Editorial

The coronavirus has manifested itself in a variety of ways in countries that differ significantly from one another. And, of course, by this time there is hardly any place in the world where it has not struck. So, in addition to many other unresolved questions, the pattern of the virus's effects raises the question of what, exactly, decides whether countermeasures taken to combat it will work or fail. In this regard we are witnessing a kind of global real-time experiment in comparing political systems; furthermore a comparison of this kind eventually could supply some useful clues that might enable governments to do better, if and when some similar challenge should arise. The internationally-renowned German scholar of democracy, Wolfgang Merkel, who specializes in research on comparative democracy, already has launched the first study of its kind, which is the lead article in this volume. Merkel's preliminary findings are unequivocal and tend to confirm the impression that has been readily apparent to other attentive researchers in the course of the last six months. The difference in political systems expressed by the concepts »democratic« and »authoritarian« (along with all the shadings in between) – categories constantly cited by the research institute of the British journal, *The Economist* – do not explain whether a given country will succeed or fail in efforts to combat the coronavirus. For example, some major, venerable democracies such as the UK, the USA, and, in a different way, India, all come off very badly in such comparisons, whereas other democracies like Germany and South Korea achieve high scores. China, the poster child of authoritarian systems, initially was the breeding ground of the pandemic, but subsequently did a very good job of containing the infection, whereas Russia, another authoritarian system, was not able to achieve comparable success. Sweden, the world's exemplary democracy, initially chalked up some impressive accomplishments, but later was engulfed by the infection's overwhelming spread.

Merkel concludes that, in the case before us, it is not the institutions of the governing system that are decisive for successful government intervention. What matters instead is the quality of the governments in question, along with the capacity for solidarity inherent in societies with a strong sense of civic community and trustworthy media. Polarized societies and government policies that reflect them, not to mention qualitative defects in the conduct of governance, largely can nullify the considerable advantages enjoyed by democratically integrated societies and their institutions of participation and oversight. This finding makes a thorough-going political debate not only possible but also necessary.

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Wolfgang Merkel
The Virus and System Competition

Actually, the whole thing seemed to have been decided long ago. When the Soviet Empire collapsed in 1989, Francis Fukuyama, recalling Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel's speculative, metaphysical philosophy of history, proclaimed the »end of history.« The latter had become conscious of itself in the idea of reason. The victor became known as liberalism and emerged triumphant as the ordering principle behind both economics and politics. There was now »no alternative« [*sic*] to it. Within a scant 15 years, the course of the world had demystified such speculation. True, capitalism in fact did prevail across the globe, but not necessarily in its liberal version. Democracies grew more numerous, but their liberal variants, featuring the rule of law, were unable to gain much ground. An old-fashioned dictatorship, China, attained the status of a world power while Russia and Turkey became total autocracies. New democracies got established in South Korea and Taiwan; Singapore consolidated its efficient semi-authoritarian regime, and Hong Kong slipped into a grey area between autocracy and democracy. In Latin America new authoritarian regimes took hold (Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua), while the virus of corruption, weak states, and authoritarian state-leadership infected what frequently had become defective democracies in Mexico, Brazil, and other countries. Evidently, the competition among systems was back again.

Around New Year's Day the novel coronavirus began to infect the world. We are currently experiencing the first truly global post-1945 crisis. The last such crisis was the so-called Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918–1919, which cost the lives of more than 20 million people and probably infected 500 million (a quarter of the world's population at that time). The current pandemic began in China, quickly spread to neighboring Asian countries and, at about the same time, to Europe. It then migrated to the USA and Latin America. We don't have much information from Africa or from South and Central Asia. It is not so much that the pandemic has not spread to those regions yet; rather, the weak or autocratic states there hamper testing and reporting. At the beginning of April, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that there were infections in 190 of 200 countries. Among the »healthy« countries were – characteristically – totalitarian ones such as North Korea, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan or the micro-states of Oceania. The first group suppresses information, hardly ever tests, makes up reports of success, or else »prohibits« the virus.

Even the figures coming out of the People's Republic of China are credible only up to a point. Sampling, testing, and reporting there are much too variable. Yet we do know that the People's Republic covered up the outbreak of the local epidemic and delayed taking countermeasures. But after that, they sealed off the eleven million residents of Wuhan with ruthless autocratic efficiency and placed 800 million people under a de facto quarantine. At the same time China expanded clinic capacity in record time and ramped up medical treatment on a massive scale. Fortunately, democratic systems do not have available to them the instruments of coercion used

in China. As far as actual numbers of the infected and deceased are concerned, we know only what the regime has revealed. No one should imagine that it comes anywhere close to the reality.

