

# Kennedy School Review

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**EMERGING  
RESILIENT:**  
*Rebuilding for the  
Roaring Twenties*

## Exclusive Interviews with:

Doug Elmendorf on Pandemic Policy  
Nancy Gibbs on Trust in Media  
Joe Nye on Inclusive National Interests  
Tony Saich on U.S.-China Relations  
Arthur Brooks on the Future of the GOP

Volume XXI | An HKS Student Publication



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on Media, Politics and

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# Editor's Note

Last year, the *Kennedy School Review* published its 20th anniversary edition. The editor's note recalled a line from the very first journal's opening reflection. "We stand on the edge of a world we barely recognize," wrote the first editor-in-chief in 2000. Since that statement was written, Kennedy School students experienced September 11, economic recessions, multiple wars, increasing partisanship, and now a pandemic. To say we have been forged would be an understatement. Since this journal began, our world has been on edge and undergoing rapid change.

The fundamental policy question of our time—perhaps of all time—is whether or not we are going to live together in concord. This question has animated the public activities of humans since government-by-citizen began thousands of years ago. After COVID-19, it is as relevant to our political divides as the divide between the *Optimates* and *Populares* of Ancient Rome. Our task then is to boldly strike forth, out into this new world, and ensure that all have an equal seat at the table. In this emerging decade, lawmakers and leaders must solve public challenges with each other instead of at the expense of each other. The alternative is to divide ourselves up—to put our heads down, write off who we are told to ignore, and only accept what policies we are told to support.

We are proud to have worked with our fellow managing and associate editors on this 21st edition of the *Kennedy School Review*. In the pages ahead, you will find policy ideas that span a wide range of ideological viewpoints and intellectual traditions. Our authors explore classical liberalism and health policy, the rise of vehicular homelessness, youth movements in Peru, and many other exciting policy areas. We also publish exclusive interviews with Kennedy School scholars and professors who answer questions about regaining trust in the media, where the US–China relationship is headed, and what is to be the future of the Republican Party and American politics. This should be our goal at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government: to include, to listen, to understand, to consider, and then to put forth the best ideas that can build a brighter, more prosperous future for our country and the world. Yes, the world we stand on the edge of now is one we barely recognize. But in this time of uncertainty there is also great opportunity. As Thomas Paine wrote once, "We have it in our power to begin the world over again."

Sarah Jacobs and Alex Domash  
Managing Editors, Print

Alexander de Avila  
Editor-in-Chief

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Source: AEI.

# Arthur Brooks on the Future of the Republican Party and American Politics

Interview by Alexander de Avila

**Alexander de Avila:** Here at the Review, we've outlined seven simultaneous challenges that the country and the world are facing. Everything from the pandemic to the economy and other areas. How do we rebuild our politics, and what do you see as the future of the Republican Party?

**Arthur Brooks:** I'm incredibly hopeful actually. I'm even optimistic, and the reason is because as I look at the situation in politics today, there are really two polarities. There is the love polarity and the fear polarity. Fear and love are philosophical and psychological opposites. We either have a political language of unity and inclusion or one of fear and

polarization. Fear always comes pursuant to a financial crisis. Always. Politicians and business leaders are followers. They are not leaders. They follow the signals from the population. Why was Donald Trump elected president of the United States? Because there was an appetite for that. Because, as research has shown, after a financial crisis, there is a 10- to 15-year period of polarization and populism, where politics becomes extremely fear based. After a financial crisis, you have uneven economic growth. 80 percent of the rewards go to the top 20 percent of the population, and there are not enough macroeconomists on the planet to know how to fix that. You can have all the

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*“One of the things that we get wrong as intellectuals is this idea that we have to solve our problems. America never solves its problems. America leaves its problems behind.”*

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redistribution that you want, but people will lack opportunity, and people will be desperate. They'll lack dignity and be open to messages like those we see from both parties, which is that the other side is stupid and evil, and you have to elect me because the other guys are bad and somebody took your stuff—and I'm going to get it back. Whether those terrible people are immigrants and foreigners or bankers and rich people, these are all the same kind of populist messages that we always see. And then this thing happens. One of the things that we get wrong as intellectuals is this idea that we have to solve our problems. America never solves its problems. America leaves its problems behind. The one great charming thing that is also the most infuriating thing about the United States is that America has its foot on the gas and is looking through the windshield and it speeds off from the scene of the crime. Over and over and over again. The Republican Party is a mess after the Trump presidency. The Republican Party, in two years, is very likely going to win the House back and everybody is going to be baffled about that. It's because America left the problem behind.

**Alexander:** What can people do about this? Or is this all just structural and natural?

**Arthur:** It's not entirely exogenous. A lot of it is endogenous too. We can wait this thing out, but it's even better if we have leaders who step forward and try to nudge it along. The way that you do that is that you have leaders who are not just reacting to public demand, which is what populists do. Populists are basically looking at a parade and going down the street, and then jumping in front of it and saying, “This parade needs a leader!” You can also see people that are more entrepreneurial leaders who sense there is a latent demand for something better. And here is

the statistic of the day: 93 percent of Americans say they hate how divided we have become as a country. That is a huge market opportunity. The 7 percent of Americans who don't hate how divided we've become are those who are trying to utterly vanquish the other side; the Democrats who say, “let's see if we can wipe out the Republican Party,” and the Republicans who say, “let's take over the country and ban the Democrats”—I don't even want to live in a country that doesn't have at least two parties and two strongly different viewpoints. I don't even want to live in a family where people agree with me. Because that's not how you become excellent. Most Americans have views, but they don't want to banish or exile people who don't have their views. Those are completely pathological viewpoints. So, we need entrepreneurial politicians who are going to step forward and say: “There is a better way, guys. There is a better way. I am a Republican or I am a Democrat, but I don't hate the other side.”

**Alexander:** What advice do you have for Kennedy School students who are reading this and are part of that 93 percent?

**Arthur:** Stand up and say it. It doesn't happen overnight, but it actually requires the next generation of leaders to talk that way. Will you be repudiated and called naive? Of course. Will you actually have people reject you and sneer at you, and will everybody say that you're not one of them? Yeah. But that's good. We need people who are countercultural—people who are not joining a tribe. This is not a tribal country. This is a country fundamentally based on an idea, and the idea is that we're all ambitious riffraff. And we're in it together. One of the things that is so characteristic of the current times, and is the most discouraging, is the ingratitude. We live in the freest and most upwardly mobile country in the history of the world, and there are people who are saying on both sides that it is terrible. Usually, they are saying that it is terrible because of the other side, but they are saying that the country is terrible. That is just ridiculous. It is an unbelievable act of ingratitude. That is really what risks the Republic:

ingratitude. Ingratitude is what destroys marriages. It is what destroys communities and churches and organizations. It can destroy democracy, too.

**Alexander:** The president seems to be someone who has an instinct for what you're talking about. How would you advise that he actually deliver on his message of unity and work with Republicans, even though he is maybe surrounded by people who aren't about it?

**Arthur:** Like all great leaders in these moments, he needs to stand up for an independent point of view. There is a time for executive leadership that is intensely independent. When the stakes are high, that is when a leader needs to be truly independent. What President Biden can do is basically say, "I refuse to vilify people on the other side." Because the tit for tat is going to wind up with Democrats overplaying their hand and being vanquished in midterm elections and maybe the next presidential election. And by the way, Alexander, you know who gets hurt by this ping-pong game of back-and-forth polarized politics? Poor people. It is always people at the margins. Rich people are just fine. People with power are just fine. But the people who get hurt are the ones who lose their health care, get their health care, change their health care. The changing policies give them something and then rip it back away so they actually can't make plans. That is the real problem, and we can't permit that. That's not right.

**Alexander:** I agree, and I hope you're right. Who is getting it right out there about thinking about this and standing up? Who should we be looking to?

**Arthur:** Let's start with the bad news. The bad news is that politics has become an entertainment industry. Basically, people have substituted their civic duty as citizens for being viewers on MSNBC and Fox News. Being outraged has become a substitute

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*"93 percent of Americans say they hate how divided we have become as a country. That is a huge market opportunity."*

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for actual citizenship. That's a scandal. That's actually un-American. If you want to be part of the solution to the problem, you need to be much more intensely local. The good news is when you do look at what is going on locally, you find tons of terrific leaders. You find unifying leaders. You find nonpartisan leaders. You find people who are looking for what we actually have in common as opposed to exploiting differences as a matter of political theater. They don't use their political party as a platform, but they actually use it as an organization to create unity and to connect with other people. I see mayors. I see governors—lots of governors. I mean look, we are in Massachusetts, and we have a Republican governor in one of the most Democratic states in the country. He's the most popular governor in America! He has 70 percent approval. The second most popular governor in America is Larry Hogan in Maryland. The second-most Democratic state also has a Republican governor! I know those guys personally. They are both real Republicans. They represent a whole lot of Democrats and a whole lot of progressives, and they're not going to give them the middle finger. They are going to represent them too. What you recognize as a leader is that people have values, and they don't always have your values. You need to do what you think needs to be done as a leader while at the same time representing the people. That is what good leadership actually does. I see tons of examples, starting with those two, of really encouraging trends.

**Alexander:** Are you working on anything exciting in this area? I know you always are. What can our readers check out?

**Arthur:** Right now, I am teaching a class at the Harvard Business School called "Leadership and Happiness." It is part of a broader Art of Happiness enterprise that involves podcasting and television and a massive open online course. It sounds kind of like I've really changed gears from somebody who was involved in public policy, but it's not a change in gears at all because politics is downstream from culture. If you really want to have a big impact, you need to affect cultural change—you need to be a cultural

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*“This is a country fundamentally based on an idea, and the idea is that we’re all ambitious riffraff. And we’re in it together.”*

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entrepreneur. My “Leadership and Happiness” work is actually for American renewal.☒

Alexander: What ☒nal advice do you have for students who are leaving the Kennedy School and want to go serve and do good in the world?

**Arthur:** There are so many opportunities to do good. If you listen to the outrage industrial complex in media and politics, and God forbid on social media, you’ll be really, really discouraged. There is so much **more good** than there is bad in this country. There are so many more opportunities to create value than there are to destroy it, so be part of this crazy American tradition of leaving bad things behind by recreating our country and moving the whole vehicle forward. That doesn’t mean to agree more. On the contrary, disagree. Go hammer and tongs. But disagree better. Bring a spirit of love and reconciliation. Bridle against the contempt that is tearing us apart and move the country forward because you can do it. You can absolutely do it. I think the best days are ahead of us, but it’s going to require people like you and your fellow students.



# What about Design? Understanding the Biden Win from an Aesthetic Perspective

PierceHenderson

*In our age of political spectacle, success in presidential elections is still linked to campaign visuals that draw support and drive engagement.*

Campaigning in a pandemic demanded a kind of aesthetic deference—but only one campaign showed it. President Trump’s brazen strokes, effective in a bygone era, got lost in the mix of exponentially increasing infection rates and state-mandated lockdowns. President Biden won, in part, because his team quietly navigated a lopsided electoral landscape wrought by COVID-19 using data, adaptability, visual adroitness, and respect for the dimensions of our gadget screens to stay ahead.

Beginning with dispensers of hand sanitizer outside of campaign events and ending with “voluntarily assume all risks” waivers for audience members, the pandemic created an unprecedented campaign trail. From March to June, in-person events were nonexistent; candidates spoke directly from the White House or their basement.<sup>1</sup> President Trump’s inaugural post-shutdown rally started at the beginning of summer—and in-person events continued until January 6—while then-candidate Biden spoke to audiences of roughly 100. Rather than in-person events, the candidates cut profiles of themselves and their opponent in the digital environment—2020’s public canvas.

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*“The mutability of the campaign was evident in the shift from a kitschy, constitutional cursive.”*

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While the conditions of the campaign trail were identical for both candidates (the virus has no creed), each campaign team approached their communication aesthetics with remarkable contrast.

Trump, going by what worked in the previous cycle, did not alter his modus operandi. To defeat Hillary Clinton in 2016, he went all in on his strengths, allowing the performative dimensions of the campaign and his outsized personality to eclipse policy. His reality-TV showmanship, paired with the novelty of his campaign and the subsequent difficulty in discerning whether to dismiss it or take it seriously, caused then-candidate Trump to receive outsized attention, boosting his niche campaign’s signal.<sup>2</sup> Despite promises of more structure, there is no evidence that the Trump campaign materially changed this approach from his first to second election cycle.<sup>3</sup> Focusing on the “A+” job his administration was doing to address the pandemic, shelling global markets with early-morning tweetstorms, and muscling through packed stadiums felt like pangs of normalcy (for Trump, at any rate) in this unprecedented election.<sup>4,5,6</sup>

Biden, on the other hand, used an army of data- and culture-driven consultants to keep an ear to the ground, tweaking each element of the campaign as they surfaced new information about what worked online.<sup>7</sup> The mutability of the campaign was evident in the shift from a kitschy, constitutional cursive superimposed over Biden in his campaign announcement video, to the swaths of bold color gradients, demarcated by the Instagram square, blasted out in the days before and after the election.<sup>8,9</sup> The aesthetics of

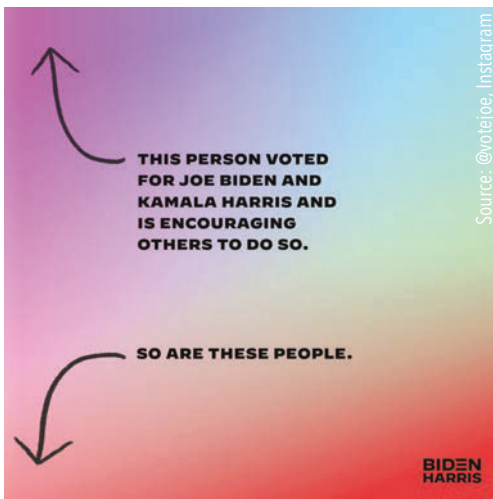
Joe and Kamala's campaign gradually became more progressive, visually and conceptually.



Source: Joe Biden, YouTube



Source: @votejoe, Instagram.



Source: @votejoe, Instagram



Source: Yale School of Art.

Visually audacious social media messages are distinct from aurally audacious campaign rallies. Trump could pound podiums at North Carolina's Fayetteville Regional Airport, then a few days later, bloviate identically at Michigan's Gerald R. Ford International Airport. Digital imagery, however, requires respect for its vessel and context. On Instagram, Biden went with culture-forward imagery and colloquialism; on Facebook, feel-good messages that easily go viral.<sup>10,11</sup> Posted on the photo-sharing platform, this visual plasticity manifests in the image below. His designers, centering naivety, chose a color palette that nauseously vibrates; stretching every other letter and word, they distilled policy preferences into a grab-bag of design references. His Instagram account, @votejoe, looks like a side project from a Yale-MFA graduate.<sup>12</sup> This is a visual idiom of millennials and Gen Z, the app's core demographic.

It worked. The campaign's design moves helped mobilize this demographic. Biden won voters under 30 by 25 points.<sup>13</sup> The gradients mentioned above, like many of the Biden campaign's aesthetic choices, are but one reverberation from larger cultural trends happening across the internet (see Nike and Spotify ads, memes, and logos of most companies headquartered in Silicon Valley). And, on Facebook, a three-minute video of Biden disparaging Trump's foreign policy decisions was a quick hit for boomers and Generation X.<sup>14</sup> Videos of two young people, Shamar and Bryant, giving heartwarming advice to Biden were easy to share for the Facebook-mom bloc.<sup>15,16</sup> Form follows function. Social media presents the opportunity to develop as many unique avatars as one could want; Biden's campaign had dozens of faces.

To write his voters, Biden, lacking in staccato tweetstorms, again followed a strategy distinct from his opponent's. In a series of tweets distilling Trump's alleged policy priorities, we see a familiar locution from the Republican incumbent:<sup>17</sup>



On the same day, Biden consolidated his views into one post:<sup>18</sup>



Did both presidential candidates plan to express policy perspectives on Twitter that day? Perhaps. Biden did send this tweet out several hours after Trump’s deluge—a measured and responsive contrast to Trump’s impulsive and reactive posting.

Certainly structural factors beyond communications played crucial roles in deciding the election. Trump sentiment was lukewarm going into the vote, due in part to his catastrophic failure to combat the coronavirus and its cascading effects.<sup>19</sup> And Biden, a White septuagenarian man who, for most of his political life, held moderate views and loved incrementalism, no doubt had less trouble than Clinton attracting more conservative-leaning voters.<sup>20</sup> Aesthetics aren’t everything.

In our age of spectacle, however, presidential success and identity uniquely commingle with campaign aesthetics. In a stay-at-home election cycle, the internet mediated most campaign communications, and which side of Biden’s identity his team chose to stream through the web—the institutionalist patriot, the newly minted progressive touting an “FDR-sized presidency,” or the pragmatic dealmaker—proved crucial to defining him for each voting audience.<sup>21,22,23</sup> Narratives and facts were determined by the different

*“Biden all but receded into a shimmering web of digital Xes and gentle signals of staying power. . . .”*

digital, visual, and performative levers the politicians pulled. Trump, of course, doubled down on his force of personality, pounding on his keyboard or podium.

Biden all but receded into a shimmering web of digital Xes and gentle signals of staying power, coalescing his divided coalition into a network of influence that 280-character hammers couldn’t level. His campaign distributed resources through the safest and most targeted channels advantageous in a dysfunctional and dangerous campaign trail. Rather than thrashing and sparring, Biden listened, and won.

**Pierce Henderson** is a master in education student at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Having spent his undergraduate studies investigating contemporary sculpture in the expanded field and unpacking different forms of visual and spatial representation, Pierce comes to Harvard with a background in fine art and design. Now, working as a consultant at the intersection of policy, education, and workforce development, he aims to better understand how the redesigning of systems through policy can produce better outcomes for society.

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# From Development to Diplomacy: Israel-Palestine through the Lens of the Three-I Problem

ChristopheAbi-Nassif

*To succeed, negotiations and development policies must transcend ideology, ignorance, and inertia.*

The past year was a particularly tumultuous and fast-moving year in the Middle East. In January 2020, the Trump administration proposed its “Peace to Prosperity” vision, a one-sided economic and political action plan that the Palestinians promptly rejected.<sup>1</sup> In September, 26 years after the last peace treaty in the region, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain signed the “Abraham Accords,” normalizing diplomatic and economic relations with Israel.<sup>2</sup> Since then, Sudan and Morocco have followed suit.

As foreign policy makers in the Biden administration continue to assess the extent of US involvement and role in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, they should strive to overcome the ideology, ignorance, and inertia that have plagued past attempts to broker peace. Only then can they successfully propel Israeli–Palestinian negotiations forward. The three-I problem, originally proposed by Nobel laureate economists Esther Duño and Abhijit Banerjee to explain why government programs fail, is as applicable to diplomacy as it is to development.<sup>3</sup> In Foggy Bottom, dodging this three-I problem would require navigating ideological hurdles on both sides of the conflict, objectively recognizing realities on the ground, and breaking away from the

recurring episodes of negotiation inertia.

Perhaps the Trump administration’s most flagrant deficiency in its approach to peace was its inability to adequately value and work with ideological and symbolic sentiments from the Palestinian side. To the Palestinians—and Arabs overall—Jerusalem is a historically and religiously indispensable capital. The latest American proposal and the 2017 decision to move the US embassy to Jerusalem fell short of denying Palestinians the right to their own capital in the city’s Eastern sector.<sup>4</sup> That decision instead threatened to dilute and erase their identity.

Suppressing ideology often backfires, and the Biden administration should strive to address such faux pas. Restoring US relations with the Palestinians and reinstating aid back in January was a step in the right direction. Although reversing the embassy decision is unlikely, articulating and enforcing the administration’s stance on East Jerusalem and Jewish settlements remains critical.<sup>5</sup> Failure to do so will come at the expense and credibility of Biden’s “mutually agreed two-state solution” policy.<sup>6</sup> It will also likely

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*“Ignoring realities has also contributed to peace paralysis because as a facilitator the United States has simply assumed what parties want.”*

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further bolster Palestinian support or sympathy for Hamas, one of the two major domestic political parties and a US-designated terrorist organization. Hamas has already announced that all options were open to counter a potential implementation of Mr. Trump's January plan.<sup>7</sup>

Ignoring realities has also contributed to peace paralysis because as a facilitator the United States has simply assumed what parties want. The Palestinian Authority, for example, was not even consulted in the development of the "Peace to Prosperity" vision. Inherent to that vision is the assumption that economic development and financial support can help offset the need for a political resolution of the conflict, which is by no means a given.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Israel's security—a core tenant throughout decades of negotiations—is tougher to guarantee with highly hostile neighbors and non-state actors. The coerced enforcement of lopsided rules neglects this fact.

The Biden administration should recognize that a resolution necessitates a mutually agreed upon win-win outcome, or at the very least an outcome that leaders on both sides can take to their people without losing face. In line with realities on the ground, it should also push for a permanent settlement of grievances, including potential land swaps and annexation reversals to anticipate incendiary relapses. The temporary pause that Israel placed on its annexation ambitions remains fragile and unpredictable.

Inertia has also hurt the prospects of a peace agreement. Now in its eighth decade, the conflict has had its fair share of stagnant negotiation attempts despite flagship breakthroughs such as the 1993 Oslo Accords. Israel might have every incentive to stall—it is, by many standards, winning. On the other hand, Palestine, whose prospects have deteriorated over the past few years, is still struggling with internal discord.<sup>9,10</sup> Folding at this stage of the game might have become too costly for the Palestinians. A stagnant, old, and predictable Palestinian leadership is not helping either.

Should a push for peace find its way to the top of the US foreign policy agenda, the Biden administration

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*"The Biden administration should recognize that a resolution necessitates a mutually agreed upon win-win outcome, or at the very least an outcome that leaders on both sides can take to their people without losing face."*

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should seize on clear signaling, such as Palestinian President Abbas's call for a new peace process last fall, to break the self-sustaining cycle of negotiation inertia and work to permanently resolve the conflict.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the recent Arab–Israeli rapprochement, the one peace that matters most in the Middle East is between Palestinians and Israelis. This remains the Holy Grail of international diplomacy. From the US foreign policy perspective, approaching this mammoth task from the analytical lens of challenges typically faced in economic development could be useful for stepwise framing purposes. As it currently stands, Mr. Biden's plate of domestic issues is full and expectations for a peace breakthrough remain low, but courageous and unapologetic leadership may accelerate the dawn of a day many have thought would never come for Israelis and Palestinians.

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# How President Biden Can Make Meaningful Progress with North Korea

YoungKim

*The Biden administration should lean on South Korea in order to advance peace talks in the region.*

In January 2021, North Korea conducted its Eighth Workers' Party Congress, at which the country evaluated its economic and foreign policy over the last five years and set forth a new plan for the future. There were foreign policy takeaways worthy of note, both from what was said and what was tactically left out.

According to the North Korean central news agency (KCNA), Kim Jong Un declared at the congress that the “key to establishing new relations between North Korea and the U.S. is whether the U.S. withdraws its hostile policy.”<sup>1</sup> While the threats of nuclear capabilities that followed were neither surprising nor new, the lack of overt messaging regarding the United States indicated that North Korea has, at least temporarily, halted its efforts to actively seek talks with the United States.

As learned from the “strategic patience” of the Obama years, North Korea can turn aggressive if things sit idle for too long. That is why, despite his brimming domestic agenda and foreign policy priorities, President Biden must take action this year to advance peace talks with North Korea. In doing so, the Biden administration should partner with the outgoing administration in South Korea to ease the tensions developed in the past year and eventually bring North Korea back to the negotiating table.

North Korea has had a devastating year. The combination of COVID-19, UN-imposed sanctions, and deadly summer floods has left the country's economy in its worst state since the famine in the 1990s that reportedly killed over 500,000 people.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, North Koreans have a leader who, unlike his predecessors, is desperate for public support.

Andrew Kim, the former head of the CIA Korea Mission Center who negotiated the foundation of the 2018 Trump–Kim Summit in Singapore, described the 37-year-old leader as somebody who “wants to be a hero and be loved by his people.”<sup>3</sup>

From his teary public apology in October 2020, to his rare admission of economic failure during the party congress, Kim Jong Un's efforts to appeal to the public are obvious. Given the dire situation in North Korea, its leader is in a vulnerable position looking for a breakthrough, ideally one without sanctions. When Kim Jong Un stops believing Americans can bring him the breakthrough he wants, he will pivot to less desirable options. These could include turning to China or restarting military provocations with nuclear tests and missile launches, as Kim Jong Un did recently by launching two short-range ballistic missiles.<sup>4</sup>

John Park, the director of the Korea Project at the Belfer Center, explained to me that Kim Jong Un is currently acting as the bottleneck in preventing the country from seeking more Chinese aid, since he is reluctant to lean more on the Chinese.<sup>5</sup> While Kim's political turn away from China is something to be welcomed by the United States, there is no guarantee that Kim won't change his mind soon, given the desperate situation he is in.

North Korea remains a vital piece on the Northeast Asian chessboard. In order to check the ambitions

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*“... President Biden must take action this year to advance peace talks with North Korea.”*

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of China and Russia, Biden must advance the peace process with North Korea, in addition to restoring alliances with South Korea and Japan. This would give America a renewed position of strength.

Achieving this reality, however, will be challenging. The current South Korean administration, with about a year left in its term, will try hard to produce results during its final days. But the Biden administration will have less than nine months to take advantage of this partnership. With the packed agenda of the Biden administration, it is unlikely that there will be enough time or political capital to make progress on the North Korean stalemate. The best option for the Biden administration may be to yield power to its ally South Korea. In working more closely with South Korea, the administration can focus on setting realistic goals, including drawing a clear roadmap for future talks and creating the environment for North Korea to return to negotiation.

The first step the Biden administration should take is to reverse the decision of the Trump administration to apply pressure on South Korea to abandon the 2018 agreements between the two Koreas. This would include reopening the Kaesong Industrial Complex (KIC)—a joint economic/industrial project between the two Koreas just north of the demilitarized zone—and moving forward with the installation of railroads between the two countries.

Secondly, the United States should reconsider the future of its joint military drills with South Korea. These exercises are a high-stakes issue that North Korea cares deeply about. Halting or significantly reducing the scale of these drills can signal that South Korea is committed to its past agreements with North Korea and can serve as a starting point to resume talks.

Lastly, given the time pressure and the urgency, the United States should yield responsibility to South Koreans in appropriate areas, including the decision over reopening the KIC as well as human rights issues. This way, South Korea can make room and give justifications for North Korea to return to negotiation, while the Biden administration saves political capital and buys time.

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*“The best option for the Biden administration may be to yield power to its ally South Korea.”*

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North Korea knows only the United States can relieve it from economic sanctions; however, the United States could communicate clearly that it is happy for South Koreans to make progress on less technical issues such as human rights and aid, while making clear that such conversations need to accompany sanctions negotiations.

By following these recommendations, the Biden administration can advance peace negotiations with a North Korea leader who is desperate for a way out of his tough economic situation.

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Source: Philly City Rep, flickr.

# Multilateralism and Marriage Counseling for Sino-American Relations

**James Moore**

*A new frame is needed to make progress with China: healing a rocky marriage.*

Can the rocky relationship between the United States and China be salvaged? Or are the world's two largest superpowers destined for war?<sup>1</sup>

"No war is inevitable until it breaks out."<sup>2</sup> Both sides have a choice.

As it stands, the United States is arguably more dissatisfied with the relationship than China. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said he considers China to be America's number one foreign policy issue.<sup>3</sup> Democrats and Republicans agree with this

assertion.<sup>4</sup> A recent Pew Research Center poll even shows that most American adults (89 percent) deem China as an enemy or competitor rather than a partner.<sup>5</sup> China has reciprocal feelings toward the United States, albeit not as strong. Although more complex than a marriage, viewing this deep Sino-American mistrust and skepticism through the lens of a marriage counselor provides instructive parallels.

## **Marriage Dilemma Drivers**

Relationship experts point to incompatibility, money problems, distrust, irreconcilable differences, and competing interests as common drivers for throwing in

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*“Although more complex than a marriage, viewing this deep Sino-American mistrust and skepticism through the lens of a marriage counselor provides instructive parallels.”*

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the towel.<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, these same drivers of marital problems are also present in the Sino-American relationship.

For instance, the economic models for China and the United States are fundamentally different (incompatibility). America believes that China’s model creates uneven global conditions and that China has not kept commitments to fair and reciprocal trade (money problems).<sup>7</sup> Trade and national security are increasingly intertwined, especially when it comes to issues like Huawei, 5G, and intellectual property (distrust).<sup>8</sup> Additionally, American and Chinese values continue to clash over democracy and human rights (irreconcilable differences).

Both countries have competing interests in Asia at a time when the global balance of power is shifting East. America perceives its century of hegemony at risk with China’s rise. In 2014, China surpassed the United States with the largest global share of GDP (using purchasing power parity), and the gap continues to widen.<sup>9</sup> China now out-trades America in every single country in Asia.<sup>10</sup> This new position of power in the region has emboldened China to compete hard and push boundaries, alarming both neighbors and leaders in Washington. China argues the opposite while declaring America to be the agitator.<sup>11,12</sup> Either way, growing nationalism, the recent trade war, xenophobic rhetoric, and COVID-19 have only accelerated a deteriorating relationship.

### **Strategic Options for Souring Sino-American Relations**

Given these concerns, let’s consider options on the table for the United States.

First, Washington could just “divorce” China by further decoupling economies and supply chains,

limiting Chinese visas, and continuing to block companies of national security concern from accessing US markets. The United States could essentially start another Cold War and plan to out-invest China in arms and technology. This could both embarrass and provoke the Chinese Communist Party in Beijing. Furthermore, as with most divorces, a true separation is unrealistic when there are shared interests (e.g., companies—which you could liken to “children” for sake of the analogy—operating in both markets).

