

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF SPEECH & DEBATE

VOLUME IV: ISSUE 2

JANUARY 2016

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DON'T FLIP OUT
CONSIDERING ABANDONMENT OF THE
COIN FLIP IN PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE

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About a dozen years ago, the high school speech and debate world was introduced to a debate event known as Controversy. Since its introduction, the event has seen a couple of name changes, ultimately settling on Public Forum Debate, and the development of an argumentative life of its own, where the event has transformed from one in which many rounds seemed to be “dueling oratories” to those where there is often genuine clash and impact analysis taking place. At the inception, proponents offered a couple of key selling points to the event, one being that rounds should be judged by a principally lay audience, thus, diminishing the use of much of the jargon that one finds in both Policy and Lincoln-Douglas Debate (particularly “progressive” Lincoln-Douglas) and thus making the event accessible to a larger population. Another feature of Public Forum was the use of a coin flip to determine sides and speaker order, done under the pretense of offering a degree of strategy into the round. At tournaments utilizing this practice, the team winning the toss may opt to select either the side they will debate or whether they will speak first or second, with the team losing the toss making the remaining decision. Though offered as a component of the event from its very first day and used by the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA), a number of circuits and tournaments, including the National Catholic Forensic League (NCFL), choose not to use this practice. This article advocates that this practice should be applied to Public Forum Debate at large.

If asked about the primary purposes of our activity, nearly every coach would include in that list education about current issues and developing students to become effective citizen-advocates. Thus, it seems a foundational question regarding any practice in the activity should be one of its pedagogical value towards those ends. Within our current political discourse, an often-leveled criticism is that too few people are being forced out of their own personal echo

chambers to engage all sides of a particular issue. Even when such a consideration of all sides leads to a reinforcement of one's own opinion, it is still the case that one's intellectual comprehension of a topic has increased, likely allowing for greater empathy towards those who may not share that opinion. This, in turn, breeds the ability and desire to seek common ground and meaningful compromise that historian Shelby Foote referred to in the Ken Burns series *The Civil War* as the true genius of the American people. The use of the coin flip within Public Forum Debate fails these educational goals in that it can incentivize debaters to retreat into their personal echo chamber. To illustrate this point, consider Team X, who makes a conscious decision to focus their preparation on only one side of the topic and to take their chances that they can avoid having to advocate the less-preferred side (for purpose of argument, let's assume they only prepare the Pro side). With a coin flip and assuming both a fair coin and an even breakdown between all choices when Team X loses the coin toss, the following happens:

- Team X wins the toss half the time and calls Pro.
- Team Y wins the toss the other half the time, but
 - Half the time Team Y opts to speak second, allowing X to defend the Pro.
 - Half the time Team Y opts to select side, but...
 - Half the time Team Y opts for the Con
 - Half the time Team Y opts for the Pro

In such a scenario, we can see that Team X would only be forced to defend their unprepared side (Con) once every eight debates, and even then Team X could go for a strategy of direct refutation against Team Y without presenting a formal case of their own. While experienced judges would quickly figure out what Team X is up to and hold them accountable, the conundrum is that Public Forum's desired preference for less-experienced or lay judges means that the event's target audience is far less likely to figure out that such an approach is not what Team X is "supposed to do," removing the disincentive for doing so. However, in a world where Public Forum operates in a switch-side format, Team X's debaters know that in a six-round tournament, they will be forced to defend each side three times during the preliminary rounds. If they wish to advance to elimination rounds (and assuming that at least a 4-2 record is required to clear), then the incentive to prepare adequately on both sides is obvious. This would seem to force teams to depart their echo chamber and discourage the sort of "my way, all the time" thinking that is too common in our political discourse. And isn't that part of what we are supposed to do as educators?

Another reason to abandon the coin flip in Public Forum has to do with the potential for resolutional bias that may exist or be perceived to exist in some of the topics debated over the course of the year and, perhaps more importantly, how teams act on that perception. In examining this question, I analyzed data from the six Public Forum Debate tournaments (open or varsity division only) contested in Mississippi in the fall of 2015. This included the following tournaments: Oxford Charger Classic, Oak Grove Warrior Invitational, Saints Classic (St. Andrew’s), Ole Miss Fall Invitational, Hub City Classic at Hattiesburg High School, and Desoto County. Hattiesburg and Desoto County utilized the November topic, while the other contests used the September-October topic. Of these six contests, all use the coin flip except the Saints Classic, which utilizes a coin flip in round five only and only to determine sides (Pro always speaks first). In looking at the data, I wish to consider two questions: 1) Were there resolutions that appeared to have an inherent side bias when one examines win-loss percentages? 2) To what degree did teams seem to be acting on a perceived side bias, even if they ultimately misperceived what the bias was? The data set is as follows:

Tournament	Teams Entered (Debates Held)	Pro/Aff Wins (Percentage)	Neg/Con Wins (Percentage)	Teams that debated same side in all contested rounds	Teams that debated all but once on same side in all contested rounds
Oxford	23 (55)	29 (52.7)	26 (47.3)	7	5
Oak Grove	21 (50)	21 (42)	29 (58)	4	7
Saints Classic	36 (89)	49 (55.1)	40 (44.9)	0	3
Ole Miss	17 (40)	16 (40)	24 (60)	3	7
Hattiesburg	26 (64)	29 (45.3)	35 (54.7)	6	11
Desoto County	15 (35)	17 (48.6)	18 (51.4)	2	10

Note: Because of byes and forfeits, the Saints Classic and Hattiesburg numbers have one fewer total debate than what would be expected based on the number of teams. That three teams that were “lopsided” at Saints Classic is best explained by a combination of judges either being unaware of our procedures or insistent on having a coin flip and us using lag-pairing, depriving us of the opportunity to balance things once we became aware of a team being lopsided after the fourth round ballots were returned.

Admittedly, an inherent limitation to the raw data is that we don't know why teams ended up on the sides they did, since no record of who won the coin flip and what they did exists for these contests. However, were one to be interested in researching that question independently, a couple quickly made modifications to the Public Forum ballot would yield that information. Answering the first question, though, the data clearly indicates no inherent resolutional bias, as none of the six tournaments even approaches a win-loss percentage that would meet the two standard-deviation norm generally accepted as required to show statistical significance. However, upon further reflection, it seems that the question of *actual* resolutional bias is really secondary to the question of whether teams seem to be acting on a *perceived* bias. That being said, it is interesting to note that every one of the tournaments that utilized the coin flip had over half its field end up in a situation where they debated one side of the resolution no more than once and that in the case of the two November topic tournaments (Hattiesburg and Desoto County), those percentages were sixty-five and eighty, respectively. Thus, even though the evidence is not probative of a side bias, it seems reasonable to claim that some teams are perceiving and acting on a side bias, even if they misinterpret that bias. Anecdotally, it is interesting to note that the data showed one debater who argued the Con side in every one of his thirteen contested debates on the September-October resolution. And what happened to this student at the Saints Classic, where no coin flip exists and our Student Congress is held alongside the debate events, instead of the other tournaments where Congress is contested alongside speech? He competed in the Senate. To paraphrase an early 90s song lyric, it's a "Thing that makes you go Hmmmmm," though I am sure my intent in using the phrase is far different than what C+C Music Factory had in mind. Finally, even if a team is prepping on both sides of a topic, the coin flip opens up the distinct possibility that they may get forced to one side for most or all of their rounds, meaning that they lose some of the opportunity for in-round education because they only get to run arguments on one side of the resolution. This, at first, might seem inconsistent with the initial claims being made in the article, but whether a team games the system or ends up not being able to run their case on one side because fate aligns against them, the ultimate source of this problem remains the presence of the coin flip.

Logistically, the coin flip is problematic when one considers the original intent of Public Forum itself. As Donus Roberts wrote in the November 2002 issue of *Rostrum* when introducing the event, then still known as Controversy, "We need to have this division judged by community adults, chaperones or teachers who do not need to learn a special language and listen to high pitch speed-talking. These people care deeply about public issues." Certainly, a number of tournaments now use significant numbers of individuals with forensics experience in their Public

Forum judge pools, particularly in elimination rounds, while others genuinely seek to create a diversified pool of both experienced and lay judges. It also is the case that many Public Forum tournaments have remained true to the “citizen-judge” component of the event’s original design and use a significant number of lay people to adjudicate and critique these debates. Personally, the idea of “citizen-judges” is something that should be applauded (as long as such judges are properly trained, of course) and perhaps returned to forensics in other ways (which is probably another series of articles for another time). That being said, utilizing lay judges in coin-flip Public Forum rounds is inherently risky in that we take what we have designed to be our least experienced judge pool and put them in the event that has the highest level of pre-round complexity and the largest number of ways for judges to get confused and enter information incorrectly. Where a ballot table can see if a judge has entered sides incorrectly when sides are locked in advance, a coin flip followed by this two-step selection process takes that fail-safe measure completely off the board. Thus, there is an increased risk that a wrongly completed ballot gets entered into the computer or cards, a team gets deprived a win it should have earned and, potentially, a team may lose the chance to advance to elimination round competition that it legitimately gained, with the error not being able to be spotted until ballots are seen after the end of the tournament (of course, allowing coaches to access ballots during the tournament would diminish, but probably not eliminate, this prospect). While all forensics events have some potential for results to be recorded incorrectly, the current practice in coin-flip Public Forum rounds uncomfortably magnifies this risk.

There are a couple of common arguments advanced in defense of the coin flip. One that I hear is that students and coaches like it. My simplest response to this is that liking something doesn’t make it good. I happen to like donuts (my wife would probably say too much), but they probably aren’t good for me. At a bit-deeper level, we need to go back to the pedagogical value of being forced to consider both sides of an argument; allowing students to prefer one side to the point of not having to advocate the other seems to diminish the educational value of the activity. Further, it does not seem that tournaments that have abandoned the coin flip are suddenly struggling to get teams to enter. There certainly seem to be enough Public Forum teams who do not see the lack of a coin flip as such an anathema so as to opt for not competing on that particular weekend. I can assure that I have never had a conversation like this:

Me: “Are you ready to go to the tournament this weekend?”

Debater: “Do they use a coin flip?”

Me: “Um, let me check...(locate invite on internet)... No.”

Debater: “Um, yeah, I can’t go. My mom said I need to rearrange my sock drawer.”

Me: “Grumble grumble grumble.”

In fact, I doubt many, if any, coaches have had such a conversation. Another argument offered in support of the coin flip is that it adds a new level of strategic decision-making into the debate. However, this perceived benefit should be weighed against several questions, such as “does the value of the coin flip warrant the potential for error that it inherently creates,” “are we really enhancing critical thinking skills or just showing students a new way to game a system,” and “does the value of the coin flip outweigh the loss of total topic knowledge and diminished advocacy skills that result from allowing students greater flexibility to retreat into their personal echo chamber?” Simply put, the coin flip seems only to increase the level of gamesmanship involved in Public Forum, diminishing the critical thinking skills that we really want to inculcate, and further doing so at an increased risk of judge error in entering results. Even worse, however, is that the use of this so-called strategy diminishes the potential of Public Forum to comprehensively educate students about relevant issues of the day, a benefit that comes because the topic changes every month, save the September-October resolution. In short, the gamesmanship of the coin toss ends up trumping this element of the educational value of competitive speech.

The answer to these issues is for Public Forum to adopt what, for lack of a better term, I will call the “Switch Sides, Pro First” model that is used by other debate events. Note that I am not advocating the “Pro speaks first and last” system used in Policy and Lincoln-Douglas Debate for a couple of reasons. First, Public Forum does not have the burden of proof that is inherent to Policy Debate and Lincoln-Douglas rounds, particularly where the Affirmative debater advocates a plan. Second, even a cursory glance at the timing structure of a Public Forum round should convince most that rearranging the time limits to allow for the Pro team to speak first and last would harm the debate round and would not generate any sort of unique benefit, for reasons that are appropriate in another venue. Further, in a “Switch Sides, Pro First” model, any sort of advantage that comes with the value of speaking last would even itself out over the course of a tournament’s preliminary rounds, as each team would get the last word in the debate a roughly even number of times.

From an educational value standpoint, the shift to a switch-sides approach is undeniable. Debaters seeking to be successful would no longer be able to engage only one side of the topic literature, since they would now expect to debate half their rounds on each side of the resolution. This would lead to greater in-depth

understanding of the topic, which would generate better clash in the round, creating a better learning experience not just for the debaters but the judge as well (which might yield a side benefit of creating a pool of lay judges who may initially come to judge out of a sense of curiosity or duty but return out of sheer excitement over the opportunity to be engaged with a new topic). Logistically, switch-sides would significantly diminish the potential for confusion at the start of the round that risks incorrectly filled out ballots, increasing the accuracy of the tabulation procedures.

In short, Public Forum has made significant strides as an event since its inception. It is now time to consider a further improvement with the abandonment of the coin flip. Any perceived strategic value or fun quirkiness that comes with it is simply outweighed by the potential for wrongly tabulated rounds and the improved educational outcomes that would come with making students engage the full range of literature on a topic, and not just the opinions that suit their mindset.

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HOW IDENTITY DISCOURSE UNDER COMPETITION RULES
DISEMPOWERS THE DISENFRANCHISED & UNDERMINES
THE COMMUNITY’S VALUES OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY**

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Introduction

The competitive interscholastic debate¹ community is, and for a long time has been, quite diverse and incredibly inclusive.² Although the diversity of the community does not reflect the various ways that society is diverse with complete precision, it is difficult to think of another community that is more diverse and inclusive. The diversity and inclusivity of the debate community opens safe spaces for those who might be, for one reason or another, excluded from other interscholastic activities. Like other interscholastic activities, competitive interscholastic debate helps to prevent students from engaging in anti-social and violent behavior such as using drugs, joining gangs, and other juvenile/criminal conduct; provides opportunities to escape poverty; and even saves students’ lives.³ The debate community’s values of diversity and inclusivity also generate opportunities for students of socially and politically disempowered identity groups.

¹ See Michael J. Ritter, Overcoming the Fiction of “Social Change Through Debate”: What’s to Learn from 2PAC’s Changes?, 2:1 NAT’L J. SPEECH & DEBATE 13, at 20-25 (2013) (describing competitive interscholastic debate as debate among schools in a competitive context).

² See Brittney Cooper, “*I was hurt*”: How white elite racism invaded a college debate championship, SALON, May 13, 2014, www.salon.com/2014/05/13/“i_was_hurt”_how_white_elite_racism_invaded_a_college_debate_championship (describing how competitive debate has, since the 1980s, become more and more diverse, noting “increasing racial diversity of college debate is directly attributable to the work of [urban debate] leagues”)

³ Josh Hamilton, *How Forensics Saved My Life: The Impact of Forensics on Lower-SES Students*, 2:1 NAT’L J. SPEECH & DEBATE 13, at 14-18 (2013).

But to say the community is diverse and inclusive does not suggest the community is not fractured. With regard to the community's diversity and inclusivity, some of the most significant, recent fracturing of the community has resulted from competitors' attempts to capitalize upon the community's diversity and inclusivity for personal gain by resorting to identity politics in debate under competition rules. The strategic use of identity discourse is itself a social disempowerment tactic that undermines the community's diversity and inclusivity. Many competitive interscholastic debaters have proven quite adept at deploying identity discourse as a disempowerment tactic and then successfully guising the disempowerment tactic as a tool of social empowerment. They wrongly liken themselves to activists by citing successful examples of empowering identity politics in radically different contexts where discourse is not regulated by competition rules, including a strict win-loss structure, speech times, and exclusive community norms regarding audience nonparticipation.

Those who value the community's diversity and inclusiveness should (re)consider whether identity discourse in a debate under competition rules is actually a misappropriation of identity politics and, if so, how the misuse of identity politics disempowers students and deprives the community of the sometimes-life-saving benefits of diversity and inclusivity. This article argues that the use of identity discourse in debate under competition rules is necessarily a misappropriation of identity politics for the purpose of personal gain and has the effect of socially disempowering others, which harms students, the community, and the identity groups that students purport to represent.

Identity Politics & Identity Discourse

Because the academic literature on identity politics is a bit dense and verbally preclusive to the vast majority of non-academicians, including high school and college students,⁴ this article presents the issues in accessible, defined terms. "Identity politics" broadly refers to the process by which people who identify by a particular trait or status unify primarily based on the shared identity trait(s) or status(es).⁵ The particular traits or statuses by which people unify are virtually limitless, but can include race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, marital status, age, etc., and any

⁴ See Michael J. Ritter, *Debater-Corporations & the Capitalism of Competitive Interscholastic Debate: A Swift Proposal*, 3:3 NAT'L J. SPEECH & DEBATE 8, 19 (2015) (attributing academic texts' lack of accessibility to the "Publish or Die" principle).

⁵ See Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Identity Politics" (2012), available at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-politics>.

combination thereof. This article refers to such groups unified by a common identity trait or status as “identity groups.” “Politics” is defined as “the activities associated with the governance of a country or other area, especially the debate or conflict among individuals or parties having or hoping to achieve power.”⁶ Identity politics is often described as an alternative to unifying by the platform of a political party (e.g. Republican, Democrat).⁷

“Identity discourse,” most basically, is a communication about one’s identity, how one identifies, or how others identify. Identity discourse can constitute intrapersonal communication when a person has an internal dialogue of coming to understand the person’s identity. Identity discourse can be interpersonal communication when the person, who has a confirmed identity, communicates to others—either verbally or nonverbally—about their identity or the confirmed identities of others. This article uses the term “identity discourse” primarily in the latter context of interpersonal communication. Not all identity discourse is political. For example, people might communicate their age, race, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status, etc., when filling out applications for employment or taking an online quiz. Identity discourse becomes political when it is used in “activities associated with the governance of a country or other area, including the debate or conflict among individuals or parties having or hoping to achieve power.” Similarly, not all identity groups are political. For instance, an identity group of men might unify for purposes of having a men’s choir.