But of course, the statistical data of democratic countries are valid only to a certain extent and scarcely comparable. Sampling, testing, and reporting must be distinguished. The same is true of statistics from Johns Hopkins University, which are cited everywhere. Likewise, Western evening news reports on TV disseminate data on the official numbers of those infected and who either have had the virus or who have died of it. These figures, too, lack validity. In particular, the numbers of those officially infected tells us nothing about the estimated number of unreported cases and thus about the reality behind them. Nevertheless, in addition to the problematic availability of data, we have theories that offer information about variables and criteria that are relevant for evaluating the efficiency and legitimacy of state actions. Theories of this kind come from research on regimes, transformations, and state intervention. They can also become meaningful for analyzing the political consequence of anti-pandemic measures. At this juncture, I would like to identify six variables that help determine the success or failure of the latter. They should be assigned to three subsystems: the state, society, and the health care system. The »state variables« are the character of the regime (»Is the political regime democratic or autocratic?«); state capacity (»Does the state have established resources and routines at its disposal, or are the latter scanty and often unavailable?«); governance (»Is governance well-thought-out and oriented to the public good?«); and state-learning (»Were lessons learned from previous epidemics such as SARS-CoV: 2002–2004?«). The state variables are important, but by no means do they alone decide the outcomes. This is so because action by the state requires a society that is willing to follow its instructions. Here, we can distinguish roughly between individualistic and collectivist societies. The third subsystem, health care, is extremely important for the treatment of those who are infected and ultimately even of those who have died. Here, we must distinguish between well-financed public systems and those that are underfinanced and heavily privatized.

Socio-political configurations of society and state

Political regimes: As is the case with economic development, it is not possible to discern systematic differences in outcomes (success or failure) between democratic and autocratic systems. China (autocratic), which began to take action only after much hesitation – attributable to a cover-up by local bureaucrats – quickly proved quite successful. Rights and liberties were, in part, not simply restricted but so far as possible abolished. Even after presumably heavily sugarcoating its statistics, Iran still has paid a remarkably high price in lives lost. The pandemic policy of the United States (by this time classified as a defective democratic system) was a disaster until deep into April. The freely elected president, along with his soul brothers Jair Bolsonaro and Boris Johnson, played down the danger. The result was a rapid spike in the death rates.

In Europe, Italy, Spain, and France for a while became hotspots of the pandemic, although they did not have to suffer from the populist incompetence of their political leadership. Semi-authoritarian Singapore acted highly efficiently as did the democratic regimes of South Korea and Taiwan. Sweden, Denmark, and Germany, each a high-functioning democracy, have all done well to keep the crisis in check thus far. Incidentally, Germany's strategy approximates more closely to those of Spain and Italy than to the equally successful approach of Sweden. Although conclusions cannot be supported by valid, comparable data, this crazy-quilt review makes it obvious that the political character of the regime in and of itself does not reveal much about success or failure of crisis management.

Statehood. Becoming a full-fledged state (attaining full statehood) is more important than the political character of the regime. The capacity, will, learning, and actions of the state are crucial to success in controlling the outbreak. A state with high capacity is one that has a rational, high-performing bureaucracy with the least possible degree of corruption. Highly-developed democracies have such administrations; less developed democracies, ranging from India to the electoral democracies of sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, lack them. For the state to have a common will, there must be a democratic, pluralist system that does not override the give and take of government and opposition, but which nevertheless possesses a robust elite consensus on the constitutional division of powers. In many European democracies the point-counterpoint of government and opposition has receded too far into the background during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is noteworthy that the opposition has shown a high degree of self-effacement. Neglecting its democratic functions, the opposition has rarely criticized, has failed to exercise sufficient oversight, and has not introduced alternatives into the discussion. In Germany it took only a simple infection protection act, approved on »fast forward,« to suspend fundamental rights for a prolonged period of time. For a while the Constitutional Court and federalism were more effective guardians of the constitution than was the opposition.

Normally we assume that democracies learn more readily than autocracies. The feedback mechanism inherent in free elections forces them to do so on pain of losing voters. However, in times of right-wing populism, this democratic »law« is perverted, for then learning by the state sometimes takes an authoritarian direction. For example, Donald Trump proclaimed in front of whirring cameras: »When somebody is President of the United States, then his authority is total and that is the way it has to be. (…) It is total.« Whereas this claim was rejected by the opposition, the governors, and in public debates in the United States, more than two-thirds of the Hungarian Parliament went along when Victor Orbán empowered himself to rule by decree for an indefinite period of time. In a crisis it becomes clear that learning in a democracy does not absolutely have to be »democratic learning.«

The will of and actions taken by the state belong together. In democracies the state lacks a unitary will. The latter is even less present in federal systems. Federalism even can be an advantage, since divergent strategies can be adapted to

regional conditions, thus introducing different experiences into the learning process.