Second, the United States could say “take me back.” This would be a return to the long-running hypothesis in Washington that China will eventually liberalize as both countries become more interdependent and China assimilates further into world markets.<sup>13</sup> America could re-allow market access, discredit the simplistic view that America is better off without China, and strike a grand bargain to become a reliable trading partner again for critical elements of China’s economy to re-establish continued dependence upon America. This could hasten America’s post-COVID economic recovery, temper warlike sentiment, and allot more time for systemic change; however, Beijing may not be willing to pivot back to partnering with the United States. Xi Jinping could instead opt to continue pressing his country’s growing competitive advantages.

Third, America could “get help” and tap into its area of strength and China’s weakness: allies.<sup>14</sup> The Trump administration’s approach was more unilateral and arguably unsuccessful in achieving desired objectives. The Biden administration could form a coalition of countries to negotiate maintaining their desired equilibrium in economic and military

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*“Washington could just ‘divorce’ China by further decoupling economies and supply chains, limiting Chinese visas, and continuing to block companies of national security concern from accessing US markets.”*

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relations.<sup>15</sup> This appears to already be happening. International pressure has proven to be a powerful check against one-party-states before, but coalitions can be complex and difficult to mobilize. Many of America's allies depend on China in numerous ways and are reluctant to poke the panda.<sup>16,17</sup>

Nonetheless, a multilateral approach might be better for both the United States and its allies. It might allow multiple countries to demonstrate how their economic models differ and show the impact of their policies and trade practices. This group could identify ways to mitigate specific damages that other parties suffer because of those differences. They might also establish a faster and more effective trade enforcement mechanism than the World Trade Organization's slow resolution process.<sup>18</sup> The coalition and China could then mutually seek greater reciprocity and access to each other's markets, thus enlarging the pie for all.

## Conclusion

Regardless of options, the objective in Washington and Beijing should be to avoid war and achieve productive Sino-American relations. A multilateral approach that eventually includes China will help countries be more effective in areas of international interest, such as managing climate change, promoting peaceful resolutions in the Indo-Pacific, curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and expanding human rights.

In the case of China and the United States, an old proverb may be most fitting: "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety."<sup>19</sup> Just as other parties (e.g., counselors) in some relationships are needed to tip the scales of change, so could Sino-American relations be salvaged through a multilateral approach. Left alone, these two superpowers may just divorce, or worse, attempt to fight each other. Few undertakings will affect the well-being of so many people worldwide as improving US-China relations.<sup>20</sup> It will take an international team effort to get this right. The world is counting on our leaders. Let's hope they try diplomacy through multilateralism first.

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## Dean Elmendorf on Rebuilding a Society Where Everyone Is Empowered to Succeed

Interview by Alexander de Avila

**Alexander de Avila:** This year we've outlined seven simultaneous challenges here at the Review. Of these challenges, what do you think is the greatest one that we face as a country?

**Doug Elmendorf:** I want to identify two. There is a medical term I read about when patients come to a hospital with a condition that is called "acute-on-chronic." Their condition is made worse because they have an underlying condition. With the pandemic, people who have preexisting lung problems are at much greater risk of being ill from the SARS-CoV-2 virus. I think our society suffers from an acute-on-chronic problem. This country and the world. The

acute problem is the pandemic, but it is made worse because we have chronic problems—chronic conditions as societies. I think the broad element of the chronic problem is that we do not empower everyone in society. Those who are not empowered to be fully a part of society feel shut out and marginalized. That is the source of some of the lack of preparedness for the pandemic. We underfund public health in this country, I think badly. That is in part because we are not sufficiently connected to each other. We don't feel we are part of a community together. That also leads to the partisan divisions. So, my focus would be on the pandemic as the acute problem made

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*“... my focus would be on the pandemic as the acute problem made worse by underlying problems, for which I think one important way forward is to build a greater sense of community in which everyone is empowered to be fully part of society.”*

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worse by underlying problems, for which I think one important way forward is to build a greater sense of community in which everyone is empowered to be fully part of society.

**Alexander:** You talked about a way forward there. What is holding the country back from finding that way forward to this challenge you’ve identified? Is it just a slow process?

**Doug:** We have a long history in this country—many countries have long histories and different ways—of excluding some people. If you look at immigration to this country over time, waves of new immigrants have successively been viewed as not as American as the groups before. We have a long history in this country of enslaving and marginalizing Blacks. Women could not vote until 100 years ago. But that is not unique to the U.S. I think we are making on average some progress in bringing people more into society, but there are also forces that are simultaneously driving us apart. Economic forces are among them. We’ve had in the last several decades greater rewards in the labor market for more education. Since some people have an easier path to education than others, that reward for education tends to cause economic divergence. We have had technological forces that enable us to live in different media worlds. We’re not drawn together to one newspaper or evening news, and so on. And there are advantages, there are gains to these technological changes, but also costs. So, I think we are making some gradual progress in overcoming divisions, but there are forces pulling us away, and I think the particular danger I see is that there are a number of leaders in this country and others who are capitalizing on those divisive forces

for their short-term political gains rather than trying to overcome those divisive forces and create a better sense of community.

**Alexander:** I want to bring up Congress, an institution you know well from your past work. What role do they have in this? If you had one piece of advice on this issue for a majority leader, a speaker, a minority leader, what would it be?

**Doug:** I am a fan of Congress as an institution. I worked for Congress for eight years. Congress has given up a lot of its power in an effort to accommodate the president, particularly in the last four years. I think Congress should reassert itself. But to do that, it has to get over its own problems. There is an excessive party fealty and loyalty. It is a hard thing to overcome, so I think it would be better if Congress operated with shifting coalitions on particular issues in the way that does happen in countries with parliamentary systems and more parties. Allegiances on one issue can be different on another issue. I don’t know how to do that in our current two-party system. So, my advice to Congress would be to assert itself on behalf of the American people, but I think it’s very hard to get there from here. Some folks at the Kennedy School are working on that problem, but I don’t have the answer.

**Alexander:** Same question to President Biden. He has a Congress that is blue on the surface. How would you recommend he face this challenge?

**Doug:** I think so far President Biden has played this exactly right, which is to say he has been a civil person to both his political adversaries and his political allies. But he has also been clear that he was elected to do certain things and he intends to do those things. If he can only do them with a bare majority vote of his party, then he will do that. I think that is the right general stance for him to take. As I’ve said in

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*“No law has ever been enacted that was the first choice of everyone whose support was needed to enact it, and so some compromise is essential. One should not be afraid of that.”*

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a whole set of speeches at the Kennedy School, I'm not personally calling for unity at all costs, or for compromising without principle. It is important to listen to people with different views and try to understand where they're coming from but also stand up for the principles one believes in. I think the president is doing that. I think he can be most successful where he can find ways to bring other people on board, and that does involve some compromise. No law has ever been enacted that was the first choice of everyone whose support was needed to enact it, and so some compromise is essential. One should not be afraid of that, but I also think the president needs to push for things he wants to achieve. So far, the president has had the right balance of civility and listening with also a determination to do the things that more Americans voted for him to do than voted otherwise.

**Alexander:** If I have this right, I think you're getting at the virtue of compromise on substance but not on values. Is that how you would characterize this?

**Doug:** I think that's right. You know there is this set of economic issues, there is an easy range, where you can look at the tax rate as being  $\approx 1/2$ , and you can think about compromising. There are other issues where things are not laid out in a number line in that way, and there are clear principles one needs to stand for. But even in those cases, our leaders need to look for ways to move ahead. When I was CBO director, there was comprehensive immigration legislation being considered. It had bipartisan support in the Senate. It could have passed the House had it come to the floor, but it would not have passed with a majority of Republican votes. Speaker Boehner didn't bring it to the floor. We are not really better off for having not done anything substantial on immigration for all this time. In that particular case, Speaker Boehner would have served the country better by bringing the bill to the floor. I think it's not that one might compromise on the principle that we are trying to encourage people to come to this country, to make lives here, and to treat them fairly, but even in that kind of issue there are specific questions, like numbers of visas and so on for which I think compromise can be achieved.

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*"The world needs you. So roll up your sleeves."*

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**Alexander:** Same question here to students. What can students who are graduating in May do to address the challenge you have identified today?

**Doug:** I think it is important for the students who graduate, for all of us who are trying to serve the public, to listen to a wide range of views but then stand for the principles that we think are important and look for ways to compromise that don't require sacrificing those principles. I think we can achieve more of that than we are achieving now. As each of us goes off to work in our own particular subject area of the world, in that area there will be particular sorts of trade-offs that one has to consider. I think in a lot of cases, better understanding combined with the tools and skills you are honing at the Kennedy School, can help you make a real difference in the world.

**Alexander:** Are there any bold policy ideas out there right now to address this challenge you've identified? Who out there has a big idea and is getting it right on this issue?

**Doug:** I think one mistake people can make is putting too much hope on the one big idea or the great leap forward, the moonshot. I think most positive change in the world happens incrementally. That is frustratingly slow given the nature and urgency of the problems, but it is the way most progress happens, in my sense of things. So, I don't think we should all be waiting for *the* one thing, although each of us in our own lives will at a point in time maybe have a big thing we are working on. We need to recognize that is one thing in the whole world of things. I will mention one idea that I am a fan of: mandatory national service. I have not studied this carefully enough to work out the details, and things are usually harder in the details than they are from 30,000 feet, but I think mandatory national service would have the dual advantage of setting up early in people's lives the expectation that they will serve people around them, which I think is an important



value to strengthen in people. Secondly, if done right, it can bring people together who would not otherwise come together because they come from different locations, socioeconomic circumstances, and demographic backgrounds. I think that sort of forced mingling would help to offset some of the forces that are pushing people apart.

**Alexander:** You hit directly on the reason I came to Harvard, which was to explore this policy area. I've had a chance to study service policy here with mentors like Mark Gearan who served on the recent national service commission, with a nonprofit founded by Kennedy School graduate Rye Barcott called With Honor that supports service, and with AmeriCorps working on their rebrand. The Marine Corps really opened my eyes to the fact that it didn't matter what your background or your political views were because you had the same opportunity to lead, to succeed, and to be there. That led me to want to work more on this issue and apply to the Kennedy School. But the civilian programs are key. You can't really hate someone from up close.

**Doug:** When I went to work for Congress, I went to meet as many members as I could. Someone said to me: "You want them to get to know you, at least a little bit personally, because it's harder to stab somebody in the front than to stab them in the back." It is a particularly negative way of telling the story, but it's true. It used to be that members lived in Washington with their families, and so it was harder to hate somebody when your kid was on that members' kid's soccer team. And now that you can fly home, which is great in a lot of ways, it has the effect that members of Congress don't know each other personally. They only know each other through the letter after their name, or through where they sit in the chamber and not as people.

**Alexander:** Is there anything you are working on, maybe related to the challenge you brought up today, that you want our readers to know about?

**Doug:** To be dean of the Kennedy School, I have mostly given up being an economist. I've written some papers but not many since I've been dean. I

do give speeches on these topics, so you can look at my remarks page and see what is there. I talk about the economy. I talk about American governance and global challenges. Mostly, my job is to empower the students and staff and faculty of the school to pursue their interests. My job is to make that possible, and so I work vicariously through all of you.

**Alexander:** Any final advice for us soon-to-be graduates who you are trying to empower?

**Doug:** The world needs you. So roll up your sleeves. Don't think you have all the answers, but take what you learn at the Kennedy School, and the commitment you brought to get into the Kennedy School, and go get to work with your neighbors and people across the world.



## How to Save the Planet: Stop Economic Growth

MorganPratt

*The viability of degrowth as an option for responding to climate change.*

After decades of inaction, humanity faces potential extinction through an ecological collapse of its own making.<sup>1</sup> Climate change, ocean acidification, mass extinction, soil depletion, acid rain, rising seas, extreme weather, unstoppable wildfires, pollution, deforestation, and desertification would each be immense challenges for global governance individually—the combination seems insurmountable, but because all share an underlying cause, there is hope. We can save the planet by directly targeting and dismantling the

system underpinning modern ecological destruction: economic growth. Growth is a problem because its compound nature is inherently unsustainable and because it inextricably drives ever-increasing resource demands. Instead, we must pursue “degrowth,” a radical reorientation of the economy’s social function away from growth for growth’s sake and toward meeting human needs in harmony with nature.

### **The Absurdity of Infinite Growth**

Growth is the driving imperative of our modern economic system. Ideologically, capitalism promises consistent returns to capital, so the entire system

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*“No such cycle can continue endlessly on a planet with finite resources.”*

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must consistently grow.<sup>2</sup> Owners of capital only fund businesses and governments based on promises of returns on their investment, forcing both public and private sectors to pursue endless growth (in revenue or GDP) to repay debts. Yet collectively, global debt sums to an estimated \$57 trillion compounding at a 5.3 percent rate, much faster than global GDP growth.<sup>3</sup> The solution: more, faster growth. It is an unending cycle. But no such cycle can continue endlessly on a planet with finite resources. Maintaining a typical 3 percent annual compound GDP growth rate doubles economic production every 24 years. Given the ecological and thus economic and human costs we’re already facing from growth at these rates, global growth clearly has a ceiling—and it seems we’re starting to hit it.

But economic growth is an abstraction; goods and services with little or no environmental footprint also contribute to the economy. Is it possible to sufficiently shift the economy into these domains so that we may grow without hitting planetary limits?

### **The Problem with Decoupling, Ecomodernism, and Green Growth**

“Decoupling”—the idea of economic growth without increasing resource and energy use—drives two leading environmental theories that (usually) preserve capitalism: ecomodernism and green growth.<sup>4,5</sup> Like degrowth, these ideas rely upon technological innovations, renewable energy, and rethinking major systems to reduce ecological impact. The difference is that ecomodernism and green growth seek decoupled economic growth. Ecomodernism posits that technological advances like hyper-efficient agriculture and nuclear power will make our civilization sustainable without fundamental economic change. Green growth argues that economic growth can continue, so long as more environmentally friendly industries and low-resource activities expand to make up most of the economy. To understand why this is problematic,

we need to critically evaluate whether decoupling is realistic and how it relates to infinite growth.

Recent research has demonstrated that, while some decoupling is possible, some is not. We already have renewable energy technology cheap and reliable enough to absolutely decouple economic activity from fossil fuels. But a 2020 review of 835 articles on decoupling finds that human civilization cannot decouple fast enough to stay within safe planetary boundaries while economic growth continues.<sup>6</sup> This pessimistic projection *includes* massive and unprecedented declines in renewables’ prices. Recent history is illustrative; since 2000, we have added 8 billion megawatt hours in clean energy production, but in the same time frame, new energy demand due to economic growth totaled 48 billion megawatt hours.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, decoupling from resource use has been even harder to achieve. The relationship between GDP and materials use has been remarkably stable and shows no signs of decoupling against a background of continued economic growth.<sup>8,9</sup> Materials use actually increased *faster* than GDP from 2002 to 2013.<sup>10</sup> What resource efficiency gains do occur are undermined by the Jevons paradox: higher efficiency decreases prices, subsequently increasing consumption and often easily outstripping any environmental gains.<sup>11</sup> This has not stopped green-growth proponents from claiming industrial economies are dematerializing, but these claims are easily debunked when accounting for resources used to create imported goods.<sup>12,13</sup> Shifts to seemingly immaterial online services won’t help either. Digital technologies have huge carbon footprints (Bitcoin alone consumes as much power as New York State) and rely upon scarce materials with high environmental and human costs.<sup>14,15,16,17,18</sup>

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*“Since 2000, we have added 8 billion megawatt hours in clean energy production, but in the same time frame, new energy demand due to economic growth totaled 48 billion megawatt hours.”*

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Even if renewables completely run our energy sector, unending economic growth still means runaway resource demands and ecological collapse.

Economic growth is clearly incompatible with solving climate change; we must turn to exploring the possibilities of degrowth.

### What Degrowth Is Not

First, degrowth is not recession (unmanaged economic contraction, usually creating higher unemployment, debt crises, and devastating shortfalls in basic human needs) nor austerity (government policies with similar consequences). Degrowth is an intentional, managed reorganization of our economy to produce and consume less, not an economic disruption resulting from disaster or system failure. Degrowth has a complex set of policy proposals to mitigate and reverse the damages of economic contraction, including debt auditing and jubilees, jobs guarantees, work sharing, and even temporary increases in some industries that are today undersized, such as small-scale farming and health care. In other words, degrowth does not just entail idly doing less of everything, but intentionally refocusing our economy on improving human well-being.

Second, degrowth is not primitivism or Malthusianism. Primitivists argue for regressing to a pre-industrial lifestyle to truly live in harmony with nature. Although many preindustrial societies had harmonious relationships with nature, degrowth does not forbid modern technology nor its advancement. Degrowth's criticism of modern industrial society is technology agnostic, instead focusing on systems and structures that incentivize endless growth and environmental destruction. Malthusianism contends that there are not enough resources to go around and that we must decrease our population to survive. Degrowth contends instead that there are plenty of resources to go around, particularly in systems with more egalitarian resource distribution than capitalism—the gross societal excess that capitalism requires is what is unsustainable.

Third, degrowth is not communism. While it is

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*“Degrowth is not recession.”*

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true that degrowth is explicitly anti-capitalist, it may be compatible with or opposed to a wide range of other ideologies depending on the circumstances. Degrowth supporters would oppose, for example, the practices of many actually existing communist societies: the first country to ever set economic growth targets was the Soviet Union in 1958, and the USSR left a far from perfect—though heavily contested—environmental legacy.<sup>19,20</sup> Regardless, degrowth cannot succeed without a heavily democratic implementation process and an intense relocalization of politics and political life, giving people much more control over their lives under degrowth than exists in any country today.

Finally, degrowth is not economic growth but in reverse or applied to new realms. In addition to measuring the wrong things, our current economic system also measures things in the wrong way. This has caused many well-meaning environmentalists to call for growth in sectors like child care, education, or bicycles. Just as we cannot achieve infinite GDP growth, we cannot seek infinite growth in bicycles, child care, or even education. What degrowth calls for instead is improvement in the areas that improve our quality of life as the main activity in society. We want *better* education, not 32 years of mathematics training.

### What Degrowth Is

In short, degrowth is an intentional reorganization of our economy to improve human life while living within our collective means. Materially, an ideal degrowth scenario involves reducing resource consumption to sustainable levels and continuing in an evolving but non-growing steady state. This means doing less of what is harmful to our planet and society and emphasizing what regenerates us. Degrowth means technical changes like reorganizing taxation and debt to reduce wasteful consumption, but it also means spending more time in your neighborhood building community, at home with your family, and enjoying your hobbies wherever they take place.

Degrowth is as much a psychosocial change as an economic one. To redefine society so holistically, concrete policy changes are imperative. There is an incredible literature articulating many different interpretations on degrowth and its tenets, so in the interests of space, this section will summarize the most important ideas.<sup>21,22</sup>

The first and most crucial principle of degrowth is the replacement of economic growth with a new, reimagined economic system. Ending the quest for growth will both immediately reduce human activity's environmental impact and make room for new, harmonious ways of living, best characterized as "frugal abundance."<sup>23</sup> Here, frugal means letting go of overconsumption, fast-paced resource competition, and ecologically harmful activities to make room for regenerative activities like community development, free time, and enjoying nature—the abundance. Of course, this means sweeping changes to material aspects of the economy, but top-line organizational changes are needed, too. This means tracking progress in new metrics beyond GDP, such as the Genuine Progress Indicator, which measures holistic well-being and factors in environmental impacts; explicitly changing the stated purpose of governments; and rewriting the social contract, in a just, well-managed transition that avoids the downsides of recessions, austerity, and other sudden contractions in growth under capitalism.<sup>24</sup>

The most important preparation for reducing economic activity is to develop strong material support systems that allow society to reinvigorate the commons, like universal basic income (UBI), universal basic services (UBSs), and/or an unconditional autonomy allowance (UAA).<sup>25</sup> UBI involves monetary support, usually through monthly cash transfers, to provide all members of society with basic needs, as each person prioritizes them. UBSs means making services like health care, education, public transportation, child care, and housing affordable or free for all. Free sustainable public transportation is a particularly central UBS, as it can reduce demand for personal vehicles and fossil fuels, while offering a critical route out of

poverty.<sup>26</sup> UAA, like UBI, involves universal support for all people from birth but is more comprehensive. It includes in-kind contributions, like work-sharing or reduction programs, and free access to basic goods and services for all.<sup>27</sup> These systems intend to redesign labor relationships to avoid exploitation and encourage people to do work that rejuvenates their communities, rather than increasing profits and GDP at the expense of personal, community, and ecological well-being.

A common suggestion to quickly reduce economic activity—without harming employment—is to shorten the work week and/or implement work-sharing schemes with no decrease in overall pay. Shorter work weeks are better for workers' health and leave more time for personal activities, reduce working hours while increasing wage rates, and reduce unemployment.<sup>28</sup> This is far from radical and is supported by historical evidence. Dropping standard work weeks from six days per week (and often more than eight hours per day) to current levels created lasting improvements to health, well-being, wages, and employment.<sup>29</sup> More recently, work-week reductions in various European countries and a New Zealand company's shift to a four-day work week have produced similar results.<sup>30</sup>

Work-length reductions should accompany a jobs guarantee, both eliminating involuntary unemployment and enabling the tremendous amount of work necessary for climate resilience and mitigation that, at present, falls completely outside the private-sector wage economy. Creating and funding a jobs guarantee allows communities to decide what work needs to be done democratically and assign those tasks to those who need work; the community will better be able to meet its own needs.

A reform that compliments this labor overhaul is rewriting taxation. In summary, as Kallis et al. put it, "We need to stop taxing what sustains societies (people's work) and instead tax what destroys society

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*"Work-length reductions should accompany a jobs guarantee."*

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(pollution and inequality).<sup>31</sup> Taxation can reduce resource extraction and greenhouse gases not only through direct levies on mining and emissions but also by discouraging excessive consumption through targeting luxuries and unnecessarily resource-intensive products. Targets or caps on resource use at the national level could be used to guide tax levels. These taxes must be designed carefully to avoid being shifted to the poor and to ensure dividends reach the masses, either through spending revenues on public goods or through funding universal systems like UBI or UBS.

Another crucial degrowth policy is reducing material throughput by increasing product durability. Today's ubiquitous planned obsolescence generates GDP growth because it forces repeated purchases of the same product, directly sacrificing the environment for profit.<sup>32</sup> To counteract this, one could implement right-to-repair laws, mandate warranties (incentivizing manufactures to make more durable goods), create appliance libraries, implement quotas for incorporating recycled materials, and reform intellectual property laws to facilitate repairs via increased access to knowledge. The intent of these policies is to reduce the amount of stuff we create and waste without sacrificing quality of life.<sup>33</sup>

### Can Degrowth Work?

Though there are currently no post-growth societies, there is real-world evidence that degrowth is plausible. United Nations data show that various countries have achieved the highest category of educational attainment and life expectancy at a GDP per capita of just \$9,000.<sup>34</sup> Adding in employment, nutrition, social support, democracy, and life satisfaction at the highest category still requires a GDP per capita below the world average: theoretically, the entire world could “degrow” immediately while drastically increasing virtually everyone's quality of life.<sup>35</sup>

Degrowth does not intend to degrow the entire world. Many countries still need to increase economic activity in key sectors to meet their material needs, and the vast majority of environmental harm is caused by rich countries. The more immediate question is can

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*“Japan’s life expectancy is almost six years higher than the United States with 35 percent lower income per capita.”*

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rich countries maintain a high quality of life while massively reducing economic activity. The data say: absolutely. Japan's life expectancy is almost six years higher than the United States with 35 percent lower income per capita. Portugal has higher levels of human welfare than the United States with \$38,000 less in GDP per capita, meaning \$13 trillion of the American economy is essentially wasted every year from the perspective of improving quality of life.<sup>36</sup> Costa Rica also has a higher life expectancy and self-reported happiness than the United States with 80 percent less income per capita and a massively lower impact on the environment.<sup>37</sup> Countries like Costa Rica are far from optimized, so it is safe to say that massive amounts of resources can be cut from the budgets of developed countries like the United States without negative effects on well-being.

Many degrowth policies have already had pilots and full-scale implementations with favorable results. Experimental UBI programs have shown improvements in mental health, happiness, sanitation, nutrition, trust in people and institutions, entrepreneurship, education outcomes, addiction rates, stress, poverty, crime, and even employment.<sup>38</sup> Countries that invest in universal public health care (a quintessential UBS) see better health outcomes and some of the fastest increases in life expectancy.<sup>39</sup> The popularity of recent programs to cut working hours suggests a four-day work week will be as popular as the 40-hour week once was.<sup>40</sup>

Finally, could degrowth really be implemented? The opposition of entrenched interests, particularly the fossil fuel industry, pose major obstacles.<sup>41</sup> However, many of degrowth's flagship proposals—like universal health care, jobs guarantees, and wealth taxation—are already wildly popular.<sup>42,43,44</sup> Successfully implementing them can increase their popularity further.



Lastly, as John F. Kennedy School of Government researcher Erica Chenoweth’s research shows, only one government has ever survived a social movement mobilizing 3.5 percent of the country’s population.<sup>45</sup> The numbers don’t lie: demanding a degrowth future, by ballots or mass movements, can make a degrowth future not just essential, but real.

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# Can Manufacturing Be the Future of India's Growth Story?

Varun Gupta and Abhishek Anand

*To restore robust economic growth, India should drop the tariffs and other protectionist economic measures.*

The year 2021 marks three decades since India liberalized its economy by deregulating markets, allowing greater foreign investment, and opening to global trade. These historic reforms played a pivotal role in accelerating India's economic growth. By the early 2000s, the Indian economy was the world's second-fastest growing economy, eclipsed only by China. India had an especially stellar run from 2004 to 2011, when GDP growth averaged just over 7 percent each year.<sup>1</sup>

In recent years, however, the economy has faltered. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, GDP growth in India decelerated for four consecutive years from 2016 to 2019.<sup>2</sup> This prolonged deceleration, the first of its kind since Indian independence, has many analysts worried that India may be yet another victim of the "middle-income trap," a phenomenon where low-income countries experience fast growth to middle-income status followed by a severe economic slowdown.

The economic downturn has been unequal too. There is widespread unemployment in the economy. Data from a government-led survey revealed that unemployment levels between 2017 and 2018 reached a 45-year high at 6.1 percent.<sup>3</sup> This jobs crisis has raised uncomfortable questions about India's future growth strategy. The high-skill services sector that fueled much of India's past

growth is unlikely to meet the twin objectives of generating growth and jobs alone. The manufacturing sector, on the other hand, has the potential to both absorb India's large unskilled labor force and grow the economy more quickly. Unfortunately, Indian manufacturing has remained small and uncompetitive. A growth in the sector would greatly contribute to India's economic development. This paper will show how India can turn this economic challenge to its advantage.

## India's inward Turn

The Indian government has responded by reversing its 30-year policy of trade liberalization to pursue a more protectionist route. While this policy reversal is not exactly new, it is most clearly identified in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's new slogan *Atmanirbhar Bharat*, which translates to "self-sufficient India."<sup>4</sup> The government's thesis of development is to boost domestic manufacturing by substituting away from imports, raising tariff barriers, and restricting foreign competition.

A review of Indian trade policies suggests that the inward turn is sizable. Since 2014, there have been tariff increases in 3,200 out of 5,300 product categories. This affects nearly \$300 billion, or 70 percent, of total imports.<sup>5</sup> Vijay Kelkar has also documented that, since 2018, India has passed more protectionist interventions than any other country at a similar level of per-capita income.<sup>6</sup> Recently, India's border disputes with China and growing anti-trade sentiment culminated in its walking away from the

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a mega free trade agreement (FTA) which was signed by 15 countries in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>7</sup> This decision was against the recommendation of the High-Level Advisory Group, constituted to advise India's trade policy, which projected large economic benefits from joining the RCEP.

In addition to the tariff protection from foreign competition, the government has introduced production-linked incentives (PLIs). PLIs aim to give companies incentives on incremental sales from products manufactured in domestic units in ten strategically selected sectors. In effect, the program is a subsidy to domestic producers in these sectors.<sup>8</sup>

Will these policies be adequate to boost the competitiveness of India's manufacturing sector and generate jobs for the country? There are reasons to be skeptical. The inward policy orientation is based on the misconception that India has not seen export-led growth and has struggled with manufacturing exports. It further assumes that India can continue to grow in isolation from the world by serving its own domestic market—an assumption that may not hold over time. Finally, it fails to address some critical structural constraints that limit the competitiveness of Indian industry while lacking a focus on the low-skill manufacturing sectors essential to creating jobs.

### Analyzing the Adequacy of Self-Reliance

While the government's new policy outlook aims to provide domestic industry some protection from import competition, it will also have negative effects on India's exports in two ways. First, exports can be subject to bilateral retaliation. Trade partners might punish India for closing its markets by imposing tariffs on India's exports. The recent US–China trade war serves as a cautionary example.

Second, India's exports will lose competitiveness. In a globalized economy, there is significant trade in intermediate goods that compose a final consumption good. If India levies higher tariffs on these intermediate goods, then exporters who use these as inputs will

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face higher costs. This reduces India's competitiveness in the global market. Preliminary evidence shows that India's current tariff structure does exactly this in the textile sector.<sup>9</sup> India levies higher tariffs on input goods than on final goods, thereby reducing their firms' competitiveness while failing to provide effective protection from imported final goods.<sup>10</sup>

The threat to exports is also detrimental to GDP growth. Since the 1990s, exports have contributed to about one-third of India's overall economic growth. As a result, India's export-to-GDP ratio is currently close to 20 percent, more than twice as high as in the early 1990s and at par with peers like China, Bangladesh, and Indonesia.<sup>11</sup> Thus, an export slowdown today is likely to have a more consequential impact on the overall economy. Estimates by Chatterjee and Subramanian suggest that every 5 percent of the export growth foregone will shave 1 percent off overall GDP growth.<sup>12</sup>

A related misconception is that because the world is deglobalizing, India should focus on its domestic demand instead of chasing a larger export share in a shrinking pie. While the deglobalization trend exists, there are large shifts within the global export market that can still make it beneficial to have an open export orientation. For example, rising wages in China mean that India is now less competitive in low-skilled, labor-intensive manufacturing like textiles and apparel and is instead moving into high-skilled exports like electronics. India has not yet benefited from this change in export pattern, but there is still time to capitalize on this opportunity to absorb large amounts of low-skilled labor.<sup>13</sup> Further, the economic shock of COVID-19 has made countries question the over-dependence of their supply chains on China. This created an opening for countries like India to

offer an alternative. Increased protectionism could prevent India's ability to integrate into these global supply chains.

