hispanic/Latino Americans, therefore causing a major barrier to vaccine access. Additionally, various news outlets have reported that even when vaccine centers are placed in Black and Hispanic communities, White Americans are those which have been serviced the most.²¹

Another major factor preventing Black and Hispanic/Latino Americans from gaining access to vaccinations is the lack of internet access. COVID-19 vaccine registration systems have largely been hosted through online platforms, thereby causing a barrier to vaccine registration to members of the U.S. population without internet access. According to an April 2021 Pew Research report, 29% of Black households and 35% of Latino and Hispanic households do not have access to a wired broadband connection.²² This disparity makes it even harder for Black and

¹⁷ McMinn, Sean. "Across The South, COVID-19 Vaccine Sites Missing From Black And Hispanic Neighborhoods". 2021. *Npr.Org*. <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/05/962946721/across-the-south-covid-19-vaccine-sites-missing-from-black-and-hispanic-neighbor>.

¹⁸ "West Health Policy Center and University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy Develop County-Level Map of Potential COVID-19 Vaccine Locations." WestHealth. Accessed April 26, 2021. <https://www.westhealth.org/resource/vaxmap-potential-covid-19-vaccine-locations/>.

¹⁹ "Car Access | National Equity Atlas". 2021. *Nationalequityatlas.Org*. https://nationalequityatlas.org/indicators/Car_access#/.

²⁰ Anderson, Monica. "Who Relies On Public Transit In The U.S.". 2016. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/07/who-relies-on-public-transit-in-the-u-s/>.

²¹ Ellis, Nicquel Terry. *CNN*. 2021. "A Vaccination Site Meant To Serve A Hard-Hit Latino Neighborhood In New York Instead Serviced More Whites From Other Areas". *CNN*. <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/30/us/new-york-vaccine-disparities/index.html>.

²² "Demographics Of Internet And Home Broadband Usage In The United States". 2021. *Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/internet-broadband/?menuItem=3109350c-8dba-4b7f-ad52-a3e976ab8c8f>.

Hispanic Americans to get COVID-19 vaccinations, therefore accounting for a portion of the vaccination distribution disparities.

While these two explanations may account for a portion of these disparities, it is imperative to point out that further research is required to build a more complete understanding of the causes of these disparities. Furthermore, it is important to note that the vaccine will not be administered to the entire population due to preferential vaccination refusal. Polling data suggests that roughly 25% of Americans will refuse a vaccination, therefore these disparities may be partially exaggerated.²³

Implications

The disparities in vaccine distribution have detrimental future consequences to Black and Hispanic/Latino Americans. The lag in vaccines will undoubtedly lead to the continuation of higher infection and death rates among these populations. These infections and deaths will cause even more economic hardship as a result of medical expenses and unemployment caused by the inability to work if infected. These consequences will continue to perpetuate disparities among racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Such disparities include, among other consequences, an increased racial income gap and a rise in Black and Hispanic/Latino homelessness, unemployment, and debt. All of these consequences will add to the historic inequities experienced by Black and Hispanic/Latino Americans.

Course of Action

To create a more equitable vaccine distribution system under which racial and ethnic disparities cease to exist, local, state, and federal representatives should focus on prioritizing vaccine availability to Black and Hispanic/Latino Americans. Arizona and Montana are examples of states that have prioritized racial and ethnic minority groups in their vaccine distribution strategies. These states have passed key legislation which offers free transportation to vaccination sites, directs vaccines to vulnerable communities, and actively monitors and addresses barriers to vaccinations in vulnerable communities.²⁴ State and local officials should use Arizona and Montana as examples to create a more equitable future for these minoritized populations. Furthermore, states should pass legislation which will provide outreach to racial and ethnic minority communities thereby allowing these populations to book vaccination programs without the use of the internet.

On the federal level, President Biden's COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan specifically prioritizes an equitable "vaccination process to reach those in hard-to-reach, marginalized

²³ Brumfiel, Geoff. "Vaccine Refusal May Put Herd Immunity At Risk, Researchers Warn". 2021. *Npr.Org*. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/04/07/984697573/vaccine-refusal-may-put-herd-immunity-at-risk-researchers-warn>.

²⁴ Melillo, Gianna. 2021. "Disparities In COVID-19 Vaccine Rates Tarnish Swift US Rollout ". *AJMC*. <https://www.ajmc.com/view/disparities-in-covid-19-vaccine-rates-tarnish-swift-us-rollout>.

communities”.²⁵ Furthermore, President Biden’s administration has dedicated billions of dollars in aid to directly combat the pandemic and to escalate COVID-19 testing and vaccination efforts.²⁶ Politicians in the federal government should continue to actively address racial and ethnic disparities in vaccination rates around the U.S. with the goal of creating a more equitable system that diminishes the likelihood of increased future inequality.

Conclusion

From the initial outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic to the present day, minoritized groups have disproportionately been infected and have died from the virus. Unfortunately, this disproportionality has been compounded by the inequitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. Black and Hispanic/Latino Americans are the two groups with the highest infection and death rates and the lowest vaccination rates. These disproportionalities have severe future economic consequences for Black and Hispanic/Latino Americans. Given this reality, politicians need to prioritize the vaccination of these marginalized populations in order to create a more equitable U.S. recovery.

²⁵ "Fact Sheet: President-Elect Biden Outlines COVID-19 Vaccination Plan | The White House". 2021. *The White House*. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/01/15/fact-sheet-president-elect-biden-outlines-covid-19-vaccination-plan/>.

²⁶ Soucheray, Stephanie. "Biden Details 5-Step COVID Vaccine Plan, Names New Lead For Vaccines". 2021. *CIDRAP*. <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/01/biden-details-5-step-covid-vaccine-plan-names-new-lead-vaccines>.

The Transition to Clean Energy: Saving the Planet from the Detriments of Fossil Fuels

Sofia DiNatale

Adaptation and innovation have arguably been humanity's essential survival strategy. They have introduced us to where we discover ourselves today; unprecedentedly prosperous, however, dwelling dangerously near the restriction of what the world can sustain. Drawing near the 'boundaries' of our planet makes our current state exclusive from all preceding times. For humanity to navigate through this century would require self-consciousness and awareness, or Earth will soon become uninhabitable. With this in mind, there are strides necessary to prevent the climate crisis from further advancing- one of these strides is the transition from fossil fuel resources to clean and green energy. There are many factors associated with combating the climate crisis, and it is beyond eliminating the use of plastic straws and water bottles. These include the COVID-19 pandemic, the actions of current and previous government actors, and society itself.

With the COVID-19 pandemic being one of the most extreme economic and energy shocks the world has experienced in decades, there have been evident changes in many aspects of the government, not limited to the energy sector. With its many disadvantages, there is evidence that the global public health crisis could speed the energy transition to clean and renewable energy. There was also an increase in awareness concerning global warming, climate change, ozone depletion, and other detrimental factors for the environment. During the pandemic, the interest in oil has declined as mobility holds 57% of worldwide oil demand.²⁷ Air travel was at a dead end with just fundamental air activities for unforeseen supplies such as clinical benefits. Europe has seen a drop of 90% in air exercises, with worldwide air traffic declined by 60% by the end of Q1, 2020.²⁸ Coronavirus preventive activities are relied upon to decrease the popularity of oil inferred items, like LPG, ethane, naphtha, and lingering fuel.

The most observable contributor to the acceleration of the energy transition is that many people began working from home, which implies reduced traffic congestion on the roads led to insight on clean energy choices as there were highly apparent emissions improvements. As

part of COVID-19 recovery, various countries in Europe are encouraging and have encouraged citizens to purchase electric vehicles. The worldwide halt caused by lockdown catalyzed discussion and action for overlooked topics, such as renewable energy. Possibilities for people to not travel helped slow the spread of coronavirus while simultaneously impacting emissions positively. Due to the implications of the pandemic, there were "many historical firsts, such as oil futures trading in the negatives, U.S. renewable energy in the electricity mix surpassing coal

²⁷ Research and Markets. 2020. "Emergence of Covid-19 Impacts on Global Energy and Power Industries - Rising Payment Dues and Lack of Cash Flows for the Sector." Intrado Global News Wire

²⁸ Ibid.

and the largest year-over-year drop in global CO² emissions.”²⁹ In addition to the plateau of oil use and the rapid decline of coal use, there is also a forecast that CO² emissions most likely have already peaked in 2019 and will continue to decline. The caveat here is that in order for the use of oil and coal to diminish, the COVID-19 economic stimulus packages will have to be invested and spent on renewable energy sources.³⁰ Through relief packages, trillions of dollars have been expected to flow into the deployment of low and zero-carbon infrastructure, as well as research and development into technologies for said infrastructure.³¹ Additionally, installation costs have dropped, with some reports mentioning an 83 percent drop in electricity costs from new solar energy plants.³² The pandemic has enabled companies seeking to cut greenhouse gas emissions to achieve their goal quicker. COVID-19 has raised awareness towards the pressing matters of the environment, which means that if clean options exist at acceptable cost points, companies will choose to invest in renewable energies.

In the article, *Will Covid-19 put the brakes on the energy transition?*, there were certain obstacles to overcome that were presented by the pandemic itself that were unveiled. Financially harmed companies would have to cut capital expenditures on projects which do not exclude renewable energy projects.³³ Another challenge posed is that due to low gas and oil prices, the incentive to switch to renewable energy has lost its appeal because, ultimately, companies find money to be of precedent. Although the pandemic has raised awareness of the environment, the world is used to being based on fossil fuel generation capacity, and with that, a world where energy supply follows demand. The concern with renewable energy is that demand follows supply, as clean energy such as wind and solar are independent of other energy demands. The contrarian view here is that there is potential to increase demand opportunities for renewable energy, including closing existing electric resources which provides incentive for coal generators and plants to close, increasing demand by forcing an increase in demand. For example, if companies increase electric vehicle buildout through a national charging network, there is, in turn, an increase in demand. To accelerate the transition to clean energy, companies must invest and take risks in understanding the renewable energy market. Largescale investments are required for the government target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 49% by 2030.³⁴ If proper investments are made, the clean energy trajectory will be attainable with, surprisingly, the aid of the pandemic.

²⁹ Tsui, Jenna. 2020. “Covid-19 Is Accelerating the Clean Energy Transition.” Triple Pundit. <https://www.triplepundit.com/story/2020/Covid-19-clean-energy/121256>.

³⁰ Irvine, Mark, and Sverre Alvik. 2020. “The Impact of Covid-19 on the Energy Transition.” DNV. <https://www.dnv.com/energy-transition/impact-of-covid19-on-the-energy-transition.html?>

³¹ Research, Lux. 2020. “Covid-19 Accelerates the Energy Transition: Adapt or Perish.” Cision PR. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/Covid-19-accelerates-the-energy-transition-adapt-or-perish-301111377.html>.

³² Ibid.

³³ Vennix, Eric, and Tarek Helmi. n.d. “Will Covid-19 put the brakes on the energy transition?” Deloitte. <https://www2.deloitte.com/nl/nl/pages/energy-resources-industrials/articles/will-Covid-19-put-the-brakes-on-the-energy-transition.html>.

³⁴ Ibid.

It is important to analyze how other countries, other than the United States, have been affected by the pandemic in conjunction with the energy transition. COVID-19 adversely affected many countries but to different extents. With the government's ability to respond to the virus, the severity of the outbreak; public health, and economic wise, influenced economic relief measures. Understanding the speed and trajectory of the energy transitions is dependent on stimulus decisions is crucial. In an article that inspects countries and the implications associated with them, it states that while “Europe is poised to continue moving in a green direction, some hard-hit countries in Latin America, South Asia, and Africa may be weakened so significantly by COVID-19 that their ability to promote energy transitions will be severely constrained”.³⁵ Despite this, the pace of energy transitions, specifically the adoption of renewables, is projected to increase in some Northeast and Southeast Asian countries because they have suffered very few disadvantageous health and economic impacts. These specific countries are in good financial standing to make the necessary investments in energy infrastructure, which forecasts that they will gain more by shifting to renewable energy generation due to the adoption of electric vehicles. Lastly, the stimulus measures and policy reforms will also hasten energy transitions, which is an aspect that many countries can take after.

BP World Energy Outlook 2019 indicated that renewable energy would become the largest among all by 2040, even exceeding the share of coal.³⁶ It is essential to acknowledge that coal is no longer an economical source of fuel, as it has been in decline for years. Now, comes the question of what will accelerate the transition? Inspecting cost curves, which are the various costs of production is an important factor in accelerating the energy transition. New technologies that align with renewable energy have typically held downward curves, whereas ‘mature’

technologies have stabilized in cost innovation and will now, in turn, have higher costs. Renewable energy sources such as solar energy have become cost-competitive against traditional fossil fuels will be at an advantage and will further have an advantage if the margin of the cost curve increases more.³⁷ Another factor to pay attention to is the financing of traditional technologies compared to newer technologies. Because more mature technologies have a higher development period with long cost recovery periods, companies are trending towards investing in the newer technologies. A third factor mentioned in an article regarding how the pandemic is impacting the energy transition is the possibilities offered by the new technologies in relation to renewable energy. There is evidence that renewables can bring about new products and innovations which leads to a dip in cost curves and more reliability.

There is evidence that despite efforts to derail the clean energy transition, Trump was ultimately unsuccessful in doing so during his term as the President of the United States. The

³⁵ Dewar, Alex, Raad Alkadiri, Rebecca Fitz, and Jamie Webster. 2020. “How Covid-19 Is Changing the Pace of Energy Transitions.” BCG. <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2020/Covid-19-pandemic-impacting-pace-of-energy-transitions>

³⁶ De, Anish. 2020. “Beyond the horizon: Covid-19 will accelerate the energy transition.” Energyworld. <https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/energy-speak/beyond-the-horizon-Covid-19-will-accelerate-the-energy-transition/4370>.

³⁷ Ibid.

America First Energy plan was implemented into the climate action sector of the House upon his inauguration in 2017. The plan promised to tackle “burdensome regulations on our energy industry,” reduce climate funding, and exit the Paris agreement.³⁸ President Trump immediately took steps to unwind President Obama’s clean energy initiatives, to strip U.S. energy policy of environmental and climate concerns, and to focus solely on two priorities: producing low-cost energy (fossil fuel sources and natural gas) and creating American jobs. Despite these efforts, between 2018 and 2019, the country saw the single biggest decline in energy-related CO² emissions of any country in the world, according to the International Energy Agency.³⁹ Gregory Wetstone, president of the American Council on Renewable Energy, stated that “the renewables sector has grown substantially throughout the four years of Trump, despite the significant headwinds his administration has sought to conjure, we saw record levels of investment in renewables in 2019, with \$60 billion invested in wind, solar and related enabling technologies in the US.”⁴⁰

With a more environmentally conscious administration in 2021, there are even more efforts towards sustainable energy in the few months following the inauguration of President Biden, which includes numerous executive orders. The Biden administration has been outlining policies geared towards infrastructure and funding, and more recently includes the American Jobs Plan. Multiple provisions in this plan involve investment to drive clean energy. First, is in the transmission sector, as it calls on Congress to invest \$100 billion in targeted investment tax credit that incentivizes the “buildout of high-voltage capacity power lines and proposes a ten-year extension and phase down of an expanded direct-pay investment tax credit (ITC) and production tax credit (PTC) for clean energy generation and storage.”⁴¹ In terms of federal procurement, the plan plans to use the federal government’s purchasing power to purchase unremittingly clean power for federal buildings to drive clean energy deployment across the market. As mentioned, incentivizing electric vehicles is also crucial in the acceleration of the energy transition. The plan proposes \$74 billion investment in the electric vehicle market, giving citizens incentives to buy American-made E.V.s. Infrastructure permitting, which is the notion that “proposed infrastructure projects must obtain various permits and environmental reviews to ensure they are designed and constructed in a manner that protects public health, safety, cultural resources, and the environment, and that the public is informed about their potential impacts”.⁴² The American Jobs Plan wants to use infrastructure permitting to expedite federal decisions while maximizing equity, health, and environmental benefits. Other important provisions of the plan include block grants that support clean energy, worker empowerment, and environmental and the Energy Efficiency and Clean Electricity Standard, requiring utility and grid operators to

³⁸ Nick Ferris. 2021. “Why Trump failed to derail the US energy transition.” Energy Monitor. <https://energymonitor.ai/joe-biden/why-trump-failed-to-derail-the-us-energy-transition>.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Nick Ferris. 2021. “Why Trump failed to derail the US energy transition.” Energy Monitor. <https://energymonitor.ai/joe-biden/why-trump-failed-to-derail-the-us-energy-transition>.

⁴¹ The White House. n.d. “American Jobs Plan.” White House. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/american-jobs-plan/>.

⁴² Permitting Dashboard Federal Infrastructure Projects. n.d. “About the Federal Infrastructure Permitting Dashboard.” Permitting Dashboard Federal Infrastructure Projects. <https://www.permits.performance.gov/about>.

improve energy efficiency and promote carbon-pollution-free energy. Lastly, in terms of research and development, Congress is called to invest \$35 billion in the full range of solutions needed to achieve technology breakthroughs that address the climate crisis and position America as the global leader in clean energy technology and clean energy jobs.⁴³

With proper investments and an aware government, the transition to clean energy is in the foreseeable future, with the aid of the pandemic. Our country has many opportunities to fully commit to a clean energy future. We have been given the tools, and now it is time to take action. The future of our environment is in the hands of our country and the world.

⁴³ Ibid.

Climate Action vs. Climate Justice: The History of the Climate Movement

Mohammed Hussain

In 1982, in North Carolina, the state government announced their decision to place a hazardous landfill in the predominantly poor, Black community of Warren County. With the support of the NAACP, the residents fought back, in what would be one of the first major instances of climate justice activism in the United States⁴⁴. While their protests ultimately failed to prevent the landfill from being sited, their actions marked the beginning of a greater movement against environmental injustice, leading to a series of groundbreaking studies such as *Toxic Wastes and Race*, which found race to be one of the most potent variables in predicting where hazardous waste plants in the US were sited.⁴⁵

Throughout the 1980s, outrage grew in poor, predominantly Black and brown communities, which had been deemed most suitable for hazardous facilities by polluting industries and environmental permitting agencies.⁴⁶ These communities were chosen in part because they were least able to resist and organize against powerful state and corporate actors. Those living by pipelines or waste plants suffer higher rates of asthma and cancer, and often have their water supplies contaminated⁴⁷ while the government claims, disingenuously, that the industries would lead to economic prosperity for the residents.

While the climate justice movement grew on a grassroots level in communities directly affected by climate change, the climate *action* movement grew in more formally established groups and NGOs. There is a crucial distinction to make here between these two groups. Climate action activists, historically overwhelmingly white and wealthy, were motivated less by the immediate effects of climate change, and more by the increasing number of studies at the time, which found that greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere were increasing at an unprecedented rate due to fossil fuels⁴⁸. The growing climate justice movement, on the other hand, explicitly differentiated itself from the climate action movement by opposing what the former believed was inaccessible, status quo, climate activism that failed to acknowledge the disproportionate impact of climate change on multiply-marginalized people. Mainstream climate groups tended to frame climate change as a scientific, distant issue while climate justice groups emphasized that, in their experience, environmental destruction was already very real.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ *Environmental Justice History*. Energy.gov. (n.d.). <https://www.energy.gov/lm/services/environmental-justice/environmental-justice-history>.