The structure of society. Whether or not even efficient action by the state succeeds depends a great deal on the society. The latter must submit to decisions made by the state. This willingness to follow state-issued directives may be generated in a variety of ways. In an autocracy it is achieved by openly inflicting harsh repression on the regime's subjects, but in democracies it requires marshalling good arguments that can persuade the citizens to comply. But even in the developed democracies there are sharp differences among societies. The individualized societies of the West stand opposed to at least the ideal type of the collectively-oriented Confucian societies of the East. In East Asia the latter often have a high degree of social cohesion. The common good as well as the welfare of the family take priority over the individual's aims. The societies of semi-authoritarian Singapore and Hong Kong as well as democratic South Korea and Taiwan conform to this pattern. The West is more heterogeneous. The Scandinavian societies, more oriented to the common good, exhibit a higher degree of social cohesion than that of the hyper-individualistic USA. The higher the level of social cohesion, the more likely a society is to follow state directives in a spirit of trust. And, all else being equal, the more likely it is that the latter will be able to weather a crisis.

The health care system. The third system, responsible for medical care and treatment, does more than that. If it is primarily public and well-financed, as it is in Scandinavia and Germany, treatment capacities will be more extensive and egalitarian. Fewer infected people will die and the virus will not display a class bias. But if health care is highly privatized and the public part of it remains grotesquely underfinanced, as in the USA, more infected patients will die, foremost among them the poor, who often happen to be disproportionately African-American. In democracies the health care system is one indicator of the humaneness of a society. The current crisis reveals just how (in)humane a society is. Health care systems such as those in Italy and Spain, which were bled dry during the euro and financial crises by neoliberal austerity turned out not to be up to the task of providing adequate care to their sick patients. That too is a lesson that could be drawn from the pandemic.

Adopting a synoptic method, in which the state, society, and health care system are viewed as an ensemble, we can identify certain ideal types of socio-political configurations and see how well or poorly the countries that embody them performed in coping with the pandemic. Underdeveloped statehood, a fragmented, polarized system for political decision-making, a hyper-individualized society and underfinanced public health care system constitute the ideal type for failure. The USA approximates very closely to that structure. An efficient state, a high level of social acceptance of state action, sufficient social cohesion, widespread consensus about the common good, and a well-financed public health care system are the actuating variables that enable a country to emerge from the crisis in good shape. A wide variety of democracies can be found that exhibit that configuration: South Korea, Taiwan, Sweden, Denmark, Austria, and Germany. However, it is not

so clear how these countries will manage the normative and economic post-crisis burdens that will follow in the wake of COVID-19. We will just have to wait and see what happens once the acute phase of the crisis is over.

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Foto: David Aussenhofer

Jennifer Wilton
The Norm, not the Exception

Women in political leadership positions

For decades, women were most likely to get ahead in politics when they adapted to dominant – male-patterned – leadership culture. But in the meantime, female politicians in a few countries have managed to develop a political style of their own. What happened?

In the summer of 2017, a young woman crisscrossed New Zealand, constantly on the go, even visiting places that were far from idyllic. Wherever she appeared, she smiled, as has been extensively documented, even by the woman herself. Just a few months before, she was thought of mainly as one of the »coolest« members of parliament in the country, as one journalist wrote. She was someone who reinvented herself in her spare time as DJane, liked whiskey, and had broken with the Mormon religion of her childhood; someone who never wanted to hold a higher position because – among other things – she was too afraid of it, as she openly admitted. But now, two months before the upcoming election, she suddenly had become the candidate of her Labour Party, which was only polling at around 20 %. And she triggered an unsuspected euphoria that was being talked about not only in her own country but abroad as well. That euphoria even acquired a name: Jacindamania. The woman behind it, Jacinda Ardern, then 37 years old, became New Zealand's prime minister in the fall of that year and, at the same time, the world's youngest head of government.

Barely a year later, she became the second leader to have a child while in office. When her child was three months old, Jacinda Ardern took it with her to a UN meeting in New York. All that drew the world's attention to the New Zealander. People also talked a bit about her climate policies, and a little about her open, positive outlook. When she was interviewed, she sometimes made statements that she presumably knew would supply good quotation material: »One can respond to the current challenges either with a message of fear or one of hope.« But then, unfortunately, she soon had to deal with a major challenge both to her country and to herself. On March 15, 2019, a right-wing radical carried out a terror attack on two

mosques in Christchurch, in which 51 people were murdered. In the aftermath, Jacinda Ardern accomplished something that until then had eluded every president and head of state in the wake of such an attack: Time and again she found the right words and gestures. She acted without delay. The world took notice. That is the way leadership looks, concluded the *New York Times*. But the paper almost overlooked the fact that there was a woman behind this demonstration of strong leadership. That was new.

The norm was and is something else: In politics even today, talk about women rarely fails to make reference to their gender, and it is almost always accompanied by a discourse on »another,« presumably female kind of leadership behavior, whether the reference is negative or positive (as it sometimes has become by now); or whether it comes up in a polemical put-down or a serious discussion. But even the latter often follows well-worn, predictable paths. This is a discussion that is not confined to politics; by this time, it fills entire bookshelves devoted to the literature on the culture of leadership, including advice manuals drawn from »pop« psychology. Here, in contrast to what many women experience in everyday life, people absolutely do discuss whether women might be the better communicators, the more emphatic bosses, the more conscientious organizers. Does all that make them better political leaders?

