



Global Capitalism: Crossroads and Challenges

Undergraduate Political Review | Fall 2023, Edition XVII

EDITED BY

Devin O'Brien & Kieler Langemo

University of Connecticut
Department of Political Science

polisci.uconn.edu

Copyright © 2023 Undergraduate Political Review. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without permission.

Undergraduate Political Review

University of Connecticut
Department of Political Science
365 Fairfield Way, Unit 1024
Storrs, CT 06269-1024

Susan V. Herbst Hall, Room 409

pols@uconn.edu
polisci.uconn.edu

Cover Design: Undergraduate Political Review branding, identity, formatting, and cover design by Kieler Langemo. Cover design artwork created with OpenAI's DALL-E text-to-image generative model.

Submission Guidelines: Authors interested in writing for the journal's next publication should consult the guidelines available on the journal's website: polisci.uconn.edu/undergraduate/political-review.

Fall 2023 Editorial Board

Editor-in-Chief

Devin O'Brien

Political Science

Assistant Editor-in-Chief

Kieler Langemo

Political Science, Cognitive Science

Associate Editors

Adam Benitez

Political Science

Cole Kurokawa

Economics, Mathematics-Statistics

Hallie Letendre

Journalism

Emma Mattingly

English, Political Science

Advising Professors

Dr. Oksan Bayulgen

Department Head and Professor, Political Science

Dr. Evan Perkoski

Director of Undergraduate Studies and Assistant Professor, Political Science

Table of Contents

Letter from the Editor	5
<i>Devin O'Brien</i>	
Lights, Camera, Action...? A Look into the Intense Labor Strikes across the Entertainment Industry	6
<i>Lauren Baskin</i>	
A Look at the Current Environmental Policy in the United States	9
<i>Sara Bedigian</i>	
An Analysis of the US-UK Energy Security and Affordability Partnership Regarding Natural Gas Supplies and Further International Cooperation	12
<i>Chapal Bhavsar</i>	
U.S. Supreme Court Legitimacy: Public Perception in the Post-Roe Era	16
<i>Makenzie Cossette</i>	
A Woman's Place is in the Situation Room: The Changing Role of Women in U.S. National Security	20
<i>Kate Czajkowski</i>	
Youth and the Alt-Right: The Influence of Social Media and Echo Chambers	26
<i>Milla Daigle</i>	
Prescription for Inflation: The Impact of the Inflation Reduction Act on Medicare	31
<i>Medha Illindala</i>	
Risk Deterrence from Entrepreneurship	36
<i>Matthew Koleszar</i>	
Unveiling Digitized Dystopia: China's Dissemination of Digital Authoritarianism	40
<i>Alessandro Portolano</i>	
Matching Crime and Punishment: Concerns Over the Juvenile Justice System	44
<i>Ashley Soto</i>	
Blade Runner 2049: Marxist Versus Sartre Existentialism	48
<i>Huiling Yin</i>	

Letter from the Editor

Devin O'Brien

December 12, 2023

Dear Readers,

It is my great privilege to write to you as the Editor-in-Chief of the University of Connecticut's Undergraduate Political Review. This semester we are proud to publish our seventeenth edition of the journal. With each edition, our writers explore the complex political issues that shape our world.

All articles in this journal are written and edited entirely by undergraduate students. Together, our writers and editors engage in a rigorous drafting process to create polished scholarly articles. Past editions have asked writers to address specific themes. This edition did not have a theme, but we observed a strong interest in topics related to the negative social and political consequences of capitalism. So, we have decided to name this edition "Global Capitalism: Crossroads and Challenges."

The success of this journal would be impossible without the support of many individuals. First, I must thank and celebrate our writers and editors for all of their hard work. Their dedication to improving their craft as writers and political thinkers is evident in the amazing articles they have produced. Additionally, I must thank Dr. Oksan Bayulgen, Dr. Evan Perkoski, and the University of Connecticut Department of Political Science for their strong support for our journal. Last, I must thank Kieler Langemo, the Assistant Editor-in-Chief, for his incredible contributions in developing a stronger brand identity for the journal.

I also thank you, our dear readers, for supporting this journal. We are very grateful for the encouragement our political science community provides. Now more than ever, the world needs to develop and celebrate political thinking to seek solutions for the challenges that lie ahead. We hope you enjoy what some of the finest political minds at the University of Connecticut have to offer.

If you have any questions for us or are interested in joining the Undergraduate Political Review at the start of next semester, please feel free to contact us at uconnpoliticalreview@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Devin O'Brien, Editor-in-Chief

Lights, Camera, Action...? A Look into the Intense Labor Strikes across the Entertainment Industry

Lauren Baskin

The conversations surrounding Hollywood productions and filmmaking have been overwhelmed by the long-standing SAG-AFTRA (Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists) and WGA (Writers Guild of America) strikes. Advocating for better wages and treatment of workers in the entertainment industries, these strikes conjure up interesting conversations regarding the hierarchical structure of Hollywood. It is easy to assume that the glitz and glam of the entertainment industries is reflected into the bank account of those who inhabit it; however, these strikes have proven that there is a serious deficit within wage distributions and employee treatment between the top and bottom of the stratum.

As people become more aware of the mistreatment of underserved workers—writers, production crew, and actors that do not fall in the top one percent of the job market—these strikes are expanding upon the importance of union protests and the necessity of advocating for a better distribution of pay in the age of ever-changing technologies and streaming services. But, as argued by journalist Jason Frank, “The strike has served as a reminder that, despite functioning as an escape based on creative output for many, the entertainment business is still, ultimately, a business.”¹ Beyond the problematic dealings and lack of negotiation, these strikes also demonstrate how prevalent Hollywood is in all aspects of American society— and how the absence of writers will completely alter the industry as a whole. The writing staff at the Los Angeles Times states, “the actors union represents many types of performers — actors, dancers, stunt people — each with specific needs that need to be addressed.”² But how can these needs, along with the sustainability of the entertainment industry be addressed when executive companies are spending their time negotiating new deals through streaming services?

Labor unions have been an integral part of political protests in the capitalist work force for decades. While these strikes highlight the importance of unions and workplace activism across the depths of production crews, A-List actors, and executive producers and directors, these strikes also generate an interesting conversation about the future of entertainment with the influence of artificial intelligence (AI). The writers and actors within these unions are asking whether it is possible that AI can do the jobs that humans have been performing for decades; based on the pushback and delayed deal-making from the ends of the executive companies, it is clear that executives might think so: “Artificial intelligence, for example, is an especially existential threat for background actors, some of whom say they've already had their bodies

¹ Frank, Jason P. “The 2023 Hollywood Strike for Dummies.” Vulture, October 23, 2023. <https://www.vulture.com/article/wga-strike-2023.html>.

² LA Times Writing Staff. “Writers’ Strike: What Happened, How It Ended and Its Impact on Hollywood.” Los Angeles Times, October 19, 2023. <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/business/story/2023-05-01/writers-strike-what-to-know-wga-guild-hollywood-productions>.

scanned for reuse.”³ According to many entertainment lawyers and reporters, the conversations surrounding the mistreatment of actors and the future of the entertainment workforce will be ongoing; in the wake of these conflicts, members of society that rely heavily on entertainment will be impacted by the delay of their favorite late night shows, films, or sitcoms—further implicating the California economy (as of 2023, the state has lost nearly \$5 billion in their economic revenue).⁴ Tara Kole, one of the leading entertainment lawyers in Hollywood, is weary about the future of the business: “Any hope that this would be fast has faded...I hate to say it, but it's going to be a while.”⁵

Although the threat of AI is looming over performers across Hollywood, it is clear that many people that actually do the performing do not see any benefits in using AI beyond the financial savings that big productions receive. VICE reporter Jules Rosco argues the reasoning behind this push for AI in her interview with PBS reporter Ali Rogin: “[AI] is being used to generate new pilot ideas for new shows or to rework a script such that it can be used by a studio without having to have a writer in the room when the script is being filmed”, “The crux of this matter when it comes to the writers and actors strike is that the large sets of data come from the content that writers and actors have generated, and they have not been compensated for any AI training that has been done on that data.”⁶ Although the emergence of AI in the entertainment workforce is daunting for workers that have trained for these jobs throughout most of their lives, the sheer fact that many individuals are not being compensated for their assistance in AI emergence is an additional punch to the gut: “the technology could easily be used to replace the actors in background roles in studio and streaming productions — the ones listed in the credits with titles like ‘second police officer’ or ‘waiter in the restaurant.’ These roles generate a huge number of the jobs that SAG-AFTRA members depend on to pay their bills.”⁷

The emergence of AI has posed interesting challenges to these longstanding negotiations in Hollywood. In addition to the demands the unions are making with regard to streaming service contracts, there are fears of the role AI may play in the future of music, theater, and film productions. While all parties agree that there can be some positive aspects to the introduction of AI in Hollywood productions, there are no limits on studios' use of AI with scripts they already own.⁸ With this in mind, most union members are not completely against AI,

³ Veltman, Chloe. “The Hollywood Writers Strike Is over, but the Actors Strike Could Drag On. Here’s Why.” NPR, October 2, 2023. <https://www.npr.org/2023/10/02/1202858838/the-hollywood-writers-strike-is-over-but-the-actors-strike-could-drag-on-heres-w>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Barnes, Brooks, and John Koblin. “Lengthy Strike Looks Likely for Hollywood Writers.” *New York Times*, May 8, 2023, B1(L). *Gale Academic OneFile* (accessed October 27, 2023). <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A748415200/AONE?u=a04fu&sid=googleScholar&xid=e8929a54>.

⁶ Rogin, Ali, and Andrew Corkery. “Why Artificial Intelligence Is a Central Dispute in the Hollywood Strikes.” PBS, September 2, 2023. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/why-artificial-intelligence-is-a-central-dispute-in-the-hollywood-strikes>.

⁷ Isidore, Chris. “AI Is a Concern for Writers, but Actors Could Have Even More to Fear | CNN Business.” CNN, July 18, 2023. <https://www.cnn.com/2023/07/18/business/ai-actors-strike/index.html>.

⁸ Coyle, Jake. “In Hollywood Writers’ Battle against AI, Humans Win (for Now).” AP News, September 27, 2023. <https://apnews.com/article/hollywood-ai-strike-wga-artificial-intelligence->

but rather *how* their contributions will be recognized in the use of AI systems: “they are demanding safeguards against AI, which can potentially use a star’s likeness without his or her permission or replace background actors entirely.”⁹ But given the grievances executives are pushing onto the Hollywood workforce, it is evident that the unions are fighting back and will not stop until they are properly recognized for their contributions to the industry. *Breaking Bad* actor Bryan Cranston showed his support at the union marches, stating that AI dehumanizes the workforce: “It’s not good for society. It’s not good for our environment. It’s not good for working-class families.”¹⁰

As the deal-making within the SAG-AFTRA union found resolution on November 9th, 2023, these strikes in the entertainment industry are an important reminder that the expansion of technology presents an interesting paradox for modern laborers. While leftist political theorists would likely approve of the removal of the disposable labor class through the implementation of AI, the eradication of jobs strips many entertainers of their motivations to join the industry in the first place. What is left of a business if the foundation of creativity and innovation championed by real beings is morphed into a technological conglomerate of AI robots? As the dealings and negotiations conclude, it will be interesting to hear an executive company’s answer to that question.

39ab72582c3a15f77510c9c30a45ffc8#:~:text=NEW%20YORK%20(AP)%20%E2%80%94%20After,generative%20AI%20in%20the%20workplace.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

A Look at the Current Environmental Policy in the United States

Sara Bedigian

Climate change has become a widely known topic of discussion domestically and internationally. Following further support for the rising environmentalism movement in the 1960s, more people became aware of its effects on the world. As concerns over the environment grew, Congress passed legislation to mitigate the damaging impacts of climate change. However, as greenhouse gas emissions continue to climb today, additional policy is necessary to combat these negative consequences.

No sole legal measure can stop climate change, but several foundational pieces of legislation set the framework for future environmental policy. The first meaningful act was the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which was passed in 1969 to “create and maintain conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations.”¹¹ Since the Act’s passage, it has been the “first and last line of defense against government mismanagement and industry abuse.”¹² Additionally, prior to NEPA, the Clean Air Act was adopted in 1963, establishing nationwide air quality standards for six air pollutants: ground-level ozone, sulfur dioxide, particulate matter, nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide, and lead.¹³ Known collectively as the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, these limits were created to mitigate heavy producers of air pollution and led to the creation of national regulatory programs that required industries to control their production of air pollutants.¹⁴ As corporations became more aware of their gas emissions, the safety of humans, plants, and animals improved. On top of addressing air pollutants, the government also looked to control the impacts of water pollution. In 1972, the Clean Water Act made it illegal to discharge a pollutant into waters without a federal permit.¹⁵ Two years later, the Safe Drinking Water Act aimed to maintain water quality for drinking sources and require owners of public water systems to abide by the standards.¹⁶

¹¹ “Learn about Sustainability | US EPA,” EPA, accessed December 4, 2023, <https://www.epa.gov/sustainability/learn-about-sustainability>.

¹² “The People’s Environmental Law: National Environmental Policy Act,” Earthjustice, July 31, 2023, <https://earthjustice.org/feature/national-environmental-policy-act#:~:text=Since%20Congress%20passed%20NEPA%20in,government%20mismanagement%20>.

¹³ “Implementation of the Clean Air Act,” Ballotpedia, accessed December 4, 2023, https://ballotpedia.org/Implementation_of_the_Clean_Air_Act.

¹⁴ “Clean Air Act,” Encyclopædia Britannica, November 27, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Clean-Air-Act-United-States-1970>.

¹⁵ “Summary of the Clean Water Act | US EPA,” EPA, accessed December 4, 2023, <https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-clean-water-act>.

¹⁶ “Summary of the Safe Drinking Water Act | US EPA,” EPA, accessed December 4, 2023, <https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-safe-drinking-water-act>.

