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## Principles, Philosophy, and other abstract stuff

### Why equality is an innate good:

- First: Not contingent on having better social outcomes:
  - Intuition: Systems of injustice might have been very efficient (based on subjugation of group for cheap labour, might have been utile for most people) → But we still think its wrong
- Then: Prove why they don't have equality on their side
  - Fundamentally arbitrary: completely random
  - No way you consented about into this
  - You cannot change these factors, thus unjust

### The State Power principle

#### **State is hugely more powerful than individuals are:**

- Policies that determine most of your life
- Coercive mechanisms
- You cannot opt out of the state
  - Therefore: you need to have some method to control how state power is used, what those policies will be
  - Otherwise: the state controls almost every facet of your life, and you essentially don't have the ability to control your own destiny
    - And its hugely important to be able to express free choice and free will, almost everyone on Earth believes these are important to uphold because generally:
      - a) people want to be able to choose to be a person they are satisfied with (since you spend every second of your life with themselves)
      - b) to make choices that lead to the life that they want to live (which is why religious choices are particularly important)
- Therefore: the government is only legitimate when the people give it permission to exercise power over them.
  - Perhaps not every form of consent is overriding, but this is clearly a situation where it is of extra importance
- **(Prove here why they aren't getting consent on their side, why you are getting consent on our side)**
- Useful because: The more precise your principle is, the better. 'Consent is important' has way too many implications that you don't want to defend. Like do I need your consent before I criticize your actions? If we can't totally predict the outcome of a situation, does that mean you haven't consented into it?

Choice/free will, right to participate in discourse: right to control over self-presentation, right to free expression, right to interact with meaningful elements of the external world which inform you

**Why choice is important:** Usually it is not enough to say that choice is generally important, you want to explain why this is a specifically important choice to protect

- Important because: You say that it's important because people need to be able to choose to be a person they are satisfied with (since you spend every second of your life with yourself), and to make choices that lead to the life that they want to live (which is why religious choices are particularly important)
- Give examples of other choices that are similar as intuition pump

#### **Free will exists:**

- (Proving why choice is important)
- If free will didn't exist, we could presumably figure out an exact prediction of what someone will do as they're just the product of chemical reactions in a domino effect
- However: if we told the person our prediction, they are reasonably likely to do the exact opposite to fuck with us. If free will doesn't exist, that seems like it should be impossible, but it's clear, common sense that this is what would happen

#### **Right to control over self-presentation:**

- No one has access to the full repository of your emotions, thoughts, etc. -- who you truly are as a person -- the only thing people can interact with is the image of yourself that you project
- Self-determination: control over how you present yourself to others is the only way to meaningfully control your social interactions and environment
  - Importantly, this is the prerequisite to any form of pursuit of happiness, and therefore a dignified life

- This is intuitive: You cannot be happy if you cannot be yourself (look at like.. Queer people who report higher rates of depression, suicidal thoughts, etc. if they are closeted)
  - a) **Prove here why individuals are losing this control** -- Unclear why individuals waive this right at the point where they do X
    - i) Show there is no other recourse

### Right to free expression:

- Free expression is a fundamental right because:
  - a) It is a prerequisite for the actualization of identity: identity only exists insofar as you can communicate it and it is positively affirmed by others. Otherwise there is no meaningful way to claim the existence of an identity
    - This is intuitive: look at how intersectional identities fight for space in discourse, look at how states try to deny the existence of an identity to justify their genocide (Uyghurs in China)
  - b) **Sometimes can run:** Given that no objective truth exists: it is legitimate for them to say these things/act this way

**Showing two claims are equivalent value:** Motion is phrased as a normative claim, which means team loses at the point they cannot prove the existence of an objective ontological good

- Insofar as such a concept doesn't exist, prop has no epistemic right to claim that certain preferences should outweigh others -- logically claiming that XYZ matters more than 123 is only a normative assertion
- Preferences are morally equivalent and it is equally legitimate to follow either one

### Why you have the most moral responsibility to yourself

(Even if an objective ontological truth exists, actors do not have an obligation to prioritise the ontologically correct position over the position that benefits them)

Why?

- Moral responsibilities are cascading and based on proximity: trivially everyone agrees that you have a larger responsibility to your loved ones than strangers on the street
  - This is because responsibilities are proportional to proximity and reciprocity -- those who you interact with the most and who have the most meaningful bearing on your life are those who you have accrued the most normative links to
    - Consequently: given that an individual has to live with themselves THE MOST -- constant internal monologue and cannot escape their own thoughts and desires and are fundamentally inseparable from themselves -- it means that the largest moral obligation is to one's self, rather than an abstract conception of the truth

### Why Utilitarianism MUST be the metric in a debate:

- Utilitarianism is a much more universal system than any other
- Its fundamental premise is that pleasure is good and pain is bad --> everyone agrees with this statement
  - When there are other moral systems, they tend not to deny that statement, but instead they prioritize other values above it But those values are all extremely subjective - For example, some prioritize maximizing human freedom/agency, some prioritize helping Gods chosen people at the expense of others, some prioritize people who have "earned their status in society" aka meritocracy
- We can't prove any of those things: they are vastly subjective every culture has a different view on it: you might as well try to prove my taste in music is better than yours
- This presents a problem for government action, because the government is obligated to ALL of its people (after all, it taxes ALL people and forces ALL people to follow its rules)
  - It follows from this that the government is obligated to act on values that everyone agrees on. Maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain is the only way to do that
- Yes, maybe not everyone agrees that it is the TOP priority, but everyone agrees that is a good thing. This is why we tend to fall back on utilitarianism in the absence of any other consideration (for example: in debate if we cant think of a principled obligation, we just say do whatever makes people happiest)
- Therefore, since the government is obligated to everyone in its society, its obligated to be utilitarian

### Why Utilitarianism is bad:

1. Argues we should ALWAYS act to maximize overall happiness. Logically, it follows then that for any given population of people, there must exist some larger population with a greater sum total of happiness
  - Even if each individual's happiness is much lower, the sheer number of people, as well as the marginally decreasing loss of happiness to each person as the population gets bigger, means that there is a point where a bigger population has more happiness
  - Therefore, one of utilitarianism's conclusions is that should always increase the population
2. Consider a sick woman considering pregnancy. If she gets pregnant now, her child will have a birth defect (nonlethal). If she waits six months, the child will be normal. She should therefore wait

- However, clearly it would be better for the first hypothetical child to be born than not at all. Therefore, it is not better to wait
  - Utilitarianism can respond to this by saying that it doesn't matter to whom the benefits accrue; just that the overall aggregate happiness is greater
3. Repugnant conclusion: if it does not matter to whom the benefits accrue (the no-difference view) then deaths in a population can be ethically offset by births

4. Utilitarianism doesn't consider justice: For example, if a judge can prevent a riot that will foreseeably cause many deaths by wrongfully convicting an innocent person and punishing them severely, utilitarianism says they should do it. Similarly, killing one to give their organs to save five others is okay under utilitarianism.

- **Obviously, then, utilitarianism competes with other important principles like justice.**
- They might say: you can adopt utilitarianism to a specific moral framework, as long as the decision is the same for similar situations (also known as rule utilitarianism).
  - Idk response to that

5. Act utilitarianism (that each action should be taken in isolation and considered on the basis of increasing overall happiness) endangers trust

- No one will trust that a judge will uphold the law, or doctors will not always help anyone who asks for it
- People's behaviour will lose predictability and consistency

6. Utilitarianism says we have no more obligation to help people near us than anyone else

- Spending money on yourself or your family is always bad, because you could have spent that money on providing food for poor people
- Too demanding

Future generations > current ones:

1. Future generations are infinitely more numerate - utilitarianism
2. People in the future have less agency: just like how you don't choose where you are born, you also don't choose WHEN you are born. People in the future are constrained by the decisions that people in the present make. Ie. how they respond to climate crisis
3. Every single human obligation we have, towards things like animal rights, racial equality, climate justice, are all necessarily long-term obligations. If we want to pursue those obligations, we need to necessarily guarantee the long-term prospects of the human race.
4. Uncertainty: Current actions have uncertain consequences, the butterfly effect. Therefore we should make the best decision we know for the future, in case it creates ripple effects going into the future.
5. Past generations have worked to guarantee better well-being in our present, which was their future. Equally current obligation to invest in the future, to keep our obligation towards the past.