Just a few months ago, former U.S. President Barack Obama, attending a gathering on the topic of leadership in Singapore, remarked that, although women might not be perfect, they were unquestionably better than men. He added that he was sure that if women governed all nations, we soon would notice clear improvements in practically every field. Is it really that simple? And what structures would be needed to make it happen?

Here's a German snapshot: On July 18, 2019 the *tageszeitung (taz)* comes out with a front page picture, taken one day earlier at the Bellevue Palace: Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, named as defense minister just a few minutes before; Ursula von der Leyen, who stepped down from that same post just minutes earlier and who now is the designated European Commission President, and Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, all sitting in a row beside one another. The caption reads: »But this is not how we imagined the end of the patriarchy.« A lot could be read into this image. However, it is hard to overlook the fact that this is newspaper excerpt, not the norm, as the caption suggests. It is the image of a generation of female politicians whose leeway to develop their own political style has been circumscribed, as in the past, by clearly discernible traditional power structures. Their careers began in an atmosphere in which political power was self-evidently masculine, and in which »masculine,« with equal self-evidence, was associated with characteristics like dominance, aggression and stoicism, assumed to be the prerequisites of political expertise. Women continued to be »intruders« in politics, as the British historian Mary Beard put it in her book, *Women and Power: A manifesto*, even though there were more and more of them as the decades went on. As we all know, the best way for them to maximize their chances was to adapt their tone and behavior to prevailing norms. But falling into line didn't prevent them from being snubbed for that very reason,

like Hillary Clinton was at times, like Margaret Thatcher (the example favored by many critics), and like many female German politicians.

When the photo was taken, Angela Merkel had been Federal Chancellor for nearly 14 years. And during that entire time, she almost never made her gender an issue, although her critics and the editorial writers nearly always did, almost regardless of how she acted. People attributed certain female roles to her (»Kohl's girl«; »Mommy«) or – which happened more frequently – hinted that she was not feminine enough (Merkel used as a neuter noun). In the latter case the »lack of femininity« charge implicitly acknowledged her abilities as a »good power politician,« but of course that was a backhanded compliment. When she didn't close the borders in 2015, criticisms turned to the classically misogynist charge: that she was too emotional.

But at the same time other observers saw that Angela Merkel definitely expanded the available room for maneuver while sometimes asserting her authority in different ways than her predecessors had, by taking ample time to make decisions and by staking everything on the principle of moderation. The latter earned her international recognition, but sometimes, on the national level, led to the charge that she was too non-partisan. Still, it helped to keep coalitions intact.

During Merkel's term in office, Professor Gesine Schwan was proposed for the second time as a candidate for the office of Federal President (albeit not by the Chancellor), an office that so far no woman in Germany has ever held. Schwan once remarked in an interview that she used to be asked why she, as a woman, even wanted to strive for power at all. She answered that she wanted power, but not in the way that power has been understood in the classic sense – i.e., as a means to conquer others or get one's way against their resistance. Instead she wanted power because of its potential to yield common ground that could be used to motivate people.

Jacinda Ardern had not been New Zealand's prime minister for very long, she said, before she was criticized for being insufficiently aggressive and decisive. Empathy was interpreted as one of her weaknesses. But she said she simply did not understand that point of view: It is possible, she insisted, to feel others' pain and still be strong. In the wake of the Christchurch terror attack in 2019, Jacinda Ardern immediately convinced nearly everyone in the country that tougher weapons laws had to be enacted. She demanded that the operators of social networks should own up to their responsibility and, in a very short time, convened a summit that included them, the EU, and 17 other countries. But more than anything else, she united her country in grief; there were no calls for retaliation either from her or from the broader public. She was the first head of state in the world to adopt a »well-being index« (a measure of the citizens' well-being) intended to take into account more than just financial indicators as criteria for evaluating conditions in her country. »Soft power« is a notion that often comes up in connection with this New Zealander.

She herself prefers to use a different word, one she often mentioned during the electoral campaign and then later, when asked about the »secret« of her leadership: kindness. It is not difficult to imagine what kind of reaction this way of understanding the uses of power would evoke in many of the world's parliaments. One of

Jacinda Ardern's unique accomplishments has been to dismiss such reactions with a smile. But having enough leeway to do that was a collective achievement.

It is not by chance that Jacinda Ardern is already the third female prime minister to govern New Zealand, after Jenny Shipley of the National Party and Helen Clark of the Labour Party. And it may be of more than anecdotal interest to note that, in 1893, New Zealand was the first country in the world to introduce female suffrage. The first European country to follow its example was Finland in 1906. There, too, a woman recently has taken the reins of government for the third time, thereby replacing Jacinda Ardern as the youngest female prime minister now holding office. Her name is Sanna Marin and she took up her position last year at age of 34. As in the case of Jacinda Ardern, her success came as no surprise, although it was portrayed that way by the foreign media. Rather, she is an experienced politician who has already held a variety of posts for her party over the years. And there is another thing that Ardern and Marin share: Both lead complicated coalitions. Sanna Marin's consists of five parties, which, incidentally, all are led by women. Jacinda Ardern entered into a coalition with the political clown Winston Peters, who has led the right-wing populist New Zealand First Party for decades, which to some extent advocates ideas that are diametrically opposed to Ardern's convictions. This suggests that the stereotype of mediating female leadership may after all be more than just a stereotype.