What about the size of India's own domestic demand? While India's economy is the fifth largest in the world, the size of its economy can be a misleading indicator for its domestic purchasing power. India still has a large poor population that cannot afford many consumer goods. Chatterjee and Subramanian estimate that the true middle-class market size in India is somewhere between 15 and 40 percent of GDP, which is only about 1.5–5 percent of the global market.<sup>14</sup> It is not clear why prioritizing a much smaller domestic market at the expense of global market interactions would be better for India's growth prospects.

More surprisingly, however, the government does not seem to have taken steps to address crucial barriers that limit the competitiveness of Indian manufacturing compared to its peers. It is important to recognize that protection from foreign competition by itself is neither a prerequisite nor sufficient to boost domestic competitiveness. Many of these competitiveness constraints are well documented and established. The World Economic Forum's competitiveness index ranks India 108th out of 141 economies in 2019 on the quality of electricity supply.<sup>15</sup> India's statistics on cost per kilometer of road transport, number of days taken for customs clearance, and time to transport goods to the United States are all worse than competitors. From the current *Atmanirbhar Bharat* rhetoric, the PLI program is the only policy that serves as a positive reform to grow domestic industry. But subsidizing production in the absence of competitive pressures may only serve to further entrench inefficiency in these sectors.

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*“The government’s thesis of development is to boost domestic manufacturing by substituting away from imports, raising tariff barriers, and restricting foreign competition.”*

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To its credit, the Indian government is making serious efforts to reform and simplify restrictive regulatory hurdles that hamper development. This includes labor laws that prevent large firms from firing workers without government permission. These laws are often cited as one of the larger challenges faced by domestic industry. Given the current government's poor record of handling sensitive political reforms, like in the case of the recent farm bills that evoked major protests, there is still doubt about the implementation of these reforms.<sup>16</sup>

## The Way Forward

So, what does this mean for policy? We conclude that the recent import tariff hikes will have negative effects on Indian exports. Considering that India has experienced export growth, and the domestic market is a small fraction of the world market, risking away hard-earned global market share is not worth it. Prime Minister Modi should roll back these tariffs. India's manufacturing industry will be much better off for it.

India's industrial policy needs to be laser focused on capturing a greater share of the global market by making businesses more competitive. This requires larger investments toward public infrastructure that can help lower the cost of production for firms. For example, India can increase competitiveness by creating corridors from industrial centers to ports to lower transportation time, reduce fuel taxes, and improve the reliability of the power supply. NITI Aayog, the government's policy think tank, has recommended the creation of at least two coastal employment zones (CEZs) with flexible land conversion and labor rules, tax incentives, and increased trade facilitation.<sup>17</sup> The creation of these CEZs should be expedited.

Furthermore, specific attention should be directed to job-creating subsectors within manufacturing. Despite its competitive advantage in low-skill labor, India has consistently been losing global market share in labor-intensive apparel, leather, textile, and footwear sectors. These sectors are disproportionately affected by stringent labor regulations, leaving firms smaller and less productive than counterparts in

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*“Increased protectionism could prevent India’s ability to integrate into these global supply chains.”*

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competing countries. The proposed labor reforms, if implemented, can reverse this trend; however, as the reforms are politically contentious, it is imperative that the government makes special efforts to build consensus amongst stakeholders during policy design.

Job generation will also be affected by India’s ability to access global markets at preferential tariff rates. Competitors have already moved ahead. Bangladesh has duty-free access to Canadian and European markets. Vietnam signed trade agreements with the United States and European Union (EU), and they are integrated into the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) economies.<sup>18,19</sup> India, on the other hand, has not actively pursued or signed any FTAs since 2014. To generate jobs at scale, it is imperative that India aggressively pursues trade agreements with the EU and considers other bilateral treaty opportunities.

While the narrative of *Atmanirbhar Bharat* and a “self-reliant India” may be politically seductive in an increasingly populist and hyper-nationalist electorate, the government must recognize that this stance is economically self-defeating. The disruption of global supply chains due to COVID-19 revealed the interdependence between countries and the connectedness of the global economy. To assume that India can do it all alone would be a mistake that undoes many years of development work.

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# To Provide Home Care, Start with Medicare for All

James Blum, Alec Feuerbach, and Winn Periyasamy

*Investing in home care would protect Americans and save money.*

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many inequalities in the United States, not least of which is the lack of long-term services and supports, including home care for older and disabled people. The events of the past year have further illustrated why including long-term and home care in single-payer health care legislation is so critical to ensuring no one is left behind.<sup>1</sup>

Long-term care covers various types of medical, nursing, custodial, and rehabilitation care that a person accesses for a period of months to years. Also known as long-term services and supports, long-term care helps people with daily living tasks like eating, bathing, and dressing. This type of care also supports needs like medication management that are vital for people's well-being. While these services can be found in nursing home care, they also can include home and community-based services, including adult day care, housekeeper support, home improvements, and other areas.<sup>1</sup>

Nearly every American will eventually need long-term services and supports for themselves, a family member, or a loved one. Access to these services was limited long before the pandemic exacerbated health challenges. Our long-term care system is disjointed, difficult to navigate, and exorbitantly—often prohibitively—expensive.<sup>2,3,4</sup> Older adults are not the only ones suffering from these failures; disabled patients also rely on these services to get the care they need. Furthermore, the current system of home care

relies heavily on the labor of unpaid and underpaid caregivers, especially impacting women, people of color, and immigrants.<sup>5,6,7,8,9</sup> Further, while there is increasing preference for home care, the costs of home care can force millions of disabled and older people who do not wish to leave their homes and communities into facilities. Despite the clear relevance of these services to ongoing political discussions about public health, racial justice, women's rights, disability rights, and the care of our seniors, home care is often an afterthought of policy discussions.<sup>10</sup>

Still, there is a proposed policy that could meet the scale and scope of the unmet home care need while drastically improving the lives of millions of Americans: single-payer health care. Both federal versions of single-payer legislation—from Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Representative Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.)—and various state versions like the New York Health Act include home and community-based services as a covered benefit.<sup>11</sup> Other policy proposals continue treating home care as an afterthought. The \$5,000 tax credits for caregiving proposed by President Biden are simply not adequate to cover the exorbitant costs of long-term care.<sup>12</sup> As such, the inclusion of home care is a vital, yet often overlooked, strength of Medicare for All legislation.<sup>13</sup>

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*“... while there is increasing preference for home care, the costs of home care can force millions of disabled and older people who do not wish to leave their homes and communities into facilities.”*

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First and foremost, including home care in Medicare for All fixes one of the central problems with the current system by recognizing that home care is health care for which patients should not be paying out of pocket. Specifically, this legislation will remedy the fact that at present, neither Medicare nor private health insurance adequately cover home care. Instead, individuals must turn to Medicaid (which may not cover the full extent of a family's need), private long-term care insurance, or out-of-pocket spending. The median cost of a private nursing home is over \$100,000 each year, while the national average bill for a part-time home health aide was \$4,385 a month in 2019.<sup>14,15</sup> This leaves many people stuck either going without the health care they need or spending down their savings until they qualify for Medicaid to cover their care.

Covering home care through Medicare for All can also support currently unpaid informal caregivers (also known as family caregivers) who play an essential role in Americans' long-term care. In 2011, about 90 percent of Americans needing help with their daily living received some informal care, with two-thirds receiving only informal care.<sup>16</sup> This care is generally provided by family, mostly spouses and daughters. Alleviating this impact would help families build savings and reduce racial wealth disparities. Of the over 40 million unpaid caregivers looking after older adults in 2017–2018, the majority (58 percent) were women.<sup>17</sup> Black caregivers report heavier caregiving needs and are more likely to report working in excess of 40 hours per week than White caregivers.<sup>18</sup> Unpaid caregivers also face financial and emotional costs, greater rates of psychological stress, and more chronic disease than non-caregivers.<sup>19,20</sup> The costs incurred by caregiving are also felt more acutely by Latinx and Black caregivers, who respectively spent 44 and 34 percent of their income on that care, while White caregivers spent just 14 percent of their income.<sup>21</sup>

Providing home care through Medicare for All would also avoid many of the problems that plague private insurance. The current system of private long-term care insurance is expensive and only covers

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*“The problems facing home care require bold solutions. As Americans continue to age and face disabilities and chronic illnesses that require home care, there can be no avoiding this issue.”*

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a small number of those who need coverage.<sup>22</sup> The fact that only 11 percent of Americans over 65 have long-term care insurance, and employers rarely cover such insurance in their benefits, means a Medicare for All system could be implemented with minimal disruption, since so few Americans currently have existing long-term care insurance plans.<sup>23</sup>

The problems facing home care require bold solutions. As Americans continue to age and face disabilities and chronic illnesses that require home care, there can be no avoiding this issue—and older adults, disabled individuals, and their loved ones must be actively involved in the development of policies affecting their access to care. As COVID-19 has made clear, the current long-term care system is inaccessible to many Americans and fails those who are currently in it. Residents and employees of nursing homes, who might otherwise be in private homes, account for nearly a third of all American COVID-19 deaths.<sup>24</sup> This crisis provides the opportunity to boldly rethink home care so that it is more accessible and safe. By providing a comprehensive funding source, Medicare for All is the only policy that can meet this moment and drive the fundamental changes that are needed to build a home care system that works for all Americans.

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Source: Don Hankins, flickr.

# The Rise of Vehicular Homelessness and the Safe Parking Movement

**Michael Berton**

*Vehicular homelessness is growing in the United States. Policy makers need new ways to measure and address it.*

Thirty percent of adults in the United States cannot cover a \$400 emergency expense without going into debt, borrowing money, or selling property.<sup>1</sup> When an individual living paycheck to paycheck unexpectedly becomes unemployed, experiences a rent increase, or faces an unanticipated medical emergency, the individual is likely only one or two months away from being unable to maintain housing.<sup>2</sup> The likelihood of becoming homeless is even greater in cities throughout

the United States, where median-income households spend over a third of their income on rent.<sup>3</sup>

After becoming homeless, some fortunate individuals have the option to move in with family or friends. Others who are not as lucky may opt to live in a vehicle. Sleeping in a vehicle is still preferable to sleeping on a sidewalk, in a tent, or at a homeless shelter. This phenomenon, known as “vehicular homelessness,” consists of the individuals and families who have little choice but to live in cars, vans, campers, and recreational vehicles (RVs).<sup>4</sup> This way of life is most prominent in the western United States, particularly in coastal communities with a

high cost of housing and favorable weather. Vehicular homelessness has also spread across the country and has been observed in cities such as Denver, St. Paul, Charlotte, and Miami.<sup>5,6,7,8</sup> One key characteristic of vehicular homelessness, as opposed to other forms of vehicular residency, is the use of public property within cities by the vehicular homeless.<sup>9</sup>

Since the Great Recession in 2007, the average rent has more than doubled in Los Angeles, San Diego, San Jose, San Francisco, and Seattle.<sup>10</sup> The percentage of Americans who spend more than 50 percent of household income on rent grew by 42 percent between 2001 and 2015, making community members more vulnerable to becoming homeless.<sup>11</sup> As a result, tens of thousands of individuals, often from working-class backgrounds, have become homeless for the first time, and many have resorted to living in vehicles. The vehicular homeless population includes full-time workers, seniors, women escaping domestic violence, and adults living with disabilities. Many individuals living in vehicles do not consider themselves to be homeless.<sup>12</sup>

Sleeping in a vehicle on a public street can be dangerous, and many cities have adopted ordinances prohibiting overnight parking for people living in vehicles.<sup>13</sup> In response, a growing number of government agencies have partnered with nonprofits and faith-based organizations to develop “safe parking programs” to ensure safety for individuals and families sleeping in vehicles.<sup>14</sup> Safe parking programs repurpose parking lots at night to provide individuals and families with a monitored, safe place to park each evening.<sup>15</sup> In addition, such programs offer social services, access to employment opportunities and public benefits, and assistance in obtaining permanent housing.<sup>16</sup>

Safe parking programs are challenging to implement and maintain for various reasons, including an insufficiency in public funding sources and the stigma associated with homelessness. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) does not require communities to collect information on vehicular homelessness, which means

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*“This phenomenon, known as “vehicular homelessness,” consists of the individuals and families who have little choice but to live in cars, vans, campers, and recreational vehicles.”*

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Congress lacks the data needed to understand the size and trends of the vehicular homeless population.<sup>17</sup> More importantly, safe parking programs are not classified as emergency shelters, making the programs ineligible for federal funding sources that typically support homelessness programs.<sup>18</sup>

Recently, national media outlets have raised awareness of vehicular homelessness and the emergence of safe parking programs. However, no policy changes can be implemented unless more data regarding vehicular homelessness and safe parking solutions are obtained and studied. To address the research gap, this article seeks to summarize research on the size of the vehicular homeless population, make suggestions about why safe parking programs serve as an effective homelessness intervention, and propose policy changes.

## **The Size of the Vehicular Homeless Population**

The primary sources of data for measuring homelessness trends in the United States come from the HUD-mandated Point-in-Time (PIT) count and the Homeless Management Information System.<sup>19</sup> Currently, HUD does not require communities to collect and compile data on vehicular homelessness during the PIT count, an annual count of sheltered and unsheltered individuals.<sup>20</sup> However, some communities have chosen to collect such data to better understand the population’s size and needs. Data from the 2019 PIT count from 14 Continuums of Care (CoC) in California and 2 CoCs in Washington show that the vehicular homeless population in the western United States consists of at least 30,000 individuals.<sup>21</sup> The actual size of the vehicular homeless population is likely significantly larger than 30,000 because the PIT

count underestimates the unsheltered population's total size.<sup>22</sup>

Depending on the CoC, the vehicular homeless population typically represents between 30 and 50 percent of the total unsheltered homeless count, according to the PIT count reports. While HUD divides the unsheltered homeless population into eight categories, such as veterans, chronic substance users, and unaccompanied youth, no such category exists for the vehicular homeless.<sup>23</sup> However, data from the PIT counts suggest that the vehicular homeless are one of the largest unsheltered homeless subpopulations in many CoCs.

In addition, individuals living in vehicles tend to be more challenging to identify and survey than other unsheltered individuals. Since sleeping in a vehicle on the street can be dangerous or expose one to law enforcement, many individuals take action to conceal homelessness—for instance, by using curtains to ensure privacy.<sup>24</sup> Others may arrange to park on private property or tend to move often and are more difficult to identify and survey than other unsheltered individuals.<sup>25</sup> In the past few years, vehicular homelessness appears to have become more visible, which may be due to the fact that individuals can no longer find private locations to park vehicles and are forced to park in more noticeable parts of town.<sup>26</sup>

Although PIT counts are inherently flawed and underestimate homelessness, data from the counts are reported to Congress each year and are used to develop homelessness intervention policies and guide funding decisions.<sup>27</sup> Data about the population's growth

in recent years are limited; however, one study shows the doubling of the vehicular homeless population from 2016 to 2018 in Seattle.<sup>28</sup> Some homelessness experts indicate that vehicular homelessness is one of the “fastest-growing forms of homelessness” and are concerned that the COVID-19 pandemic will cause vehicular homelessness to increase to “unprecedented levels.”<sup>29</sup>

### The Emergence of Safe Parking Programs

The first safe parking program was launched in 2003, when the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors decided to allow residents sleeping in RVs to park in a county-owned lot each evening to avoid being ticketed.<sup>30</sup> Since 2004, the Santa Barbara nonprofit New Beginnings has successfully operated the Safe Parking Program®. New Beginnings's program is widely recognized as the model safe parking program in the nation. It has been featured at CNN, the *Nation*, *Rolling Stone Magazine*, VICE News, and many other national media sources.<sup>31</sup> Today, New Beginnings has grown the program to include 26 lots that provide 156 parking spaces for people to park in each evening and is in the process of expanding throughout the county.<sup>32</sup>

New Beginnings has scaled the number of lots in the program by partnering with faith-based organizations, governmental and nonprofit agencies, and businesses. Each lot owner is indemnified against any liability, and lot monitors ensure clients are safe and comply with program rules. New Beginnings employs a team of case managers to help clients obtain employment, health and disability benefits, and long-term housing.<sup>33</sup> The program is especially impactful because individuals living in vehicles are often homeless for the first time and are unlikely to seek traditional homeless assistance services offered at shelters.<sup>34</sup> Over the past 15 years, New Beginnings has moved over 700 program participants into permanent housing and has provided safety to thousands of community members.<sup>35</sup>

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*“The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) does not require communities to collect information on vehicular homelessness, which means Congress lacks the data needed to understand the size and trends of the vehicular homeless population.”*

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New Beginnings’s program has been replicated by Safe Parking Los Angeles, which claims that “vehicle dwellers represent 25% of the population of people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County.”<sup>36</sup> In San Diego, the nonprofit Dreams for Change has offered a program since 2010.<sup>37</sup> Programs have also emerged in San Francisco, Palo Alto, Oakland, Mountain View, Seattle, and Denver.<sup>38,39,40,41,42,43</sup> Most programs are funded by municipal governments and operated by nonprofits or faith-based organizations. The programs are difficult to scale for various reasons, and most only have a few lots. As a result, the percentage of the vehicular homeless population living on public property with access to safe parking programs is minimal and likely less than 3 percent.

Safe parking programs provide physical safety for individuals facing crises, promoting sleep and a sense of security. The psychologist Abraham Maslow posits that individuals must first address basic physiological and safety needs before focusing on addressing other areas in life, such as esteem, love, and ultimately self-actualization.<sup>44</sup> Safe parking programs are successful at providing a foundation and safety net for individuals facing crises. Program participants may feel less estranged from the community, knowing they will not be victims of violence or be ticketed by the police. Connection to social workers and to peers in the program may also establish a sense of belonging and help one eventually move into permanent housing.

As programs have emerged throughout the nation, state policy makers have begun to recognize the need to provide services to the vehicular homeless and have noticed the safe parking model’s effectiveness. In 2019, the California legislature passed a bill requiring all cities and counties with a population above 330,000 to implement safe parking programs by 2022.<sup>45</sup> Although the bill was eventually vetoed, the need for providing services to the vehicular homeless continues to grow, especially as the size of the population is projected to increase due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>46</sup>

## Policy Recommendations

One of the most considerable barriers for communities looking to implement safe parking programs is insufficient public funding. This insufficiency is partially due to HUD’s inability to recognize safe parking lots as shelters, making the program ineligible to receive federal funding from a variety of funding vehicles for shelter programs. HUD and policy makers should revise the definition of an “emergency shelter” to include parking lots for the vehicular homeless. Similarly, HUD changed the definition of “homelessness” in the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act in 2012, expanding eligibility for HUD-funded homeless-assistance programs.<sup>47</sup> The inclusion of safe parking programs within the definition of an emergency shelter would enable safe parking programs to become eligible for shelter funding. Furthermore, HUD should require all CoCs in the nation to collect data on the vehicular homeless during PIT counts and should disseminate specialized training documents to help communities count the vehicular homeless. More accurate data would show HUD the pervasiveness of vehicular homelessness and likely pressure policy makers to prioritize the issue.

Due to HUD’s commitment to employing evidence-based strategies, substantial data-driven evidence supporting the effectiveness of safe parking programs is essential.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, foundations and individual donors should consider funding-program-evaluation research initiatives aimed at establishing safe parking programs as an evidence-based practice (EBP). With over 15 years of data, New Beginnings is in the process of identifying, funding, and building a research team that can establish its program as an EBP. Such an accomplishment may help inspire policy makers and administrators at all government levels to advocate for funding and to support the implementation of safe parking programs. Research about best practices may also empower service providers to develop more effective programs with improved client outcomes.

Civic leaders should understand that vehicular homelessness has become a new form of affordable

housing out of necessity in many urban regions. Due to income inequality, rising housing costs, and the COVID-19 pandemic, more Americans are at risk of becoming one of the many living in vehicles. While safe parking programs show promise for ensuring safety and addressing homelessness, additional funding, research, and advocacy is needed to compel policy makers to take actions to serve the growing vehicular homeless population more effectively.

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## America's Digital Divide

**JeremyNey**

*Connecting more American households to the internet will expand opportunity and prosperity in a big way.*

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that without reliable internet access, Americans often cannot work, attend school, or access telehealth support. If you've ever felt the frustration of losing your Wi-Fi or getting caught in a dead zone, you've had a glimpse into the pain that millions of Americans experience every day. The difference is that many families cannot reset the router and carry on with their lives.

According to the Federal Communications Com-

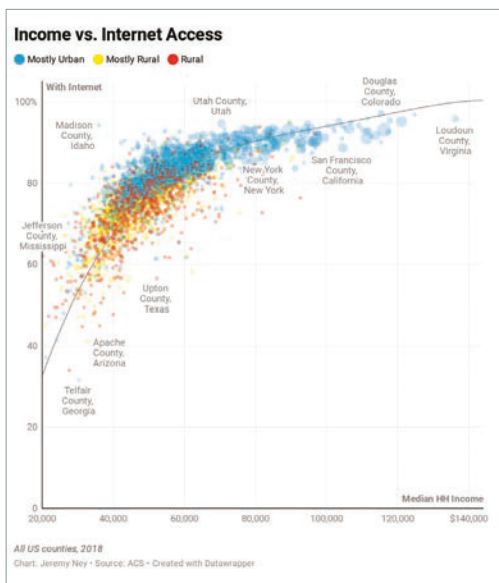
mission (FCC), 21 million Americans and 10 million school-age children do not have internet access.<sup>1</sup> This means that 15 percent of American children will not have the same education as their peers, will struggle academically, and will have fewer economic opportunities as they grow older. The challenges of the digital divide are growing.

Low-income communities are the least connected in America. New data analysis reveals a 75 percent correlation between median household income and broadband access across all US counties. Many of these counties tend to be rural or tribal regions where there are fewer jobs and less public infrastructure. A



child born into a county with a median income of \$35,000 has a coin-flip chance of having any internet connection.

Douglas County, Colorado, and Telfair County, Georgia, are prime examples of the digital divide, since they are the best and worst connected counties in the country. Douglas has 97 percent connectivity, sits right outside Denver, and has a median income of \$115,314; Telfair has 32 percent connectivity, sits 100 miles from the nearest city, and has a median income of \$30,288. The digital divide maps almost exactly to the country’s economic divide. Loudoun County, Virginia, the richest county in America, just ordered 15,000 Chromebooks for its students in May 2020, while Telfair County has seen no such support.<sup>2</sup>



The problem is worse than policy makers realize. The FCC has historically underestimated the number of connected households, and even some of the agency’s own commissioners have dismissed FCC reports as “blindly accepting incorrect data.”<sup>3</sup> The

*“... internet inequality had critical implications for people’s education, health, careers, and access to government services.”*

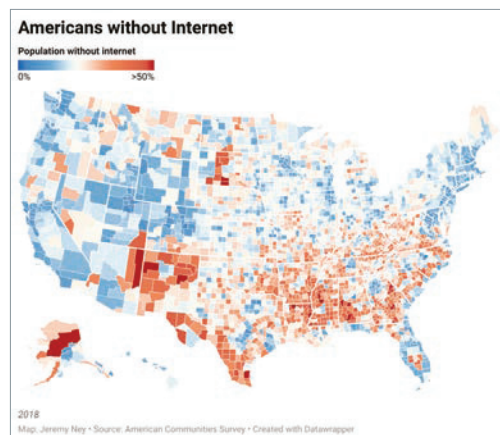
FCC measures connectivity by census block, which means that if an internet service provider (ISP) offers service to at least one household in a census block, the FCC counts the entire census block as covered by that provider. The FCC acknowledges this measurement error and is working with ISPs to fix it.<sup>4</sup>

BroadBandNow, an internet watchdog that conducts digital divide research, instead calculates that 42 million Americans lack internet access, double the official estimate.<sup>5</sup>

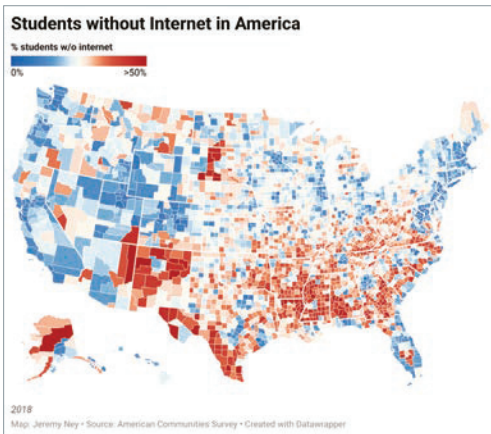
### Students, Income Inequality, and the Internet

Students in low-income communities suffer the most. In Robeson County, North Carolina, the median income is \$33,679, putting it in the poorest 5 percent of counties. Students there spend weeks trying to get Wi-Fi hotspots to turn in homework. 43 percent of the county’s 27,000 students have no internet. In November, the *New York Times* interviewed a school superintendent in Robeson who cited unaffordable access and a lack of cell towers: “It’s un-American. I can’t wrap my head around the fact that we live in a place where you have all this technology, yet we have families who can’t access the internet in the comfort of their home.”<sup>6</sup>

While the digital divide is often seen as a rural challenge, students in cities feel the pain too. In August 2020, a photo went viral after two girls in Los Angeles were seen studying on the ground in a Taco Bell parking lot to use the nearby Wi-Fi.<sup>7</sup> These



children were just two of the 268,000 students in Los Angeles County without internet. James Steyer, CEO of Common Sense Media, summarized the internet-inequality dilemma, saying, “The tragedy is this is not a Democratic or Republican problem. It is simply not fair that a poor family in a rural area or a low-income urban area does not have the resources to send their kids to school in this pandemic.”<sup>8</sup>



Income inequality is increasing in America, which widens the digital divide. When income inequality grows, fewer families can afford broadband plans or purchase connected devices, fewer ISPs compete in low-income areas, and more people move into poorly connected affordable housing.<sup>9,10</sup> But increasing internet access can actually reduce inequality. One Brookings study in the United States showed that increasing internet penetration by 1 percent can increase employment by 0.3 percent, creating jobs for 405,000 people.<sup>11</sup> In this study, families used this newfound access to search for jobs, health care, training, and government support.

This study confirms the findings of a 2010 Gates Foundation study of 77 million people who could not access the internet at home and thus relied on the internet at public libraries. The study found that 32 million people (42 percent of visitors) sought out educational help on the library computers, 37 percent of whom used these computers to do homework for a class. Meanwhile, 30 million people (40 percent of visitors) used the internet to apply for jobs, with

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*“Just as Thomas Edison put electricity in every home, so too can America achieve universal internet access.”*

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75 percent searching online for a job and 51 percent submitting a resume. Additionally, 28 million people (37 percent of visitors) used library computers for health issues: 82 percent of these respondents logged on to learn about a disease, illness, or medical condition, and 33 percent searched for doctors or health care providers.<sup>12</sup> Overall, even before the pandemic pushed everyone online, internet inequality had critical implications for people’s education, health, careers, and access to government services.

### The Landscape of Solutions

Three different tactics have been deployed to address the digital divide: public, private, and nonprofit. These three domains will have to work in tandem to address the highly correlated challenge of income inequality and internet inequality. The best solutions are to provide hotspots to students, to subsidize the cost of connecting low-income communities, and to increase competition in broadband markets to drive down prices.

### Public-Sector Solutions

In June 2020, Representative Jim Clyburn introduced a \$100 billion bill (H.R. 7302), which would authorize the construction of high-speed internet in rural communities.<sup>13</sup> This bill is the largest ever Congressional effort to address internet inequality, with \$80 billion in broadband infrastructure spending and the rest of the money going toward more affordable and accessible options. Congress is not the only government entity acting to solve this challenge. The Department of Agriculture has created a Rural Utilities Service and Broadband ReConnect Program; the Department of Commerce has deployed billions through its Broadband Technologies Opportunity Program and State Broadband Initiative; and the FCC similarly has helped ISPs set up networks through its Universal Service Fund and Connect America Fund as well

as assisting families through its E-Rate program and \$9.95/month subsidy through Lifeline.

### **Private-Sector Solutions**

ISPs like Verizon, AT&T, and Comcast have created various programs to increase coverage and close the digital divide. Comcast's Internet Essentials program offers low-cost 25 Mbps internet for \$9.95/month to households that can show they've used public assistance programs like housing assistance or food stamps. ISPs typically rely on government support to connect rural areas since this can be costly, just like it was when America first started electrifying rural areas.<sup>14</sup> While fiber has the potential to provide cheaper and faster internet, it has not yet shown promising results, and the cost of laying fiber optic cables can run \$50–\$500 per foot.<sup>15</sup>

### **Nonprofit Solutions**

US nonprofits have focused on both short-term and long-term solutions. In the short-term, nonprofits like Mobile Citizen, Mobile Beacon, and No One Left Offline have helped deploy Wi-Fi hotspots and affordable internet plans to families in need. They have also helped schools put Wi-Fi networks on school buses so children can park nearby to complete homework. Nonprofits have also assisted cities and towns in creating their own municipal networks by setting up towers and negotiating contracts. These municipal networks often increase competition, thereby lowering prices.<sup>16</sup> Some of these efforts have recently run into setbacks. 22 states actually ban municipal broadband, meaning that private companies have to be the ones to provide internet.

### **The Path Forward**

When Thomas Edison helped electrify the country, he revolutionized the way that Americans work. Electric dishwashers and washing machines gave hours back to people every day. People worked longer hours under the shine of light bulbs, and a new industry of public utilities emerged. While it was expensive to run electrical cables to rural areas

or low-income neighborhoods that struggled with high prices, electricity radically improved daily life.

The public, private, and nonprofit sectors can work together again to bring internet connectivity to millions. Just as Thomas Edison put electricity in every home, so too can America achieve universal internet access with congressional funding, ISP infrastructure, and nonprofit community engagement. Now, the focus must be on students, as programs that invest in children have the highest returns.<sup>17</sup> This is particularly true of programs that target regions with both the highest number of children without internet and the lowest internet penetration. While low-income families and students suffer the most from lack of internet access, solutions to increase connectivity have the potential to bridge America's digital divide.