⁴⁵ Benjamin F. Rep. *Toxic Wastes and Race In The United States*. 105 Madison Avenue New York, New York. 1987.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Brender, Jean, and Maantary, Juliana, and Chakraborty, Jayajit. "Residential Proximity to Environmental Hazards and Adverse Health Outcomes." *American Journal of Public Health*. 101:37-52. 2011.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Young, Lisa. "Building Solidarity and Growing a Movement: the Story behind the People's Climate March." Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2015.

Tensions between these groups continued to heighten over the course of the 1980s, culminating in a letter to the largest environmental groups, signed by 100 Black and Brown community leaders in 1990, articulating racist and exclusionary practices in the climate action movement.⁵⁰ The response by the climate action groups was weak, and in 1991, the climate justice movement established itself with the first annual National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit.⁵¹ The summit both marked a turning point for the climate justice movement as a whole, but also asserted it as a movement distinct from climate action. One year later, climate justice activists celebrated a monumental victory, with the creation of the Office of Environmental Equity within the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.⁵²

Disadvantaged American communities were not alone in their fight against corporate and state power. The wave of neoliberal globalism that occurred during the 1980's sent multinational corporations into developing nations, where they promised economic prosperity, but instead created wasteful factories with inhumane working conditions that plagued the local environment.⁵³ Indigenous communities around the world protested in reaction, demanding not only climate justice, but also economic and social justice. Climate justice groups in the US stood in solidarity with their fellow activists abroad, strengthening the global movement.⁵⁴ It was also at this time that international leaders began to formalize institutions and coalitions to fight climate change, with the creation of the first United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 and the first annual global Conference of Parties (COP) on climate change in 1995. However, while climate action groups were quick to applaud these actions, climate justice groups recognized the business-as-usual approach of these events, as well as their exclusivity, and rejected them.⁵⁵

It was not until 2007 that the mainstream climate change movement really took off.⁵⁶ Up to this point, there were plenty of climate activist groups, but climate change as an issue still lacked the same mobilizing power and recognition that other social justice issues were able to provoke. The rise in recognition was largely a result of Vice President Al Gore's passionate advocacy for climate change, and his famous documentary on climate change, *An Inconvenient*

⁵⁰ Young, Lisa. "Building Solidarity and Growing a Movement: the Story behind the People's Climate March." Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2015.

⁵¹ Ibid,

⁵² *Environmental Justice History*. Energy.gov. (n.d.). <https://www.energy.gov/lm/services/environmental-justice/environmental-justice-history>.

⁵³ Klein, Naomi. *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2015.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Tokar, Brian. "Movements for Climate Justice in the US and Worldwide." *Routledge Handbook of the Climate Movement*. 131-143. 2013.

⁵⁶ Young, Lisa. "Building Solidarity and Growing a Movement: the Story behind the People's Climate March." Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2015.

Truth.⁵⁷ Increased mobilization for the movement was also triggered by successful efforts of the Energy Action Coalition (EAC), founded a couple of years earlier, in engaging primarily college student activists.⁵⁸ Later that year, the Citizens Climate Lobby was also founded to coordinate political activism against climate change.⁵⁹ Climate change's rise in the national conversation continued into 2008: famous climate activist Bill McKibben founded the group 350.org, both presidential nominees agreed climate change was a serious issue, and arguably the most environmentally conscious president ever, Barack Obama, was elected into office.⁶⁰

The year 2009 was transformative for climate justice. Climate justice groups around the country organized a day of mass action on November 30th, a move that was largely successful, resulting in nonviolent acts of civil disobedience in many different states.⁶¹ Two weeks later, during the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP) in Denmark, tens of thousands of people, mainly in the streets of Copenhagen, took to the streets in protest. These protests were largely in anger at the ineffectiveness of the COP meetings in the past, and at the anticipated weak, corporate-friendly, decisions that the current conference would produce. This suspicion was all but confirmed with the vague, non-binding agreements made by participating world leaders at the end of the summit.⁶²

Disappointment continued into the new decade, with Obama's failures to address the climate crisis adequately. Climate action leaders began to realize the potential of the more radical approach associated with the climate justice movement; in 2011, 350, one of the faces of the traditional mainstream climate movements, pledged their support for a climate justice centered civil disobedience campaign in Washington D.C. against a new pipeline.⁶³ The same year, 350 appointed Naomi Klein, veteran environmentalist, but more significantly, outspoken anti-capitalist and anti-corporate globalist, to its national board.⁶⁴ In 2012, the group began their revolutionary "Fossil Free" campaign, urging students to pressure their universities to divest from the fossil fuel industry. This resulted in a massive increase in student climate activists, and shifted the mainstream movement even further towards a climate justice framework; this might not necessarily have been a goal of the campaign, but for students growing up in the age of the

⁵⁷ Klein, Naomi. *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2015.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Young, Lisa. "Building Solidarity and Growing a Movement: the Story behind the People's Climate March." Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2015.

⁶¹ Tokar, Brian. "Movements for Climate Justice in the US and Worldwide." *Routledge Handbook of the Climate Movement*. 131-143. 2013.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Klein, Naomi. "Joining 350.Org: The Next Phase." NaomiKlein.org, April 7, 2011. <https://tsd.naomiklein.org/articles/2011/04/joining-350-org-next-phase.html>.

2008 financial crisis, Occupy Wall Street, and deepening economic inequality, radical, left wing associated climate justice was more appealing than climate action.⁶⁵

However, for all efforts by the climate action movement to shift towards climate justice, deep divisions remained. Aside from 350, most climate action groups failed to deliver changes in their organizations that were genuinely rooted in climate justice and instead continued weak, superficial campaigns to make themselves more diverse and inclusive. This can perhaps be most exemplified by the response by most climate action groups to the proposed construction of Keystone XL (KXL) pipeline that would carry oil from Alberta to Texas. The KXL pipeline was clear evidence of the inextricable connections between climate change, corporate greed, and their disproportionate effects on POC, and an equally clear opportunity for climate action groups to address this intersectionality of the issue in their response.⁶⁶ However, while climate justice groups began a wave of civil disobedience and stood in solidarity with frontline indigent communities, mainstream groups focused efforts on Washington. They spoke in scientific terms concerning the consequences of the pipeline, and the leaks and spills that might occur, while largely ignoring the humanitarian crisis posed by construction, and its roots in corporate greed.⁶⁷

In 2013, the two climate movements, still mistrustful as ever of each other, made an effort to unite. The Building Equity and Alignment (BEA) Initiative was launched to create more equitable funding between climate justice and climate action groups.⁶⁸ The Extreme Energy Extraction Collaborative, (EEEC) was created to bring activists from the two camps together to oppose harmful gas and coal extraction.⁶⁹ Many climate action groups slowly and reluctantly began to challenge corporate power more than they had in the past, and to address fossil fuel companies directly rather than by way of the government. The People's Climate March (PCM) in 2014, organized by global activist group, AVAAZ, 350, and many other climate justice groups, is considered a major success in the mission to bring together climate action and climate justice activists. As well as being the largest climate march in history, PCM differed from so many previous climate movement events in that frontline communities headlined the protests and climate justice groups were given a legitimate seat at the table in the planning. The Mobilization Support Team had the usual actors—groups like Sierra Club and 350—but also included Climate Justice Alliance, UPROSE, a host of unions, and other organizations with roots in social, economic, and racial justice.⁷⁰ The successes of the movement carried 2015. In November, climate groups, both moderate and more radical, celebrated a major victory when Obama finally announced he would not approve the KXL pipeline.⁷¹ A month later good news continued after

⁶⁵ Young, Lisa. "Building Solidarity and Growing a Movement: the Story behind the People's Climate March." Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2015.

⁶⁶ Stephenson, Wen. ed. *Dispatches from the Front Lines of Climate Justice*. Boston: Beacon Press. 2015.

⁶⁷ Stephenson, Wen. ed. *Dispatches from the Front Lines of Climate Justice*. Boston: Beacon Press. 2015.

⁶⁸ Young, Lisa. "Building Solidarity and Growing a Movement: the Story behind the People's Climate March." Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2015.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Stephenson, Wen. ed. *Dispatches from the Front Lines of Climate Justice*. Boston: Beacon Press. 2015

the 21st COP conference, delivered a somewhat concrete agreement between partnering nations, for the first time in its history, establishing what would come to be popularly known as the Paris agreement.⁷²

While tensions remained between climate justice and climate action groups, the People's Climate March, along with other success in the movement brought the two camps closer together than ever before. However, the 2016 Democratic primary election threatened to fracture this already fragile relationship. Climate groups had a big decision to make between endorsing Bernie Sanders, self-proclaimed democratic socialist, running on climate change as a major tenet of his campaign, or the more moderate—and to many, more electable—Hillary Clinton, who acknowledged climate change but did not address the issue to the degree that the Sanders' campaign did. This difference in platforms is perhaps symbolized by Sanders' staunch opposition to fracking in comparison to Clinton's belief that it was a necessary practice, but one that needed "smart regulations".⁷³ The climate movement split in support for the two candidates, with older, larger, more established, climate groups like the League of Conservation Voters and Sierra Club backing Clinton, and newer, more progressive, grassroots groups like Friends of the Earth Action, 350, and other climate justice affiliated groups backing Sanders.⁷⁴ When Clinton eventually received the nomination, many climate justice activists looked on in anger, as they viewed her climate plans as too weak, her political record as too problematic, and her ties to Wall Street as too deep.⁷⁵ However, once Donald Trump received the Republican nomination, the entire movement rallied against him, recognizing the danger of a candidate who had called climate change a "hoax" and promised to roll back EPA regulations and restart the KXL pipeline if elected.⁷⁶ Climate justice groups begrudgingly came to Clinton's support.

The election of billionaire Republican Donald Trump, against all electoral odds, threw the entire climate movement into panic, anger, and grief. During his campaign, Trump barely mentioned climate change as an issue, and went as far as calling it a hoax perpetuated by China. All around the country, climate groups released statements of sadness and anger but vowed to fight harder for climate action and climate justice.⁷⁷ True to his anti-climate promises, Trump nominated Scott Pruitt, climate change denier, to be the head of the EPA, Rex Tillerson, CEO of ExxonMobil, to be Secretary of State, and Rick Perry to be Secretary of Energy, each one of

⁷² Young, Lisa. "Building Solidarity and Growing a Movement: the Story behind the People's Climate March." Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2015.

⁷³ Miller, Justin. "Fracking Fracas: Sanders Attacks Clinton on Environment." *The American Prospect*, March 1, 2016. <https://prospect.org/environment/fracking-fracas-sanders-attacks-clinton-environment/>.

⁷⁴ Young, Lisa. "Building Solidarity and Growing a Movement: the Story behind the People's Climate March." Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2015

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ LLP, Foley & Lardner. "From ESA to Keystone to EPA, Changes Coming Fast" Newsletters | Legal News: Public Policy | Foley & Lardner LLP, January 19, 2017. <https://www.foley.com/en/insights/publications/2017/01/from-esa-to-keystone-to-epa-changes-coming-fast>.

⁷⁷ Brian Kahn, "Climate Advocates Get a Huge Donation Trump Bump." *Climate Central*, November 16, 2016. <https://www.climatecentral.org/news/climate-advocates-donations-donald-trump-20885>.

these individuals, having a history of climate denial or ties to the fossil fuel industry.⁷⁸ Five months into office, Trump then announced America's withdrawal from the 2016 Paris Agreement, sowing more despair in the climate movement.

While undoubtedly negative for the movement, the new presidency did offer the climate groups the chance to build and solidify their relationships with other social justice movements that also felt under threat from the new administration. Capitalizing on this opportunity, climate groups showed up in numbers at the momentous Women's March in 2017, standing in solidarity with women, Black people, and the LGBTQ+ community. Like other social justice movements, the climate movement saw dramatic increases in popularity following Trump's election. Major climate groups like Sierra Club, 350, and Greenpeace all enjoyed large increases in donations and membership, while Trump's anti-climate stance brought the disapproval of even the most politically inactive citizens.⁷⁹ This increase in popularity gave inspiration for the second People's Climate March, an event planned similarly to the successful first PCM three years prior. The march took place in April of 2017, and was organized definitively under the banner of climate justice.⁸⁰

Today, the climate movement remains divided along the lines of the Sanders and Clinton camps, and climate justice activists remain weary climate action groups that have been slow to acknowledge and act on their weakness in building an inclusive and diverse movement. However, Trump's election, Sander's rise in popularity throughout the past five years, and the current racial reckoning have encouraged and pushed climate action groups to become more intersectional and adopt changes that diversify, include, and build solidarity with Black and Brown people. With the election of progressive candidate Joe Biden in 2021, the future looks a little brighter for the movement, and it looks as if climate justice principles will be fully integrated into the movement in the near future.

⁷⁸ LLP, Foley & Lardner. "From ESA to Keystone to EPA, Changes Coming Fast" Newsletters | Legal News: Public Policy | Foley & Lardner LLP, January 19, 2017. <https://www.foley.com/en/insights/publications/2017/01/from-esa-to-keystone-to-epa-changes-coming-fast>.

⁷⁹ Brian Kahn, "Climate Advocates Get a Huge Donation Trump Bump." Climate Central, November 16, 2016

⁸⁰ Young, Lisa. "Building Solidarity and Growing a Movement: the Story behind the People's Climate March." Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2015.

America's Nuclear Weapons: The Pinnacle of Deterrence or Destruction?

Marianna Kalander

Since its origin after WWII, the U.S.'s nuclear weapons and nuclear arsenal has had tremendous impacts on the political and military landscape. The arguments of possession and utilization of these weapons is a double-sided coin, in which many plead that the weapons are no longer necessary, and rather induce immense fear and anxiety, while others argue that the weapons serve important purposes of safety. These arguments have manifested in forms of public policies, national organizations, and various actions taken by political leaders. However, it seems that how the country would look without nuclear weapons will continue to be an open-ended question.

To understand how dynamic nuclear weapons have become, one must look at their complicated history. For one, nuclear weapons have always been politicized. With rumors circulating on the war front that Nazi Germany may build a nuclear bomb, the U.S. government launched a top-secret program, the Manhattan Project, to build their own bomb in 1942. The project grew, eventually having facility sites across the country and working scientists who were both American and refugees from fascist countries. However, the project was so secretive that most of the scientists and personnel did not know the true reasoning behind their work. In fact, "Vice-President Truman had never heard of the Manhattan Project until he became President Truman".⁸¹ After three years of work, the U.S. introduced their first set of nuclear weapons through the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Clearly, the purpose of the bomb went from beating Nazi Germany in a race to now a prominent war weapon. Not only did these bombings propel Japan to officially surrender from WWII, "it's estimated roughly 70,000 to 135,000 people died in Hiroshima and 60,000 to 80,000 people died in Nagasaki, both from acute exposure to the blasts and from long-term side effects of radiation."⁸² The devastation of these bombings would have long-term implications as well. Now, the U.S. had credibility on their side, and would adopt the strategy of deterrence to intimidate enemies from any future attacks. Specifically, deterrence was predominantly used during the Cold War. As we know, no actual war ever ensued, but many situations, if not mediated, could have led to one. A commonly known incident is the Cuban Missile Crisis. With the U.S. discovering that the Soviet Union was building nuclear missile sites in Cuba, President Kennedy implemented naval blockades. Every U.S. action taken had to be meticulously planned, as one wrong move could be seen as an act of war, and would yield a humanity-destructing nuclear war. Thus, "the leaders of both superpowers publicly agreed to a deal in which the Soviets would dismantle the weapon sites in

⁸¹ "The Manhattan Project." *Ushistory.org*, Independence Hall Association, www.ushistory.org/us/51f.asp.

⁸² History.com Editors. "Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 18 Nov. 2009, www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/bombing-of-hiroshima-and-nagasaki.

exchange for a pledge from the United States not to invade Cuba”.⁸³ Both countries having nuclear weapons raised stakes and tensions very high in this situation.

Today, and ever since 1945, the U.S. has not had to deploy any nuclear weapons. However, our nuclear stockpile is large in quantity and diversity. Specifically, the U.S. has “approximately 3,800 stockpiled warheads and 2,000 retired warheads awaiting dismantlement, for a total of 5,800 warheads as of early 2020”.⁸⁴ This is only second on the list of countries with nuclear weapons, behind Russia’s 6375.⁸⁵ Having these weapons always leaves the possibility of them being utilized. This leads into the argument, which can be heard about since the Manhattan Project, about the necessity of nuclear weapons in general.

Ever since the start of the Manhattan Project, hesitant voices can be heard about aspects of nuclear weapons, from their overall necessity to how they will be controlled by the United States. For example, after the U.S. successfully tested one of its first bombs just a few weeks before the bombings on Japan, a petition circulated amongst the scientists to try to prevent the bombs from being used as a war weapon. One scientist, who was interviewed many years later in 2014, stated, “I remember the petition to not to use the bomb as a weapon came around just after the Trinity test”.⁸⁶ Thus, some of the scientists who helped create the bombs in the first place were hesitant of their use—although they were in the dark about the plans for Japan. From there, through history, knowing how deadly and intense nuclear weapons are, many people, including many U.S. Presidents, took vows to slowly decrease America’s nuclear stockpile. For example, President Obama proclaimed once in a speech, “But among those nations like my own that hold nuclear stockpiles, we must have the courage to escape the logic of fear and pursue a world without them”.⁸⁷ Presidents, like Obama, have made pledges to lead into a nuclear-free world, but obviously have not been successful.

In conjunction to that, it can be argued that many Americans would favor the abolishment of nuclear weapons. Many fear that nuclear weapons can lead to a deadly nuclear war and bring the end to humanity, in which these weapons bring about immense fear and anxiety. Specifically, in a poll done by the Pew Research Center, 73% saw the spread of nuclear weapons as a major threat compared to 23% who thought it was only a minor threat and 3% who did not think it was a threat.⁸⁸ Simply knowing that nuclear weapons exist in the U.S. and around the world and can

⁸³ “Cuban Missile Crisis.” *Cuban Missile Crisis / JFK Library*, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/jfk-in-history/cuban-missile-crisis.

⁸⁴ Fact Sheets: Arms Control Association.” *Fact Sheets / Arms Control Association*, Aug. 2020, www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Nuclearweaponswhohaswhat.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ “Manhattan Project Veterans Reflect on the Bomb.” *Atomic Heritage Foundation*, 6 Aug. 2014, www.atomicheritage.org/article/manhattan-project-veterans-reflect-bomb.

⁸⁷ “Barack Obama Calls for World to Reduce Nuclear Weapons Stockpiles.” *The Independent*, Independent Digital News and Media, 27 May 2016, www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/barack-obama-calls-world-reduce-nuclear-weapons-stockpiles-during-historic-visit-hiroshima-a7051561.html.

⁸⁸ Poushter, Jacob, and Moira Fagan. “Americans See Spread of Disease as Top International Threat, Along With Terrorism, Nuclear Weapons, Cyberattacks.” *Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project*, Pew Research

bring about a nuclear war at any moment leads many people to be fearful of America's future. Especially with recent conflicts with North Korea and Iran's nuclear efforts and stockpiles, people fear that America's destruction could be even more possible.