While the Air and Water Acts have established quality standards for several decades, the implications of climate change are only increasing, meaning new, additional action is necessary. In 2022, President Joe Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act, dedicated to lowering energy costs and allowing communities to mitigate the climate crisis through different agriculture practices, forest restorations, and rural communities.¹⁷ According to the United States Department of Agriculture, the act makes a “once-in-a-generation investment that supports rural communities and their needs.”¹⁸ The act launched several plans, including an increasing land access program to help underserved farmers, the NextGen program to build and sustain agriculture enterprises, and the provision of billions of dollars across different platforms to fund clean energy projects throughout the country.¹⁹

The United States has taken great strides to ease the environmental issues on the federal level, but actions must go further to lessen the impacts of climate change. A new report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirms that emissions and atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gasses are at record highs in 2023.²⁰ A PBS article analyzed this, emphasizing that to “keep warming within 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, global greenhouse gas emissions must decline by around 21 percent by 2030 and around 35 percent by 2035.”²¹ The world has the technology to “turn the corner,” but if countries “rein in emissions, adapting to the damage it causes will be more difficult and expensive in the future.”²²

The federal government must pursue efforts to promote energy efficiency, energy conservation, carbon capture and sequestration, and the use of renewable resources to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Environmental organizations like the Environmental Defense Fund and the National Resource Defense Council (NRDC) call for Americans to reduce their carbon footprint. The NRDC explains how turning off lights and electronics when not using them, decreasing the amount of distance traveled in vehicles, and using more efficient electrical appliances are also ways to reduce emissions.²³ While this individual action does not hurt, more federal action has to occur. Further implementation of legislation is necessary to enforce the protection of water, air, and other natural entities. While the Inflation Act should push the United States from a 25 percent to 40 percent reduction in greenhouse gasses by the end of the

¹⁷ “Fact Sheet: Marking One Year of the Inflation Reduction Act,” USDA, accessed December 4, 2023, <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2023/08/16/fact-sheet-marking-one-year-inflation-reduction-act#:~:text=The%20law%20increases%20access%20to,of%20wildfires%20and%20extreme%20heat>.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ “Ar6 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2023,” IPCC, accessed December 4, 2023, <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-cycle/>.

²¹ Frank Jotzo and Mark Howden, “Analysis: Latest IPCC Report Confirms Climate Change Is Worsening, but We Have the Tools to Combat It,” PBS, March 21, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/analysis-latest-ipcc-report-confirms-climate-change-is-worsening-but-we-have-the-tools-to-combat-it>

²² Ibid.

²³ Jeff Turrentine, “What Are the Causes of Climate Change?” What Causes Climate Change? Human and Natural Causes, September 13, 2022, <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/what-are-causes-climate-change>.

decade, it is not enough to meet the needs of the climate crisis.²⁴ The best way to ensure the federal government is addressing all aspects of the climate problem is to implement a social cost of carbon.²⁵ The social cost of carbon metric is used in rulemaking decisions to calculate economic damages associated with a rise in greenhouse gas emissions.²⁶ If federal agencies are held accountable for the costs of carbon pollution, they will feel more inclined to pass environmental policies that address the concerns. Additionally, the United States should create a carbon border adjustment, a tariff that places a fee on imports from countries that do little to cut carbon pollution in their industries. The U.S. is much “less carbon intensive than its trading partners, so a border adjustment fee would boost clean American manufacturing while putting intense economic pressure on foreign polluters.”²⁷ While the Inflation Reduction Act’s enactment is an impactful step in addressing the climate crisis in the U.S., implementation must be perfect. More direction on the federal level is needed for politicians to feel inclined to keep environmental policies at the front of their agendas.

Even though the United States has continued since the 1970s to pass federal environmental legislation, the climate crisis is only worsening. The federal government must implement new laws and enforce them effectively through firm management, careful congressional oversight, and coordination with state, local, and tribal governments to lower greenhouse gas emissions.²⁸ Though the United States is only one country, these efforts can set a precedent for other nations. The United States must reassert its climate leadership internationally and work with other countries to save the planet.

²⁴ Sheldon Whitehouse and Martin Heinrich Brian Schatz, “What the U.S. Must Do next in Fighting Climate Change,” Time, November 4, 2022, <https://time.com/6227985/next-steps-climate-fight/>.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Clark Mindock, “Biden ‘social Cost of Carbon’ Climate Risk Measure Upheld by U.S. Appeals Court,” Reuters, October 21, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/biden-social-cost-carbon-climate-risk-measure-upheld-by-us-appeals-court-2022-10-21/>.

²⁷ Sheldon Whitehouse and Martin Heinrich Brian Schatz, “What the U.S. Must Do next in Fighting Climate Change,” Time, November 4, 2022, <https://time.com/6227985/next-steps-climate-fight/>.

²⁸ Ibid.

An Analysis of the US-UK Energy Security and Affordability Partnership Regarding Natural Gas Supplies and Further International Cooperation

Chapal Bhavsar

The United States and the United Kingdom have maintained a strong relationship both economically and politically for over 100 years, through worldwide conflict, independence movements, international political movements, and other significant events. With the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, however, energy prices have drastically increased while supply, especially natural gas, has significantly decreased across Europe. European countries, including the UK, face rising energy costs for homes and businesses while their economies suffer under the duress of the Ukrainian conflict. This trend has not been limited to Europe, however, as many in North America and elsewhere have experienced significantly higher energy costs. With the US and UK's robust economic and political relationship, they have come together to mediate the effects of the conflict and rising energy costs. On December 7th, 2022, the White House announced a new initiative between the US and the UK called the "US-UK Energy Security and Affordability Partnership."²⁹ The ultimate goal of this partnership is to ensure that energy access to the UK and the overall European market remains stable, affordable, and meets international environmental standards. The comprehensive "US-UK Energy Security and Affordability Partnership" has many aspects that require breakdown and analysis, focusing on natural gas supplies, environmental impact, and environmental cooperation. This paper will explore how they fit into the overall treaty, and what effects they will have both on the US and the UK.

Natural Gas Supplies

One of the largest impacts of Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been the disruption of natural gas supplies (causing significant price increases) throughout Europe and elsewhere. According to Reuters, "Moscow cut off an estimated 80% of the gas it had previously piped to Europe. By the end of the year, [2022] Russian exports had fallen from around 40% of EU gas supply to less than 10%, the lowest level since the 1980s."³⁰ After the strong support demonstrated against it in its invasion of Ukraine, Russia, being the largest provider of natural resources to Europe, retaliated by cutting off an estimated 80 percent of natural gas it was supplying.³¹ Eliminating this much natural gas was significant for the UK as it is heavily reliant on natural gas to power its electrical plants. According to the National Grid, the main supplier of electricity for the UK, 38.4 percent of all electricity production within the nation is generated

²⁹ The White House. 2022. "US-UK Energy Security and Affordability Partnership." The White House. December 7, 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/12/07/us-uk-energy-security-and-affordability-partnership/>.

³⁰ Abnett, Kate. 2023. "Explainer: Europe's Energy Security Better than Feared after a Year of War in Ukraine." Reuters, February 24, 2023, sec. Energy. <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/europes-energy-security-better-than-feared-after-year-war-ukraine-2023-02-24/>.

³¹ Zettelmeyer et al. 2022. "Beating the European Energy Crisis." International Monetary Fund. December 2022. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2022/12/beating-the-european-energy-crisis-Zettelmeyer>

using natural gas.³² Almost immediately, consumers began to experience spikes in energy prices. In April 2022, immediately after the invasion, consumer prices rose by 54 percent.³³ This has been directly connected to the dramatic surge in natural gas prices and has necessitated the government interfering and enacting a price control for UK citizens. In September 2022, Prime Minister Liz Truss announced a plan to limit the prices that consumers pay. The typical household “will pay no more than £2,500 (\$2,880) per year for each of the next two years.” This is in comparison to the estimated £5,341.08(\$6,800) cap that would have been reached without this preemptive legislation.³⁴

Such large increases in energy costs have been detrimental to the UK economy and have spawned a cost-of-living crisis. As the nation heads into the winter months, energy costs are expected to skyrocket again, especially as the subsidies enacted by Prime Minister Truss begin to expire. The natural gas shortage has worsened the UK's economic conditions and created a deeper crisis ranging from double-digit increases in food prices to soaring housing costs. The UK has relied on nations such as the US to help ease this crisis, a cornerstone of the 2023 energy agreement between the two nations.

President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak agreed to dramatically increase energy imports to the UK from the US in December 2022. This new agreement has allowed the US to fill the major energy gap the UK developed from the invasion. In fact, the shipping data firm ICIS LNG Edge showed that “the UK imported 3.9bcm (billion cubic meters of natural gas) of LNG (liquefied natural gas) from the US in 2021, 26% of the UK's total LNG imports. From October 2021 to October 2022, the UK imported 9.7bcm of American LNG, 42% of total imports.”³⁵ This new agreement has allowed private commercial gas exporters to economically benefit the US while aiding the UK by supplying them with much-needed energy. The partnership also allows the UK to lessen its reliance on Russia as its main source of energy. A positive that has emerged from this movement away from Russia is the increase in stability, as relying upon them has proven politically and economically detrimental. One of the cornerstone provisions within the 2022 UK-US agreement was expanding US LNG exports to the UK and Europe through reinforcing “the market conditions for security of supply, recognizing the role of natural gas in ensuring near-term energy security, and in particular the significance of UK LNG import infrastructure” and integration with overall European supply security.³⁶ Both countries believe that by establishing an energy connection they will develop more overall energy

³² “Britain Hits Historic Clean Energy Milestone.” n.d. [Www.nationalgrid.com. https://www.nationalgrid.com/britain-hits-historic-clean-energy-milestone-zero-carbon-electricity-outstrips-fossil-fuels-2019](https://www.nationalgrid.com/britain-hits-historic-clean-energy-milestone-zero-carbon-electricity-outstrips-fossil-fuels-2019).

³³ “Review of Domestic Energy Prices.” 2023. House of Commons. UK Parliament. September 13, 2023. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9491/>.

³⁴ Ward-Glenton, Hannah. n.d. “New British PM Liz Truss Announces a Cap on Energy Bills to Combat Cost-of-Living Crisis.” CNBC. <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/09/08/british-pm-liz-truss-announces-a-cap-on-energy-bills.html>.

³⁵ Lawson, Alex. 2022. “Joe Biden and Rishi Sunak Agree to Increase Gas Exports from US to UK.” *The Guardian*, December 7, 2022, sec. Environment. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/dec/07/joe-biden-and-rishi-sunak-agree-to-increase-gas-exports-from-us-to-uk>.

³⁶ The White House. 2022. “US-UK Energy Security and Affordability Partnership.” The White House. December 7, 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/12/07/us-uk-energy-security-and-affordability-partnership/>.

security, ensure that energy supplies remain stable, and that skyrocketing prices do not plague the consumer.

International Cooperation

An important aspect of the UK-US Partnership was its diplomatic success. This ranged from technological developments to political agreements through the G7 and the G20. Part of the plan between the US and the UK was to ensure that significant investments were made domestically. Examples are laid out in the White House statement stating, “[the] UK has committed an additional £6bn (7.6 Billion USD) in energy efficiency schemes to 2028. Meanwhile, the U.S. is investing more than \$30 billion in energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions for low-income communities.”³⁷ This domestic investment is representative of their efforts to improve sustainability and create long-term solutions to long-standing problems. These developments will also help low-income populations in both nations who would ordinarily not be able to make these improvements on their own.

Hydrogen development is another of the main energy aspects both countries want to work on. However, both have previously faced industrial problems preventing them from progressing further. The UK, in need of more effective and quick solutions to future energy problems, has begun funding hydrogen infrastructure that will eventually span across the country. For example, last year the UK announced its “Hydrogen Strategy,” a joint government-industry initiative to “develop at least five [gigawatts] of low-carbon hydrogen production capacity this decade. Analysts said such production would be the equivalent of replacing natural gas to power about 3 million homes.”³⁸ This indicates a massive change from the UK’s current situation with natural gas as its main source of energy. Hydrogen would also provide an economic alternative while allowing the UK to reduce its reliance on Russia for fuel. In the long run, this economic opportunity will ensure that the UK is reducing its greenhouse gas emissions and providing households with a direct, sustainable energy option. This overall shift towards more sustainable forms of energy such as hydrogen is at the cornerstone of international cooperation, not only between the US and the UK but also the wider G20, which stated “we affirm the ‘G20 High-Level Voluntary Principles on Hydrogen,’ to build a sustainable and equitable global hydrogen ecosystem that benefits all nations.”³⁹ The international vision is growing towards a more sustainable and alternative energy perspective. This global cohort also envisions partially stabilizing the field to prevent countries such as Russia from gaining greater footholds in controlling the energy supplies of other countries.

Conclusion

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the UK found itself in a precarious position with high energy costs, energy shortages, and an economic crisis looming. In response, the UK

³⁷ The White House. 2022. “US-UK Energy Security and Affordability Partnership.” The White House. December 7, 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/12/07/us-uk-energy-security-and-affordability-partnership/>.

³⁸ Proctor, Darrell. 2022. “Projects Underway as Part of UK’s Hydrogen Plan.” POWER Magazine. December 1, 2022. <https://www.powermag.com/projects-underway-as-part-of-uks-hydrogen-plan/>.

³⁹ Collins, Leigh. 2023. “G20 Leaders’ Declaration on Hydrogen Suggests US Will Adopt Similar Rules to EU on Green H2 Production.” Hydrogen News and Intelligence | Hydrogen Insight. September 11, 2023. <https://www.hydrogeninsight.com/policy/g20-leaders-declaration-on-hydrogen-suggests-us-will-adopt-similar-rules-to-eu-on-green-h2-production/2-1-1516033>.

and the US reached a historic and landmark agreement with the US-UK Energy Security and Affordability Partnership, which comprehensively tackled the issues they faced. The two countries agreed to drastically increase the amount of energy imported by the UK from the US, therefore furthering their economic and energy cooperation while also addressing the energy shortage and rising prices they were facing. This move also lessened Russia's influence on Europe by introducing a more stable energy supply that prevents such swings from significantly impacting the domestic market. Aspects of this deal also dramatically increased investments toward environmental standards for both the US and the UK. These investments should significantly diminish the emission of greenhouse gasses for both countries. The agreement also focuses on sustainable technology developments such as hydrogen, which will further help the environment and create more stable energy sources in dire times, thus preventing situations similar to the one the UK faced after the Russian invasion. This agreement has provided a sound and significant groundwork for the US and UK to further develop their relationship into the 21st century. The environmental and economic benefits of this landmark deal will continue maturing for each respective country, both domestically and internationally, and can be expected to be emulated by other potential partnerships on the international stage.

U.S. Supreme Court Legitimacy: Public Perception in the Post-Roe Era

Makenzie Cossette

Introduction

As the highest court in the nation, the U.S. Supreme Court plays a critical role in the American political system. However, the legitimacy of this institution has been called into question amidst its most recent rulings, particularly the court's decision to overturn the landmark decision of *Roe v. Wade* in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*.⁴⁰ The decision in this case was leaked over a month before its official release, and the unofficial news was immediately met with public protest and debate.⁴¹

The American people's view of the Supreme Court as a legitimate institution declined sharply after the decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson* was communicated to the public. According to a recent Gallup poll, a few months after the *Dobbs* decision, "Forty-seven percent of U.S. adults say they have 'a great deal' or a 'fair amount' of trust in the judicial branch of the federal government that is headed by the Supreme Court."⁴² This percentage is twenty points lower than it was just two years ago, signaling a significant decline in the reputation of the Supreme Court, which some argue is a direct result of the decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* in June of 2022.