Current generations > future ones:

1. The current generation have the most obligation to themselves and their peers (normative links + they don't know if future generations will become people they want to help (give example here)), and they are the ones who will experience this decision's effects first.
2. Butterfly effect: Current actions have unknown future consequences because there is inherent variance to the universe. Weather, genetic lottery, the growth and change of culture trends, etc. So even the best decision for the future may actually fuck over the future, therefore mechanisms preferring current generations has far more certainty and a controllable outcome.
3. Future generations may have constrained agency (ie. their wellbeing is determined by current actions), but they also don't have the ability to consent to the decisions we are making on their behalf. Consent is right prior to others. For example, we don't put tracking devices on every single person even though this would help deter crime basically because it feels wrong to do. Regardless of outcome, it is a violation of basic human dignity to deprive people of autonomy like that.
  - a. People also have a revealed preference to fight for their autonomy at the cost of other basic goods like shelter, food, water. (Give example here)
4. Even if the outcome in the future is guaranteed positive: weigh based on depth of impact, etc.

Privacy from government, consent, and bodily autonomy:

1. Privacy from government interference is important because:
  - a. Analogous to the right to private property: stealing my money to give money to a malaria organization might have a net good effect, but it is wrong because it is my money
  - b. It is only justified for the government to interfere in public spaces: we cannot discriminate in public, but we can certainly discriminate who comes into our home

- c. If the government punishes you before knowing you committed a crime, this is an illegitimate form of preemptive punishment. We would never send someone to jail without having them go to court first, so you need a warrant.

Even if you think an outcome is good for someone, that shouldn't override their own choices.

- d. Another example: Most people would feel it is wrong to put tracking devices onto every single person even though this would help deter crime because, regardless of the outcome, it is a violation of basic human dignity to deprive people of autonomy without their consent like that.
- a. Throwing a book through someone's window and asking for payment even if it's the book they need to complete their essay is still a moral harm, because even if your actions are perpetuating what is in someone's interests people only feel their life has meaning if they feel their choices are their own, and that they can be the arbiter of their own best interests and act on them in the ways that manifest what they feel is best for them.

## Religion

Why religion > other beliefs:

Difference between religious beliefs and other beliefs: less likely to compromise on religious beliefs because they don't care about truth/facts/evidence since the value of the religious beliefs comes from personal experience and reflection that can't be easily replicated/shown in evidence.

- Response: Hamza's critique of religious beliefs: religious relativism + all reasons why you can find community elsewhere/why it's harmful

Why religion is important:

- Gives people a sense of purpose
  - Must show: how its different purpose than you can get from other debates
- Religious communities are uniquely powerful/structured/constant
  - A) Logistically set up for you to a further extent than other groups. Every single Sunday I can go to my church group, there's often dates set within the religious calendar that carve out time to appreciate a sense of community (Easter) *compared to* forcing someone to do that initiative on their own
  - B) More powerful in terms of number of people who practice it  
You pray to the same God and share similar beliefs. Huge feeling that you are not alone because you have family who are part of your own religious group. Profound sense of "there are so many other people who are like me" which gives purpose and fulfillment because we are social creatures and need groups like that.
- Religion is less fleeting than other identities in life
  - Religious identity is less wavering, friends change but religion is not something that changes/is framed as something that should change
- Associate yourself with a particular sense of moral goodness

Why religion is good:

- Religion uniquely promotes good kinds of morality

Generally good things:

1. Religious commitments tend to enforce a variety of positive moral values.

Ex: The notion in Christianity that you should do unto others as you would want done to yourself, and in Islam that the prophet has said that kindness is a marker of faith. The Fifth Commandment in Judaism says that you should honour your father and honour your mother, the Eighth commandment says that you should not steal, and other commandments about doing good notions and not gossiping or taking revenge.

Common response: atheists can be moral.

- 1) There are some things that are deemed to be immoral under a religious system, but those things are not illegal. So even if atheist people don't do things like steal and commit murder because of basic levels of empathy, they are still not as likely to be empathic or brought up in a strong moral framework because there are often additional things that religion tries to build those values
  - a) Like: helping people within your community, giving to charity (which was a concept religion was credited with normalizing), helping your parents to a broader extent
    - i) There are things that are worldly preferable, even though these things are often not deemed to be obligatory under the law AND our basic levels of empathy might not demand them to as large of an extent.
- 2) Aggregate more people will behave in moral ways because people often want to subscribe to religious conceptions of morality. Think about it: more people subscribe to religion or religious morality not because people want to be good for selfless reasons

- a) Given that we have other conflicting things within our lives, like wanting to conform to capitalism and because of limited resources, time, and energy.
  - i) But even those selfish people often want to subscribe to religious conceptions of morality, because the more moral that you are under your particular religious system, the more that God is going to be pleased and the higher the probability that you're going to be able to access a sense of eternal salvation which is great for even selfish people!
    - (1) So even if some people would behave in moral ways absent of religion, a larger number of people are going to behave in those moral ways with religion because you have the religious motivation and obligation to behave in those particular kinds of ways.

## 2. Religion comes to uniquely motivate important kinds of charity

Common response: There are important kinds of charities that exist absent of religion

Religious charity is unique for 2 reasons:

- 1) Substantially more people engage in religious charity since the morality of religion often demands charity in a way that other moral systems do not.
  - a) Example: In the New Testament, there is a phrase that Lord Jesus wants us to practice benevolent and charitable giving and that the liberality of God's blessings to us is connected to the liberality of our Christian giving. Similarly, Buddhists have a required option called ganas. The Zakat is the third pillar of Islam, which is giving those Muslims whose incomes are at a particular level and it is considered to be a purifying kind of tax.
  - b) This is why 73% of American giving goes through religious-related organizations like the Red Cross!
    - i) All of this demonstrates if there are some acts of charity without religion, the sheer quantity of giving you are going to have is so much larger when it's done through a religious context.
- 2) Religious charities tend uniquely to have a lot of organizational power relative to other kinds of charities
  - a) Collective action problems that tend to be associated with normal charitable giving of different people have different priorities that aren't religious, but donating to different charities can be overcome with religion to a large extent
    - i) Since in larger religious organizations, money is often pulled into a single institution because it is often demanded that followers of a particular organization donate to a centralized church.
      - (1) Therefore: when it comes to religion, you often have a larger pool of money that is centralized within a single place
        - (a) Why is this important/good? Economies of scale, having a lot of money centralized in a single organization is important when it comes to effective charity because a lot of charitable projects are just very expensive
          - (i) Ex: Building schools, or orphanages, or new wells all have very high capital demands. Thus, when you centralize, you are better able to be far more effective in charitable outcomes.

## 3. Historical religion argument: religion spearheaded innovation and historical political development

Common claim: innovation exists in opposition to science

Responses:

- 1) Vast majority of religion is not inherently anti-science. Most religions believe that we have a basic level of free will and therefore we have the ability to innovate.
- 2) Religion is often important for historical political development:
  - a) Ex: In the middle ages/early modern Europe, religious schools were often the only way that people could access primary and secondary education. States and kingdoms had an incentive to keep people in the dark and did not want them to be well read, because then they would challenge political power.
    - i) It was religious organizations who spearheaded the vast majority of early modern education. Even though that education was religious in nature, it did help to massively expand education to the masses.

Why religion is problematic:

- 1. Religion uniquely problematic because conflict is often worsened by religion
  - a. Examples: The Crusades were eight major military expeditions that originated in Western Europe between 1096 in 1270, with the purpose of recapturing Palestine from the Muslim because it was the area where Jesus had lived so an example of a religious conflict.
  - b. The 30 Years War was a 17th century religious conflict, but primarily in Central Europe. What started as a battle between Catholic and Protestant states that formed the Holy Roman Empire, led to the French wars of religion for a prolonged period of war and popular unrest between Catholics and Huguenots.
- 1) Direct kinds of conflict over religious conflicts itself: Jerusalem, temples, artifacts, etc. Argue who is the religious group who has the right to control those and whether they are legitimate
- 2) Religion is built around notions of internal exclusivity
  - i. Often pressure within religions to demonize other religions in order to encourage people to stay in your religion, but also prove to people that your religion is the best one

1. So religious leaders do this by criticizing other religions saying things like “That's not what God wants” and “other people are infidels, only my people are going to heaven”
2. Leads to a hatred of people outside one’s own religious structure since others are violating the true will of God

3) Conflict is inherent to religion, because there tends to be schisms and divides within particular kinds of religions

- ii. Example: sunnu/shia divide in Islam, Quebec conception of theology
- iii. Internal divides within religion tend to be VERY bad in promoting conflict because these people are people who used to agree with you, and who share similar baselines with your ideologies that are now literally contradicting that.
  1. So it's not someone of a different religion. It's literally someone who you think is like corrupting, like spirituality and the truth of what your own religion ultimately is, but can often create new kinds of hatred.