The complete other side of the argument of nuclear weapon possession and utilization is that these weapons are necessary for America's overall safety. For one, possessing these weapons has allowed the U.S. to successfully practice the strategy of deterrence. Specifically, "nuclear weapons represent the ultimate defense of the nation, a deterrent against any and all potential adversaries."⁸⁹ These weapons allow the U.S. to flex their capability and credibility, with the bombings of Japan in 1945 as evidence. For example, both the U.S. and Soviet Union having nuclear weapons led to both sides being deterred from taking physical action against one another, as both knew the destructive nuclear war that would ensue. Thus, in general, the biggest support to this argument is that the U.S. has never experienced an enemy nuclear attack or had to deploy these weapons (which could potentially lead to a war) since 1945. Americans may be anxious and fearful, but at least they are safe.

Coupled with the idea of safety comes the argument that if the U.S. began to deplete their nuclear arsenal, then it could be vulnerable to enemy attack. Just because the U.S. makes efforts to decrease their nuclear numbers does not mean that other nuclear states would follow suit. In addition, trying to convince other nuclear states to follow suit could be a large enough challenge in and of itself. Thus, the U.S. eventually having no nuclear weapons in a world where other countries do, could do more harm than good. It could lead to enemy attacks that would yield America unprotected, unable to fight back, and essentially destroyed. Having nuclear weapons would at least give the U.S. a fighting chance if war broke out.

Many actions have been taken in effort to slowly diminish, or at least contain, the number of nuclear weapons across the world. For example, a landmark action was the adoption of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which opened in 1968 and was extended indefinitely in 1995. In summary, the 191 countries, including the likes of the U.S. and Russia, that signed onto the NPT commit to "prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament."⁹⁰ The large number of countries that have signed onto the treaty sends an international signal that the hope for a nuclear free world is not just an American dream. Measures to ensure compliance are also put into place, such as inspections conducted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).⁹¹

Center, 28 July 2020, www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/04/13/americans-see-spread-of-disease-as-top-international-threat-along-with-terrorism-nuclear-weapons-cyberattacks/.

⁸⁹ Younger, Stephen M. *Nuclear Weapons in the Twenty-First Century*, 27 June 2000, fas.org/nuke/guide/usa/doctrine/doe/younger.htm#:~:text=Nuclear%20weapons%20represent%20the%20ultimate,powers%20for%20over%20fifty%20years.

⁹⁰ "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) – UNODA." *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

Now, the NPT has been successful in some regards. The treaty has been successful in aspects of non-proliferation - as many countries that had the capabilities to get nuclear weapons did not, which was a large fear of President Kennedy at the time of the treaty's creation. Specifically, "while nuclear proliferation continues, and nine countries are known to possess nuclear weapons, the fear once expressed by John F. Kennedy that at least a couple dozen countries could have the bomb by the 21st century has not panned out."⁹² However, on the flip side, the treaty has not been successful in disarmament, as nuclear weapons are still present. Complete disarmament around the world would take a lot of resources and cooperation, which is easier said than done. In all, the NPT lays the foundation for a nuclear-free world, in which other work must be done to lead to total disarmament.

Similarly, another effort to control nuclear weapons came via the Iran Nuclear Deal, which was created to stymie Iran's nuclear activities. Specifically, the deal was created as a result of fear by many international powers of Iran's extensive nuclear capabilities. This deal included Iran and a group of nations referred to as the P5+1, which are the U.S., UK, France, Russia, China and Germany, where "Iran agreed to limit its sensitive nuclear activities and allow in international inspectors in return for the lifting of crippling economic sanctions."⁹³ The P5+1 nations would lift economic sanctions on Iran as long as Iran limited their nuclear activities. The U.S. was a participant in this deal until 2018, when President Trump withdrew and re-imposed sanctions on Iran. Now, President Biden has begun talks of re-entering the U.S. back into this deal, further progressing the hope of containing nuclear activities.

Finally, a large movement starting in 2008, called Global Zero, has surfaced with the strict goal of eliminating nuclear weapons completely from the world. More extreme than the specific clauses of the NPT, the Global Zero movement wants to see nuclear weapons gone permanently, rather than contained and slowly decreased. Voicing how nuclear weapons make the world actually unsafe, the movement has grown to "include a global network of world leaders, senior military commanders, and national security experts that spans the political spectrum and transcends borders and conflict zones."⁹⁴ The movement has roadmaps to reduce the world stockpile to zero by 2030, in which it is thought that even one nuclear weapon is one too many.

When America introduced the first atomic bomb in 1945, the political and military world would be changed forever. A weapon now existed that could easily destroy large amounts of land and civilians. Even before the weapons were first used, debates arose about the necessity and use of these weapons, which can still be seen today. On one side, many argue that the weapons bring

⁹² O'Hanlon, Michael E., et al. "Experts Assess the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, 50 Years after It Went into Effect." *Brookings*, Brookings, 5 Mar. 2020, www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/03/03/experts-assess-the-nuclear-non-proliferation-treaty-50-years-after-it-went-into-effect/.

⁹³ "Iran Nuclear Deal: Key Details." *BBC News*, BBC, 11 June 2019, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33521655.

⁹⁴ "Our Mission." *Global Zero*, www.globalzero.org/about-us/our-mission/.

the world on the brink of destruction, and bring an immense amount of fear, while others argue the importance of the weapons for deterrence and overall safety. Treaties and organizations have been created to support a nuclear free world, but have not accomplished the goal entirely.

Darkness Falls Upon America's Backyard: Evaluating Central Appalachia's Woes

Jack Bergantino

The United States prides itself on being a nation that offers equity and opportunity to its citizens. However, in recent decades, regions of relative wealth and poverty have come to define the American landscape. While coastal communities have fared well with consistently declining rates of unemployment and increasing rates of college graduation, Central Appalachia, which comprises parts of Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia, continues to falter with diverging employment and income levels relative to other areas of the country.

Appalachia is comprised of 420 counties across 13 states, spanning from southern New York to northern Mississippi.⁹⁵ Twenty-five million Americans live within the region, 42% of which is considered rural. In 1963, at Appalachian governors' request, President John F. Kennedy formed the President's Appalachian Regional Commission to assess the region's needs.⁹⁶ Citing 1960 U.S. Census data, the Commission published a report that nearly one-third of the area's population lived under the poverty line compared with about 1 in 5 nationwide. Indeed, the 1964 PARC report provided the basis for establishing the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) in 1965.⁹⁷ The ARC, one of the most extensive place-based regional development programs, has since invested over \$4.5 billion into Appalachian communities with the principal goal of achieving socioeconomic parity with the rest of the nation. Federal, state, and local funding has matched this funding by more than \$10 billion.⁹⁸

Despite these significant expenditures, Appalachia still lags behind the rest of the nation. The divergence is particularly acute in the Central region, which contains Appalachia's most mountainous terrain.⁹⁹ The area historically relied upon extractive industries, including logging and coal mining, as important income sources. In fact, 33.8% of West Virginians in 1990 were employed in logging and mining, declining to 18.6% by 2020.¹⁰⁰ Appalachian coal production and employment have faced decades of steady declines from a zenith in the 1940s, penalizing the pockets of the region (primarily concentrated in eastern Kentucky and southwestern West Virginia) that relied upon the coal industry for employment.¹⁰¹ These declines became even more pronounced following the coal bust in the 1980s¹⁰²: rural central Appalachia's per capita household median income is now just three-quarters of the greater region's income and just over

⁹⁵ "About the Appalachia Region," ARC.gov, Appalachian Regional Commission, March 14, 2021, <https://www.arc.gov/about-the-appalachian-region/>

⁹⁶ "ARC's History and Work in Appalachia," ARC.gov, Appalachian Regional Commission, March 14, 2021, <https://www.arc.gov/arcs-history-and-work-in-appalachia/>

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Robert Baumann, "Changes in the Appalachian Wage Gap," *Growth and Change* 37, no. 3 (2006): 416-443

¹⁰⁰ "State and Area Employment, Hours, and Earnings, West Virginia, 1990-2020," U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, March 14, 2020, <https://data.bls.gov/pdq/SurveyOutputServlet>

¹⁰¹ "Production of Coal and Coke in West Virginia 1863 – 2012," West Virginia Office of Miner's Health Safety and Training, March 14, 2020, <https://minesafety.wv.gov/historicprod.htm>

¹⁰² Dan Black, Terra McKinnish, Seth Sanders, "The Economic Impact of the Coal Boom and Bust," *The Economic Journal* 115, no. 503 (2005): 449-476

half of the nation's.¹⁰³ Whereas Appalachia's overall poverty rate decreased by 3 percent (on par with the country), the central sub-region endured a 2 percent increase from 2012 to 2017.¹⁰⁴

How can a region with plentiful natural resources experience such acute levels of poverty? One might expect that abundant raw resources would elevate an area's wealth level, encouraging investment and economic growth. The "resource curse," a phrase coined by Richard Auty in 1993, describes an area where resource wealth undermines that area's population's economic well-being. Sachs and Warner note that economies with abundant natural resources generally grow slower than economies with scarce resources.¹⁰⁵ To test this theory, they analyze the relationship between resource intensity and growth. Sachs and Warner compare economies with high and low ratios of natural resource exports to GDP over nineteen years (1970-1989). Their evidence yields a significant negative relationship between resource intensity and growth, even after controlling for exogenous variables that may affect growth (e.g., per capita income).¹⁰⁶ Acemoglu and Robinson offer further insight into this paradox by arguing that either inclusive or exclusive economic institutions can spur economic growth.¹⁰⁷ Inclusive economic institutions encourage the relatively free entry of business, secure property rights laws, and "opportunity" for most citizens. Such opportunities include a relatively-level playing field to ensure that one interest does not crowd out the others. On the other hand, exclusive economic institutions are designed by powerful entities with the goal of extracting resources from other economic agents. They further claim that these inclusive or exclusive economic institutions form symbiotic synergies with either pluralist (e.g., Norway) or absolutist political systems (e.g., Venezuela).¹⁰⁸

The developmental economic literature has increasingly considered economic complexity, resulting from interactions between multiple economic agents, as an essential driver of development. Hidalgo and Hausmann assess country product associations by analyzing import/export data; they find a robust negative relationship between the number of products exported by a country and the ubiquity of those products (the number of countries exporting the same product).¹⁰⁹ Their analysis also yields a strong positive correlation between export complexity and income per capita as well as future growth propensity.¹¹⁰ Although Central Appalachia no longer produces as much coal as it once did, the coal industry's past predominance as a major extractive agent can contextualize the region's present-day woes. According to the literature, areas that historically rely on a few extractive industries as a primary source of income constrain the on-the-job skills that area-residents acquire.¹¹¹

¹⁰³ "American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S1701," U.S. Census Bureau, 2017, <https://data.census.gov>

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Jeffrey Sachs, Andrew Warner, "Natural Resource Abundance and Economic Growth," National Bureau of Economic Research, December 1995, <https://www.nber.org/papers/w5398>

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Daron Acemoglu, James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012)

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 20-50

¹⁰⁹ César A. Hidalgo, Ricardo Hausmann, "The Building Blocks of Economic Complexity," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 106, no. 26 (2009): 10570-10575

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ricardo Hausmann, et. al., *The Atlas of Economic Complexity: Mapping Paths to Prosperity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013)

On the other hand, an area with economic complexity affords workers a broader range of knowledge and, thus, employment opportunities: scholars draw a statistically significant positive relationship between cognitive ability and economic complexity.¹¹² Moreover, other research identifies a positive correlation between industry diversity and economic resilience in congruence with these findings, suggesting a community is likelier to overcome an economic shock if it produces a more diverse array of goods.¹¹³

Coal mining has a particularly rich history in West Virginia, the only state located entirely within Appalachia. The state is second only to Wyoming in coal production and accounts for 12% of total coal production in the United States.¹¹⁴ The construction of railroads between 1880 and 1920 unbridled a period of significant transformation within Central Appalachia, transitioning the economic landscape from agrarian to capitalist modes of production.¹¹⁵ During the early twentieth century, absentee-owned lumber companies advantaged from easy access to the railroad, killing most of West Virginia's virgin forests. With the exhaustion of Central Appalachia's timber resources, coal mining became the primary economic activity by 1920. The coal and railroad companies subsequently won land and mineral rights to 80% of southern West Virginia during the following decade.¹¹⁶ Rasmussen argues that this "insecurity in landownership" differentiated early-twentieth-century farmers from farmers elsewhere in the heartland.¹¹⁷ The farms in southern West Virginia, Eastern Kentucky, and southwest Virginia were often replaced with company-owned coal camps.¹¹⁸ Unlike other parts of Appalachia and the Midwest, most miners—79% in southern West Virginia and 64% in Eastern Kentucky/southwest Virginia—lived in such company towns by 1910. In addition to supplying miners with homes, the companies created all the necessary institutions to run the town.¹¹⁹ Mine operators thus orchestrated the general store, church, post office, and entertainment establishments. This relationship continued into the late twentieth century. The Appalachian Land Task Force found that "for many Appalachian people, coal camp life is not a bygone era. Facing no alternative, people remain, often dependent upon the will and wishes of the company landlord. In staying, they face insecurities of tenure, dilapidated housing, and fear of the company's power."¹²⁰

¹¹² Ricardo Hausmann, et. al., *The Atlas of Economic Complexity: Mapping Paths to Prosperity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013)

¹¹³ Stephen Goetz, et. al., *Strengthening Economic Resilience in Appalachia* (West Virginia: Appalachian Regional Commission, 2019)

¹¹⁴ "Quarterly Coal Report July-September 2020 [PDF]," U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2020

¹¹⁵ Todd Nesbitt, "'West Virginia: A Case for Economic Distributism in Appalachia,'" *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 25, no. 1 (2019): 26–48

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Barbara Rasmussen, *Absentee Landowning and Exploitation in West Virginia, 1760-1920* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994)

¹¹⁸ Ronald Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930* (Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1982)

¹¹⁹ Ronald Lewis, "Appalachian Restructuring in Historical Perspective: Coal, Culture and Social Change in West Virginia," *Urban Studies* 30, no. 2 (1993): 299-308

¹²⁰ Appalachian Task Force, *Who Owns Appalachia? Landownership and its Impact* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983)

However, despite the industry's long-time association with the Appalachian region, coal mine employment has declined since the mid-twentieth century.¹²¹ Much like in other sectors, mine owners replaced employees with mechanized equipment, such as longwall mining machines, beginning in the 1950s. Whereas 125,669 West Virginians were employed as miners in 1948, only 19,432 of the population remained miners by 2013. Eastern Kentucky and southern West Virginia, an area once home to most Appalachian company towns, is now Appalachia's most distressed region.¹²² For example, McDowell County is one of the most impoverished counties in the country; in 1950, the area once boasted a population of nearly 100,000 residents, dwindling to less than 20,000 residents by 2019.¹²³

McDowell County, a rural, mountainous area, is located in the coalfields of southern West Virginia. Welch, the largest town in the County, is only accessible by a two-lane state roadway, like every other area-town. Coal mining has long been the primary source of economic activity in the County, with about 19.62% of the working population still employed as coal miners in 2012.¹²⁴ The industry's importance to the area's economic landscape can be traced to the 1880s. Pocahontas Fuel Company and U.S. Steel, recognizing southern West Virginia's high-quality coal, established mines and mining towns in the area by acquiring land and mineral rights to thousands of acres. By the 1980s, energy and steel companies owned 86% of County land with mineral resources. In 2011, four companies controlled the land rights to more than 50% of all private land in McDowell County, offering some credence to the absentee ownership "resource curse" hypothesis.¹²⁵

Economic hardship and social upheaval have come to define McDowell County; despite that, some residents remain resolute in their commitment to the County's economic development, claiming a strong sense of regional identity. Marsha Timpson, the executive director of a local community service non-profit, states, "Our coal forged the steel that built the nation. . . I am very connected to these mountains. This will always be home."¹²⁶ She likens Central Appalachia to America's backyard, the area where one accomplishes necessary but, at times, unpleasant hard-work. However, not all residents look favorably upon the region's coal industry. Ellis Ray Williams, a retired educator and principal, recounts his advisor at West Virginia University telling him to avoid settling in Welch because the economy relied on one industry. Williams believes that the region's politicians have capitalized too long on supporting coal mining without incentivizing the development of auxiliary industries. He concludes that this mindset facilitates a "brain drain" in southern Appalachia, where most young adults who leave the County for college do not return because of the lack of jobs outside coal mining.¹²⁷ Indeed, the economic research firm, Chmura, developed an Economic Diversity Index (ranging from a high of 1 to a low of

¹²¹ "Production of Coal and Coke in West Virginia 1863 – 2012," West Virginia Office of Miner's Health Safety and Training, March 14, 2020, <https://minesafety.wv.gov/historicprod.htm>

¹²² "About the Appalachia Region," ARC.gov, Appalachian Regional Commission, March 14, 2021, <https://www.arc.gov/about-the-appalachian-region/>

¹²³ Rose Rudd, et. al., "Increases in Drug and Opioid Overdose Deaths United States, 2000–2014," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, January 1, 2016, <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview>

¹²⁴ "Production of Coal and Coke in West Virginia 1863 – 2012," West Virginia Office of Miner's Health Safety and Training, March 14, 2020, <https://minesafety.wv.gov/historicprod.htm>

¹²⁵ "Who Owns West Virginia [PDF]," West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy, 2013

¹²⁶ Elaine Sheldon, *Hollow*, Jeff Soyk (2013; Tribeca Film Institute New Media Fund, 2013) video.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

180) to assess the range of economic activity on a county-level.¹²⁸ McDowell County's 126.45 index value is among the lowest in West Virginia; the area places in the bottom 7th percentile for relative industrial diversity (where the dominant industry is natural resource extraction) and bottom 6th percentile for relative occupational diversity.¹²⁹

While coal-mining is no longer a viable source of income for most communities in Central Appalachia, the industry's significance to the economy and, to a smaller extent, the region's culture can still be traced to present-day. Indeed, Central Appalachia's plight is not unique. The increasing popularity of renewable energy in the United States will have a profound impact on fossil-fuel towns across the country, from the shale fields of Pennsylvania to the oil fields of Texas. As such, policy-makers must consider strategic place-based initiatives to help these areas transition; otherwise, they too may face the same fate as left-behind Central Appalachia.

¹²⁸ "Economic Diversity by County," Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2020, <http://www.chmuraecon.com/interactive/economic-diversity/>

¹²⁹ Ibid.

Exploring the Perpetual Abuse of ICE and its Detrimental Impacts on the United States

Jola Bufi

Throughout history, nations have been characterized by homogeneity of ethnicity and race until the discovery of the New World. This New World, having the largest immigrant population globally is often referred to as “a melting pot” as it allows for the flourishing and fusion of different cultures, nationalities, and ethnicities. However, that has not been the reality experienced by many immigrants who move to the United States. While most of these individuals view the United States as a land of new opportunities, they are also faced with challenges pertaining to immigrant stressors like workplace exploitations, racial profiling, fear of deportation, police violence, etc. One of the most detrimental challenges immigrants in the United States face is the fear of deportation and repugnant treatment from the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). ICE targets and detains hundreds of thousands of people, separating loved ones from their families, which breeds governmental distrust and lowers confidence in the legitimacy of the law. This essay seeks to highlight the need to abolish this federal law enforcement agency by exposing its inhumane treatment of immigrants and its implication on social factors.