This decline in public perception of the Supreme Court's legitimacy may indicate a broader erosion of trust in the federal government and its institutions, posing significant challenges to maintaining a stable and effective democracy.

Factors Influencing Legitimacy

Recent rulings, party affiliations, and the media are all factors that influence how individuals perceive the Supreme Court's institutional legitimacy. One commonly held theory is that the public's opinion regarding the legitimacy of the Supreme Court is influenced by the Court's most recent rulings.⁴³ This explanation could account for the shift in perceived legitimacy in the months following the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision.

Another common theory among political scientists is that individuals assess the Supreme Court's institutional legitimacy based on party affiliation.⁴⁴ Studies have shown that

⁴⁰ *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113 (1973). *Dobbs, State Health Officer of The Mississippi Department of Health v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, No. 19-1392, 597 U.S. (2022).

⁴¹ S. Hubler, "Supreme Court rules on abortion: Thousands protest end of constitutional right to abortion" (*The New York Times*, December 9, 2022).

⁴² J. M. Jones, "Supreme Court Trust, job approval at historical lows," *Gallup.com*, May 31, 2023.

⁴³ Jeffery Mondak, "Institutional Legitimacy, Policy Legitimacy, and The Supreme Court," *American Politics Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (1992).

⁴⁴ James L. Gibson and Michael J. Nelson, "Is the U.S Supreme Court's Legitimacy Grounded in Performance Satisfaction and Ideology?" *American Politics Research* 43, no. 2 (2015): 281-310.

those with conservative ideologies are more likely to view the court as a legitimate institution in comparison to those with liberal ideologies.⁴⁵

Lastly, some theorize that the Supreme Court's legitimacy shifts based on how the media portrays the Court's decisions and reputation as a whole. There is significant evidence that the ways in which newspapers, television, and social media depict the decisions of the Supreme Court have a significant influence on how the public views this institution.⁴⁶

When assessing the public's perception of legitimacy in the wake of the *Dobbs* decision, it is important to consider the social and political context of both the court and the nation, as well as the role of the media in depicting the Court's decision.

Historical, Social, & Political Factors of The *Dobbs* Decision

Dobbs v. Jackson is significant because it is one of the few Supreme Court cases in American history in which a landmark precedent has been completely reversed. According to the Constitution Center, only around 232 cases have had precedents overruled in the Supreme Court's history.⁴⁷ Many experts argue that this overturning of a landmark precedent is what contributed most to the decline in public perception of Supreme Court legitimacy. The act of overturning a legal status that has been in place for fifty years raises questions about the impartiality of the justices and potential political influences. Reversing precedent undermines the nature of the institution itself and highlights the ultimate power of the judicial branch at the federal level.⁴⁸ Ruling based on precedent is a fundamental aspect of the Court's structure. Therefore, the Court should exercise significant restraint when considering reversing a precedent, as its frequent use threatens to undermine the credibility and integrity of the Supreme Court as an institution.

Others argue that it is the content of the case and not merely the reversal of precedent that resulted in the decline in institutional legitimacy of the Supreme Court. Cases dealing with highly personal and controversial topics like reproductive rights tend to garner a lot of attention from the public.⁴⁹ It is possible that because this case was addressing a hotly contested issue in American politics, people followed it more closely and felt the consequences of the decision intensely.

The highly politicized makeup of the Supreme Court, as well as the personal nature of the topic of reproductive rights, likely contributed to the decline in legitimacy in the court. The majority of Americans, approximately 61 percent, disagreed with the Court's ruling in *Dobbs v.*

⁴⁵ Brandon L. Bartels and Christopher D. Johnston, "On the Ideological Foundations of Supreme Court Legitimacy in the American Public," *Journal of Politics* 76, no. 4 (2014): 871-884.

⁴⁶ John Crothers Pollock, James Lee Robinson Jr., and Mary Camel Murray, "Media Agendas and Human Rights: The Supreme Court Decision on Abortion," *Journalism Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (1991): 266-275.

⁴⁷ "A short list of overturned Supreme Court Landmark Decisions," *National Constitution Center* – constitutioncenter.org, June 24, 2022.

⁴⁸ "Does overturning precedent undermine the Supreme Court's legitimacy?" *Harvard Law School*, November 9, 2022.

⁴⁹ *The New York Times*, "Politics and the Supreme Court," January 15, 2022.

Jackson.⁵⁰ In a nation founded on values of popular sovereignty and representative government, this outcome is puzzling. According to a poll conducted by Marquette Law School (2022), “61% of the public disapproves of how the court is handling its job.”⁵¹ Americans’ view of the Supreme Court as a legitimate institution can only be expected to decline when this Court is making decisions that directly contradict the majority will of the people. If these trends continue, the court may lose its connection with the public over time, presenting significant dangers for the future of American democracy.

The Role of the Media

The media plays an essential role in communicating the actions of the Supreme Court. Therefore, the method in which the media discussed the decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* likely had a significant impact on the decline in the public’s trust in the Supreme Court. Faith in American institutions in general (government agencies, political parties, the police) has experienced a decline in recent years, and there is evidence that this can be somewhat attributed to the discussions of these institutions in the media.⁵²

Several researchers have conducted media analyses of newspapers, television, and social media to determine how depictions of political issues and Supreme Court rulings have impacted public opinion. Pollock, Robsin, and Murray examined the differences in how pro-life and pro-choice agendas are covered in newspapers regarding *Hodgson v. Minnesota*.⁵³ Their work revealed that these interest groups influenced how various newspapers covered the outcome of the case, suggesting that a similar phenomenon could have taken place today.

It is also important to consider that the media has undergone significant changes in recent years, including how people receive their daily news. This has changed significantly over the history of the U.S. Supreme Court, from print newspapers to radio broadcasts, to television news, the internet, and now social media. Social media played a major role in delivering news of the *Dobbs* decision to the American public, and there is evidence that social media heavily influences the public’s perception of reproductive rights issues.⁵⁴

Analysis of the Decline in Legitimacy

It is reasonable to assume that social media played a role similar to that of newspapers in the past, as demonstrated by the study of *Hodgson v. Minnesota*. While the platform through which the information is delivered has changed, the main idea remains true: information about the Supreme Court impacts public opinion of the Court as an institution.

⁵⁰ Gallup, "Where do Americans stand on abortion?" July 7, 2023, *Gallup.com*.

⁵¹ A. de Vogue, "Justices worry about the future of the Supreme Court -- and Point Fingers as to who's to blame," *CNN Politics*, July 29, 2022.

⁵² L. Saad, "Historically low faith in U.S. institutions continues," *Gallup.com*, August 17, 2023.

⁵³ *Hodgson v. Minnesota*, 497 U.S. 417 (1990).

⁵⁴ Eva Sharma*, Koustuv Saha*, Sindhu Kiranmai Ernala*, Sucheta Ghoshal*, Munmun De Choudhury, "Analyzing Ideological Discourse on Social Media: A Case Study of the Abortion Debate," in Proceedings of *CSSSA's Annual Conference on Computational Social Science*, Santa Fe, NM, USA, October 19–22, 2017 (CSS '17), 8 pages.

It has been observed time and time again that public opinion regarding the Supreme Court changes in accordance with its political makeup, the political climate of the nation, and the nature of its decisions. However, it is rare for such a large portion of the American public to experience a decline in faith in an institution essentially overnight, which is what many experts argue occurred after the *Dobbs* decision. Investigations into this decline have revealed that it can likely be attributed to the significance of reversing a landmark precedent, the political nature of the case, and the role of the media in depicting the facts of the case. Each of these factors impacts how much trust the public has in the U.S. Supreme Court as an institution.

Analyzing public opinion in regard to federal judicial action helps to test if American institutions in government are continuing to serve the American people. The public's reaction to the *Dobbs* decision serves as an important reminder of the profound impact that the actions of the U.S. Supreme Court can have on the public's assessment of its total legitimacy. It is essential that these metrics are tracked to ensure that institutions remain responsive to the changing dynamics in American society.

A number of solutions have been proposed to restore the reputation and legitimacy of the Supreme Court. For instance, experts have recently called for an ethics code to be implemented to guide the Supreme Court justice's judicial decision-making. In November of 2023, this ethics code was adopted, though it is unclear how it will be implemented, what it will entail, and what this indicates for the future of the Court.⁵⁵

Moving forward, various strategies of this nature will likely be discussed in the media if the reputation of the Court continues to decline. If institutions fail to reflect the values of Americans, should they continue to persist, or be subject to changes of this nature?⁵⁶ If faith in institutions continues to decline, what will be the fate of the federal government as a whole?

⁵⁵ Abbie Vansickle and Adam Liptak, "Supreme Court Adopts Ethics Code after Reports of Undisclosed Gifts and Travel," *The New York Times*, November 13, 2023.

⁵⁶ L. Saad, "Historically low faith in U.S. institutions continues," *Gallup.com*, August 17, 2023.

A Woman's Place is in the Situation Room: The Changing Role of Women in U.S. National Security

Kate Czajkowski

On October 22, 2011, Lieutenant (LT) Ashley White-Stumpf was killed when a member of the assault team she was supporting accidentally triggered an improvised explosive device in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan.⁵⁷ A recent graduate of Kent State University's ROTC program, White-Stumpf was a member of an elite Cultural Support Team (CST) comprised entirely of women who gathered intelligence, conducted searches of women and children, and built relationships with local villages.⁵⁸ The creation of this program, two years before the Pentagon lifted its ban on women serving in combat, marked the first time that an all-female team of soldiers was authorized to work alongside special operations forces in combat zones.⁵⁹ The Cultural Support Program and LT White-Stumpf's ultimate sacrifice underscores the U.S. government's growing recognition of the importance of women's participation in national security.

In the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017, Congress found that the meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention and conflict resolution processes helps to promote more inclusive and democratic societies—critical to the long-term stability of countries and regions.⁶⁰ However, between 1992 and 2019, women constituted, on average, just thirteen percent of negotiators, six percent of mediators, and six percent of signatories in major peace processes around the world.⁶¹ These alarming statistics, and stories like Ashley's, underscore the pressing need for greater female representation in national security. To analyze the present condition of women in national security, however, it is necessary to look to the past and determine how conditions have changed. This paper traces the history of women's roles in U.S. national security and analyzes how these roles have changed over time as a result of individual and governmental actions.

Women's Roles in the History of U.S. National Security

⁵⁷ Heather Wood Rudolph, "After My Twin Sister Was Killed in Afghanistan, I Realized What a Badass She Truly Was," *Cosmopolitan*, June 9, 2015, <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/politics/interviews/a41638/ashley-white-brittany-ashleys-war/>.

⁵⁸ Kent State University, "Ashley White-Stumpf's Sacrifice Featured in National Museum of the U.S. Army," Kent State University, November 23, 2020, <https://www.kent.edu/kent/news/ashley-white-stumpfs-sacrifice-featured-national-museum-us-army>.

⁵⁹ Rudolph

⁶⁰ U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Women, Peace, and Security Act, 115th Cong., 2017, S. 1141 (H.R. 2484), 1, <https://www.congress.gov/115/plaws/publ68/PLAW-115publ68.pdf>.

⁶¹ Council on Foreign Relations, "Women's Participation in Peace Processes," Council on Foreign Relations, accessed October 24, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-peace-processes/>.

In American history, intelligence and national security have often been considered domains reserved for men. It is, therefore, crucial to explore the history of women's contributions to the field to fully appreciate the progress that has been made since.

During the American Revolution and the American Civil War, women primarily served their country through espionage.⁶² During the American Revolution (1776-1783), for example, women passed along secrets to the Continental Army, and in the case of Culper Spy Ring agent Anna Strong, passed along intelligence to George Washington himself.⁶³ Other women were recruited as maids and cooks for prominent loyalist families, using their unassuming covers to eavesdrop on British soldiers. During the American Civil War (1861-1864) the recruitment and training of female spies became more structured. Elaborate networks of female spies, scouts, case officers, encryption specialists, and intelligence agents formed on both sides.⁶⁴

During World War I (1914-1918), women's roles in national security expanded significantly. No longer relegated solely to the field of espionage, women worked in a variety of roles that directly and indirectly affected the outcome of the war. For example, tens of thousands of women joined The Women's Land Army to work the fields to free men for military service, and eight million women volunteered as American Red Cross workers.⁶⁵ During World War II (1939-1945), women filled non-combat positions by serving as mechanics on training bases, pilots transporting military planes, and postal workers delivering overseas mail, among other roles.⁶⁶ In addition, the creation of the Office of Strategic Services following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor allowed women to play roles in the intelligence service that ranged from clerical to operational missions.⁶⁷

The end of World War II brought a partial return to traditional gender roles as women were expected to leave the military and resume domestic duties. Not willing to part with traditional gender hierarchies, men attempted to deny women of the agency that they had exercised during wartime by reminding them that their efforts should be remembered as acts of necessity and not as a pathway to a career. Despite this misogynistic rhetoric, the Cold War era (1947-1991) saw the increasing recognition of women's contributions to national security. The Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 allowed women to serve in the regular armed forces,⁶⁸ and the end of the 20th century saw many "firsts" for women in the military: the first

⁶² Martin, Amy J. "America's Evolution of Women and Their Roles in the Intelligence Community." *Journal of Strategic Security* 8, no. 3 (2015): 1. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26465249>.

⁶³ National Women's History Museum. "Revolutionary Spies: Women Spies of the American Revolution." National Women's History Museum, November 9, 2017. <https://www.womenshistory.org/articles/revolutionary-spies>.

⁶⁴ Martin, 2

⁶⁵ National Parks Service, "Women in World War I," National Parks Service, April 7, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/women-in-world-war-i.htm>.

⁶⁶ Alli Hartley-Kong, "Women in the Military During World War II," The Library of Congress, April 19, 2023, <https://blogs.loc.gov/families/2023/04/women-in-the-military-during-world-war-ii/>.

⁶⁷ Martin, 3

⁶⁸ C. Todd Lopez, "In 75 Years Since Women's Armed Services Integration Act, Female Service Members Have Excelled," U.S. Department of Defense, June 12, 2023, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3425621/in-75-years-since-womens-armed-services-integration-act-female-service-members/>.

female Navy fighter pilot, the first female four star general in the Army,⁶⁹ and the first graduating class of female officers at the U.S. military academies.⁷⁰ Women also broke barriers in diplomacy, the intelligence community, and the defense industry. Notable women like Madeleine Albright and Condoleezza Rice served as Secretaries of State, while others achieved success in roles within the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the National Security Council.