4) Even if leaders could use other justification, leaders make an active decision to use religion as a primary justification for some action, it probably means that other justifications are not as effective

- a. For example: Leaders frame that actions like genocide or forced relocation or cutting off of resources or starting wars are something that God or morality demands.
- a. There is a sheer number of people who are more likely to believe religious justifications because there are just more people who subscribe to religion.
- b. Also it is a justification that requires a lot less legwork to become appealing. You just bribe a head priest or use your support as a divine ruler to create rhetoric rather than having to justify economic or political reasons with some sort of evidence that most of the population probably isn’t educated enough to understand anyways
  1. Example: Particularly bad because during mid-colonialism prominent philosophers like Locke and Kant were rejecting colonialism for moral reasons, but religious education of the majority of Western populations allowed support for the process to concur for a longer period of time because it was uniquely powerful relative to other kinds of justifications that leaders use.
  2. More examples of leaders choosing this rhetoric over other

## 2. Religion is bad for people inside of it

- a. Certain minorities inside religious structures get fucked because religious theology is easily interpreted or directly advocates to discriminate them
  - i. Ex: Lots of religions saying that queer people are going to burn in hell, generally being against trans people, women in Saudi Arabia needing male guardians to accompany them wherever they go, Catholics supporting FGM, etc.
  - ii. **Important to weigh it in the context of a debate round.**
    - i. **Why should we prioritize a particular minority even if this oppression might still occur in secular society//benefits another group?**
  2. Extremity of what oppression within religion means
    - a. In the same way that notions of the afterlife can be important in providing a sense of fulfillment and purpose, it can also be actively damaging because if you truly believe you are going to burn in hell then the emotional consequences of such are really terrible
  3. There are lots of minority groups that might just outnumber the mainstream actor: women, queer, racial, the poor (cant read, etc.)
    - i. So many people experience marginalization under religion in the sense that one part of your identity is boosted as legitimate and another as illegitimate, so we should weigh the holistic value of that group quite highly
    - b. Ex: The poor: often marginalized because they cannot meet religious expectations of indulgences, or of charity, and can’t read religious texts/interpretations because many are illiterate, etc.
- b. Religious morality itself is something that is often harmful
  - i. Religious organizations have massive kinds of social influence, often because they were involved in early kinds of state formation that occurred in the vast majority of states, where there was a linkage and intermixing between church and state.
  - ii. Religious organizations often comprise of powerful lobbying groups, like mega churches in America, but they don’t need a lot of money to impact politics in the same way other malicious actors do because rhetoric is enough
    1. This is why they have been able to institutionalize LGBTQ+ discrimination to a large extent with things like conversion therapy and trans military bans, and harm women with negative attitudes towards birth control.
    2. **Positive kinds of morality exists in absence of religion**

- a. On either side of the house there is going to be a baseline level of morality that exists absent of religion
    - i. Why?
    - ii. Because 1) its intuitive: people have an natural inclination to want to want to be empathetic people and work together
      - 1. Which is why we don't like it when we see puppies kicked or left on the street, or seeing starving children in those World Bank ads) and why people come together for non-religious reasons to rebel or revolution like BLM or massive marxist movements in Latin America in 1980s
    - iii. 2) Laws constrain the worst excesses of our actions already in absence of religion
  - b. THEREFORE: comparative isn't whether we want morality to exist or not on either side, rather its whether religion exerts a net positive or negative effect on how we conceive of morality
    - i. Given that religion often supports many of these problematic ideals/people use it in uniquely shitty ways, its negative in how it shows people morality
  - 3. Also, its harder to challenge religious conceptions of morality because you can't really have proof that religion is something thats incorrect
    - a. **Timeline weighing:** Therefore, religious morality tend to exist for longer periods of time compared to general social norms that progress at a faster rate.
      - i. Ex: the average person has a more favorable view towards LGBTQ+ people than an average member of a religion
      - ii. This isn't to say religion hates queer people, but rather the average rate of social progressiveness tend to evolve asymetrically
- c. Constraints your identity
- i. Pretty intuitive: People deserve maximal amount of agency over their lives and they should be free to effectively construct their own identity
    - 1. Why? Because we don't have fixed preferences and we are all unique, independent beings.
      - a. Therefore, to maximize our own happiness and personhood, we must be able to choose for ourselves
    - 2. But religion has a variety of rules that we have to follow that inherently decrease our choices since it often does things like instruct what clothes to wear, what clothes to eat, who to marry/divorce, how many kids you can have, whether you can have birth control: it often forms the center of one's choices and identity
      - a. Problem is: its entirely arbitrary who gets that identity because its based on the parents that you are born into, the community that you live in, which exert massive influence over our lives
        - i. Impacts: This is a principle wrong
        - ii. But also it decreases our utility, because people under religion cannot choose the kind of life practices that would actually otherwise be the most meaningful for them.
- d. Religion has led to harmful developments throughout human history
- i. Same claim as the education claim
  - ii. It delayed a period of human history in which science was developed
    - 1. Locked up Galileo for saying things like the Earth revolved around the sun, rather than the Sun revolves around the Earth
    - 2. Punished people for attempting to become doctors by suggesting that illness was not a spiritual condemnation, rather a physical factor that can be alleviated
      - a. Therefore: science was developed at a slower pace
      - b. This is important because scientific innovations are really important, particularly in a time period with the plague and stuff, so having them earlier would have been very valuable and probably saved hundreds of thousands of lives
    - 3. Used as a justification for slavery and colonialism
      - a. Use ideology analysis here
      - b. Because religion is such a powerful ideology, it was easier to get people to buy into these highly immoral kinds of social practices for a longer amount of time

Why religious reform is slow/fast: While religions evolve at a relatively slow pace, religion can still evolve in a couple of key ways

- 1. External factors affect it
  - a. How does nationalism affect religion?

- b. How do different religions interact?
  - c. How does technology affect religion?
2. Internal factors: people within religion desiring particular things
- a. This evolution is slow for two reasons:
    - i. Most religions tend to follow structures that are quite hierarchical in nature. So within religion, how the vast majority are established is that there tends to be a person at the top. For example, there's the Pope, and there's people, Pope's, and there's priests, and there's like, lower people within individual churches, and most religions operate in a similar ways
      - 1. This closes down reform because:
        - a. We don't question the people at the top of that hierarchy since they are often believed to have access to God's will or what God thinks, so nobody wants to question people who are so well regarded and venerated within religious structures, given the tremendous morality that they seem to possess
        - b. For people who want to advance up the religious hierarchy, there are massive kinds of pressure to not question what those embedded norms are present
          - i. Most religious appointments don't work democratically or meritocratically, but instead higher ups just appointing lower people within that structure
            - 1. As a consequence, lower people suck up to higher up people in order to guarantee that they are able to advance in the system
              - a. You want to advance because it often means social clout but also material resources like living in nicer places, you are told you are pleasing God more, you get prestige, etc.
                - i. Ex: Clearly this is true because the people at the top of religious hierarchies are overwhelmingly conservative old white men.
                - ii. And therefore they tend to be regressive or stagnant even if the average person within religion would ideally want or aspire to different things
  - 2. You can't really challenge the initial word of God, especially since the initial documents took place so long ago.

Why religious people should choose their leaders/have democracy (because religious entities are similar to the state)

Criteria for democracy:

- 1. State has a disproportionate influence on your life through its policy, so the only way to control your life is to control the state.
  - 2. State has coercive mechanisms which are infinitely more powerful than you. Therefore, to protect yourself, you need to be able to control the use of discourse mechanisms.
  - 3. The state is inescapable because you cannot live outside of the states (only between).
- Therefore, religious individuals should be able to choose their leaders because religion has a larger influence over your life, has more coercive power b/c has divine punishments worse than death, and is inescapable. Religion = the state.
    - (Pushing burden) Therefore, other side has to agree with voting in religious organizations, or show why they do not support the principle of democracy

World without organized religion clashes:

- Different clash: Do we prefer a world with religion as it exists under the status quo?
  - Like churches/mosques, lots of people subscribing to a religious leader, etc.
- Or do we prefer an individualized conception of religion, where people tend to decide what religion means for themselves?
- **You can use some of the arguments from above by making it exclusively for/in the absence of religious hierarchies.**

Clashes:

- 1) Do you get higher levels of spirituality when you have more freedom to choose what religion means for you? Or you need an abiding kind of community to feel that sense of joy? Do you need billions of other people around the world believing the same religious system that you do to feel like your own religious identity is actually validated?
  - a) Yes: importance of religion is inherently influenced by society of our social creatures and our own identities often legitimize substantially more when we see other people subscribing to similar kinds of identities
- 2) Do hierarchies tend to promote more radicalism because you often appoint people who are increasingly more conservative, or is individualized interpretation going to lead to more radicalism?
- 3) What will be the focus if individualized religion becomes a thing? Race?