At times, Jacinda Ardern has responded to the question of how feminine her principle of leadership is in the following way. It is less a matter of gender, she says, than one of political style. That is a statement which inherently points the way into the future, because important cues can be extracted from it. The conceptions of power and leadership that have so far defined the conduct of politics are not determined by masculinity per se but instead by a stereotypical notion of masculinity. Still – and this is the challenge – it is a notion that is growing stronger and more dominant in certain countries. Jacinda Ardern has also been called the »anti-Trump.« Even that picture of the three women in the office of the Federal President was in a certain sense – and more than could have been assumed at the time – a »going away« photo, since all three women soon will have disappeared from German politics. As the end nears, Angela Merkel and Ursula von der Leyen have been far less reluctant than in the past to talk about the role of women, including their own roles. The question is: Will the political space they created contract or will it continue to expand? The New Zealand and Finnish patterns of slow, uninterrupted acceptance of women in politics, now taken as the norm and not the exception in those countries' systems of government, is the one that also permits the development of other ideas about leadership. And that would hold out the prospect of an end to the binary conceptions of political leadership surveyed here.

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Ulrich Baron

»I Am Your Voice «

Donald Trump and political boorishness

Now that impeachment proceedings against U.S. President Donald Trump have gone nowhere, it is beginning to look like he might win a second term. That is astonishing given that he is a man, who, as journalist Michael Wolff wrote in a retrospective piece in 2018, »read nothing (…) not only did he read nothing, but he did not even listen. The prevalent idea around Trump's White House is that expertise is a highly overestimated left-wing virtue.«

After *Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House*, Wolff has now written a second volume on Trump's presidency entitled *Siege: Trump under Fire*. When you include the recently published *A Very Stable Genius: Donald J. Trump's Testing of America* by Philip Rucker and Carol Leonnig as well as Bob Woodward's *Fear: Trump in the White House*, you have a growing pile of books on Trump. Of course, that will not bother a notorious non-reader any more than would the slim volume in French by Bérengère Viennot, *La Langue de Trump*. The problem with these otherwise impressive journalistic feats can be gleaned from a book review in the weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*, in which the author acknowledges that »[the book] objectively unmasks his style of governance.« But it would be going too far to imagine that Donald Trump finally has been found guilty of practicing the subtle art of political distortion. As the reviewer, Rieke Havertz, rightly points out, »After three years of Trump there's actually nothing left that could still surprise anyone.« A man who manages to use the word »great« 41 times and the verb »win« 25 times in a single interview (Bérengère Viennot, who has to translate Trump's speeches into French, actually counted them) does not leave much for even the cleverest and most indefatigable unmasker to do.

We should regard these portraits of Trump's presidency as sources for a better understanding of political boorishness – a phenomenon that is spreading outside the USA, even in venerable democracies such as Great Britain's – rather than as scandal sheets, a description that especially fits the books by Wolff. It is not only a penchant for flamboyant hairstyles that British PM Boris Johnson shares with Trump; it is also a sometimes decidedly abrasive demeanor. Now a certain tendency toward brusqueness doesn't necessarily have to degenerate into clownish crudity. Winston Churchill was a Nobel Prize-winning author, but also the incarnation of John Bull. And whereas Johnson cultivates his scatterbrained gaze and wild mane as part of a role that he plays almost to the edge of self-parody, his American counterpart does not respect any limits: »Trump has partially fulfilled his promise to act as a human hand grenade, razing Washington to the ground and rebuilding it,« write Rucker and Leonnig in their 2020 retrospective piece. They add: »He has weakened the regulatory state, stepped up border controls, and reshaped the federal judiciary.«

Whereas Wolff, in *Fire and Fury*, was still describing the detonation of this figurative hand grenade and the devastation caused by it, a year later, in *Siege*, he notes

that a defensive line has been formed: »By this time, certain limits have been set to the president's petulant temper tantrums by increasingly organized and systematic institutional procedures.« Nevertheless, Woodward's judgment has the ring of truth. The United States, he says, has become the »hostage of the words and deeds of an emotionally overwrought, erratic, and unpredictable political leader.« And when one seeks words to characterize the behavior of his Republican supporters during the impeachment proceedings, one might even call it blind faith.

Still, the image of Americans as hostages elides a point that Rucker and Leonnig make in their prologue, when they cite Trump's declaration: »I alone can fix it,« which he uttered on July 21, 2016 upon accepting the Republican presidential nomination in Cleveland. He claimed: »I am your voice. … Nobody knows the system better than me, which is why I alone can fix it.« Even though Trump, his family, and his entourage seem to have invaded the White House like usurpers, as so graphically depicted especially in Wolff's books, he was in fact chosen to be his party's nominee and then elected president.