Identity discourse can involve the mere revelation of aspects of an individual’s not-so-readily-observable identity, a more in-depth discussion about how one’s identity has influenced the person’s life, or a discussion about the traits or qualities of other identity groups. The use of identity discourse for political purposes is neither inherently good nor inherently bad; the use of identity discourse for political purposes is subject to moral evaluation based on its purposes and effects. As examples, a person might “come out” (or, for example, reveal that she is a lesbian) during a social discussion involving hateful speech towards gays and lesbians for the purpose and with the effect of stopping hateful speech that might negatively influence others; alternatively, a person might come out for the sole purpose of interrupting a productive conversation about racial

⁶ Oxford English Dictionary, “Politics” (2015), available at <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/politics>.

⁷ See, e.g., Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, *supra*; Bregham Dalgliesh, *Problematizing the Political Theory of Identity Politics: Towards an Agonistic Freedom*, 7:1 KRITIKE 69, 69-95 (2013), http://www.kritike.org/journal/issue_12/dalgliesh_june2013.pdf.

equality. Both examples would be subject to moral evaluation based on their respective purposes and effects. Thus, when a person engages in identity discourse, questions arise as to whether the identity discourse is political and, if so, what are the identity politics' purposes and effects when considered in terms of power relations.

Identity Groups & Areas of Power Relations

Identity groups have three important areas of “power relations,” or the degree to which individuals have power in relation to others, when it comes to politics, which by definition relates to the acquisition of power. The areas of power relations involve the relationships that identity groups have (1) with groups that unify for non-identity-based political reasons, such as the voting public, political parties (e.g. Democrats, Republicans), governmental bodies, etc.; (2) with other identity groups; and (3) with itself, meaning the power relations among the members of an identity group. As an illustration, an identity group of elderly gay women organized for political reasons might have (1) political relationships with elected officials and (2) with an identity group of elderly gay men, and (3) certainly there will be the power relations among the various elderly gay women within that identity group. The fact that identity groups have areas of power relations is neither inherently good nor inherently bad; however, how those power relations are used is also subject to moral evaluation based upon purposes and effects. As examples, a group of Mexican-Americans might use their power relations to lobby politicians for the equal rights of Mexican-Americans and an identity group of white supremacists may use their power relations to harass, threaten, and intimidate racial minorities. Both uses of power relations would be subject to moral evaluation, and most people would morally evaluate the two differently.

Identity groups have used identity discourse in social and political contexts to empower themselves in relation to other identity groups and non-identity groups. One of the best, most recent examples has been the use of identity discourse by individuals who identify as LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning or queer). Many of the laws prohibiting LGBTQ individuals from engaging in romantic relationships and starting families by marrying and adopting children were based upon moral condemnation, fear, and preconceived notions. “Coming out,” or a use of identity discourse by which a person reveals to another that the person identifies as LGBTQ, was very effective at shattering moral condemnation, fear, and preconceived notions about LGBTQ individuals. As illustrations, when children come out to parents who morally condemn LGBTQ individuals, parents must make the choice between their preconceived notions and

their children. A homophobic man must confront his fear and pre-conceived notions of homosexuals when he learns that his best friend is gay.⁸ Another great example of the recent use of identity discourse in politics is Blacks Lives Matter activism. The identity discourse of Black Lives Matter activists attempts not merely to reveal identity but to share experiences to challenge the dominant political narratives, such as the narrative of the virtuous, unerring police officer.⁹

The use of identity politics has been described as a response to the failures of representative democracy to prevent political disempowerment.¹⁰ In a representative democracy, individuals elect representatives to represent the people. In the United States for example, a majority of individuals in geographically defined areas elect representatives on the federal, state, and local levels to represent their interests. One criticism of representative democracy is that it operates upon majority rule. When the majority chooses representatives, the representatives sometimes thereafter use their political power to disempower the minority, or those who would vote to elect different representatives. Examples of political disempowerment in the United States have been the deprivation of African Americans/Blacks' and women's right not to be considered the property of white men, their right to vote, and their right to be free from discrimination. Many states have banned gays and lesbians from engaging in romantic relationships and starting families by marrying and adopting children. Identity politics has thus been an alternative to party-based politics and has been aimed at achieving more political power to correct and prevent the political and social disempowerment of identity groups.

But simply because identity politics, including identity discourse, has been effective at achieving some successes does not mean that each use of identity politics is good or desirable. The method by which individuals use identity discourse may, too, be morally evaluated based upon its purposes and effects. Because politics is inherently about power struggles, and identity politics relies on identity discourse to influence balances of power, the purposes and effects of the

⁸ See generally Michael J. Ritter, *Teaching Tolerance: A Harvey Milk Day Would Do a Student Body Good*, 19 TEX. J. OF WOMEN & L. 59 (2009) (describing a strategy advocated by Harvey Milk of coming out to break down negative stereotypes about gays and lesbians).

⁹ Jennifer Swann, *How Black Lives Matter Reshaped the Traditional Narrative About Police Killings*, TAKEPART, Aug. 9, 2015, www.takepart.com/article/2015/08/09/black-lives-matter

¹⁰ See, e.g., Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Identity Politics" (2012), available at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-politics>; Bregham Dalgliesh *Problematising the Political Theory of Identity Politics: Towards an Agonistic Freedom*, 7:1 KRITIKE 69, 69-95 (2013), http://www.kritike.org/journal/issue_12/dalgliesh_june2013.pdf.

method by which individuals use identity discourse in the three areas of power relations provide a useful framework for analyzing whether any particular use of identity discourse for political reasons is harmful or beneficial. The starting point for analyzing the purpose and effects of identity politics on areas of power relations must be the context in which individuals engage in identity politics.

Identity Politics in the Context of Competitive Interscholastic Debate

The current state of identity politics in competitive interscholastic debate is largely limited to two categories. The first category is identity discourse, or communication about one's identity or the identities of others, in a debate under competition rules for strategic reasons. Debaters engage in such identity discourse when they make a verbal or nonverbal communication about their identities or others' identities as part of their strategy to win a debate. Identity discourse in competitive interscholastic debate is strategically deployed when the identity discourse is, either itself or together with an argumentative strategy to prove the truth or falsity of the resolution, presented as a reason to vote for a debate. The typical method of using identity politics in debate involves describing an identity group based on race, sexuality, gender identity, etc., and then, sometimes, attempting to place the debater and perhaps opponents into or out of those identity groups. For example, a debater who identifies as gay might inform the audience in some way about gay individuals in relation to the resolution, and then verbally or nonverbally express that he identifies as gay as part of his argumentative strategy. Alternatively, a Caucasian debater might attempt to engage in identity discourse by referring to concepts such as "the Black body" or other identity-based terms referring to a groups to which the debater does not belong. The generally understood purpose of such identity discourse is to bolster a debater's credibility to speak about issues affecting a certain identity group to which the debater belongs or, alternatively, to draw upon the pain and suffering of other groups as part of an emotional appeal.

The second category of identity discourse is discourse (or communication) about identity discourse, or "identity meta-discourse." Identity meta-discourse can occur in debates under competition rules by competitors who critique the use of opponents' identity discourse. Identity meta-discourse also occurs outside a debate round. Some examples of identity meta-discourse not under competition rules include discussions about identity discourse and identity politics after debate rounds, by debate teams at tournaments or at practice, and on web forums and message boards. This article is itself an example of identity meta-discourse because it is discourse (a communication) about the use of identity discourse.

Identity discourse in debate under competition rules is inherently political because it occurs in a “debate or conflict among individuals or parties having or hoping to achieve power.” Students achieve power in the debate community by gaining “reputational authority,” or the power that comes from being perceived as a leader due to one’s reputation for success. Reputational authority gives a debater power (relative to others who lack reputational authority) to have more opportunities in the debate community and many times outside of the debate community as well. The win-loss structure of interscholastic competitions ensures that reputational authority is limited and that competitors must engage in a power struggle to acquire wins that culminate in reputational authority. Thus, all identity discourse in debate under competition rules is, very basically, identity politics.

But not all identity politics are created equal. The use of identity discourse in debate under competition rules inherently misappropriates the identity politics that have been successful outside of the debate community. Identity discourse in debate under competition rules is far removed from the social and political contexts in which identity politics have been successful at positive empowerment and achieving positive social and political change. Identity discourse in debate under competition rules differs from identity politics outside of the debate community in terms of purpose, effects, method, and audience. The purpose of identity discourse in debate under competition rules is for the personal gain of bettering one’s chances of winning a debate round and thereby obtain the power that comes from reputational authority. The purpose of identity politics in other social and political contexts is not for personal gain, but for the collective good of an identity group. Competition rules, including time constraints and the win-loss structure, and community norms regarding evidence and audience/judge non-participation, make identity discourse in debate under competition rules overly brief and shallow, whereas identity politics in other contexts are not so limited and can involve meaningful, non-adversarial, and productive discussions. That simply is not possible within an adversarial system such as debate where discourse regulated by competition rules. Finally, the strategy of describing identity discourse in debate under competition rules as “identity politics” incorrectly suggests the audience is resistant to diversity and inclusion or is morally condemning, fearing, or holding negative stereotypes about identity groups when, in reality, the audience is one of the most diverse and inclusive in modern American society. Because the debate community is already one of the most diverse and inclusive communities in existence, it is arguable that individual instances of identity discourse for personal gain in debates under competition rules will do little, if anything, to make the community more diverse and inclusive.

Instead, identity discourse in debate under competition rules is more likely to make the community less diverse and less inclusive by disempowering the community and identity groups in all areas of power relations. First, the primary purpose of identity discourse in a debate round is to win and thereby gain reputational authority. If debaters win based on their identity discourse, then their opponents lose opportunities to gain reputational authority *because* of the community's values of diversity and inclusivity. Due to the win-loss structure of the competition, there is a forced zero-sum power trade off. If identity discourse achieves its intended purpose, which—if used in a debate under competition rules—is inseparable from winning, then the debaters successfully misuse identity politics to deprive other debaters of the reputational authority to be obtained by winning the debate. Thus, identity politics under competition rules directly disempower identity groups to which other debaters belong. Therefore, the misappropriation of identity politics through identity discourse under competition rules disempowers others, including debaters from other identity groups that have often suffered political and social oppression.

Second, the misappropriation of identity politics takes unfair advantage of the rules and norms regarding evidence, audience non-participation, and speech times to preclude and thereby disempower opponents, judges, and any other audience members from being able to effectively participate in actual identity politics, which—again—entails meaningful, non-adversarial, and productive discussions about identity that are not limited by competition rules. An opponent must wait until the opponent's designated speech time or cross-examination to clarify and respond, assuming any such opportunities remain in the debate. The judge is disempowered by community norms from interjecting comments, clarifying points, asking important questions, or otherwise effectively participating in any identity discourse until after the debate when the competition rules no longer regulate discourse. And, anyone else in the audience is ordinarily given no opportunity to contribute their ideas and experiences to the discussion, as is demonstrated by the typical mass exodus of an audience after a judge finishes explaining the reason for decision. The customary lack of post-round discussion by the competitors, judge, and audience about the debater's identity or identity discourse is substantial evidence that any assertion regarding the benefits of identity discourse in a debate under competition rules is nothing more than a strategic tactic. Thus, the strategy of misappropriating identity politics in debate is to first engage in superficial, surface-level identity discourse and then to immunize the debater from having to actually engage in identity politics, which entails an meaningful, non-adversarial, and productive discussions about identity. This disempowers students, who are our country's future advocates and activists, from learning how to be effective at advocacy and activism.

Third, the misappropriation of identity politics in debate has been successful because it effectively instills fear in good-intentioned, open-minded people of the risk of being perceived as offensive if they question or discuss opponents' identities or their representations about identity groups. Identity politics in debate is designed to highlight ways in which the identity group to which the debater belongs or claims to represent is or has been more oppressed than any identity group to which opponents might belong or claim to represent. Identity discourse thereby threatens competitors with the possibility being perceived as trivializing oppression, and thus identity discourse rhetorically disempowers others in the community from effectively engaging in discussions about identity groups. Identity discourse in competitive debate is able to instill fear of being perceived as offensive or trivializing oppression because the community already strongly values diversity and inclusivity. Identity discourse does not foster inclusivity and diversity but rather takes advantage of existing values of inclusivity and diversity for the personal gain of acquiring the power of reputational authority. In theory, the most effective way for a competitive environment to defeat a strategy that is viable solely because the community is diverse and inclusive would be to foster less diversity and inclusivity. For example, some teams and administrators have attempted to defeat diverse race-conscious debate teams by sending letters to administrators to prompt the administration to prohibit further participation in debate. The misappropriation of identity politics thus discourages inclusivity, open-mindedness, and diversity. Therefore, misappropriation of identity politics in debate disempowers the community not only by creating a culture of fear and disdain for diversity and inclusiveness, but also by causing an already-diverse and already-inclusive community to disengage from non-adversarial discussion about diversity and inclusion.

Fourth, identity discourse in debate under competition rules has gained some attention from school administrators and media outside of the debate community (i.e. in the real world to which debaters must someday enter).¹¹ School

¹¹ For example, following the 2014 CEDA Nationals, the identity politics of teams in the final round gained relatively significant media attention. *See, e.g.*, Gloria Mao, *The Privilege Blame Game in College Debate*, Candor News, July 17, 2014, candornews.com/2014/07/17/the-privilege-blame-game-in-college-debate; Brian Anderson, *Black Debate Team Wins National Championship With Gratuitous Use Of The N-Word*, DownTrend May 6, 2014, downtrend.com/71superb/black-debate-team-wins-national-championship-with-gratuitous-use-of-the-n-word. Some of the media attention was critical in a quite offensive manner. *See, e.g.* Anderson, *supra*. Cooper, *supra*, points out well that “[f]requently, Black success is met with white temper tantrums and passive aggressive attempts to resituate power through calls for a return to ‘tradition.’” *See supra*. But Cooper’s response misses the mark and lends credence to the reactionist arguments in several ways. First, Cooper’s unsupported descriptions of the modern debate community as “a notoriously elite, white academic sport” and comprised of “inhospitable

administrators are often called upon to defend spending time and money on continuing debate programs. But, some of the results of media attention on the misappropriation of identity politics has been the loss of public support for the debate community, which has translated in some instances of slashed budgets, discontinued debate programs, and debaters who are, because of their association with competitive interscholastic debate, are unable to get jobs after school.¹² Students' lack of information and understanding about the administrative processes that make competitive interscholastic debate possible has been a grave pedagogical failure of some educators in the debate community. Many educators and their assistants have encouraged students to engage in "identity politics" without honestly and genuinely considering the historical uses of identity politics and whether the use of identity discourse in a debate under competition rules is actually harming one of the most diverse and inclusive communities in society. In context of the power relations between the debate community and those groups that make the debate community possible, the misappropriation identity politics has disempowered the community by causing school administrators and the public to withdraw support from the debate community and give less credence and consideration to those transitioning from the debate community to the real world.¹³

spaces" contradicts her accurate description of how the competitive interscholastic debate community has become increasingly and incredibly diverse thanks to the efforts of Urban Debate Leagues and to recent successes of minority students and alternative forms of persuasion. Second, although Cooper concedes "[t]he increasing racial diversity of college debate," she minimizes the successes of Urban Debate Leagues and of those in the community who have effectively challenged white privilege over the past thirty-five years with totalizing rhetoric. Third, Cooper too quickly dismisses any possibility of constructive criticism from non-Blacks as "white liberal guilt," which discounts a variety of perspectives and demonstrates how identity politics even outside of debate can disempower other identity groups. Fourth, the point of Cooper's article, as demonstrated by the title, is that "elite white racism invaded a college debate championship," but Cooper notes that the "elite white racism" she criticizes came from outside of the community from commentators after the debate championship. Implicit within Cooper's defense is, as argued previously, that debaters engaging in identity discourse under competition rules *should be immunized* from out-of-round discussions about the use of identity discourse in debate. Although Cooper correctly notes, "Our nation certainly needs more people like them" (referring to the competitors in the final round CEDA Nationals in 2014), our community certainly needs to provide training that will enable them to be effective at engaging others in our nation in discourse not occurring under competition rules.

¹² Michael J. Ritter, *Nix the Nixonism: Identifying the Purposes of Debate Through Constituency, Accountability & Transparency*, 2:1 NAT'L J. OF SPEECH & DEBATE 3, 8 (2013).

¹³ *Id.*

Fifth, the misappropriation of identity politics in debate disempowers identity groups internally. A debater who engages in identity discourse for strategic purposes in a debate under competition rules does so, knowingly and sometimes unknowingly, to bolster the debater's credibility or emotional appeal. The verbal or non-verbal reference to or discussion of the debater's identity for the strategic purpose of engaging in identity politics is a strong suggestion to the audience that the debater has suffered just as much as the identity group to which the debater belongs. Identity discourse under competition rules thereby contains an implied assertion that the debater represents the identity group. Alternatively, when the identity discourse is deployed by a debater who is not from the referenced identity group, the debater impliedly asserts the debater represents the oppression of that identity group with the effect of using that identity group's pain and suffering. This suggestion of genuine representation nearly always goes unchallenged, and thus accepted by true by most judges. The problem with these suggestions, regardless of whether they are genuine or not, is that they assume, and legitimize assumptions, that all people within an identity group are the same in ways other than identity. For example, a trans debater's assertion that they represent the experience of all trans people relies on, and thus advances, the assumption that all trans people are the same and thus experience life and oppression in the same way. These sorts of flawed, categorical assumptions about identity groups underlie the moral condemnation, fear, and preconceived notions about identity groups that result in identity groups' social and political disempowerment. The misappropriation of identity politics in debate disempowers identity groups by legitimizing the thought processes that result in the social and political disempowerment of identity groups. The negative stereotypes perpetuated by the misappropriation of identity politics in debate under competition rules disempower identity groups in yet another way. The suggestion that all people in the debater's identity group are essentially the same, and that the debater is a representative of the identity group, disempowers the weaker members of the identity groups from disagreeing and sharing their experiences that challenge narratives dominant within identity groups that keep the disempowered members of the identity group disempowered.