- a) Group formation is quite inherent to the human psyche. Because from a psychological perspective, we often want to see how we are positioned within the world in terms of we want other people to subscribe to the same belief system as us just to make us feel better about ourselves.
  - i) Travel in packs, form around similar ideas as other people

## Identity Politics, Social Movements, and Messages

Why violence is justified:

1. Appeasement might be less violent, but it is dehumanizing on a fundamental level that is worse than violence. This is because violence is not necessarily a means to an end. Violence is a certain outcome when other things like peace are not certain. Violence is therefore cathartic.
1. Even if people die: every day people die waiting for change, so in the mind of protestors, at least this way for them to be free for 15 minutes rather than 15 years dying in a camp

Tin's cancel culture POI:

- If principle is premised on "emotional harm (harm which takes the form of a subjective insult) is sufficient harm for the state to legislate or for society to act"
  - Since principles have to be absolute: do you support trans people being cancelled by conservative majority?
    - Responding to the POI: This principle holds, but not in this context, because trans activism impacts are deeper than people being offended.
      - The reason why we don't cancel trans activists is not a question of emotional harm. This activist is advocating for someone else's basic human rights.
      - So, most instances of cancel culture is where a group of people feel offended at a particular statement, and that is the end. There is no larger consequence or context to that instance of being cancelled. There is not a principle of human dignity here.
        - In comparison, a trans rights activist is campaigning for the recognition of a certain group of peoples' humanity. The principle of human dignity outweighs the principle of personal offense.
          - Because even if we concede that there are people offended by the trans activist, this harm is outweighed by the far greater harm of denying individuals their humanity and recognition of identity.

Ventriloquist relationships: Why queer/feminist movements have an obligation to act in a way that best maximizes the utility for each individual member:

**Ventriloquist relationship** between FEMINIST/QUEER movement and the people they support, where the movements messaging effects to how everyone views that identity whether or not an individual with that identity actually buys into the movement.

- Why?
  - Because calling yourself the feminist movement and claiming to represent women, you necessarily take away and remove a part of each individual women's agency for two reasons:
    - 1. When you represent the entire group, you necessarily have to generalize every individual preference. These preferences have very specific nuances and often irreconcilable contradictions. Therefore aggregation erases nuances in preference.
    - 2. External society views you as representative of all women, because you are the movement of women and you call yourself the feminist movement. So people who look at women often see women through the lens of the feminist movement. Therefore, in being representative of these women, you determine to a significant extent how they are going to be acted towards and therefore also determine some level of agency.
      - Therefore: if you are removing the individual agency of a particular person and claiming to act as their representative, you have an obligation to act in a way, TO THE BEST OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE, best maximizes the utility for each individual member of that particular group.
- 1. (Then explain why the policy is structurally oppressive, therefore, even if it doesn't cause harm, the potential to cause harm makes it principally unjust)
- 2. (marriage specific) No side will abolish marriage/achieve full equality, etc because xyz reasons. Even if this never gets solved, the feminist movement has the obligation to oppose marriage because they have taken away the voices of individual women, so it is their obligation to then speak out against everything which has the structural potential to oppress women, even if they cannot abolish it.

## International Relations

General questions about political or economic unions?:

- How do different bodies decide? How do they interact with each other
- Who are the strong countries/weak countries?
- Who are the countries aligned with the US and aligned with China

- What are reasons China and US are good/bad allies? Point to domestic political issues.

## China

### History:

#### Pax Sinica: “us” vs. “them” - this is how Chinese kids are taught history

- China being the center of the global community, every and each corner of the world belongs to China
  - This is why the Chinese name for China is *chong-wuho* (bad pronunciation) middle kingdom
- Historically entrenched, prominent since literally the beginning of China until only a few years ago dropped by CCP
  - Important for understanding China’s contemporary I.R.
    - Understanding Belt and Road, “recreating the Silk Road”

#### Reaction to colonialism or perceived colonialism:

- 1930s-1950s: Japan vs. China war
- “Century of humiliation”: late 18th century to early 20th century: humiliating because colonial forces destroyed China, shape Chinese politics, take territory: ie. Hong Kong was given to Britain, lots of treaties signed

#### Mao:

- 1949-1976: Chairman Mao governed China: characterized by mass mobilization, centralization, collectivization of people and formulation of communes through mass propaganda + Mao’s revolutionary utopia belief
  - People were situated in communes with hundreds of thousands of people, communes responsible for development/industrialization
    - Mao wanted to beat USA
      - But because of lack of technology + unskilled labour force
      - Also bureaucrats had incentive to lie to get recognition + money, inflated targets
        - Resulted in: 1958-1961 FAMINE, failed mobilization
          - **Evidences Mao’s “cult of personality” to motivate people to essentially mass commit suicide, millions of deaths from this “Great Leap Forward”**

#### Other valuable historical events:

- First 5 year plan, beginning years of Mao
- Mao’s policies to root out corruption
- Cultural revolution, later years of Mao

#### 1976-2018: Contemporary China

- Nothing like Mao:
- Deng: put globalization and capitalism into China’s policy + authoritarian centralization power
- Other leaders: believed in stability was required for economic growth, maintained political system
- **Xi Jinping (came to power in 2010s):**
  - 3 common features of his rule over China:**
    1. Not comparable to Mao or Deng, because his vision for China is far more globalist and internationalist than others; perceives the rising influence and stability in China means that China needs to take a lead in global governance and affairs
    2. Xi is not as committed to ideology as Mao, but not as ideologically free as Deng.
      - He continued centralization of power (Beijing gets power and information of local municipalities and cities)
      - Economic modernization and connecting China to rest of the world
    3. Xi has taken active approach to cracking down on opposition to his rule

#### “China is an authoritarian state”

##### Some more nuance to this:

- 1) Nonetheless, there is still some separation of power (not like West though) between the Party and the Government
  - Party decides the ideologically framing of policy on national, provincial, and even local level (villages)
  - Government focuses on **implementation** of these policies
    - One party system means that the Party can decide many factors of how government works
    - An attempt to separate roles
  - Legislative branch: CPPCC political mediation and negotiation between national party and local leaders
- 2) “Turn towards rule of law” in Chinese politics, making legal education less ideological and more robust
  - Why? Cuz local protestors who are using law to get better outcomes
- 3) Locking up civil rights lawyers, etc:
  - Claimed by some as evidence that China is rolling back reform
- 4) Hierarchy of Chinese politics:
  - a) At the top: Xi is at top, one of 7 members of

b) >>??????

1990s hierarchy of politics:

- New system: talk to offices above that have same responsibility as you
- Old system: talk to offices above in governing the region
  - Why important?
  - **Signals shift to greater focus on specialization and working with offices that have functional synonymity**

**Recent trends in Chinese politics:**

- 1) Increasing crackdown on corruption; but these people are often losing power anyways
- 2) Xi is trying to recreate MAo cult of personality; Xi is being enshrined in constitution
  - a) Is China moving towards political liberalization? Enshrined in constitution is not liberalization, but Xi practices more liberal values so his liberal values are being enshrined in constitution- clash up for grabs
- 3) Shift towards greater meritocracy in China
  - a) Less emphasis on partisan ideology
  - b) Might not be true: still lots of emphasis on loyalty and selecting successors in that way
- 4) Is there a shift towards greater democratization?
  - a) To what extent are these elections democratic?
    - i) Local elections: are not rigged, more efficient ways to cling onto power
    - ii) Probably not democratic because clan leaders run, leaders of famous families or large corporations, etc.

China's society and culture:

- 1) Inequalities in China
  - a) Three types of inequality:
    - i) Urban-rural inequality
      - (1) Sources from urban areas developing substantially faster than rural areas developing
      - (2) Educational inequality props this up: **hukou system**
      - (3) Shift from politicians caring primarily about rural to urban cuz migration
      - (4) Coastal areas turned into special economic zones, FDI stayed on the coast never trickled inland
    - ii) R
    - iii) f
- 2) Civil society

Afghanistan under the Taliban

- Allies: China, Pakistan, Russia, Iran (aligned with anti-USA)
- Enemies: USA
- Unclear: India - part of economic unions in South Asia and border Afghanistan, so have incentive to play nice and focus on new security concern of Afghanistan and Pakistan working together.