A Legacy of Discrimination

Despite these contributions, women in national security often faced discrimination and were relegated to auxiliary roles. As women's participation and status in the field increased in the 1980s and 1990s, stories of sexual harassment, racial discrimination, wage theft, toxic workplaces, oftentimes going back decades, began to emerge.

After joining the CIA in 1952 as a Directorate of Operations Intelligence Officer, Harritte "Tee" Thompson grew increasingly exasperated after her appeals for promotions continued to be turned down while her male coworkers received promotions for comparable work.⁷¹ Frustrated, she filed a formal complaint of discrimination against the CIA's Directorate of Operations (DO) in 1977.⁷² This complaint would become the first to result in a discrimination lawsuit against the Agency.⁷³ In it, she alleged that "because of my sex, I have been systematically denied essential training courses designed to prepare officers for upward mobility."⁷⁴ Thompson later sued the CIA for willfully violating the Equal Pay Act of 1963 by paying her less than it paid male employees for equal work.⁷⁵ As part of the settlement, she was retroactively promoted to GS-16 and ensured that the DO was required to revise its promotion criteria.⁷⁶

Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Stephanie Davis, an African American servicewoman, experienced decades of racial harassment after joining the Air Force in 1988.⁷⁷ Although she became a flight surgeon, commander of flight medicine at Fairchild Air Force Base and

⁶⁹ Danielle DeSimone, "Over 200 Years of Service: The History of Women in the U.S. Military," United Service Organizations, February 28, 2023, <https://www.uso.org/stories/3005-over-200-years-of-service-the-history-of-women-in-the-us-military/>.

⁷⁰ Terri Moon Cronk, "Women in the Military Academies: 40 Years Later," U.S. Department of Defense, October 2, 2020, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/Story/Article/2369469/women-in-the-military-academies-40-years-later/>.

⁷¹ Dawn Ellison, "One Woman's Contribution to Social Change at CIA," Central Intelligence Agency, 2002: 2. <https://www.cia.gov/static/eae16eb08669306e47b43b5d691e8a69/One-Womans-Contribution.pdf>.

⁷² Ellison, 1

⁷³ Ellison, 1

⁷⁴ Ellison, 2

⁷⁵ Ellison, 7

⁷⁶ Ellison, 7

⁷⁷ Kat Stafford, James Laporta, and Aaron Morrison, "AP Report: Deep-Rooted Racism and Discrimination Permeate U.S. Military," PBS, May 27, 2021, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/ap-report-deep-rooted-racism-and-discrimination-permeate-u-s-military>.

eventually a Lieutenant Colonel, she was subject to extensive racial discrimination from her white peers.⁷⁸ In a later interview, Davis recounted the degrading experience of being assigned the racist call sign 'ABW'—an abbreviation for 'angry black woman'— and being attacked with slurs.⁷⁹ Davis, unlike Thompson, who is white, did not receive a settlement, retroactive promotion, or apology for the discrimination she endured.⁸⁰ LTC Davis' story speaks to the nuances of intersectionality within the armed forces by highlighting the distinct type of discrimination that one may endure as both a woman and person of color.

Contemporary Conditions

It is important to acknowledge the efforts that have been made in improving the conditions of women in national security in recent years. In 2000, the United States supported the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security. This resolution reaffirmed the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.⁸¹ The resolution also highlighted the need for countries to increase women's roles in decision-making regarding conflict prevention and resolution.⁸² More recently, the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 (WPS) acknowledged that "the world is more peaceful, safe, and prosperous when women can fully participate in all facets of economic, social, and political life."⁸³ So far, this act has made a difference. As of 2022, the U.S. Department of State increased gender analysis in projects and strategic frameworks by 25 percent and invested approximately \$110 million in WPS assistance programming.⁸⁴ The U.S. Agency of International Development has supported the WPS by increasing its efforts to consult with local female leaders, civil society, as well as members of academia within countries affected by crisis and conflict.⁸⁵

Although significant efforts have been made to improve the conditions of women in national security, there is still much work to be done. In the United States Marine Corps, for example, instances of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and 'frat-house' behavior continue to occur despite countless reports, regulations, recommendations made by the Department of Defense. In 2017, for example, US Marine Corps Veteran Thomas James Brennan broke the story that "hundreds – possibly thousands" of naked photos of female servicewomen had been

⁷⁸ Stafford, Laporta, Morrison

⁷⁹ Stafford, Laporta, Morrison

⁸⁰ Stafford, Laporta, Morrison

⁸¹ United Nations Security Council, "UN Security Council Resolution 1325," United Nations, October 31, 2000: 1. <https://daccess-ods.un.org/tmp/6028454.30374146.html>.

⁸² United Nations Security Council, 1

⁸³ "Fact Sheet: U.S. Government Women, Peace, and Security Report to Congress," The White House, July 18, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/07/18/fact-sheet-us-government-women-peace-and-securityreport-to-congress/>.

⁸⁴ The White House

⁸⁵ The White House

shared on a private Facebook page named 'Marines United' with nearly 30,000 members.⁸⁶ More than two dozen active-duty women whose photos were posted there were identified by their full names, ranks and duty stations.⁸⁷ Although this incident brought swift condemnation from the then-commandant of the Marine Corps, it is only one of the most recent examples of such a Facebook group.⁸⁸ Says USMC Major Janine Garner, "how can I look to the Marine to the right and the left of me and sit there and wonder, were you one of the ones who said you wanted to rape me?"⁸⁹

Why More Women are Needed in National Security

In the words of retired Naval War College Professor Joan Johnson-Freese, "involving women more in national security is not just the right thing to do, it's a national security imperative."⁹⁰

The inclusion of women in national security brings a diversity of perspectives and experiences to the decision-making process. Historically, the national security arena has been dominated by a single perspective, which can result in tunnel vision and groupthink.⁹¹ By incorporating more women into this sphere, different viewpoints and solutions can be brought to the table. In addition, national security is not just about military strength; it encompasses a wide range of elements, including diplomacy, intelligence, cyber warfare, economic stability, and humanitarian efforts. Women in national security contribute significantly to these non-military aspects. An emphasis on diplomacy as opposed to military invention can lead to more peaceful resolutions to conflicts and, consequently, a safer world. The meaningful participation of women in political processes furthers U.S. national security interests by promoting peace globally.

By actively promoting gender diversity, national security agencies can also expand their talent pool. The Department of Defense is one such agency that can benefit from increased recruitment. In 2022, the U.S. Army missed its recruitment goals by fifteen thousand, with that number expected to rise to 20,000 in 2023.⁹² According to the U.S. Army Recruiting Command, this recruitment crisis is due in part to female prospects viewing the Army as an inferior employer that is neither aligned with their aspirations nor capable of providing desired career

⁸⁶ Joanna Walters, "Former Female Marines: Facebook Page Only the Latest Instance of Sexual Abuse," *The Guardian*, March 8, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/mar/08/female-marines-facebook-page-sexual-abuse>.

⁸⁷ Walters

⁸⁸ Walters

⁸⁹ Walters

⁹⁰ Johnson-Freese, Joan. "Half of Heaven: Why More Women Are Needed in National Security." TED, 17 Aug. 2018, www.ted.com/talks/joan_johnson_freese_half_of_heaven_why_more_women_are_needed_in_national_security.

⁹¹ Gabriela Doyle, "Who's in the Room? Part II: The Case for Women's Voices in National Security," *Georgetown Security Studies Review*, November 4, 2020, https://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2020/10/21/whos-in-the-room-part-ii-the-case-for-womens-voices-in-national-security/#_edn14.

⁹² Michelle Kurilla, "The President's Inbox Recap: The U.S. Military Recruiting Crisis," *Council on Foreign Relations*, June 16, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/presidents-inbox-recap-us-military-recruiting-crisis>.

outcomes.⁹³ Encouraging women to pursue careers in these fields by reforming the military justice system, increasing opportunities for professional growth, and improving individual and familial benefits, helps with recruitment and improves retention rates. A shrinking armed forces is detrimental to U.S. national security interests and the promotion of global stability.

Finally, in an era of increasing focus on human rights and international law, national security decisions must be made with a strong ethical foundation. Women in leadership roles can advocate for policies that prioritize human rights and justice, aligning national security strategies with international norms and frameworks like international humanitarian law. It has been found that those who express greater concern for the status and role of women, particularly for equality between women and men, are more likely than other individuals to believe that the international disputes in which their country is involved should be resolved through diplomacy and compromise.⁹⁴ Woman-led measures to promote human rights and equality globally, therefore, further U.S. national security interests by discouraging international disputes and encouraging stability.

Work to Be Done

The historical contributions of women in national security stand as a testament to their determination to succeed in a structure not designed for nor welcoming of their presence. From undercover spies to diplomats in the public eye, history has proven that women have the skills necessary to take charge in times of crisis while retaining their identity as women in a male-dominated field. The challenges and disparities that persist in national security serve as a reminder that more work is needed to ensure gender equality in the intelligence sector. To do this, the United States must continue its ongoing efforts to dismantle barriers, promote diversity, and create a more inclusive environment in the national security domain. Only by including women in conflict prevention and peace-making processes can the United States further its goals for domestic and international stability.

⁹³ United States Army Recruiting Command, "Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services US Army Brief March 20-21," Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, March 2023, <https://dacowits.defense.gov/Portals/48/Documents/General%20Documents/RFI%20Docs/March%202023/USA%20RFI%201-1.pdf?ver=h6875fsxPIVPZ2PN-e6X5Q%3D%3D>.

⁹⁴ Caprioli, Mary, and Mark A. Boyer. "Gender, Violence, and International Crisis." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 4 (2001): 509. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3176309>.

Youth and the Alt-Right: The Influence of Social Media and Echo Chambers

Milla Daigle

Since the dawn of the Information Age, parents and scholars alike have struggled to understand the impact of social media on youth. Life in the twenty-first century has been marked by the rapid development of technology, from flip phones to small computers, and the emergence of online communities. Many experience these communities firsthand, from Harry Potter to card games, the internet has a corner for every person and interest. While it may seem that these social communities are a good location for youths, allowing them to explore and interact with others about their niche interests, certain cliques hold dark ideals and foster echo chambers. Andrew Tate is a recent social media influencer who has come to light within youth culture. Well known for his self-proclaimed misogynistic beliefs and his arrest on accusations of sex trafficking,⁹⁵ he has become the face of a new alt-right generation. The rise of Andrew Tate and similar influencers has created numerous internet echo chambers that have bled out into reality. The question, however, remains: when children as young as 11 have been exposed to these misogynistic and harmful ideals,⁹⁶ what will they grow up to be, and how will these echo chambers of hate influence the next generation of adults?

For the purpose of this paper, the alternative-right, or alt-right as it is commonly known, will be defined by its three political tenets:

1. A 'reboot' or revision of earlier forms of American white nationalism, sometimes designated 'white nationalism 1.0.'
2. A theoretical and discursive program centered on appropriating and adapting European right thought – especially that of the French New Right, the German Conservative Revolution, and Evolian Traditionalism – for an American audience.
3. A refined and intensified gender politics, a form of 'ultra-masculinism.'⁹⁷

While definitions vary, with some popular alt-right influencers claiming that they do not believe in white nationalism/supremacy, these ideals comprise the vast majority of alt-right beliefs.

Online echo chambers are defined as “a situation or a space in which pre-existing beliefs are repeated and reinforced – like reverberations in an acoustic echo chamber”⁹⁸ by researchers Ludovic Terren and Rosa Borge. This paper delves into the specifics and differences between the ideas of echo chambers and filter bubbles, defined as interactions and

⁹⁵ Dodgson, Lindsay and Bethany, Dawson. “As His Beliefs Have Seeped into Homes and Classrooms, Children as Young as 11 Think Andrew Tate Is Their ‘God,’” *Business Insider*, January 29, 2023, <https://www.businessinsider.com/teachers-and-parents-talk-about-andrew-tates-influence-on-kids-2023-1>.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Vandiver, Josh. “The Radical Roots of the Alt-Right | Josh Vandiver,” *www.gale.com*, 2018, <https://www.gale.com/intl/essays/josh-vandiver-radical-roots-alt-right>.

⁹⁸ Terren, Ludovic and Borge, Rosa. “Echo Chambers on Social Media: A Systematic Review of the Literature,” *Openaccess.uoc.edu*, March 15, 2021, <http://hdl.handle.net/10609/136811>.

exposure with like-minded thinkers, and the concept of algorithmic influence respectively.⁹⁹ In the context of this paper, echo chambers and filter bubbles will be analyzed under the same lens, and both will be associated with the term “echo chamber.”

The appeal of the alt-right is incredibly complex, ranging from the appeal of hypermasculinity to traditional childhood beliefs. The question of why youth enter the alt-right is one that is difficult to answer. Author Pam Nilan prefers to ask *how* youth enter the alt-right. She especially focuses on appeals to emotion: “Far Right recruitment sets out to activate the emotions and feelings of young people using persuasive discourses like *white victimhood*, *anti-elitism* and *invasion*.”¹⁰⁰ The current state of our society, one which places a focus on concepts like social justice and equality, may influence white men to become threatened by this idea of justice - they have no stake in equality, so why support it?

The history of the alt-right is relatively simple, mainly because it is a more recent phenomenon. The idea of an alt-right came into popularity with the presidential campaign and election of Barack Obama. What followed was the collaboration of Dr. Paul Gottfried and Richard Spencer, a paleoconservative and white nationalist respectively, and the creation of the H. L. Mencken club, a “small group of pro-white, far-right intellectuals and academics—the white nationalist intelligentsia.”¹⁰¹ It is here that the term “alternative right” is officially used.

Most forms of social media, including YouTube, X, and Instagram, employ an algorithm that recommends content based on the content users have interacted with. YouTube’s algorithm works by taking search history, watch time, age, and gender into account when recommending videos. This leads consumers to believe “that YouTube’s algorithm is not trying to teach or convince the user of a certain truth, but simply wants to convince them to continue to watch the videos on the site.”¹⁰² YouTube’s algorithm may be non-partisan in that its goal is only to increase watch time and advertisement interaction, but that does not mean its recommendations are. In a study of YouTube’s algorithm, researchers found that “a user who pursues even mildly conservative content is ‘only one or two clicks away from extreme far-right channels, conspiracy theories, and radicalizing content.’”¹⁰³ Within the realm of online indoctrination, journalist Robert Evans in an interview with 75 fascist advocates, found that 39 credited the internet for starting their “red-pilled” journey. Red-pilling refers to the radicalization of people towards extreme far-right views, including antisemitic, racist, and fascist beliefs.¹⁰⁴ The rest of those interviewed credited their red-pilling journey to a wide array of factors, including their family, living in a

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Nilan, Pam. “Young People and the Far Right,” Palgrave Macmillan, accessed October 24, 2023, <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/blogs/social-sciences/nilan>.