Conclusion

The debate community is one of the most diverse and inclusive communities. This diversity and inclusivity offers numerous opportunities to all students, including those who are part of disenfranchised groups. The increasing use of identity discourse as part of a competitive strategy in debate under competition rules is fracturing the community and threatens the life-saving benefits and opportunities resulting from the community's diversity and inclusivity. Identity discourse helps

students to win successive debates and thereby obtain reputational authority, or power that comes from a reputation for success in the community that ultimately culminates in being viewed as an authority. Thus, such identity discourse can be considered “identity politics” only in the sense that it relates to influencing who wins and loses individual debate rounds in the ultimate power struggle for being considered an authority.

The use of identity discourse in debate under competition rules, although a basic form of “identity politics,” is not the same identity politics that have been used by identity groups in society to overcome social and political disempowerment and oppression. Identity discourse in debate under competition rules differs from identity politics in society to overcome social and political disempowerment in terms of its purpose, effects, audience and method. Thus, the use of identity discourse in debate is actually a misappropriation of identity politics. The effectiveness and empowering value of social and political uses of identity politics cannot be imported to identity discourse in a debate under competition rules by the mere fact that identity discourse in debate satisfies the basic definition of “identity politics.”

Rather, competitive interscholastic debate is a very rule- and norm-based adversarial competitive structure that makes identity discourse a tool of disempowering identity groups and the larger debate community. First, the win-loss structure requires that any reputational authority to be gained will be given to one side and denied to the other side, which is frequently part of disempowered identity group. Second, engaging in identity discourse under competition rules and community norms disempowers others to participate in meaningful, non-adversarial, and productive discussions initiated by the debater’s use of identity discourse. Third, the strategy of identity discourse incorrectly assumes the community is not diverse or inclusive and is often justified as increasing diversity and inclusivity. But, in reality, the reason why the strategy of identity discourse is has been effective is because identity discourse instills fear in people in the already-diverse and already-inclusive community of being called or perceived as offensive or trivializing of identity groups’ oppression. Because the strategy of identity discourse is viable because the community is already diverse and inclusive, identity discourse as a competitive strategy to be defeated discourages and disincentivizes diversity and inclusivity in the community. Fourth, the media and administrative recognition of the misappropriation of identity politics has resulted in actual loss of opportunities to be empowered by the training debate provides. Fifth, identity discourse justifies the essentialization of people in identity groups, which is the same thought process that results in identity groups’ political and social disempowerment, and disempowers those in the identity group

from challenging dominant narratives of the powerful and privileged within respective identity groups.

Identity discourse and identity meta-discourse not subject to competition rules is, however, capable of generating meaningful, non-adversarial, and productive discussions because they are not restrained by win-loss requirements, the restrictions on speech time and participants, and norms of audience non-participation. Competition rules and norms preclude any effectiveness of identity discourse in a debate under those rules and norms. The identity politics that has been effective at empowering socially and politically oppressed identity groups has not, like an interscholastic debate competition, been subject to formal rules of competition and community norms that the judge and audience should remain silent and not participate. The competition rules make the purposes, method, and effects of identity discourse a disempowering form of identity politics. The only way to engage in identity politics to empower identity groups in the debate community is to do so outside the inherently disempowering constraints of competition rules.

The Epilogue: My Story

I first noticed my same-sex attraction when I was in elementary school. At that time, I did not know what “gay” meant, and I certainly did not identify as gay. I cannot recall the specifics of the time I first heard about gays and lesbians, but I do recall feeling that people who were gay or lesbian were “weird” and different from “normal people,” partially because of my religious upbringing. I remained a bit effeminate into middle school, where I was asked many times if I was gay. It made me sad. I was sad to think that others actually thought I might be one of those people who I thought (of course, without any real reason) were weird and immoral. I didn’t want to be weird and immoral; I wanted to fit in.

Toward the end of seventh grade, I finally learned, most basically, what a gay person was: someone who was attracted only to others of the same sex. Remember what I learned in elementary school about my same-sex attraction, I came to a tentative conclusion, “I... must... be... .. gay...” But I didn’t want to accept that because I had thought gays were weird and immoral, and I didn’t think I was a weird or bad person. And because I thought people would still have hope for me if I said I was “bisexual,” that’s how I how I self-identified the very first time I came out, which was to my straight friend Drew during the summer after seventh grade:

Me: Drew, are you still awake?
Drew: Yeah.
Me: Can I tell you something?
Drew: Sure.
Me: I think I'm bi.
Drew: ...
Me: ...
Drew: ... That's cool.

Relieved and a bit emboldened, I then came out to another one of my close friends, my sister, my brother, and then eventually to my mother. Coming out was always (and still is) scary, but sometimes it was sad, other times it was a huge relief, and yet at other times, it was just plain funny to see people's reactions, including the response I received on numerous occasions, "But you don't seem gay!"

Another friend of mine would often "out" me when introducing me to other people, "This is my friend, Mike. He's gay, but don't worry, he's cool." Or "He's not like the other gays." While others who do not identify as LGBTQ and many who do might advance a dominant narrative that such words and thoughts are offensive, my story is different. I found it to be a relief. I thought, "Awesome... I'm in!" Except for some occasions that I won't describe in this article, I was not treated differently because I happened to be a little effeminate, and totally gay. There were numerous occasions when I would come out to people I knew at school, even when I had heard them make homophobic remarks in the past, and I would observe a change, however slight, in their attitudes about gay people.

I came to learn quite quickly that I had what I then viewed as my superpower: I could influence, to some degree, other people's preconceived notions about gay people. To use my superpower, all I had to do was, first, find someone who had ideas similar to the ones I had when I was in middle school. The second step was to get them to like me without letting them know I was gay. And the third step was, after I was confident I had successfully completed step two, come out. But the one place where my superpower was almost useless was the speech and debate community. I simply could not complete the first step of using my superpower because I did not encounter anyone who had ideas similar to the ones I had when I was in middle school.

When I joined my high school's debate team in 2000, I became part of the most diverse and inclusive group of people I had ever encountered in my entire life. My teammates and debaters from other schools consisted of a good mix of males and

females who were from a variety of racial, religious, ethnic, and economic backgrounds, some at different stages of the coming out process, and some of whom had special needs that the community accommodated. The fact that I was gay was not a shock to any of them to my knowledge, and many debaters from other schools were “out of the closet” at the time. There was no other place I felt was more welcoming of me than the debate community, and I knew I never had to worry about homophobia when I was at debate practice or at tournaments. It became my safe space. And that way back in the year 2000, well before marriage equality, before Don’t Ask Don’t Tell was repealed, and before the Supreme Court struck down state laws that prohibited same-sex relationships.

Over the past fifteen years of being involved in the debate community, I have observed quite a bit. I have observed tireless efforts by administrators, teachers, and their assistants to ensure that the debate community remains diverse and inclusive. In the past several decades, there have been no formal rules that treat students differently based on their identities. There have been no community norms that negatively discriminate against students based on their identities. Except for very isolated incidents usually involving incredibly ignorant youths, there has not been any hate speech indicating large, widespread animosity toward any identity group.

What I have observed, increasingly so in the past ten years, is an attempt to make the community’s inclusivity and diversity part of teams’ competitive strategy. Students of various identity groups have successfully deployed the competitive strategy of taking advantage of identity groups’ oppression. But to what end? The result has been the same as it has been since it was first formed: someone wins and someone loses. That result is neither novel nor noble. What I have seen has been young people use their identities and the oppression of others to defeat others and preclude them from advancement. I’ve seen students use their identity to imply an outright falsity that debate is not inclusive or diverse, and advance a false, self-absorbed narrative that the debate community is this racist, homophobic, and transphobic community that needs to be fixed by judges voting for debaters who are the first in a debate round make such an assertion. This is not the spirit of the true identity politics that has been successfully used by disempowered identity groups to achieve political and social equality. The offensive nature of the competitive strategy offends the community’s values of diversity and inclusion, the values that attracted me, as well as others from various backgrounds, to the debate community in the first place.

It was this shift away from the values of diversity and inclusivity in college debate that motivated me to leave the collegiate debate community and to focus my time

and efforts on volunteering my time to helping minority and disabled students in high school debate. But even when I made that decision, I was aware that what is successful on the college level eventually trickled down to high school debate. And I feared what I see today: High school students from privileged communities, who usually lack real-world experience and appreciation of true oppression, using identity discourse to access identity groups' pain and suffering for the purpose of disempowering and defeating others. Encouraging this strategy teaches students the wrong lessons and will render all students, including those of politically and socially disempowered identity groups, less empowered to engage with, communicate with, and persuade others.

The purpose of telling my story is to challenge the dominant narrative that voting for debaters because they belong to an identity group, or alternatively because they draw upon the pain and suffering of an identity group to which they do not belong, will somehow make the community more diverse and more inclusive. My experience demonstrates the opposite; the strategy of deploying identity discourse under competition rules discourages diversity and inclusivity in the community. It is through this discussion of my identity—through my identity discourse—that I want to empower others—through my own use of identity politics—to stand up to any debater who claims to represent “the gay experience” in the debate community as one that is homophobic and not inclusive. It’s simply not true. That is not to say that my experience has been the same as every other gay debater’s experience. The point is that a debater can and should speak only on their own behalf and not claim to represent the experience of others. And they should not do so under competition rules so they can effectively disempower others. When a debater can and does speak only on behalf of their own experiences under competition rules, it becomes clear that such discourse for a competitive strategy is simply for the personal gain of that particular debater and not for the collective good of the identity group the debater purports to represent.

My experience in debate is that the debate community is, to this day, one of the most diverse and inclusive you will likely find in life. Please don’t deprive future students of the opportunities you or your students have now so that you or your students can win a debate round, debate tournament, or several tournaments. The claim that the community is ignorant and needs to be educated by self-proclaimed representatives of identity groups needs to be met with narratives and stories from those in identity groups that challenge this incorrect notion. You are welcome to use my story to do so.

CRITIQUING CHIMERA: PART II

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Introduction

In the first part of this comment, I discussed how the capitalism “kritik” critiques a chimera, a monster of myth that does not exist. I offered a primer on economics, identifying three main systems that I believe encapsulate the various modern alternatives communism/socialism, fascism, and capitalism in which the state either has all ownership and control, some ownership and control, or little to no ownership and control over the market. I then explained why I think the US economy, so frequently misidentified as “capitalist” by debaters who run the capitalism kritik, is certainly not a capitalist economy, but very much an economy that has a mixture of these policies, as the government has nationalized some industries (a socialist economic policy), it exercises heavy control over other industries without nationalizing those industries (a fascist economic policy), and it allows a great deal of freedom in other industries (a capitalist economic policy). I argued that to critique the US as capitalist is to critique that which does not exist; the US economy is—according to most if not all accounts of economists—a mixed economy. Even the freer markets must interact with the more controlled markets and thus it is very difficult to determine if issues in a given industry are due to the freeness of the industry, the control of a different industry with which the freer industry must interact, or vice versa.

Part I demonstrated how debaters who run the pervasive capitalism kritik criticize something that is non-existent, a nightmare mythologized to create something worse than the straw man fallacy. This Part demonstrates how the capitalism kritik criticizes from the perspective of something else that is not existent: utopia. All of the problems alleged to be created by, exacerbated by, embraced by, or even needed by allegedly capitalist countries exist or existed in communist and fascist countries as well to the same degree or to far worse degrees. Debaters responding to the capitalism kritik too often ignore that what it is criticizing is not really capitalism and ignore the checkered and often horrific empirical examples of alternatives to capitalism in favor of the more utopian ideal of what alternatives to capitalism embrace in ideology but clearly not in reality. The deck is then stacked in favor of the utopia as the utopian capitalist theory is ignored (the theory where rights are protected, racism is condemned, prosperity and abundance are

shared by all even if not equally, etc.) in favor of alleged empirical examples of capitalism while empirical examples of alternative systems are ignored in favor of the utopia. Worse, the empirical examples of alternatives to capitalism are called capitalism as well because none of these empirical examples, despite meeting the definitions of the alternatives (socialist, fascist, etc.) meet the utopian end ideal of the alternative. In other words, existing systems are all capitalist because they are not ideal and utopian.

This is not a fair, helpful, or educational way to debate. As matter of logic, it is not fair to force only one side to defend an empirical world against a utopian world because, comparatively, the empirical will always fall short of the utopian. One side defends heaven and the other hell. The one forced to defend hell starts at a significant disadvantage. Beyond all concerns of fairness, the approach is not educational because students do not learn about the actual results of theories and policies but are taught, rather simplistically, to blame all ills on a giant chimera they call capitalism. But beliefs and policies do have effects upon real people in the real world. Teaching students to ignore real world effects of any given theory virtually ensures bad effects beyond high school and college debate will continue and potential solutions are ignored because the solutions do not fit a convenient, mythologized, utopian narrative. Identifying policies and theories that are beneficial versus ones that are destructive is especially complicated in a world where, as was pointed out in Part I, the economic system is really a mix of fascism, communism/socialism, and capitalism. All sides tend to blame harms on the other and take credit for solutions and any good economic news. Training people to think simplistically and to ignore the counter evidence seems to place the fate of many, including these students, on luck or faith. I think we can do better.

This Part demonstrates that the standard capitalism kritik is presented with overly simplistic thinking that fails to account for the nuances of our highly regulated economy. I engage in an extensive demonstration for multiple reasons. The first is to educate students who may not be aware that all the criticism made of capitalism is just as present in alternative to capitalism. The second is to help debaters encountering the capitalism kritik provide informed response to standard links, impacts, and alternatives. Clearly, teams running the capitalism kritik are smart and imaginative and can come up with links that I have not heard of, nor thought of, nor would think of; thus I do not provide analysis of every possible link and “alternative solves” arguments. Anyone looking to answer an argument not addressed in this could quite easily research and find that whatever the alleged link to capitalism is incredibly likely to be not unique to capitalism and so cannot be said to be identifying that which is being critiqued as capitalist. The hope of

this article then is that we can reformulate the debate around capitalism and its alternatives to one of more genuine intellectual ardor rather than honestly assesses and evaluates all systems.

For clarity, I use the phrase “not unique to capitalism” to demonstrate two points with regard to the standard kritik format. The first is that if a particular economic characteristic is present in both capitalist and non-capitalist economies, then the purported link is not really a link to capitalism, but one of economics. The second is that if a particular economic characteristic is present in both capitalist and non-capitalist economies, then any alternative will be unable to solve impacts relating to the identified characteristic. I start with the use of money or existence of currency, and capital.

The Use / Existence of Money, Currency & Capital

The use or existence of money, currency, and capital is not unique to capitalism. To believe so is to completely ignore the facts of history. Communist and fascist regimes have all used money. This is not a secret. The Soviet Union used the ruble. The Soviet Union Information Bureau admits this openly describing struggles they had keeping the currency afloat. They explain that, “By 1922 the ruble as a unit of reckoning had declined to such an extent as to become practically useless. A new monetary unit was instituted called the “1922 ruble,” equivalent to 10,000 rubles of previous issues. A year had barely elapsed before progressive inflation had rendered even the 1922 ruble too minute in value, and another monetary unit was instituted known as the “1923 ruble,” made equivalent to 100 rubles of the 1922 issue, i.e., one million rubles of previous issues.”¹⁴ It is not important for the purposes of this comment that the money was being devalued. The only point that matters is that the USSR used money as much as the USA. The Communists in Russia did not see the error of their ways and abandon money. The Russian Ruble still exists today and has been used in Russia continuously for 800 years.¹⁵ (This fact should begin to illuminate why reproducing the status quo is also not a link to capitalism.)

Although there were a few attempts at moneyless communes in Mao’s Communist China the Maoist regime used many bank notes including the yuan.

¹⁴ Brian Baggins, “The Soviet Union: Facts, Descriptions, Statistics,” Soviet Union Information Bureau, 1929, <https://www.marxists.org/history/ussr/government/1928/sufds/index.htm>

¹⁵ The RT Network, “The Russian ruble’s tumultuous history,” Autonomous Nonprofit Organization “TV-Novosti”, Jan. 6, 2015, <http://rt.com/business/217003-russian-ruble-tumultuous-history>

The Communist regime in China still uses the yuan.¹⁶ The communist regime in Cuba uses the Peso Convertible & the Peso Cubano.¹⁷ North Korea uses the won.¹⁸ Fascist Germany used the Reichsmark.¹⁹ Communist Vietnam uses the dong.²⁰ Marx himself concedes the likely need for money writing, “A second attribute of the [central] bank [issuing labour-time chits] would be necessary: it would need the power to establish the exchange value of all commodities... But its functions could not end there. It would have to determine the labour time in which commodities could be produced... But that also would not be sufficient... The workers would not be selling their labour to the bank, but they would receive exchange value for the entire product of their labour, etc. Precisely seen, then, the bank would not only be the general buyer and seller, but also the general producer.”²¹ Of course this would likely be money based on a different theory of money, the communist theory, but still money would be needed. This brief analysis does not cover all the countries on earth but it does suggest overwhelmingly that money is not a link to capitalism because it is not unique to capitalism. The burden would be on the debater running the capitalism kritik to provide examples of non-capitalist countries operating sans currency or any money link should be rejected.