**How this has shifted geopolitics: Aligning powerful enemies against the USA, giving China huge power in region**

Iran:

- Iran's new administration has strategically repositioned the country towards prioritising relations with other Islamic states, but ALSO in partnership with Russia and China.
  - Basically, bringing Iran's allies closer with Russia and China, aligning the Islam world against the USA
- The Iranian Supreme National Security Council then declined to agree to the draft Vienna agreement for a relaunch of JCPOA, the Iran nuclear deal
- Iran was invited formally to join the SCO (which ultimately would imply Iran joining the Eurasian Economic Union), thus giving the country a fresh economic and trade horizon - absent the lifting of the US siege of its economy.

China, Russia,

- During Taliban's takeover, China and Russia (coincidentally) closed the airspace over northern Afghanistan on account of their joint military exercises taking place to the north of the country - and, for the first time, the two powers exercised under joint military control.
- Afghanistan is geographically important, it is the gateway between China and the rest of Eurasia.
- Afghanistan is a security concern for China, because West China has strong Islamic ties and culture, and are ethnically Turkic so related to people in Afghanistan in many ways.
  - But China doesn't want Uyghur people to move into Afghanistan because wants their labour, doesn't want to stir problems with Afghans over immigrants, wants them to become "real Chinese"
  - Also doesn't want people in Afghanistan moving into China, because that would make it harder to discipline West China and also cause concerns with Afghanistan over the treatment of Afghani people

- HUGE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR CHINA: China will likely build a pipeline along the "five-nation corridor", bringing Iranian oil to China, via northern Afghanistan. It will likely then follow on with a north-south corridor, ultimately linking St Petersburg via Afghanistan to Iran's Chabahar port, lying across the strait from Oman.

## Pakistan

- Pakistan has strategically repositioned too, by declining to host any US military presence in its territory.
- Pakistan funded the Taliban heavily and basically is the roots of the modern Taliban

## Ukraine

- History of being invaded by Russia (Crimea in 2014), and being a poor/desolate country
- No foreign investment because fear it will get fucked by Russia again
- Not stable and lots of corruption: switch currencies twice in 50 years + politicians have embezzled billions from EU subsidies
- Comparatively not worth investing: stuck in farming because every other industry better value and available elsewhere

## Cyber surveillance good:

- A big problem in the past was: misunderstandings, and each side worrying that the other is planning something, and being forced to react quickly or pre-emptively without checking if they misunderstood or not
  - For example: one way that we got very close to a nuclear exchange during the Cold War was a communication failure where America failed to inform the USSR that they were doing tests on their weapons, leading the USSR to notice that weapons were being moved into the Pacific and thinking that they might be in danger
- Cyber surveillance is a constant struggle because no one has a comparative advantage in it, so everyone is dedicating a lot of resources to it, and it is impossible to 'win' in surveillance.
- Cyber surveillance gives more information about each country obv.
  - Therefore, when countries spy upon each other, they are confident that the other isn't planning anything and don't react in extreme ways without genuine reason
  - And if either side does plan anything, they can mobilize a deterrence more quickly than would otherwise be possible, thus making conflict a worse gamble when they can't strike before the other side is ready as easily
  - Makes wars less deadly

## Protracted elite battles = people get fucked:

In countries which are resource cursed or very authoritarian in nature, for politics to change or for policies to shift, it doesn't really matter what an average person wants: if a ton of people rebel because it will never be a hugely sufficient majority that has the manpower or organizational skills to overthrow a military/security service b/c of obvious reasons.

- The way policies/political regimes change if the party's cohesion is threatened by disunity or ideological polarization and it gets overthrown or has to undergo significant policy changes. This is reasonable because elites control almost everything in these countries: some run the military, some run the banks, some run international trade and investing, some run the security service -- but it is all a small group of like ~500 people max. If one group dissents or refuses to obey the central authority, it significantly hinders the efficacy of the other parts. For example, if a bank refuses to lower interest rates because it personally fears inflation, this could throw off military investment plans which require loans or the politicians who promised everyone could get more affordable mortgages and now is facing scrutiny.

## The problem then is:

- people vs. single unified military ends quickly because one side is way better planned and has way more power
- but when elites fight, they all sides the connections and capital to get big weapons, but they lack the information to know what another group will do (will car bomb the president? will they police raid and arrest the rival politicians?) and they act very vindictively and preemptively, so their battles are a lot bigger and more dangerous and since they are similar in power they last a lot longer. Therefore a lot more people die, a lot more infrastructure is destroyed, and politics is halted for months or even years on end (impact more here and weigh)

Potential ref: I will say that it is maybe a bit too black-or-white to say that people dissenting doesn't matter -- see the Arab Spring, democratization in Argentina and Brazil being triggered by mass protests, etc.

## State Policy - Public vs Private Sector

### 1. Capacity

- a. Where is there more money to set up? (Taxes? Stocks? Economies of scale?)
- b. Where is there more information? (Government data banks? Free market dynamism?)
- c. Expertise? (What kind of workers can you afford?)
- d. Planning? (Shareholders or politicians? Bureaucrats or CEOs?)
- e. Lack of competition? (Are government monopolies better than oligopolies/free markets?)

### 2. Incentives:

- a. Externalities (Pollution and education, can we regulate?)
- b. Do they care about efficiency or output? (Profit vs votes, shareholders vs politicians)
- c. Where are incentives more perverse? (Cronyism or price-gouging)
- d. Who is more accountable? (Lobbying and media in government vs shareholders, employees, consumers)
- e. **Do they care about the long-term?** (Reckless overspending? Long-termism for environment?)

# International Economics - Free Trade vs Protectionism

## 1. Free Trade

- a. Investment (FDI) to boost growth
- b. Better structural growth (Governments pick bad industries, markets pick better ones)
- c. Competition means efficiency
- d. Cheap goods for consumers
- e. Benefits of interpersonal connections (IP, tech, skills, connections)
- f. Access to other markets

## 2. Protectionism

- a. Financial stability (Local investments are less volatile)
- b. Better planning (Governments can avoid structural traps)
- c. Local industries don't die off (profits don't go abroad, jobs go to citizens)
- d. Better for workers (Better wages, government investment into growth)
- e. Benefits of ownership of local resources
- f. Tax revenue from other markets

- a. Capture of assets
  - i. \$3.4B forgiven by China - Deborah Brautigam
  - ii. China operates Gwadar Port in Pakistan and jointly operates Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka with a 65% stake for 35 years
- b. Open up markets to Chinese goods
- c. Provide raw materials to Chinese markets

## 2. Capacity:

- a. Some money, much lesser than IMF (How does this affect bargaining power?)
- b. Weaker exchange rate (Lesser funding? Cheaper repayments?)
- c. Technical assistance (Highly efficient manufacturing? Low-quality?)

## 3. Incentives:

- a. Maintain a strong market for consumption (Dumping? Stability?)
- b. Creates infrastructure to use your region for trade (Power asymmetry? Stability?)
- c. Wants employment for Chinese workers (Worth local employment?)
- d. International political incentives (Less Western interventionism? Chinese aggression?)
- e. Domestic political incentives (Sovereignty? Condoning dictatorship?)

# International Institutions - IMF?

## 1. Conditionality

- a. Austerity
- b. Focus on resource extraction industries
- c. Trade and financial liberalization

## 2. Capacity:

- a. High level economic education (Expertise? Ideology?)
- b. Lots of money and strong exchange rate (Lots of funding? Expensive debts?)
- c. Technical assistance (Surveillance and efficiency? Unnecessary red tape?)

## 3. Incentives:

- a. Repayment of loans (Short-term extraction? Long-term planning?)
- b. Voter states' incentives may deviate from repayment of loans (access to markets, political influence)
- c. Domestic incentives focus on democracy (Violation of sovereignty? Benefit to people?)