¹⁰¹ Hartzell, Stephanie. “Alt-White: Conceptualizing the ‘Alt-Right’ as a Rhetorical Bridge between White Nationalism and Mainstream Public Discourse,” *Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric* 8, no. 1/2 (2018): 6–25.

¹⁰² Valentino Bryant, Lauren. “The YouTube Algorithm and the Alt-Right Filter Bubble,” *Open Information Science* 4, no. 1 (June 8, 2020): 85–90, <https://doi.org/10.1515/opis-2020-0007>.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Evans, Robert. “From Memes to Infowars: How 75 Fascist Activists Were ‘Red-Pilled,’” *bellingcat*, October 11, 2018, <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/americas/2018/10/11/memes-infowars-75-fascist-activists-red-pilled/>.

diverse area, and even the influence of hard drugs.¹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, the majority of those interviewed credited their extreme political views to the internet.

The alt-right differs from its white nationalist cousins in the fact that they possess no hierarchical organization, forgo traditional religious ideals, and lack universal symbols/uniforms. In these ways, they differ from their predecessors in the KKK and Nazi Party, but retain their fixation on whiteness, apocalyptic scenarios surrounding the elimination of the white race, and open antisemitism.¹⁰⁶ Although the alt-right may hold similar beliefs to many fascist ideologies, the alt-right is uniquely different in its use of the internet. They hold no public meetings, rarely physically demonstrate, and utilize meme culture to spread their ideology. It is undebatable that the alt-right is the new age of fascism - one that has never been seen before.

The influence of the alt-right is not exclusive to adults, however. Youth, experiencing changes in their lives and an unseemly insatiable need to rebel, commonly find themselves looking to the alt-right as a beacon. A teacher, referred to as Jane to protect her anonymity, reported that her 11-year-old student “will use any opportunity to ‘talk about how Andrew Tate is God’s gift to men,’” and that ““He has particular affinities for Russia and Nazi Germany. And I’ve caught him a couple of times in my classroom targeting students that he perceives to potentially be Jewish and showing them Nazi memorabilia.””¹⁰⁷ In 2020, a neo-Nazi group called Feuerkrieg Division was banned in the UK under its terror law after police foiled two terrorist attacks. This group was led by a 13-year-old boy.¹⁰⁸ Neo-Nazi militant group The Base led by 47-year-old Rinaldo Nazzaro sought to recruit young teenagers and influence their ideology to be more right-leaning.¹⁰⁹ Teenagers are especially vulnerable to political grooming, especially young white men who feel they have been wronged by the current social standard. These teens also face a new issue in the digital age - loneliness. In a time where it seems people are more connected than ever, for some, it has never been lonelier. With this loneliness comes extremist thoughts. According to a study by researchers at RAND Corporation, loneliness is one of the major causes of the adaptation of extremist thought.¹¹⁰ With hours spent on social media ever increasing, especially with youth, it is unsurprising that in an age lonelier than ever, teenagers find solace in extreme right-leaning echo chambers online.

The concept of echo chambers and the political right are very much a “chicken and the egg” scenario. Do youth become ensnared by political echo chambers first, or are they

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Vandiver, Josh. “The Radical Roots of the Alt-Right | Josh Vandiver,” www.gale.com, 2018, <https://www.gale.com/intl/essays/josh-vandiver-radical-roots-alt-right>.

¹⁰⁷ Dodgson, Lindsay and Bethany, Dawson. “As His Beliefs Have Seeped into Homes and Classrooms, Children as Young as 11 Think Andrew Tate Is Their ‘God,’” *Business Insider*, January 29, 2023, <https://www.businessinsider.com/teachers-and-parents-talk-about-andrew-tates-influence-on-kids-2023-1>.

¹⁰⁸ De Simone, Daniel. “Neo-Nazi Group Led by 13-Year-Old Boy to Be Banned,” *BBC News*, July 13, 2020, sec. UK, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-53392036>.

¹⁰⁹ De Simone, Daniel and Winston, Ali. “Neo-Nazi Militant Group Grooms Teenagers,” *BBC News*, June 21, 2020, sec. UK, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-53128169>.

¹¹⁰ Stulberg, Brad. “Loneliness Can Make You Vulnerable to Extremism,” *Time*, October 3, 2022, <https://time.com/6223229/loneliness-vulnerable-extremist-views/>.

radicalized by YouTube, a parent, or their friend first? That is, unfortunately, an unanswerable question for this paper, but it is undebatable that the internet provides echo chambers for the most extreme youth. While the internet is very much a place of knowledge, these homogeneous communities persist. In the subtle ways that news stations like Fox News or CNN take a political approach to newscasting in what they do or do not air, online political echo chambers take advantage of their community to push narratives toward their own goal. People may also change their beliefs to fit into an extremist group: “It was, for instance, found that members of an online neo-Nazi group received punitive and rewarding responses to their discussion board posts, after which some of the expressed opinions were adjusted.”¹¹¹ Youth are also able to find a sense of identity within extreme groups - something that both gives them a sense of self and also rebels against the standard beliefs. Youth especially look for reasoning to justify their own beliefs, thus leading them into the trap of an echo chamber.¹¹²

Right-wing radicalization of youth may be especially dangerous for the future outcomes of society. With Neo-Nazi organizations hosting violent events such as the Charlottesville rally in 2017 and plotting terrorist attacks against those they deem as “lesser,” it is no wonder that the alt-right online movement is heavily tracked by authorities. The concept of youths never growing out of their violent radicalization is threatening, “Scholars are in significant agreement that political attitudes form during adolescence and early adulthood tend to persist over time. Thus, political attitudes developed during youth may have lifelong consequences for future political values and behavior.”¹¹³ The concept of a new generation of the KKK or the Nazi Party is a terrifying one, especially for women, those of color, Jews, and any other minority groups that the alt-right places a target on.

Understanding the concepts of racism, antisemitism, and misogyny is difficult, they are concepts too broad to completely understand without holding those beliefs. Asking “Why are people alt-right?” is essentially asking why people are racist, why they think the way they do, and why they hold beliefs that seem so disjointed from our own? The answer may vary from person to person but eventually circles back to a simple answer - because they do. Their path to believing may vary, but the simple fact that they hold entirely unjustifiable opinions does not. They are alt-right because that is what they believe.

The future of the alt-right is unclear and may remain that way. It is possible that involvement in the alt-right is simply a brief, edgy phase that teens will grow out of. But the actions of some of these children, with 13-year-olds starting Neo-Nazi groups and planning terrorist attacks, certainly point to the opposite. “Likewise, because identity consolidation is a core developmental task of the adolescent and young adult years, psychologists have argued that adult personalities are shaped in part by the way people grapple with and resolve social issues of salience during this developmental period.”¹¹⁴ The fear of these adolescents never

¹¹¹ Geeraerts, Sanne. “Digital Radicalization of Youth,” *Social Cosmos* 3, no. 1 (2012): 25–32.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Rydgren, Jens. *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right* (New York, Ny: Oxford University Press, 2018), 348.

¹¹⁴ Flagan, Constance and Sherrod, Lonnie. “Youth Political Development: An Introduction,” *Journal of Social Issues* 54, no. 3 (April 9, 2010): 447–56, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1998.tb01229.x>.

growing out of these beliefs is a valid one, but there is unfortunately not enough research on the direct implications of an extreme alt-right attitude. For that, only time will tell.

Prescription for Inflation: The Impact of the Inflation Reduction Act on Medicare

Medha Illindala

The United States is witnessing a rapid incline in prescription drug pricing, leading to significant financial strain for millions of Americans.¹¹⁵ The U.S. population is growing with more people living longer, leading to a greater use of drugs in healthcare. The prices of many of these drugs are currently surpassing inflation rates, and the cost of treatment for complex medical conditions is higher than ever.¹¹⁶ Congress is attempting to balance innovation in pharmaceuticals with price competition to keep consumers from not being able to afford their medications and lifesaving healthcare, but there are nuances to this issue.¹¹⁷ Drug manufacturers rely on federal funding for research and testing to develop new medication. This discovery and development process is quite expensive, but it shouldn't come at a price that prevents patients from accessing its results.¹¹⁸

When a manufacturer launches a new drug, they have complete discretion to set its starting price. Additionally, manufacturers are given a patent for the product and are protected by market-exclusivity for a specific period of time.¹¹⁹ This means that until other manufacturers produce generic versions of this drug to sell at a lower price, the original manufacturer can keep raising the price each year without worrying about competition.¹²⁰ In 2014, oral anti-cancer drugs were introduced at six times the previous pricing.¹²¹ Manufacturers can increase the price of their product even without making significant improvements to it. Between 2014 and 2015, the retail prices for 268 prescription drugs commonly used by older Americans had increased by 130 times the rate of inflation.¹²² This rate is even higher for specialty drugs used to treat more complex conditions. For example, the cost of insulin has tripled over the past decade, and even antibiotics are being inflated; a 500-pill bottle of doxycycline that used to cost \$20 can now go for \$1849.¹²³ Manufacturers take advantage of natural monopolies and hold on to their patent-

¹¹⁵ Henry Waxman et al., "Getting to the Root of High Prescription Drug Prices," The Commonwealth Fund, July 10, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.26099/vs1x-6992>.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Erica York, "Inflation Reduction Act's Price Controls Are Deterring New Drug Development," Tax Foundation (Tax Foundation, April 26, 2023), <https://taxfoundation.org/blog/inflation-reduction-act-medicare-prescription-drug-price-controls/>.

¹¹⁸ Henry Waxman et al., "Getting to the Root of High Prescription Drug Prices," The Commonwealth Fund, July 10, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.26099/vs1x-6992>.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

era pricing for as long as they can. Manufacturers may block competitors from obtaining samples to make bioequivalent generic versions, or even pay off companies from releasing their version of the drug for several years. This 'pay for delay' costs Americans roughly \$3.5 billion annually in higher healthcare costs.¹²⁴ While many Americans with health insurance may not need access to complex medical treatments, the elderly population is feeling this inflation the most.¹²⁵

Medicare is federal health insurance for people aged 65 or older, including younger people with end stage diseases. Medicare has designated divisions of coverage and various policies that surround them. Specifically, Medicare Part B covers services from doctors, outpatient care, medical equipment and preventive services such as screenings or vaccines.¹²⁶ Medicare Part D covers prescription drugs and medications, which is where significant costs stem from, as 48 million Americans utilize this coverage, which totaled nearly one third of all prescription costs in 2017.¹²⁷ Prior to the Inflation Reduction Act (IFA), the secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) was strictly forbidden from negotiating the prices for drugs covered under Medicare Part D. This meant that the copay for drugs was and still is especially high for a smaller selection of covered drugs where most of the spending from Medicare Parts B and D were going towards. These drugs are piloting the IFA's new exception of drug negotiation.¹²⁸

The IFA was signed into law by President Joe Biden on August 16th, 2022.¹²⁹ This investment revamped Medicare in several ways, most notably allowing for the negotiation of drug prices.¹³⁰ Drugs that have a generic or biosimilar version available, are younger than 9 years (pill form) or 13 years (biologics), or with Medicare spending of less than \$200 million in 2021 are excluded from this.¹³¹ The HHS can establish a maximum fare price for these drugs, marking the limit as the lowest end of the drug's enrollment weighted negotiation price.¹³² The negotiated cost takes into account the research and development costs, federal support

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ "Inflation Reduction Act and Medicare," CMS (U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, September 12, 2023), <https://www.cms.gov/inflation-reduction-act-and-medicare#:~:text=The%20new%20law%20requires%20drug,price%20increases%20by%20drug%20companies>.

¹²⁷ "How the Inflation Reduction Act Aims to Lower Drug Costs," PBS NewsHour (PBS, August 7, 2022), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/how-the-inflation-reduction-act-aims-to-lower-drug-costs>.

¹²⁸ Juliette Cubanski, Tricia Neuman, and Meredith Freed, "Explaining the Prescription Drug Provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act," KFF (blog), January 24, 2023, <https://www.kff.org/medicare/issue-brief/explaining-the-prescription-drug-provisions-in-the-inflation-reduction-act/>.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² "Inflation Reduction Act and Medicare," CMS (U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, September 12, 2023), <https://www.cms.gov/inflation-reduction-act-and-medicare#:~:text=The%20new%20law%20requires%20drug,price%20increases%20by%20drug%20companies>.

provided to the manufacturer, production and manufacturing costs, and evidence of alternative treatments to the condition.

In addition to drug negotiation, the IFA implemented a yearly cap of \$2,000 on out-of-pocket prescription costs. This included capping insulin for Part D patients at \$35 per month and providing vaccine access without cost sharing.¹³³ The low-income subsidy program expanded to include patients up to 150 percent of the poverty level and provide extra support and coverage.¹³⁴ Additionally, if a manufacturer raises the price of a drug faster than the rate of inflation, they have to pay a rebate to Medicare. Medicare Part B changes included improved access to biosimilars and a \$35/month cap on insulin cost sharing when used in medical equipment pumps.¹³⁵

Leading expert in healthcare policy Stacie Dusetzina, from Vanderbilt University, shared her comments on the IFA, calling it a ‘modest start.’¹³⁶ She agreed that the negotiation aspect will lead to significant savings for Medicare patients, although it was disappointing that there was no decision on reducing insulin costs for all Americans, even those without insurance. She also noted that there is limited research to understand the effects that this act may have on innovation and development of drugs and government investment into the industry.¹³⁷ Critics of the IFA warn people of its adverse effects on research and development (R&D) of drugs. They argue that the IFA is negatively impacting access to medicine and will discourage continued development post approval.¹³⁸ Once a drug is approved, it typically goes through continued R&D to make improvements to the drug or discover its unknown benefits. Many medications are discovered to also work for different conditions years after it was approved to treat only one condition. More than 60 percent of oncology medicines that were approved a decade ago now have additional indications.¹³⁹ This increases the drug's therapeutic value, and manufacturers use this to determine their pricing. The IFA limiting drug pricing may discourage manufacturers from post approval R&D, as the costly labor may not be ‘worth it’ to do.¹⁴⁰ It takes an average of about \$2 billion and 10 years to develop a new drug and get it approved, and even then only about 12 percent of drugs that go to clinical trials end up being approved for introduction.¹⁴¹ The

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ “How the Inflation Reduction Act Aims to Lower Drug Costs,” PBS NewsHour (PBS, August 7, 2022), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/how-the-inflation-reduction-act-aims-to-lower-drug-costs>.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Erica York, “Inflation Reduction Act’s Price Controls Are Deterring New Drug Development,” Tax Foundation (Tax Foundation, April 26, 2023), <https://taxfoundation.org/blog/inflation-reduction-act-medicare-prescription-drug-price-controls/>.