Unfortunately, all of these portraits of Trump concentrate so much on his presidency that one learns scarcely anything about his former life and development. Yet what emerges from the relevant sources is the fact that, from his childhood on, this millionaire's son had it drilled into him that he should get things done and be a winner. Judging by those criteria, one could count his narcissistic, deal-making career as evidence of a truly successful upbringing. And in this respect his own self-assessment as a »genius« is not so far off base. Donald Trump is the genius of American capitalism. His voter »base« continues to be nearly as besotted by his spirit as he himself is. But why did a country that prides itself on being a bastion of freedom and cosmopolitanism, even a melting pot of nations and beliefs, elect such a crude bully?

Rucker and Leonnig try to capture the mood of the voters: »Countless millions of Americans were angry. They felt that they had been forgotten by the bureaucrats in Washington, scorned by liberal elites, and humiliated by a global economy that had passed them and their skills by, and that their children were destined to be the first generation of Americans who would be worse off than their parents.« Millions of Americans had seen how mines and factories had been closed, watched local retail stores disappear, only to be replaced by malls built in the middle of nowhere, where the former miners and workers now sold cheap goods from Asia for starvation wages. They felt like they were the losers from globalization, who were being called upon to act as the world's policemen to boot – at their own expense.

In a key scene from his book *Fear*, Bob Woodward describes how the Director of the National Economic Council, Gary Cohn, stole a letter from the President's desk, in which Trump would have terminated the free trade agreement with South Korea known as KORUS. The background of that action was »Trump's fury that the United States had an US $ 18 billion annual trade deficit with South Korea, and was spending US $ 3.5 billion a year to keep US troops there.« In addition to that, another roughly 10 billion dollars were slated to be spent on the construction of a missile defense system, which prompted Trump to say, »Fuck it, pull it back and put it in

Portland.« The trigger for such an aggressive refusal is not only the feeling that we are getting a raw deal, but even more that we are still expected to support others. For those who think that they don't have or are not getting what they deserve, issues like protection of minorities, health care, environmental protection, taxes, international agreements, and supranational communities just feel like so many more unreasonable impositions.

Here, political boorishness can score double points. A shout of »take it to them!« not only allows people to vent spontaneously, it also sweeps away all the more complex explanatory approaches which show that having concern for others can pay off in the long run. But boorishness carves up the social contract, which is complex and designed for the long term, into a series of deals made on an ad hoc basis. The latter of course presuppose a position of strength, and there are some powers with which one cannot negotiate, such as the forces of nature.

The most formidable foes of political boorishness are experts, who are also not amenable to negotiations. Washington used to be full of them. And Trump's words to them seem to have fallen on deaf ears when he proclaimed that »our politicians took away from the people their means of making a living and supporting their families (…) moving our jobs, our wealth and our factories to Mexico and overseas.« But in the end, says Woodward, Trump found an academic economist, in the person of Peter Navarro, who hated free trade as much as he did. The latter described his role in words that finally bestowed an irrefutable existential justification on economics as a science: »My function really as an economist is to try to provide the underlying analytics that confirm [the President's] intuition. And his intuition is always right in these matters.«

The existing literature does not tell us whether Trump, the genius of felt truth, will enter the annals of economic science. But beyond all self-irony Navarro issues a devastating testimonial to himself and Trump's policies. What is at stake here is nothing less than an effort to make reality fit the intuitions of a man who has made »disdain for empirical facts,« not to speak of outright lies, into the guiding principles of his political career.

Woodward provides a telling example in one scene, where Trump, already a candidate for the Republican nomination for the presidency, plays fast and loose with the truth. Initially, he vehemently denies that 80% of his political contributions have gone to Democrats. When he is told that there is a public record of this, Trump at first appears flabbergasted, but then offers an explanation that unfortunately seems credible coming from a longtime building tycoon: »I've got to do that,« Trump says. »All these fucking Democrats run all the cities. You've got to build hotels. You've got to grease them. Those are people who came to me.«

Viennot writes that, when America looks at its president, it sees itself as if in a funhouse mirror: »Yet the truth is that this mirror reflects a reality that the American people have long suppressed and now are feeling like a sudden slap in the face.« Even things seen in a funhouse mirror can come uncomfortably close to reality.

Philip Rucker and Carol Leonnig: A Very Stable Genius: Donald Trump's Testing of America; Penguin Press, New York, 2020, 480 pages, $ 17.99 hardcover; Bérengère

Viennot: La Langue de Trump; ARENES, Paris, 2019, 162 pages, $ 16.07 paperback; Bob Woodward: Fear: Trump in the White House; Simon and Schuster, New York, 2018, 448 pages, $ 11.70 hardcover; Michael Wolff: Siege: Trump under Fire; Henry Holt & Co., New York, 2019, 352 pages, $ 9.14 paperback; Michael Wolff: Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House; Henry Holt & Co., New York, 2018, 321 pages, $ 5.98 hardcover