# State Policy - Banning vs Regulating

## 1. Banning:

- a. Much easier to enforce, no loopholes
- b. Restricts the product to very small black markets, with many ways to deal with them
- c. Stops the growth of the industry and its lobbying power
- d. Sometimes a moral obligation

## 2. Regulating:

- a. Nuance means you can avoid the worst excesses and keep the benefits
  - i. **Explain the regulation, describe what you mean.**
- b. Creates huge black markets
- c. Maintains significant tax revenue for the government, helping to deal with related and unrelated harms
- d. Sometimes a moral obligation to maintain choice

## 2008 Crisis: Regulation vs. Deregulation in the Finance Industry

Why deregulation bad:

Claim: "loans are necessary to get economy moving"

Response: **Characterizing 3 types of loans:**

1. Unproductive gambles: Incredibly risky financial instruments like shorting certain shares, options, futures that aim to make money betting on future of economy
  - a. The problem: None of these investment capital in the economy or make value. All it does is make people who already have a significant amount of wealth grow their wealth further which then sits in a retirement portfolio
2. Investments that prop up bubbles because people think their value can increase forever. For example, people buy houses en masse in China, in the West so they can turn it for a higher price in the future.
  - a. The problem: These investments are not responsive to market supply and demand factors. At some random tipping point the rich investing class realize they have no value for whatever reason because the market had been diminishing their value so long under the radar, that their price unforeseeably and rapidly crashes.
3. Legitimate loans (this is the minority) for college students, small businesses -- generally investments for the working class.
  - a. The problem: The credit for legitimate loans comes from the same institutions and out of the same pool of funds as the first two types of loans, so whenever financial crisis happens as a result of the first two investment types, these legitimate people suddenly lose access to all their credit, and this continues for many years after the crisis as banks adjust to risk.
    - i. Imagine: midway paying off student debt or a legitimate mortgage on your first house and the economy crashes, you are probably never going to be able to pay for those things now and be burdened with debt for the next 20, 30, 50 years.
    - ii. Imagine: planning on starting your small business and quitting your shitty job but then after a financial crisis banks are no longer willing to loan to you because your credit score is low, you have other lines of credit, because you are too young and haven't established a sufficient credit history, etc. -- This disproportionately affects young people, poor and middle class people, people of color, women, queer people, etc.
      1. **Central conclusion here: even if there was a lot of good done from legitimate loans, it was all undone by the vast prevalence of the other two shitty forms of loans**
        - a. How do we know this? 1) Trivially, economies wouldn't crash if there wasn't a sufficient amount of investment in the thing whose price crashed. Obviously people invest a lot into unproductive gambles like currency markets in 1997 Asian financial crisis, bubbles like in 2008 subprime loan housing crisis, cryptocurrency like 2018 and beyond.
        - b. Statistically, the top 1% own as much capital as the bottom 99% on Earth
        - c. Logically, there are also significant opportunity costs to not investing a large amount of money, and this cost only grows the more money you have. A 2% return on 10,000\$ is much smaller than a 2% return on 10 million dollars.

Give that deregulation consistently leads to market crashes, there are 4 tradeoffs:

1. Gains of deregulated growth only went to rich people. Unclear why we should value these gains.
  - a. Poor and middle-class lost
2. Public debt: governments did not save much in 1980s and 1990s because prosperous, so when financial crashes happened they had to take out even more loans and raise taxes, etc. The burden was not put on the government but rather millions of marginalized people
3. Unclear if economic growth in the West resulted from mass deregulation. Other reasons:
  - a. The open and rising of China and Southeast Asia as hotspots of cheap labour and lowcost manufacturing
  - b. The dotcom bubble - significant tech improvement
  - c. End of the Cold war - no more military spending

Why deregulation good:

1. Increased size of economies such that even if there are recessions the economies
  - a. Trivially true: USA still bigger than rest of world even after recession
  - b. More job, more income, more employed, more saving for children/old age
  - c. Businesses are growing: wider variety of goods at lower prices
    - i. Why?
      1. Higher regulation = less lending b/c higher reserve regulations, which means less speculative capital which is essential for these industries.
        - a. This is bad because the vast majority of high tech economy in investment into AI, etc. are highly speculative (which is most of West world). Banks need to be able to lend to support these industries and the hundreds of thousand people they employ.
          - i. This means less jobs, less capital, more poverty
          - ii. This is bad because loans used to expand, engage in new market
          - iii. Unable to recovery after recessions as easily because no capital
            1. **This effect multiplies:**
              - a. If you have a job, now you can spend, multiple effect - chain effect
2. Decreased likelihood of crisis
  1. Regulation = government picks winners, some institutions have to be saved, others will never get support. Therefore: too big to fail since only one or two competitors and they know they will be saved
    - a. No incentive to fear future of your institution or the market
    - b. Feel less responsible for the money since can be replaced mostly
    - c. Have close connections with government which is seed for corruption, for revolving door industry like oil and government in Australia
      - i. This means worse goods, worse employment standards, worse management
      - ii. Worse risk management since it doesn't matter what the fuck you do
      - iii. More corruptions
      - iv. More scrutiny from investors
3. Increased access to financial resources
  - a. They need housing, not renting.
  - b. Feel abandoned by gov

Economics warfare effective?

Basically there are 3 ways the international community is pressuring Russia to stop the war with Ukraine. The first two are relatively ineffective (but up for grabs in characterization). These are proofs why economic warfare will/will not work, and potentially why direct military intervention is necessary.

1. Seizing elite assets such as freezing their bank accounts, raiding their superyatches, etc. This looks optically amazing, but in reality it maybe takes 50bn out of 500bn of their wealth away. Most of it is out of the US and allies' reach, especially since Russians were hit with smaller, targetted versions of these a long time ago so Russians have had time to adapt
2. Fucking over Russian banks: removing them from Swift (the platform which banks use to coordinate with eachother), freezing Russian-held assets in ally banks, general export bans and lack of buying Russian cash which is aggressively driving down currency. These are not effective because 1) EU is still buying oil (and gas) so Russia has a fuckton euros but this might change once EU moves away in Feb 2023, 2) Turkey, China, and UAE are buying Russian currency because Russia is selling oil that EU is not buying at a huge discount

3. Sanctions on TECH/semiconductor IMPORTS: this is the largest margin of change allegedly. USA and Taiwan has banned tech imports directly which, but also USA patent office has a policy where no one can sell anything that the USA has HELPED manufacture or anything that uses or is related to a US patent (this is enforced by UN), so literally almost every single mainstream tech patent cannot be sold to Russia. In the short term, they dont have enough semiconductors to manufacture things, update oil rigs, update airplanes, update data centers, etc. Long term there will be a lot of infrastructure breakdown b/c of this, but also hundreds of thousands of educated people and high tech workers are leaving because they are no longer useful

Semi-conductors and why efficiency exposes semiconductor industry to huge supply risk:

### 1. There is a huge semiconductor shortage

#### a. Why?

- i. Supply chains unable to adjust to sudden demand: during COVID, car sales plummeted while everyone was in quarantine, while consumer electronics like webcams, laptops, home appliances, etc. exploded in demand.
- ii. A car only needs one semiconductor (literally 1) to have all its cool advertised features, but phones, webcams, even rice cookers and microwaves also only need 1. Significant increase in demand, and cancelling orders from other semiconductors products like cars was not enough.
- iii. **Supply timeline:** It take 3-6 months to produce a batch of semiconductors. THATS A LOT OF TIME! Its a complex engineering process to weld a billion transistors onto a single chip, workers have to maintain and operate in environments that are cleaner than hospitals because the engineering process needs to be perfected down to the nanometer, to the point where dust and germs can be the difference between selling one and throwing one out. Theres also a million parts to outsource and arrive at the moment you are putting it together, etc. Then you have to TEST the semiconductors in a different facility in a different country, then you have to ship the semiconductors to manufacturers, who then have put them into their product. The supply chain cannot react to everyone being forced to stay at home in 2 weeks, they literally fill orders years in advance.

1. **Overly complicated timeline:** semiconductor industry, as it is so important to continue selling consumer electronics which is the main driver of GDP growth in all developed countries, is as efficient at producing as possible and precisely regulated.

- a. This means there is an independent profit-driven company for every step of the process: getting the parts, providing the technology to put the SCs together, getting the factory workers, getting the factory space, etc. Its at least 50 different companies in one supply chain.
  - i. This leads to the problem of information asymmetry, since there are so many private moving parts they don't know what is the best outcome, so they use business projections and make profit-maximizing decisions for themselves at a cost for the market as a whole (and they do this UNKNOWINGLY):
- b. For example: Toyota wants to make 20 million cars, but it wants some breathing room, so it orders 21 million electronics. Samsung recieves this order and wants to account for risk in-case Toyota needs more or some are not up to quality in the batch, so they order 22 million semiconductors. Foxconn sees 22 million orders but they are literally using child and enslaved labour who make mistakes because they are poor, starved, and uneducated so they order 25 million to account for risk. The mining company in South Africa sees this and they fear demand going up after COVID so they produce 30 million.