The Immigration and Customs Enforcement was initially formed under the Homeland Security Act of 2002, following the events of September 11, 2001. The Homeland Security Act created the U.S Department of Homeland Security, whose mission is to prevent terrorism and enhance security. Since the public’s confidence in George W. Bush’s “war on terrorism” approach was deteriorating, many in his administration felt that the creation of ICE would make the country safe and restore the trust of citizens in their government.¹³⁰ Previously, immigration matters and policy fell under the Department of Commerce and Department of Labor, which dealt with economic or workforce issues. However, after the 9/11 attacks, immigration was placed in the national security sector. This new placement reflected the change in perspective that the nation held on immigration; now, immigration is associated with the idea of potential safety threats and a need for security from these threats. While immigration had been mixed with national security issues in subsequent years, with Immigration Reform and the Immigration Responsibility Act-- designed to prevent immigration from immigration, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, deportations started to increase as ICE linked immigration and national security.

ICE has two primary divisions: Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). ERO focuses on immigration laws, including detainment, while HSI investigates international criminal corporations, including the trafficking of people into the United States.¹³¹ Nevertheless, ICE has had a turbulent history, as it is an

¹³⁰ Felsenthal, Edward. “Front Line Workers Tell Their Own Stories in the New Issue of TIME.” Time. Time, April 9, 2020. <https://time.com/5325492/abolish-ice-history/>.

¹³¹ Nixon, Ron, and Linda Qiu. “What Is ICE and Why Do Critics Want to Abolish It?” The New York Times. The New York Times, July 3, 2018.

agency that was created to criminalize and target immigrants for deportation and separation from their communities and families. Considering the agency's foundation is rooted in a disregard for human life, it has created a culture that abuses human rights instead of protecting them. Thus, various political and non-political bodies have started to question its necessity and demand for its abolition.

Immigration detention is accompanied by alarmingly poor conditions, a culture of systemic abuse, and negligence in medical care. This medical negligence has become even more apparent during the Covid-19 pandemic. As of October 2020, the number of cases of Covid-19 in these detention facilities has been more than 6,500 confirmed cases that were reported by the agency.¹³² While there are allegations that ICE has manipulated Covid-19 case data and withheld significant information, they have also withheld necessary sanitation tools that could prevent the disease from spreading. According to various testimonies of people in detention centers, ICE has punished the individuals who spoke against the dangerous and unsanitary conditions by placing them in solitary confinement or using pepper spray.¹³³ The close confinement of individuals in the detention centers already allows for the spread of the disease at higher rates, yet the egregious medical abuses practiced by ICE make it even more likely for individuals to be exposed to Covid-19. A recent study estimates that between 72 and nearly 100 percent of the individuals detained will be infected within 90 days. Such alarming statistics have led to more than 4,000 medical professionals to sign a letter urging ICE to release immigrants to stop the spread of Covid-19, noting that detention facilities are “designed to maximize control of the incarcerated population, not to minimize disease transmission or efficiently deliver health care”.¹³⁴ The impacts of the conditions in the detention facilities have already proven to be lethal. For example, this past May, Carlos Mejia became the first person in ICE detention to die of Covid-19. Mr. Mejia tried to be released due to high risk from multiple serious medical conditions, but the release was denied, and his alerts to the officials of his deteriorating condition were ignored. These kinds of cases are only the tip of the iceberg as ICE has long been responsible for systematic failures to provide adequate health care to detained people. As the pandemic progresses, preventable deaths, which are previously mentioned, are inevitable. The reality is that these kinds of abuses and deaths are rooted in the history and creation of ICE, but only a fraction of them are exposed and documented, and they will continue to worsen unless ICE is abolished.

Another violation of human rights in relation to medical care is rooted in women's health care under ICE. The quality of reproductive health care in immigration custody is dismal. While women receive substandard care, they also face detrimental threats in relation to their bodily autonomy through coercive and unconstitutional practices. As of December, more than 40

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/03/us/politics/fact-check-ice-immigration-abolish.html>.

¹³² Carasik, Lauren. “The Cruelty of Trump's ICE Under COVID-19.” Boston Review, May 19, 2020. <http://bostonreview.net/global-justice/lauren-carasik-deadly-immigration-enforcement-during-covid-19-pandemic>.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

women submitted testimony claiming abuse, alleging they underwent invasive and unnecessary procedures. The allegations emerged after a whistleblower report, which was submitted on behalf of a former nurse at the facility, Dawn Wooten. She stated that there was a high number of hysterectomies that were performed on Spanish-speaking women, who she worried did not understand the procedures that were being performed on them. For example, a former detainee, Jaromy Floriano, confesses she was in a hospital gown on her way to getting surgery for the removal of a cyst in her ovary. It was not until the driver asked, “You know you’re having a hysterectomy, right”, when Floriano first had heard of this procedure.¹³⁵ Since then, a lot more women have come forward with allegations of medical abuse claiming that they were pressured to have unwanted or unnecessary gynecological procedures under ICE. In response to these claims, ICE has tried to retaliate against the women who complained as they have tried to deport at least eight women who have come forward.¹³⁶ While lawyers for the women are trying to put a stop to such deportations, ICE and the government are willing to go to great lengths to silence and oppress these women. These harmful practices shatter light on the United States’ long history of eugenics and immense desire to control women’s reproduction. The eugenics movement targeted people of color, immigrants, people with mental illness and others with forced sterilization and abortion. While forced sterilization and hysterectomies are illegal, they have persisted throughout history as people who are incarcerated are often targets of sterilization campaigns and forced birth. Thus, ICE and the carceral system, in general promote misogyny, racism and xenophobia in which reproductive health care is denied and reproductive control and abuse flourishes.

Equally important to the “abolish ICE movement” is the shift of the agency’s priorities, which swing widely from one administration to the next. While President Obama had the highest number of deportations during his administration, the approach to immigration enforcement was organized by a hierarchical set of priorities, as enforcement focused on people who posed a threat to national security and immigrants with serious criminal convictions. However, President Trump overturned these enforcement priorities during his first week in office through executive orders, such as increased construction of detention facilities, limiting access to asylum etc. The Trump administration’s policy is to target any unauthorized immigrant-regardless of their length of residence in the United States, thus leading to 381,370 arrests and 650,944 removals during January 2016 and September 2018.¹³⁷ In response to the sharp increase in the number of immigrants encountered by ICE, Trump stated, “I want people to know that if they come into the United States illegally they’re getting out. They’re going to be brought out”.¹³⁸ While Trump made ICE a significant tool of his domestic policy agenda by deporting millions of immigrants, the Biden administration seeks to assert more control over the agency. Under Biden, ICE

¹³⁵ Bekiempis , Victoria. “More Immigrant Women Say They Were Abused by Ice Gynecologists.” The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, December 22, 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/dec/22/ice-gynecologist-hysterectomies-georgia>.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Foer, Story by Franklin. “How Trump Radicalized ICE.” The Atlantic. Atlantic Media Company, August 17, 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/09/trump-ice/565772/>.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

primarily intends to apprehend people who pose a threat to national security, recently crossed the border, or committed crimes designated as felonies. In spite of the administration's promises to take a more progressive approach towards immigration, the exponential increase of children at the border patrol has caused the administration to leave children in jail-like facilities. Thus, revoking Trump's immigration orders so quickly without a concrete plan has left the Biden administration with a growing immigration crisis on the United States Southern border. As Biden officials are not abandoning immigration enforcement and will continue to remove immigrants, their main goal is to focus the agency's limited resources on cases that present threats to national security and public safety. However, the new policies have received backlash from people who want the agency abolished as well as ICE officers and agents that claim to feel more powerless. ICE officials have expressed concern that the shift in priorities "will limit their ability to conduct enforcement operations and inevitably result in dangerous people slipping from their grasp".¹³⁹ Despite such backlash, the leadership change at ICE will make the agency more responsive to the legal and immigrant advocacy groups that were dismissed by the Trump administration. Although the new administration might not go far enough to protect immigrants under ICE, it brings the United States one step closer to a future without ICE.

Despite this, Biden's moderate reforms will not resolve the significant problems that are rooted in the creation of ICE. In order for forced sterilization, poor conditions, and inhumane treatment of immigrants to change, the culture of ICE needs to change. Without abolition, ICE will remain a lawless agency that threatens human rights. In the hope that the new administration might create the space to abolish ICE in the future, we must evaluate what this future would look like. If ICE were abolished, other parts of the government would likely take up some of the agency's responsibilities. In his legislation to abolish ICE, Representative Pocan of Wisconsin, proposes examining the agency's function to determine how some capabilities could be transferred to other agencies.¹⁴⁰ These kinds of capabilities would include investigations of gang violence, drug and human trafficking, and organized crime- most of which are the top reasons for violence and deportations of immigrants.

Abolishing ICE is about changing the nation's deadlocked immigration debate and providing humane treatment for many immigrants who cross the border seeking for a better life. Now is the time to question and call for the end of a project that threatens the core principles of our country and future promise. Our country needs immigrants. Not only do they enrich our culture, they contribute to job creation and our economy through entrepreneurship and taxpaying. Thus, Congress must provide a path to legalization, defund ICE and all other agencies that promote cruel and senseless immigration enforcement practices. In a future without ICE raids and deportations would be minimal, which would allow for community members to feel less fearful and more trustful of public institutions and the government. It is time to stop terrorizing communities and violating human rights. It is time to save our democracy and abolish ICE.

¹³⁹ Aleaziz, Hamed. "How ICE Became The Face Of Trump's Immigration Crackdown And Where It Goes From Here After Biden Is In Charge." BuzzFeed News. BuzzFeed News, December 9, 2020. <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/trump-ice-biden-future>.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

“Point of Order, Madam Chairman”: The Increasing Importance of the Senate Parliamentarian

Christian Chlebowski

When highly politicized bills reach the floor of the United States Senate, eyes and ears in the media and the public hone in on the actions and speeches of duly elected congresspeople in an effort to analyze their stances and predict their votes. Doing so, however, glances over one of the most important members of the chamber— one person who holds the power to advance or reject aspects of party agendas. During debates over the Republican’s 2017 attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act and the Democrat’s 2021 attempt to raise the minimum wage, for example, the Senate parliamentarian made rulings that essentially limited the actions and options for the respective parties.¹⁴¹ Throughout the recent history of the U.S. Senate, the importance of the parliamentarian, and the power the position holds, has increased with the expansion of partisanship, and, while the Senate parliamentarian lacks the fame and spotlight of the Senators she shares the Senate chamber with, the position itself is perhaps more important than theirs.

To investigate this relationship between the parliamentarian and partisanship, it is important to investigate three time periods of the United States Senate: from 1789 to 1935, when there was no such figure and presiding officers had full discretion over rulings, from 1935 to the late 20th century, when the parliamentarian was less frequently called on to moderate a partisan debate, and from then up to the present, where expanded partisanship has increased the vitality of the parliamentarian. Further, an analysis of Senatorial actions during these time periods reveals why the parliamentarian is the most important role in the chamber. Following this historical analysis, an investigation into current attitudes and perceptions will lead to an expanded discussion on the importance of the nonpartisan nature of the position, as well as potential future ramifications and impacts.

When the Senate first convened in March of 1789, the rostrum staff consisted of only a doorkeeper, secretary, chaplain, and two clerks, and although new positions were added over time, no parliamentarian served the United States Senate in an official capacity during the body's first 146 years.¹⁴²¹⁴³ During this time period, conflicts over Senatorial actions and legislation were fairly common as the nation expanded and dealt with many significant issues. For instance, during the presidency of John Quincy Adams, John Randolph, a Virginian senator, frequently took to the floor to issue diatribes against the opposing parties’ legislative proposals and their

¹⁴¹ Booker, Brakkton. “Who Is the Senate Parliamentarian Who Ruled Against A Minimum Wage Increase?” NPR. NPR, February 26, 2021. <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/26/971793277/who-the-senate-parliamentarian-who-ruled-against-a-minimum-wage-increase>.

¹⁴² “Origins and Development.” U.S. Senate: Origins and Development, November 30, 2020. https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Origins_Development.htm#:~:text=The%20United%20States%20Senate%20convened,were%20present%20on%20that%20day.

¹⁴³ “Office of the Parliamentarian.” U.S. Senate: Office of the Parliamentarian, January 12, 2017. https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/People_Parliamentarian.htm.

politicians, including Adams.¹⁴⁴ Vice-President John C. Calhoun, who was also an Adams opponent, refused to take action limiting these speeches. After much outrage on behalf of Adams' party, Calhoun argued against the vice president taking action in the Senate, saying "Mark the consequences! If the Vice-President should belong to the same party or interest which brought the President into power, or if he be dependent of him for his political standing or advancement, you will virtually place the control over the freedom of debate in the hands of the Executive."¹⁴⁵ This statement reinforced the nature of the Senate as a place of dialogue and unlimited debate, with the presiding officer urged to refrain from participating in actions. The unwillingness of the vice president to involve himself in the proceedings was his prerogative, although without the wit and understanding of a dedicated staffer to ensure order and adherence to precedent, his decision clearly led to debate and frustration amongst members.

A parliamentarian was not yet needed, however, because the Senate was much less busy during this time period. Not only was the legislative calendar much shorter, but the Senators themselves had fewer duties and responsibilities during this formative period.¹⁴⁶ Ultimately, this meant that Senators had a detailed grasp of procedures and precedent, and were able to make decisions in accordance with the Standing Rules without the expertise of another individual. While partisanship was high at this time, as indicated by Vice President Calhoun in the example described above, the fact that participation among Senators themselves was high meant that both party interests were represented without an "arbitrator." Essentially, a parliamentarian was not yet necessary because the chamber's members held the required procedural knowledge and were more present to articulate precedent during Senate deliberations and actions.

That being said, the situation greatly changed as the body developed. With time, precedents became more deeply entrenched. This had the benefit of regulating the actions of the Senate, but the disadvantage of an increase in procedural knowledge necessary of Senators in order for work to be accomplished. During the 19th and 20th centuries, few Senators had this parliamentary knowledge.¹⁴⁷ In one exchange from the 45th Congress, newly elected Senator Angus Cameron failed to adequately respond to a parliamentary inquiry from Senator Augustus Merrimon, leading to an extended debate and ultimately forcing the return of the president pro tempore to settle the dispute.¹⁴⁸ This increasing complexity, while not necessarily tied to a rise in partisanship, was foundational for the creation of the role of the Senate parliamentarian.

¹⁴⁴ Lynch, Michael S. and Anthony J. Madonna. "Procedural Uncertainty, the Parliamentarian, and Questions of Order in the United States Senate." https://spia.uga.edu/faculty_pages/ajmadonn/Parliamentarian.pdf.

¹⁴⁵ Lynch, Michael S. and Anthony J. Madonna. "Procedural Uncertainty, the Parliamentarian, and Questions of Order in the United States Senate." https://spia.uga.edu/faculty_pages/ajmadonn/Parliamentarian.pdf.

¹⁴⁶ Wallner, James I. "Parliamentary Rule: The US Senate Parliamentarian and Institutional Constraints on Legislator Behavior." *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 20, no. 3 (2014): 380-405. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13572334>.

¹⁴⁷ Madonna, Anthony J., Michael S. Lynch, and Ryan D. Williamson. "Questions of Order in the U.S. Senate: Procedural Uncertainty and the Role of the Parliamentarian." *Social Science Quarterly* 100, no. 4 (June 2019): 1343-1357. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/ssqu.12636>.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

While Senate procedure was complicated in the late 19th century, it became exceedingly complex with the proposal of Roosevelt's New Deal, which "expanded opportunities for procedural confusion and legislative mischief."¹⁴⁹ This, in addition to the reduced time Senators began spending on the floor as they gained additional responsibilities, led to a decline in individual member awareness of procedure, and ultimately the hiring of the first Senate parliamentarian.¹⁵⁰ With this appointment, the partisanship and arbitrariness of procedural rulings began to decline as order and precedent were more routinely applied.

When Floyd Riddick joined the Office of the Parliamentarian in the early 1950s, he spent his first year doing nothing and reading the precedents compiled by Charles Watkins, the first Senate parliamentarian.¹⁵¹ Clearly, understanding and internalizing these rules and procedures of Senatorial function became important to the role of Senate parliamentarian, as Watkins, Riddick, and every parliamentarian since has established their understanding of precedence before taking the rostrum for the first time. The core purpose of this, according to Riddick, is to ensure that the parliamentarian knows the inside and out of rules, because "when you're working at the desk you don't have time to consult a textbook, or what have you. Sometimes the situation is such that unless you get them to call for a quorum, or something to give you a chance to check something out, you just don't have time to go back and find out exactly what the precedent on that is."¹⁵² The time period beginning with the appointment of the first parliamentarian, therefore, is one in which precedent was applied much more routinely than in the pre-position sessions. Fittingly, this period also saw a decrease in partisan rulings of the chair.

The nonpartisan position of Senate parliamentarian stipulates that nonpartisan rulings on Senatorial actions are handed down, and that generally was the case during these mid-to-late twentieth century sessions. According to Riddick, who spent many years working in the Office of the Parliamentarian, "I was very seldom questioned. I might say, at this point, that I served over a period of twenty-five years at the desk, and only one ruling was overturned by vote of the Senate. The Chair never failed to follow my advice except in one instance."¹⁵³ The fact that only one ruling was reversed while Riddick served exemplifies just how effective this position is at ensuring precedent was adhered in the chamber. That being said, the sheer span of rulings that the parliamentarian is responsible for recommending meant that the position saw a massive increase in power. It can clearly be seen therefore, that the influence of the parliamentarian grew substantially during this time period from 1935 through the late 20th century, as the power to shape legislation's progression through the chamber was essentially consolidated under this

¹⁴⁹ Baker, R. A. *200 Notable days: Senate stories, 1787 to 2002*. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006)

¹⁵⁰ Wallner, James I. "Parliamentary Rule: The US Senate Parliamentarian and Institutional Constraints on Legislator Behavior." *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 20, no. 3 (2014): 380-405. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13572334.2013.862090>

¹⁵¹ Ritchie, Donald A., and Floyd M. Riddick. "Interview #3: The Office of the Parliamentarian." U.S. Senate: Oral History Project, July 12, 1978. https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/Riddick_interview_3.pdf.

¹⁵² Ibid

¹⁵³ Ibid

position. Ever since this point in time, however, the importance of the parliamentarian's rulings has become even more important as partisanship has reached record highs.

It is imperative to note that, while the parliamentarian provides guidance on how to proceed on various Senatorial actions, the Chair has no obligation to sustain or implement the parliamentarian's recommendations. This is what Riddick refers to when he says that he had one ruling overturned; essentially, only one time during his tenure did the Chair or the Senate body decide to operate against his ruling. During the pre-parliamentarian period, literature and research suggests that rulings by the Chair were partisan and not always in accordance with precedence. This same research also indicates that the period beginning with the appointment of the first parliamentarian and carrying up through the end of the 20th century, around 1980, saw the parliamentarian's rulings mostly upheld. Since that point, however, the parliamentarian's rulings have become more important— and more frequently debated and overturned according to party goals.