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## The Pan-African Decade of Return: Reimagining Pan-Africanism beyond Ghana's Year of Return and the UN Decade for People of African Descent: The PADoR Initiative

**Darold Cuba and Leah Nakaima**

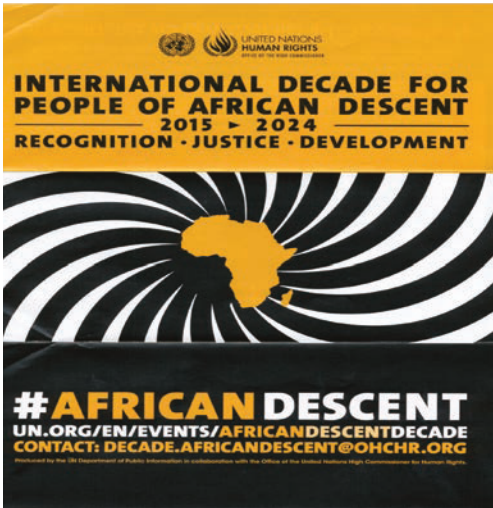
*Big movements are afoot to connect the African continent with its diaspora.*

In 2015, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 2015–2024 as the International Decade for People of African Descent (IDPAD) (resolution 68/237).<sup>1</sup> The proclamation cited the need to strengthen national, regional, and international cooperation regarding the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights by people of African descent (PAD)

while ensuring their full and equal participation in all aspects of society. The International Decade proclamation aims to provide a framework for the UN member states, civil society, and all other relevant actors to join together with PAD and take effective measures for the implementation of the program in the spirit of recognition, justice, and development.

Since 2015, the International Decade has led many successful programs.<sup>2</sup> For example, (1) UNESCO published a guide for the management of memory





sites and itineraries related to the history of slavery, the slave trade, and the heritage of PAD to ensure effective preservation and management; (2) the Office of the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) has hosted an annual fellowship for PAD to deepen participants' understanding of international human rights law and the UN human rights system, with a focus on issues of particular relevance to PAD<sup>3</sup>; (3) Kazakhstan contributed to the construction of the Ark of Return, the permanent memorial to honor the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade unveiled at the United Nations Headquarters in March 2015; and (4) in Uruguay, scholarships have been offered to Afro-Uruguayan students to promote racial equality in education for people of African descent.

On a related note, in September 2018, the President of Ghana Nana Akufo-Addo launched 2019 as Ghana's Year of Return (YOR), in honor of the 400 years since the first enslaved Africans arrived in Jamestown, Virginia.<sup>4,5,6</sup>

The YOR created many opportunities for Ghana, including (1) boosting Ghana's economy by ~\$5 billion as predicted by the World Trade and Tourism Council by 2027; (2) moving Ghana to the fourth

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*"This will change the narrative around the African continent and African people in the diaspora."*

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position, from 89th place in the world, for most desirable tourist destinations; (3) fostering business partnerships and investments between Ghana and the African diaspora; and (4) making Ghana the premier destination for African Americans and other Africans from the diaspora. Additionally, the YOR created opportunities for Africans from the diaspora to have physical experiences of the African continent and reconnect with their ancestral soil. This has reportedly been a great source of healing for many Africans in the diaspora.

With the YOR already over, and the UN IDPAD nearing the end in 2024, the Pan-African Decade of Return (PADoR) seeks to pick up from where the two programs ended. Specifically, the program further emphasizes pan-African solidarity through expanding diaspora-driven tourism to the African continent and facilitating programs that seek deeper engagements with Africa, all aimed at giving back to the African continent.

**The PADoR will take place between 2025 and 2035, and it will consist of expanding diaspora-driven tourism to the African continent.**

The PADoR will expand the YOR to all the African nations. This will open up more countries in Africa for PAD and allies and expand the diversity of the scenery to include historical heritage sites and monuments, safaris, and the physical experience of the African culture and traditions.

Additionally, the PADoR, like the IDPAD, will welcome approximately 210 million people of African descent from all over the world, including all descendants of all forms of the slave trade. Furthermore, the PADoR is planned for ten years in order to ensure ample time for Africans from the diaspora to visit Africa, share their experience with others, and invite their friends to visit the continent.

In the long run, this initiative will facilitate knowledge exchange between Africans in Africa and Africans in the diaspora. This will change the narrative around the African continent and African people in the diaspora. Additionally, it will enable all African countries to enjoy the economic benefits that will

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*“Africa is the world’s youngest and most rapidly urbanizing continent.”*

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accompany the boom in the tourism industry, as more people will be encouraged to visit the continent. This creates the potential for massive economic investment, property ownership, and business partnerships between Africans on the continent, Africans in the diaspora, and African allies.

Finally, the PADoR will facilitate more healing among Africans in the diaspora. Many will finally get access to trips back to their homeland through support programs created in partnership with organizations like the UN, the Gates Foundation, the Mastercard Foundation, and others. The top business leaders and influencers in Africa and the diaspora can work together to ensure that these trips are made possible for everyone—especially those less privileged—to ensure that no one is left behind. People like Aliko Dangote, the wealthiest person in Africa; Isabel dos Santos, Africa’s wealthiest woman; Robert F. Smith, the richest Black person in the United States; BET co-founders Sheila Crump and Bob Johnson, the first Black billionaires in the United States; and Oprah Winfrey, currently the United States’ richest Black woman are just a few of the continental and diasporic influencers who could make such an initiative happen.

The newly formed African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) will also play an instrumental role in coordinating all African Union member states, especially since they are already working with countries to create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of persons and investments.<sup>7</sup> This move would pave the way for accelerating the potential establishment of the Customs Union.

**However, tourism alone is not enough. The PADoR also seeks to facilitate programs that seek to give back to the African continent.**

The PADoR seeks to partner with academic institutions and national ministries in Africa and the diaspora to create and iteratively advance a pilot career development program, where (1) African

students from Africa and the diaspora are given an opportunity to spend one summer in the diaspora and Africa, respectively, working on projects that have been endorsed by their academic and host academic institutions as well as associated national ministries; (2) international organizations create rotational programs for people of African descent, which allow them to spend at least six months of their career working in a different country of their choice, other than their country of origin; and (3) African students from the continent and the diaspora participate in an academic exchange program where they spend a semester in the diaspora and Africa, respectively.

In the long run, this program will expose African students and workers in Africa and the diaspora to the world beyond their own countries. It will facilitate knowledge exchange and exposure, which will reduce the information divide between the two communities, and further amplify pan-African solidarity. Additionally, this will ensure early exposure among young Africans in the diaspora and Africa, which is predicted to ignite more interest and facilitate the creation of projects and new organizations that are relevant to their heritage and interests.

Africa is the world’s youngest and most rapidly urbanizing continent.<sup>8</sup> Given that Africa is predicted to have the highest consumer capital in the next 20 years, these opportunities would bridge the knowledge gap and ease recruitment procedures for those large corporations seeking to expand their business on the African continent.

The PADoR plans to work with the Mastercard Foundation to marry their giveback model to our

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*“In the long run, this program will expose African students and workers in Africa and the diaspora to the world beyond their own countries. It will facilitate knowledge exchange and exposure, which will reduce the information divide between the two communities.”*

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work, thereby reaching all African countries and all people of African descent.<sup>9</sup> We will continue to work with international charity organizations, business leaders, and influencers in Africa and the diaspora, in addition to national ministries and academic institutions, to ensure that this program is successfully implemented and is accessible to the least privileged people of African descent.

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**Darold Cuba** is a Center for Public Leadership Fellow at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, the Ivy League's first Wikipedia Fellow, and the inaugural Oral History Fellow at the Washington National Cathedral. As a co-founder of #HackingRacism, #DisruptWikipedia, and #MappingFreedom and a lead on the National Cathedral's first oral history project, his work actively dismantles the settler colonial narrative, perspective, lens and worldview of the "colonizer culture"—especially the effects of digital, tech, and data colonialism—through a process of decolonization and indigenization.

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## Nancy Gibbs on Rebuilding Trust in Media

Interview by Alexander de Avila

**Alexander de Avila:** Here at the Review, we are asking professors to discuss their views on rebuilding the country and the world. I want to talk with you about public trust and the media. What are the challenges, and how can we restore trust in the media in America?

**Nancy Gibbs:** I think for society in general, and media in particular, rebuilding trust is right at the top of the priority list. It is a huge challenge. There is really interesting research that suggests that some of the lack of trust and the deep polarization that we see comes from each side's misperception of the other. That misperception correlates pretty closely with their media diets, which is why I think of this as a media challenge above all. Political scientists found that we make these systematic errors. I suspect

that you have seen the study that says that Americans think on average 32 percent of Democrats are gay, lesbian, or bisexual, when it's more like 6 percent. Americans think 38 percent of Republicans make at least a quarter million dollars a year, when in fact it is just over 2 percent. So, one of the reasons that we have this lack of trust is that Team Red and Team Blue each views the other as an existential threat to democracy, but that's because they think that the other team is much more extreme than they actually are. That to me is a starting point for how we might address this crisis.

**Alexander:** What do you think is holding the country back from addressing this challenge?

**Nancy:** Part of the problem is that it is much

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*“... one of the reasons that we have this lack of trust is that Team Red and Team Blue each views the other as an existential threat to democracy, but that’s because they think that the other team is much more extreme than they actually are.”*

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more profitable for many media companies, and profitable politically for many political leaders, to fuel polarization rather than fight it. This leads to behavior that seeds distrust instead of fighting it. That is because so much of media success right now depends on financial success. Financial success depends on building a loyal and engaged audience. And fear and outrage and appeals to emotion tend to drive consumer loyalty more than dispassionate appeals to higher, common purpose. I am encouraged, though, by the growing exploration of different ways of funding news and supporting media.

**Alexander:** What would your advice be to political leaders on addressing this challenge that you have outlined?

**Nancy:** It is hard to tell political leaders to resist the incentives that lead them to play to extremes. The vast majority of elected officials have more to fear from a primary challenge from their left or right flank than they do from the middle. There are a lot of interesting reform ideas on everything from nonpartisan redistricting panels to address gerrymandering, ranked choice voting, and open primaries. Right now, it is hard to blame politicians for acting on the incentives that they face. So how do you change the incentives and give people a reason to reach across the aisle? Give people an incentive to appeal to a broader swath of the ideological spectrum rather than just to the extremes. I think that work becomes more and more urgent as we see the post-January 6 world. There are really dangerous effects of having these parallel realities of thinking was the election fair or not, stolen or not. Are people who were trying to block the vote patriots or insurrectionists? This is a

profound fight that depends on your news diet. You can easily have come to very different conclusions about what is happening. The only thing we are all united on is that we’re facing a democratic crisis.

**Alexander:** Are there any bold moonshot ideas out there to address this challenge?

**Nancy:** One of the things that has driven mistrust and polarization is the hollowing out of the local news ecosystem, which the pandemic dramatically accelerated. Advertising just evaporated. Newsrooms that did not shutdown went from being daily to weekly or fixed half their staff. That is just demonstrably damaging to democracy. When a hole opens up, a vacuum of information tends to get filled either by disinformation, which is cheap and easy to spread, or by national news, which is removed from the concerns of the community and will frame everything in polar red/blue terms. The polarization sinks right down into the community level, rather than communities having reliable and relevant local information sources. We are working very hard [at the Shorenstein Center] on the models that create sustainability for local news. When I think moonshot, I think of my colleagues Latanya Sweeney and Joan Donovan who are talking about what it would mean to build a public interest internet. If right now we have a social media public sphere that is designed to be profitable and is massively under-regulated, given the demonstrable harms that flow from it, what would an internet designed in the public interest look like? This is something that people are working on. We have to catch up really quickly to the fact that these social media companies grew very, very quickly and without guardrails. This is now harming the public. How we do address those costs, and how do we think about the spread of disinformation and extremism as a public health crisis? A lot of the crisis around trust is inextricable from the

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*“Are people who were trying to block the vote patriots or insurrectionists? This is a profound fight that depends on your news diet.”*

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environment of polarization and disinformation that defines our information environment right now. If we can get that environmental intervention right, I think civic trust can then improve.✕

**Alexander:** You talked about incentives. One interesting group that I've done some work with is With Honor, founded by an HKS graduate. They are out of North Carolina, and they fund both Republican and Democratic veterans running for Congress who literally pledge to work across the aisle. Is part of that incentive money, specifically spending money to get people into office who pledge to be sensible?

**Nancy:** Obviously money is important. It is also true that in the last election, if you look at the main Senate races, you see massive amounts of spending that was not effective. Those Senate races were some of the most expensive in history, and the winning candidate was sometimes outspent 5:1, 6:1, 10:1. So money is not everything. It is important, and transparency in campaign finances is important. But you put your finger on something that I am very interested in, which is whether or not one of the beneficial results of what are now described as “the endless wars” is the fact that we have a whole new generation of military officers who experienced various forms of nation building in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are quite experienced in having to build cohesion across very different groups. They are bringing back to public service a different sensibility that is honed by their military experience and that holds a lot of promise for how they approach their work. In that sense, whether they run as Democrats or Republicans is less important to me than the experience that they bring. I do think there is an interesting opportunity

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*“One of the things that has driven mistrust and polarization is the hollowing out of the local news ecosystem, which the pandemic dramatically accelerated. . . . That is just demonstrably damaging to democracy.”*

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*“There is enormous debate in newsrooms about the line between reporting and advocacy.”*

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with a rising generation of leaders who bring that experience with them and may make those kinds of commitments about working together to get the job done. You hear senators all the time say frustration is one of the reasons they are retiring, so what does it take for all of the incentives to align in the direction of reform? That is going to be fascinating to watch.

**Alexander:** Is anybody out there getting it right on this topic that you would like to highlight for our readers?

**Nancy:** One thing I am watching with interest is Axios' recent announcement that they will never run opinion columns. There is enormous debate in newsrooms about the line between reporting and advocacy. I am also curious about people who are founding new kinds of media startups that are single subjects rather than being broad. I am interested in The 19<sup>th</sup> that decided to build a newsroom that would be not only of women but for women. They have a different sensibility in the way they think about defining the parameters of news. There is a lot of innovation going on now in the media space. That is important because even if we magically had unlimited money to pour into standing up newsrooms in every county in the country, that still doesn't answer the question about what news people want to consume.✕ It may be that the people at Snapchat are going to make the greatest contribution to strengthening the news ecosystem as they develop new ways to entice the consumption of news. The supply of news is important, but the supply alone doesn't do any good if people aren't consuming it. In an attention economy where you are competing for people's time, I am most interested in seeing who is being the most creative and the most innovative at delivering information in a form and format that people want to consume. At any given minute you can stop looking at the *New York Times* and jump over to Instagram or start playing *Fortnite*, so how is

it that you find a way to get information and ideas to people in ways that will catch hold? Yes, there is a huge business model problem, and yes, there are structural problems around information, but there is also a creative challenge about people's appetites and the tools for storytelling. There is a rising generation of digital natives who have been experimenting with new media forms, who were the first to embrace Snapchat, who were the first to embrace TikTok, who were the first to figure out what each of these tools was able to do just as part of communicating with their peers. Will they now extend those skills to the communication of information that is in the public interest? I am putting my weight on you guys for solving problems that people who grew up in traditional media are just less likely to be able to crack. Institutional trust is lowest among young people. It goes up consistently with age cohorts, so senior citizens have the highest institutional trust and people under 30 have the lowest institutional trust. The line is pretty clear, so the need is greatest among younger people. I actually think the possibility of addressing it is greatest among younger people too.

**Alexander:** What advice do you have for students at the Kennedy School who might want to be future public servants?

**Nancy:** Learn how to be good storytellers. You have to be able to tell a story. The government needs to tell people what it is doing, how it serves them, and how their lives are improved by the efforts of the people who are serving them. That is what servant leadership looks like. Use every skill in your toolbox to tell a story about the difference you are making.





Source: flickr.

# The Intersection of Race, Womanhood, and Medicine

OnyekaOtugo

*“Black girls don’t often go to college.”*

During a didactic session I participated in during my obstetrics and gynecology clerkship, the resident who was lecturing stated she would offer different birth control options to her young Black patients than she would to her young White patients. Her reasoning stemmed from a misconception that her Black patients would often not want to attend college, whereas her White patients would always opt for an undergraduate education. I recall looking around the classroom to see if anyone else shared my disbelief, not finding any recognizable expressions of disbelief or anger.

As I came to the realization that the reason no one else seemed visibly bothered could be because they harbored similar sentiments, I recognized that I was the only Black medical student in that classroom.

As a resident and now an attending physician, I am often told that I do not look like a doctor. Often, when the individuals who say this catch themselves, they qualify their statement with “you look so young.” They rarely, however, tell my male colleagues that they are too young to be their doctors. Instead, what they mean to say is that I look too Black. I look too female to be their doctor.

*Doctors do not look like me.*

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*“... the resident who was lecturing stated she would offer different birth control options to her young Black patients than she would to her young White patients.”*

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With only 2 percent of physicians being Black women, I can't blame them. The commonly accepted narrative is that women who look like me should not be doctors.<sup>1</sup> We see this in the imagery of physicians displayed in the media. We also see this in our medical institutions, which have been complicit in keeping Black women physicians stagnant through their lack of accountability and support for Black women who pursue careers in medicine.

This past summer, medical institutions around the country knelt in support of Black lives and sent out statements of support.<sup>2</sup> These actions were performative, given the complicity that they have had in maintaining institutional racism that harms their medical trainees of color, specifically Black women, and their patients at their institutions. My experience as a medical student was not the first or last time I have been othered in my experience in medicine.

Because of these stereotypes, Black women also suffer as patients. Recall how the resident leading my didactic session decided that her patient's skin color was enough for her to determine her patient's subsequent treatment. It was enough for her to offer her Black patients different care. This is not an isolated incident. We see this as the Black-White health gap for women in the United States continues to grow. Black women are four times more likely to die of pregnancy-related complications when compared with White women.<sup>3</sup> Take the case of Dr. Chaniece Wallace, who defeated the odds stacked against her to become a Black woman physician, only to then die from pregnancy-related complications.<sup>4</sup> Look at the case of Dr. Susan Moore, a Black woman who died from COVID-19 after expressing concerns of her inadequate medical treatment.<sup>5</sup> The stories of these patients and many others reveal that “Black

women cannot buy or educate their way out of dying.”<sup>6</sup>

*Our health care system is failing Black women as patients, trainees, and physicians.*

To change the current lack of diversity, which is the status quo in medicine, a thorough evaluation of medical school education is required. It will also require understanding how bias seeps into medical school acceptances, lectures, grading, and the promotion of Black women in medicine. This means more than a course that discusses bias but one that is overall effective at creating actionable change.<sup>7</sup> It means an evaluation of hiring practices and support for those pursuing medicine who do not have the same mentorship and sponsorship opportunities as their White counterparts.<sup>8</sup> It will require elevating leaders from diverse backgrounds, which has been shown to improve outcomes for all patients, including medically disenfranchised populations.<sup>9</sup> Black women need more than statements of support. We need a massive cultural shift at these institutions, actionable change, and effective policies to begin to move away from this status quo in medicine. Only then can we begin to discuss equity.

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*“Black women need more than statements of support. We need a massive cultural shift at these institutions, actionable change, and effective policies to begin to move away from this status quo in medicine.”*

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Source: Dawn Huczek, flickr.

## Democratizing Access to Clinical Trials

SahirRaof

*More diverse enrollment in clinical trials will help new drugs—and health care—be more effective.*

Pharmaceutical companies spend approximately \$200 billion each year on research and development. This money is largely used to support clinical trials of experimental drugs.<sup>1,2</sup> Due to the incentive structures for trial sponsors and the historically predatory treatment of minority participants in America, clinical trial demographics skew heavily to healthier, wealthier White patients. Despite making up less than 60 percent of the US population, non-Hispanic White patients represent as much as 80–90 percent of some

clinical trials. Since recent studies have documented differences in drug interactions among races, it is critical that we enroll representative populations of patients in clinical trials to minimize racially driven outcome disparities.<sup>3,4</sup>

Pharmaceutical companies monetize research risk by developing novel therapeutics for patients. As a result, these for-profit companies have invested

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*“... it is critical that we enroll representative populations of patients in clinical trials to minimize racially driven outcome disparities.”*

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heavily in efficiently navigating the US Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) regulatory approval process. The complexity of clinical trials has intensified over the last decade due to a paradigm shift in medical care. Scientific approaches to studying disease are nuanced, and they are now often based on an underlying genetic cause or predisposition. With this shift comes the added burden of enrolling genetically rare populations in clinical trials. To minimize cost-per-patient metrics in surfacing hard-to-find patients, pharmaceutical companies focus largely on major academic centers, which tend to have both high patient volume and specialized genetic testing. There have also been recent efforts to include smaller community clinics in the drug development process through more “pragmatic trials” that are less restrictive and burdensome to trial sites. Despite these efforts, pharmaceutical companies are not yet sufficiently incentivized to consistently engage in these practices.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, minority involvement is inhibited by distrust in the health care system, costs of participating in trials, and lack of information on clinical study availability. Studies by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have found that medical disparities around race remain prevalent in the health care system, with 40 percent of health care quality measures worse for Black patients than for White ones.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps the most blatant example of such medical racism was the predatory inclusion of Black men in the Tuskegee Syphilis Study. This study examined the progression of untreated syphilis by tricking Black participants into thinking they were receiving medical care. The memory of this unethical treatment has justifiably resulted in a lack of desire to enroll in clinical trials. Furthermore, other well-documented racial and socioeconomic disparities make

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*“ . . . the most blatant example of such medical racism was the predatory inclusion of Black men in the Tuskegee Syphilis Study.”*

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it difficult for Black patients to enroll in trials, which often require patients to drive to trial sites, take time off work, and find childcare during appointments.

Although the FDA could require companies to enroll demographically representative groups, this would pose two substantial challenges. First, patient recruitment is expensive and often makes up more than 40 percent of all clinical research costs.<sup>7</sup> A demographic requirement would further drive up costs. This would likely lead pharmaceutical companies to run fewer trials, resulting in fewer new drug approvals. Second, a demographic requirement would also draw out recruitment timelines, which would similarly result in fewer drug approvals.<sup>8</sup>

In response to these challenges, per the 21st Century Cures Act mandate, the FDA issued a July 2018 guidance to the pharmaceutical industry regarding how electronic health record (EHR) data could be used to support clinical trial submissions.<sup>9</sup> A potential extension of this policy could require pharmaceutical manufacturers to submit a demographically representative dataset collected from “real-world” use of a drug after its initial approval (similar to the existing framework for post-marketing requirements already instituted by the FDA). Given that these data would be collected as part of routine care, the cost of data generation would be significantly lower than the cost of running a clinical trial. Additionally, the data could be aggregated across community and academic medical centers to provide a much more nationally representative sample of patients. Further investment in software-enabled remote monitoring, telehealth, and wearables could mitigate the need for frequent in-person visitation and further reduce the burden to patients and the cost to clinical trial sponsors.

However, rebuilding trust with the Black community is no easy task. As a first step, HHS should partner with local community centers (churches, YMCAs, etc.) to conduct a grassroots health education campaign. This campaign could provide information to local communities regarding public health issues and clinical trials as well as answer individuals’ questions. Recent studies have determined a number of

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“... require pharmaceutical manufacturers to submit a demographically representative dataset collected from ‘real-world’ use of a drug. . . .”

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the key barriers to minority participation in clinical trials and can guide the development of an effective campaign.<sup>10,11,12</sup> Beyond clinical trial participation, this type of community education could more broadly contribute to bridging the health outcome gap between Black and White patients.

Additionally, over the long term, it is imperative that the FDA, research institutes, and clinical trial sponsors work together to increase the diversity of physicians running clinical trials. Studies have shown that minority patients seek advice from doctors of their own race,<sup>13</sup> so we must ensure that the physicians running trials reflect the populations we expect them to enroll.

The FDA’s mission is to protect “public health by ensuring the safety, efficacy, and security of human and veterinary drugs,” yet data from minority populations continue to be excluded from regulatory decision making.<sup>14</sup> This exclusion is due to misaligned incentives for pharmaceutical manufacturers, as well as a history of mistreatment of Black patients that has perpetuated distrust in the health care system. The FDA has begun to lay a foundation for innovative solutions to facilitate data generation on drug safety and efficacy across various racial subpopulations. These innovative policy changes, coupled with effective grassroots campaigns to rebuild trust in the health care system, can begin to close the gap in clinical outcome disparities.

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Source: National Park Service, flickr.

## How Women Can Win Salary Negotiations

ZoeWilliams

*Negotiating salary can be tricky for women. With a few key strategies, women can overcome this challenge and build thriving careers.*

The economic challenges of COVID-19 have hit women hard. Job losses and childcare responsibilities disproportionately affect women.<sup>1</sup> These circumstances are pushing a quarter of working women to consider quitting or working less.<sup>2</sup> In a recent Deloitte global survey, 60 percent of working women questioned whether fighting for a promotion or raise would pay off.<sup>3</sup> This winter I researched how negotiation principles could help women reach their career goals

for pay, position, and workload even in the midst of the pandemic. I interviewed two dozen women early in their careers in Boston about their experiences with negotiations. These interviews were followed with coaching sessions on how to negotiate more effectively. This article shows why negotiations skills are critical for women throughout their careers and gives practical advice on how women can overcome barriers in negotiations.

**Women negotiate job offers less often because they pay a higher social cost for negotiating than men.** Social cost refers to people wanting to work with women less after negotiating with them.<sup>4</sup> Research



shows that by not negotiating her first salary, a woman could earn half a million dollars less during her lifetime.<sup>5</sup> Among the women I interviewed, half said they had worse relationships after a negotiation or did not negotiate a job offer because they feared backlash. The good news is that women achieve outcomes similar to men when candidates are explicitly told that negotiations are expected.<sup>6</sup> Women are not bad negotiators by nature, but they face different social expectations than men.

**Women are less likely to get promoted, even when they are just as qualified to lead, want more responsibilities, and ask for promotions at the same rate.** Women are 18 percent less likely to be promoted from an entry-level position to manager.<sup>7</sup> The difference in career trajectory between women and men is the biggest contribution to the gender pay gap.<sup>8</sup> Common myths that justify the discrepancy in promotions is that women are less capable candidates for leadership, do not want more responsibilities, or are less likely to advocate for themselves.<sup>9</sup> These myths are not supported by evidence. First, women leaders are consistently ranked as more competent leaders than their male counterparts during a crisis.<sup>10</sup> Second, women are just as interested in getting promoted as men are—in fact, 90 percent of the women I interviewed said that they wanted to learn how to negotiate a promotion, but many were unsure how to do so. Lastly, multiple studies show that women are now asking for promotions as often as men.<sup>11,12</sup>

**Uncertainty in a negotiation makes negotiations challenging for women.** Uncertainty about what is negotiable, how to negotiate, or who to negotiate with increases anxiety and lowers leverage in negotiations.

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*“The good news is that women achieve outcomes similar to men when candidates are explicitly told that negotiations are expected. Women are not bad negotiators by nature, but they face different social expectations than men.”*

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When women lack the social support networks that men might have—such as mentors at work—they are more likely to face uncertainty in a negotiation. Access to social networks can vary by class, race, sexual orientation, and other factors, so not all women face the same barriers to social networks.

The following steps can help women reach their career goals in negotiations.<sup>13</sup>

1. **Resolve to ask.** The risk of paying a social cost for negotiating decreases when seeking mutually beneficial arrangements—especially for women.<sup>14</sup> Think creatively about how you could achieve your career goals while helping your employer, then commit to advocating for yourself. Remember to consider your career goals, not just pay. How could you advance your career by negotiating new responsibilities, schedule flexibility, or professional development?

2. **Prepare to ask.** Lean on your community to decrease uncertainty about the upcoming negotiation. Who could help you learn about the market rates for compensation? One woman in our workshop learned the salary range for a job offer she was considering by talking to a former employee she knew. You might contact people from your alumni network, family, or colleagues—the broader you reach, the better. As you prepare to negotiate a promotion, you might ask, “Who could I talk to about the skills I would need to advance?” Find people willing to go to bat for you—whether male or female (interestingly, women are less likely to face backlash in negotiations when they are advocating on behalf of others).<sup>15</sup>

3. **Ask.** Appeal to your employer’s values and interests when you ask. Several women I interviewed said they usually appealed to personal reasons for a raise, like the rising cost of living. But requests are more likely to be perceived as legitimate if you appeal to the values of your negotiating counterpart. You might ask for a new professional development opportunity by saying, “I know we value delivering the most cutting-edge products to our clients. Having me attend the upcoming training will enable us to deliver that to clients.”

4. **Ask again.** Leave the door open if you do not

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*“Women are more likely to achieve their career goals through negotiations when they resolve to ask, prepare strategically, and are creative and persistent in advocating for themselves.”*

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get your desired outcome in the first conversation. Many women I spoke to said that they did not know how to respond when they were initially told no. As you prepare to negotiate, consider what alternatives you could suggest if your first proposal is denied. During your initial conversation, you will gain more information about what is negotiable and your counterpart’s interests, which you can use at a future date. If you hear no, ask your counterpart to explain more about how they made their decision, thank them for the information, and then prepare to ask again—in a new way and perhaps with new stakeholders.

Women are more likely to achieve their career goals through negotiations when they resolve to ask, prepare strategically, and are creative and persistent in advocating for themselves. Negotiating skills alone will not close the gender pay gap, but they can help women take advantage of opportunities for raises, promotions, and flexibility in scheduling. Ensuring women can achieve their career goals is good for business, too. Organizations thrive when women are well represented in executive leadership, as company profits and share performance can be close to 50 percent higher.<sup>16</sup> Fortunately for all genders, women winning is win-win.