The Pursuit of Profit / Profit Motive

The pursuit of profit and the profit-motive are not unique to capitalism. The USSR had an official profit policy. “Official Soviet policy requires that prices of producers' goods be set so as to ensure a "profit for each normally functioning enterprise. Prices obtained under these circumstances reflect production costs associated with the entire range of production techniques in use, rather than those

¹⁶ Currency Information.org, “History of the Chinese Yuan,” Currency Information and Research, <http://www.currencyinformation.org/world-currency-information/chinese-yuan/history-of-the-chinese-yuan>

¹⁷ Cuban Adventures, “Money & Currency in Cuba,” <http://www.cubagrouptour.com/information/cuba/money/>

¹⁸ Susannah Cullinane, “How does North Korea make its money?” CNN. April 9, 2013, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/09/business/north-korea-economy-explainer/>

¹⁹ Wikipedia contributors, “Reichsmark,” Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Reichsmark&oldid=655222558 (accessed April 25, 2015).

²⁰ Wikipedia contributors, “Vietnamese dong,” Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Vietnamese_dong&oldid=658853449 (accessed April 25, 2015).

²¹ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (1857)

associated with only the "marginal" technique."²² Mao's China also had a profit policy. Profits went to the state to be redistributed by the states. "The government not only controlled the profits generated in industry but would also control the allocation and pricing of the outputs and inputs of industry, both state-owned and privately owned enterprises. This would be carried out eventually (by 1953) via a central plan that was then imposed on all industrial, extractive, transport (particularly the railroad system), and state merchanting enterprises."²³ In other words profits were not prohibited in either communist country. In fact, making a profit could be viewed as patriotic as the more profit one made the better for the state as the state collected it all. An advocate of the capitalist kritik might see an opening here as in people in communist countries do not seemingly work for their own profit in communist countries but for the welfare of the other, the state. But this is clearly not true.

Communists sell their project to people on a promise of greater production and a better, more harmonious, more prosperous future. Here is an example from Frederick Engels, "There will be no more crises; the expanded production, which for the present order of society is overproduction and hence a prevailing cause of misery, will then be insufficient and in need of being expanded much further. Instead of generating misery, overproduction will reach beyond the elementary requirements of society to assure the satisfaction of the needs of all; it will create new needs and, at the same time, the means of satisfying them. It will become the condition of, and the stimulus to, new progress, which will no longer throw the whole social order into confusion, as progress has always done in the past. Big industry, freed from the pressure of private property, will undergo such an expansion that what we now see will seem as petty in comparison as manufacture seems when put beside the big industry of our own day. This development of industry will make available to society a sufficient mass of products to satisfy the needs of everyone."²⁴ The promises of prosperity continue from there. In other words, clearly those seeking profit would give to the state not solely out of altruistic motivation but selfish ones as well. Profiteers, if they turned over the profits willingly, did so out of a belief in a more prosperous future they would enjoy as much as their countrymen and women would. In other words profiteers believed they would profit from investing their profits in the state.

²² Michael Manove, "Soviet Pricing, Profits and Technological Choice," *Review of Economic Studies* (1976)

²³ Satya J. Gabriel, "The Structure of a Post-Revolutionary Economic Transformation: The Chinese Economy from the 1949 Revolution to the Great Leap Forward," *Mount Holyoke College* (September 1998)

²⁴ Frederick Engels, "The Principles of Communism," *Selected Works*, Vol. One, p. 81-97, Progress Publishers, (1969), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/11/prin-com.htm>

As fascism is rarely openly or knowingly advocated by debaters little space will be devoted to the subject. It is important to note though, for the purposes of proving the thesis that profit also exists in fascist systems. Most people are aware of some giant companies made a great deal of profits in Nazi Germany. Some of these companies are Kodak, Bayer, Nestle, Coca Cola, Ford Motor Company, and of course IBM.²⁵ Obviously these companies could not have profited in Nazi Germany were profits impossible, illegal, etc. in Nazi Germany. Christoph Buchheim & Jonas Scherner explain how the profit system existed in Nazi Germany but was different from the profit systems in both the USSR and the USA writing, “Firms in National Socialist Germany had more room for maneuver in decision-making than enterprises in the Soviet Union did. That room for maneuver was not unlimited, of course, as firms took the prevailing political and economic circumstances into consideration. That is the case in every economic system in which private enterprises exist. But it was precisely those circumstances that made the National Socialist economic order different from other capitalist systems. As a result, the decisions firms made were also sometimes very different. Peter Hayes writes: [D]ecisions were increasingly channeled in directions the regime desired by the interaction of government funding and state-guaranteed profit margins for producing certain goods, on the one hand, and steadily tightening official controls, stiff penalties for their violation, the possibility of government compulsion, and the danger that the refusal to cooperate opened opportunities to competitors, on the other. (Hayes, p. 31)”²⁶ Germans supported the fascist system on a similar belief on collective prosperity as promised by the Nazi party. Without comment on the virtues or vices on any system, clearly the pursuit of profit is not a link to capitalism because it is not unique to capitalism. In other words, just because a plan, an agent, a counterplan, etc have a profit motive it does not mean that the plan, agent, counterplan, etc are in any way capitalist. In fact, the advancing of a plan or alternative is far more suggestive of a collectivist command economy than it is of a capitalist economy as capitalists, to greater or lesser degrees, advocate leaving individuals alone to make their own plans.

²⁵ Gareth May, “10 Big Business Nazi Profiteers,” Listverse, October 24, 2013, <http://listverse.com/2013/10/24/10-big-business-nazi-profiteers/>

²⁶ Christoph Buchheim & Jonas Scherner, “Corporate Freedom of Action in Nazi Germany: A response to Peter Hayes,” Bulletin of the GHI (Fall 2009), chrome-extension://oemmnadbldboiebfnladdacbfmadadm/http://www.ghi-dc.org/files/publications/bulletin/bu045/bu45_043.pdf

Racism/Anti-Semitism

Racism is clearly not unique to capitalism. All one need do to realize this is to recall the attempted extermination of the Jews by fascist Nazi Germany. This section is meant to demonstrate that racism exists or existed in communist countries as well. The anti-Semitism of the Nazis was a state generated phenomenon as the Nazi's blamed Jews for the problems of the state. However, some might object that communist doctrine advocates equality and so racism would pre-exist communism. In other words communism inherited racism but would function to eliminate it. This apology for communist racism collapses unless communists admit that capitalism too inherited racism, poverty, etc, that capitalism too views all individuals as equal (worthy of the protection of individual rights) and would thus function to eliminate it. Thus if capitalism cannot eschew its problems because it inherited these problems, fairness requires communism to take responsibility for the problems it too inherited. Of course, if communism can eschew harms it inherited, so can capitalism, and thus much of the capitalism kritik collapses.

To begin, the USSR promoted a similarly racist image of the Third World and of Africans during the Cold War. The New Internationalist explains, "During the Cold War, Western colonial powers saw' all Third World liberation movements as communist inspired. The communist bloc, for its part, saw an opportunity to spread its ideology. The prevailing idea that 'my enemy's enemy' is my' friend' benefited the Third World - initially at any rate. But in the long term it promoted the image of Third World people as helpless, in need of salvation from the marauding power of Western capitalist nations. They could only' be saved through Soviet-style top-down socialism. It was case of copy us or copy them. In fact, the images of Africa that were fed to Soviet and Eastern European people were not essentially different from those fed to Western citizens. Westerners justified their exploitation of Africa and Africans by seeing it as the white man's burden' to 'liberate' these people from their African way's. The Eastern bloc, though not exploiting Africans directly, also sought to convince their own working classes that it was their international duty to 'liberate' these people from the Western capitalist oppressors."²⁷ This was communist state propaganda creating or exploiting racist images of those in the Third World. This state propaganda was not without consequence. It led to racist backlash during the glasnost era. "Pro-Soviet trade unionists, students and other Third World people were brought to the communist countries for training in the universities and technical schools as evidence of this 'internationalism'. It gave rise to a popular

²⁷ Tajudeen Abdul Raheem, "Black in the USSR," New Internationalist Magazine (Sept. 1990)

feeling amongst Eastern Europeans that their problems of inadequate resources and technology were due to their internationalist obligations. It is not therefore surprising that in the present era of perestroika and glasnost foreigners - and especially Third World people - became the first target of nationalist, isolationist East Europeans. Since the advent of glasnost a can of worms of racism has burst shamelessly across Eastern Europe.²⁸ This propaganda portrayed the African as a sexual degenerate and uncivilized.²⁹ Islamophobia was also rampant and evident in state policies.³⁰ Jews in the USSR, according to Goldhagen were forced to live in specific regions, forced to live in poverty bordering on starvation, and were condemned as parasitic and exploitative.³¹ To be fair the USSR did embrace some positive reforms but if this empowers communism to escape being identified as racist so too must the reforms of the USA and countries identified as capitalist by the capitalism kritik. In addition to this Erich Goldhagen explains that anti-Semitism was a tool of the communist leaders in the USSR.

The Soviet Union is famous for its mass slaughter of its own citizens, far more than the Nazis. At least some of this mass slaughter was based on racial and ethnic prejudice. After World War II five burgeoning communist countries expelled fifteen million Germans killing nearly two million of these Germans in the process. "As Eastern Europe recovered from the Second World War and the occupying victorious Red Army assured that their post-war governments would be communist and Soviet controlled, ethnic Germans, most of whom had settled in Eastern Europe well before the war, and Germans who had taken up residence there during the German occupation, were systematically expelled to East and West Germany. True, some may have worked for or supported the German occupation. True, some may have been traitors to their native Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Poland. However, many of them retreated with the German Army. In any case, whether bemedaled by their native country for previous military service, opposed to Hitler and the occupation, whether having live in the country for generations, they were deported or murdered. Age or loyalty to their country of birth did not matter. The old and the

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ Ian Law, RED RACISMS: RACISM IN COMMUNIST AND POST-COMMUNIST CONTEXTS 20-22 (2012)

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ Erich Goldhagen, "Communism and Anti-Semitism, Problems of Communism (May-June 1960)

young, the babies and the crippled were all expelled into the economic, chaotic, defeated, starving, and destroyed Germany, approximately 15,000,000 of them.”³²

Racism is prevalent in communist China today. The communist government employs racist policies to its own detriment, of course claiming these policies are for the good of the state, but they cling to racism at their own peril. Gray Tuttle elaborates, “But analyses of China’s troubles in Tibet and other areas that are home to large numbers of ethnic minorities often miss a crucial factor. Many observers, especially those outside China, see Beijing’s repressive policies toward such places primarily as an example of the central government’s authoritarian response to dissent. Framing the situation that way, however, misses the fact that Beijing’s hard-line policies are not merely a reflection of the central state’s desire to cement its authority over distant territories but also an expression of deep-seated ethnic prejudices and racism at the core of contemporary Chinese society. In that sense, China’s difficulties in Tibet and other regions are symptoms of a deeper disease, a social pathology that is hardly ever discussed in China and rarely mentioned even in the West. When placed next to the challenge of maintaining strong economic growth, fighting endemic corruption, and managing tensions in the South China Sea, China’s struggle with the legacy and present-day reality of ethnic and racial prejudice might seem unimportant, a minor concern in the context of the country’s rise. In fact, Beijing’s inability (or unwillingness) to confront this problem poses a long-term threat to the central state. The existence of deep and broad hostility and discrimination toward Tibetans and other non-Han Chinese citizens will prevent China from easing the intense unrest that roils many areas of the country. And as China grows more prosperous and powerful, the enforced exclusion of the country’s ethnic minorities will undermine Beijing’s efforts to foster a “harmonious society” and present China as a model to the rest of the world.” So clearly racism existed or exists in communist countries and fascist countries. Racism is not a unique phenomenon of capitalism then and thus racism cannot be a link to capitalism nor can merely embracing communism be viewed as a viable alternative to solving racism. It didn’t or hasn’t.

Slavery

A history or legacy of slavery is not unique to capitalism. (The author is assuming a concept of slavery where some humans force other humans to labor for minimal to no reward.) It should be clear that any modern system of economic inherited

³² Rudy (R.J.) Rummel, *The World’s Greatest Unknown Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing*, DEMOCRATIC PEACE BLOG, Oct. 6, 2005, <https://democraticpeace.wordpress.com/2009/02/23/the-worlds-greatest-unknown-genocide-and-ethnic-cleansing/>

slavery from prior systems as slavery was prevalent globally and still exists in parts of the world today. Millions of people in the Soviet Union were forced into state sponsored slavery. “In America, we constantly, almost obsessively, wrestle with the “legacy of slavery.” That speaks well of us. But what does it say that so few care that the Soviet Union was built — literally — on the legacy of slavery? The founding fathers of the Russian Revolution — Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky — started “small,” merely throwing hundreds of thousands of people into *kontslagerya* (concentration camps). By the time Western intellectuals and youthful folksingers like Pete Seeger were lavishing praise on the Soviet Union as the greatest experiment in the world, Joseph Stalin was corralling millions of his own people into slavery. Not metaphorical slavery, but real slavery complete with systematized torture, rape, and starvation.”³³ It should be noted that this forced slavery was occurring sixty years after the USA, if the USA is capitalist, outlawed slavery with the Emancipation Proclamation. This was also occurring in what purported itself to be a workers paradise.

Communist China is no different. There were/are millions of slaves working in China producing much of what people in the West purchase from China. Josh Gelernter of *National Review*, “China’s Communist dictators operate more than a thousand 1,000 slave-labor camps. The camps are called “*laogai*,” a contraction of “*láo dòng gǎi zào*,” which means “reform through labor.” They were conceived under Mao; unlike Stalin’s gulags, they never closed — though the CCP has tried to abolish the name “*laogai*.” In the Nineties, it redesignated the camps “prisons.” The conditions, though, don’t seem to have changed. Our picture of life in the *laogai* is murky, but here’s what has been reported: The prisoners are given uniforms and shoes. They have to purchase their own socks, underwear, and jackets. There are no showers, no baths, and no beds. Prisoners sleep on the floor, in spaces less than a foot wide. They work 15-hour days, followed by two hours of evening indoctrination; at night they’re not allowed to move from their sleeping-spots till 5:30 rolls around, when they’re woken for another day of hard labor. Fleas, bedbugs, and parasites are ubiquitous. The prisoners starve on meager supplies of bread, gruel, and vegetable soup. Once every two weeks they get a meal of pork broth. The camps currently billet between 3 and 5 million convicts — real criminals along with thought criminals guilty of opposing Communism, promoting freedom, or practicing religion — though the process doesn’t wait on conviction; Chinese law permits the police to hold anyone for four years before judicial proceedings. At any given time — according to the *Laogai Research Foundation* — 500,000 Chinese citizens are in “arbitrary detention.” If a prisoner does get a hearing, he enters a legal system controlled,

³³ Jonah Goldberg, “From Russia with Euphemisms,” *NATIONAL REVIEW*, Feb. 14, 2014

capriciously, by the Communist Party. The laogai camps are estimated to have held between 40 and 50 million prisoners since they opened in 1949.”³⁴ The reader should note this slavery is ongoing in communist China.

Slavery is ongoing in communist Cuba as well. “In October 2008 a federal judge in Miami ruled in favor of three Cuban workers who claimed they, along with some 100 others, had been sent by the regime to Curaçao to work off Cuban debt to the Curaçao Drydock Company. The plaintiffs described horrific working conditions for which they were paid three cents an hour. The Christian Science Monitor reported at the time that the company “admitted that the Cuban workers’ passports were seized and that their unpaid wages were deducted from the debt Havana owed the company.” Tomas Bilbao of the Cuba Study Group in Washington told the paper that “these types of violations are not out of the ordinary for the Cuban government.” Their attorney told the paper that back home in Cuba, after they cried foul, their family members lost jobs and access to schooling and suffered harassment from gangs.”³⁵ Slavery is ongoing in North Korea as well. Obviously there was forced labor in Fascist Germany. Of course, tragically, there is endless illegal forced labor globally but these are examples of state sponsored, state approved slavery, despite their alleged principled or legalistic condemnations of the practice. Clearly ongoing or a legacy of slavery is not unique to capitalism. Communist apologists might claim communist governments were forced to use slaves because of the policies of ‘capitalist’ regimes but this bespeaks badly of the communist theory of production and development. It would seem that, if communism were true, it could overcome the nefarious policies of capitalist countries. Additionally, allegedly capitalist countries had their rationale for using slavery.

Segregation

A history or legacy of segregation is not unique to capitalism. While segregation was not racially based in the Soviet Union it did exist. Those with disabilities were hidden from society. “During the 1980 Olympic games in Moscow, a Western journalist inquired whether the Soviet Union would participate in the first Paralympic games, scheduled to take place in Great Britain later that year. The reply from a Soviet representative was swift, firm, and puzzling: “There are no invalids in the USSR!” (Fefelov 1986).¹ This apparatchik’s denial of the very existence of citizens with disabilities encapsulated the politics of exclusion and

³⁴ Josh Gelernter, “What that “Made in China” label really means,” NATIONAL REVIEW, Dec. 13, 2014.

³⁵ Mary Anastasia O’Grady, “Cuba’s Slave Trade in Doctors,” Wall Street Journal, Nov. 9, 2014

social distancing that characterized disability policy under state socialism. Historically throughout the former Soviet bloc, persons with physical and mental disabilities have been stigmatized, hidden from the public, and thus made seemingly invisible (Dunn and Dunn 1989). More than a quarter century later, still little is known about the experiences of persons with disabilities in the former Soviet Union, who remain in many respects an "unknown population" (Polozniuk 2005).² The social justice struggles of people with disabilities under the Soviet regime have been even less explored."³⁶ This would also mean ableism is not a link to capitalism as the communist Soviet Union was extremely ableist.