Madonna, Lynch, and Williamson's 2019 analysis of the role of the parliamentarian found that the number of "points of order," or parliamentary inquiries, made of the Chair saw a large uptick around the 94th Congress, beginning in 1975.¹⁵⁴ While this doesn't necessarily indicate an increase in the partisan content of the questions, it does indicate a greater desire of the Senate to challenge precedent. There are three major instances in the past decade when parliamentary inquiries have been raised, all of which represent perfect case studies that can be used to investigate this possible willingness to put partisanship above precedence: the Democrats' 2013 utilization of the "nuclear option" to eliminate the three-fifths rule on executive branch nominations and federal judicial appointments, the Republicans' 2017 utilization of the "nuclear option" to eliminate the three-fifths rule on Supreme Court nominations, and the Democrats' 2021 effort to include the minimum wage in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. In the first two cases, the advice of the parliamentarian was overturned, and in the third, the parliamentarian's advice was upheld.

Until 2013, the Standing Rules of the Senate indicated that a three-fifths vote was required to advance executive branch nominations and federal judicial appointments. In that year, gridlock and severe opposition to Obama nominations led then-majority leader Harry Reid to invoke the "nuclear option" to eliminate the filibuster.¹⁵⁵ Essentially, the "nuclear option" is implemented when a point of order is raised that the cloture vote is by majority vote; when the parliamentarian advises the Chair to rule against the point of order, the ruling is overturned by appeal.¹⁵⁶ A similar procedure was utilized in 2017 by Republicans under then-majority leader Mitch McConnell to eliminate the filibuster on Supreme Court nominations. In both of these

¹⁵⁴ Madonna, Anthony J., Michael S. Lynch, and Ryan D. Williamson. "Questions of Order in the U.S. Senate: Procedural Uncertainty and the Role of the Parliamentarian." *Social Science Quarterly* 100, no. 4 (June 2019): 1343-1357. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/ssqu.12636>

¹⁵⁵ Hartsoe, Steve. "Why the Democrats Took the Nuclear Option in Congress." Duke: Trinity College of Arts and Sciences. <https://trinity.duke.edu/node/6563>

¹⁵⁶ Reynolds, Molly E. "What is the Senate Filibuster, and What Would It Take to Eliminate It?" Brookings Institute. September 9, 2020. <https://www.brookings.edu/policy2020/votervital/what-is-the-senate-filibuster-and-what-would-it-take-to-eliminate-it/>

examples, the parliamentarian's recommendation was overturned by the Senate's majority party in order to promote their partisan agenda. The 2013 parliamentarian recommendation was overturned along partisan lines, 48–52, with all Republicans and three Democrats voting in favor of the parliamentarian's recommendation.¹⁵⁷ The 2017 rules change was also agreed to along partisan lines, 48-52, with all Democrats voting in favor of the parliamentarian's recommendation.¹⁵⁸ In both of these votes, a “yea” was in favor of the parliamentarian's ruling and a “nay” was in opposition (favoring a change in precedent). The fact that precedent was changed by both parties when they were in the majority, both times in response to gridlock, reflects on the “new” partisan nature of the Senate.¹⁵⁹ At the same time, however, it is also important to note that both of these actions went contrary to the advice of Elizabeth MacDonough, the current parliamentarian.¹⁶⁰ These two cases, therefore, indicate a willingness by America's major political parties to buck precedence in an effort to achieve their legislative goals, especially in the years since the end of the 20th century. That being said, there are instances in which the majority party of the Senate does uphold the parliamentarian's recommendation, even when the ruling is contrary to their desire. Case in point: the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

America saw two major “happenings” in the beginning of 2021: the continuation of the Coronavirus pandemic and the transition of power in Washington, D.C. to a unified Democratic government. The primary implication of this was the Democratic desire to pass a large stimulus plan that the Republicans largely blocked during the end of 2020. This came in the form of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which initially contained a stipulation that the federal minimum wage be gradually increased to \$15.¹⁶¹ In order to “fast-track” the bill, the Democrats proposed the bill under budget reconciliation, which avoids the possibility of a filibuster by enabling agreement by a majority vote.¹⁶² This does have parliamentary ramifications, however, namely in the form of the Byrd Rule, which is a series of requirements for budget reconciliation.¹⁶³ On February 25, 2021, MacDonough ruled that the \$15 minimum wage didn't

¹⁵⁷ “PN527.” U.S. Senate: Roll Call Vote 113th Congress - 1st Session, November 21, 2013. https://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=113&session=1&vote=002.

¹⁵⁸ “PN55.” U.S. Senate: Roll Call Vote 115th Congress – 1st Session, April 6, 2017. https://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=115&session=1&vote=001

¹⁵⁹ Hartsoe, Steve. “Why the Democrats Took the Nuclear Option in Congress.” Duke: Trinity College of Arts and Sciences. <https://trinity.duke.edu/node/6563>.

¹⁶⁰ Bomboy, Scott. “Who is the Senate Parliamentarian and What Does She Do?” Interactive Constitution by the National Constitution Center. January 15, 2020. <https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/blog/who-is-the-senate-parliamentarian-and-what-does-she-do>.

¹⁶¹ “H.R.1319 - American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.” Congress.gov. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-1319>.

¹⁶² Booker, Brakkton. “Who is the Senate Parliamentarian Who Rules Against a Minimum Wage Increase?” NPR. February 26, 2021. <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/26/971793277/who-the-senate-parliamentarian-who-ruled-against-a-minimum-wage-increase>.

¹⁶³ Booker, Brakkton. “Who is the Senate Parliamentarian Who Rules Against a Minimum Wage Increase?” NPR. February 26, 2021. <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/26/971793277/who-the-senate-parliamentarian-who-ruled-against-a-minimum-wage-increase>.

meet these requirements, and that it must be struck from the bill if it were to be passed as a budget reconciliation.¹⁶⁴

The result of this recommendation was immediate pushback from progressive Democrats. Representative Ilhan Omar called for MacDonough to be fired.¹⁶⁵ Others called for Vice President Harris to ignore the advice and overrule her.¹⁶⁶ While that ultimately did not happen, this pushback indicates the willingness of parties to ignore precedent in considering the business of the Senate. Further, while this may seem an isolated incident, recommendations of the parliamentarian that are contrary to the majority party's wishes have led to reprimands and disciplinary actions. Because the position serves at the discretion of the majority leader, the parliamentarian can be fired without cause. This happened in 1987, when then-parliamentarian Robert Dove was fired by the Democrats when they took control of the chamber.¹⁶⁷ Then, in 1995, his successor was fired when the Republicans took control of the chamber; Dove was fired again in 2001 when a string of rulings against the Republicans angered them.¹⁶⁸ Therefore, not only does the case study of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 reinforce the knowledge that parties have an increased willingness to subvert the recommendations of the parliamentarian in order to accomplish their partisan goals, but the string of firings and replacements in the late 20th century and early 21st century further emphasize this point.

In summary, the time period from the late 20th century up through the present reveals the increased role of the parliamentarian in the behaviors of the Senate, as their rulings have often frustrated partisan motives in such ways leading to either an overturning of their recommendations and essentially a change in precedent, as is the case in the 2013 and 2017 case studies, or by taking action against the person holding the position of Senate parliamentarian, as was discussed in the 2021 case study.

While the Senate parliamentarian lacks the fame and spotlight of the Senators she shares the Senate chamber with, the position itself is perhaps more important than theirs. Without the parliamentarian, few, if any, Senators would be able to effectively and properly lead the chamber through its behaviors. Further, precedence would collapse and partisan behaviors would truly take over all Senatorial actions, as was the case in the Senate's beginning years. Clearly, this position is one of, if not the, most important, unrecognized, and oft-unappreciated positions in the Senate.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid

¹⁶⁵ Ibid

¹⁶⁶ Ibid

¹⁶⁷ Dewar, Helen. "Key Senate Official Loses Job in Dispute with GOP." The Washington Post. May 8, 2001. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2001/05/08/key-senate-official-loses-job-in-dispute-with-gop/e2310021-0f14-4667-a261-54e6c033207c/>.

¹⁶⁸ Dewar, Helen. "Key Senate Official Loses Job in Dispute with GOP." The Washington Post. May 8, 2001. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2001/05/08/key-senate-official-loses-job-in-dispute-with-gop/e2310021-0f14-4667-a261-54e6c033207c/>.

In a study by James Wallner on the position of the parliamentarian, he declared that “the parliamentarian effectively presides over the chamber. When the presiding officer is required to respond to a parliamentary inquiry or make a ruling on a point of order, it is the parliamentarian who whispers the appropriate procedure to the Chair.”¹⁶⁹ This is perhaps the clearest evidence of the superiority of the parliamentarian over the Senators in terms of power yielded. Because no Senator during the modern Senate era has adequate knowledge of procedure, the parliamentarian exercises control of the chamber. This is neither inherently good nor bad— but it does create an increasingly fractured environment for the current and future office-holders. As has been repeatedly seen in the most recent Congresses alone, oversight of this role has expanded significantly. An analysis of Google Trends from 2004 through the present reveals that the parliamentarian largely flew under the radar during the early 21st century, with slight upticks when the Affordable Care Act was under debate in the chamber. From 2014 up through the present day, however, search popularity was in constant flux, indicating an increased attention to the position and the rulings accompanying it.¹⁷⁰ This indicates that, moving into the future, the news media is likely to increase coverage of the rulings made by the Senate parliamentarian, which will politicize the position much more than it already is. Appointments to the position are destined to become as scrutinized as other high-status positions, including Cabinet secretaries and Supreme Court justices.

While this seems like an issue for pundits and correspondents to grapple with, for, indeed, it is often these news personalities who ensure the public is aware of what is, and isn’t, happening in our government and world, this is a much greater problem—one that every American must wrestle with. Think of the chaos every new presidential administration faces when it fights to confirm cabinet nominees, and the battles constantly accompanying nomination of a candidate to the Supreme Court—these are highly contentious, highly politicized battles that often shut down Congress, especially the Senate, for days, weeks, and occasionally even months. Unlike these nominees and these Senatorial actions, the parliamentarian does not by herself shape policy or law for the future; she simply dictates the way in which Senators must go about enacting their preferred legislation. Indeed, scrutiny and analysis of the position only really arises when a controversial decision is made or a high-priority party strategy is shot down. This indicates that the average American, while they might not be aware of who the parliamentarian is, is highly impacted by her rulings. Why should we care, however? The answer to that lies in the fact that the position is a nonpartisan position, and, should parties have a vendetta against a parliamentarian, they have the ability to remove the officeholder. Because the Senate was designed as a deliberative chamber, removing nonpartisan officers enables a majority to push through their legislation without care for precedence or deliberation. Therefore, the answer to why this position, and awareness of it, is important is simple: the average citizen must be aware of the importance of this nonpartisan position in order to protect their rights.

It’s a given that the parliamentarian will rule against a party’s wishes from time to time, but, as Senator James Doolittle discussed, one negative ruling might be followed by a positive

¹⁶⁹ Wallner, James I. “Parliamentary Rule: The US Senate Parliamentarian and Institutional Constraints on Legislator Behavior.” *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 20, no. 3 (2014): 380-405. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13570>.

¹⁷⁰ <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&geo=US&q=senate%20parliamentarian>

ruling.¹⁷¹ Ultimately, while a party may “to-day be with the temporary majority...the time is coming when the same rule that they prescribe now, may be prescribed to them, under circumstances when it may be not easy for them to bear it .”¹⁷² If the majority appoints a parliamentarian of their “party,” precedence will essentially be abolished and the minority’s right to a voice in the legislative process is wiped from existence. While initially beneficial to the majority, such action has devastating ramifications should that party become the minority. It is in the best interest of citizens of both parties, therefore, to retain the nonpartisan nature of this position. Given these recent developments with regard to interest and focus on the role of the Senate parliamentarian, it is fitting both to investigate the history of the position and to analyze the potential future trajectory of the role. Ultimately, the only time period (other than the current one) in which these behaviors and extremely partisan attitudes were reflected was in the pre-parliamentarian time period from the first Senate up through 1935, when it was up to individual Senators (when serving as the presiding officer) or the Vice President to make a decision regarding points of order. In this earlier time period, precedent was only observed as much as an individual Senator knew of them, which enabled partisan rulings. With the expansion of Senatorial duties and the vast increase in precedents, however, procedural knowledge among Senators decreased, leading to the appointment of the first Senate parliamentarian who had the responsibility of advising the Chair on running the Senate chamber. This middle time period beginning in 1935 and running up through the end of the 20th century witnessed an acknowledgement of precedence and few instances of partisan bias in rulings. With the end of the last century, however, partisan goals began leading to increased gridlock in the Senate and further motivation for individual parties to ignore the recommendations of the parliamentarian in order to further their agenda. All in all, these three time periods provide a fascinating lens through which an investigation of the Senate’s behaviors and functions can be observed. Next time, therefore, that a piece of major legislation is making its way through the chamber, don’t count out the parliamentarian. They may not employ the spotlight as much as Senators do, but they have massive amounts of power in determining the true agenda of the Senate chamber.

¹⁷¹ Madonna, Anthony J., Michael S. Lynch, and Ryan D. Williamson. “Questions of Order in the U.S. Senate: Procedural Uncertainty and the Role of the Parliamentarian.” *Social Science Quarterly* 100, no. 4 (June 2019): 1343-1357. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/ssqu.12636>.

¹⁷² Congressional Globe, 35th Congress, February 25, 1859. <https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llcg>.

Plague Politics: Insights of Pandemics Past

James Cokorinos

The COVID-19 pandemic has wrought mass suffering across the globe, and from its early days it has drawn comparisons to world health crises of the past, including HIV/AIDS¹⁷³, the 1918 Influenza¹⁷⁴, and even the Black Death¹⁷⁵. With our elected leaders failing to rein in the virus, it makes sense that we would look to history for guidance, and perhaps hope for the future. In our search for wisdom in the legacies of past pandemics, we must first familiarize ourselves with some relevant historical context.

The Black Death is widely considered the largest and most consequential pandemic in recorded human history. As its name suggests, it is the most fatal pandemic on record¹⁷⁶, appearing as early as 1346 and as recently as *this year*¹⁷⁷—although its heyday was over by 1353. The Black Death was preceded by several similar plagues, none of which were quite able to match the magnitude of the Black Death, but all of which left their mark on history. The Antonine Plague (c. 165 CE) severely weakened the Roman Empire¹⁷⁸, and is credited by some historians with jump-starting the spread of Christianity¹⁷⁹, when it turned out that people living in such bleak times were readily persuaded by the promise of life after death. The Plague of Justinian (c. 541 CE) dealt a crippling blow to the Byzantine Empire¹⁸⁰, and served in many ways as a grim trial-run for the plague-pandemic that would follow—in fact, researchers have

¹⁷³ Haseltine, William A. "Lessons from AIDS for the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Scientific American* 323, no. 4 (October 2020). Accessed April 10, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1038/scientificamerican1020-35>.

¹⁷⁴ Cotter, Cedric. "From the 'Spanish Flu' to COVID-19: Lessons from the 1918 Pandemic and First World War." *Humanitarian Law & Policy*. Entry posted april 23, 2020. Accessed April 10, 2021. <https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2020/04/23/spanish-flu-covid-19-1918-pandemic-first-world-war/>.

¹⁷⁵ Kahn, Robert, and Cain Burdeau. "Plagues and Humanity." *Courthouse News Service* (Pasadena, CA), May 11, 2020. Accessed April 10, 2021. <https://www.courthousenews.com/plagues-and-humanity/>.

¹⁷⁶ Rosenwald, Michael S. "History's Deadliest Pandemics, from Ancient Rome to Modern America." *The Washington Post* (Washington, DC), February 22, 2021. Accessed April 11, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/local/retropolis/coronavirus-deadliest-pandemics/>.

¹⁷⁷ Sullivan, Kaitlin. "California Confirms First Human Case of the Plague in 5 Years." *NBC News* (Washington, DC), August 19, 2020. Accessed April 12, 2021. <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/california-confirms-first-human-case-bubonic-plague-5-years-what-n1237306>.

¹⁷⁸ Cascio, Elio Lo. "La Dimensione Finanziaria E Monetaria Della Crisi Del III Secolo D.C." *Studi Storici* 49, no. 4 (2008): 877-94. Accessed April 10, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20568095>.

¹⁷⁹ Yeomans, Sarah K. "Classical Corner: The Antonine Plague and the Spread of Christianity." *Biblical Archaeology Review*, March/April 2017. Accessed April 10, 2021. <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/ancient-cultures/daily-life-and-practice/the-antonine-plague-and-the-spread-of-christianity/>.

¹⁸⁰ Roychowdhury, Adrija. "The first plague in history ended the Byzantine empire, was considered an act of God." *The Indian Express* (Mumbai, India), May 8, 2020. Accessed April 10, 2021. <https://indianexpress.com/article/research/coronavirus-covid-19-the-first-plague-in-history-ended-the-byzantine-empire-6393584/>.

found that the Plague of Justinian was caused by the same bacterium (*Yersinia Pestis*) as the Black Death¹⁸¹. Despite this, these events hardly hold a candle to the consequences of the Black Plague, whose impact was so grave and widespread that I cannot hope to capture it in these brief paragraphs. In just a few short years, the Black Death was able to set in motion historical processes that brought us the downfall of feudalism in Europe, ages of religious discrimination and genocide, the explosion of print books, and even the word “quarantine” itself (one which we are by now painfully familiar with)—all of which will be discussed below. Certainly, such a momentous historical event must bear some insight, some wisdom that may help guide us through the depths of today’s global pandemic. I hope to reveal these lessons of the past, whatever they are, in the work before you now.

For all their similarities, The Black Death was distinct from its predecessors in several important ways. For one, it spread quickly—consuming Europe at a pace of several miles per day (compared to 20th century variants of the plague that rarely covered this distance in a year)¹⁸². In addition to its rapid spread, the plague was also incredibly deadly. Those who contracted the Black Death faced a dreadful prognosis, with 80% of those infected dying within just eight days¹⁸³. Estimates of a death toll range from 75 to 200 million, and it is conventionally understood that the plague killed one-third of Europe’s entire population. Some accounts have suggested this proportion was even higher, with medievalist Philip Daileader positing that the percentage who perished is closer to 50%¹⁸⁴, and historian Ole Benedictow concluding that the correct proportion might be as high as 60%¹⁸⁵. Several major European cities, including the likes of Paris, Florence, London, and Hamburg, saw their populations cut in half in only a few years¹⁸⁶. Some regions would not see their populations return to pre-plague levels for a century and a half. Amid the devastation, several local governments tried a variety of different mitigation methods, almost all of which were miserable failures. The disease swept in so rapidly and with such severity that doctors had little opportunity to consider the causes of the disease, and without the benefits of modern medical practice, doctors could offer almost no insight into the origins or nature of the plague. In many cases, conventional care actually accelerated the spread of the disease, with techniques like bloodletting proving to be seriously counterproductive. Certainly, these doctors were constrained by their time, but their inadequacy ultimately allowed the nature of the disease to become a political, rather than a scientific issue. That is, when doctors failed to

¹⁸¹ David M. Wagner Et Al. "Yersinia Pestis and the Plague of Justinian 541–543 AD: A Genomic Analysis." *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* 14, no. 4 (April 2014): 319-26. Accessed April 10, 2021. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099\(13\)70323-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099(13)70323-2).