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# The Criminalization of Title IX: Replicating a System Where No One Wins

MaryRoseMazzola

*Recommendations for reforming how Title IX is implemented on campuses.*

For decades, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 has allowed victims of sexual assault on college campuses to pursue action against their perpetrators. Title IX provides important tools for the millions of students who experience sexual violence in college by requiring educational institutions to create remedies for and procedures addressing sexual harassment and assault. However, though Title IX is a civil law, implementation and enforcement have begun to replicate criminal rape law, rendering it ineffective for victims and potentially overly punitive to men of color. In the context of the national reckonings brought on by the #MeToo and Black Lives Matter movements, Title IX must be reimagined, perhaps in the vein of police and prison abolition.

The criminal justice system’s treatment of rape is infamous for its inefficacy. The overwhelming majority of rapes go unpunished.<sup>1</sup> Even in “successful” cases, victims are often retraumatized in the process of reporting the crime to police and testifying in an adversarial court setting.<sup>2</sup> There is also substantial evidence of disparate outcomes depending on the race of the victim and perpetrator, resulting in a higher likelihood that Black men are imprisoned for rape, especially if the victim is White.<sup>3</sup> Though rape convictions contribute much less to mass incarceration than do other crimes, such as drug offenses, investigating and prosecuting rape can still serve as a vehicle for law enforcement to over-police marginalized communities.<sup>4</sup> This system results in impunity for many perpetrators, a lack of trust and engagement from victims, and overly harsh punishments for

communities of color — themes that are increasingly prevalent on college campuses as well.

A key component of the criminalization of Title IX is a misunderstanding of who sexual assault perpetrators are. The idea that most assaults on college campuses are perpetrated by a very small number of serial rapists has gained traction over the past decade,<sup>5</sup> causing many universities to move away from a public health–inspired prevention model, under the assumption that a serial rapist would not be deterred by training or improved campus culture.<sup>6,7</sup> This predatory serial rapist theory has many parallels with the now-debunked “super predator” theory of the 1990s, and the racism inherent in the latter may have trickled into Title IX adjudication. A multitude of recent lawsuits allege that students were subject to false charges, and in some cases abrupt expulsions, because they were racial minorities.<sup>8</sup>

Title IX has also mimicked the criminal justice system in procedure and in remedy. Specifically, the adjudicatory process has transformed to look almost identical to a criminal trial. Under the 2020 Trump administration regulations, universities are required to provide live hearings for Title IX complaints, complete with cross-examination of the victim and perpetrator.<sup>9</sup> The new regulations raise the evidentiary standard from the civil litigation standard of “preponderance of the evidence” to the higher “clear and convincing” burden instead. Given the private nature of sexual interactions, finding enough evidence to meet the “clear and convincing” standard makes it more difficult

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*“The criminal justice system’s treatment of rape is infamous for its inefficacy.”*

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for victims to make their case, the same way that the “beyond a reasonable doubt” standard in the criminal justice system serves as a barrier to many victims.

Title IX remedies also isolate the victim from the perpetrator, akin to a restraining order in a domestic violence setting.<sup>10</sup> The campus serial rapist theory has led school administrators to implement harsher punishments, such as removing perpetrators from campus as a public safety priority.<sup>11</sup> The idea of removing “bad actors” from the campus environment has only become more popular in recent years, with some schools even making expulsion the mandatory punishment for substantiated Title IX complaints.<sup>12,13</sup> In reality, this higher degree of punishment means that schools are less likely to find a perpetrator liable.<sup>14</sup>

Moving away from this system via the creation of a wide range of legal and non-legal solutions to Title IX complaints would give students more bargaining power in their sexual, social, and educational interactions on campus. Knowing that the university recognizes many forms of Title IX violations, ranging from harassment to rape, and that there are a range of solutions, ranging from educational programs to expulsion, would increase student confidence that their complaints would be taken seriously and met with an appropriate and proportional response. This schema would also signal to potential perpetrators—or even those simply unclear of the line between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors—that there are also institutional responses tailored to conduct that is on the margins.

For example, a substantiated but minor sexual harassment claim could result in a mandatory educational program. Intimate partner abuse education programs (IPAEPs), which are currently used across the country as an alternative to incarceration for domestic violence offenders and have proven effective in many settings, may provide a model.<sup>15</sup> Successful IPAEPs take a holistic approach to ending gender-based violence, focusing on patriarchal norms, mental health, substance use, racism, and socioeconomic concerns. For more serious violations, restorative justice may be a helpful tool. In recent

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*“Feminist prison abolitionists have advocated for restorative justice remedies to gender violence.”*

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years, feminist prison abolitionists have advocated for restorative justice remedies to gender violence, such as mediation and preventative community standard setting. Under the Obama administration, mediation was not allowed as a response to a Title IX complaint, with the rationale that too many colleges would push victims into an informal resolution process.<sup>16</sup> Though restorative justice was not explicitly banned and could arguably be distinguished from mediation, many school administrators avoided the risk, thereby avoiding restorative justice altogether.<sup>17</sup> The Trump-era Title IX regulations allow schools to offer informal resolution options, as long as both parties give voluntary, informed, and written consent to do so. While this may incentivize schools to use restorative justice models, it could also provide them with a way to sweep serious allegations under the rug.

The Biden administration now has an important opportunity to reimagine Title IX. On 8 March 2021, President Biden signed an executive order directing the new Secretary of Education to review existing Title IX guidance and issue new regulations.<sup>18</sup> Experts and advocates are looking to the president’s past work on the issue for clues as to what these new regulations will entail. Experts and advocates are looking to the president’s past work on the issue for clues as to what these new regulations will entail. As vice president, Joe Biden led the Obama administration’s response to campus sexual assault, with a significant focus on bystander intervention via the “It’s on Us” campaign. Because bystander intervention training relies on the idea that students will witness someone else attempting an assault, it can build an assumption that they themselves would never participate in behaviors that violate Title IX. This can limit students’ understanding of sexual violence as a community issue and potentially undermine the possibility for restorative justice remedies. While on the campaign

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*“Title IX must take a page from feminist prison abolitionists and move away from the flawed criminal response to rape.”*

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trail in 2020, Biden vowed to “immediately” put an end to these Trump-era Title IX regulations, stating he would expand the types of Title IX violations that are investigated and remove the new adjudicatory processes that Secretary DeVos put in place.<sup>19</sup> However, it is unclear whether he will reinstate the Obama administration ban on mediation or whether his Department of Education will consider a restorative justice approach to Title IX violations.

Creating a system that takes all complaints seriously and acknowledges the ways that criminal law fails in these situations would engage and empower survivors to report. Expanding identified problematic behaviors and solutions would help protect those most impacted by an overly punitive system as well—administrators may be incentivized to conduct more in-depth investigation that considers the structural and societal power imbalances in a given interaction or relationship. By creating more alternatives to expulsion, like restorative justice models, counseling, and educational programs, campuses can increase the likelihood of reporting and decrease excessive punishment, resulting in more equitable campus culture. Title IX must take a page from feminist prison abolitionists and move away from the flawed criminal response to rape.

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Source: Shashi Bellamkonda, flickr

## Beyond Recruitment: Retaining Diverse Talent at the State Department

Constanza Castro Zuniga, Caroline Kim, and Mojib Ziarnal Ghaznawi

*How the State Department can improve its hiring and retention of diverse foreign service officers.*

As Secretary of State Antony Blinken emphasized in a press statement on investing in the diplomatic workforce, “Diversity and inclusion make us stronger, smarter, more creative, and more innovative. And our diversity gives us a significant competitive advantage on the world stage.”<sup>1</sup>

In late 2020, the US Department of State expanded its flagship foreign service officer (FSO) diversity recruitment programs—the Charles B. Rangel International Fellowship and Thomas R. Pickering Foreign

Affairs Fellowship—by 50 percent. This raised the number of selected fellows in each program from 30 to 45.<sup>2</sup> Despite these programs, recent evidence from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) indicates that diversity is falling short at the department’s mid-career and senior levels. Data from the 2018 fiscal year reveal that the proportions of racial or ethnic minorities have been progressively lower in each rank above class 5 in the foreign service.<sup>3</sup> By

*“By 2020, only seven ambassadors representing the United States overseas were career diplomats of color.”*

2020, only seven ambassadors representing the US overseas were career diplomats of color.<sup>4</sup> As concluded by GAO, the department must take additional steps to identify, address, and resolve diversity issues. That process begins with acknowledging that, as officer ranks increase, to sustainably improve diversity metrics the fellowship programs must be accompanied by additional measures improving recruitment and retention.

As three Rangel fellows, we were disheartened by anecdotes we had heard on why diverse officers had chosen to leave the State Department, which inspired us to launch a survey with the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) to better understand the barriers to retention of diverse officers within the department. Our survey collected data from FSOs who quit, retired, or are currently serving. Based on over 2,800 responses from officers of all ranks, specialties, and demographics, it was clear that retention remains a major barrier to improving diversity. Overall, our survey found that bias ranked as a top-five driver of officer exits for all racial and ethnicity classifications. Furthermore, when aggregating for race and ethnicity, African American and Native American officers ranked bias as the second-highest driver for leaving the foreign service. These findings point to larger structural issues with retention, which the department must address if it does not want to lose gains it has made on improving diversity.

In particular, current GAO data show that the largest drop in officers occurs between the entry-level and mid-career jump.<sup>5</sup> This is in part because the first and second tours can be among the most challenging in an officer's career. Often, if a first-tour officer suffers burnout, this increases the chances they will decide to leave the foreign service.<sup>6</sup> For many new officers, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds, finding mentors or support during these times can be very difficult. As such, the department would benefit from implementing a formal mentoring system that assists officers at multiple points in their careers (entry-level, mid-career, and senior ranks). Without this, the State Department runs a high risk

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*“Our survey found that bias ranked as a top-five driver of officer exits for all racial and ethnicity classifications.”*

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of increasing the number of exits, particularly from diverse officers.

Moreover, the department must investigate why employees are leaving and enact data-driven policies to address overall departure trends. The department only started collecting in-house exit surveys from officers at the end of 2019.<sup>7</sup> In the future, it would be more effective to have an independent party run the exit surveys, as employees may not feel comfortable providing honest reasons for their departure.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, climate surveys should be frequently and consistently collected. Systematic exit and climate surveys will reveal the issues faced by officers, allowing the department to reduce attrition in a more proactive manner.

Finally, while the Pickering and Rangel fellowships remain a strong recruitment tool, the department should not rely on them as the sole solution for diversifying the entry-level ranks. Instead, we suggest improvements to the Diplomat in Residence (DIR) program, which stations FSOs across the country to recruit at universities and high schools.<sup>9</sup> In its present iteration, one officer is assigned to cover multiple states and academic institutions. This produces gaps in recruitment coverage by DIRs spread too thin. Instead, DIRs should be assigned to recruit in only one state. Additionally, every FSO, not just DIRs, should be required to participate in at least one virtual recruiting initiative during their career in order to be promoted. The impact of more than 13,000 diplomats actively recruiting within their high schools, universities, and communities would greatly improve representation.<sup>10</sup>

Overall, to improve diversity within its ranks, the US Department of State must undertake considerable changes to its recruitment and retention practices. Without progress, the department cannot achieve its congressional mandate to assemble a diplomatic corps “representative of the American people.”<sup>11</sup>

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# Equity by Access: Are Minority Depository Institutions the Great Economic Equalizer?

Noah Yosif

*Minority communities could prosper with greater access to financial institutions. MDIs are one option for driving change.*

## Introduction

The recent police shootings of unarmed Black Americans have galvanized a reckoning regarding the impact of systemic racism in the United States. The conversation around racial equity in the United States has shifted considerably beyond criminal justice and has pivoted toward exploring the existing financial, occupational, and educational inequalities that are pervasive in our country. While such issues pertaining to economic justice are complex and multifaceted, they are often associated with unequal access to financial services.<sup>1</sup>

Financial services, such as bank accounts, lending facilities, and credit provisions, are vital building blocks for individuals to accumulate wealth and attain economic prosperity. But these services are often considered a luxury, and out of reach, for many Black Americans. Households that lack access to traditional financial services, such as banks and credit unions, are more likely to rely on expensive alternatives such as payday lenders. This perpetuates a vicious cycle of debt, which further inhibits families' capacity to accumulate a comparable level of wealth as their peers. In 2018, over 66 million American households were unbanked (defined as lacking access to a traditional financial institution) and collectively spent \$189 billion in lost wealth to receive basic financial services without the assistance of an established bank or credit union.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, access to traditional financial services is yet another facet of our economy that is afflicted by racial disparities. According to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), 18 percent of African Americans and 16 percent of Hispanic Americans were unbanked compared to a mere 3 percent of White Americans.<sup>3</sup> A recent study by S&P Global Market Intelligence also found that aggregate bank branch closures (mostly owned by larger institutions such as J.P. Morgan and Bank of America) increased by 23.2 percent from 2010 to 2018 in communities with a large minority population.<sup>4</sup> In all other communities, bank branch closures increased by only 11 percent. According to experts, this disparity cannot be entirely explained by industry-specific factors such as an uptick in mergers and acquisitions or poor branch performance.<sup>5</sup> While such closures are not explicitly motivated by customers' ethnic backgrounds, they are driven by economic factors such as unemployment or poverty, which are more prevalent within minority communities.

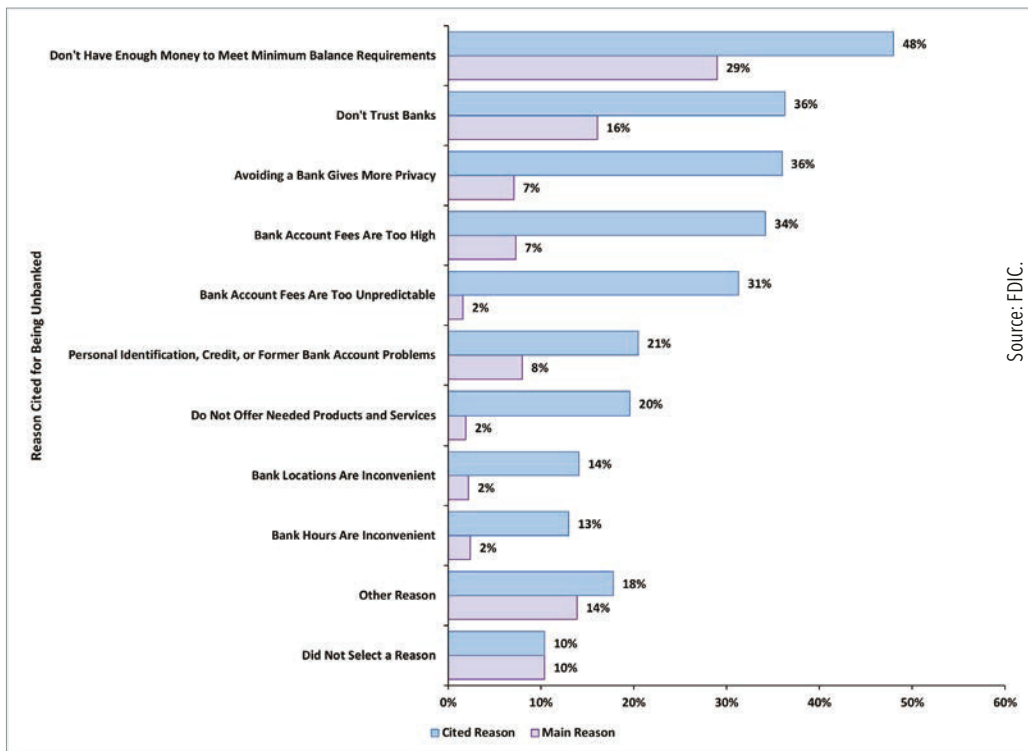
Much of the effort to improve financial inclusion among minority communities has been spearheaded by minority depository institutions (MDIs), a small cadre of 143 banks managed by minority bankers in service of minority customers.<sup>6</sup> These institutions, while far smaller than the financial hegemony of Wall Street, serve communities with a 40 percent higher share of minority individuals and a 19 percent higher share of foreign-born individuals as well as over 90 percent of localities designated as low-to-moderate income (LMI) by the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC).<sup>7</sup> Yet, these banks

also experience higher portfolio volatility, increased operating expenses, outsized financial shocks, and greater vulnerability to institutional failure, all of which reflect the challenges of balancing social impact with profit maximization, especially within an industry as competitive and capital-intensive as financial services.

This article will explore whether MDIs deliver on their stated mission of providing access to financial services within the minority communities they serve. This question is urgent for policy makers, since increased access to financial services has the potential to mitigate ongoing race-based financial, occupational, and educational inequalities. Given MDIs' unique mission and decades of experience within minority communities, better understanding their efficacy and limitations can inform how public policy can be used to further enhance their capabilities.

## Evaluating Efficacy

To gauge the efficacy of MDIs in supporting financial inclusion, this article will examine whether MDIs are associated with declines in the unbanked population in the communities they serve. The term unbanked refers to individuals or households that are not served by a traditional financial institution. A growing body of private and public financial research has identified several predictive factors for being unbanked, which include having a low income, minimal education, and physical or mental disabilities.<sup>8</sup> These predictive factors are closely linked to some of the most commonly cited reasons for being unbanked, including exorbitant or unpredictable bank fees as well as lack of faith in financial institutions. Figure 1 shows the frequency of each reason cited for being unbanked, which were featured in the 2019 Survey of Household Use of Banking and Financial Services administered by the FDIC.<sup>9</sup>



**Figure 1. Reasons Cited by Unbanked Households for Not Having a Bank Account**



Minority ethnic groups are also at a higher risk of being unbanked, often driven by discrepancies in household income, access to education, and vulnerability to disability. With the exception of Asian American households, over 10 percent of all other minority households were reported to be unbanked in 2019 compared with just 3.4 percent of White households.<sup>10</sup> MDIs are often well-positioned in terms of physical proximity to individuals with all of the above risk factors that make them prone to being unbanked. Figure 2 shows the average percentage of

individuals meeting the criterion of each predictive factor for being unbanked within counties served and unserved by MDIs, utilizing data from the American Communities Survey published by the Census Bureau.<sup>11</sup> Counties served by MDIs had a higher average percentage of low-income or minority individuals by significant margins, with marginal differences in average percentage of individuals without a college education or with a disability, suggesting MDIs are located in areas likely to have a high need for financial services.

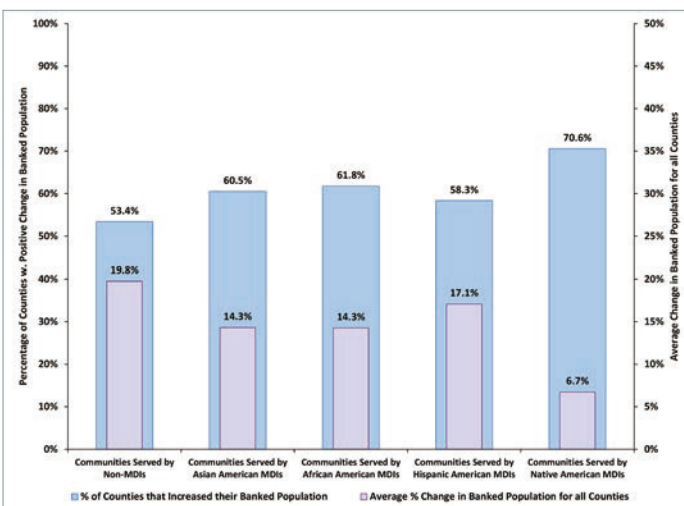
Predictive Factor	Criterion	Counties w. MDIs	Counties w/o MDIs
Family Income	% Population with Household Income < \$35,000	44.9%	34.3%
Education	% Population with High School Diploma/No College	61.9%	67.3%
Disability Status	% Population with Any Disability	16.1%	16.1%
Minority	% Non-White Population	83.7%	24.8%

Source: FDIC/Census Bureau.

**Table 1. Proximity of MDIs and Non-MDIs to Population at Risk of Being Unbanked**

However, physical location provides an incomplete picture of the actual effect. Therefore, to determine the efficacy of MDIs in supporting financial inclusion among minority communities, county-level estimates of the unbanked population in 2009 and 2019 were

developed using data from the Survey of Household Use of Banking and Financial Services as well as the American Communities Survey.<sup>12,13</sup> These estimates were used to calculate county-level rates of change in the unbanked population that could be reasonably affected by the presence or absence of an MDI from a particular community.



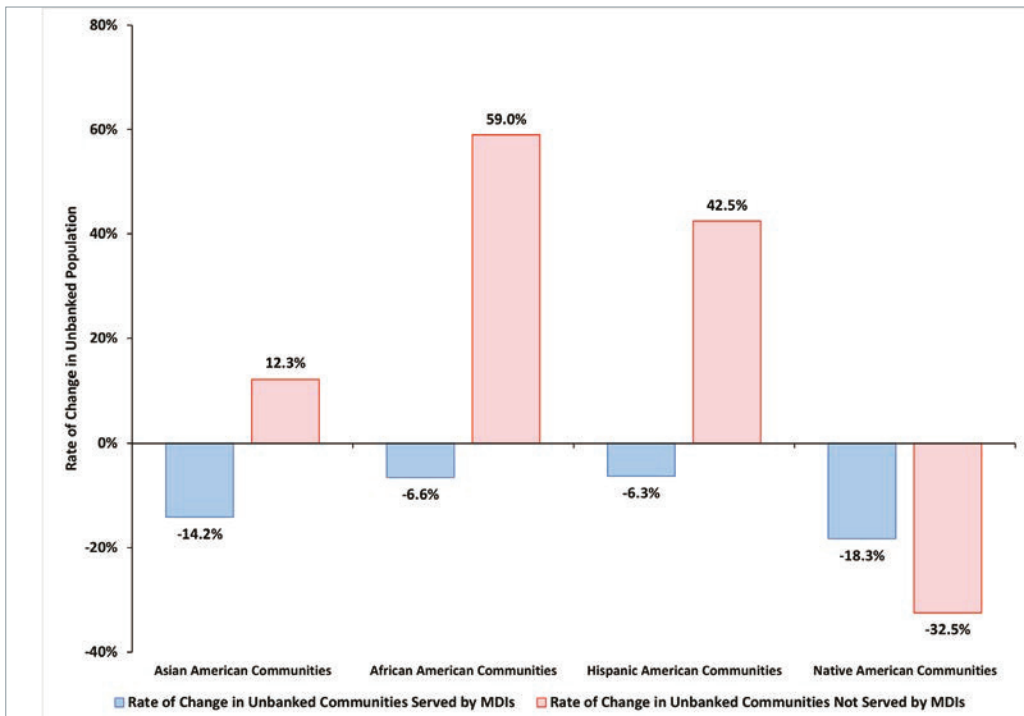
**Figure 2. Percentage of Counties that Increased Their Banked Population and Average Percent Change in Banked Population, 2009-2019**

Source: Author's calculations based on data from FDIC/Census Bureau.



According to Figure 3, counties served by an MDI were more likely to experience an increase in their banked population between 2009 and 2019. 60–70 percent of counties served by each type of MDI experienced an increase in their banked population, whereas just over 50 percent of counties not served by an MDI increased their banked population. The average percent change in the banked population was smaller in counties served by an MDI. Since MDIs often serve communities with a larger at-risk population for being unbanked, these results indicate that counties with an MDI presence performed well when compared with counties with likely advantages to increasing

their banked population. These results are more pronounced when examining changes in the unbanked population within counties with a significant minority footprint, served and unserved by MDIs. According to Figure 4, counties with a significant Asian American, African American, and Hispanic American population experienced declines in their unbanked population when served by MDIs but had the number of unbanked surge by 12–59 percent when unserved by MDIs. Only counties with a significant Native American population did not follow this trend, which could be influenced by several socioeconomic factors that complicate their ability to access traditional financial services.<sup>14</sup>



**Figure 3. Average Rate of Change in Unbanked Population within Minority Communities Served and Unserved by MDIs**

Source: Author’s calculations based on data from FDIC/Census Bureau.

Taken together, these results suggest that MDIs can be an effective vehicle for increasing financial inclusion within minority communities. Not only are they ideally located near at-risk populations, but the localities they serve have exhibited demonstrable gains in expanding access to traditional financial institutions over the past decade, enabling individuals to take the first of many steps toward economic prosperity.

Supporting Success

These findings, alongside a growing body of empirical research, suggest that MDIs effectively serve minority communities at risk of exclusion from the financial system. Their service, however, is accompanied by a hefty price tag. MDIs face unique challenges as a result of their small scale and the populations they serve, including higher compliance costs, greater operational complexities, and exacerbated risks to safety and soundness. Figure 5 shows the number of active MDIs and their return on assets (ROA) compared to the aggregate

*“Access to traditional financial services is yet another facet of our economy that is affected by racial disparities.”*

banking industry.<sup>15,16</sup> During this timeframe, the total number of MDIs fell by 30 percent, while their average ROA consistently lagged behind the average for the rest of the industry. Without direct public policy support, these economic realities could discourage the formation of new institutions, while encumbering established MDIs from reaching the communities which depend on them.

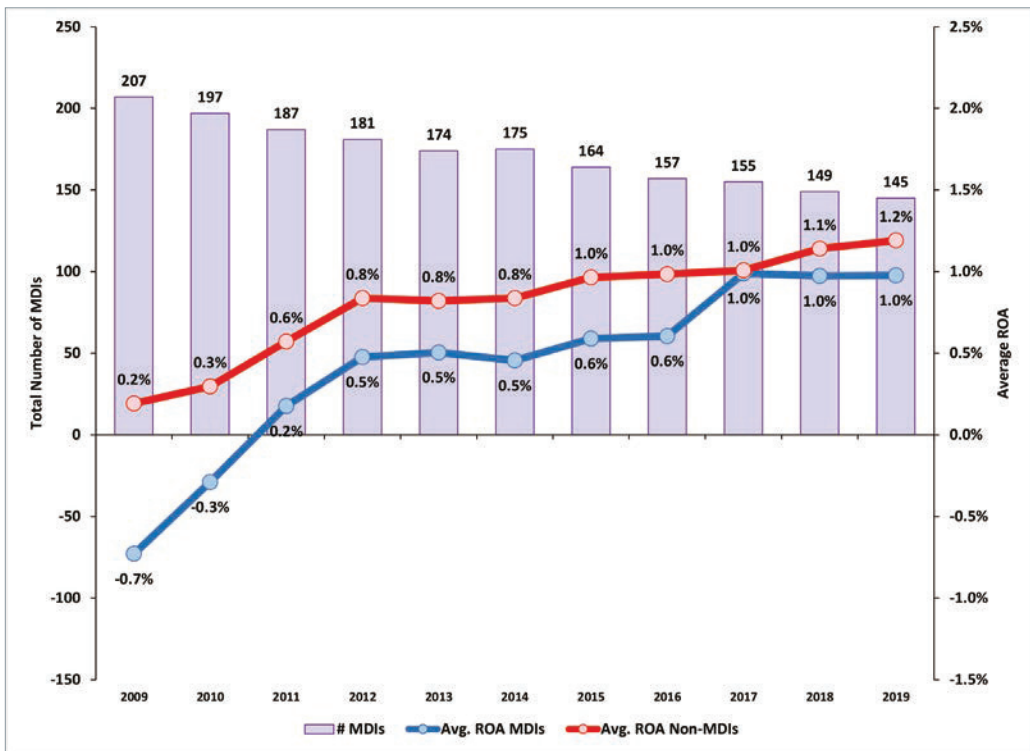


Figure 4. Number of Active MDIs by Year and Average ROA for MDIs and Non-MDIs

Source: FDIC.

One potential solution would be increasing partnerships between MDIs and financial technology (fintech). Broadly, fintech describes a growing market of online non-bank platforms that provide basic

financial services. While they are sometimes viewed as competitors to traditional banks, many have opted to collaborate with banks due to their knowledge of local markets and regulatory complexities.<sup>17</sup> By partnering with fintechs, MDIs could become more capital efficient by reducing customer acquisition costs, enhancing loan portfolio diversification, and resolving industry-specific pressure points including credit card processing, loan underwriting, and wire

transfers. All of these would enable MDIs to become more competitive against larger financial institutions and to offer products capable of servicing a growing demand for digital services.<sup>18</sup> Since many MDIs do not have the resources to take the first step in identifying or selecting an appropriate fintech partner, federal assistance could have a consequential impact on their long-term growth.

Another possible solution would be phased-in capital requirements for *de novo* MDIs. Any *de novo* bank is required by the FDIC to maintain at least 8 percent of its total assets as core capital—which is generally comprised of common stock and some reserve funding—throughout the first three years of operation. This is to prevent financial losses that could threaten the solvency of a bank in its infancy.<sup>19</sup> These well-intentioned capital requirements often discourage the formation of *de novo* MDIs that do not have access to public capital markets or the same robust private financing often accessible to non-MDIs. There were 48 *de novo* banks formed between 2009 and 2019, but only one was an MDI.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, to encourage the formation of additional MDIs while accounting for the financial risks associated with any new institution, the FDIC should phase in capital requirements for these *de novos* by lowering the core capital requirement to 6 percent in the first year, 7 percent in the second year, and 8 percent in the third year. The additional time would enable *de novo* MDIs to secure more funding, while establishing themselves within their communities.<sup>21</sup>

A final proposition would be to permit MDIs to receive a tax incentive based on their lending in communities deemed as qualified opportunity zones (QOZs). This designation was enacted by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, which created tax incentives for investors to fund projects within low-income commu-

nities designated as QOZs. However, MDIs and all financial institutions are disqualified from partaking in this initiative because of a provision prohibiting organizations that hold more than 5 percent of their assets within financial instruments.<sup>22</sup> While originally intended to limit large institutions like J.P. Morgan Chase or Bank of America from receiving further needless tax deductions, this provision also hurt MDIs, which would naturally qualify based on their track record of service and propensity to reinvest excess capital within the same communities they already serve.<sup>23</sup> Permitting MDIs to obtain a tax incentive for their work within underserved communities would recognize and reward the public utility of their mission, providing the exact services the QOZ designation was meant to encourage.