¹³⁹ “Inflation Reduction Act’s Unintended Consequences,” PHRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America), accessed November 3, 2023, <https://phrma.org/Inflation-Reduction-Act>.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Erica York, “Inflation Reduction Act’s Price Controls Are Deterring New Drug Development,” Tax Foundation (Tax Foundation, April 26, 2023), <https://taxfoundation.org/blog/inflation-reduction-act-medicare-prescription-drug-price-controls/>.

Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that the IFA may cause pharmaceutical profits to drop by \$237 billion by 2031.¹⁴² Additionally, there may be fewer new drugs being brought to the market, leading to an even larger loss of funds.

Biopharmaceutical companies do not see an incentive to continue research on the initial drug. The act starts the price setting process much earlier for small molecule (pill form) medications; starting the limiting at 7 years post approval instead of the usual 13-14 years manufacturers have to keep prices high before competitors produce generic versions.¹⁴³ Some drug companies are cutting ties and re-allocating resources to other R&D projects, with some discussing moving business outside of the U.S. as they may not be able to recoup the R&D costs.¹⁴⁴ Since the IFA was announced, biopharmaceutical companies have put a halt to more expensive projects. Specifically, Eli Lilly announced it was canceling a project for a blood cancer drug. Additionally, Alnylam suspended its development for the treatment of rare eye disorder, Stargardt disease.¹⁴⁵

Critics call out policymakers, saying they should keep emphasis on innovation in lifesaving treatments for complex, hard to treat conditions, and should instead target insurance companies and Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) to lower the out-of-pocket cost for patients.¹⁴⁶ PBMs are companies that serve as a middleman for managing prescription drug costs and benefits on behalf of insurers. They determine how much the pharmacies are paid, the patient's access to medications and the cost for insurers. Overall, PBMs have been able to lower drug prices over the last three years.¹⁴⁷ However, they have their own incentive to favor higher priced drugs, as they receive a rebate in the form of a percentage of the drug costs. Higher priced drugs mean a higher rebate, leading to patients with a higher deductible often paying more out of pocket. Drug manufacturers argue that paying PBMs a rebate is causing them to raise the prices of drugs.¹⁴⁸ From 2012 to 2016, the manufacturer rebates to PBMs increased from \$39.7 billion to \$89.5 billion.¹⁴⁹ PBMs say a share of this is going to insurers, but

¹⁴² "Inflation Reduction Act's Unintended Consequences," PHRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America), accessed November 3, 2023, <https://phrma.org/Inflation-Reduction-Act>.

¹⁴³ Erica York, "Inflation Reduction Act's Price Controls Are Deterring New Drug Development," Tax Foundation (Tax Foundation, April 26, 2023), <https://taxfoundation.org/blog/inflation-reduction-act-medicare-prescription-drug-price-controls/>.

¹⁴⁴ "Inflation Reduction Act's Unintended Consequences," PHRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America), accessed November 3, 2023, <https://phrma.org/Inflation-Reduction-Act>.

¹⁴⁵ Erica York, "Inflation Reduction Act's Price Controls Are Deterring New Drug Development," Tax Foundation (Tax Foundation, April 26, 2023), <https://taxfoundation.org/blog/inflation-reduction-act-medicare-prescription-drug-price-controls/>.

¹⁴⁶ "Inflation Reduction Act's Unintended Consequences," PHRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America), accessed November 3, 2023, <https://phrma.org/Inflation-Reduction-Act>.

¹⁴⁷ "Pharmacy Benefit Managers and Their Role in Drug Spending," The Commonwealth Fund, April 22, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.26099/njmh-en20>.

¹⁴⁸ "Inflation Reduction Act's Unintended Consequences," PHRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America), accessed November 3, 2023, <https://phrma.org/Inflation-Reduction-Act>.

¹⁴⁹ "Pharmacy Benefit Managers and Their Role in Drug Spending," The Commonwealth Fund, April 22, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.26099/njmh-en20>.

the details are not publicly disclosed. If PBMs were to pass through all of this rebate to insurers, copays and premiums could reduce. PBMs may also engage in 'spread pricing', where they are reimbursed by health plans at a higher price for generic drugs than what is actually paid to the pharmacies, with the PBMs keeping the difference.¹⁵⁰ This lack of transparency may be costing Americans a major loss, further creating a divide in healthcare access.

Access to healthcare in the U.S. has remained a controversial topic. At the end of the day, it is a business. Pharmaceutical manufacturers, PBMs and insurers, and healthcare providers are involved in the economics and politics of drug production and sale. The goal of policymakers is to reduce out-of-pocket costs for patients, but the methods of doing so may have unintended effects and could potentially make this access much worse.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

Risk Deterrence from Entrepreneurship

Matthew Koleszar

Since the 1970s, entrepreneurship in the United States has gradually declined, causing a two percent decrease in average GDP growth.¹⁵¹ Overwhelming risk deters people from starting a business, with 20 percent of small businesses failing in their first year and 50 percent failing by their fifth year.¹⁵² However, an aspiring entrepreneur from a wealthy family can take on this risk with the knowledge that they can rely on their family's help if their venture fails. For this reason, wealthy individuals tend to be more risk-tolerant and are more likely to start a business than the general population.¹⁵³ If the U.S. government provided a safety net for all small business owners through a national unemployment insurance (UI), low-income entrepreneurs would be able to take greater risks, thereby increasing the nation's economic productivity. Additionally, UI would not produce business owners of inferior quality, burden the government with expensive monitoring costs, or reduce the incentive to work.

UI reduces the risk of starting a new business because it provides a safety net in case of failure. For example, France modified their UI rules in 2002, allowing the “unemployed turned entrepreneur” to continue collecting benefits until their business turned profitable. After the reform, “monthly firm creation immediately [increased] by 25 percent.”¹⁵⁴ Opponents of the policy expected this new pool of entrepreneurs to be of inferior quality to more risk-tolerant entrepreneurs who started businesses before the UI change. Perhaps the high risk of starting a business can effectively “screen out entrepreneurs who have low expectations about the success of their venture.”¹⁵⁵ But, when compared to pre-existing firms, the new firms were more productive. “Value added per worker is [\$7,400] per year higher in newly created firms relative to these incumbents.”¹⁵⁶ New firms also survived for a similar length of time and employed a similar number of workers.¹⁵⁷

The United States Self-Employment Assistance (SEA) offers similar benefits to France's UI and has seen similar results. It is a voluntary program administered by the Department of Labor. So far, only Delaware, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New York, and Oregon have decided to participate. To enroll in the program, claimants must have their business idea

¹⁵¹ “Entrepreneurship and the Decline of American Growth.” United States Congress Joint Economic Committee, 14 Dec. 2022, www.jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/republicans/2022/12/entrepreneurship-and-the-decline-of-american-growth.

¹⁵² “Survival of Private Sector Establishments by Opening Year.” U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Mar. 2022, www.bls.gov/bdm/us_age_naics_00_table7.txt.

¹⁵³ Leckelt, Marius, et al. “The personality traits of self-made and inherited millionaires.” *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-022-01099-3>.

¹⁵⁴ Hombert, Johan, et al. “Can Unemployment Insurance Spur Entrepreneurial Activity?” *National Bureau of Economic Research*, Nov. 2014, <https://doi.org/10.3386/w20717>.

¹⁵⁵ Hombert, “Can Unemployment Insurance Spur Entrepreneurial Activity?”

¹⁵⁶ Hombert, “Can Unemployment Insurance Spur Entrepreneurial Activity?”

¹⁵⁷ Hombert, “Can Unemployment Insurance Spur Entrepreneurial Activity?”

approved. Then, they receive entrepreneurial training and technical assistance.¹⁵⁸ SEA participants were four times more likely to find any type of employment when compared to eligible nonparticipants.¹⁵⁹ Two thirds of participants successfully started their own business without the need to secure loans, leading to steady job creation.¹⁶⁰ While enrollment numbers have been low in the few states with SEA, participants consistently report “high levels of satisfaction with self-employment and the training they received as part of the SEA program.”¹⁶¹ The U.S. could expand SEA so that people nationwide have the opportunity to start their own business, in hopes of increasing employment and job satisfaction.

Other forms of welfare have the same effect of reducing the risk of entrepreneurship and encouraging firm formation. A robust social safety net that reduces the risk of entrepreneurship could include more than just UI. For instance, the State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) provides health insurance to families that make too much money to qualify for Medicaid, but still need help providing medical care to their children. Once the program began in 1997, “SCHIP reduced the number of households with uninsured children by 29%... increased the self-employment rate by 23%, [and increased] the number of incorporated firms by 31%.”¹⁶² The study also determined that these new firms were “high-quality ventures.”¹⁶³ In the U.S., where employers typically provide health insurance to their employees, aspiring entrepreneurs may be deterred from starting a business out of fear of losing coverage. Public health insurance assuages this fear and protects families from medical debt. Similarly, in the mid-2000s, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) income threshold increased so that the program covered twice as many people. After the change, “newly-eligible households [were] 20% more likely to own a business.”¹⁶⁴ Both the SCHIP and SNAP expansions caused an increase in the labor supply, thereby boosting total economic output. Many forms of welfare follow the same underlying principle, as a risk reduction can boost entrepreneurship.

There are two mechanisms through which a safety net can increase entrepreneurship: reducing risk and increasing credit. Welfare can provide insurance in the case of business failure (reducing risk) or free up wealth to use as collateral or invest into the start-up (increasing credit). Between these two effects, entrepreneurs are more likely to be risk constrained than credit constrained.¹⁶⁵ After the SNAP expansion, the new firm growth was driven by newly

¹⁵⁸ “The Self-Employment Assistance (SEA) Program.” Congressional Research Service, 4 Apr. 2023, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R41253>

¹⁵⁹ “The Self-Employment Assistance (SEA) Program.” Congressional Research Service, 4 Apr. 2023, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R41253>

¹⁶⁰ Vroman, Wayne. “Self Employment Assistance: Revised Report.” The Urban Institute, Dec. 1997, www.ciln.mcmaster.ca/papers/seconf/assistance.pdf.

¹⁶¹ “The Self-Employment Assistance (SEA) Program.” Congressional Research Service, 4 Apr. 2023, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R41253>

¹⁶² Olds, Gareth. “Entrepreneurship and the Social Safety Net.” Brown University, 2014. <https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:386278/PDF/>

¹⁶³ Vroman, “Self Employment Assistance.”

¹⁶⁴ Olds, Gareth. “Food Stamp Entrepreneurs.” Harvard Business School Working Paper, No. 16-143, June 2016. <https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/item.aspx?num=50692>

¹⁶⁵ Olds, “Food Stamp Entrepreneurs.”

eligible non-enrollees.¹⁶⁶ Households with less risk exposure but the same amount of capital were more likely to start a business. A study in Mexico found the same conclusion by giving some farmers cash immediately while other farmers were promised cash transfers in the future. People who had the insurance of future cash transfers were far more likely to start their own firms than people who immediately received money.¹⁶⁷ The main obstacle to firm formation is not a lack of capital or collateral to start the firm, but rather the fear of what might happen when the business fails. Because the risk effect poses a larger barrier for most aspiring entrepreneurs, government policy should focus on reducing risk rather than increasing credit. Some policies try to increase credit through microcredit loans, preventing credit rationing, or providing tax incentives to lenders giving to start-ups.¹⁶⁸ Other policies, like universal basic income or a negative income tax, simply give people more money.

Opponents of UI argue that the program burdens the poor by forcing them to report their job-seeking efforts and burdens the government with expensive administrative costs.¹⁶⁹ These potential issues can be solved with a program that has low activation requirements. For example, unemployed people seeking benefits would only have to self-certify to receive benefits, rather than providing extensive evidence of job applications. This, in turn, would reduce job-search monitoring costs that typically burden UI.¹⁷⁰ High job-search requirements can force job seekers to take lower quality jobs and push people out of the labor market.¹⁷¹

With low activation requirements, many claim that UI has the potential to create a moral hazard: people may receive benefits without looking for a job. Some cite how UI increases unemployment durations as evidence for the reduced incentive to work and a reduced incentive to start a business.¹⁷² However, unemployment duration only increases because UI provides jobseekers with more bargaining power.¹⁷³ With greater financial security, they do not have the pressure to accept the first job offer they receive. They can negotiate a better deal or wait for a better offer. Consequently, more generous UI programs correlate with higher job match quality as measured by increased wages and increased job stability.¹⁷⁴ In contrast, when states cut UI,

¹⁶⁶ Olds, "Food Stamp Entrepreneurs."

¹⁶⁷ Milo Bianchi, Matteo Bobba, Liquidity, Risk, and Occupational Choices, *The Review of Economic Studies*, Volume 80, Issue 2, April 2013, Pages 491–511, <https://doi.org/10.1093/restud/rds031>

¹⁶⁸ Olds, "Food Stamp Entrepreneurs."

¹⁶⁹ McVicar, D. "The impact of monitoring and sanctioning on unemployment exit and job-finding rates." *IZA World of Labor* 2020: 49 doi: 10.15185/izawol.49.v2

¹⁷⁰ Fuller, David L., B. Ravikumar, and Yuzhe Zhang. 2015. "Unemployment Insurance Fraud and Optimal Monitoring." *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics*, 7 (2): 249-90. DOI: 10.1257/mac.20130255

¹⁷¹ Marinescu, I. Job search monitoring and assistance for the unemployed. *IZA World of Labor* 2017: 380 doi: 10.15185/izawol.380

¹⁷² Chetty, Raj. "Why Do Unemployment Benefits Raise Unemployment Durations? Moral Hazard v. Liquidity." National Bureau of Economic Research, Mar. 2006, www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w11760/w11760.pdf.

¹⁷³ Dahl, Gordon and Knepper, Matthew. "Unemployment Insurance, Starting Salaries, and Jobs." NBER, June 2006, https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w30152/w30152.pdf

¹⁷⁴ Farooq, Ammar, et al. "Do Unemployment Insurance Benefits Improve Match and Employer Quality? Evidence from Recent U.S. Recessions." National Bureau of Economic Research, July 2020, <https://doi.org/10.3386/w27574>.

starting salaries fall by 7.2 percent.¹⁷⁵ UI does not “make people lazy.” Extended unemployment benefits do not decrease labor force participation.¹⁷⁶ UI provides people with the financial security to start businesses or find more optimal jobs.

Our legal system already recognizes that starting a business is very risky. An LLC or Limited Liability Corporation protects shareholders, owners, and employees from being held responsible for their company’s losses. If a corporation goes bankrupt, the owner doesn’t go bankrupt. The corporation is a legal mechanism designed to protect business owners from risk and encourage firm formation. Likewise, a social safety net with comprehensive unemployment insurance would protect business owners from risk.