2. And suddenly, we needed 20 million semiconductors for just 1 company, but 30 million resources have been queued up for production. Now imagine this at scale where Apple is ordering 100 million, Ford/Huawei/Amazon/Google,etc. Ordering 50 million each, etc.
  - a. Others might say: but managers account for it: but no, the fact that demand rose unexpectedly and spiked after only 2 weeks of lockdown means there was no way for managers to account there was too much money to be made, there was no precedent for this scenario, etc. So they just did what they usually do.
    - i. Another implication of information asymmetry is: companies in times of crisis start HOARDING! They order more out of fear for no demand in the future!

There are only 3 semiconductor producers in the world: **SUPER FUCKING FRAGILE**

- 2 are in Taiwan
- Why only 3?
  - Require the most amount of capital and other market conditions to succeed

Crypto and NFTs:

No need for a bank, entirely decentralized

- In practice though it is just another medium for banks to operate in: does not address 99% problems of banks (which are problems of human behaviours)

No loaning/holding entity, you just have crypto in your wallet

Expensive, medium for illegal activity

Very environmental cost b/c need energy to mine coins  
Solve problems efficiently, but sometimes get it wrong

Lots of prohibitions to make mining hard, require strong computer - still values wealthy  
Proof of stake, proof of work  
Transactions cost really high, but there are battles over this

Stable coins -- not enough buyers or liquidity

Art theft

- Not for all artists, just rich and popular and connected people get art
- Its a casino

## Legal/Law/Legal Ethics

Why retribution is bad for victims:

1. What you want right after the crime is different from what you want upon reflection. Right after the crime, you are emotional and angry and you may push for the criminal to be locked up. Later, when the emotions are more processed, you may feel super guilty about ruining someone's life
2. This is a huge thing to put in the lap of a victim. Many victims have mixed feelings about, say, the person who abused them, or the person who robbed them but was poor and had a hard life. This gives the victim the choice to press charges and do something they may not feel confident in, or not press charges and have their suffering continue (different people from than 1)
3. Retribution makes victims more vulnerable to social backlash. You may be seen as the person who sent Tommy down the street who everyone loves to prison for twenty years, and people who like Tommy will resent you if they see it that way. This again increases the cost of coming forward, and just generally exposes victims to a lot of bullshit

Why prison fails/why it doesn't get rehab:

If justice system is not bought into:

- Need buyin from Justice system, otherwise no one ever reports
- If no one reports, vigilante justice is far more likely, and that is incredibly harmful

Parts of Justice

Justice has two parts:

- Interpreting where the law is right now
- What the law should be / what rights should be → thats the role and competency of the legislative. So presumably they have the wisdom to know what should be.
  - If an act happened in the past and its immoral in the past,

## Climate Change and the Environment

Weighing: Even if you don't stop climate change entirely, it is valuable to slow it down:

1. The impacts of climate change advance more slowly, giving us more time to predict them and adapt. It is easier to renegotiate refugee resettlements over 50 years than 10 years, and it is easier to figure out how we are going to feed people if land goes underwater in a more slow and predictable fashion
2. More time before catastrophe gives us more time to find technological solutions that might solve the problem once and for all, such as things that would make green energy radically cheaper, or very good carbon capture technology that could offset emissions

Animal rights:

**Animals deserve equal moral consideration as humans because we know animals feel pain and pleasure.**

- Suffering is a priori bad. The fact that human suffering is bad is so obvious that it's impossible to analyze -- therefore, all we have to do is show you why the suffering of animals is morally analogous to the suffering of humans.
- We know animals can feel pain, pleasure, fear, and can think freely. For example: This is why rats respond to electric shocks by avoiding the trigger, and why we use animals as test subjects for tests on human psychology.
  - **Opp might say: animals are physically different and that equality only applies to humans:** however, our equality is not descriptive of actual physical equality between humans, it is a prescription of how we should treat living beings. Equality does not depend on the capacity of living beings such as intelligence, moral capacity, physical strength, etc. It is a moral idea.

How do we know this? Because if it was about physical capacity:

- 1) Why do we not condemn people with less than 100 IQ, or people who are so severely disabled they cannot leave their bed and live on life support? These people have significantly less capacity than many of the animals on the planet.
  - 2) Why do we shy away from implementing policies which cite measurable differences between humans: how women tend to have higher IQs than men, europeans tend to be taller than asians on average, etc.
- The reason we care about equality therefore is not contingent upon considering abilities, it is contingent upon considering interests.
  - This is the premise of our fight against sexism and racism: where we acknowledge it is not enough merely to give other humans equal treatment, but to give equal consideration to their interests and to promote equity.
    - Insofar as animals have interests that we can observe with them running away from pain and spending time with things they love, they deserve equality.
  - If opp wants to argue animals do not deserve equal moral consideration to humans, they have to prove why most people would not believe in equality, and why other animals are so fundamentally different than humans.

Will oil companies shift to renewables?

Why will oil companies shift to renewables + equity industries being invested into:

1. Informational advantage: Makes sense to go into clean energy if you already know about unclean energy: what countries want, how to interact with oil execs, scientists who research energy science, investors who are confident in your ability to mine and sell energy comparatively to startups who have far less experience
  - a. For example: tobacco industry didn't move into gold, it moved into e-cigarettes
2. Reduces the oil resource curse: More competition when your main industry isn't a geographically protected monopoly like oil/gas, which means you diversify assets + incentivized to invest into human resources.
  - a. Problem before: resource-cursed countries never invest into public services and infrastructure because they only need control over a single state asset (the land of the oil/gas/mineral) and refineries/ports to make money + their politics are focused on fighting over that single resource. They don't need educated workers or vocational work, they don't need healthcare beyond a minimum account because nobody is doing dangerous work, etc.
  - b. But now, because you shift to being like every other economy: National economies can only survive through human resource development: upscaling education, vocational work, etc. Things that reduce income inequality, more social services, etc.
    - i. Therefore: climate change reduces (explain how it)

Oil prices dropping good or bad?

If oil prices drop this is good because:

- a. OIL PRICES WILL NOT CRASH: new industries will capitalize on the cheap oil inflating its price in short run until reasonable alternatives are met
  - i. Even if oil prices drop, not necessarily a bad thing: portfolios diversify against oil drops because they recognize it is a very volatile market -- this is also why many markets bet against oil and benefit from it dropping (ie. biofuel, green alternatives, etc.) Many countries will benefit economically from oil.
    1. Subprime loans
    2. Short your own stocks (since you have most information about how your oil do)
    3. Creative destruction is a positive thing (why companies will shift to renewables, above)
  - ii. Venezuela isn't a good example because they are incompetent
- d. Companies cannot hoard oil and wait for it to go up again
- e. No longer invest in huge capital to refine them low marginal returns for a barrel of oil if price is low, so less investment into terrible polluting things

Why oil prices going down is terrible:

- All countries are affected by this
- Inflation, bank rush,
- Manipulate demand, huge contingency funds,

- Predict oil prices go down, oil prices go down, layoffs, etc.

## Other stuff, misc

### Brave New World motion

This house prefers a "Brave New World" to the status quo in Western Liberal Democracies.

A "Brave New World" has these characteristics:

1. People are genetically engineered and socially conditioned by the state for specific societal roles.
2. People's material and physical needs are unfailingly met.
3. There is no possibility of changing the social order.

Gov:

1. Why Free will does not exist: the fact people have a sense of free will does not mean it actually exists
  - a. Free will: ability to choose outcomes aside from random circumstances
  - b. Random circumstances: every future decision is made by every past decision, random genetic lottery, social values that arose in the past, your proximity to education and where you are born, etc. -> all inform how people behave in the present moment
    - i. Therefore free will does not exist
2. Experiences are relative to environment. So if you manipulate them or their life is so great, then they wont rebel. etc.