Despite many reforms similar to those in Western countries, a type of segregation and stratification still exist in China. "Despite this regime of state promotion and protection, minority populations (in aggregate) remain significantly behind their Han counterparts on nearly all objective standards of development—education, health and welfare indicators, and income. This is particularly evident among rural Uyghur and Tibetan communities. Fiscal transfers have dramatically boosted Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates in frontier regions but disproportionate numbers of minorities continue to live in isolated, poverty-stricken, rural communities. Over 50 percent of officially designated improvised counties (□困□) are in rural areas with high proportions of non-Han minorities (Zhu and Blachford 2012: 725; Freeman 2013: 18). Despite nearly doubling since 1949, life expectancy in the TAR remains eight years below the national average (Xinhua 2011b), and twelve years behind for Uyghurs in Xinjiang (Mackerras 2012: 500). Current research by Bhalla and Luo (2013) identifies significant gaps in access to health and education resources among minorities versus Han communities. But overgeneralizations are dangerous. Many minorities, especially those in the nation's southwest, have benefited significantly from current state policies, and feel a sense of kinship with the Han majority. Still, the current approach has been less successful in cultivating a sense of national belonging among key segments of the Uyghur and Tibetan communities and, to a lesser extent, among some Hui and Mongol minorities."³⁷ These numbers are comparable to ethnic differences in the allegedly capitalist USA.

In 2001 the UN has condemned the People's Republic of China for its discriminatory government policies. "The PRC government's CERD report claimed that the economic and social status of national minorities (shaoshu minzu) is improving and that religious, cultural and basic human rights are fully

³⁶ Sarah D. Phillips, "'There Are No Invalids in the USSR!': A Missing Soviet Chapter in the New Disability History," *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 2009

³⁷ James Leibold, "Ethnic Policy in China Is Reform Inevitable?" *Policy Studies* (2013)

respected. However, in its report to the CERD members, Human Rights in China (HRIC) exposed the discriminatory effect of PRC laws and policies on three overlapping groups: people with rural household registration or hukou, (63.91 percent of the population); internal rural-to-urban migrants, part of a vast floating population (estimated between 40 to 120 million); and national minorities (106.43 million, 8.41 percent of the population). These three groups together constitute the vast majority of the PRC's 1.3 billion population. The failure of the PRC government to ensure equality in political, economic, social, cultural and other fields of public life has created an exclusionary system that threatens to undermine the security, stability and fairness of the PRC's reform efforts."³⁸ Thus it is clear that discrimination was not simply a lag effect of interpersonal prejudice but was state sponsored and supported despite the seeming egalitarian ideals of communism. So a history of discrimination and segregation is not unique to capitalism because it is not unique to capitalism.

Sexism

Sexism is not unique to capitalism. Despite official state policies and propaganda espousing gender equality, patriarchy was rampant. "The government used subsidies to encourage women to occupy the ideal, double role of working mother -- especially when a shortage of men, who died by the millions during World War II, meant women had to fill in working in factories, driving trams, and doing other blue-collar jobs. But men occupied the highest posts, and behind the propaganda, attitudes toward women remained far more traditional than in the West. Zdravomyslova says that's especially true today outside the capital, where very little has changed.

"Russians have much stricter limits in their perceptions about gender roles -- what's a man, what's a woman," she says. "Society restricts its discussions to those limits."³⁹ Patriarchy manifested itself in other ways in communist Russia. Women were only paid well if they did 'men's work' and could not afford to opt for more traditional roles. "The only women worthy of respect were the ones that did men's work. Soviet salaries were low enough to compel people of any gender to work all the time to make a living. As a result, a wife living in this unique "socialist paradise" could never expect her husband to fully support her. A woman who opted for a conventional lifestyle, such as taking care of the house,

³⁸ HRIC, "UN experts review discrimination against ethnic minorities, rural residents and migrants in the PRC," Human Rights in China, Aug. 1, 2001

³⁹ Gregory Feifer, "The Iron Ceiling: Sexism Still Strong In Russia," Radio Free Europe, Apr. 27, 2015

giving birth and raising children, faced public scorn as an idler, loafer or “princess.”⁴⁰ Women were also nearly excluded from political office.

However, this access to a wide variety of jobs and declared equality did not apply to the realm of politics. Women could only be members of the party, and were closed out of its administrative ranks. They occupied nominal administrative positions such as heads of councils, trade unions and Komsomol organizations, while the soviet party nomenclature remained clearly patriarchal. Yekaterina Furtseva was the only woman to serve as a government minister in the Soviet Union.⁴¹ So despite some policies that attempted to lead to gender equality and despite communist doctrine, women were far from equal in the USSR.

The fate of women is even worse in Communist China. “China’s “One child policy” is arguably one of the most controversial policies—one that arouses a wide array of human rights concerns. The direct consequences of this policy include notorious sex-selective abortions and female infanticides, which are practiced under traditional gender norms and patriarchic social customs that favor boys over girls in most Chinese families. In the long run, Chinese society suffers from an imbalanced sex-ratio problem, which has wide ranging social ramifications. Issues such as trafficking in woman and children for forced marriage or sex slavery have become apparent both internally and throughout China’s bordering regions. Stringent gender disparities also remind us of the ways in which homosexuality is stigmatized as unnatural and framed as a public health question, particularly with regard to HIV/AIDS. Gender discrimination expresses itself in many societal realms. In the workforce, women are deprived of an equal entitlement to land and a right to work; in education, the opportunities of primary education for many girls are limited, given the unevenness and scarcity of education resources.”⁴² So clearly sexism is not unique to the so-called “capitalist USA.”

Lest readers conclude that sexism was only a problem only in these two communist countries; sexism and patriarchy are alive and well in communist Cuba. In an article generally positive about gender equality reforms in the New York Times it is admitted that, “women make up only 38.1 percent of Cuba’s work force. That is an improvement, the report published this week notes, but lags behind most of Latin America. Less than 40 percent of working-age women are

⁴⁰ Oleksandr Pahiria, “Gender in the USSR,” THE UKRAINIAN WEEK, Apr. 18, 2012

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² Hsiu-lun Teng, “Human Rights in China,” Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver (Fall 2009)

employed, and Cuban women earn on average less than half what men make, mostly because men have access to higher-paying jobs. Like women just about everywhere, women in Cuba want more female leaders in the high ranks of government and party. According to the report, they make up only 7 percent of the Cuban Communist Party's ruling Politburo, 14 percent of the Party Secretariat and 22 percent of the Council of Ministers; only one has enjoyed the rank of vice president (there are five).⁴³ This seems far behind gender equality standards in the allegedly capitalist US.⁴⁴

Abuse of Indigenous People

Abuse of indigenous people is not unique to capitalism. Indigenous people have been abused under multiple systems and communism/socialism is no exception. Abuse of indigenous people in the USSR/Russia has been so bad indigenous Russian people are threatened with extinction. "Indigenous peoples around the globe have experienced colonialism, assimilation, and paternalism, whether it be in capitalist or socialist systems. From Tsarist times to the present the Indigenous peoples (see Figure 1 for definition) of Siberia have had to face Europeanization. In the Soviet period, the Indigenous people experienced the "dictatorship of the proletariat" (Bartels, 1986:19). Simply put, they experienced the "dictatorship of industrial society" (Bartels, 1986:19). Soviet policy towards its Indigenous people was a type of benign paternalism that, over time, has grown into a tumour that now must be removed. Today, solutions based upon the intentions and mistakes of the past are being offered to try to stem some seventy years of cultural tampering, developmental policy, general mismanagement, and neglect. Similar to the other Indigenous populations of the world (such as those in Canada), the Small Peoples of the Soviet North or Siberia (i.e. Aleuts, Chukchee, Eskimos, Nganasans, see Map 1 for location of groups) demand a recognition of their rights, values, culture, and self-determination. The Small Peoples want control of their destiny. To them, the all powerful nation state is not a valid trustee. With the current trends in Soviet society, the Indigenous people may again be able to master their destiny within the Russian Republic and Soviet State. Soviet policy has fluctuated widely when it comes to governing the Small Peoples. Policies developed in the early years have digressed to such an extent that Indigenous society is characterized by stagnation and cultural loss (Programme of the Association of the Small Peoples of the North of the Soviet Union, 1990:53). This problem is

⁴³ Torregrosa, Luisita Lopez. "In Cuba, Equality Is Two-Sided." The New York Times. The New York Times (Mar. 2013)

⁴⁴ To be fair, I do not claim to know where the starting point was, or how unequal, Cuban society was prior to the revolution.

serious enough to make some believe that the Small Peoples will become extinct if something is not done soon (Mihalisko, 1989b:4). Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, alike, are attempting to find solutions to halt this cultural annihilation.”⁴⁵

Though communist China denies having indigenous populations, Tibet is one area of China that is broadly considered to be populated by indigenous people. Famously, the rights of Tibetans are not respected by the regime in China. “That Tibet is heavily militarized, and that the Tibetan people have never been allowed to make a free choice in determining their association with PRC, is widely appreciated. Efforts by the exiled Tibetan leadership to negotiate agreement concerning these issues have been consistently rebuffed. International concern over these matters has been the subject of numerous non-governmental organization, national, and international reports. The UN Declaration, in its main text, guarantees indigenous peoples the right of self-determination; the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs; the right to manifest, practice, develop, and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs, and ceremonies, including private access to their religious and cultural sites and control of their ceremonial objects; the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures; the right to be consulted and given prior consent through their own representative institutions before implementing state legislative and administrative measures; and the right to recognition, observance, and enforcement of treaties, agreements, and other constructive arrangements.[4] At the same time, they are guaranteed the rights protected by various human rights treaties and covenants. China’s nationwide imposition of top-down authoritarian rule, its dismissive responses to Tibetan efforts at negotiation, and its weak general protection of basic human rights clearly fail to meet these standards.”⁴⁶ Again we see the communist ideals and communist practices do not coincide.

Leftist or communist movements in Latin America are being criticized for continuing to ignore indigenous people or simply using them for political gain. “If the left, particularly the Latin American left, misses this point, it’s a shame, as the mistrust of indigenous peoples, and their absence, has weakened previous

⁴⁵ Karl Hele, “Native People & the Social State: The Native Populations of Siberia and Their Experience as Part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,” 14:2 CANADIAN J. OF NATIVE STUDIES, 251-72 (1994).

⁴⁶ Michael C. Davis, “China & the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: The Tibetan Case,” E-International Relations, May 27, 2014

revolutionary movements in Latin America. Indeed, some indigenous activists and organizations in the Andean region are wary of Evo Morales because of his left politics and alliances, because Latin American left movements have often either ignored indigenous issues and aspirations, or recruited indigenous individuals or communities without incorporating or even prioritizing their aspirations in regards to land and self-determination. The responsibility belongs to social justice movements to catch up with what has been going on with the indigenous movement. If there is ever to be socialism and just societies in the Americas, the leadership and form of it must rely heavily on the experiences and knowledge of the indigenous peoples.”⁴⁷ So communist movements globally have little actual concern with the rights on indigenous people, again despite their rhetoric. Once again, disregard or abuse of indigenous people are not unique to capitalism because abuse or disregard of the indigenous is not unique to capitalism.

Homophobia

Disregard for the rights of gays and lesbians is not unique to capitalism. The Soviets viewed homosexuality as an anti-social disease that could be prosecuted. “As Engelstein (1995) justly mentions, the formal decriminalization of sodomy did not mean that such conduct was invulnerable to prosecution. The absence of formal statutes against anal intercourse or lesbianism did not stop the prosecution of homosexual behavior as a form of disorderly conduct. After the 1922 Penal Code was published there were in that same year at least two known trials for homosexual practices. The eminent psychiatrist Vladimir Bekhterev testified that “public demonstration of such impulses ... is socially harmful and cannot be permitted” (Engelstein, 1995, p. 167). The official stance of Soviet medicine and law in the 1920s, as reflected by Sereisky's encyclopedia article, was that homosexuality was a disease that was difficult, perhaps even impossible, to cure. So “while recognizing the incorrectness of homosexual development ... our society combines prophylactic and other therapeutic measures with all the necessary conditions for making the conflicts that afflict homosexuals as painless as possible and for resolving their typical estrangement from society within the collective” (Sereisky, 1930, p. 593).”⁴⁸ Thousands of gays were prosecuted and punished simply for being gay.⁴⁹ Communist doctrine cannot solve for this as

⁴⁷ Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, “Indigenous Peoples and the Left in Latin America,” MONTHLY REVIEW, July-August 2007

⁴⁸ Professor Igor Kon, “Monlight Love,” Russian National Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transsexual Website (1998)

⁴⁹ *Id.*

homosexuality was viewed as a bourgeois indulgence.⁵⁰ Communists in America were thrown out of the Communist Party when their orientation or preferences were discovered.⁵¹

Gays and lesbians in communist China did not fare any better. “Ancient Chinese culture and literature celebrated same-sex relationships, and even relationships considered taboo in most of the world today. However, with his rise to power, Mao sought to destroy all of what he considered to be deviant Western vice. With the rise of the Communist Party, homosexuality became a symbol of Western vice and decadence. Though not officially banned, homosexual activity was forced underground. Homosexuals in China were often forced into heterosexual marriages, harassed by police, imprisoned, and occasionally disappeared. Mainstream Chinese society became intolerant of any sexuality that deviated from the traditional heterosexual view. In the 1960s to 1970s, during the Cultural Revolution, violence against sexual minorities escalated. Homosexuals were publicly humiliated, and often executed. Art and literature that referred to homosexuality, cross-dressing, or any untraditional sexual activity was destroyed en masse.”⁵²

Neither did gays and lesbians in Cuba, “While Castro challenged many backward ideas as remnants of the old society, he embraced with enthusiasm the homophobia of Latin machismo and Catholic dogma, elevating it into a fundamental tenet of Cuba’s new socialist morality. Idealising rural life, he once claimed approvingly that “in the country, there are no homosexuals.”

When Cuba adopted Soviet-style communism it also adopted Soviet-style prejudice and puritanism. Ever since Stalin promoted the ideology of “the socialist family” and recriminalised gay sex in 1934, communist orthodoxy dictated that homosexuality was a “bourgeois decadence” and “capitalist degeneration”. This became the Cuban view. “Maricones” (faggots) were routinely denounced as “sexual deviants” and “agents of imperialism”. Laughable allegations of homosexuality were used in an attempt to discredit “corrupting” Western influences, such as pop music, with the communists circulating the rumour that the Beatles were gay. The punishment for homosexuality during 1960s and 1970s in Cuba was "rehabilitation" in a labor camp. The camps subjected prisoners to hard labor, meager food rations, and violent gangs that

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ Rainbough Phillips, “The Treatment Of Homosexuals Under Communism,” The Distributed Republic (May 2006)

⁵² *Id.*

physically and sexually attacked other prisoners.”⁵³ Once again it is clear homophobia and the denial of rights to Gays and lesbians is not unique to capitalism.

Production

Increasing production or a desire to increase production is not unique to capitalism. It is communist doctrine that freeing industry from the constraints of private property will create a production boom. “Society will take all forces of production and means of commerce, as well as the exchange and distribution of products, out of the hands of private capitalists and will manage them in accordance with a plan based on the availability of resources and the needs of the whole society. In this way, most important of all, the evil consequences which are now associated with the conduct of big industry will be abolished. There will be no more crises; the expanded production, which for the present order of society is overproduction and hence a prevailing cause of misery, will then be insufficient and in need of being expanded much further. Instead of generating misery, overproduction will reach beyond the elementary requirements of society to assure the satisfaction of the needs of all; it will create new needs and, at the same time, the means of satisfying them. It will become the condition of, and the stimulus to, new progress, which will no longer throw the whole social order into confusion, as progress has always done in the past. Big industry, freed from the pressure of private property, will undergo such an expansion that what we now see will seem as petty in comparison as manufacture seems when put beside the big industry of our own day. This development of industry will make available to society a sufficient mass of products to satisfy the needs of everyone.”⁵⁴ Capitalist think that private property will lead to expanded production but communists think that abolishing private property will lead to expanded production. This makes sense as it would be difficult to sell people on an ideology that promised to leave them starving and in need. So not only is production not unique to capitalism but communism seems a poor alternative to any environmentalist criticism of capitalism because communism promises to massively exploit nature, just through a different mechanism.

Fascists also believe their way will maximize production and thus sell their ideology on this idea. “On 24 December 1928 Italy’s fascist regime launched

⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ Paul Sweezy, “The Principles of Communism,” Selected Works, Volume One, p. 81-97, Progress Publishers, Moscow (1969), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/11/prin-com.htm>

“Mussolini’s Law”, a fourteen-year national land reclamation programme aimed at turning Italy’s ‘death inducing’ swamps into fertile agricultural land (Desideri 1981). The Pontine Marshes, a marshland spreading across 75,000 hectares south of Rome was given top priority as an area that should be given over to agricultural production (Sottoriva 1977). The programme was directly linked to the need to increase the country’s food and fuel self-sufficiency after the sanctions imposed on Italy by the League of Nations. However, the fascist regime used an extensive propaganda machinery to promote the programme not as the outcome of economic necessity, but as a heroic quest for producing an ‘ideal’ fascist landscape within which the ‘ideal’ fascist man/woman could live and thrive. As the extensive land reclamation programme coincided with the establishment of a national cinematic propaganda institution, L’Unione Cinematografica Educativa (LUCE), the use of newsreels became a key means through which fascism promoted the tamed marshland as an ideal fascist landscape. During the project’s initial phase, the labour and capital spent on land reclamation was matched by the labour spent on producing its representation on the silver screen. Newsreels documented step by step the struggle to turn the ‘sterile’ nature of the marshes into a fertile landscape, with Mussolini himself often featuring, overseeing the project, or even working on the land. The newsreels were widely distributed for compulsory general viewing, celebrating the land reclamation project as one of fascism’s crowning achievements.”⁵⁵ Thus fascism also sells its project on maximizing production meaning again this emphasis on production is not unique to capitalism and so it is not unique to capitalism. (A quick aside, some capitalist authors do not sell capitalism on utilitarianism but on individual rights and so do not sell capitalism on maximizing production however these authors do agree that capitalism will increase production.) This should also show that focus on economic growth is not unique to capitalism but in case this is doubted.