Recent developments have enabled these policies to transition well past the idea stage. In 2019, the FDIC established an office of innovation known as FDiTech to assist small banks—including MDIs—in identifying and partnering with fintech.<sup>24</sup> In September 2020, the House of Representatives passed the Ensuring Diversity in Community Bank Act that contained numerous provisions for MDIs, including phased-in capital requirements.<sup>25</sup> Even reforms to QOZs have received newfound attention from academics and policy makers. They could see additional consideration in the Biden administration, which has placed a premium on racial equity in financial services.<sup>26</sup>

## Conclusion

The renewed attention toward systemic racism in the United States offers policy makers a unique moment to provide proactive solutions that enable all Americans to realize the freedoms entitled to them. Policy makers have an opportunity to help minority communities attain financial freedom by investing in the MDIs that serve them. MDIs serve an important role in minority communities by providing more inclusive financial services, which can reduce the unbanked population and provide a pathway to economic well-being. Policy makers can strengthen MDIs by facilitating partnerships with the fintech

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*“Taken together, these results suggest that MDIs can be an effective vehicle for increasing financial inclusion within minority communities.”*

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community, phasing in capital requirements for *de novo* institutions, and expanding their eligibility for tax incentives such as via QOZs.

Enacting any one of these policies would recognize and reward the unique contributions of MDIs in minority communities, while attracting additional business from new investors and institutions. While the United States is far from the finish line in its quest for racial justice, investing in MDIs would constitute a vital step forward. If policy makers are willing to make the necessary investments within the institutions most capable of leading the change they wish to see, then our nation will be one step closer toward an equitable economy which works for everyone.

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## Tony Saich on the Future of the U.S.–China Relationship

Interview by Alexander de Avila

**Alexander de Avila:** Thank you for joining us. We want to zone in on your area of expertise and talk U.S.–China. What are some of the key diplomatic, economic, or governance issues that may not get the attention they deserve?

**Tony Saich:** Getting the U.S.–China relationship right is the greatest challenge for U.S. foreign policy, and it will be through all the working lives of those who are studying at the Kennedy School. The question is how you get the analysis of China right. There are obvious areas of collaboration that perhaps we've been ignoring, and then there are those areas where we are really being outcompeted. Let me just start

briefly with the latter. China has realized that it won't beat out the U.S. in many of the traditional areas of diplomacy, like in global finance. Beijing is really looking for those areas where it might be able to get a head start and move past the U.S. I think one area that is the most prescient is digital currency. China realizes it will not replace the dollar in terms of trade, so it is pushing out into digital currency. Not only domestically, but now increasingly globally. And it's got a real head start. Beijing sees that those who set

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*“China is a reality. They are not going away.”*

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technological standards increase their own capability and influence. I think on the other side there are clearly a number of areas for collaboration. These issues range from climate change to peacekeeping and others. There are actually areas of substantial coincidence of interests between China and the U.S.

**Alexander:** How would you decide whether or not an issue is something we should collaborate with China on or push back on?

**Tony:** If we are trying to look for those collaboration areas, I tend to think of it in terms of what I call “new global public goods.” These are areas where the architecture is not yet settled, and it may be possible to engage China. I structure it in terms of three categories. One is global commons. An area where there has been clear collaboration is climate change, but you could also extend it to water shortages, which I think are going to be a major global challenge moving forward. The second category is global engagement—natural disasters, peacekeeping operations, etc. China does not want a nuclear North Korea. They want to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. They are worried about instability in the Middle East, since that is where most of their oil comes from. The third category is the question of global regulation in areas like digital currency, finance, trade, cybersecurity, and others. Those are some areas you might look to since the architecture is not yet fully structured.

**Alexander:** What is holding America back from succeeding in setting up a framework for these collaborative and competitive areas?

**Tony:** China is a reality. They are not going away. Criticizing China on things which are misguided—like trade—does not really help U.S. policy making. There is no real evidence that our trade imbalance with China has been detrimental. That fixation has kept the U.S. away from other areas of policy which are important. Similarly, the claims that China has stolen our jobs in manufacturing, for example, may not be so accurate. Manufacturing was at its peak in the U.S. in 1952, and it has been going down ever since. China certainly did not cause that decline

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*“Decoupling has become a very popular word, and I think that will happen in certain areas, but that is a natural process as China becomes too expensive to produce.”*

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in 1952, so there is something else going on there. China is now losing more manufacturing jobs than the U.S. We certainly can be critical of China for its treatment of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang, its aggressive movements in the South China Sea, and the hostile attitude towards Taiwan. Those are all quite justifiable and correct areas to be critical of, but let’s get policy right about what China is doing and doing wrong. That will then begin to guide U.S. policy onto a much better track of what we want to be critical of China about. The second thing is that the U.S. is only going to succeed by creating alliances with like-minded countries around the world. The last thing China likes is other countries ganging up on it and putting pressure on it. It likes to deal in a bilateral framework.

**Alexander:** What would your advice be to leaders in Congress who are dealing with the U.S.–China relationship?

**Tony:** You have to be realistic about where China is. This is not the Soviet Union. If you think about the interaction between the two economies, it is so much more extensive than what you had during the Cold War. In 2019, U.S. companies sold about \$250 billion of goods in China. The U.S.–China financial engagement is about \$5 trillion. China cannot afford to cut itself off from global financial markets, and the U.S. is the dominant player in those markets. China has, for the first time in a long time, run a current account deficit. That is going to become structural, and China will need to access global financial markets. That could be a pressure point for the U.S. Most American companies say they have no intention of pulling out of the China market. Wall Street is now salivating over the prospects of getting more into the financial sector in China. Do you really think they are going to cut back on those

activities because Washington has a hostile attitude towards China? They are not. You see internal policy splits within Washington and other parts on China—between Wall Street and Washington, between state governors and Washington. State governors are often looking to bring Chinese investment. So, again going back to Congress, it is really about being realistic about where we should be critical and not hyping up on big headlines. That would also be my advice to the president. There is a depth of engagement there that is difficult to unravel. Decoupling has become a very popular word, and I think that will happen in certain areas, but that is a natural process as China becomes too expensive to produce. China is trying to get itself away from over reliance on the U.S. for trade. AI is one clear example where I think we are going to be in competition, and that is going to pull in Southeast Asian countries and others because you can't run one Chinese system and one American system at the same time. Are you going to have an American GPS system running alongside a European and a Chinese one? The answer is obviously no. So that is going to put countries in a difficult situation. And don't kid yourself that you are going to be able to change China's domestic behavior. It's not going to happen. You might in certain areas around the edges, but China is confident, whether we think it or not, that what it is doing works. That has been building since the global financial crisis, where China became disillusioned with Western practices and much more certain about their own model and belief that what they are doing is right.

**Alexander:** Some estimate that Chinese companies have been involved in up to 15 percent of new U.S. venture capital raises. This means that, potentially, the CCP has seen 30–40 percent of new tech startups. What advice would you have for the president as

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*“... don't kid yourself that you are going to be able to change China's domestic behavior. It's not going to happen... China is confident.”*

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he engages our business community on issues like technology transfer and the link between business and national security?

**Tony:** Beijing realizes that as those technologies develop, the U.S. is going to protect them and not share, so they want to buy in from the ground up. Obviously naming and shaming will work, but I don't think Chinese companies or American companies are naive. President Biden has to make clear to American companies that national security is paramount and that there would be punishments were they found to transgress. China has progressed by bringing back technologies that have been developed in the West, and then building a cocoon around them and protecting markets at home. One question becomes with the party (CCP) now exerting control over the tech sector, does it lose some of its vitality and entrepreneurship? That is an open question.

**Alexander:** What advice do you have for Kennedy School students who want to work on U.S.–China issues?

**Tony:** This is really going to be one of the major challenges for your generation. Try and develop a more nuanced understanding. Don't go for the headlines. Whichever area you are working in, try and dig a bit deeper. China doesn't really have a master plan in the way we sometimes portray. In some ways it can focus attention like a laser, but it is also a very contested system between different ministries, different agencies, different levels of government. Often the way things turn out is not the way the center intends them to be. So, if you can, get some understanding of the internal dynamics in China. What I see in some of the strategic community is this rising straight-line analysis: “China is rising and will keep rising exponentially and this becomes a massive threat. Warning, their economy is bigger than ours. Shouldn't we all be terrified? It's number one in this, it's number one in that”—so on and so forth. Well yes, if you have over a billion people, you are going to be number one in a number of things. A lot of China's future power projection is going to depend on what happens domestically. It has an economic

model which its own leadership says doesn't work very effectively anymore.

**Alexander:** How should we be talking about China's activity in Xinjiang in a way that actually makes a difference? How do we push back in a way that frees those people?

**Tony:** I think it is a problem of freeing those people or having a positive effect on China. As I said earlier, it is very difficult to change China's domestic practices. Having said that, it is appalling what is being done. The CCP has always had a problem with the "other"—Mongolia, Tibet, Xinjiang. These are places where there is an external point of reference that tells a history, culture, and narrative which is distinct from the dominant Han culture or CCP history. It has always been seeking to squeeze that and crush that as much as possible. I think it is instructive that the party secretary who moved to Xinjiang had previously been in Tibet, where there had been similar measures implemented. It is a clear concerted attempt to eradicate an alternative history and culture the CCP sees as a threat. What do we do about it? I think it should still keep being figured in the press and publications as much as possible. I think it should be kept alive in the international community in terms of shaming China. It might not change things within China, but it certainly will cause other countries to think carefully about what kind of relationship they want with China, and what is at the core of that China model that is touted globally.

**Alexander:** What are you working on that you think our readers should be aware of?

**Tony:** There are a few things I am working on. I just finished a book which will be released in a couple months. It is a hundred-year history of the CCP. July this year is the 100-year anniversary of the founding of the CCP. The book is called *Rebel to Ruler*, and it answers the question of how on earth the CCP won when they should not have won power in 1949. It looks at what the past tells us about the present and future practices of the CCP. Here at the Ash Center, we have been involved in a whole range of opinion surveys conducted in China to see how Chinese

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*“China doesn't really have a master plan in the way we sometimes portray. In some ways it can focus attention like a laser, but it is also a very contested system. . . .”*

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people are thinking about their government at different levels. What you see is a huge division. There is strong popularity for the national government, which you could claim is due to propaganda, but then there is declining satisfaction as government gets closer to the people. That is because it is the local level of government that has to provide most of the services. Sitting in Beijing, you pontificate and say, “Yeah, everyone should have a pension. Everyone should have some kind of benefits.” It is the local government that has to pay for it, and it often doesn't have the money. That is the reverse of America, interestingly. Satisfaction in the U.S. tends to be higher with local government than it is with Washington.

**Alexander:** Any final advice for future public servants?

**Tony:** Whatever type of issue you work on, you have already shown by coming to the Kennedy School that you have a commitment to public service. That can play out in many different ways. As long as you keep that passion and commitment to public service, you will feel that you've done something worthwhile.



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# Regulating Autonomy: A Clash between Classical Liberalism, Public Health, and the Constitution

ColinLee

*A collectivist approach to public health during a crisis.*

In response to a spike in COVID-19 cases, Governor Asa Hutchinson announced on 19 July 2020 that the state of Arkansas would implement a new mask mandate.<sup>1</sup> The following morning, a tractor was parked

in front of the Arkansas State Capitol bearing an American flag. Accompanying the vehicle, a crowd of farmers and state officials had gathered to protest the governor's executive order.<sup>2</sup> As reporters congregated along the capitol steps to cover the rally, Republican State Senator Gary Stubblefield declared, "We the people are the ones that control the government, not

the other way around.”<sup>3</sup>

In a similar protest in Minnesota, a mask critic insisted that the government was encroaching on the private lives of its citizens and stripping away their freedom.<sup>4</sup> During a Pennsylvania House Committee meeting, Republican Representative Daryl Metcalfe suggested that the “my body, my choice” slogan should be extended to the conversation surrounding face-mask orders.<sup>5</sup>

Each of these comments express a concern for the preservation of one’s autonomy. The origin of this importance placed on freedom traces back to a political theory known as classical liberalism. According to classical liberalism, all humans possess natural rights, and each of these rights should be respected in order to sustain a pluralistic society.<sup>6</sup> A diverse array of views and perspectives can coexist through the exercise of mutual toleration.

While classical liberalism has played an integral role in shaping the structure of American governance, it has proven to be incongruent within a particular area of regulation—public health. From seatbelt mandates to big soda bans, commentators have described public health orders as paternalistic, and as the aforementioned protests demonstrate, mask mandates are being framed through a similar lens of criticism.<sup>7</sup>

Admittedly, proponents of classical liberalism believe that individual autonomy should be limited in instances where it would lead to the substantive harm of others, indicating that the theory would not support a right of refusal to wearing a face mask.<sup>8</sup> This key ground rule has been cast aside and largely forgotten in modern discourse. Instead, mask critics have relied on themes of limited government intervention and constitutional freedom to support their claims that individual rights are being infringed upon by the states.<sup>9</sup>

What these critics fail to acknowledge is that the Constitution allows a state to restrain the exercise of certain rights when those rights are at odds with the health and safety of the general public. This power is derived from the Tenth Amendment, and

it is often referred to as the states’ “police power.”<sup>10</sup> This article will explain why the prioritization of certain principles within classical liberalism have led to a misunderstanding of the Constitution and, specifically, its role in preserving the general welfare through state action.

## The Lasting Influence of Classical Liberalism in America

Political liberalism blossomed over the course of the 17th century, and its core tenets were largely shaped by the writing of John Locke.<sup>11</sup> In *Two Treatises of Government*, Locke laid out the foundation of how natural rights should be framed in a just society:

*“To understand political power right, and derive it from its original, we must consider, what state all men are naturally in, and that is, a state of perfect freedom to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons, as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature, without asking leave, or depending upon the will of any other man.”<sup>12</sup>*

Three principles can be extrapolated from this passage. Each one helps explain the negative reaction to public health measures in recent months. First, every individual enjoys a set of inalienable rights, meaning that by the very nature of one’s existence, he or she possesses a right to life, liberty, and property.<sup>13</sup> Importantly, Locke did not believe that this “state of perfect freedom” derived from a government institution or a constitutional document.<sup>14</sup> Instead, he viewed it as being inherently retained by an individual upon birth.<sup>15</sup>

It is this distinction that formulated the second principle of classical liberalism: a limited scope

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*“According to classical liberalism, all humans possess natural rights, and each of these rights should be respected in order to sustain a pluralistic society.”*

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granted to government. For classical liberals, the government's sole purpose was to act as a protector of liberty rather than an enabler of rights.<sup>16</sup> In many ways, this precept was a product of their characterization of freedom as a negative right—that is, a right not to be subject to the intervention or compulsion of others.<sup>17</sup> Scholars have suggested that the Constitution is itself a charter of negative liberties and that its text aims to limit the scope of government power. As Judge Richard Posner pointed out in the 1983 opinion *Jackson v. City of Juliet*, “The men who wrote the Bill of Rights were not concerned that Government might do too little for the people but that it might do too much to them.”<sup>18</sup> This is not to say that classical liberals excluded the need for government altogether. Undoubtedly, there were important civic functions that needed to be addressed following the failures of the Articles of Confederation.<sup>19</sup> However, it was a prioritization of limited government that would shape the Constitution and its subsequent influence on the American way of life.<sup>20</sup>

The third principle, freedom of choice, is essentially an extension of natural rights and limited government. Classical liberals believed that “the good society is one that defaults to voluntary interaction as the best way to achieve mutually beneficial ends.”<sup>21</sup> While this tenet lends itself to a pluralistic society, the theory's prioritization of choice and autonomy has been responsible for a large amount of the criticism surrounding public health mandates in 2020 and 2021. To illustrate this point, one can refer to the protest that took place following Governor Hutchinson's mask order in Arkansas. During a news interview that morning, one of the protestors stated, “If you want to wear a mask or if you want to wear three, I'm good with it. Just don't force me to do something.”<sup>22</sup>

While it may be true that John Locke believed individuals should order their actions as they see fit, he also indicated that there are limits to this autonomy, notably when the exercise of one's freedom conflicts with the liberty of another individual.<sup>23</sup> The key then is distinguishing when it is appropriate to circumscribe an individual's freedom in order to

protect the well-being of the community at large. Such a theory—one that prioritizes the group rather than the individual—is known as collectivism, and in many ways, it has played a foundational role in the development of the Supreme Court's police power jurisprudence.

### State Policing and the General Welfare

Although the preservation of individual liberty remains an important value within American society, there exists a constitutional check on this autonomy: the states' police power. According to the Tenth Amendment, “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”<sup>24</sup> Courts have traditionally read this to include the enactment of public health regulations, and the power is often invoked by states to safeguard the general welfare of the community.<sup>25</sup>

Nowhere is this general-welfare rationale more apparent than the 1905 Supreme Court decision *Jacobson v. Massachusetts*.<sup>26</sup> In the runup to this lawsuit, the Cambridge Board of Health adopted a new regulation pursuant to state law that required inhabitants to receive a smallpox vaccination if they had not been vaccinated since 1897. Jacobson, a Cambridge resident, declined to cooperate with the board order. He believed that the Massachusetts code infringed on “the inherent right of every freeman to care for his own body and health in such way as to him seems best.”<sup>27</sup> This led the state to file a lawsuit against Jacobson. Following a trial that ruled in favor of the state, the Supreme Court of Massachusetts affirmed the constitutionality of the vaccination program. Jacobson next appealed to the US Supreme Court.

After agreeing to review the case, the Supreme Court set out to determine whether the compulsory vaccination was an infringement on Jacobson's individual liberty. Writing for the majority, Justice Harlan explained, “the statute in question [was] a health law, enacted in a reasonable and proper exercise of the [state's] police power.”<sup>28</sup> The Court advanced two collectivist arguments in order to support this



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*“While classical liberalism has played an integral role in shaping the structure of American governance, it has proven to be incongruent within a particular area of regulation—public health.”*

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conclusion, and oddly enough, its rationale in 1905 serves as a response to the criticism surrounding mask mandates today.

First, the Court explained that restraints on liberty are occasionally necessary to facilitate the structure of an orderly society. According to Justice Harlan, “Real liberty for all could not exist under the operation of a principle which recognizes the right of each individual person to use his own, whether in respect of his person or his property, regardless of the injury that may be done to others.”<sup>29</sup> While the majority recognized that individual liberty is one of the greatest rights that a citizen can possess, it qualified this concession by explaining that a state legislature may override the will of the individual for the common good of the community.

This collectivist approach has served as the impetus behind mask mandates across the country. In a March 2020 brief that was published by the World Health Organization, health officials explained that one of the primary modes of spreading COVID-19 was through respiratory droplets.<sup>30</sup> Scientists at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention added to this research by recommending that face masks would limit the mobility of these droplets, reducing the transmission of the coronavirus.<sup>31</sup> After taking these studies into consideration, more than half of the 50 states implemented mask mandates.<sup>32</sup> As a result, many of these same states were able to successfully mitigate the growth rate in positive COVID-19 cases, protecting the well-being of their constituency.<sup>33</sup> Comparatively, the states that did not implement these mandates saw higher rates of cases per capita.<sup>34</sup>

The second argument that the Supreme Court put forth in *Jacobson* focused on the relationship between majority and minority views—specifically,

their role in shaping public health regulations:

*“If the mode adopted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the protection of its local communities against smallpox proved to be distressing, inconvenient or objectionable to some . . . the answer is that it was the duty of the constituted authorities primarily to keep in view the welfare, comfort and safety of the many, and not permit the interests of the many to be subordinated to the wishes or convenience of the few.”<sup>35</sup>*

This excerpt indicates that a vocal minority is not enough to sway the tide of a state’s regulatory authority. Instead, it is the state’s responsibility to look out for the general welfare of the polity as a whole.

In many ways, *Jacobson*’s description of vaccinations being an inconvenience to a select group of individuals is analogous to the critics who protest executive orders today. And while a minority of citizens have attacked the legality of mask orders, several polls indicate that a bipartisan majority of registered voters support these health measures.<sup>36</sup> One Morning Consult study found that “nearly three out of every four voters [across the country] support state face mask mandates with penalties for those who don’t comply.”<sup>37</sup> Additionally, a national survey that was released by the COVID Collaborative in August 2020 provided that “80% [of Americans approved] their state government having a mask requirement.”<sup>38</sup> *Jacobson* made it clear that the safety of the public is what drives the states’ police power, not the misgivings of an adamant minority. Therefore, it is evident that states are exercising their power in a way which aligns with the Constitution and the precedent of the Supreme Court.

## Conclusion

After analyzing the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Jacobson* and assessing its relationship to individual autonomy, it is clear that a collectivist approach should shape the course of state public health regulations in the

future. Models indicate that the near-universal use of face masks would have resulted in thousands of lives being saved throughout the fall.<sup>39</sup> Mask orders are constitutional, yet multiple states still refuse to enforce these health measures due to the resistance and pushback of a vocal minority. As government officials and lawmakers continue to assess the public health landscape in years to come, they should learn from mistakes over the past year. Only then will they be able to look out for the safety and well-being of the many, rather than the inconvenience of a select few.

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# Inadequate Access to Abortion and Family Planning Services Is Reducing Women's Wages

Nima Rahimi

*Targeted policies are needed to improve the economic well-being for women in need of abortion and family planning services.*

Women who do not have adequate access to abortion and family planning (AFP) services face a multitude of financial and health-related costs. The costs of inadequate access to AFP services could be exacerbating existing inequities and creating additional barriers to financial stability, economic mobility, and longevity. Inadequate access to AFP services has been associated with lower wages and less education,<sup>1,2,3,4,5,6</sup> a lack of job mobility,<sup>7</sup> higher birth rates,<sup>8</sup> increases in maternal mortality,<sup>9</sup> and poor maternal health.<sup>10</sup>

Conflicting attitudes in the United States surrounding AFP services have led to an unwillingness by the federal government to enact legislation guaranteeing access to readily available AFP services. At the state level, only seven states (New York, Vermont, Connecticut, California, Oregon, Washington, Hawaii) have expanded access to abortion services. Only 14 other states and the District of Columbia protect the right of women to have an abortion,<sup>11</sup> while 23 states have instituted targeted restrictions on abortion providers (TRAP) laws.<sup>12</sup> Under TRAP laws, abortion providers are forced to adhere to several overly restrictive and burdensome regulations. The primary purpose of TRAP laws is to create additional barriers for women who are trying to access AFP services.<sup>13</sup> Not only are states creating barriers for women seeking AFP services, but there has also been a decrease in the number of abortion facilities. From 2008 to 2014,

there was a 6.8 percent decrease in abortion facilities nationally in the United States.<sup>14</sup>

While increasing access to AFP services would be the most efficient way to address the negative outcomes associated with limited AFP access, it remains politically unfeasible in the short term. Instead, policy makers should focus on implementing targeted policies to bolster the economic well-being of women in need of AFP services. This article aims to shed light on the economic circumstances of women who are potentially in need of AFP services to aid policy makers in this objective.

## Data

The analysis conducted in this article uses data from the American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) for 2019. Women who did not report any wages are not included in the sample. The sample is further restricted to women below 250 percent of the federal poverty line who are between 16 and 29 years old. Sample restrictions and covariates are motivated by guidelines from the Guttmacher Institute and Jones and Jerman to identify women potentially in need of AFP services.<sup>15</sup>

The Guttmacher Institute characterizes a woman in need if she is fewer than 20 years old and is sexually active, can conceive but wishes not to become pregnant, and is an adult with income 250 percent below the poverty line.<sup>16</sup> Jones and Jerman found that later-stage abortions (second trimester) were associated with women who had less than a high school degree, relied on financial assistance to pay

for the abortion, were Black, and were over 25 miles from the abortion facility. Sixty percent of abortions were obtained by women in their twenties, and 59 percent were obtained by women that already had children.<sup>17</sup> Summary statistics of the sample are

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
		Average/ Share	Std. error	Min. value	Max. value
(1)	Wages (2019 total)	14,336.3	46.3	4	80,000
(2)	Age	23.2	.016	16	29
(3)	Hours worked	31.3	.060	1	99
(4)	Teen (16-19)	.158	.002	0	1
(5)	Employed	.852	.001	0	1
(6)	Below poverty line	.329	.002	0	1
(7)	Public assistance	.021	.001	0	1
(8)	TRAP state	.558	.002	0	1
(9)	Black	.191	.002	0	1
(10)	Non-white	.358	.002	0	1
(11)	No high school	.124	.001	0	1
(12)	College or more	.166	.001	0	1
(13)	Married	.120	.002	0	1
(14)	Children	.246	.002	0	1
(15)	Disability	.060	.001	0	1
(16)	Non-citizen	.072	.001	0	1
(17)	No health care	.179	.002	0	1
(18)	Private health care	.549	.003	0	1
(19)	Public health care	.304	.002	0	1

**Table 1. Summary Statistics**

presented in Table 1.

The weighted N (sample) for all rows is 8,444,699. Variables with a minimum value of zero and a maximum value of one are indicator variables. All indicator variables are below the line in the third row. Indicator variables are interpreted as the characteristics share in the sample. Indicator variable values in column 1 are interpreted as percent when multiplied by 100. For example,

row 5 in column 1 indicates that 85.2 percent of the sample is employed. All non-indicator variables above the line are averages. For example, row 3 in column 1 indicates that the average hours worked per week in the sample is 31.3 hours. Sample is restricted to women with wages, ages 16-29, and below 250 percent of the federal poverty line. All standard errors are calculated using the successive difference replicate (SDR) method outlined by the US Census Bureau.

Source: Own calculations using ACS 2019 1-Year PUMS data. ACS PUMS are a product of the US Census Bureau.

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*“Policy makers should focus on implementing targeted policies to bolster the economic well-being of women in need of AFP services.”*

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## Methodology

For the analysis in this article, I use two weighted ordinary least squares (OLS) regression specifications to estimate the relationship of living in a state with a TRAP law on wages. I also use three different regression models to estimate the relationship between education and employment on wages and on the probability of being below the federal poverty line. The first model’s estimates are from three OLS specifications where the dependent variable is a continuous measure of income. The second model is a weighted linear probability model (LPM), which uses an indicator variable equal to one if a woman is below the federal poverty line as the dependent variable. The final model is a weighted logistic regression (logit) model, which is used as a robustness check for values outside of zero and one in the LPM.

The primary OLS regression specification for the relationship between TRAP laws and wages is noted below:

$$Y_w = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 TRAP_w + X_w \alpha_2 + \epsilon_w \quad (1)$$

is the log of wages indexed for an individual woman . is an indicator variable set to one for states with TRAP laws. is a vector of controls for individual characteristics (race, children, public assistance, marriage, age, schooling, citizenship, health care

type, disability status).  $\epsilon_w$  is the error term.

The second regression equation is the primary regression specification for the LPM and OLS estimates. The LPM is used to estimate the relationship between education and employment on the probability of being in poverty. The OLS regression estimates the relationship between employment and education on the log of wages. The regression equation for the LPM and OLS estimates is included below:

$$Y_{ws} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \beta_w + \alpha_2 \delta_w + \alpha_3 \rho_w + \alpha_4 \vartheta_w + X_w \alpha_5 + \gamma_s + \epsilon_w \quad (2)$$

$I_{ws}$  is an indicator variable set to one if an individual woman  $w$  in state  $s$  is in poverty for the LPM.  $\ln W_{ws}$  is the log of wages for the OLS estimates.  $I_{wne}$  is an indicator variable set to one if a woman does not have a high school degree.  $I_{wd}$  is an indicator variable set to one if a woman has a disability.  $I_{we}$  is an indicator variable set to one if a woman is formally employed.  $H_{ws}$  indicates the average hours worked per week.  $X_w$  is a vector of controls for individual characteristics (race, children, public assistance, marriage, age, schooling, citizenship, health care type, disability status).  $\gamma_s$  are state-level fixed effects, and  $\epsilon_w$  is the error term.

The logit model includes the same dependent variable and covariates as the LPM but is the natural log of the odds that the dependent variable equals one. The equation for the logit estimates is below:

$$\log \left( \frac{Y_{ws}}{1 - Y_{ws}} \right) = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \beta_w + \alpha_2 \delta_w + \alpha_3 \rho_w + \alpha_4 \vartheta_w + X_w \alpha_5 + \gamma_s + \epsilon_w \quad (3)$$

The main difference is that the dependent variable transitions from a probability to an odds ratio, which has the benefit of allowing the estimate to take a value larger than one. The log of the odds is then taken, which allows the estimate to take a value less than zero.

### Results

The OLS estimates in Table 2 present the relationship between living in a TRAP law state and wages, for women potentially in need of AFP services. Column 1 estimates the relationship without any covariates, while column 2 includes covariates.

On average, women living in a state with a TRAP law earn 4.9 percent less than women who do not live

in a state with a TRAP law. While the estimates in column 2 are statistically significant at the 1 percent level ( $p < 0.01$ ), the lack of state-level controls likely bias the estimate. Also, previous research on TRAP laws have used more granular data at the zip code level to control for heterogeneity in effects conditional on the distance from an AFP provider.<sup>18</sup>

	(1)	(2)
	Log Wage	*Log Wage
TRAP state	0.002	-0.049***
	[0.012]	[0.009]
Constant	9.123***	6.106***
	[0.009]	[0.052]
Observations	66,398	66,398
R-squared	0.000	0.494
Covariates	No	Yes

**Table 2. Estimates of the Relationship between TRAP Laws and Wages**

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ . Robust standard errors in brackets. The dependent variable is the log of total wages. Additional covariates in column 2 are for race, children, public assistance, marriage, age, schooling, citizenship, and health care type. Sample is restricted to women with wages, ages 16–29, and below 250 percent of the federal poverty line. US Census replicate weights are applied to all regression models. Weighted sample is 8,444,699.

Source: Data are from the ACS 2019 1-Year PUMS. ACS PUMS are a product of the US Census Bureau.

The OLS estimates in Table 3 present the relationship between having a high school degree, formal employment, and average hours worked per week, on wages. The results in column 1 of Table 3 do not include additional covariates. Column 2 includes additional covariates, and column 3 includes

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*“An inability to provide accessible AFP services for all women in need of those services could result in lost lives, intergenerational poverty, and unnecessary suffering.”*

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additional covariates and state-level fixed effects.