Opp:

1. Principle: autonomy
  - a. Comparative: people express autonomy: Collectivize the change, organize and protest
2. Marginal benefits are small, harms massive
  - a. Structurally, there will always be working class people who struggle against power to influence politics and push socialist policies.
    - i. Gov knows this, so they will try their best to separate classes, suppress protests, etc.
      1. Even if you get indoctrinated, you will still be angry: Why humans always want more/willing to fight for their autonomy:
        - a. **Humans uniquely experience things relationally** and think on the margins: you should be happy with making a salary of 50,000\$ a year, and maybe itll get you through life peacefully, but you know you would be far happier if you had 100,000\$ a year, especially if you see other people enjoying the things that larger salary provides like vacations and cars and clothes that you don't get to experience.
        - b. Humans are social and understand themselves in groups compared to other groups. Thats why we identify as arbitrary countries compared to other countries and shit on Yanks for being Yanks and think Canadians are generally boring and/or irrelevant.
          - i. All of this means: if you just BELIEVE, god forbid literally see and experience, that there are people who are different than you, or have more than you in this world, you will want it for yourself or your family, and you will fight for it.

Why artificial preferences created by machine are bad:

- b. EVEN IF preferences become homogenized by the state and therefore they don't matter, there are still competing personal incentives created by the social constructs the state makes. For example: I have pressure to win this debate round from myself and my partner, but I also have pressure from friends who tell me to relax or focus on my grades. Consequently, people are still able to express preferences on Gov and still, importantly, DESIRE THE WILL to express preferences. But they are far more limited on Gov in a way that undermines their principle right to autonomy.
- c. Even if an individual has a strong preference, for example to be a heroin addict, that isn't actually good for you, which means the decisionmaking body does not necessarily know what is good for you
- d. Preferences can have different weight depending on the situation they are expressed in: so in Govs world even I don't win this debate and study instead and I'm happy, I would be able to be happier had I had the opportunity to win the debate
- e. Utilitarianism is a bad metric (other part of doc)
  - i. Therefore, these artificial preferences rip people of the most important right, which is the freedom to practice agency and decisionmaking.
    1. Agency on our side looks like: xyz

### 1. Why Mexican farmers poor? Western farm subsidization + NAFTA:

- a) Peasants tend to increase their input costs, which makes them less competitive overtime.

In Global South, input costs super low (family run, simple tools, good environment, etc.), they are really good at their job. In order to compete in global market, West HEAVILY subsidizes agriculture (billions poured into farm subsidies).

- To keep up with the West, Global South farmers feel compelled to INCREASE their production, which requires increasing their input costs (take on debt, buy expensive equipment, buy expensive crop seeds).
- b) Subsidization increases output of food goods, which decreases the market price of the food goods. When the price of the food goods decrease, Global South farmers have to sell more (which costs more input) or cut costs (fire people, decrease wages, etc.).

This simultaneously creates (1) cheap, racialized, precarious labour, which artificially continues to suppress wages of agricultural workers internationally. (2) Monopolistic, giant agribusiness because only the most financially efficient can survive this cutthroat market, which further reinforces low wages as the sole employer/contractor of farm labour.

- This is why wealthy countries and corporations literally outbuy food AND LAND from domestic producers/consumers

Land colonialism: Land not used for producing food for local market, instead exported or to grow biofuel, or to grow food to feed animals for animal products

### 2. Power-knowledge of Western countries:

- Big institutions define the rules
- Lobbying defines trade advantages
- Which countries get subsidized, which countries get their agribusiness innovations patented

Everything is okay as long as things are becoming "more developed" (richer and richer, GDP is going up)

NOT FREE if big countries dictate the terms of trade

- Rich countries never pursued globalization policies, they protected their markets and subsidized their industries

Alternatives are literally better: food can be fed quite differently by restoring the rights and benefits of local farmers around the world

Good incentives of the state:

Good incentives of state to do generally well for people:

- 1) Democratic - cater to interests of people because otherwise you will be voted out of power  
If non-democratic - Performance legitimacy, you have interest to increase credibility of govt. To win over loyalty of different groups so you can hold onto that power
- 2) Legal reasons - Constitutions and laws of accountability states have an incentive to have at least due diligence in their actions (ie. can get sued if something is wrong with their water supply)
- 3) Media pressure - States have incentive to avoid media troubles and minimize media scrutiny that act as a threat to their power
- 4) Maximizing votes reaching out to minority groups - Adapted to minorities and different groups because majorities in most countries are divided into two-three distinct groups (ethnic, political, etc.) **(Ex: Growing support for republicans among hispanic men)**
- 5) International pressure - Supranational institutional pressures from entities such as the UN, the ICC, the WTO, the World Bank, the IMF, ASEAN, etc. to abide by general principles of ruling and interaction with populations.
- 6) Sustainability of the Government - A government would want to rule to the best of its capacity because otherwise there are issues of instability Ex. protests, coups, etc. **Politicians don't want to die in a sewer like Ghaddafi**

Bad incentives of states:

- 1) Elites do not care about expanding the economy they care about capturing the most
  - a) Ex: Carlos Slim and telecommunications company in Mexico

## ART MOTIONS:

### How to mech/characterize art motions:

- Consider structural parameters/unique characteristics of the form of art piece (for ex: movies have one plot, limited time so only humanize one side, see things very close up and emotional, visual, etc.)

### Peoples' behaviour: DONT ONLY FOCUS ON THIS

STEP 1: PROVE THE PROBLEM, that a policy/mechanism/harm is PRIMARILY predicated on cognitive biases (and not other things).

- Art/narratives don't always serve as peoples' conscious reference (people know art is fake, people know narratives are not necessarily true or ideal)
- But it has a subconscious effect (it shapes perceptions of what's normal, what's allowed, what's spoken about) in two ways:
  - Creates familiarity:
    - When you are unfamiliar with something, you are often biased against it (and inversely you are biased FOR what you ARE familiar with)
      - Give examples here
  - Changes what is normal in discussions and arguments because art/narratives influence background/subconscious thoughts:
    - When you are having an argument or trying to explain what is wrong with something, you often take latent or familiar thoughts for granted and focus on the larger, more disputable things.
      - For example: So in debating, we often don't question whether GDP growth or development is a good thing, instead we question whether alternatives do GDP growth better, even though development often creates inequality which makes the lives of most people worse.
      - For example: In real life, we often don't question that the reality of the world is a dog-eats-dog world with competition for limited resources, even though there is actually more than enough resources for everyone on Earth and lots of indigenous people across the world build communities of relationality and love rather than individualism and competition.
    - These large ideologies are hidden because they are naturalized through narratives and rituals -- THIS narrative/art works in the same way
    - It plants unconscious beliefs that "shift the overton window" and naturalize these beliefs, so people focus on more larger, more disputable things
      - Give example of the narrative here
  - First movers advantage: (Often because first-mover advantage from exposure: For example: we watch rom coms before we date, we watch highschool shows before we go to highschool)

### How to impact art motions:

- You can weigh: speculative changing peoples' behaviour vs. certainty of catharsis and feeling represented
- Make it a business debate; which companies benefit/harmed, which kind of artists benefit/harmed, how many consumers will watch, etc.
  - What's cheaper/more expensive
    - Historical sets are super high costs (prove here); so you can't employ artists as much
      - Compared to like a rom-com (costumes are regular everyday clothing)
  - How many people do you have to employ?

More art = people get bored of common stereotypes, so art diversifies/becomes less centralized around a stereotype

Impacts:

- People just enjoy identifying with things (ie. powerful villain with agency) or enjoy hating something
- When only narrative/art/characters are X, then having more diversity who are interesting
- More used to the idea that women have complex inner lives
  - Empathize, lust after, desire; men empathize more with women than other spheres

### Meching/characterizing

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Prep time:

**Assessing case quality:**

- Consider wide variety of contexts, don't bind just to one
- Consider wide variety of counterfactuals, don't bind just to one
- Deal with multiple tradeoffs (the obvious opp args); especially if the PM feels too optimistic
  - Gutcheck the comparative; is this exclusive? Does the motion require us to defend that?

THW/THBT specific:

1. MODEL: Consider opp args and general clarity problems
2. CONSIDER potential countermodels using same fiat and adjust to maintain exclusivity

**Assessing argument quality:**

1. Context: is the characterization reasonable? Gutcheck it.
2. Comparative: is there a clear tipping point? Vulnerable to easy mitigation?
3. Mechanism: outline logical steps of the mechanism, FIND AN EXAMPLE TO CITE.
4. Principles: can we weigh principle above practical? If not, don't run it.
5. Messages/narratives/norms/art:
  - a. a) Explain how narrative/message/norm/art is internalized (characterize the mindset of actor)
  - b. b) SHOW ME THE BLOOD - Gwen, give clear end impact and what tangible differences occur

Meta debating rebuttal:

1. Were they comparative?
2. Was their characterization correct?
3. Did they identify a tipping point?
4. Was their mechanism complete? What logical links are they missing?
5. Mitigation -> Unlikely, small impact, etc.