Economic Growth

Economic growth is not unique to capitalism. Marx believed communism would lead to rapid economic growth that would provide for all people. “Marx’s belief that the costs of administration will diminish does not necessarily imply that there will be less government in the short-run, though his claim that these costs diminish “in proportion as the new society develops” does imply just this for the long-run. The transformation of the professional army into a people’s army and

⁵⁵ F. Caprotti & M Kaïka, *Producing the ideal fascist landscape: nature, materiality and the cinematic representation of land reclamation in the Pontine Marshes*, 9:6 SOC. & CULTURAL GEO. 613-634 (2008).

the low wages paid to all government functionaries (the example for this was set by the Commune) offer sufficient reason for the immediate drop in expenses of running a government. Despite all these inroads into the social product, the portion which goes to each individual is still larger than a worker's portion under capitalism. Besides rapid economic growth, this new prosperity is explained by the fact that the outsized shares of the product which went to capitalists, landlords, army officers, bureaucrats, and many industries now considered wasteful are divided among everyone. What each person receives directly as his/her share in the total product plus the welfare, etc. he/she gets as a citizen gives him/her a material existence that is both secure and comfortable."⁵⁶ Again this is intuitive as it would be difficult to sell the masses on a program of economic decline.

Fascists push for sufficient economic growth as to produce autarky or national self-sufficiency so fascist nations would not need to be dependent upon other countries. "Under fascism, the state, through official cartels, controlled all aspects of manufacturing, commerce, finance, and agriculture. Planning boards set product lines, production levels, prices, wages, working conditions, and the size of firms. Licensing was ubiquitous; no economic activity could be undertaken without government permission. Levels of consumption were dictated by the state, and "excess" incomes had to be surrendered as taxes or "loans." The consequent burdening of manufacturers gave advantages to foreign firms wishing to export. But since government policy aimed at autarky, or national self-sufficiency, protectionism was necessary: imports were barred or strictly controlled, leaving foreign conquest as the only avenue for access to resources unavailable domestically. Fascism was thus incompatible with peace and the international division of labor—hallmarks of liberalism. Fascism embodied corporatism, in which political representation was based on trade and industry rather than on geography. In this, fascism revealed its roots in syndicalism, a form of socialism originating on the left. The government cartelized firms of the same industry, with representatives of labor and management serving on myriad local, regional, and national boards—subject always to the final authority of the dictator's economic plan. Corporatism was intended to avert unsettling divisions within the nation, such as lockouts and union strikes. The price of such forced "harmony" was the loss of the ability to bargain and move about freely. To maintain high employment and minimize popular discontent, fascist governments also undertook massive public-works projects financed by steep taxes, borrowing, and fiat money creation. While many of these projects were domestic—roads,

⁵⁶ Bertell Ollman, "Marx's Vision of Communism," *Dialectical Marxism*, http://www.nyu.edu/projects/ollman/docs/vision_of_communism.php

buildings, stadiums—the largest project of all was militarism, with huge armies and arms production.” It makes sense that fascist economics would appeal to nations such as Germany who had been so soundly defeated and were then entangled in multiple state reparations projects. Again, it is clear economic growth is not unique to capitalism. It does seem that communism and capitalism both emphasize growth more than fascism but none of these systems ignore the need for growth.

Environmental Exploitation / Destruction

Environmental exploitation or destruction is not unique to capitalism. In fact, the environmental record of communism is abysmal and far worse than anything under alleged capitalist countries. “In many of these countries, the something more turned out to be the environment. Communism had a dismal record on the environment. By 1989, sulfurous skies were killing people across the Soviet bloc. Immediately after the end of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation classified one-sixth of its territory as uninhabitable because of pollution—yet the inhabitants had nowhere to go. Rivers were poisoned beyond anything found in western countries. The Aral Sea, in Central Asia, had become the prime example of “ecocide.”⁵⁷ Further, “The USSR killed 338,000 whales. Its relentless illegal whaling fleets drove the blue whale into extinction in the North Pacific and caused population crashes in a number of other species. Some have labeled it the worst environmental crime of the century, but it was really just a slow day for the USSR whose other contributions to the environment included destroying one of the four largest lakes in the world (“One of the worst environmental disasters of the world”: UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon) and multiple nuclear disasters culminating in Chernobyl (the world’s worst nuclear disaster). The USSR was determined to show that communism could defeat capitalism and while it couldn’t beat the United States in industrial production, it took home the gold medal for environmental disasters. By the end, 75 percent of its surface water was polluted and its air was among the dirtiest in the world.”⁵⁸

Soviet satellite countries had a similar, horrific environmental record “When the Berlin Wall came down and the Iron Curtain was finally lifted to expose the inner workings of communism to Western eyes, one of the more shocking discoveries was the nightmarish scale of environmental destruction. The statistics for East

⁵⁷ Dellapenna, Joseph W., "Behind the Red Curtain: Environmental Concerns and the End of Communism" 152 (2010) <http://digitalcommons.law.villanova.edu/wps/art152>

⁵⁸ Daniel Greenfield, “Save the Environment from the Socialist,” *Frontpage Magazine*, Sept. 30, 2014

Germany alone tell a horrific tale: at the time of its reunification with West Germany an estimated 42 percent of moving water and 24 percent of still waters were so polluted that they could not be used to process drinking water, almost half of the country's lakes were considered dead or dying and unable to sustain fish or other forms of life, and only one-third of industrial sewage along with half of domestic sewage received treatment. An estimated 44 percent of East German forests were damaged by acid rain — little surprise given that the country produced proportionally more sulphur dioxide, carbon dioxide, and coal dust than any other in the world. In some areas of East Germany the level of air pollution was between eight and twelve times greater than that found in West Germany, and 40 percent of East Germany's population lived in conditions that would have justified a smog warning across the border. Only one power station in East Germany had the necessary equipment to clean sulphur from emissions. Sten Nilsson, a Swedish forest ecologist who was kicked out of East Germany in 1986 for his efforts at collecting data on the health of its forests, said in April 1990 that many forests were "dead, completely" and described the country as "on the verge of total ecological collapse." The environmental policy of the communist government, according to then Environment Minister Karl-Hermann Steinberg in 1990, "was not only badly designed but didn't exist."⁵⁹

Oddly Mao in China went to war with the environment. Moreover, the idea fit in quite well with Mao's hard-line totalitarian Communist ideology. Marx himself was far from an environmentalist, proclaiming that nature should be fully exploited by humans for production purposes (a legacy which may explain China's poor environmental track record to this very day). Now, while the Chinese citizens were called upon to wage war against all four of these pests, the government was particularly annoyed by the sparrow, or more specifically, the Eurasian Tree Sparrow. The Chinese were having a rough go of it as it was, adapting to collectivization and the re-invention of farming, so they felt particularly victimized by this bird which had a particular fondness for eating grain seeds. Chinese scientists had calculated that each sparrow consumed 4.5kg of grain each year — and that for every million sparrows killed, there would be food for 60,000 people. Armed with this information, Mao launched the Great Sparrow Campaign to address the problem. To accomplish this task, Chinese citizens were mobilized in massive numbers to eradicate the birds by forcing them to fly until they fell from exhaustion. The Chinese people took to the streets clanging their pots and pans or beating drums to terrorize the birds and prevent them from landing. Nests were torn down, eggs were broken, chicks killed, and

⁵⁹ Colin Grabow, "If You Think Communism Is Bad For People, Check Out What It Did To The Environment," THE FEDERALIST, Jan. 13, 2014

sparrows shot down from the sky. Experts estimate that hundreds of millions of sparrows were killed as part of the campaign.”⁶⁰ The results of this were disastrous for the environment and the people. Additionally, “According to the Worldwatch Institute, more than 90 percent of the trees in the pine forests in China’s Sichuan province have died because of air pollution. In Chungking, the biggest city in southwest China, a 4, 500-acre forest has been reduced by half. Acid rain has reportedly caused massive crop losses. There also have been reports of waterworks and landfill projects severely hampering fish migration. Fish breeding was so seriously neglected that fish has largely vanished from the national diet. Depletion of government-owned forests has turned them into deserts, and millions of acres of grazing and farm land in the northern Chinese plains were made alkaline and unproductive during the "Great Leap Forward." Clearly, communism is not an alternative to protecting the environment. Additionally, to believe that only capitalism is anthropocentric and exploitative of the environment is to ignore history and even Marx’s writings.

The environmental record of the fascists in Italy is better than that of the communists, but still the environment was only a secondary concern and they did their fair share of environmental damage. “The ruralizing tendency was not confined to the level of ideology. The 1928 “Mussolini Act” launched a large-scale land improvement campaign which included measures to reduce urban sprawl and discourage monocropping in agriculture. Overseen by Arrigo Serpieri (1877-1960), the campaign emphasized protection of the soil and non-mechanized methods of cultivation. It was accompanied by reforestation measures and the establishment of wildlife preserves in the Alps and Apennines. Such efforts were offset, however, by other fascist projects like the “Battle of Grain,” an attempt to increase wheat productivity which stimulated an increased reliance on machinery and artificial fertilizers. Perhaps the best-known instance of fascist policy toward the land was the draining of the Pontine Marshes south of Rome. The malarial fens were replaced by meadows and grasslands, as well as agricultural plots, and new villages were built as symbols of rejuvenated peasant values. On balance, Italian fascist policy toward the land had decidedly mixed results. While erosion control, water quality, and public health sometimes improved, the regime’s environmentally friendly programs were curtailed or abandoned when the exigencies of militarization became too pressing. Much of the impetus toward ruralization gave way before the urban and industrial trends that prevailed in many countries during the fascist era. Above all, Italian fascism’s ecological proclivities were subordinated to its drive toward national aggrandizement and

⁶⁰ George Dvorsky, “China’s Worst Self-Inflicted Environmental Disaster: The Campaign to Wipe Out the Common Sparrow,” (2012).

imperial expansion. Fascist ecology remained primarily fascist and only secondarily ecological.”⁶¹ Thus environmental exploitation or destruction is not unique to capitalism.

Competition

Competition or engaging in competition is not a link to capitalism because it is not unique to capitalism. This section requires some prefacing because ‘being competitive’ is a broad concept and can apply in a variety of areas and contexts. Explicitly Karl Marx condemned competition and thought it would lead to destruction under capitalism as companies competed themselves into bankruptcy and monopoly. Accordingly Marx advocated a more cooperative system. That said, clearly the USA and the USSR were ‘competitive’ with each other during the cold war in everything from the Olympics, to the Space Race, to nuclear and hegemonic dominance, and economic growth. Both sides attempting to prove to the world the superiority of their own world view. In China, while communist doctrine espoused cooperation, fostering a competitive ethic was common in Soviet schools to motivate academic achievement with winners of these competitions being celebrated and awarded prizes.⁶²

In fact, competition is and was fierce in communist countries. It is just not competition for consumers. It is competition for power. Bojidar Marinov describes conditions in Bulgaria. “For all the Marxist talk against competition as the ultimate evil of capitalism, Communist societies were not free from competition. To the contrary, competition there was even more brutal, more vicious, and more materialistically motivated than the market competition of capitalism. Ambitious men will always want control over economic resources. When that control is possible only through serving the consumers, they will work hard to serve the consumers; as it is in a free market. When, as it is in a socialist society, control is possible only by capturing the levers of power, competition will be about who captures those levers. Education was probably the field where that competition raged to its maximum. The Communist school system was strictly stratified; after seventh grade students were separated according to their intellectual performance into different schools. One type of schools was what was called *gimnazia*, the more academic type, where a rather theoretical, scientific, and academic education was given. Another was a *technicum*, which was a vocational school, with more practical training. Admission to university was much more difficult for graduates of the second type of school, for the university

⁶¹ Peter Staudenmaier, “Fascism,” Marquette University, Jan. 1, 2004.

⁶² Susan L. Shark “Competitive Comrades: Career Incentives and Student Strategies in China,”

was just an extension -- in terms of principles of teaching -- of the gimnasia. University education, of course, made access to the ruling bureaucracy much easier. The bureaucracy which wasn't just a bureaucracy in the Western meaning of the word, but a virtual owner of all economic resources. The nomenclatura (from Latin, "list of names," as in the joke, "power is in the people, and we know the names of the people"). The Communist school, then, was from very early years a field of fierce competition, starting from ages 10-12. Some of it was fair, intellectual, academic competition. Some of it was unfair: behind-the-scenes, pulling the other person down to the common level, as in the proverbial bucket with crabs. All of it was motivated by the constant fear that if, in your climbing the ladder, you stopped for a minute to catch your breath, you would lose the race. The individual was lost. Only those few students who made it to the top of the ladder that had been set up by the government had the right to call themselves successful. Even they could only get there by losing their individuality. The Soviet Man was a man with disproportionally large elbows and without a face. The system collapsed."⁶³ This is what Ayn Rand describes as the aristocracy of pull, in other words, a world where people compete not for money but for political favors, political office, and political power. This is not meant as a criticism but an observation that people seemingly will compete for whatever rewards are available and history has demonstrated that this is so in all types of systems. Thus being competitive is not unique to capitalism, and it is difficult to imagine an alternative world where people do not compete. The onus of proof on the advocate of any alternative purporting to totally abandon competition thus has a substantial burden to prove this eschewing of competition is even possible to accomplish.

Reproducing the Status Quo

Reproducing the status quo is not unique to capitalism. This is illustrated benignly by Konrad Putzier for World Policy describing Putin. He writes, "In the 19th century, the Tsar was widely regarded as a caring ruler by his subjects, often affectionately called "little father". Standing above the law, he could punish but also pardon. The belief that the Tsar was something akin to a father figure who was there for his subjects when they needed him most was an important pillar of the autocracy's popularity. Stalin later built on this Tsarist tradition, calling himself "father of the people" and often posing for photos with children on his lap. The various letters written to Stalin in the 1930s by ordinary citizens asking for help or pardon show how deeply ingrained the image of the caring ruler had become in Russian public consciousness. By showing supposed kindness towards

⁶³ Bojidar Marinov, "Communism's Unintended Competition," The Ron Paul Curriculum.

his enemies, Putin is trying to become the father figure Stalin and numerous Tsars have successfully embodied. This imagery is enhanced by its link to another Tsarist tradition—blaming failures on subordinates.”⁶⁴ In other words all three different systems are not all that different in essentials. Of course they were run by different people, had different policies, targeted different people for different reasons, etc. but all three are characterized by a strong central government, repression, political violence, and economic difficulties. The rule of Russia has not been very different for well over a century despite officially different regimes. This does seem to reproduce the status quo.

It is difficult to identify exactly what academics, and those who parrot them, mean by reproducing the status quo as much changes with new leaders, new policies, new technologies, etc., but it does seem that holding on to power for multiple decades would be an indication of, just that, holding on to power. Perhaps this belies an American bias where presidents only hold power for eight years and political parties rarely hold office for more than three consecutive four-year terms but decades of power does seem like it could be described as reproducing the status quo. The communist party has held power in China for sixty-six years, the regime in North Korea has reigned for seventy years, Cuban communists have held on to power for fifty-six years, the communist government in Laos has held on to power for forty years, and Vietnam’s communist government has held on to power for the same length of time as Laos. There are examples of other communist countries that held on to power for a couple of decades before collapsing but the point seems made that reproducing the status quo is not unique to capitalism. The multiple examples of collapsed communist revolutions (there are only five communist countries left in the world) should cast doubt on the viability of communism as an alternative.