The U.S. economy is missing out on potential entrepreneurs. Many brilliant ideas that would benefit the economy never materialize because risk deters people from entrepreneurship. The government should build a stronger social safety net to help people transition into becoming small business owners. If entrepreneurship were a more feasible option, we would have more entrepreneurs. With more entrepreneurs, our economy would be more productive.

¹⁷⁵ Olds, “Entrepreneurship and the Social Safety Net.”

¹⁷⁶ Figura, Andrew and Barnichon, Regis. “The Effects of Unemployment Benefits on Unemployment and Labor Force Participation: Evidence from 35 Years of Benefits Extensions.” Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve, Sept. 2014, <https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/feds/the-effects-of-unemployment-benefits-on-unemployment-and-labor-force-participation.htm>

Unveiling Digitized Dystopia: China's Dissemination of Digital Authoritarianism

Alessandro Portolano

The ascent of the People's Republic of China as a global leader in the exportation of digital authoritarianism offers a glimpse into a troubling future. China's primacy in this area is spurred forward by its techno-nationalist aspirations and increasingly totalitarian political system, piquing many developing nations' interest in an alternative path to governance outside Western political liberalism. As China expands its economic and political influence, it concurrently spreads the dark cloud of digital authoritarianism across the globe. The utilization of advanced digital surveillance tools and AI-powered systems for suppression and repression of its citizens is not merely a step toward authoritarianism but a significant leap into the abyss of dystopia.

The initial hope that digital technologies would bring democratization has given way to immense disappointment. Initially seen as tools for oppressed populations to mobilize against authoritarian regimes, recent trends indicate that dictators now employ digital technologies to consolidate their rule.¹⁷⁷ China has become the world's first digital totalitarian state, using digital tools for surveillance and censorship. A wide array of these burgeoning authoritarian technologies are developed and tested on the captive Uyghur population in Xinjiang. The Chinese government has designated the northwestern autonomous region as the "main battlefield" in its fight against the "three evils:" terrorism, extremism, and separatism.¹⁷⁸ The conflict between Han cultural homogeneity and the Turkic Uyghur minority intensified after the 2009 Ürümqi ethnic riots, leading to a series of violent incidents and the subsequent implementation of the government's anti-terrorist Hard Strike Campaign.¹⁷⁹ President Xi Jinping's pursuit of "social stability and enduring peace" has allowed party authorities to address regional unrest with an advanced technological repression network.¹⁸⁰ This initiative not only bolsters the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) regime security but also fuels a highly lucrative market, with billion-dollar private and state-owned enterprises vying for lucrative contracts in the region. Investment in Xinjiang's security sector, worth an estimated 8.7 billion RMB (USD 1.3 billion) annually, fuels nightmarish implementations of natural language processing, machine learning, facial recognition, and genetic profiling, enabling unequalled levels of control.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Hellmeier, S. (2016), *The Dictator's Digital Toolkit: Explaining Variation in Internet Filtering in Authoritarian Regimes*. *Politics and Policy*, 44: 1158-1191. <https://doi.org/10.1111/polp.12189>

¹⁷⁸ James Leibold (2020) *Surveillance in China's Xinjiang Region: Ethnic Sorting, Coercion, and Inducement*, *Journal of Contemporary China*, 29:121, 46-60, DOI: 10.1080/10670564.2019.1621529

¹⁷⁹ Polyakova, Alina, and Chris Meserole. "Exporting Digital Authoritarianism: The Russian and Chinese Models." *Brookings Institute*, (2023). Accessed October 28, 2023. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/FP_20190827_digital_authoritarianism_polyakova_meserole.pdf.

¹⁸⁰ James Leibold (2020) *Surveillance in China's Xinjiang Region: Ethnic Sorting, Coercion, and Inducement*, *Journal of Contemporary China*, 29:121, 46-60, DOI: 10.1080/10670564.2019.1621529

¹⁸¹ Shen, Olivia. "AI DREAMS AND AUTHORITARIAN NIGHTMARES." In *China Dreams*, edited by Jane Golley, Linda Jaivin, Ben Hillman, and Sharon Strange, 142–56. ANU Press, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv12sdxmk.17>.

Since the turn of the century, Chinese security officials in Xinjiang have gradually been implementing “grid-style social management,” aimed at carving up urban neighborhoods and even some rural townships into geometric grids. Efforts to achieve “complete coverage” without blind spots have swelled since the Ürümqi riots.¹⁸² This social control apparatus consists of 6,281 grids where 41,000 security officials operate. Higher-risk neighborhoods see 24/7 digital surveillance, with over 60,000 cameras monitored by 1,000 security personnel. The grid-management system integrates innovative surveillance technology with grassroots security patrols to create a multi-tiered system of social control. Further investments into surveillance technology attempt to create a more automated and seamless approach. For instance, residents of Xinjiang are required to install a surveillance app on their smartphones to “automatically detect terrorist and illegal religious videos, images, e-books, and electronic documents, and alert authorities.” Ground police forces conduct regular checks to ensure citizens comply with this directive. Moreover, countless Xinjiang residents have been questioned and illegally detained due to their online activities.¹⁸³

The incremental rollout of the Hard Strike Campaign has reshaped Xinjiang into the globe's largest open-air panopticon. The deployment of digital authoritarian technology is portrayed as the ultimate instrument for precise and scientific social control, focusing on individuals labeled as terrorists, criminals, separatists, or “social undesirables.”¹⁸⁴ The Chinese national video surveillance initiative, known as “SkyNet,” ominously earns its name from a traditional Chinese proverb about the inevitability of justice. Chinese state media has emphasized Skynet's objectivity, asserting that it serves as the “eyes that safeguard China.”¹⁸⁵ More advanced systems operating on iris identification compile biometric data and feed it into Xinjiang's Integrated Joint Operations Platform, along with data from other sources. With the help of artificial intelligence, predictive policing models can identify a source of instability before it emerges.¹⁸⁶ Despite the parading of ostensibly ‘objective’ technologies for social management, their actual impartiality remains questionable. For example, certain behaviors flagged as suspicious by AI adjudicators exhibit a disconcerting bias against Uyghurs, disproportionately targeting activities inherent to the Islamic faith, such as engaging in the Hajj pilgrimage or fundraising for a Mosque.¹⁸⁷ However, the heightened concern extends beyond technology-driven local mass detentions and human rights abuses in Xinjiang as Beijing exports the despotic technologies developed there to like-minded regimes worldwide.

¹⁸² James Leibold (2020) Surveillance in China's Xinjiang Region: Ethnic Sorting, Coercion, and Inducement, *Journal of Contemporary China*, 29:121, 46-60, DOI: 10.1080/10670564.2019.1621529

¹⁸³ *Ibid*

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁸⁵ Shen, Olivia. “AI DREAMS AND AUTHORITARIAN NIGHTMARES.” *China Dreams*, edited by Jane Golley et al., ANU Press, 2020, pp. 142–56. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv12sdxmk.17>.

¹⁸⁶ James Leibold (2020) Surveillance in China's Xinjiang Region: Ethnic Sorting, Coercion, and Inducement, *Journal of Contemporary China*, 29:121, 46-60, DOI: 10.1080/10670564.2019.1621529

¹⁸⁷ Shen, Olivia. “AI DREAMS AND AUTHORITARIAN NIGHTMARES.” *China Dreams*, edited by Jane Golley et al., ANU Press, 2020, pp. 142–56. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv12sdxmk.17>.

The spread of digital authoritarianism is interlinked with China's rise in soft power within the developing world. Beijing's advancement and proliferation of information technology no longer serve purely economic purposes but also act as strategic leverage against Western democracies. The complicity of private Chinese companies in advancing authoritarian technologies emerges as a critical issue in this issue. Many of these private companies are covertly interlinked to the CCP through various proxies, with an academic study concluding that an ominous "trade union committee" owns a staggering 99 percent of the tech behemoth Huawei.¹⁸⁸ This pattern extends across many Chinese companies, as the government strategically implants "party cells" to advance the directives of the Chinese government.¹⁸⁹ Globally, the consequences of these clandestine directives are emerging as Chinese companies propagate CCP norms and undermine democratic processes in countless nations. One strategy to this end involves educating foreign elites on Beijing's internet policies, facilitated through forums such as the 2017 World Internet Conference in Wuzhen.¹⁹⁰ Over 36 nations have participated in these sessions covering "new media" and "information management."¹⁹¹ The impact of these initiatives becomes apparent as participant nations often adopt Chinese-style cybersecurity laws following their exposure to Chinese seminars. This pattern is observable in East Africa, with increased Chinese involvement coinciding with the passage of stringent cybercrime and media laws in Uganda and Tanzania.¹⁹² These endeavors showcase China's overarching objective to encourage authoritarian shifts in governance globally.

By embedding the dissemination of digital authoritarian technology within the Digital Silk Road (DSR) framework and the larger Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Beijing gains the unique opportunity to mold the digital backbone for participating nations.¹⁹³ These efforts bolster Chinese influence worldwide by providing aid, political support, and other assistance to recipient states and assisting Chinese exporters, including prominent technology companies.¹⁹⁴ The implementation of Chinese technology is apparent in Africa, with many nations signing exclusive agreements with Chinese companies. For example, Zimbabwe entered into a deal with the

¹⁸⁸ Feldstein, Steven. "How Much Is China Driving the Spread of AI Surveillance?" *The Global Expansion of AI Surveillance*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2019, pp. 13–15. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep20995.7>.

¹⁸⁹ Shen, Olivia. "AI DREAMS AND AUTHORITARIAN NIGHTMARES." In *China Dreams*, edited by Jane Golley, Linda Jaivin, Ben Hillman, and Sharon Strange, 142–56. ANU Press, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv12sdxmk.17>.

¹⁹⁰ Shahbaz, Adrian. "The Rise of Digital Authoritarianism." Freedom House, (2018). Accessed November 3, 2023. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2018/rise-digital-authoritarianism>.

¹⁹¹ Polyakova, Alina, and Chris Meserole. "Exporting Digital Authoritarianism: The Russian and Chinese Models." Brookings Institute, (2023). Accessed October 28, 2023.

¹⁹² Shahbaz, Adrian. "The Rise of Digital Authoritarianism." Freedom House, (2018). Accessed November 3, 2023. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2018/rise-digital-authoritarianism>.

¹⁹³ Lilkov, Dimitar. "Made in China: Tackling Digital Authoritarianism." *Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies*, (2020). Accessed November 8, 2023. <https://www.martenscentre.eu/publication/made-in-china-tackling-digital-authoritarianism/>.

¹⁹⁴ Kurlantzick, Joshua, and Patricia Lee Dorf. "Assessing China's Digital Silk Road Initiative: A Transformative Approach to Technology Financing or a Danger to Freedoms?" *Council on Foreign Relations*, no. Eyes on Asia (2021). Accessed November 10, 2023. <https://www.cfr.org/china-digital-silk-road/>.

Beijing-based CloudWalk firm to provide a national facial recognition database and monitoring system.¹⁹⁵ Even more perturbing is the fact that Chinese companies are actively aiding foreign officials in surveilling political adversaries in Uganda and Zambia,¹⁹⁶ as well as monitoring journalists in Ethiopia.¹⁹⁷ Simultaneously, Singapore is developing a SkyNet-like network in Southeast Asia, while Malaysia is implementing Chinese facial recognition systems into its armed services. Crossing continents to South America, Venezuela is entrusting the construction of a "fatherland database," meant to track financial transactions and personal information, to the Chinese firm ZTE. Concurrently, Ecuador is adopting streamlined intelligence services, harvesting data from the 4,300 government cameras scattered throughout the nation. Finally, Dubai's ambitious "Police without Policemen" initiative seeks to replace conventional law enforcement with a network vitalized by Chinese technology, heralding an era where control is exerted more through algorithms than uniform presence.¹⁹⁸ Across the planet, governments keenly recognize the transformative power of these technologies to repress and consolidate power at an unparalleled rate.

The digital revolution has reshaped the way humans connect. For the first time in history, distance is a negligible bottleneck to the spread of ideas. Yet, connection knows no morality. The same force that weaves the human experience into a collective digital space is the very same one that grants autocratic governments divine-like insight into the most private recesses of individuals' lives. To disregard the encroaching specter of totalitarian technology is to drive forward the dark cloud of digital authoritarianism. The unchecked development of digital authoritarian technologies threatens democracies worldwide as they have the potential to cast oblivious populations into the stark depths of an Orwellian dystopia. In this cold and calculated existence, the cherished ideals of individual freedom and privacy, reduced to mere sources of nostalgia, wither beneath the relentless march of centralized control.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid

¹⁹⁶ Feldstein, Steven. "How Much Is China Driving the Spread of AI Surveillance?" *The Global Expansion of AI Surveillance*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2019, pp. 13–15. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep20995.7>.

¹⁹⁷ Polyakova, Alina, and Chris Meserole. "Exporting Digital Authoritarianism: The Russian and Chinese Models." Brookings Institute, (2023). Accessed October 28, 2023. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/FP_20190827_digital_authoritarianism_polyakova_meserole.pdf.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid

Matching Crime and Punishment: Concerns Over the Juvenile Justice System

Ashley Soto

The American criminal justice system's treatment of offenders differs significantly based on their age. It influences their access to medical treatment, rehabilitative resources, and education and employment programs. In numerous jurisdictions across the United States, juveniles are eligible to receive adult convictions and be denied these services. However, when determining juvenile offenders' sentences, it is important to understand the neurological differences between them and adults. Juveniles' comparative lack of brain development informs their propensity for criminality. This paper delves into the extensive research surrounding juvenile development and argues against juveniles' receiving adult convictions.

Three neurological distinctions differentiate juveniles from adults: their maturity levels, vulnerability, and undeveloped characters.¹⁹⁹ These distinctions are demonstrated through the case of seventeen-year-old Christopher Simmons, who was charged with first-degree murder and sentenced to death in 1993. However, when presented before the United States Supreme Court, his sentence was ruled unconstitutional and subsequently reduced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.²⁰⁰ According to Simmons' testimony, he exhibited a lack of maturity (the first distinction) in understanding and accepting the consequences of his actions.²⁰¹ Simmons' immaturity caused him to believe that he could escape responsibility for his crimes, as evidenced by his boastful discussions of the murder with friends. This lack of accountability also enticed 15-year-old Charles Benjamin to participate in the crime.²⁰² Being an adolescent, Benjamin's underdeveloped sense of responsibility made him vulnerable to Simmons' corrupting authority. This demonstrates the second distinction between juveniles and adults: juveniles are more impressionable and susceptible to negative influences. The ease at which Benjamin was swayed into criminality exhibited his personality's malleability. This also constitutes the third critical difference between juveniles and adults: underdeveloped characters.²⁰³ One of the most significant changes individuals undergo during adolescence is cognitive development, which influences their thought processes. Psychologist Elizabeth Cauffman's research illustrates the disparity between intellectual ability and psychosocial development in adolescents and adults. Although adolescents reach adult intellectual abilities around age 16, their psychosocial abilities

¹⁹⁹ Cauffman, Elizabeth, Adam Fine, Alissa Mahler, and Cortney Simmons. n.d. "UC Irvine Law Review How Developmental Science Influences Juvenile Justice Reform Recommended Citation." <https://scholarship.law.uci.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1306&context=ucilr>.