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Lewis Hinchman

The American Right-Wing Media Ecosystem: Critical Reasoning or Sycophancy

It has long been understood that political rule in a democracy must be subject to control and oversight by public opinion, which in turn is informed by the media. The media's job is to ascertain what is going on at every level of the political process, call decision-makers to account, and unearth the failures, scandals, and lies of power-wielders. They must be close enough to political decision-makers to develop sources, but distant enough to ask hard questions and uncover contradictions between rhetoric and reality. Unsurprisingly, in a democracy the spectrum of media outlets will tend to reflect the array of opinions and interests in the broader society. But as long as the critical function of journalism continues to be upheld, the public should understand what public officials are doing and hold them accountable. The media thus both represent and stimulate what Jürgen Habermas considers the essential feature of the public sphere: *das öffentliche Räsonnement* (public reasoning).

In the United States until recently, most people derived their political knowledge from mainstream media. But now the proliferation of media outlets as well as the vast expansion of the internet have provided Americans with incomparably more choices than before. Every segment of the ideological spectrum is »represented« by websites, blogs, TV news channels, and Twitter feeds. Consequently, in our polarized political environment the politically interested public often can digest analysis and opinion exclusively from its own side of the political spectrum. That is worrisome, but not disastrous for a democracy as long as journalists adhere to the standards of their trade, ferreting out information that the powerful would like to conceal and discovering the »real world« impact of policies, while maintaining their independence from public officials and parties. Unfortunately, that is no longer true of much journalism on the right, which allows Donald Trump to lie as much as he likes

without fact-checking or correction (The *Washington Post* counted 16,241 »false or misleading claims« during the first three years of his presidency).

In the USA today, the right-wing media function within a kind of »ecosystem« (Ezra Klein) with ties to each other and the Trump administration. To some extent they are rivals, fighting over the same pool of readers/viewers and jockeying for the President's favor. But they also use one another as sources, with the more extreme media trying to attract the attention of better-known outlets. At the »top of the food chain« is Fox News, the most-watched cable news channel in the USA with more than 3.6 million primetime viewers, far ahead of centrist CNN or leftist CNBC. By now, 34 % of adults who watch cable TV news choose Fox. Right-wing media on the fringes that specialize in conspiracy theories and anti-Democrat invective hope that Fox News or even Trump himself will cite their stories, which in turn will attract a wider readership to their sites.

It would be hard to exaggerate the influence of Fox on this administration and right-wing public opinion generally. After 15 months in office Trump had already appeared on the network 44 times. Sean Hannity, its most-prominent commentator, reportedly speaks to Trump every day and has accompanied him to campaign rallies. Meanwhile, some twenty Fox News employees have served at various times in the current Administration. Even the right-wing intellectual Bill Kristol describes Fox News as »just propaganda« for Trump and his policies. But not even Fox is guaranteed to remain in Trump's good graces. Annoyed at a poll conducted by the network during impeachment proceedings, he now seems to favor the newer, farther-right One America News Network. Its White House correspondent, Chanel Rion, likes to ask the President »tough« questions such as whether he is upset that the »left-wing news media have teamed up with Chinese Communist Party narratives« and embraced »Islamic radicals and Latin gangs (...)« By »left-wing news media« she apparently means mainstream sources such as CNN or the *New York Times*.

As an alternative to Fox, Trump also can count on support from far-right Breitbart News, which tries to appear »objective,« yet frequently runs opinion pieces by pro-Trump, anti-globalist Christian-right figures such as Ryan Helfenbein of Liberty University. The latter claimed that the Covid-19 pandemic was the fault of the Chinese Communist Party and the World Health Organization (a common far-right trope), that protective measures against the virus should not be so strict as to destroy the »free« American economy, and that Trump deserves »unconditional support«. Readers interpreted his editorial to mean that dirty and plague-infested »Democrat-controlled« cities like New York should be walled off from the rest of »healthy America«.

Today, the chief responsibility of the right-wing media is to glorify Trump and deflect criticism of his statements and actions in addition to its traditional effort to attack and discredit Democratic politicians or media. Extremist fringe sites such as Infowars (Alex Jones) propose ever-weirder conspiracy theories that, they hope, will attract the attention either of Fox News or Trump himself. For example, a recent story on Infowars ran as follows: »Deep state using coronavirus fear and panic to destroy our country« or »Coronavirus opens the door for the NOW [New World

Order]. Pandemic crisis presents unique opportunity for globalist power grab.« Stories such as these are intended to promote the idea that, as Trump earlier suggested, we should just »get back to work« and ignore the cost in lives lost. Fortunately, Trump subsequently changed his mind and ordered serious steps to contain it. But the right-wing ecosystem continues to encourage him to ignore expert opinion.