Privilege

Privilege is not unique to capitalism. One recent common criticism of Western, especially American, society is that there is a built in bias or favoritism toward white citizens. This favoritism or bias is called privilege. There are other types of privilege in society that might be a link but the crucial point being argued by the capitalism kritik is that capitalism somehow uniquely upholds privilege and so bites the kritik. However, privilege existed in Communist countries as well. Dr. Kelly Hignett describes the privilege that existed in the communist Eastern Bloc writing, “When the communists assumed power across Eastern Europe in the aftermath of WWII, their stated intention was to create a new, more democratic

⁶⁴ Konrad Putzier, “Putin, The Man Who Would Be Tsar,” WORLD POLICY BLOG, Aug. 5, 2013

and egalitarian society. However, a gulf quickly became evident between the political elite and the masses. In the 1950s Yugoslav partisan and communist leader turned dissident Milovan Đilas openly condemned the emergence of what he described as a 'New Class' in communist Eastern Europe, comprised of the privileged political elite.[1] In post-war Eastern Europe, it was soon widely recognised that membership of the communist party didn't just give you political standing, but also provided access to numerous socio-economic advantages. Possession of a party card opened the door to numerous 'perks', including the allocation of a superior standard of accommodation, access to special shops (containing domestically produced goods in short supply and imported luxury items from the West) and holidays in special health resorts. Little wonder then, that many people have subsequently justified their decision to join the East European communist parties, as motivated not by any genuine ideological or political commitment, but simply to 'get along in life'. The higher up the power structure you climbed, the more levels of privilege reached ridiculous proportions. While official salary levels among the nomenklatura (communist-era bureaucrats) remained relatively low in monetary terms, in practice communist officials could supplement their basic income through corruption, bribery and blat, and they also enjoyed a range of other 'perks.'"⁶⁵

This privilege also existed in the USSR itself. "There was a time when a lot of people really believed that whatever its faults the Soviet Union was on the way to creating a society free of exploitation and class distinctions. Everybody knows better now. Almost 30 years have passed since Milovan Djilas, one-time Tito intimate and veteran Yugoslav Communist, shocked the world by writing a book, "The New Class," in which he charged that a new feudalism had arisen in communist countries. The new ruling class, he said, was a self-aggrandizing oligarchy made up of the communist political and managerial elite. The disillusioned Djilas' premise, though big news at the time, is generally accepted nowadays inside and outside the Soviet Union. Everybody knows that--despite all their talk of creating an egalitarian, classless society--communists are no different from other people when it comes to feathering their own nests. Them that has get. However, the existence of an organized system of privilege was not openly discussed in the Soviet Union until it broke into the open at the recent congress of the Soviet Communist Party."⁶⁶ And this privilege was explicit, hereditary, and had the force of law. "Formally, disparities in pay are very narrow. Politburo

⁶⁵ Dr Kelly Hignett, "Power and Privilege: Elite Lifestyles in Communist Eastern Europe," *The View East*, April 23, 2012

⁶⁶ Ernest Conine, "Soviet Privileged Class Is Under Fire : Perks of Party Elite Confront Gorbachev With Dilemma," *LA TIMES*, March 17, 1986

members collect paychecks that are not much larger than those for skilled workers. But, in fact , party leaders and functionaries--as well as leading writers, artists and technocrats--enjoy perks and privileges beyond the wildest dreams of the average Ivan. Members of the so-called nomenklatura , numbering perhaps a million, have special holiday retreats, access to special medical facilities and--most resented by ordinary Russians--access to special stores that sell imported and Soviet-made goods that are simply not available in the regular stores. Many also have cars and chauffeurs. As a practical matter, the privileges are hereditary, since children of the elite have an inside track on admission to the top universities--graduation from which guarantees them good jobs and a place on the nomenklatura list.⁶⁷

The privilege experienced by China's elite communists even includes better air why than the non-privileged. "Membership in the upper ranks of the Chinese Communist Party has always had a few undeniable advantages. There are the state-supplied luxury sedans, special schools for the young ones and even organic produce grown on well-guarded, government-run farms. When they fall ill, senior leaders can check into 301 Military Hospital, long considered the capital's premier medical institution. But even in their most addled moments of envy, ordinary Beijingers could take some comfort in the knowledge that the soupy air they breathe on especially polluted days also finds its way into the lungs of the privileged and pampered. Such assumptions, it seems, are not entirely accurate. As it turns out, the homes and offices of many top leaders are filtered by high-end devices, at least according to a Chinese company, the Broad Group, which has been promoting its air-purifying machines in advertisements that highlight their ubiquity in places where many officials work and live."⁶⁸

The privilege in fascist regimes is too obvious to bother providing much support. It is clear that privilege exists in societies other than capitalist societies and so privilege is not unique to capitalism.

Private Property

The existence or protection of private property is not unique to capitalism. Despite communist theory condemning private property the communists in the USSR did protect and respect private property. "The material wealth of many Soviet citizens has increased greatly over the past decade and will continue to

⁶⁷ *Id.*

⁶⁸ Andrew Jacobs, "The Privileges of China's Elite Include Purified Air," N.Y. TIMES, Nov. 4, 2011

increase. Many own their own homes⁵³ ownership of durable consumer goods is becoming widespread;⁴ savings accounts are at an all time high.- The Soviet constitution and the established legal framework provide for private ownership on a broad scale, although private commercial activity is severely restricted.⁶ Does the present system of Soviet law grant the property-owner adequate security against uncompensated loss of his property to state agencies or private individuals? Are changes likely to occur in the immediate future that would either jeopardize or reinforce such security as is now afforded? In the 1920's, constantly shifting economic policy led alternately to confiscation and denationalization of property on a large scale.⁷ However, by the time of the Stalin constitution, a comparatively stable policy had been reached as to what types of property were to be in private hands. At present a Soviet citizen may have cash, government bonds and savings-bank deposits in unlimited amounts. He may own consumer goods of any sort. He may receive income from patents and copyrights.' The constitution recognizes the institution of privately-owned housing."⁶⁹

Private property rights are not protected well in communist China but this is less ideology and more a result of bad policy. "The process of transferring social property to private is shaking the Communist Party and the country, destabilizing social relations. This instability creates a serious risk. For security reasons, then, the Communist Party of China has chosen a less direct and sudden path for the transition. Property rights can be separated into user rights (usufruct) and seller rights. Separation of these components of property rights can be seen as a major characteristic of China's economic reform. This creates a major ambiguity, especially as applied to land and buildings which stand on the land. The Constitution states very clearly that all land belong to the state. But Article 2 of the Law of Real Estate says that anyone can obtain land-use rights to develop real estate, and that this land-use right can be transferred. This distinction leads to complex and ambiguous "ownership." For example, houses can be bought and sold. But for many of the Chinese families I have visited, permanent certificates of ownership and 30-year certificates of right of land use are held by different people! Some families only have the first certificate. Some have neither certificate, but had paid some money to "buy" the house; this is called an "implicit contract." I asked the families with no permanent certificates what they expect to happen at the end of 30 years; apparently, nobody thinks about this question. But I told them that I wanted to get some ideas from them. The answer is usually the same: "I can sell my house before the end of the day, because I am

⁶⁹ Pater B. Maggs, "The Security of Individually Owned Property Under Soviet Law," DUKE L.J. (1961).

the owner of the house. Currently, we do sell our house in this way; we never need to know the land-use right. It is useless.” For further understanding of this ambiguity of ownership, I visited some other officials in China. I investigated two very interesting cases.”⁷⁰ The system seemingly gets more complicated from there but the point is not that the system is complicated, it is simply that a system exists in communist China. By definition property rights exist to some degree under fascism (see CC part I). Thus it is clear that even private property is not unique to capitalism.

Banking & Credit

Banking and credit are not unique to capitalism. Lenin himself wrote of the importance of banking to a socialist system writing, “Without big banks socialism would be impossible. The big banks are the ‘state apparatus’ which we need to bring about socialism... A single State Bank, the biggest of the big, with branch—in every rural district, in every factory, will constitute as much as nine-tenths of the socialist apparatus. This will be countrywide book-keeping, country-wide accounting of the production and distribution of goods, this will be, so to speak, something in the nature of the skeleton of socialist society.”⁷¹ The Soviets listened to Lenin. What follows is a description of Soviet Banking. “The Statute of the State Bank of the RSFSR, passed by VTsIK on October 13, 1921, said that it was an economic organisation established “to assist by credit and other banking operations the development of industry, agriculture and goods turnover and also the concentration of monetary turnovers and the implementation of other measures designed to establish proper money circulation”. The bank had the right to extend loans to industrial and commercial enterprises based on different forms of ownership, farms and self-employed handicraftsmen “only if they were solvent and their financing was economically justified”. The State Bank was a part of the People’s Commissariat of Finance (Narkomfin), directly accountable to the People’s Commissar (Minister) of Finance. In November 1921 the State Bank was granted the exclusive right to conduct operations with foreign currency and valuables. It also set the official price of precious metals and the official exchange rate, regulating private trade in gold, silver and foreign currency on stock exchanges and cheques and bills of exchange drawn in foreign currency, which were permitted in 1922.”⁷²

⁷⁰ Yan Qin and Yunbo Zhou, “Transformation of Property Rights in China,” 4:2 INT’L REV. OF BUSI. RESEARCH PAPERS (Mar. 2008).

⁷¹ Lenin, CW. Vol, 26, p, 106; emphasis in the original.

⁷² Master & Margarita, “The State Bank of the USSR,” Article from the website of the Bank of Russia of the USSR in the Soviet Union

The Chinese modeled this same system. “The Chinese banking system in the pre-1978 reform followed the Soviet Union’s Model. Under the central planning system, funds were provided by the state budget and the banking system. The People’s Bank of China headed this system as a source of funds to support state enterprises when they tried to achieve the output goals of the central plan. With this type of accommodating credit policy, the People’s Bank of China acted as a monobank (functioning as both central bank and commercial bank) and had little impact on the allocation of resources in China (Bell et al., 1993; Wolken, 1990). During the 1980s, the People’s Bank of China was allowed to grant medium- and short-term equipment loans because the post-Mao reform required productive units to pay for their resources used in the production process in addition to the resources allocated by the government. In addition, the branches of the People’s Bank of China were given greater autonomy and independence in their credit activities such as increasing the amount of loans if the branches increased their deposits. The bank was also allowed to make loans to street cooperatives, factory cooperatives, and individuals to start small-scale enterprises (Hsiao, 1984; Wolken, 1990). Finally, in January 1984, the People’s Bank was established as a central bank, and its commercial banking functions were transferred to a newly created bank, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China. As China’s central bank, the People’s Bank instituted a deposit reserve system in 1985 and started to develop the nation’s monetary policy, supervise its implementation, control the issuance and circulation of currency, determine interest rates, assist in setting foreign exchange rates, and formulate and ratify the individual plans for credit rationing for the specialized banks under its control (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1989; Wolken, 1990; World Bank, 1988). The specialized banks (e.g., the Agricultural Bank of China, the Communications Bank of China) were gradually allowed to engage in general banking activities.”⁷³

The Nazis, of course, used banking as well. “To the Nazis, preparing for total war, the inherited banking mechanism was inadequate. Instead of leaving to interest rates and the deposit-generating decisions of the banking system the determination of the volume of funds available for short- and long-term use, the German government saw to it that the Central Bank and other credit institutions provided whatever funds were considered necessary. Instead of permitting the market mechanism to set interest rates, the government fixed them in terms of its politico-military requirements. Instead of depending upon the mechanism of the market for the allocation of funds, the government used special devices to siphon accumulated funds into desired channels. Direct controls made new private

⁷³ Kuotsai Tom Liou, *MANAGING ECONOMIC REFORMS IN POST MAO CHINA* 39-40 (1998)

investment through the capital market either completely impossible or subject to government approval. Credit institutions in the capital market found their status completely altered. Instead of making important investment decisions, and determining the use to which their funds were to be put, they merely had to provide the technical facilities for covering government expenditure or financing new investment, the volume and composition of which had been previously settled by the government. Institutions in the money market did not fare much better. There the banks may have retained a little more authority, but the changes in their prerogatives and limitations upon their authority were drastic.”⁷⁴ Thus clearly banking is used in multiple economic systems and so to criticize system as capitalist because it uses banking or credit necessarily fails because we cannot be certain that banking or credit is more capitalist than not.

Wages

Wages or employers provision of wages is not unique to capitalism. The Soviets paid workers in wages as well. “Wages in the Soviet Union were supposed to conform to Marx's notion of the lower stage of communist society in which workers would be paid according to their contributions to the social product and on the basis of equal rewards for equal work. Factors taken into account in the assignment of wage levels typically included the arduousness and dangerousness of work, skill levels or necessary qualifications, and the degree of responsibility. Occupations in which women predominated, such as teaching, medicine, infant care, cleaning, and clerical and sales work, invariably were graded below male-dominated occupations. In early 1918 Lenin advocated the use of piece-work as opposed to time-based wages as an appropriate system to stimulate labor discipline and productivity. He also grudgingly acknowledged the necessity of paying specialists (e.g., managers and engineers) more than ordinary workers. Although these policies were opposed by the Left Communist faction and many rank-and-file Bolsheviks, they were incorporated into the wage scales constructed by respective trade unions. During the years of war communism, labor was in effect an obligatory service to the embattled state, which in turn assumed the responsibility to provide work and at least a caloric minimum in the form of employee rations. Payment in kind was ubiquitous, and no sooner did workers receive their wage than they repaired to the black market to barter it for other goods.”⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Otto Nathan, “The Banking System in the Nazi Military and War Economy,” *Nazi War Finance and Banking*, April 1944

⁷⁵ SIEGELBAUM, LEWIS H. "Wages, Soviet." *Encyclopedia of Russian History* (2004), Encyclopedia.com. Apr. 30, 2015 <http://www.encyclopedia.com>.

The communists in China also pay laborers wages. Mao discussed his wage system in a published series just before he died. “Two years before his death, Chairman Mao published a series of sayings about wage grades, such as: “China is a socialist country, about the same as capitalism before liberation. Now it still implements an eight-grade wage scale, distribution according to work, and monetary exchange. These follow past society and do not have much difference”. He even warned: “Compared with the Guomindang [Chinese Nationalists] this is not as good.” [quoted from Mao Zedong, “About the key points of a talk on theoretical questions,” December, 1974]. Just before his death Chairman Mao said: “All my life I did two [mistaken] things [The first was to let Chiang Kaishek escape to Taiwan, something everyone agreed with.] The other thing was to start the Cultural Revolution, which few (leading cadre) approved of and many opposed.” Grades and graded wages, which formed the bureaucratic system, are the basic cause that created this result.”⁷⁶

The fascists in Italy also relied on wages (as did the Nazis but Italy’s example should suffice). “The original feature of Italy’s labor market was its direct and coercive control by the Fascist regime, which exogenously set wages. In particular, the 1930s labor policies aimed at keeping wages, deflated by consumer prices, constant at a subsistence level corresponding to around 15 lire (1938 prices) (Zamagni, 1976, p. 337). Therefore, initially as a consequence of the massive deflation due to the return to the gold standard, the government enacted a series of wage cuts in order to maintain this target, but also to accommodate the industrialists’ requests of keeping their profits unvaried, notwithstanding the fall in prices. When the Great Depression then broke out, the new reason for introducing these measures was that, to keep employment levels constant, the workers’ purchasing power had to be sacrificed. In the industrial sector, the first cut, introduced by law, was of 20 per cent in 1927 with further cuts undertaken in 1930 (8 per cent), 1933 and 1934 (cumulatively, another 10 per cent).”⁷⁷ So again, it is clear wages or that payment in wages is not unique to capitalism.

Imperialism

Imperialism is not unique to capitalism. The communists in the Soviet politburo were aggressive imperialists. “The fact that 24,355,500 non-Russian people have

⁷⁶ Klaas V, “The Wage Grade System – The Breeding Ground of Revisionism,” Anti-Imperialism.com, June 10, 2013

⁷⁷ Claire Giordano, Gustavo Piga & Giovanni Trovato, “Fascist price and wage policies and Italy’s Industrial Great Depression,” *MACROECONOMIC DYNAMICS* (2014).

been taken into Soviet Russia since 1939 does not seem particularly impressive until it is realized that they constitute a population greater than the total of Canada, Sweden, New Zealand, and Norway. Moreover, the 273,947 square miles of territory acquired at the same time exceeds in area all of France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Portugal combined. Beyond these acquisitions. Soviet influence has probed deep into Central Europe and radiated throughout all of China. Furthermore, along a 2000-mile southern frontier from the western shore of the Black Sea to India, the USSR has maintained a relentless pressure for outlets to the warm seas and decisive influence in the affairs of Asia. Today, whether motivated by a search for security or an expansionist drive, the decisions of the Politburo in international relations affect not only the mute millions of the Soviet Empire but virtually every being on the globe. The expansion of the Soviet Union has not all been by direct aggression. Both the United States and Great Britain, compelled by the necessities of war, approved beforehand a large part of Russia's territorial gains. However, with these possible exceptions, Soviet policy has been extremely enterprising and presumptuous in any negotiations affecting territory."⁷⁸ This just describes the imperialism of the Soviets up to 1950, before Vietnam, Afghanistan, and others.

The Soviet communists were not the only imperialist communists. The Chinese were also imperialist. "The implementation of this agreement resulted in China's support for Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh and, in October 1950, massive intervention in the Korean War, making Mao's China a "front-line soldier" fighting against the U.S. imperialists.[7] Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, East Asia continued to be a main focus of the Cold War. While China was playing a central role in the two Taiwan Strait crises and the Vietnam War -- the longest "hot" war during the Cold War period -- the strategic attention of the United States, following the assumption that China was a more daring enemy than the Soviet Union, became increasingly fixed on East Asia."⁷⁹ Apologists for the communists regimes might claim many of these policies were only done to defend against capitalist imperialism but that is exactly how capitalists defend their imperialism. If imperialism is extending power through diplomacy or military force, the Soviets and the Chinese were imperialists.

⁷⁸ E. Day Carman, *Soviet Imperialism Russia's Drive Toward World Domination*, PUBLIC AFFAIRS PRESS (1950)

⁷⁹ Chen Jian, *MAO'S CHINA AND THE COLD WAR* (2001)

Imperialism is as old as Ancient Greece, China, Persia, and Ancient Rome.⁸⁰ Imperialism has been practiced by many countries since then with all types of economic systems. “Russia, Italy, Germany, the United States, and Japan were added as newcomers among the imperialistic states, and indirect, especially financial, control became a preferred form of imperialism. For a decade after World War I the great expectations for a better world inspired by the League of Nations put the problem of imperialism once more in abeyance. Then Japan renewed its empire building with an attack in 1931 upon China, and under the leadership of the totalitarian states, Japan, Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union, a new period of imperialism was inaugurated in the 1930s and ’40s.”⁸¹ More telling, imperialism has been opposed by economists and theorists from all sides as well. “In their modern form, arguments about the causes and value of imperialism can be classified into four main groups. The first group contains economic arguments and often turns around the question of whether or not imperialism pays. Those who argue that it does point to the human and material resources and the outlets for goods, investment capital, and surplus population provided by an empire. Their opponents, among them Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and J.A. Hobson, often admit that imperialism may benefit a small, favoured group but never the nation as a whole. Marxist theoreticians interpret imperialism as a late stage of capitalism when the national capitalist economy has become monopolistic and is forced to conquer outlets for its overproduction and surplus capital in competition with other capitalist states. This is the view held, for instance, by Vladimir Lenin and N.I. Bukharin, to whom capitalism and imperialism are identical.”⁸² So capitalist, communist, and fascist countries have all engaged in imperialism and capitalist and communist writers have all opposed this imperialism. Clearly imperialism is not unique to capitalism.