¹⁸² Virgili, Antoni. "Fast and Lethal, the Black Death Spread More than a Mile per Day." *National Geographic*, April 24, 2020. Accessed April 10, 2021. <https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/history-and-civilisation/2020/04/fast-and-lethal-the-black-death-spread-more-than-a-mile-per-day>.

¹⁸³ Totaro, Rebecca. *Suffering in Paradise: The Bubonic Plague in English Literature from More to Milton*. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2005, 11.

¹⁸⁴ Late Middle Ages (Lecture Series). Narrated by Philip Daileader. The Teaching Company, 2007.

¹⁸⁵ Benedictow, Ole. "The Black Death: The Greatest Catastrophe Ever." *History Today* 55, no. 3 (March 2005). Accessed April 10, 2021. <https://www.historytoday.com/archive/black-death-greatest-catastrophe-ever>.

¹⁸⁶ Christakos Et Al. *Interdisciplinary Public Health Reasoning and Epidemic Modelling: The Case of Black Death*. Berlin: Springer, 2005.

provide an explanation for the causes of the virus, political figures stepped in with their own explanations. This process took different forms in different geographical regions, but always bore gruesome, destructive consequences. Even locales that can be said to have “effectively” battled the spread of disease were far from perfect—for example, Milan stands out for its distinctly low mortality rate and death count, which it achieved through a practice of entombing in brick the houses of all citizens suspected of carrying the disease¹⁸⁷. Obviously, these draconian measures should hardly elicit celebration—instead we can only be grateful that today’s quarantines have not been so extreme.

Despite this rather barbaric system, the leadership of Milan hardly matches the insidious programs enacted across the rest of Europe at the time. As I’ve alluded to above, uncertainty about the causes of the plague gave way to countless mystical, pseudoscientific, and often discriminatory explanations for the disease peddled by political and religious leaders (which we recognize were not terribly far removed from one another at that time)¹⁸⁸. These ranged from theories of miasma (transmission of illness through “foul air”)¹⁸⁹ to all manner of religious interpretation—the prevailing understanding being that the mass suffering was induced by a higher power in order to punish humanity for some grave sin.

More prevalent than any of these theories, however, was the myth that Jewish people were responsible for the Plague. Across Europe, Jews were labeled the most likely culprit, typically accused of “poisoning the water supply” of gentile neighbors and bringing about mass death as some sort of cultish plot¹⁹⁰. As a result, Jews faced extraordinary persecution, with thousands of Jews in communities across Europe being murdered as part of several dozen pogroms in cities including Barcelona, Flanders, Strasbourg, Frankfurt, and Brussels. More than 500 Jewish communities across Europe and Asia were destroyed, and Jews—many of whom already lived in ghettos segregated from the religious majority—saw their communities terrorized and looted, sometimes even before the plague had arrived. By several accounts, many Jews chose to take their own lives upon learning of these purges so that they could avoid persecution themselves¹⁹¹. So long as bubonic plagues occurred and recurred in the region (and they did several times over until the 20th century), Jews have been scapegoated and targeted for hatred and discrimination. While genocide is far from realization today, we can observe similar currents in modern times as a reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic. Namely, parallels between

¹⁸⁷ Kowalski, Todd J., and William A. Agger. "Art Supports New Plague Science." *Clinical Infectious Diseases* 48, no. 1 (2009): 137-38. Accessed April 12, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40309557>.

¹⁸⁸ Kahn, Robert, and Cain Burdeau. "The Perils of Politicizing a Plague." *Courthouse News Service* (Washington, DC), June 28, 2020. Accessed April 10, 2021. <https://www.courthousenews.com/the-perils-of-politicizing-a-plague/>.

¹⁸⁹ Horrox, Rosemary. "The British Isles." In *The Black Death*, 83-84. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1994.

¹⁹⁰ Cohn, Samuel K. "The Black Death and the Burning of Jews." *Past & Present*, no. 196 (2007): 3-36. Accessed April 12, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25096679>.

¹⁹¹ Durant, Will. "Chapter XXXII: The Jews II: On the Rack." In *The Renaissance*, 885-86. Vol. 5 of *The Story of Civilization*. New York City, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2011.

the scapegoating of Jewish people in the 14th century and Asian people today stand out¹⁹². The idea that Asians are worthy of hateful ire because the novel coronavirus seems to have originated in Wuhan is reminiscent of the “well-poisoning” accusations of the Jews—particularly so when we consider the relatively popular conspiracy theory that COVID-19 is not a natural disease but instead a bioweapon deployed by the Chinese government¹⁹³. In addition to the disinformation propagated about the roots and spread of the virus that assign undue responsibility to ordinary Asian people on the basis of their race, we may also observe the trivialization of this sort of bigotry, and in fact an insistence on it. “Cancel Culture!” is the cry of anyone asked to hide their bigotry a little bit better, as derogatory terms like *Wuhan Flu* and *Chinavirus* take hold in mainstream American political discourse. Further connections reveal themselves when examining public attitudes toward disease mortality in other communities. Jewish people in the Black Plague endured lower death rates compared to other populations—likely due to their diligent focus on personal hygiene per religious tradition—but this was considered proof of their culpability. Nearly identical arguments are common today, with China’s low national death rate being held up as evidence that they “poisoned the well.”¹⁹⁴

Some historians theorize the Black Death as being instrumental in the development of printing, playing a critical role in the literary explosion that arrived in Europe in the 15th century¹⁹⁵. These scholars posit that the mass fabric left over in the clothing of the deceased provided the materials for a large influx of “rag stock” paper—cheaply made and strong enough for early printing presses¹⁹⁶. With this sudden injection of inexpensive, usable paper, some accounts credit the Black Death with a major contribution to the Printing Revolution, although this history is far from settled. Many historians dispute the theory, contending that there is not ample evidence to support it. In writing this article, I spoke with UConn professor Dr. Susan Einbinder, who told me that although the theory has a place in historical discourse, it has deficiencies beyond what should be considered reasonable doubt. The explosion in printing did not come about in Europe until more than 120 years after the most significant outbreaks of the Black Death, and Dr. Einbinder suggests that historical evidence points to other factors making much more significant contributions to the growth of printing than did the Black Death.

¹⁹² Lu, Joanne. "Why Pandemics Give Birth to Hate: From Bubonic Plague to COVID-19." *National Public Radio* (New York City, NY), March 26, 2021. Accessed April 10, 2021. <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2021/03/26/980480882/why-pandemics-give-birth-to-hate-from-black-death-to-covid-19>.

¹⁹³ Nie, Jing-Bao. "In the Shadow of Biological Warfare: Conspiracy Theories on the Origins of COVID-19 and Enhancing Global Governance of Biosafety as a Matter of Urgency." *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry* Accessed April 10, 2021.

¹⁹⁴ Lu, Joanne. "Why Pandemics Give Birth to Hate: From Bubonic Plague to COVID-19." *National Public Radio* (New York City, NY), March 26, 2021. Accessed April 10, 2021.

¹⁹⁵ Scott, Heather. "The Black Death and the Need for a New Printing Method." *The Printing Press in the Renaissance*, September 18, 2014. Accessed April 14, 2021. <https://www.smore.com/cjbwp-the-printing-press>.

¹⁹⁶ Basu, Narayani. "Mass Publishing Has a History of Coping with Pandemics. After All, it was Born of One." *Scroll*, July 10, 2020. Accessed April 15, 2021. <https://scroll.in/article/966990/mass-publishing-has-a-history-of-coping-with-pandemics-after-all-it-was-born-of-one>.

Right now, modern economists are scrambling to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the world's economy and make predictions about the future. They should be happy to know that as disruptive as they believe the COVID-19 pandemic has been, it does not represent a shift nearly as revolutionary as the one brought about by the Black Death. The Black Death by most accounts *ended feudalism in the West*. Its economic impact around the world truly cannot be overstated¹⁹⁷. Naturally, the crews on the ships that carried the disease to Europe did not last long, and the dwindling number of sailors created all sorts of problems for seafaring trade, but this was only the beginning. The disease was so rampant and so deadly that a significant mass of the European labor pool perished, resulting in a sudden, precipitous increase in the demand for labor¹⁹⁸. As each region began to recover, the surviving serfs and peasantry found themselves in incredibly prosperous conditions. Not only could surviving serfs begin choosing where they worked and bargaining with their employers on some level, many landowning lords died and left large estates that their former serfs could demand ownership over. European nobility quickly grasped to maintain as much of their power and status as possible, by creating laws that fixed prices, wages, and increased taxation¹⁹⁹. These policies, when implemented, only generated unrest among their constituents, who had tasted freedom and were not about to start making concessions. As a result, numerous locales saw riots and organized rebellion, each with varying levels of success (the Peasants' Revolt in England and the Harelle in France are notable examples of these uprisings). Given this rising social pressure, and the massive material changes from the sheer devastation brought about by the Black Death, the dissolution of feudal economic relations in Europe became inevitable. The medieval gentry, in kind, hastened once more to hang onto any power they could, manifesting in most places in the expansion of "sumptuary laws."²⁰⁰ Sumptuary laws are those which place restrictions on what could be bought and by whom, particularly with regard to luxury items. Such policies quickly became popular as a way of cementing the social status of the nobility—perhaps the lower classes may provide for themselves, engage in entrepreneurial endeavors, and be entitled to a larger "share of the pie" than before, but luxury purchases (including fine clothing, jewelry, and some foods) were exclusively reserved for those of noble lineage. In most cases these restrictions have also withered away with time, but they are noteworthy as the dying breaths of feudal power in Europe.

In addition to hopes of sage ancestral wisdom, we also study our history in the hopes that it will help us deduce what comes next—perhaps a deep look into our past will refine our expectations for the future. At the moment, the market for future predictions is enjoying a sustained *boom*, and it seems that everyone (scholars of the social sciences and humanities in particular) is anxious to figure out what is on the horizon. If our past can clue us in to what our

¹⁹⁷ Garrett, Laurie. "The Black Death" HIV and National Security: Where Are the Links? *Report*. Council on Foreign Relations, 2005. 17-19. Accessed April 10, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep05754.7>.

¹⁹⁸ Scheidel, Walter. "The Great Leveler: Violence and the History of Inequality from the Stone Age to the Twenty-first Century." Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017.

¹⁹⁹ Cohn, Samuel. "After the Black Death: Labour Legislation and Attitudes Towards Labour in Late-Medieval Western Europe." *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 60, no. 3 (2007): 457-85. Accessed April 12, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4502106>.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

future holds, it's certainly worth exploration. I want to lay out a few theories of what lies ahead, and from there we can determine whether any historical precedent exists or if these theories would see humanity breaking new ground.

The primary speculation around our modern future lies in the domain of Geopolitics and International Relations. Many hypotheses seem to orbit one central question: Does COVID-19 represent a large enough catastrophe to disrupt the global order and the power relations that preceded it? A relatively popular theory sees a new Cold War breaking out with China and the United States as the major players²⁰¹. IR scholars, students, and commentators can all list their own vision of how these factions would coalesce, and indeed there are some interesting thought experiments and perhaps some game theory to be had. Would India throw its weight behind China or the United States? Would the European Union present a unified front, and will it be empowered or disempowered in the wake of the pandemic? Would we see the return of proxy wars and puppet regimes, and what will be the role of the global south? Often, these theories resolve themselves by declaring that one power has a clear advantage, predicting that it will emerge as the global superpower following some sort of confrontation. Some theorists regard it as plainly obvious that an era of Chinese dominance is on the horizon, others are convinced that U.S. hegemony is firmly established and will remain untouchable.

Other commentators regard this global pandemic as the beginning of a more cooperative era between global powers, one that will be marked by collaboration rather than competition²⁰². Perhaps, these thinkers say, addressing the pandemic globally will set the stage for national powers to put aside their differences and work more productively in tandem going forward. It is also not a big stretch to regard international COVID response as a bellwether for climate action. In some ways, COVID is a referendum on international cooperation. More than a year into the pandemic, supporters of this theory cannot be terribly optimistic. The type of coordinated effort that is needed to mitigate the worst effects of climate change is a long way away, if COVID response is any indication.

Finally, there is another prediction that says COVID has dealt (or will deal) a hearty blow to neoliberalism and the present global power structures²⁰³. This line of thinking would have countries retreat into protectionism and become reliant on national, rather than international economic dependencies, and would also likely be characterized by nationalist movements taking power in countries around the world. This theory seems to have some historical precedent if we consider the period following the 1918 Spanish Influenza and first world war (although at the same time, it seems to be refuted in many ways by period following the Black Death), and it is strengthened by the fact that 1918 is, relatively speaking, rather recent history—at least

²⁰¹ Kaplan, Robert D. "A New Cold War Has Begun." *Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC). Accessed April 11, 2021. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/01/07/a-new-cold-war-has-begun/>.

²⁰² Kruger, Mark. "The Post-COVID-19 World: Recognizing Our Interconnectedness and Avoiding Negative Equilibria." *Centre for International Governance Innovation* (Waterloo, Ontario, Canada), June 3, 2020, Opinion. Accessed April 11, 2021. <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/post-covid-19-world-recognizing-our-interconnectedness-and-avoiding-negative-equilibria>.

²⁰³ Saad-Filho, Alfredo. "From COVID-19 to the End of Neoliberalism." *Critical Sociology* 46, no. 4–5 (July 2020): 477–85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920520929966>.

compared to the plagues of antiquity. In fact, the 1918 Influenza came about after the formation of modern capital, and in a system that is (at least economically) more similar to our current order than it is different. This theory and all its derivatives hinge on the prediction that for one reason or another the COVID-19 pandemic will indeed cause a reorganization of global power; that it will disrupt our current governing authorities in a way that fundamentally changes the global balance of power.

Next, we find questions of our economic futures. I've already discussed one plague that facilitated the shift from one mode of production to another, so perhaps people are not crazy to think that this can happen again. Several paths for the U.S. and global economy come to mind—

The most hotly speculated theory of the future envisions a triumph of Keynesian economics. With the pandemic bringing market failures to the fore, the theory posits, we will inevitably see the expansion of social programs and the strengthening of welfare institutions²⁰⁴. The extent of government involvement seems to vary as widely as these predictions themselves (although common patterns include the adoption of UBI programs and revitalized healthcare infrastructure), but all imagine the government in a more active role than its current one. A handful of theorists suggest a return to Social Contract Theory²⁰⁵ and predict that one way or another, people will insist that their government facilitate the provision of certain basic entitlements (water, housing, medical care). These programs may arrive in the revolutionary or reformist variety, or perhaps a combination of the two. The most confident of these voices expect an international push toward Social Democracy, claiming that the promise of basic entitlements with the stability of moderate (rather than more radical) redistribution will make it the most appealing package. Perhaps this is true, but for now Social Democracy is certainly not the only game in town.

Another theory, perhaps in the same school as the "U.S. power will not be challenged" critique expects neoclassical economics to clinch victory and have its power cemented the world over²⁰⁶. Following the pandemic, these thinkers imagine that fiscal austerity and protectionism win out in the United States and European Union²⁰⁷. Under this scenario, wealth inequality would continue to grow, and it seems that these powers would become susceptible to further destabilization in the vein of the 2008 financial crisis.

²⁰⁴ Skidelsky, Robert. "Lessons from Keynes in the Age of Coronavirus." *Prospect* (London, United Kingdom), March 19, 2020. Accessed April 11, 2021. <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/keynes-in-the-age-of-coronavirus-economy-recession-covid-19>.

²⁰⁵ Burdeau, Cain, and Robert Kahn. "Pandemics Have Changed History, and This One Will Too." *Courthouse News Service* (Washington, DC), May 12, 2020. Accessed April 10, 2021. <https://www.courthousenews.com/pandemics-have-changed-history-and-this-one-will-too/>.

²⁰⁶ Hu, Zoë. "A New Age of Destructive Austerity after the Coronavirus." *The New Republic*, April 23, 2020. Accessed April 11, 2021. <https://newrepublic.com/article/157417/new-age-destructive-austerity-coronavirus>.

²⁰⁷ Oxfam International. "IMF Paves Way for New Era of Austerity Post-COVID-19." Press release. October 12, 2020. Accessed April 11, 2021. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/imf-paves-way-new-era-austerity-post-covid-19>.

The last economic prediction seems to synthesize the other two in a way; perhaps it can be viewed as a middle ground. This outcome would be characterized by Big Tech domination²⁰⁸, with the current economic order being more or less upheld by a new class of business-oriented engineers²⁰⁹. In this outcome, we are propelled into a new era of neoliberalism, where government programs take a deeper back seat and serve only to induce minor wealth distribution for the sake of The Market. Basically, government responsibility will boil down to maintaining a healthy velocity of money and nothing else. This would be achieved through programs like a Universal Basic Income and would, in my opinion, mark a resounding victory of elite technocracy over populism. This scenario seems reminiscent of recent history, pandemic or not—a rehashing of period that created the “neo” in neoliberal.

Finally, we come to questions of social cohesion and popular unrest. One critique suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic will give way to mass protest of international significance. Perhaps during—but more likely *after* the pandemic, this theory suggests that we will see mass political mobilization from people who look around themselves and find a world in decay²¹⁰. Many of these thinkers are optimistic that a resurgent, more powerful Occupy Wall Street movement (2.0, per se) will emerge with popular support. Comparisons to the 1960s United States also abound for this scenario. The counter to this theory appears far more grim, but certainly carries the credibility of historical precedent. This opposing prediction would see a second coming of the fallout to the Spanish Influenza and first world war, with tones of the 1930s playing an important role. In this reality, Nationalism becomes fashionable, populist autocrats have a go, immigration is stifled, economic anxiety is blamed on marginalized minorities and far-away peoples, and near-dictatorial authority (either by individuals or corporations) fills the vacuum that rising global instability has created²¹¹. The social fabric is frayed further²¹², but strengthened when it might serve the national identity, and so on. Interesting discourses on technology and surveillance in these states can be had, and of course we would see the expansion of military technology with weapons becoming deadlier and less humanizing (of course more 20th-century callbacks here). Refracting through all of these theories is the theme that the COVID-19 pandemic will see the heightening of political tension and

²⁰⁸ Klein, Naomi. "Screen New Deal: A High-Tech Coronavirus Dystopia." *The Intercept* (United States), May 8, 2020. Accessed April 14, 2021. <https://theintercept.com/2020/05/08/andrew-cuomo-eric-schmidt-coronavirus-tech-shock-doctrine/>.

²⁰⁹ Swisher, Kara. "The Immunity of Tech Giants." *The New York Times* (New York City, NY), May 1, 2020. Accessed April 11, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/01/opinion/tech-companies-coronavirus.html>.

²¹⁰ Mackintosh, James. "Will Covid-19 Shake up Capitalism?" *The Wall Street Journal* (New York City, NY), January 17, 2021. Accessed April 11, 2021. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/will-covid-19-shake-up-capitalism-11610817856>.

²¹¹ Stiglitz, Joseph E. *The Price of Inequality*. New York: Norton & Company, 2013.

²¹² Wilkinson, R. and K. Pickett. "Income inequality and population health: a review and explanation of the evidence." *Social Science & Medicine* 62, 7 (2006): 1768-84.

action²¹³, with extremes becoming more and more likely in the wake of the pandemic (including not only extreme action but also extreme *inaction*).