²⁰⁰ Oyez. n.d. "Roper v. Simmons." Oyez. <https://www.oyez.org/cases/2004/03-633>.

²⁰¹ Justia. 2005. "Roper v. Simmons, 543 U.S. 551 (2005)." Justia Law. 2005. <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/543/551/>.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Cauffman, Elizabeth, and Laurence Steinberg. 2000. "(Im)Maturity of Judgment in Adolescence: Why Adolescents May Be Less Culpable than Adults." *Behavioral Sciences & the Law* 18 (6): 741–60. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bsl.416>.

continue developing until their mid-twenties. Psychosocial development is important because it enhances impulse control, emotional regulation, resistance to peer pressure, and the ability to think long-term.²⁰⁴

Examining brain development, the prefrontal cortex does not fully mature until early adulthood. The prefrontal cortex is the brain region associated with planning, complex cognitive behavior, personality expression, decision-making, and the regulation of social behavior.²⁰⁵ Therefore, because juveniles' prefrontal cortexes are not fully developed, they lack control and skillfulness in these areas. Another factor impacting the prefrontal cortex's delayed maturation is juveniles' decreased production of myelin, a fatty sheet that facilitates the transmission of electrical signals throughout the body. Myelin accumulates through experiences and strengthens juveniles' intelligence and inhibition, both factors inversely correlated with criminality.²⁰⁶ Similar development also occurs with the density and distribution of dopamine receptors. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter produced by the brain. The nervous system uses dopamine to send messages between nerve cells. Dopamine affects emotions and how people experience pleasure. Adults cannot reach the same levels of dopamine as adolescents. Therefore, youth tend to engage in more risky activities, such as speeding or drinking, because their dopamine levels spike beyond their eventual adult range. However, as individuals age their dopamine gradually declines. This decline corresponds with a reduction in the frequency of risky decisions.²⁰⁷ Another developmental change occurs within the amygdala, a part of the brain that facilitates the recognition of certain facial emotions (especially fear), acts as a storage for emotional memories, and serves an important function in social learning.²⁰⁸ The reactivity of an individual's amygdala influences their aggression.²⁰⁹ Older people's amygdalas are less reactive to negative emotions, meaning they are less aggressive and violence-prone.²¹⁰ Cauffman's research on patterns of offending also demonstrates that as adolescents become adults, they mature and begin making more rational decisions. For example, one psychological study demonstrated that only roughly nine percent of high-level adolescent offenders remained life-

²⁰⁴ “Arrested Development: Adolescent Development & Juvenile Justice | Elizabeth Cauffman | TEDxUCIrvine.” n.d. [www.youtube.com. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wUa0bIqZ0XU&t=2s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wUa0bIqZ0XU&t=2s).

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Chevalier, Nicolas, Salome Kurth, Margaret Rae Doucette, Melody Wiseheart, Sean C. L. Deoni, Douglas C. Dean, Jonathan O’Muircheartaigh, Katharine A. Blackwell, Yuko Munakata, and Monique K. LeBourgeois. 2015. “Myelination Is Associated with Processing Speed in Early Childhood: Preliminary Insights.” Edited by Hao Huang. *PLOS ONE* 10 (10): e0139897. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0139897>.

²⁰⁷ UCL News. “Declining Dopamine May Explain Why Older People Take Fewer Risks.” UCL News. May 6, 2022. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2016/jun/declining-dopamine-may-explain-why-older-people-take-fewer-risks>.

²⁰⁸ Cristol, Hope. 2021. “What Is Dopamine?” WebMD. WebMD. June 14, 2021. <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/what-is-dopamine>.

²⁰⁹ Guy-Evans, Olivia. 2021. “Amygdala Function and Location | Simply Psychology.” [Www.simplypsychology.org](http://www.simplypsychology.org/amygdala.html). 2021. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/amygdala.html>.

²¹⁰ Publishing, Harvard Health. 2015. “Why You Should Thank Your Aging Brain.” Harvard Health. March 17, 2015. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/why-you-should-thank-your-aging-brain>.

long criminals. Meanwhile, 35 percent ceased offending by their twenties.²¹¹ This and the research presented above clearly demonstrate that juvenile brains are weakly developed compared to adults. Therefore, they should not be treated equally within the criminal justice system.

In a study by the National Library of Medicine, sixty-four male juveniles incarcerated within adult correctional facilities completed the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI-2). The MAYSI-2 is administered to identify potential mental disorders needing immediate attention. The study compared the scores of the sixty-four subjects to juveniles incarcerated within specifically juvenile facilities.²¹² The study discovered that the sixty-four subjects exhibited greater mental disorders than their counterparts incarcerated within specifically juvenile facilities. These results demonstrate the adverse effects of incarcerating juveniles alongside much older offenders. As abundant research illustrates, instead of facilitating rehabilitation, the American prison experience often furthers offenders' criminality. Prisoners encounter brutal conditions where violence and domination ensure safety and social prominence.²¹³ After release, prisoners maintain this mentality and, through discussions with fellow inmates, learn how to engage in criminal behavior more artfully. This reality becomes exacerbated among juvenile offenders, who as previously discussed, are especially susceptible to corrupting influences.²¹⁴ Therefore, juvenile offenders should only be incarcerated with fellow juveniles and never tried as adults. Additionally, this would allow them to benefit from the services of their respective states' Department of Youth Services, which provides community service, delinquency prevention and education, job training, unemployment, victimization, and clinical health and substance abuse programs.²¹⁵ The alternative, adult convictions, would yield permanent criminal records and significantly limit their access to these resources.

Although juvenile offenders should not be tried as adults, their actions nonetheless necessitate penalties. In such cases, potential mental disorders should be considered when determining their sentences. Moreover, juveniles should be provided with opportunities to receive treatment until they are in the condition to reintegrate into society. For example, they should receive access to the programs of their respective states' Departments of Youth Services, which, along with proper mental treatment, improve delinquent juveniles' maturity and impulse control. Nevertheless, the glaring disparity between juvenile and adult psychosocial development significantly influences their greater propensity for criminal offending. With their brains not fully developed, juveniles experience greater chances of benefiting from rehabilitation

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Murrie, Daniel C., Craig E. Henderson, Gina M. Vincent, Jennifer L. Rockett, and Cynthia Mundt. 2009. "Psychiatric Symptoms among Juveniles Incarcerated in Adult Prison." *Psychiatric Services* 60 (8): 1092–97. <https://doi.org/10.1176/ps.2009.60.8.1092>.

²¹³ Lambie, Ian, and Isabel Randell. 2013. "The Impact of Incarceration on Juvenile Offenders." *Clinical Psychology Review* 33 (3): 448–59. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S027273581300010X>.

²¹⁴ Initiative, Prison Policy. n.d. "Research Roundup: Incarceration Can Cause Lasting Damage to Mental Health." <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2021/05/13/mentalhealthimpacts/#:~:text=Exposure%20to%20violence%20in%20prisons%20and%20jails%20can.>

²¹⁵ "Youth Services | Mansfield, CT." n.d. www.mansfieldct.gov. Accessed December 4, 2023. <https://www.mansfieldct.gov/MansfieldYouthServices>.

than adults whose characters are already fixed. With sufficient support, juveniles can be guided and treated in a safe environment. Therefore, they should never receive a life sentence, and treatment for their potential mental illness should be available.

Blade Runner 2049: Marxist Versus Sartre Existentialism

Huiling Yin

Blade Runner 2049 is a sequel to the science fiction classic *Blade Runner*, directed by Ridley Scott. *Blade Runner* offers a dystopian vision of a capitalist society in a future world where advanced technology, including the creation of bioengineered humans (replicants), plays a central role. 30 years after the original film, *Blade Runner 2049* provided a philosophical explanation of the distinction between humans and replicants. *Blade Runner 2049*'s interpretation of fertility represents the emblem of freedom in the existentialist perspective. According to replicants' interpretation of Sartre's theory of existentialism, the evolution of the reproductive system heralds the eventual abolition of the essences of slaves, whereas Marx thought that accessing human essences would not alter their characteristic of instrumentality. While both Sartrean and Marxism existentialism provide distinct philosophical lenses through which to analyze and critique this society, they can be seen as contrasting concepts due to their differing perspectives on class struggle, individualism and freedom.

The 1982 film, *Blade Runner* suggests that empathy is the one emotion that distinguishes humans from replicants. The line between humans and replicants began to progressively fade after the new model replicant, Rachael, was implanted with memories, giving the replicant basic human emotions. The topic of human nature in *Blade Runner 2049* initially focuses on the parallels and divergences in more fundamental physiological systems. The movie claims that replicants can be mistaken for real individuals because of the excellent bioengineering technology in the *Blade Runner* universe; however, replicants are still regarded as being merely produced on an assembly line and unable to reproduce on their own until the sequel film. The main character in *Blade Runner 2049*, K's search for the first replicant child, Ana, is the central theme of the film. The replicants believe that the development of the reproductive system is a sign of the final erasure of the physiological differences between replicants and humans.²¹⁶ The existential philosopher Sartre proposed the idea that human beings "existence precedes essence."²¹⁷ In other words, humans are first born and exist before we choose the nature and meaning of our life. The fundamental essence of an everyday thing is being made for a purpose. A newborn baby has no preset essence, because there is no creator who can predetermine our adult personality, behavior, employment and reason for existing in the world. These characteristics are entirely dependent on a person's actions in the future. With each person only developing their unique essence in the values and the purpose of life through contact and interaction with oneself, others and the environment during the growing process.²¹⁸

Replicants, on the other hand, are the result of bioengineering technology; while they have the same physiology and mentality as humans, they are programmed to fulfill a certain function. Being a replicant means being a slave in the *Blade Runner* movies, whose essence

²¹⁶ Vint, S. (2020). Vitality and reproduction in blade runner 2049. *Science Fiction Film & Television*, 13(1), 15–35. <https://doi.org/10.3828/sfftv.2020.2>

²¹⁷ Sartre, J.-P. (2021). *Being and nothingness*. Washington Square Press.

²¹⁸ Barad, J. (2009). *Blade Runner and Sartre: The Boundaries of Humanity*, in M.T. Conard (ed.), *The philosophy of neo-noir* (pp. 21–34). essay, University Press of Kentucky.

exists before its physical form. Replicants cannot choose their essence; therefore, they can never become truly human. Humans introduced the replicant to the world with a distinct artificial purpose, whether they are soldiers used to fight wars, slaves who are laborers, or blade runners who are born to hunt down their own kind. In *Blade Runner 2049*, Ana, the daughter of a replicant, is the first replicant created without any preset meaning.²¹⁹ She is the first replicant that is truly a human being because she has no essence before her existence.

Through Ana's birth, replicants gained freedom from their essence, but this was not the only way they were enslaved. Despite the potential similarities between replicants and humans in their shared experiences of alienation and reification, replicants are largely perceived as slaves within this capitalist dystopia. Their status as slaves is not solely a result of their physical or psychological similarities to humans but is instead a consequence of the system that treats them as disposable labor based on Marxist perspective.

According to Marx, only a small number of people can work in non-production domains due to the constraints of the growth of productive forces.²²⁰ Various groups have had an "instrumental status" that has been supported by a variety of moral theories. The moral tensions in society grew deeper when instrumentality grew deeper. At the darkest time of slavery and tyranny in the 18th and 19th century, the moral tension extended to "they are not human beings."²²¹ However, the reproduction characteristic is only a tremendous "technological breakthrough" and a "new profit growth point" from the viewpoint of the capitalist elite Niander Wallace who built and enslaved replicants in the films.

The definition of a human being has evolved from the development of tribal productivity to human input. Marxists refer to the result of this estrangement as reification, which occurs when the worker is simply perceived as a member of the labor force and capitalism's core objectives, profit and loss, take precedence.²²² The worker loses some of his or her humanity when they are reduced to nothing more than cogs in the machine; they turn into objects.²²³ Replicants are therefore perceived as slaves because of alienation and the result of reification rather than their differences from humans.

In the movies, Wallace is the reclusive and enigmatic CEO of the Wallace Corporation, a powerful corporation that specializes in the production of replicants. He is portrayed as a visionary and megalomaniac who is obsessed with expanding the replicant workforce and advancing their capabilities. He believes that replicants are the key to humanity's future and is determined to unlock the secrets of their creation, including the ability to procreate. The replicants seek a savior to demonstrate, in some ways, their humanity, whereas Wallace desires

²¹⁹ Vint, S. (2020). Vitality and reproduction in *blade runner 2049*. *Science Fiction Film & Television*, 13(1), 15–35. <https://doi.org/10.3828/sftv.2020.2>

²²⁰ Marx, K., Engels, F., & Moore, S. (1972). *Manifesto of the communist party*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press.

²²¹ Wilderson, F. B. (2010). *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the structure of U.S. antagonisms*. Duke University Press.

²²² Marx, K. (2018). *Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform. October 1, 2023, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/preface.htm>

²²³ Boşnak, M. (2001). The Nocturnal Future as Alienated Existence: *Blade Runner*. *Journal of Economic & Social Research*, 3(2).

a new labor force, or a new, more resilient, less expensive and easier to manufacture slave caste.²²⁴ Wallace believes that accessing human essences would not change their characteristic of instrumentality, whereas Replicants believe that accessing human essences would not change their perception of Sartre's notion of existentialism. The replicants' struggle for liberation and self-realization can be seen as both a class struggle and an existential quest for authenticity in a capitalist, dehumanizing society. Whether they seek to abolish their "essences" as slaves or transcend them, their journey embodies the complexities of these philosophical ideologies.

Blade Runner 2049 explores the conceptual difference between humans and replicants in a dystopian capitalist society where sophisticated technology and the development of replicants are prominent. The products of biotechnology replicators share the same physiology and psyche as humans but are trained to perform specific tasks. Replicants read Sartre's existentialist theory as indicating that the reproductive system's development would eventually lead to the eradication of slaves' essences. Marx believed that human essences would remain instrumental to the capitalist; instead of their distinctions from humans, replicants are viewed as slaves due to alienation and the outcome of reification.

²²⁴ Guynes, S. (2020). Dystopia fatigue doesn't cut it, or, Blade Runner 2049's utopian longings. *Science Fiction Film & Television*, 13(1), 143–148. <https://doi.org/10.3828/sfftv.2020.6f>