Big Business

Big business is not unique to capitalism. Recently The Moscow Times reported that, “The Soviet Union's biggest toy store reopened to a new generation of children on Tuesday with a burst of ceremonial pomp and patriotic fervor. With more than 100 stores spread over 73,000 square meters and seven stories, the Central Children's Store — really a shopping mall centered on the theme of childhood — is the biggest complex of children's stores in the world, according to Hals-Development, the subsidiary of state banking group VTB that transformed

⁸⁰ Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s. v. "imperialism", accessed May 02, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/283988/imperialism>.

⁸¹ *Id.*

⁸² *Id.*

the building's interior. The mall also reportedly boasts the biggest clock in the world, whose 5 tons of metal solemnly launched into motion on Tuesday before an audience of more than 1,000 people, among them Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin. A project of Soviet architect Alexei Dushkin, who also designed several well-known Moscow metro stations, the store was opened in 1957 under the name Detsky Mir, or Children's World. According to Natalya Dushkina, a professor at the Moscow Institute of Architecture who is also Dushkin's granddaughter, the building had clear symbolic value. "It was a symbol in a country that had lost a huge number of people during [World War II], and of course the meaning of this building is that children, many children must be here," Dushkina said.⁸³ Of course one must infer from this that for a Soviet toy store to reopen it must have existed during the Soviet era in the Soviet Union.

Of course with the Soviet Union being communist, businesses were mostly controlled by the state but this did not preclude the existence of big business. Ford signed an agreement to produce cars in the Soviet Union in 1929.⁸⁴ PepsiCo also signed an agreement to produce soft drinks and open Pizza Huts in the Soviet Union not too long before the Soviet Union collapsed.⁸⁵ It was not simply American firms that signed up for business with the Soviet Union. Other Western business did as well. "Industrial cooperation agreements may be quite complex. For example, a few years ago Parsons Whittemore, a French subsidiary of a United States firm, agreed with the Soviet foreign trade organization Prommashimport to build a \$160 million pulp and paper complex at Ust-Ulim in Siberia, for which 35 French firms were to supply equipment for various processes. Prommash-import, acting as a commission agent for various Soviet economic organizations, was to pay for the initial imports of equipment and technology over a period of approximately eight years by exporting a portion of the expected annual output of 500,000 tons of cellulose. In addition, Parsons Whittemore was to purchase 85,000 tons annually for sale in France and other Western European countries.¹³ Another agreement that has attracted wide publicity is the undertaking in 1973 by Armand Hammer's Occidental Petroleum, together with Chemico, to build a chemical fertilizer complex in the Soviet Union, with commitments to purchase four million tons of ammonia, urea, and potash

⁸³ Delphine d'Amora, "Soviet Union's Top Toy Store Back in Business," *The Moscow Times*, March 31, 2015

⁸⁴ History.com Staff, "Ford signs agreement with the Soviet Union," *History.com*, A+E Networks, 2010

⁸⁵ Michael Parkss, "Doing Business : Bloc-Buster Deal : Pepsico's \$3-billion-plus Soviet expansion was the 'deal of the century.' Then, the deal crumbled along with the country. Here's how Pepsi put it back together." *L.A. TIMES*, July 21, 1992

over a 20-year period, while the Soviets will purchase from Occidental Petroleum one million tons of super phosphoric acid." Many other similar arrangements could be mentioned, such as the recent agreement of a West German steel consortium to build an iron and steel plant near Kursk at a total cost of \$2.2 billion, and the purchase over a 10-year period some millions of tons of iron-ore pellets and steel products (subsequently, the Soviet side agreed to pay cash instead). Also impressive are various Soviet-Japanese deals to develop timber resources in the Soviet Far East and Siberia, with Japan agreeing to provide hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of timber-production equipment in return for timber.¹⁸⁶

Business and trade between the US and China was limited but this was due more because of an embargo on trade put in place by the US government and largely supported by American business (whether for idealistic or pragmatic perceptual concerns) rather than any Chinese communist policy. The Chinese communists were open to business. "In Geneva, a Chinese official said that the Chinese door was wide open to U.S. businessmen: "We are prepared to conduct business transactions with the United States industrial and trade circles whenever possible." That official also claimed that "not a few United States corporations and manufactures have expressed their high hopes of doing business with China. We support such aspirations."⁸⁷ That embargo was lifted in part by President Nixon⁸⁸ and since then Americana big business has spread all over currently still communist China. Here is just a list of American companies doing business in China whose companies names start with the letter A. "AT&T, Abercrombe & Fitch, Abbott Laboratories, Acer Electronics, Ademco Security, Adidas, ADI Security, AGI- American Gem Institute, AIG Financial, Agrilink Foods, Inc. (ProFac), Allergan Laboratories, American Eagle Outfitters, American Standard, American Tourister, Ames Tools, Amphenol Corporation, Amway Corporation, Analog Devices, Inc., Apple Computer, Armani, Armour Meats, Ashland Chemical, Ashley Furniture, Associated Grocers, Audi Motors, AudioVox, AutoZone, Inc., & Avon."⁸⁹ There are many, many more.

⁸⁶ Harold J. Berman, *Joint Ventures Between United States Firms and Soviet Economic Organizations*, 1:2 MD. J. OF INT'L L. (1976).

⁸⁷ Kailai Huang, "American Business and The China Trade Embargo in the 1950's," *Essays in Economic and Business History* (2001)

⁸⁸ Carroll Kilpatrick, "U.S. Ends Ban on China Trade; Items Are Listed," WASHINGTON POST, June 11, 1971

⁸⁹ Shipping database. US Customs database. Chinese government publications/database, http://www.jiesworld.com/international_corporations_in_china.htm

Famously many American big businesses did business with fascist Germany. These include Chase Bank, Ford, Random House, Kodak, Coca-Cola, Allianz, Novartis, Nestle & General Electric.⁹⁰ Jacques R. Pauwels elaborates on this, “The Nazi rearmament program revealed itself as a wonderful window of opportunity for the subsidiaries of US corporations. Ford claims that its Ford-Werke was discriminated against by the Nazi regime because of its foreign ownership, but acknowledges that in the second half of the 1930s its Cologne subsidiary was “formally certified [by the Nazi authorities] ... as being of German origin” and therefore “eligible to receive government contracts.” (Research Findings, 21) Ford took advantage of this opportunity, though the government orders were almost exclusively for military equipment. Ford’s German branch plant had posted heavy losses in the early 1930s, however, with lucrative government contracts thanks to Hitler’s rearmament drive, the Ford-Werke’s annual profits rose spectacularly from 63,000 Reichsmarks in 1935 to 1,287,800 RM in 1939. GM’s Opel factory in Rüsselsheim near Mainz fared even better. Its share of the German automobile market grew from 35 per cent in 1933 to more than 50 per cent in 1935, and the GM subsidiary, which had lost money in the early 1930s, became extremely profitable thanks to the economic boom caused by Hitler’s rearmament program. Earnings of 35 million RM — almost 14 million dollars (US) — were recorded in 1938. (Research Findings, 135–6; and Billstein et al., 24) 10 In 1939, on the eve of the war, the chairman of GM, Alfred P. Sloan, publicly justified doing business in Hitler’s Germany by pointing to the highly profitable nature of GM’s operations under the Third Reich. 11 Yet another American corporation that enjoyed a bonanza in Hitler’s Third Reich was IBM. Its German subsidiary, Dehomag, provided the Nazis with the punch-card machine — forerunner of the computer — required to automate production in the country, and in doing so IBM-Germany made plenty of money. In 1933, the year Hitler came to power, Dehomag made a profit of one million dollars, and during the early Hitler years the German branch plant paid IBM in the US some 4.5 million dollars in dividends. By 1938, still in full Depression, “annual earnings were about 2.3 million RM, a 16 per cent return on net assets,” writes Edwin Black. In 1939 Dehomag’s profits increased spectacularly again to about four million RM. (Black, 76–7, 86–7, 98, 119, 120–1, 164, 198, and 222) American firms with branch plants in Germany were not the only ones to earn windfalls from Hitler’s rearmament drive. Germany was stockpiling oil in preparation for war, and much of this oil was supplied by American corporations. Texaco profited greatly from sales to Nazi Germany, and not surprisingly its chairman, Torkild Rieber, became yet another powerful American entrepreneur who admired Hitler. A member of the German secret service reported that he was “absolutely pro-

⁹⁰ <http://www.businesspundit.com/10-global-businesses-that-worked-with-the-nazis/>

German” and “a sincere admirer of the Führer.” Rieber also became a personal friend of Göring, Hitler’s economic czar.”⁹¹ Of course the Nazi’s had their own big businesses including Hugo Boss, Volkswagen, & Siemens.⁹² Clearly then big business is not unique to capitalism.

Xenophobia

Xenophobia is not unique to capitalism. The Soviets were openly xenophobic and they put policies in place to enforce this xenophobia. The non-Russian other was viewed as a potential spy or saboteur, a fifth columnist. “The fundamental reorientation of the Stalin terror towards foreign espionage elements came on 25 July 1937, with NKVD Resolution No. 00439: Reliable informants and [police] investigatory materials have recently proven that the German General Staff and the Gestapo in wide measures are organizing espionage and sabotage work in the most important defence industry establishments, utilizing for this goal specially placed cadres of German extraction. Secret informers among German subjects who are currently active in wrecking and sabotage [confirm that] main attention has been given to the organization of sabotage activities during wartime, and it is with these goals that the cadres of saboteurs are being trained. This reorientation towards foreign enemies inevitably brought into focus the question of ‘fifth columnists’: active agents and saboteurs operating inside the Soviet Union. Moscow sent a clear signal to expand operations from suspected German spies and saboteurs to other nationalities on 9 August 1937 with NKVD Order No. 00485, ‘Regarding Measures to Protect the USSR from the Penetration of Spy, Terrorist, and Saboteur Elements’. The order focused in particular on ‘the subversive activity of Polish intelligence’ on Soviet soil that ‘has been conducted, and is still being conducted, openly and with impunity’ from Soviet secret police operations.⁹³ From this point on, there emerged a new category of ‘enemy nations’, where Soviet police organs targeted ‘diaspora nationalities . . . exclusively based on their national identity’. These ‘national operations’ of the NKVD initially focused on the ‘destruction of espionage and sabotage contingents made up of Poles, Latvians, Germans, Estonians, Finns, Greeks, Iranians, Kharbintsy, Chinese, and Romanians, both foreign subjects and Soviet citizens’. In this way, ‘the Great Terror had evolved into an ethnic terror.’”⁹³

⁹¹ Jacques R. Pauwels, “Profits über Alles! American Corporations and Hitler,” *Global Research*, June 8, 2004

⁹² Mike Huang, “Third Reich to Fortune 500: Five Popular Brands the Nazis Gave Us,” *Cracked*, Jan. 3, 2008

⁹³ Jeffrey Burds, “The Soviet War against ‘Fifth Columnists’: The Case of Chechnya, 1942–4,” *Journal of Contemporary History* (2007)

A description of the status of migrant workers in communist China sounds very similar to the conditions of migrant workers in the allegedly capitalist USA. “Most of those jobs are physically stressful. However, they can hardly get any other opportunities. Even if they are qualified, they usually cannot make it. Why? Simply because they are from the countryside. For them, five eight-hour workdays and two-day weekends do not apply to them. It’s common for them to work 10, 12 hours a day sometimes even 14 to 16 hours a day without legal holidays because if they take any days off they will not be paid. In my research among those hired nursing assistants in Shanghai’s hospitals, theoretically, they don’t have any break or holiday. They are supposed to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. Why? It’s because they are migrant labors, not formal urban employees. They work so hard but they rank at the bottom of the payroll, whose payments remains the same as what their elders earned twenty years ago. Urban worker’s salaries keep rising annually at different rates while those migrant labors experience no change at all or no substantial improvements. Why? It’s again because they are migrant labors. No medicare, old-age pensions, injury protection insurances and house accumulation fund are included in their payments. They are excluded from all the public welfare programs. Chinese social welfare system has never lent a helping hand to them. Why? It’s because the privileges have always been bestowed upon urban citizens only.”⁹⁴ As fascism is practically synonymous with xenophobia and racism it seems clear that xenophobia is not unique to capitalism.

Income Gap

An income gap is not unique to capitalism. “The USSR was the ultimate experiment in central planning. The Soviet Constitution declared, “The principle applied in the U.S.S.R. is that of socialism: From each according to his ability, to each according to his work.” The Soviet Union was supposed to be a classless society. Western leftists assumed that was true. They were wrong. Not only did the Soviet Union have a rigid hierarchy of classes, but it also had the same income inequality as any other economy in its class. After WW2, the wealthiest ten percent of Russians took home more than seven times as much as the poorest Russians did. Factory bosses took home 100 times the salary of factory workers. Managers made five times what their employees did. A small percentage of the country wallowed in luxury while a sizable underclass struggled to put food on the table. And these figures are hopelessly inadequate to describe real income inequality in the USSR because most of the real income at the top went

⁹⁴ Yu Hai, “Racism & Xenophobia in China,” CASA ASIA (2002)

unreported because it was derived from corruption and bribery which were and are widespread.”⁹⁵

The income gap in communist China is wide. “Results of a wide-ranging survey of Chinese family wealth and living habits released this week by Peking University show a wide gap in income between the nation’s top earners and those at the bottom, and a vast difference between earners in top-tier coastal cities and those in interior provinces. The survey found that in 2012, the households in the top 5 percent income bracket earned 23 percent of China’s total household income. The households in the lowest 5 percent accounted for just 0.1 percent of total income. Average annual income for a family in 2012 was 13,000 renminbi, or about \$2,100. When broken down by geography, the survey results showed that the average amount in Shanghai, a huge coastal city, was just over 29,000 renminbi, or \$4,700, while the average in Gansu Province, far from the coast in northwest China, was 11,400 renminbi, or just under \$2,000. Average family income in urban areas was about \$2,600, while it was \$1,600 in rural areas. The survey results underscore some of the economic challenges confronting the Communist Party as a result of the growth policies that party leaders have pushed over the decades. The policies have lifted millions from poverty, but have resulted in an uneven distribution of wealth, which was one of the glaring problems of early-20th-century China and contributed to the success of the Communist revolution. Ordinary Chinese are increasingly resentful of wealth being accumulated by a select few — and in particular by people connected to party officials — and government censors often try to limit discussion in public venues of the personal wealth of the richest Chinese and of the families of China’s leaders.”⁹⁶

Inequality worsened under Hitler’s fascist government. “The general picture of the distribution of individual income shows that inequality has increased during the Hitler regime. There may have been shifts in the particular individuals falling within the income classes. Although the “rich” may not be the same individuals as before the Hitler government, there is, nevertheless, a greater inequality of money income. This, of course, does not indicate the distribution of real income, nor the distribution of income after deductions for taxes and other contributions to the State.’ Unfortunately there are no available data showing total taxes paid according to income classes. Taxation and insurance contributions in 1937 amounted to 28.6 per cent of national income against 18.6 per cent in 1928 and 25.4 per cent in the depression year 1932. The distribution of

⁹⁵ Daniel Greenfield, *The Poverty of Income Inequality*, FRONTPAGE MAG, Dec. 18, 2013

⁹⁶ Edward Wong, “Survey in China Shows a Wide Gap in Income,” N.Y. TIMES, July 19, 2013

income tax according to income classes shows that all classes except the largest one shared in the increase of total income taxes paid in relation to taxable income.' The bulk of the taxation, however, is of a non-progressive nature with labor sharing a greater percentage of the total tax revenue in 1937 than in 1929 or 1932. Taxes mainly on propertied groups - income tax, corporation tax, property tax, and inheritance tax - contributed 29.3 per cent of total revenue in 1928-29 while taxes mainly on labor - wage tax, turnover tax, excise, and duties - amounted to 58.6 per cent. The share of total tax revenue contributed by the properties group had grown by one per cent in 1937-38, while labor's burden had increased 3.4 per cent."⁹⁷ So again, clearly income gaps are not unique to capitalism.

Conclusion

This Part could continue to go on and on, but I do believe that the prior discussion answers some of the most common alleged links to capitalism. In conclusion, the characteristics debaters attribute to capitalism are not unique to capitalism. This conclusion should help students formulate responses not only on the link level, but also in response to alternatives that claim to replace capitalism. Part I of this article demonstrated what the three main economic theories are, communism, socialism, fascism, and capitalism. I also showed how the US is not a capitalist country but a mixture of each of these systems and argued that the capitalism kritik is critiquing a chimera. This Part explains why it is important to reconsider the capitalism kritik and why alleged links to capitalism are not actual links at all and alternatives to capitalism recreate the problems frequently attributed to capitalism and sometimes to a worse degree. It is not my hope that the debate over capitalism versus its alternatives ceases but that it is refocused on the reality (the empirical evidence) of all these systems. It is hoped that if we quit critiquing a chimera and embracing a utopia that this will raise the debate to a level that will better inform all involved so that we can make better decisions for people in the real world.

⁹⁷ Maxine Yapple Sweezy, *Distribution of Wealth and Income under the Nazis*, 21:4 REV. OF ECON. & STATS. (1939)