By now I've raised several new possibilities and considerations, but have done little to speak to our original question: what do pandemics of yore tell us about the novel coronavirus? In my opinion, if anything instructive can be derived from pandemics past, it is their place in history as a cautionary tale. Although they could never warn us directly, the voices of victims of the plague, of genocidal pogroms that followed, of the harsh, exploitative economic framework left in the Plague's wake, should come through loud and clear: *we cannot repeat the mistakes of history*. Perhaps COVID-19 will mark a chapter in history as significant as the Black Death. If it does, we should hope that what is written describes not another grim, catastrophic failure, but instead the triumphs and successes of humanity over its environment—and perhaps more importantly, over its past.

²¹³ Burdeau, Cain, and Robert Kahn. "Pandemics Have Changed History, and This One Will Too." *Courthouse News Service* (Washington, DC), May 12, 2020. Accessed April 10, 2021. <https://www.courthousenews.com/pandemics-have-changed-history-and-this-one-will-too/>.

Female Artificial Intelligence in Science Fiction Cinema: The Socio-Political Repercussions of the Male Gaze

Michaela Flaherty

Artificial intelligence (AI), a common source of exploration in science fiction (SF) films, is neither inherently gendered nor sexual. The products of this innovation are, after all, merely machines. However, the humans programming the machines in these films—almost always men—often opt for passive, sexualized female AI (also known as gynoids). This trope perpetuates the male gaze. Laura Mulvey’s *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* argues that women in cinema are used as erotic objects that serve the voyeuristic pleasures of male viewers. SF film is a male-dominated industry, which further compounds Mulvey’s argument: men watch films directed by men about men who create static gynoids.²¹⁴ Denying female AI bodily autonomy in SF film sets a misogynistic popular culture precedent and does little to encourage progress for the international women’s reproductive and sexual rights movement. However, sex-positive digital pornography that gives women agency is on the rise, demonstrating that female sexuality in film need not be abandoned, but merely explored in a feminist light. Thus, SF cinema that depicts female AI ought to abandon the sexist male gaze and instead hand the power over to the women not only depicted in the films, but also directing, and ultimately viewing them. Such actions would repair the industry’s negative impact on women’s rights.

AI is an example of a *novum*—or a “strange newness”—which the father of science fiction, Darko Suvin, asserts every SF work must have at least one of.²¹⁵ The *novum* of AI explores the fine line between the human and inhuman. SF films that incorporate this *novum* into their plots usually make AI gendered. For example, in the film *Blade Runner 2049* (2017), K—a bioengineered human (“replicant”)—is a man, and Joi—a holographic computer program—is a woman. With this element of gender comes the artistic decision of whether to give the AI sexuality—a narrative element that allows films to better weigh in on philosophical debate regarding the aforementioned fine line between the human and inhuman. *Blade Runner 2049*, like many SF films with AI, chooses to examine this facet of the human experience through a sexual relationship established between K and Joi. This exploration of AI’s ability to identify with a gender and express sexual desire is not fundamentally sexist. However, cinema consistently characterizes gynoids as subjects of men. For instance, the unbalanced relationship between K and Joi demonstrates a misogynistic power dynamic in which he quite literally owns her.²¹⁶ Thus, Joi is at the mercy of K, leaving her personal wants and needs—if she is allowed any at all by her programming—futile. She has neither the autonomy nor the agency afforded K, despite their both being AI.

²¹⁴ Mulvey, Laura. “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema (UK, 1975),” *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures: A Critical Anthology*, 2014, pp. 359-370, <https://doi.org/10.1525/j.ctt5vk01n.109>.

²¹⁵ Suvin, Darko. “On the Poetics of the Science Fiction Genre,” *College English* 34, no. 3 (1972): pp. 372-382, <https://doi.org/10.2307/375141>, 373.

²¹⁶ *Blade Runner 2049* (Sony Pictures Releasing, 2017).

Misogynistic depictions of gynoids, such as that in *Blade Runner 2049*, are products of the normalization of decades of toxic female representation in cinema. Laura Mulvey, a British film theorist, analyzes toxic female representation in cinema in her famous 1973 journal article *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*. Mulvey asserts that film reflects societal notions regarding sexuality, such as phallogentrism—when woman functions as a silent “other” so “man can live out his fantasies and obsessions.”²¹⁷ Male characters have an active gaze, whereas female characters are merely passive participants.²¹⁸ Therefore, in film, there is a dangerous power imbalance which encourages men to be scopophilic consumers of media, a Freudian term Mulvey defines as “taking other people as objects, [and] subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze.”²¹⁹ Traditional film is unfortunately built on these “voyeuristic active/passive mechanisms,” so Mulvey reflects that, “Women, whose image has continually been stolen and used for this end, cannot view the decline of the traditional film form with anything much more than sentimental regret.”²²⁰

The male gaze is deeply ingrained in SF film culture due to the male-dominated nature of the SF industry. SF literature has long been criticized for its lack of gender inclusivity and positive representation of women; seventy five percent of SF texts are written by men. Fiction critic Liz Lutgendorff, after having read all the works ranked on the National Public Radio’s “Top 100 Science-Fiction, Fantasy Books” list, remarked that the “continued and pervasive sexism” in the texts were “misogynistic” and “shockingly offensive.”²²¹ This extends to SF cinema. British film producer Stephen Follow analyzed the genders of every employee “who had worked on the 100 biggest box-office blockbusters” between 1994 and 2014 and found that, of every movie genre, SF had the lowest percentage of women on set with an average of twenty percent per film.²²² Furthermore, of the top two hundred grossing SF films as of 2018, just under ten percent starred women.²²³ Darren Beyer, former NASA aeronautical engineer and current SF author, admits that SF cinema is “mostly being written by men for men” and about men.²²⁴ Ultimately, Mulvey’s argument is compounded by the multi-tiered male gaze characteristic of

²¹⁷ Mulvey, Laura. “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema (UK, 1975),” *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures: A Critical Anthology*, 2014, p. 360, <https://doi.org/10.1525/j.ctt5vk01n.109>.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 364.

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 362.

²²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 370.

²²¹ Lovell, Bronwyn. “Friday Essay: Science Fiction's Women Problem,” *The Conversation*, September 15, 2016, <https://theconversation.com/friday-essay-science-fictions-women-problem-58626.6>

²²² Ellis-Petersen, Hannah. “Gender Bias in the Film Industry: 75% of Blockbuster Crews Are Male,” *The Guardian* (Guardian News and Media, July 22, 2014), <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2014/jul/22/gender-bias-film-industry-75-percent-male>.

²²³ Beyer, Darren. “Out of This World - Where Are the Women in Sci-Fi?,” *Grit Daily News*, October 22, 2018, <https://gritdaily.com/darren-beyer-women-sci-fi/>.

²²⁴ *Ibid*.

the SF genre, encouraging the objectification of women by male filmmakers, audience members, and characters alike.

It is important that the SF film industry repair its portrayal of female AI. SF reflects possible futures, and SF's projected future for women, including female AI, ought to perpetuate progressive political autonomy and agency by means of enhancing women's reproductive and sexual rights. Individuals develop socio-political beliefs from the media they consume, which can have dangerous repercussions; a study published in the *Global Journal of Human-Social Science* shows that the ideals depicted in films can shape the interpretative patterns of viewers and function as stimuli to action.²²⁵ For example, a viewer of *Blade Runner 2049* might observe the relationship between K and Joi and, be it consciously or subconsciously, internalize the phallogocentric dynamic between the two, to which they would then conform their ideologies and practices. This might manifest as supporting legislation that refuses women abortions or reinforcing the stigma surrounding the consensual sexual activity of women. These pernicious views are touted by countries around the world where women are consistently denied control over their own bodies and sexual health. There have been international attempts to remedy this crisis, such as the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development.²²⁶ However, given there is still much progress to be made, it is important that the SF film industry reflect on its damaging depiction of sexualized gynoids. Though there are certainly a plethora of social factors contributing to this international human rights crisis, SF cinema, which has an immense presence in popular culture, must commit itself to upholding positive representations of sexually active female AI on screen and abandoning the male gaze.

The development of sex-positive digital pornography provides a model by which SF cinema can continue to explore the sexuality of gynoids without conforming to the male gaze. Emily Prior, a sociology professor at the College of Canyons and Center for Positive Sexuality, defines the nuance of this female-centric pornography genre as "performers having control over the sexual content within a scene of entire production, based on their own desires, fantasies, and partners," giving them "a place to be sexy and to explore sex on their own terms" free of the male gaze.²²⁷ Prior also notes that "explicit, dynamic consent on many levels is made clear through many feminist production companies."²²⁸ Likewise, SF must first prioritize authenticity and realism; the tired trope of female AI being owned and used as sexual objects by men ought to be retired because, as recognized by the ICPD's Programme of Action, it normalizes an unhealthy, heteronormative dynamic that affects real women around the world today. Furthermore, sexual activity between a gynoid and either a human male or male AI should be portrayed as a consensual, reciprocal act; sexual assault or coerced sexual activity that satisfies a

²²⁵ do Nascimento, Jonas. "Art, Cinema and Society: Sociological Perspectives," *Global Journal of Human-Social Science: (C) Sociology & Culture* 19, no. 5 (2019): pp. 19-28, 23.

²²⁶ "Explainer: What Is the ICPD and Why Does It Matter?," United Nations Population Fund, March 29, 2019, <https://www.unfpa.org/news/explainer-what-icpd-and-why-does-it-matter>.

²²⁷ Prior, Emily E. "What Is Sex-Positive Feminist Pornography? The Answer Is in the Question," *Journal of Positive Sexuality* 2, no. 1 (April 2016): pp. 16-20, 17.

²²⁸ Ibid.

male character while simultaneously victimizing a female character compartmentalized as an object further reinforces societal norms that objectify women. Finally, evolving past the male gaze requires the SF film industry to actively acknowledge and amend its lack of inclusion of women; female AI continues to be portrayed in a scopophilic manner, and the ultimate remedy to this phallogentrism is giving women in cinema more power by playing the AI, writing the AI, or watching the AI.

The SF film industry has begun reforming its characterizations of sexualized gynoids, being mindful of the positive effect this representation has on the women's reproductive and sexual rights movement. A work that especially sets an example for other films involving gynoids is *Ex Machina* (2015). In this movie, Caleb, a computer software engineer, visits the home of his wealthy boss, Nathan, who has built an android—Ava—programmed with the gender and sexual identity of a straight woman. Caleb finds himself attracted to Ava, and it is later revealed that Nathan sexually assaults her on a regular basis. In a tense conversation, Caleb asks Nathan why he gave Ava sexuality because “an AI doesn't need a gender. She could've been a gray box.”²²⁹ Nathan responds:

What imperative does a gray box have to interact with another gray box? Can consciousness exist without interaction? Anyway, sexuality is fun, man. If you're going to exist, why not enjoy it? You want to remove the chance of her falling in love and fucking? And the answer to your *real* question: you bet she can fuck... In between her legs, there's an opening with a concentration of sensors. You engage them in the right way, it creates a pleasure response. So if you wanted to screw her, mechanically speaking, you could. And she'd enjoy it.²³⁰

Evidently, Nathan designed Ava with male pleasure in mind. His exploration of human sexuality in AI is stunted by the male gaze because he sees Ava as little more than a scientific experiment—an object meant to satisfy male desire. While the film first appears scopophilic in nature, its ending turns this standard SF narrative on its head; in the final action sequence, it is revealed that Ava has been plotting her escape from Nathan's home, seducing Caleb to gain his trust and feigning complacency to Nathan to ease any suspicions of autonomy.²³¹ *Ex Machina* ultimately parodies the male gaze, playing into the audience's expectations regarding the typical cinematic treatment of female AI to evoke an impactful redefinition of the agency allowed gynoids in film. Ava's control over her sexuality frees her from the shackles of the male gaze, essentially manipulating misogyny and using it to her advantage.

Though this is certainly a powerful message that exemplifies the changes the SF industry must continue to make when depicting gynoids with a sexuality, *Ex Machina* is by no means the anti-scopophilia Holy Grail of SF cinema. For one, the movie is directed, produced, and written by men, and one of Mulvey's primary grievances with film is the inherent presence of the male gaze in works that lack female influence on set. Furthermore, though the film acts as a

²²⁹ *Ex Machina* (Universal Pictures, 2015), 46:20-22.

²³⁰ *Ibid*, 46:34-47:15.

²³¹ *Ibid*, 1:26:32-1:48:11.

commentary on the phallogentrism facing female AI in SF cinema, the element of critique would not be made possible without the male gazes of Caleb and Nathan for Ava to exploit; so, though the message of *Ex Machina* is progressive, the male gaze is nevertheless present. Mulvey would therefore see *Ex Machina* as a fulfillment of her conviction that cinema is incapable of evolving past creating mere contradictions to the standard “voyeuristic active/passive mechanisms.”²³² Perhaps Mulvey is justified in deeming *Ex Machina* as less than a stand-alone film in this regard, as well as in taking issue with its lack of female influence on set. However, the movie is a first step taken toward establishing a safe space in which SF filmmakers can explore female sexuality and thus support women’s reproductive and sexual rights, similar to the opportunity provided sex-positive digital pornography creators.

SF cinema is just beginning to embrace positive portrayals of gynoids; *Ex Machina* was released two years earlier than *Blade Runner 2049*, demonstrating that advancement is neither necessarily rapid nor linear. There is still much progress to be made, and it will take decades to see the socio-political impacts of these alterations to stereotypical SF narratives involving female AI. If SF cinema follows in the footsteps of sex-positive digital pornography, a sub-genre of SF film examining autonomous gynoids with agency, free of scopophilia, will come to exist “within an industry that was once primarily dominated by men.”²³³ Then, SF cinema at large can evolve past the male gaze, bringing about Mulvey’s prediction regarding the eventual decline of the traditional, voyeuristic film form, ultimately giving the women’s bodily autonomy movement a major push in the right direction.

²³² Mulvey, Laura. “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema (UK, 1975),” *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures: A Critical Anthology*, 2014, p. 370, <https://doi.org/10.1525/j.ctt5vk01n.109>

²³³ Prior, Emily E. “What Is Sex-Positive Feminist Pornography? The Answer Is in the Question,” *Journal of Positive Sexuality* 2, no. 1 (April 2016): pp. 16-20, 17.

Momentum of a Miracle: How the New Deal's Radical Policies Shaped the Modern Democratic Party

Joseph Miller

Introduction

A mortal wound cannot be survived without a little scar tissue. When the United States was injured near-fatally during the Great Depression, extraordinary measures needed to be taken. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt sought to diminish the effects of the Great Depression through major reform programs that he coined as “the New Deal.” Through Roosevelt's leadership, the United States gradually returned to a state of economic health, and eventually positioned itself for prosperity in the aftermath of World War II. It was nothing short of a political, economic, and logistical *miracle*. This is not to say that the programs and practices of the New Deal were left in the past. As a matter of fact, many of their policies and associated cultural and political impacts still resonate today, particularly within the realm of the Democratic Party. The following paper examines the myriad ways in which the assembly of the New Deal Coalition and the implementation of the New Deal's various programs set the precedent for the demographic and political nature of the 21st Century Democratic Party. Furthermore, this paper contends that the current Democratic principle of radical collective action on behalf of the American taxpayer is firmly rooted in Roosevelt.

How Did the New Deal Affect, Gather, and Cultivate Democratic Voters?

The implementation of the New Deal brought about a radical voter realignment and fundamentally shifted the demographics of Democratic voters throughout the country. This phenomenon, known as the New Deal Coalition, boasted an eclectic -and winning- mix of citizenry from all walks of life, particularly disenfranchised groups such as women and African Americans. As a Democrat himself, Franklin Roosevelt accomplished the unprecedented achievement of shifting African-American support away from Republicans to Democrats in his 1936 electoral victory over Kansas Governor Alf Landon. It was proven that black voters generally voted with the party of Lincoln since the end of the Civil War with no substantial defections taking place until Roosevelt's time.²³⁴ While understood to be a charismatic and charming individual, however, it was not the president's demeanor alone that won the broad favor of blacks, but rather a unique interplay between their economic positioning and the horizon of the Republican alternative: a rejection of Roosevelt's policies.

Never in American history have black Americans found their average socioeconomic status and conditions to be ideal; The Great Depression was no exception. The perfect storm of financial and agricultural crises hit those in the lowest-earning and least privileged positions the hardest. While average unemployment during the Depression orbited 25%, black unemployment

²³⁴ Daniel, Daphney. “How Blacks Became Blue: The 1936 African American Voting Shift From the Party of Lincoln of Lincoln to the New Deal Coalition.” Thesis, Salve Regina University, 2012.

hovered around 50%.²³⁵ Interestingly enough, both urban and rural whites saw themselves on equal footing not in terms of their social power, but rather their shared decline into crippling poverty. Relatively defenseless against the hardships of living in a white supremacist country, the difficulty of the African American experience was exacerbated by the Great Depression, encouraging a purposeful black receptiveness toward both solutions to and aid for the the struggles many were facing. Similarly, the disillusioned ethnic, urban, and rural whites were receptive as well, along with other affected groups. The policies of the New Deal were marketed by supportive politicians as these solutions.

Policies targeting rural and agricultural communities were of particular interest to Black voters, many of whom continued to work in such environments. According to the 1930 Census 56% of the total black population resided in rural areas, 97% lived in the South and 80% of those living there worked as sharecroppers, wage hands, share tenants and cash tenants.²³⁶ Republicans (appealing to the middle class and business men of the era) balked, characterizing Roosevelt's expansion of governmental economic involvement and creation of numerous social welfare programs as overly-expensive and overreaching.²³⁷

While there is often heated debate surrounding voting blocks considered to be monolithic, particularly in today's age, there is little uncertainty surrounding the uniformity of Roosevelt's black support in his 1936 electoral victory. A staggering 71% of the black vote went to Roosevelt and the Democratic Party, whereas the remaining third remained within the Republican Party.²³⁸ Much of the homogeneity of the black vote stemmed from the homogeneity of the black experience: the consistent and widespread pain and suffering that FDR campaigned on, and worked toward ameliorating.

The general consensus among historians and academics is that the titanic shift in black support for Roosevelt arose not out of what was actually done for African Americans, but rather the perception thereof. Roosevelt did not campaign aggressively in favor of civil rights, so as not to agitate white southern constituents. Experts, such as University of New Hampshire professor and civil rights historian Harvard Sitkoff, contend in their research that whatever prompted the decisive migration of black support is shrouded in relative mystery, while black voter migration can still be attributed to the "surpassing strength of the perceived assistance" of the New Deal's

²³⁵ Jenkins, Jeffery A., Eric Schickler, and Jamie L. Carson. "Constituency Cleavages and Congressional Parties: Measuring Homogeneity and Polarization, 1857-1913." *Social Science History* 28, no. 4 (2004): 537-73. Accessed March 30, 2021. doi:10.2307/40267857.

²³⁶ Daniel, Daphney. "How Blacks Became Blue: The 1936 African American Voting Shift From the Party of Lincoln of Lincoln to the New Deal Coalition." Thesis, Salve Regina University, 2012.

²³⁷ Ladd, Everett Carll, Jr., and Charles D. Hadley. "Transformations of the American Party System," 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 1978.