On average, women without a high school degree earn 27.8 percent less than women with at least a high school degree. Women who are formally employed earn 79.1 percent more than women who are not formally employed, and each additional hour of work per week is associated with a 4.2 percent increase in wages. All results in Table 3 are statistically significant at the 1 percent level ( $p < 0.01$ ).

Since women reporting no wages are excluded from the sample, all women included in the regression have reported wages. The indicator variable for employment refers to formal employment and active participation in the labor market. Thus, the reported estimate is the average increase in wages compared to women earning reported wages outside of formal employment. Wages earned through informal labor markets could be reported as wages and would also allow the individual to accurately categorize themselves as unemployed.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	<i>Log Wage</i>	<i>Log Wage</i>	<i>Log Wage</i>
No high school	-0.517*** [0.017]	-0.283*** [0.020]	-0.278*** [0.020]
Employed	0.856*** [0.016]	0.794*** [0.016]	0.791*** [0.016]
Hours worked	0.048*** [0.001]	0.042*** [0.001]	0.042*** [0.001]
Constant	6.970*** [0.022]	5.554*** [0.052]	5.464*** [0.062]
Observations	66,398	66,398	66,398
R-squared	0.397	0.434	0.438
State FE	No	No	Yes
Covariates	No	Yes	Yes

**Table 3. OLS Regression Estimates for Wages**

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ . Robust standard errors in brackets. The dependent variable is the log of total wages. Additional covariates in columns 2 and 3 are the same and include race, children, public assistance, marriage, age, schooling, citizenship, and health care type. "State FE" indicates state-level fixed effects. Sample is restricted to women with wages, ages 16–29, and below 250 percent of the federal poverty

line. US Census replicate weights are applied to all regression models. Weighted sample is 8,444,699.

Source: Data are from the ACS 2019 1-Year PUMS for 2019. ACS PUMS are a product of the US Census Bureau.

Table 4 presents the relationship between having a high school degree, formal employment, and the average hours worked per week on the probability of being in poverty. Columns 1–3 represent the results from the LPM model, while column 4 uses a logit model. The logit model is less intuitive in its interpretation and is included solely as a robustness check for LPM values outside of zero and one.

The results in column 1 of Table 4 do not include additional covariates. Column 3 includes additional covariates, and column 3 includes additional covariates and state-level fixed effects. Column 4 presents the estimates of the logit model with additional covariates and state-level fixed effects.

	<b>Probability of being in poverty</b>			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	<i>LPM</i>	<i>LPM</i>	<i>LPM</i>	<i>Logit</i>
No high school	-0.041*** [0.008]	-0.059*** [0.010]	-0.060*** [0.010]	-0.315*** [0.050]
Employed	-0.175*** [0.007]	-0.168*** [0.007]	-0.167*** [0.007]	-0.757*** [0.033]
Hours worked	-0.008*** [0.000]	-0.008*** [0.000]	-0.008*** [0.000]	-0.040*** [0.001]
Constant	0.736*** [0.009]	0.793*** [0.026]	0.823*** [0.032]	1.619*** [0.158]
Observations	66,398	66,398	66,398	66,398
R-squared	0.070	0.092	0.098	0.081 (pseudo)
State FE	No	No	Yes	Yes
Covariates	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Table 4. LPM and Logit Model Estimates**

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ . Robust standard errors in brackets. The dependent variable is an indicator variable for women below the federal poverty line. Additional covariates in columns 2–4 are the same and include race, children, public assistance, marriage, age, schooling, citizenship, and health care type. "State FE" indicates

state-level fixed effects. Sample is restricted to women with wages, ages 16–29, and below 250 percent of the federal poverty line.

US Census replicate weights are applied to all regression models.

Weighted sample is 8,444,699.

Source: Data are from the ACS 2019 1-Year PUMS. ACS PUMS

are a product of the US Census Bureau.

On average, women without a high school degree are less likely to be in poverty by 6.0 percentage points. Women who are formally employed are less likely to be in poverty by 16.7 percentage points, and each average hour of work per week is associated with a decrease in the chance of being in poverty by 0.8 percentage points. All results in Table 4 are statistically significant at the 1 percent level ( $p < 0.01$ ).

### Conclusion

The United States has yet to provide readily accessible AFP services for all women who need them. Certain individuals in the United States believe that AFP services should not be readily accessible. The controversial nature surrounding AFP services make it unlikely that strong federal policies expanding and supporting those services will be enacted soon.

An inability to provide accessible AFP services for all women in need of those services could result in lost lives, intergenerational poverty, and unnecessary suffering. My analysis is a preliminary look at the magnitude of the relationship between education and employment on wages and poverty for women potentially in need of AFP services. There are shortcomings in the analysis due to an inability to more accurately identify women in need of AFP services; however, I believe the study can provide guidance for future research. Future studies can more accurately identify women in need of AFP sources to better understand how education and employment policies could be implemented as alternatives. Despite the shortcomings in my sample selection, the large wage premiums and substantive decreases in poverty rates associated with higher education and formal employment suggest that more policies are needed to increase education and employment for women in need of AFP services.

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## The Right to Choose: Incongruity in the Democratic Party Platform

David Struhs

*Does the Democratic Party support choice? The answer is that it depends.*

Seeking to capitalize on their trifecta of controlling both chambers of Congress and the White House, Democrats are poised to advance an ambitious agenda that includes expanding the availability of abortions and reining in the expansion of options in public education. Are Democrats prepared, then, to square the incongruous logic of giving prospective parents more choice while giving actual parents less choice?

It requires some extraordinary mental gymnastics to believe that prospective parents know best as to

whether they should bring a child into the world but that these same parents should not be trusted with choices for educating the children they choose to have. Is parental choice a right to be protected or

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*“It requires some extraordinary mental gymnastics to believe that prospective parents know best as to whether they should bring a child into the world but that these same parents should not be trusted with choices for educating the children they choose to have.”*

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*“This is akin to giving local school districts veto authority over charter schools. Imagine giving McDonald’s the final say on where Burger King restaurants could be built!”*

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a risk to be regulated? And why should the answer be different in the classroom than it is in a doctor’s examining room?

Over the last four decades, Democrats have increasingly become the party that supports a woman’s right to make decisions regarding her reproductive health. According to a 2018 Gallup poll, Democrat support for abortion in the second and third trimesters was 46 percent and 18 percent, respectively. For comparison, only 12 percent and 6 percent of Republicans held the same respective beliefs.<sup>1</sup> Americans witnessed Democrats’ ardent support for abortion when leading Democratic senators questioned all three of President Trump’s Supreme Court nominees about their positions on *Roe v. Wade*, the Court’s 1973 ruling that established a constitutional right to abortion.

The Democratic Party platform seeks to broaden a woman’s access to choice by repealing the Hyde Amendment, a law that prohibits federal funds from being spent on abortion except for in extreme circumstances. Repealing the Hyde Amendment would make federal Medicaid funding for abortions legal, thereby expanding access to abortions for low-income women (currently states decide whether to use only state money to provide abortions to those on Medicaid). The disparity in access to health care based on geography is unacceptable to President Biden, who has stated he “can no longer support an amendment that makes that [abortion] right dependent on someone’s zip code.”<sup>2</sup>

The Democratic Party’s message is clear: in order to protect “reproductive freedom,” reproductive decisions must rest with each individual woman, and “access to high-quality reproductive health care services” should not be dependent on a woman’s zip code.<sup>3</sup> Yet, remarkably, if one were to rewrite

this plank and change the focus from “abortion” to “education,” many Democrats would balk:

*In order to protect “education freedom,” education decisions must rest with each individual parent, and “access to high-quality education” should not be dependent on a parent’s zip code.*

The Democratic Party platform eschews both public and private school choice. It seeks to scale back public charter schools through excessive regulations, proposing that failing local school districts should have the final say on whether charter schools can receive federal funding. This is akin to giving local school districts veto authority over charter schools. Imagine giving McDonald’s the final say on where Burger King restaurants could be built! At the same time, the party platform opposes private school choice options, thereby trapping the children of poor parents in failing public schools with compulsory attendance laws.

Ironically, the most vocal opponents of school choice in the Democratic Party are progressive and White. This presents an interesting political calculus for the Biden administration, as support for school choice is highest amongst African American Democrats . . . and Republicans.

A poll conducted in advance of the 2020 presidential election found that 89 percent of African American Democrats supported expanded public school choice options.<sup>4</sup> Another poll that used a nationally representative sample found that 68 percent of Black Americans and 70 percent of Hispanic Americans support private school choice through tax-credit scholarship programs for low-income families.<sup>5</sup>

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*“If we trust women with the choice to have children, we ought to trust those same parents with choices for educating the children they choose to have.”*

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The racial divide on supporting school choice is not surprising. Over the last three decades, the performance gap between Black and White 12th graders has grown.<sup>6</sup> This comes despite a nearly 50 percent increase in education funding since the early 1990s, adjusted for inflation.<sup>7</sup>

A useful starting point for the Biden administration would be to remind the Democratic Party's anti-school choice wing that if we trust women with the choice to have children, we ought to trust those same parents with choices for educating the children they choose to have. And yes, we should even trust Black and Brown parents to make these choices. Indeed, we should trust them most of all.

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Source: Phil Roeder, Flickr.

## Financing Education as a Pure Public Good in COVID-19 Relief Packages

Ciara Rivera

*How post-pandemic education can be more effective and equitable.*

Education systems weakened by the pandemic could cause 20 of the world's most prosperous nations to experience 1.5 percent lower GDP growth throughout the remainder of the century, according to a European model simulation.<sup>1</sup> The United States alone could lose \$14.2 trillion in potential GDP growth by the year 2100.<sup>2</sup> This economic damage could be mitigated, however, by bolstering equitable access to education.

While the pandemic has deepened America's learning disparities, research demonstrates that these

disparities were already endemic. Leading policy experts say that US public schools “are among the most inequitably funded of any in the industrialized world.”<sup>3</sup> Disaggregated US school financing data show that considerable inequitable financing trends led to inadequate access to education for students in school districts with low property-tax revenues. Most US education financing comes from state budgets, with 50 percent of funds generated from local property taxes, resulting in “[greater] disparities in per-student funding levels within some states than among the [50] states as a group.”<sup>4</sup>

By analyzing historical data on persistent learn-

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*“US public schools ‘are among the most inequitably funded of any in the industrialized world.’”*

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ing gaps, policy makers can parse the relationship between these disparities and the current economic downturn. In short, increased learning gaps will further contribute to dismal economic growth. To illustrate, had the United States eliminated performance gaps between Black, Hispanic, and White students between 2009 and 2019, the nation could have experienced \$426–\$705 billion dollars in GDP growth, or 2 percent of GDP in 2019.<sup>5</sup> With this added GDP, the nation could have been in a better position to face the economic downturn caused by the pandemic. Additionally, based on trends from previous education disruptions and summer learning slides, researchers predict that teachers will have to address substantial student learning losses as a result of inequitable access to learning during the pandemic-enforced school closures.<sup>6</sup> Students from poorer households, especially Black and Brown families, will experience more learning losses than students from more affluent households and/or White families, further aggravating racial inequities.<sup>7,8</sup> However, a longitudinal study of a nationally representative sample of US public school data, following children born between 1955 and 1985, offers an alternative course. The study demonstrated that for schools located in low-income neighborhoods, a 20 percent increase in expenditure per student resulted in additional school completion, higher earnings, and reduced incidences of adult poverty.<sup>9</sup>

Overall, reducing inequities offers a pathway to boost the failing economy. According to a 2017 report, low to moderate levels of inequality could be beneficial to growth in countries with Gini coefficient index values below 27.<sup>10</sup> The 2018 US Gini index value was 41 though, bolstering the argument that reducing inequalities can promote GDP growth.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, European researchers maintain that sustained increases in income inequality limit GDP growth.<sup>12</sup> In countries with higher rates of inequality,

those in poverty cannot maximize their human capital, leading to stagnant social mobility that has negative impacts on economic development.<sup>13</sup>

Although equitably financing education would benefit the US economy, some experts argue against denoting education as a public good. According to classical economic theory, a government’s responsibility for financing public goods is contingent on said goods being non-rivalrous and non-excludable.<sup>14</sup> A contemporary American policy analysis from the Cato Institute states that education cannot be considered a public good even if “education provision is ‘good for the public.’”<sup>15</sup> Yet, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) expresses: “Education, like all other goods, may exhibit the characteristics typical of the concepts of a private or public good simultaneously.”<sup>16</sup> Consequently, UNESCO encourages governments to find their relevant balance when considering education financing modalities, while safeguarding “the fundamental principles of equity, equality of opportunity and of social justice.”<sup>17</sup> Enabling these fundamental principles cannot be the responsibility of private actors, individuals, or families, who according to UNESCO “also have to deal with private needs and aspirations.”<sup>18</sup>

In the aftermath of the pandemic, the US government can ensure an equity lens is applied to the disbursement of relief funding. New legislation should require states to prioritize school budget security for districts with higher proportions of low-income and minority children.<sup>19</sup> The American Rescue Plan offers new equity provisions impeding education budget reductions for schools with high percentages of poor students. In order to provide adequate education for all in a post-pandemic context, the policy narrative around economic recovery should integrate an ap-

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*“Education, like all other goods, may exhibit the characteristics typical of the concepts of a private or public good simultaneously.”*

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proach that includes access to equitable learning opportunities as a necessary public good.

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Source: Samantha Hare, flickr.

## The Spirit of Democracy and Its Martyrs: Peruvian Youth’s Political Awakening

Marco Carrasco-Villanueva and Raquel Sánchez-Mejía

*Youth in Peru are inspiring the world.*

“They have killed him, they have killed him with a bullet in the heart,” cried the mother of Inti Sotelo, one of the young men who lost his life in the second national march against then-President Manuel Merino.<sup>1</sup> Hours earlier, Óscar Pintado had lamented the news of the death of a young man in the march. He later learned that the young man was his son Brian, who had been hit by 11 projectiles in the face, head, and chest. Inti and Brian were only two of the many youth killed in November 2020. But what happened to prompt hundreds of audacious young people in

Peru to risk their lives in defense of their country?

Amidst the political crisis that has gripped Peru since 2017, a glimmer of hope arose in November 2020. In the run-up to Peru’s 2021 bicentennial celebration, a generation of young people experienced a political awakening. Their aim was the resignation of President Manuel Merino, an allegedly corrupt congressman who emerged as president after the questionable impeachment of Peru’s previous president, Martín Vizcarra. Vizcarra was impeached during one of the worst public health and economic crises suffered by the country, largely caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>2</sup> Peruvian youth were seeking a



more just country, where the wishes of the population would guide honest new leaders to make decisions that would benefit all citizens.

Prior to November 2020, politically engaged youth had developed a deep distrust for the state and its institutions.<sup>3</sup> Corrupt politicians driven by personal interests were willfully ignorant of the population's well-being. The majority of Peruvians felt that meaningful reforms could not be carried out and that any call to action against corruption would be futile. Young people appeared to have developed something akin to learned hopelessness, a rejection of the notion that the situation could improve. The State also contributed to the political disenfranchisement of Peruvian youth, using legislative obstacles to prevent youth involvement in the policy formulation process.<sup>4</sup> Without the necessary tools to become more involved in politics, and in the face of traditional institutions' inaction, young people redirected their concerns to participatory spaces outside of party politics.

Against the backdrop of this political stagnation, Peru's Congress approved the removal of then-President Martín Vizcarra on November 9, 2020. With 105 votes in favor, the motion responded to new testimony on acts of corruption committed by Vizcarra during his tenure as regional governor related to the infamous *Lava Jato* corruption scandal. His government had also largely mismanaged the COVID-19 pandemic in Peru, both in terms of public health and economic fallout. For several weeks of his administration, Peru had the world's highest COVID-19 death rate. The country also experienced one of the sharpest GDP contractions in Latin America. The presidential impeachment process referred to Vizcarra's "moral incapacity," a controversial term not clearly defined by the Peruvian constitution. It was the third such process carried out in recent years.

Following Vizcarra's removal, Congress promptly appointed Manuel Merino as president. Merino, previously President of Congress, had been a detractor of Vizcarra and one of the leaders of the impeachment process. The impeachment was exceedingly controversial. Unusually, the Vizcarra government

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*“Young people redirected their concerns to participatory spaces outside of party politics.”*

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had considerable popular support. This was mostly due to his 2019 constitutional dissolution of Congress, which was dominated by the conservative Fujimorist Popular Force, itself previously embroiled in several corruption scandals. Most Peruvians believed that Vizcarra should have continued as president for the last eight months of his term and then face a corruption trial, rather than handing the presidency to a congressman as allegedly corrupt as Merino, at the height of the pandemic.<sup>5</sup>

That night, while making a public statement outside of Congress, Ricardo Burga, a congressman who supported the impeachment, was hit in the face by a young man. This incident unleashed the population's deep frustrations with their politicians. Peruvian youth turned to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Tik Tok to release pent-up anger. They criticized the measures taken by Congress and called for protests against Merino.

The response to Peruvian youth's call to action was immediate. The next morning, on November 10, demonstrators in various cities rejected Manuel Merino's inauguration. The hashtags #Merinonorepresenta (#Merino does not represent me) and #Merinonoesmipresidente (#Merino is not my president) emerged online. Demonstrators headed to the Legislative Palace, where they were contained by the police. During the first night of protests, the police arrested at least 16 people after using tear gas to disperse the demonstrators. Others expressed their discontent by banging pots and pans outside their homes—a form of protest known as *cacerolazos*—and honking their car horns. Given the ongoing pandemic, the protests consisted mostly of young people who were deemed to be less at risk of contracting the virus. On November 12, the first great national march was called. Large demonstrations were held in cities throughout Peru using anti-Merino slogans such

as “Peru, I love you: that’s why I defend you.” Social networks collaborated to form a young, diverse community of protesters, mostly under the age of 30. One Peruvian sociologist called the protesters the “bicentennial generation,” referencing the 2021 bicentennial of Peru’s independence.



Source: Samantha Hare, flickr.

Merino’s appointed prime minister, Antero Flores Aráoz, appeared disconnected from the young protesters’ reality, commenting: “I don’t know what bothers them.”<sup>6</sup> Statements such as these generated further outrage. The second great national march was called for November 14. This time, the police used tear gas and pellet guns. Police weapons reportedly resulted in civilians injured, including one journalist from an international news network. That night, the demonstrations’ first death was confirmed following clashes between armed protesters and the National Police of Peru. The deceased was Brian Pintado, a 22-year-old Peruvian law student. The next day the death of a second protester, Inti Sotelo, a 22-year-old tourism student, was also confirmed. The pain of the two deaths cut deeply for all Peruvians who felt connected to the protests. The victims’ families had believed that their children were safe.

Brian Pintado’s grandmother who raised him did not know that her grandson had gone to the march. She could never have imagined that she would be asked to identify Brian’s body hours later. “For me, it is like my death because I am sick and ill,” she lamented.<sup>7</sup> The 22 year old dreamed of becoming a lawyer, and the search for justice had motivated him to march that day. Although the police denied the use of lethal weapons, Brian’s autopsy record

indicated that 10 lead pellets had been removed.<sup>8</sup> Inti Sotelo had also been shot—hit in the heart beside a sun tattoo on his chest. Inti’s name means “sun” in Quechua. His mother, in disbelief, cried inconsolably outside the hospital. He had loved his country and frequently shared photos of his visits to Peruvian landmarks, claiming that each site was yet another way to know and understand Peru. Inti left behind two siblings: a twin sister named Killa (“moon”) and an older brother named Pacha (“spacetime”), who was with him during the march. “With my children, I had the universe in my house and with the death of Inti I lose my Sun,” said his mother. Social networks were flooded with messages in recognition of Brian and Inti, with many stating “their memory will not be forgotten” and “their fight will not be in vain.” The press and various Peruvian institutions recognized Brian and Inti as “heroes of the Bicentennial” and “heroes of democracy,” while Peruvians joined in national mourning.

What was intended as a peaceful march had become a battle field, with two dead and at least 112 wounded, according to the National Coordinator



Source: Samantha Hare, flickr.



of Human Rights.<sup>9</sup> There were multiple allegations of harassment as well.<sup>10, 11, 12</sup> The violent treatment of the protestors was considered a serious violation of human rights. In response, the vast majority of Peruvians demanded that Merino step down. At noon on November 15, after a string of resignations by his ministers, Merino announced his own resignation. Something that political analysts had deemed highly unlikely became a reality. Against the wishes of most Peruvians, Congress rushed the appointment of Merino's successor. After several hours of debate in Congress, Francisco Sagasti was chosen to become President of the Republic for the next eight months, until a newly elected president would be inaugurated.

For Sagasti's appointment, Brian Pintado and Inti Sotelo's families were guests at Congress. The president asked for a minute of silence in honor of the men. He apologized on behalf of the state to the families and all the young people who had marched to defend democracy. "This great movement we have seen in all the regions of our country belongs to young people, belongs to youth, belongs to the generation of the Bicentennial," said Sagasti.<sup>13</sup> Inti Sotelo's mother recounted her son's parting words as he left home for the protest: "I'm going to give my life for my country!"<sup>14</sup> Inti was not a character

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*"With my children, I had the universe in my house and with the death of Inti I lose my Sun."*

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from a Peruvian history book but rather a young man who, like many in the year of the bicentennial, had experienced a political awakening. Although the future is full of challenges, these young people have emerged as a source of hope—a light at the end of the long tunnel of Peruvian political crisis.

There is a famous Peruvian poem that says: "There is, brothers, very much to do."<sup>15</sup> Not long ago, a different group of demonstrators raised their voices for better working conditions in the agro-export sector. The protests resulted in deaths.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately these workers did not receive the same attention as the bicentennial protesters. Meanwhile, further evidence has emerged on the Vizcarra administration's corruption, but there have been no new protests. However, while the November 2020 protests have not produced a panacea for injustice, they have introduced a precedent for Peruvian leaders' responsiveness to the population. The phrase "they wanted to bury us, but they did not know we were seeds" resonates deeply with the memories of heroes who gave their lives to



Source: Rodrigo Abd (@abdrodrigo), AP.

see a better country. As Peru prepares to celebrate 200 years of nationhood while redoubling its efforts to ensure democratic rights through empowering citizen voices, these deaths must not be in vain.<sup>17</sup> The shock of each death must reverberate across our communities and inside every heart, renewing our commitment to the construction of a better Peru.

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## Joe Nye on U.S. Global Leadership after the Pandemic

Interview by Alexander de Avila

**Alexander de Avila:** We want to learn how you think the U.S. can be a world leader after the pandemic eases. What should the U.S. be doing to strengthen our leadership role in the reopening world?

**Joe Nye:** If you look at the largest states in the international system, they provide global public goods, which are things that all can benefit from. Providing these goods can be in our own self-interest, but it all depends on how we define our self-interest. If we define it broadly, we can do things that are good for us and good for others at the same time. That is the kind of approach we want to take to how we lead after the pandemic. But you have to realize the world is

not like it was in the past. The American share of total world product is not what it was in 1945. You have the rise of China and others. The question is, what is the role for us and what leeway do we have? I think the answer is that we still have a considerable amount. I published a book this year called *Do Morals*

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*“There are a lot of problems now that no country—the US, China, nobody—can solve by acting alone. Pandemics and climate change are good examples.”*

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*Matter: Presidents and Foreign Policy from FDR to Trump.* In it I argued that while countries do act in their national interest, the moral question is how do they define that national interest? You can define it narrowly or broadly. A great example of this of course from the 1940s when Harry Truman decided to define our national interest as helping the rest of the world, particularly Europe recover from the ravages of WWII. In the Marshall Plan we gave away about 2 percent of our GDP. We did that because it was good for us to prevent Europe from becoming communist, but it was also obviously good for the Europeans. So that was what I call a broad definition of the public interest. If you take the pandemic and the problems of how we are going to cope with its aftermath, imagine that we decided that instead of vaccine nationalism, we thought that nobody is safe in this world until everybody is safe. Viruses don't care about the nationalities of the humans they kill. Therefore, finding ways to ensure all countries have strong public health systems and access to vaccines, that's an example of what you might call the modern equivalent of the Marshall Plan. There is some analogy to this. Look at what President Biden has done in terms of deciding to rejoin the World Health Organization and pledge \$4 billion towards the COVAX facility, which is aiming to ensure vaccines go to poorer countries. That is an example of thinking of our national interests in broad rather than narrow terms. This is thinking of it in terms of the challenges that are faced by what I call "ecological interdependence." This refers to pandemics and the other major ecological challenge we face, which is climate change. President Biden has reversed the Trump policies and decided to rejoin the Paris Accords. Those are examples of the type of approach we should take to international leadership. I would summarize that by saying a point I make in the book, which is that there are a lot of problems now that no country—the U.S., China, nobody—can

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*“... we have to learn to think of power with others as well as power over others.”*

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solve by acting alone. Pandemics and climate change are good examples. In that sense, we have to learn to think of power with others as well as power over others. That is a new frame of reference. In the nature of international politics, you have to continue to think of power over others. That is going to be a real challenge for our leaders. In the first steps we have seen from the new administration, they seem to understand that.

**Alexander:** What do you think is holding America back from succeeding in this challenge you have outlined today?

**Joe:** The problem we have seen in the last decade has been polarization that leads to an unwillingness to pull together on things. In that sense, the populism that we saw in American politics from the 2016 election onward has not gone away. America First is not bad per se if you define America First the way I just did: taking the lead to help produce global public goods. All too often we see a much narrower nativist populism defines our problems in restrictive terms. That produces a politics which is highly divisive. We will have to see whether we can overcome those divisions.

**Alexander:** What advice would you have for Congress to deal with this issue you've outlined today?

**Joe:** After we pass this current COVID recovery legislation, I think the question is to look for areas where you can get cooperation across the aisle—issues like infrastructure, investment in young people, and the health of younger generations. It is interesting that this idea of child welfare allowance is in the current [pandemic relief] bill. The question is whether that will be something that will last beyond the two years of the current mandate. There might be areas like that where Republicans and Democrats can find ways to work together. I think that would be an important sign of beginning to overcome some of these differences.

**Alexander:** What advice would you have for the president?

**Joe:** The president has the same problem. This is the question of how you can pick issues and approach them in a way where you begin to soften some of

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*“America First is not bad per say, if you define America First as . . . taking the lead to help produce global public goods.”*

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these political divides. These divides are not going to go away quickly. The so-called culture wars have deeper roots. Pippa Norris of the Kennedy School has written elegantly about some of the deeper cultural problems that are behind the populism we have seen of the past decade or so. But they can be eased or smoothed by having policies which think about some of the inequalities that we have. The inequalities we have are not just economic. They are also in terms of status and dignity of people. Presidential measures that address those will be important. In addition, the question of trying to find issues where you can get some symbolism working across these cultural lines will be crucial. In the early days, we have opportunities which get more difficult as you approach elections. We will see how the Biden administration finds some of those.

**Alexander:** What advice do you have for students who are coming out of school and may want to work on this issue you have identified?

**Joe:** I always said when I was dean that the Kennedy School’s mission was to train public leaders. Public leaders can be in government, nonprofits, or even in the private sector if they are trying to add public value. For Kennedy School students, the issue is how can you add public value whatever sector you are in. I sometimes call this “trisectional entrepreneurship” — the fact that students will wind up not just in one of the three sectors but will go back and forth between them. The common denominator can be that you are doing good and contributing public value.

**Alexander:** Are there any bold ideas out there that might help with this challenge you have identified today?

**Joe:** The great challenges that we will face are going to be these issues of ecological interdependence. These are issues that we cannot decouple from.

They are basically driven by the laws of physics and biology, not politics. They are tough, but there may be things that can be done about them. There are many different ways to approach these large problems. Keep thinking about them, even if you don’t have a solution that is a moonshot and solves everything at once. The search for solutions is something that can drive all graduates.

**Alexander:** Who is getting it right out there on your idea of ecological interdependence?

**Joe:** I mention Bill Gates because he was a Harvard dropout who founded a company that became extremely successful in one area. He then turned to philanthropy and focused on public health in poor countries. Now he is putting more of an emphasis on climate. That is interesting because it is a career that spans different sectors in different ways. Take Larry Fink from the investment world and his effort to try to figure out how to price investor risk from climate change. There are lots of possibilities that are very important. We also should not neglect the work that is being done in the academic sector. Look at the people at the Kennedy School working on climate: Rob Stavins, John Holdren, Dan Schrag. These are all people doing extremely important work thinking through these major issues. So again, it’s not the sector you are in. Trying to deal with these problems and cope with them is what is impressive to me.

**Alexander:** Is there anything you are working on that you are excited about sharing with our readers?

**Joe:** I have been thinking about this question of the role of morality in foreign policy and how do we do foreign policy better than we’ve done it in the past. This book that I just finished, *Do Morals Matter*, looks back at the history of the 14 presidents since 1945 and asks whether their moral positions made a difference, or whether history would have turned out the same no matter who was president. What I show in the book is, yes, the moral views of the presidents, for better and for worse, were extremely important. If morality does then play an important role, then how do we think about it in a sensible way in terms of policy? You can’t just judge foreign policy decisions



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*“I’ve called myself a liberal realist. Start with realism, because if you don’t have realism, you’re not going to get things done. But don’t stop there.”*

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on good intentions. You have to do what I call “3D moral reasoning.” Yes, the intentions matter, but the choice of means also matters, as does the assessment of probable consequences and due diligence. 3D moral thinking, which balances all three aspects of moral decision making, is absolutely critical, yet all too often neglected. I’ve been working in the last year on how to bring this to bear on policy issues.

**Alexander:** I’ve read *Do Morals Matter*, *The Powers to Lead*, and some of your other writings on soft power. As a student of ancient history, there was one line from your recent book that struck me. You were talking about smart realists. You wrote: “The Roman Empire rested not only on its legions, but also on the attraction of Roman culture.” Since I’ve been at the Kennedy School, I have been challenged to look at realist and liberalist views of foreign policy. I took both Stephen Walt and Samantha Power in the same semester, and I really thought deeply. It was a great balance to be in both at the same time. I came out of the experience defining myself as more of a realist, but as I like to say, “A realist in REM,” as in REM sleep, the phase of sleep where you dream. You can be a realist, but you can still dream of better outcomes that are not just zero sum. You can be in REM and seek a better way. I wonder how you define yourself at this point in your career.

**Joe:** Well, I like your way of putting it. I’ve called myself a liberal realist. Start with realism, because if you don’t have realism, you’re not going to get things done. But don’t stop there. In other words, realism is the starting point. All too often realists say, “well, that’s the end of it.” There may be some situations where it is impossible, but more often than not you can start with realism and add values as you are able. I think that’s what you are trying to get out with your idea of realism with REM sleep.

**Alexander:** Do you have any final advice for future public servants and our readers?

**Joe:** Think of yourself as trisectoral entrepreneurs. Don’t worry too much about exactly where you are and which step in your career and which sector. Ask yourself, “Am I adding public value as well as my own private value?”



Source: Moving Mountains Trust, flickr.

## Back to School in Kenya: How 152,000 New Teen Mothers Can Resume Their Education

MajdSteitieh

*Policy ideas to help young mothers in Kenya return to school after the pandemic.*

### The COVID Lockdown: Unintended Consequences

Global Citizen estimates that more than 152,000 teenage girls in Kenya became pregnant between March and May 2020 due to economic hardship during the country's nationwide COVID lockdown.<sup>1</sup>

This represents a staggering 40 percent increase in Kenya's monthly average. While the global community

has celebrated and commended world leaders for their swift action to shut down schools and businesses to keep us "safe," too few have questioned the unintended consequences of severe measures that particularly disadvantage those in poor, rural, and developing communities.

Teen pregnancy is not new in Kenya. Roughly 13,000 young girls drop out of school each year to have children, the National Council for Population and Development reports.<sup>2</sup> Through the COVID-induced lockdowns, however, unintended teen pregnancies

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*“Many families in rural Kenya found themselves unable to afford simple goods like soap and drinkable water.”*

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have skyrocketed. Some have gone so far as to call the phenomenon a “shadow pandemic.”<sup>3</sup> This massive surge in teen pregnancies can be explained by a number of factors, but most outrageous perhaps are three elements: availability of showers, access to reproductive facilities, and an inability to procure hygiene necessities like sanitary pads.

### **Unintended Teen Pregnancies: Drivers behind the Surge**

It should come as no surprise that with the lockdown came a severe upheaval in unemployment for families throughout Kenya. This was exceptionally taxing on the population. A 2020 comprehensive poverty report published by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics found that a third of Kenya’s population was already living below the poverty line.<sup>4</sup> Unsurprisingly, many families in rural Kenya found themselves unable to afford simple goods like soap and drinkable water, explains Mercy Chege, program director at Plan International Kenya.<sup>5</sup> According to Chege, the Kenyan government provided sanitary pads to teenage girls at school prior to the lockdown, but this service was discontinued when learning went remote. This resulted in many teen girls becoming indebted to older men who promised to loan them the required funds in exchange for sexual services.

Girls younger than 19 were often exposed to exploitation by men who demanded sex in exchange for hygiene essentials like taking a shower. This occurred in a country where, according to *Médecins Sans Frontières* (Doctors Without Borders), some settlements only have one water point per 1,000 people.<sup>6</sup> As Chege recounts, “many would go for days without taking a bath and would do anything to appease someone who promised them such small luxuries.”<sup>7</sup> Before the pandemic, the going rate for these “luxuries” was 14 cents. Now, many men are

demanding sexual favors from these women who cannot afford to pay.

The stark upsurge in teen pregnancies was fueled by the inability of young girls to source any kind of reproductive health care after this sexual coercion. This was primarily due to the government’s decision to redirect efforts toward flattening the COVID-19 curve. According to Dr. Manisha Kumar at *Médecins Sans Frontières*, “The collateral damage of taking that kind of approach is when we shut down these routine services [for girls], we saw an increase in maternal and child death from preventive causes.”<sup>8</sup>

### **The Stigma Awaits: Ridicule and Rejection within the Community**

The bitter reality is that many of these teen mothers will be subjected to “stigma, rejection or violence by partners, parents and peers,” as the World Health Organization reports.<sup>9</sup> This stigma is not particular to Kenya, however, as widespread misogynistic attitudes that lead to blaming teen victims for their “negligence” is common in the region. As one mother in Sierra Leone expressed: “I would not allow my daughter to sit in class with someone pregnant—that’s a very bad influence.”<sup>10</sup> The same unsympathetic rhetoric is echoed by some teachers who have been known to be unwelcoming to pregnant students in the classroom.<sup>11</sup>

In an effort to relieve such burdens on teen mothers, the Kenyan Ministry of Education rolled out a set of mandates to ensure a more inclusive and discrimination-free environment at schools. These efforts have proven ineffective as the culture at most Kenyan schools has remained unaccommodating toward these young girls’ circumstances.<sup>12</sup> Chege remembers an occasion in which a teacher told her students to consult with a teenage mother in class

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*“Girls younger than 19 were often exposed to exploitation by men who demanded sex in exchange for hygiene essentials like taking a shower.”*

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about sex, since she was supposedly “an expert on this topic,” despite the fact that she was a victim of rape.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Way Forward: Getting Teen Mothers back to School**

The Kenyan government prides itself on having begun implementing the Educational Re-Entry Policy for Girls after Teenage Pregnancy as early as 1994. The policy was established to guarantee that teen mothers could re-enroll and complete their studies free of stigma. A host of studies, however, have highlighted that, despite the favorable provisions of the policy, the implementation has been less promising. Critics of the policy have pointed to low parental involvement and support<sup>14</sup>; little awareness of the policy among key stakeholders including teachers, school administrators, guardians, and teen mothers<sup>15</sup>; significant stigmatization and social marginalization of teen mothers within school environments<sup>16</sup>; and discrepancies in implementation of the policy.<sup>17</sup>

In order to combat these limitations—and ensure these teen mothers’ educational rights are not infringed—four supplemental policies are required.

#### ***Reduce Financial Barriers***

An April 2020 study by the Kenyan Ministry of Health found that “68% of participants had skipped a meal or eaten less in the past two weeks because of COVID-19.”<sup>18</sup> The financial hit from lockdowns often causes parents and guardians to be less supportive of sending pregnant girls back to school, especially when a child working appears to be a much more lucrative return on investment. As the Brookings Institution reports, “waiving school and examination fees could facilitate girls’ return to school” by easing these financial pressures on families.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the World Bank stated that “providing cash transfers . . . has proven effective in enabling girls and marginalized learners to attend school” in nearby Zambia.<sup>20</sup> This finding was corroborated by the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation through conducting a systematic review that studied 216 education-focused cash-transfer programs.<sup>21</sup>

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*“The Educational Re-Entry Policy is a great stepping stone to ensuring teenage mothers do not have to trade their education for raising their children.”*

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#### ***Ensure Clear and Targeted Communication***

In order to gauge the awareness of the Educational Re-Entry Policy, researchers at the Population Council in Kenya interviewed 728 teen mothers along with their household heads in Homa Bay County. They were shocked to learn that “over a third of teenage mothers and their household heads were not aware of the provisions of [the policy].”<sup>22</sup> Even more shocking was the finding that one-third of the 167 school principals interviewed were unaware of the policy.<sup>23</sup> These findings highlight how imperative communication is in ensuring young mothers are guided back to school. This communication must be accompanied by a robust outreach campaign centered on public awareness, with tailored messages facilitating a change in harmful gender norms that limit a young woman’s potential.<sup>24</sup>

#### ***Create Stigma-Free Educational Spaces***

As underscored above, most Kenyan schools have not been able to provide discrimination-free environments for pregnant students. This is largely due to the fact that biases and negative attitudes toward teen mothers are deeply rooted in misogynistic cultural norms that will not transform in the short term. It is crucial to set up intermediate spaces exclusive to pregnant teen girls where they can focus on their studies in a setting that is both free from stigma and catered toward their special needs. One prime example is Serene Haven Rescue Centre in Nyeri. Serene Haven was established in the wake of the COVID-related teen pregnancy surge to provide special services for expecting student mothers. These students benefit from in-house therapists who provide counsel to the new mothers while they receive a state-certified

education.<sup>25</sup> Further, these students are able to take advantage of special arrangements unique to their circumstances such as breastfeeding, which a typical school would find difficult to implement due to pushback from other children’s parents.<sup>26</sup>

### **Mandate Constant Monitoring and Evaluation**

The best way to safeguard against discrepancies in the implementation of the Educational Re-Entry Policy is to enforce constant monitoring and evaluation at the local level. It is vital that the government, in partnership with other key stakeholders, establishes standards that are consistently applied across all schools, monitors the effectiveness of these standards, and proposes amendments as necessary. Without proper observation and examination, the government will miss out on important insights and feedback from stakeholders, meaning that successful tactics in supporting young girls will not be recognized and replicated across the nation. Finally, monitoring and evaluation are a fundamental part of the execution phase, since they are a prime accountability mechanism.<sup>27</sup>

The Educational Re-Entry Policy is a great stepping stone to ensuring teenage mothers do not have to trade their education for raising their children. In order for it to be effective, however, a community-based approach is essential. Only then will the policy enable the solutions required for young girls to resume their education, maintain their health, and advance their aspirations.

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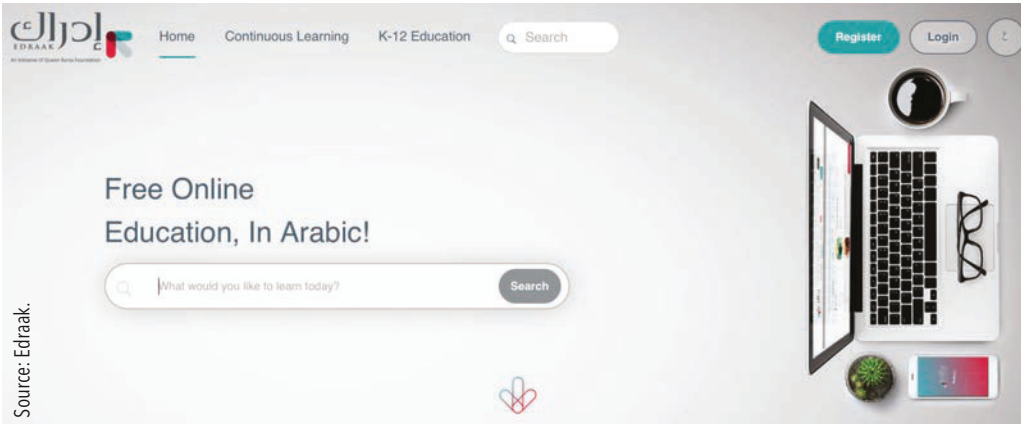
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## Lessons Learned from +4.5 Million Remote Learners in the MENA Region



ShireenYacoubandNafezDakkak

*Online learning can be effective when done right. Edraak is a success story that should be emulated.*

As eternal optimists (you have to be if you are in the EdTech space), we are always trying to turn challenges into opportunities and to find hope in the midst of uncertainty. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region's higher-education system has lagged in terms of quality, research, and relevance of outputs to job market needs. The untapped potential of Arab youth continues to be a daunting challenge hovering over the region. For the past seven years, the skills gap has grown at an alarming rate, and unemployment rates have been found to be positively correlated with education levels in several MENA countries. Despite the rise of open online education in developing countries and the accompanying hype around massive open online courses (MOOCs) in 2013, the majority of young people in the MENA region were left behind, given their low level of

English proficiency.

Building on growing internet penetration in the region (there are now more than 190 million Arabic-speaking internet users) and a shift in attitudes toward online learning, we responded to education disparities with Edraak.<sup>1</sup> This initiative of the Queen Rania Foundation was the first non-profit, mass-scale attempt to extend quality online learning to the Arabic-speaking world. 120,000 learners signed up for the platform within the first six months, but skeptics were concerned about the interplay between online and offline learning. Today, Edraak reaches over 4.5 million learners across the MENA region, including disadvantaged youth and refugees. The platform has played an integral role in sustaining learning during the pandemic, welcoming one million new learners within the first six months of lockdowns and curfews. Our experience developing this platform can accelerate the global efforts of governments, donors, venture capitalists, and entrepreneurs to reimagine education.

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*“Starting anything is hard; starting anything in education is harder.”*

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### Lessons Learned from the Early Days

Starting anything is hard; starting anything in education is harder. The complex challenges we faced due to the highly fragmented nature of education required commitment to a long-term vision and understanding that success and impact take time to achieve. As we tackled these challenges, we learned the following:

- \* **Blind imitation of solutions does not work:** Importing licensed courses and simply translating them into Arabic does not engage learners. Contextualization is key—we have to build according to the needs of our local users.

- \* **Open-source software is essential for creating empowered communities in the tech space:** Because edX, the massive open online course provider created by Harvard and MIT, decided to open source their codebase, we could create an experience that works for Arabic (and other right-to-left) learners worldwide.

- \* **The third sector is important for correcting market failures:** When we started, nobody would fund a MENA online learning startup. However, the public service mandate of nonprofits allows them to measure success by the impact they drive and hence tackle challenges that are neither lucrative nor feasible for the private sector.

- \* **Content standards must be seeded early on:** Content crowdsourcing initiatives are unlikely to work in immature ecosystems. Ecosystem players must set the content standard and upskill creators. At Edraak, our success was contingent on rolling out high-quality online content in Arabic. We played a leading role in setting the content and pedagogical standards and worked closely with content providers to develop quality assurance processes.

### Lessons Learned from the Pandemic

More than 2 billion children have been affected by the global shutdown, and millions started learning online for the very first time.<sup>2</sup> Whilst we strongly

believe that technology will not entirely replace face-to-face learning, we are more confident than ever that online learning will become part and parcel of every modern education system. Here are some lessons we have learned from working during the pandemic:

- \* **Collaboration is essential when responding to crises:** The sheer size of the problems created by the pandemic means that a single sector can't address them alone. Public-private partnerships can play an important role in expediting responses, and civil society backed by donor agencies can bridge critical gaps. Our experience supporting the Jordanian Ministries of Education and Entrepreneurship and Digital Economy, alongside private-sector companies, to launch a national K–12 platform during the pandemic was a textbook example of a productive public-private partnership. The platform, called Darsak (Arabic for “your lesson”), now facilitates learning in closed public schools.

- \* **Any education system is only as good as its teachers:** Teaching and learning online require changes in mindsets and behavior. These cannot happen overnight because they require dedicated teacher-training efforts. This is why we supported the Ministry of Education in launching a teacher-training platform focused on digital literacy and the use of technology in education, in tandem with the launch of the Darsak platform.

- \* **Build for scale while focusing on human-centered design:** Delivering high-quality online education at scale requires an agile and lean approach that leverages solid infrastructure to expand and adapt to changes quickly.

- \* **The new UBI—universal basic internet:** COVID-19 has made it evident that the world can no longer afford to treat basic internet access as anything other than a human right.

Putting these lessons into practice will not bullet-proof new EdTech startups and initiatives, but we

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*“Any education system is only as good as its teachers.”*

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hope that it will contribute to navigating the complex landscape ahead. We have only been able to come this far because we were fortunate enough to have an amazing and capable team of colleagues and backers who believed in the transformative power of education. Among all the lessons we have learned, perhaps the most important lesson is that education is about hope.

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**Shireen Yacoub** is the CEO of Edraak. As a catalyst for education reform and harnessing the power of technology in education, Shireen leads the platform’s strategy and execution for Up/Reskilling MENA’s Youth online at scale. Shireen is pursuing a part-time EdM in technology, innovation, and education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She is also a product consultant at the Project on Workforce at Harvard University.

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**Nafez Dakkak** is the CEO of the Queen Rania Foundation’s London office, where he oversees the foundation’s strategic partnerships and talent development. He is also executive chairman of Edraak.org. Nafez is pursuing a part-time EdM in educational neuroscience at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

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Source: Jey Zanotti, Flickr.

## Creatives and COVID-19: How to Avoid a Cultural Depression

Melissa Arellano

*Art doesn't just inspire. It also makes up a significant portion of the American economy. Policy makers should focus on rebuilding the creative economy right now.*

Creatives are often told their jobs are risky and to not expect a comfortable lifestyle. The creative economy—from art to music to film—is competitive. Some creatives are classically trained and spent time in academia on abstract concepts. Others are driven by the belief that they do not need to be in school to pursue their passions. Both archetypes exist and can

succeed; both can also fail.

While failure in the creative economy is not uncommon, no one could have foreseen or prepared for what happened in March 2020. The pandemic has been particularly devastating for creatives, and policy changes are needed to help save this critical industry. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) needs to be restructured and strengthened. Public-private partnerships with nonprofit arts organizations should be encouraged. Creatives in art, music, film, fashion, and design are vital to our economy and quality of life. It is time we help them.

## The Creative Economy under Pressure

The creative industry provides experiences, goods, better places to live, and educational opportunities that contribute to the country's economy and culture. The industry drives tourism, which leads to more jobs and more government revenue. Small businesses, restaurants, and transit systems benefit from proximity to the arts and the consumers who support them. Creatives account for 3.4 percent of the American workforce. Arts and culture in the United States make up 4.5 percent of GDP and add more value to the economy than the construction, transportation, and agriculture industries, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis.<sup>1</sup> The creative economy is an \$804.2 billion industry that supports 5 million jobs and \$26 billion in tax revenue.<sup>2</sup>

But the pandemic has put the creative economy in jeopardy. A Brookings Institution analysis of the creative economy from April to July 2020 estimated a combined loss of at least 2.7 million jobs and \$150 billion in total sales.<sup>3</sup> According to the report, the arts will suffer the most, with a loss of almost 1.4 million jobs and \$42.5 billion in sales.

The loss of some cultural institutions may have an outsized impact. A survey from June 2020 by the American Alliance of Museums showed that one-third of museum directors were not confident that their museums would survive 16 months without additional financial relief, and 16 percent felt their organizations were at risk of permanent closure.<sup>4</sup> The loss of these institutions will have ripple effects beyond the loss of jobs and economic activity. Communities would lose important educational resources and public spaces for events. These services are not easily replicated online.

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## The Need for Policy Action

Immediate action is needed to stop the collapse of the creative economy. The American Rescue Plan passed in March 2021 allocated \$135 million to the NEA, but more sustained investment over time is needed.<sup>5</sup> If the federal government can strengthen funding and reform key institutions, the creative economy can emerge stronger than ever.

### *Reform the NEA*

The creative economy has struggled to attract sustained federal funding, as many citizens and politicians feel a distaste for state control of culture. The NEA is intended to provide funding for the arts but has struggled under partisan political fights over the role of art, sex, and race.<sup>6</sup> The NEA's 2020 budget was \$162.25 million, just 0.004 percent of the federal budget.<sup>7</sup> The NEA needs to formulate a new policy paradigm that examines the purpose, goals, resources, programs, structures, and processes of the arts. One way to do this is to re-establish public trust and participation in arts policy, thereby creating a broader community representation in NEA decision making.<sup>8</sup> The NEA needs to better incorporate the voices of creatives in its funding and management decisions to be more responsive to the industry it is supposed to support. Disseminating knowledge to the public will also help creatives better advocate for the NEA.

### *Public-Private Partnerships*

The government should also facilitate support for the creative economy beyond direct spending. The Brookings Institution has proposed the formation of public-private partnerships between stakeholders in the creative economy, from nonprofit organizations to local government.<sup>9</sup> Collaboration is needed now more than ever, and other sectors can help the arts and culture through their business.

Nonprofits can also research and collect data on the importance of arts and culture in our economy. This can help public administrators effectively channel additional funding to the creative economy. There is a wealth of research on how arts and cultural pro-



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gramming can benefit and enrich children’s lives.<sup>10</sup> The arts also provide therapeutic services to the incarcerated.<sup>11</sup> Nonprofits and public administrators need to work together to generate data highlighting the arts’ impact when trying to access federal funding.

### ***The CREATE and PLACE Acts***

The Comprehensive Resources for Entrepreneurs in the Arts to Transform the Economy (CREATE) Act was introduced in March 2019 as legislation designed to strengthen the creative economy. The bill would “expand programs at the Small Business Administration (SBA) to increase microloans, business loans, and technical assistance for artists, and to ensure access to FEMA’s disaster relief assistance for artists impacted by natural disasters.”<sup>12</sup> The bill also instructs the Economic Development Administration to provide support to the arts through a business incubation program that gives management guidance and technical assistance.<sup>13</sup> Though no funding amount has been specified, such targeted assistance will be critical. In May 2020, the Promoting Local Arts and Creative Economy Workforce (PLACE) Act was introduced in the Senate, which would further expand the government’s support of the creative economy. Its principal aim is to address federal workplace policies to increase support for the creative economy.<sup>14</sup> If both bills pass, the creative economy will be better positioned to survive this crisis.

Art has the power to influence individuals to pursue their dreams, whether or not they are a part of the creative economy themselves. This is not the first time the creative economy has suffered during a global crisis, and it will certainly not be the last. In time, artists will tell the tragic stories of COVID-19 through their work. Policy makers need to help keep the creative economy alive so those stories can inspire us again.

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## COVID-19 in a Fractured Los Angeles

Timothy A. Smith

*Southern California's many overlapping jurisdictions present a challenge to combatting the pandemic.*

While many residents of the sprawling Orange County and Los Angeles Metro area would quibble at being called Angelenos, it has never been easy to define Los Angeles. The Los Angeles of fame and fortune is a collection of cities and unincorporated areas with only a freeway connecting them to the heart of downtown. These cities' borders often seem to offer a distinction without a difference. However, this fracturing of both the functions and geography of local government has hindered the region's efforts to create a coherent pandemic policy.

Free-flowing federal housing assistance, abundant defense jobs, and the Hollywood aesthetic saw the region boom after 1945.<sup>1</sup> Tract housing developments

in suburbs like Lakewood grew rapidly, and with them came a thirst for local control of government. These communities developed contract agreements with counties to provide public services, an arrangement that allowed them to reduce costs while gaining the land use and property tax benefits of a city.<sup>2</sup>

The Lakewood Plan also accelerated a process of redistribution of local government functions to a patchwork quilt of county agencies and special districts. Cities widely and inconsistently contracted services like public safety to counties. For example, Orange County and Los Angeles County sheriff departments protect 51 cities and unincorporated communities, representing 3.3 million of the counties' 13.2 million residents.<sup>3</sup> Legislation passed shortly after the constitu-

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*"The result is a tangled mess of jurisdictions."*

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tion of 1879 allowed for the creation of special districts, single-service entities with the power to levy taxes and direct services at the behest of voters or legislation. These jurisdictions may cross multiple cities or just one, and they can provide a comprehensive service like water or operate a single library.<sup>4</sup>

The result is a tangled mess of jurisdictions. The redistribution of authority through contracts and special districts has shifted policy making to a broad and often confused array of alternative governments: 121 cities, 121 special districts, and 125 school districts are spread across two counties, with nearly 1,700 officials elected every four years—more officials than most countries’ parliaments.<sup>5,6,7,8,9,10,11</sup> This structure of diffuse authority has routinely derailed implementation of an effective COVID-19 policy response.

To illustrate, it came as no surprise to locals when Huntington Beach became the center of the pandemic resistance. A glance at the city’s demographics would lead many to believe that Huntington Beach is a typical White middle-class beach town, although it also includes the Latino community of Oak View.<sup>12,13</sup> One *Los Angeles Times* study of three beach communities found that Huntington Beach residents were the least likely to wear a mask.<sup>14</sup> The study mirrored what journalists described as “raucous” protests over Governor Gavin Newsom’s first lockdown in March.<sup>15</sup> Tito Ortiz, a former ultimate fighter, subsequently announced his campaign for city council on a platform that included declaring COVID-19 a form of sponsored “population control” and social justice protests an attempt to “rape women and children.”<sup>16</sup>

Yet, it is working-class communities of color in the region that bore the brunt of the pandemic, like Huntington Beach’s Oak View and the neighboring city of Santa Ana.<sup>17</sup> These communities are reflective of Los Angeles and Orange County’s working-class Latino residents as well as the region’s history of governance by Native peoples, Spain, and Mexico during the centuries before the Bear Flag Revolt memorialized on the state flag. Santa Ana is 77 percent Latino, with 39 percent of residents reporting they speak English less than “very well.”<sup>18</sup> Its median income of \$66,145 is

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low for a region where an estimated \$86,427 is required to support an adult with a child.<sup>19,20</sup> As of 10 February 2021, 12 percent of Santa Ana residents had tested positive for COVID-19 since the pandemic’s outset, compared with only 5 percent in Huntington Beach. With 605 deaths, 17 percent of the county’s COVID-19 deaths occurred in Santa Ana, a city that constitutes just 10 percent of the county’s population.<sup>21</sup> Despite this, the county’s vaccination program was launched through an app that did not release a Spanish version, even after months of distribution.<sup>22</sup>

The harmful impact of Huntington Beach’s pandemic mismanagement on Oak View and Santa Ana exemplifies the ripple effects of one entity’s governance crisis. Small cities like Huntington Beach, with borders reflecting the economic and social concerns of generations past, create venues that elevate the narrow concerns of their inhabitants. These jurisdictions’ broad authorities have had painful consequences for the lives and deaths of neighboring communities.

COVID-19 has brought to light the glaring inequities and inefficiencies apparent in Los Angeles’s local government systems. Beyond the pandemic, policy challenges like homelessness, housing affordability, and water rights will require cooperation across jurisdictions to meet residents’ needs. In a system that seems to disincentivize collaboration, clarity, or consistency, addressing these challenges may require taking a hard look at municipal reform too.

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Tim has assisted in writing a textbook about equity in policing, co-authored a journal article on successful classroom interventions, and assessed policy outcomes as an analyst for the Long Beach Community College District. Tim was born, raised, and currently lives in the Los Angeles area.

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# Stopping the Spread: Not Just the Virus

Justin Shapiro and Ravina C. Anand

*Health care leaders have a critical role to play to restore trust in our health institutions.*

The political backlash to the COVID-19 pandemic response has demonstrated the deep fissures in our social fabric. While societal division has been a growing issue for many years, the pandemic has illustrated the fragility of domestic and global institutions. Decreasing trust in these bodies in the United States and beyond has shaken confidence in leaders and institutions and weakened our collective ability to react to humanity's most pressing threats. As medical students, we believe this decay in trust is one of the greatest public health issues of our time. We have witnessed, in clinical encounters and beyond, the pervasive hesitancy that surrounds vaccinations, lockdowns, and other public health measures. These are just a few symptoms of the larger problem of declining trust in governments, leaders, and institutions. ❏

The accelerating force of globalization has elicited an undercurrent of distrust and populism across the Western world that is causing a shift toward authoritarianism.<sup>1</sup> While globalization has brought prosperity to many, it has also created economic insecurity, resulting in widespread resentment and helplessness among those who feel left behind by the transition. Populist movements have capitalized on the perceptions of incompetent leaders and governing institutions, provoking chaos, and further eroding public trust.<sup>2</sup> The 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer,

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which examined global trust in government, business, NGOs, and media, reports that 57 percent of the general population view government as looking after the interests of a privileged few.<sup>3</sup>

Faltering societal trust has led to a rise in populist politics and a decline in intergovernmental collaboration. When countries shift away from cooperation, they stifle dissemination of knowledge and resources. This hinders the international community's capacity, efficiency, and effectiveness to combat the pandemic. In addition, the spread of fake news has weakened the foundation of trust that has taken lifetimes to build. Without trust, it is less likely that the messages of the leadership class will be heard by the people they serve. For example, global institutions, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), have been questioned and discredited, particularly for perceived pandering to foreign governments and a lack of transparency. In many countries, policy makers question the political neutrality of the WHO, including complaints of corruption, cronyism, and politics that have dogged the agency and limited its effectiveness.<sup>4</sup> As mistrust in the WHO rises, national governments turn inward for solutions, resulting in a lack of collaboration among global and national agencies. ❏

While mistrust slowly plagues established global institutions, the weaponization of public health also leaks into the domestic sphere, resulting in the politicization of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the United States, only 43 percent of Americans have confidence in medical scientists to act in the best interest of the public.<sup>5</sup> That number climbed marginally from 35 percent one year prior; however, trust only increased among Americans identifying as Democrats, not Republicans. The partisanship surrounding health

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suggests a potential ideological-based approach. ❑

Further, according to Pew Research Center polling, whether one “believes” the scientific evidence on COVID-19 strongly correlates with partisan affiliation.<sup>6</sup> Democrats are more than twice as likely as Republicans to say that masks should always be worn, whereas 23 percent of Republicans say that masks should never be worn (compared with 4 percent of Democrats). Moreover, while almost three-quarters of Democrats say that the actions of ordinary Americans affect how COVID-19 spreads a great deal, less than half of Republicans feel similarly.❑

Many in the media and establishment politicians have characterized the issue as the credulous consumption of misinformation. However, that view does not capture the brewing resistance to the messages of political elites on varying parts of the political spectrum. The assault on expertise and evidence is a symptom of the failure of communication and the belief that the leadership class looks out solely for its own interests.<sup>7</sup> While the COVID-19 pandemic has devastated whole industries and communities, disenfranchised citizens have grown skeptical toward shutdowns, restrictions, masks, and social distancing measures. This mistrust is one symptom of the crisis of leadership. It illustrates the continuous failures of elites on both sides of the political spectrum to serve their constituents.

Unfortunately, there are no simple answers to resolving the deepening societal divides and plummeting faith in domestic and international institutions. The pervasive distrust that has hampered the response to the pandemic is not new and will linger well after most people are vaccinated. Public health has never been exclusively a technical or scientific challenge; however, medical institutions and policy makers must

remember that, to effectively eradicate the virus and confront future public health crises, we must consider and address the pressing economic and social issues that shape how our patients and the public at large perceive our specialized knowledge. An effective medical response is only possible when people trust political and public health leaders. Mass vaccination campaigns are likely to fail without healing societal rifts. This will require a resurgence in faith and stability across all sectors of society. Health care leaders should engage their communities directly to build trust by providing their patients with transparent information and education. Bridging this gap will improve health literacy, increase autonomy, and empower all people as champions of individual and societal health.

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