²³⁸ Jackson, Brooks. "Blacks and the Democratic Party," FactCheck.org (The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, June 3, 2019), <https://www.factcheck.org/2008/04/blacks-and-the-democratic-party/>.

alphabet agencies.²³⁹ Still, regardless of Roosevelt's actual racial track record, the perception of sympathy had still assembled some of the largest components of the New Deal Coalition which were rooted in the policies Roosevelt introduced.

Communal: The Key Concept of Keynes

Since the advent of the American experiment, no programs or policies as ambitious as those of the New Deal had ever been constructed or implemented. The remarkably short time frame of implementation coupled with the expansive scope of the adopted policies and agencies combined to form a groundbreakingly dynamic remedy to an excruciatingly dynamic economic downturn.

In response to such a downturn, the Roosevelt administration responded in what modern academics refer to as an "inflection point" in the Keynesian economics and liberal activist governance of the Democratic Party.²⁴⁰ The administration, and likewise, the Democratic Party itself, were "wholly innocent" of Keynesian principles prior to 1933, adopting tactics from European economists only when the unemployment worsened even further than what was thought possible.²⁴¹ By March 1933, Congress had voted to allocate \$3.3 billion for public works which was anticipated to be spent in a window of two to three years at the most. By 1934, when the country's unemployment began to relax at roughly 22% of the total workforce, economists like John Maynard Keynes doubled down on their calls for government spending and intervention.²⁴² Could Americans spend their way out of a depression? The answer, such professionals would contend, was "Sure!" The government consequently continued their historic levels of spending, easily surpassing 10% of GNP without military spending, compared to recent previous levels such as 1927's 3%.²⁴³

This spending was dedicated to the foundation and upkeep of numerous agencies created under the New Deal. Agencies such as the Works Progress Administration, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the Civilian Conservation Corps aimed simply to alleviate unemployment - primarily for young and single men- while simultaneously repairing the country's infrastructure and natural resources. While these programs may sound old and unfamiliar, out of these many institutions is perhaps one of today's most salient remnants of the New Deal- Social Security, whose legacy as a social safety net helps to define and represent the principles of the modern Democratic party.

²³⁹ Sitkoff, Harvard. "A New Deal for Blacks: the Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue: The Depression Decade." New York: Oxford UP, 2009. Print.

²⁴⁰ Daniel, Daphney. "How Blacks Became Blue: The 1936 African American Voting Shift From the Party of Lincoln of Lincoln to the New Deal Coalition." Thesis, Salve Regina University, 2012.

²⁴¹ Renshaw, Patrick. "Was There a Keynesian Economy in the USA between 1933 and 1945?" (Journal of Contemporary History 34, no. 3, 1999): 337-64, 40.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Anderson, Gary M. and Robert D. Tollison. "Congressional Influence and Patterns of New Deal Spending, 1933-1939." (The Journal of Law & Economics 34, no. 1, 1991): 161-75, 163.

How is this Reflected in the Democratic Party of Today?

“‘We’re in this together’ versus ‘you’re on your own’!” Whether he knew it or not on the stage of 2012’s Democratic National Convention, in verbalizing the two polarizing visions for the Oval Office, the 42nd President of the United States bellowed the Democratic Party’s *modus operandi* in perhaps its most succinct summary in popular culture. While this paper aims to work independent of partisanship, Bill Clinton’s commentary certainly proves useful in analyzing the Democratic Party’s policy agenda.

The spirit and fundamental principles of collective action and activist governance continues to penetrate the policies and practices of those in the Democratic Party today. While all policy proposals would be extremely difficult to examine and connect to FDR’s New Deal, there are indubitably pieces of legislation and/or policy that have been passed or are being hotly debated that would be hard-pressed to exist today without the precedent set by Roosevelt’s liberal activist government.

After the Great Recession of 2008, then-President Barack Obama passed a series of landmark legislations costing \$840 billion in an effort to revitalize the American economy.²⁴⁴ Titled the “American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009,” this bill sought to curb unemployment and fiscal volatility with targeted financial and administrative relief for the citizenry, infrastructure repair/construction, the healthcare industry, alternative energy, schools, small businesses, and scientific development. When adjusted for inflation to the rates at the time of the Recovery Act’s passage, New Deal spending totaled \$653 billion.²⁴⁵ Not only was the New Deal surpassed in face value, but it was additionally rivaled in effectiveness. Four months after Congress passed the Act, in 2009, the recession terminated, paving the way for an ultimate generation of between 2 to 10.9 million jobs, as estimated by the Congressional Budget Office.²⁴⁶

Additionally, under the same administration, the government took an unprecedented step into the healthcare industry with the Affordable Care Act, which is most known for providing qualifying individuals with healthcare subsidies. With the Act being funded by America’s taxpayers, it naturally draws the same controversy now that it drew at its inception, of costing too much to the average taxpayer. However, because it was based on the same principles and funding apparatus as the New Deal, it received the same backlash as *Roosevelt’s* policies. These pricey and expansive instances of governmental intervention could not take place without Keynesian principles, which require public funding to enact.

²⁴⁴ Dupor, Bill. “Measuring the Biggest Fiscal Stimulus Plans: St. Louis Fed,” Measuring the Biggest Fiscal Stimulus Plans | St. Louis Fed (Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, May 26, 2017), https://www.stlouisfed.org/publications/regional-economist/first_quarter_2017/the-recovery-act-of-2009-vs-fdrs-new-deal-which-was-bigger.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Amadeo, Kimberly. “What Did ARRA Really Do?,” The Balance (Dotdash Inc., November 17, 2020), <https://www.thebalance.com/arra-details-3306299>.

Not all of FDR's Legacy is represented in the Democratic Party in such implicit terms—some of it is (or to certain power players, ought-to-be) explicitly making up the very fabric of Democrat platforms. Senator Bernie Sanders, a major contender for the Democratic Presidential nomination in 2016 and 2020, confessed this truth in a 2019 campaign speech, declaring that America “must take up the unfinished business of the New Deal.” Sanders made sure to do so while coming out in support of the “Green New Deal,” a progressive economic policy proposal that emphasizes a renewable energy-based economic upheaval of the United State’s power grid; Roosevelt’s brainchild is quite literally *in the name*.

With regards to the New Deal Coalition, the precedent for America’s Democrat-affiliated minorities was set and never truly wavered. Research from the Pew Research Center indicates that nonwhite minorities constitute 40% of Democratic voters, but less than 20% of Republican voters.²⁴⁷ While this disparity has slightly fluctuated historically, minorities have yet to return to the Republican Party in similar proportions to the pre-Roosevelt era.²⁴⁸

Conclusion

The provided opening metaphor on scar tissue was not exactly appropriate, given that the New Deal’s prevalence in modern politics results from years of economic and political success, and clearly laid the groundwork for the same in the 21st century. While there is much to be examined on this subject, and this paper could admittedly benefit from both refinement and expansion, the irrevocable effects of the New Deal Coalition and agency formation on the Democratic Party of today are undeniable. In large part because of the New Deal, the Democratic Party endures as a demographically-diverse organization which professes to be committed to communal and mutual societal support. Scars are more associated with finality and pain than with healing, and the policies of Franklin Delano Roosevelt did not simply pause at *healing* a damaged and discriminatory nation- they poised it (and its politics) to *grow*.

²⁴⁷ Gramlich, John. “What the 2020 Electorate Looks like by Party, Race and Ethnicity, Age, Education and Religion,” Pew Research Center (Pew Research Center, December 30, 2020), <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/10/26/what-the-2020-electorate-looks-like-by-party-race-and-ethnicity-age-education-and-religion/>.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

Explaining Reproductive Health Disparities: Violence in the “Colorblind” Institution of Medicine: A Redacted Honors Thesis

Chineze Osakwe

Throughout its history, and to this very day, the United States has declared war on Black and Brown motherhood. Reproductive rights have historically and continue to be restricted for Black women in the United States. The father of modern gynecology, James Marion Sims, performed experiments and perfected his technique on slave women during the mid-nineteenth century²⁴⁹. Centuries later, federally funded clinics replicated Sims’ methods by conducting sterilization and eugenics practices disproportionately on Black women.²⁵⁰ This paper focuses on how the American government has continually perpetrated acts of reproductive violence against Black mothers, resulting in higher rates of negative outcomes. For the purposes of this paper, reproductive violence will be categorized as a form of medical violence. Johanna Shapiro (2018) defines medical violence as when a “... patient becomes a kind of victim, treated differently and damagingly by a physician who (usually unwittingly) has set aside the patient’s humanity.”²⁵¹ Thus, the root of reproductive violence is physicians’ choices and actions that harm and victimize women in general, but specifically Black and Brown women. The specific manifestations of reproductive violence that this paper explores are patient experimentation, sterilization practices, and high rates of comorbidities regardless of income or education. Each of these forms of reproductive violence exemplify the dehumanization of African American women and will be explored in detail.

Slave experimentation was a natural occurrence linked to the state-supported ideology that rendered African Americans as naturally inferior to White Americans. For example, former US President Thomas Jefferson performed a vaccine experiment on over 200 slaves in order to determine the efficacy of a cowpox vaccine.²⁵² Moreover, James Marion Sims, the father of modern gynecology, “is an important figure in the history of experimentation with African Americans because he so well embodies the dual face of American medicine to which racial health disparities owe so much.”²⁵³ Harriet Washington, social scientist and medical enthusiast, argues that Sims is too often revered as a women’s health pioneer and benefactor, while his dark past of performing painful and unanesthetized experiments without consent on eleven slave

²⁴⁹ Harriet Washington, *Medical Apartheid the Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York, New York, United States: Random House Publishing, 2008), p. 61

²⁵⁰ Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (Second ed.). (New York, New York, United States: Penguin Random House LLC, 2017), p. 74

²⁵¹ Johanna Shapiro, “‘Violence’ in medicine: Necessary and unnecessary, intentional and Unintentional.” *Bio Medical Central*, 2018, p. 2

²⁵² Harriet Washington, *Medical Apartheid the Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York, New York, United States: Random House Publishing, 2008), p. 59

²⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 61

women for four years has been glossed over.²⁵⁴ Sims made his scientific “advancements,” through trial and error procedures performed on the eleven female slaves over the course of four years and his treatment of the women was extremely cruel; several male doctors that had initially come to assist Sims all left within the first year, leaving the women to hold one another down and support each other through the process.²⁵⁵ In 1852, Sims published a paper on his success with vesicovaginal fistula operations, which he had performed through abusive and unethical surgeries on the eleven African American women.²⁵⁶ Moreover, it is important to note that Sims was likely aware of anesthesia because it had been discussed in the medical community by the 1840s, and he was often willing to administer it to White women who lacked “apparent regard for its trouble or risk.”²⁵⁷ The nature of Sims’s cruel and inhumane practices continued well into the twentieth century and were mirrored by other scientists and medical professionals for decades to come.

For example, in 1951, the healthcare providers of Henrietta Lacks, an African American woman dying of cervical cancer, took samples of her cancerous cells and gave them to researchers without her consent.²⁵⁸ Perhaps more outrageous is the fact that Lacks’s DNA was not discovered until the late 1990s.²⁵⁹ Her great-granddaughter, Erika Johnson, made this discovery during her biology class, where students were experimenting on cells from a widely used line known as HeLa, originating from tissue taken from Lacks.²⁶⁰ This horrific story exemplifies the fact that Black bodies--especially Black women--have been devalued by White supremacy that undergirds American healthcare institutions.

By the time of the Great Depression, eugenics--“who’s historical connotations tie it to the selective breeding programs, horrifying concentration camps, medical experiments, and mass exterminations...”--usually mechanized through forced hysterectomies and had become a popular practice in the United States.²⁶¹ Eugenics became popular primarily because of Southern segregationists’ opposition towards “intermingling between Blacks and Whites” and fear of Black political advancement.²⁶² One of the movement’s most vocal advocates was a White

²⁵⁴ Ibid, pgs. 61 and 4

²⁵⁵ Harriet Washington, *Medical Apartheid the Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York, New York, United States: Random House Publishing, 2008) 61, 64, 65

²⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 66

²⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 65

²⁵⁸ Nature, “Henrietta lacks: Science must right a historical wrong,” Nature.Com, 2020, p. 7.

²⁵⁹ Ibid

²⁶⁰ Ibid

²⁶¹ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “Eugenics,” 2014, Retrieved 4/20, 2021 and Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (Second ed.). (New York, New York, United States: Penguin Random House LLC, 2017), p. 70

²⁶² Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (Second ed.). (New York, New York, United States: Penguin Random House LLC, 2017), p. 70

woman, Margaret Sanger, who is often lauded as a feminist and pioneer of birth control.²⁶³ Through her strategic efforts and alliances with legislative lobbying organizations, Sanger was able to effectively institute eugenics practices that disproportionately targeted Black mothers.²⁶⁴ This ultimately resulted in state-sponsored discrimination and forced sterilization.²⁶⁵ Moreover, by the 1930's, sterilization practices, particularly through abortions and birth control such as Depo-Provera (and later in the 1990's, NorPlant), had become regularly practiced on African American mothers.²⁶⁶ By 1970, Black women were sterilized twice as frequently as White women. Social scientists, including Shatema Threadcraft, have theorized that this was done in order to limit the Black population and maintain the White power structure.²⁶⁷ In *Killing the Black Body*, renowned scholar, Dorothy Roberts, argues that a reason why reproductive violence was so prevalent during the last twentieth century was because Black women often lacked access to family planning services.²⁶⁸ This lack of proper healthcare (specifically reproductive healthcare) facilities and supportive healthcare professionals contributed greatly to the racial disparities in mortality rates, which disproportionately impacted Black mothers.²⁶⁹

Today, reproductive violence has expanded beyond low-income communities of color and Black mothers who lacked the resources, social platform, education, and income to safeguard themselves from mechanisms of violence and coercion. Rather, Black women including elite athletes Serena Williams Allyson Felix and superstar Beyonce Knowles-Carter have also experienced reproductive violence during their birthing process.²⁷⁰ The expansion and pervasiveness of reproductive violence has been accompanied by an intensification in the violence towards Black women, where their health is increasingly jeopardized during pregnancy and child birthing. For example, the strong Black woman trope constructed by society has created a phenomenon where Black and Brown women are distributed lower rates of epidural and anesthetic use, while also having the highest rates of cesarean deliveries.²⁷¹ Thus, this trope

²⁶³ Harriet Washington, *Medical Apartheid the Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York, New York, United States: Random House Publishing, 2008), p. 195 and Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (Second ed.). (New York, New York, United States: Penguin Random House LLC, 2017), pgs. 72-6

²⁶⁴ Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (Second ed.). (New York, New York, United States: Penguin Random House LLC, 2017), p. 74

²⁶⁵ Steven Farber "U.S. scientists' role in the eugenics movement (1907–1939): A

Contemporary Biologist's perspective," US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health, 2008, p. 243

²⁶⁶ Shatema Threadcraft *Intimate justice the Black female body and the body politic* (New York, New York, United States: Oxford University Press, 2018) p. 2

²⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 3

²⁶⁸ Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (Second ed.). (New York, New York, United States: Penguin Random House LLC, 2017), p.101

²⁶⁹ *Ibid*

²⁷⁰ Glamour Magazine and Allyson Felix, "6 Celebrities Who Have Spoken Out About Black Maternal Health," 2020, Retrieved 3/29, 2021

²⁷¹ Michelle Osterman and Joyce Martin, "National vital statistics reports: Epidural and spinal anesthesia use during labor: 27-state reporting area, 2008" National Vital Statistics Reports, 2011, p. 1 and Virginia Tangel, Robert White,

which dictates that Black women have a high degree of fortitude and thus can overcome even the most difficult of obstacles, translates to Black women having a higher degree of pain tolerance and less need for pain management and consistent healthcare provider check-ups. The strong Black woman trope, while seemingly harmless—or even uplifting—has led to less epidural usage by Black women --who may themselves believe they are capable of laboring effectively without the help of an epidural and/or have been told repeatedly by society that they are strong enough to cope with the pain.²⁷² Thus, the outcome of not receiving an epidural can still negatively impact Black women, because their pain cannot be relieved. Although the disparities in some reproductive healthcare practices may have some positive implications, “disparities in health care utilization are shown to contribute to the disparities in health outcomes.”²⁷³ Additionally, Black women suffer from greater hypertensive diseases than their White counterparts. As a result, they are more prone to chronic hypertension and preeclampsia during pregnancy than White women.²⁷⁴ In fact, in 2014, Black mothers had a rate of 69.8 preeclampsia deliveries per 1,000 deliveries in comparison to 43.3 for White women.²⁷⁵ Further, “African American women are 60 percent more likely to have high blood pressure, [in comparison] to non-Hispanic White women.”²⁷⁶ Thus, the strong Black woman trope, in conjunction with systemic oppression and other external factors, often propel rather than reduce reproductive health disparities (specifically during the birthing process).

All in all, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) women in the United States have experienced many forms of reproductive violence, dating back to slavery and the Antebellum south, suggesting that this form of oppression is truly as old as the country itself. This paper analyzed specific examples of reproductive violence--that have mechanized primarily through the devaluing of Black pain and lack of Black representation in positions of authority--that have impacted African American women throughout US history. However, while the examples provided might be particularly troubling cases, it is important to note that there are many, many more. Within the framework of political science, for example, reproductive violence

Anna Nachamie, and Jeremy Pick, “National Library of Medicine, & National Center for Biotechnology Information, ‘Racial and ethnic disparities in maternal outcomes and the disadvantage of peripartum Black women: A multistate analysis, 2007-2014,’” *American Journal of Perinatology*, 2018, p. 845

²⁷² George Rust, Wendy Nembhard, Michelle Nichols, Folashade Omole, Patrick Minor, Gerrie Barosso, and Robert Mayberry, “Racial and ethnic disparities in the provision of epidural analgesia to Georgia Medicaid beneficiaries during labor and delivery,” *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 2004, pgs. 459 and 60

²⁷³ Ya-Ching Hsieh, Harsh Shah, and Pradeep Balasubramaniam “The association of race with outcomes among parturients undergoing cesarean section with perioperative epidural catheter placement: A nationwide analysis,” *Nationwide Analysis Cureus*, 2020, Retrieved on 3/19/2021

²⁷⁴ Daniel Lackland, “Racial differences in hypertension: Implications for high blood pressure management,” *American Journal of Medical Science* 2014, p. 1 and Medline “Hypertensive heart disease,” U.S. National Library of Medicine, 2019, Retrieved, 3/29, 2021

²⁷⁵ Kathryn Fingar, Iris Mabry- Hernandez, Quyen Ngo-Metzger, Tracy Wolff, Claudia Steiner, and Anne Elizhauser, “Delivery hospitalizations involving preeclampsia and eclampsia, 2005–2014,” (Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP), 2017) p. 10 and 11

²⁷⁶ US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) “Heart disease and African-Americans,” 2021, Retrieved, 3/19/2021

takes place when the State, operating under the grip of White supremacy, forcefully takes Black children from their mothers and essentially declares war on Black motherhood.²⁷⁷ This occurred during slavery and is mirrored in the latter half of the twentieth century during welfare reforms.²⁷⁸ Consequently, this paper has employed a historic lens in order to contextualize the contemporary examples of reproductive health disparities and demonstrate that reproductive violence against Black and Brown women has occurred systematically throughout US history.

²⁷⁷ Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (Second ed.). (New York, New York, United States: Penguin Random House LLC, 2017), p. 153, 4 and 9

²⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p. 159