The latest right-wing media attack has been directed against Anthony Fauci, a renowned epidemiologist and expert on Covid-19 on the White House Coronavirus Task Force. Nearly every day he appears on TV alongside Trump and others to offer briefings on the virus and countermeasures taken against it. One right-wing blogger, Peter Chowka, characterized Fauci as a «deep-state Hillary Clinton-loving stooge«. Almost instantly, other parts of the far-right media ecosystem took up the cause, including the Drudge Report, GatewayPundit, and the conservative blog, American Thinker. Fauci never had been perceived as a partisan figure in the past; in fact, he had served as director of an important public health institute since 1984. But now, because he sometimes contradicts Trump and advocates stricter measures to limit the spread of Covid-19, he has become the target of invective not just from the far-right fringe, but even on One America News Network, the up-and-coming rival to Fox. The result of the far-right campaign is that Fauci has received death threats and now receives Secret Service protection.

In short, right-wing media have a symbiotic relationship with the Trump administration. Trump favors them with interviews, consultations, and job opportunities as long as they continue to show total loyalty. But they know that, if they begin to establish some critical distance from the administration – much less from Trump himself – they may be superseded by rival media organizations. Thus, all of them have strong incentives to abandon the critical standpoint that they, as representatives of the public sphere, must take if democracy is to function. It would be hard to argue that they represent part of a critical democratic public in the sense understood by classic theorists of the public sphere such as Jürgen Habermas or John Dewey.

But there is another thing that the calumnies against Fauci, the earlier »birther« slanders of Obama, and the debate over Trump's dismissal of climate change as a »hoax,« have in common. Right-wing media in the United States tacitly or explicitly have adopted the view that expertise, facts, and objective evidence no longer matter. Every position taken by a public figure or journalist is judged according to its potential impact on the right-wing agenda and on Trump's approval ratings and chances for re-election. Fauci's warnings about the impending catastrophe of Covid-19, so it is implied, should not be taken seriously because he is a representative of the »deep state« and once said nice things about Hillary Clinton. The public relies on journalists to distinguish between facts and misinformation, truth and lies. But if a person's credibility is a function of their political allegiance, then knowledge and truth no longer matter. Only partisan loyalty counts. The right-wing media scene thus has evolved into something like the state-influenced systems found in authoritarian regimes, except their coercive apparatuses. Of course, Americans are still free to read the *New York Times* or watch the news on ABC, but millions would now regard those sources as too »liberal« to be believed. We then have a tautology: The mainstream

media supposedly cannot be trusted because they criticize Trump, and the fact that they criticize him proves that they are liberal and not to be trusted. In the end, the critical function of the media, and the public oversight of government it is supposed to ensure, gets eviscerated, at least on the right side of the political spectrum.

In theory, the citizenry, enlightened by the media, should judge the programs and actions of their leaders according to whether those policies serve their interests and conform to their values. Instead, in the Trump era, the right-wing media and (right-wing) voters wait for Trump to decide what to think or do, and then adopt his opinions as their own. If he changes his mind – as on Covid-19, they are supposed to change their minds as well. Objective criteria for policymaking are far less important than Trump's self-proclaimed unerring »instincts.« This is no longer democracy as we have known it over the past century or so, because there is no »public reasoning« that is not already distorted by the imperative of justifying Trump's every whim.

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Peer Teschendorf
In Defense of »Free Speech in the Kitchen«

In Russia it's not easy to clamp down on the internet

To understand the outlook for internet freedom in Russia, we first need to survey its significance for the Russian population. Russia has the highest proportion of internet users in Europe. Among those in the age group 16–29, 99 % are already on the internet, while more than 75 % of the overall population has access to it. Costs are reasonable and high-quality access is available, especially to those in the larger cities. The state has recognized the significance of digitalization and invests in its expansion. But domestic internet behemoths also have emerged even without any assistance from the state at all. It is Yandex, rather than Google, which is the most-used search engine in Russia. This is a company that now has become an intermediary for calling taxis, ordering meals, arranging car sharing, and providing navigation. VKontakte (VK), the counterpart to Facebook, is also used intensively, especially since it is not quite as rigid about blocking content. But in addition, more and more state services are being provided online. Of course, effective commercial use and digital freedom of opinion are two different things. But the broad distribution and economic significance of the internet impose limits on control measures. Even now one can follow opposition figures on YouTube, organize protests, and dig up information on topics of interest.

In this respect Russia simply cannot be compared to China; the differences between the two countries can be traced back to the origins of Russia's part of the internet. As early as the Soviet era, a few scientists already had begun to expand connections. Taking advantage of the new economic freedoms available during the perestroika period under Gorbachev, they established some of the first businesses. In the wake of the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the new sector underwent rapid development as its commercial possibilities became apparent. Because the state was confronted by more urgent problems, regulation remained tentative. Furthermore, the contents of the new medium continued to be unrestricted. The media law of now-independent Russia initially was among the most open in Europe. Of course, here too regulations and incipient supervision began to emerge. However, the authorities in this field tended to be underequipped for their tasks. They were more interested in the classical media, above all television.

All this did not start to change until the »Bolotnaja protests« of 2012, named after the Moscow square where people had assembled in great numbers to protest Vladimir Putin's third term in office. Since the protests were organized on the internet, the security services began to pay much closer attention to monitoring this space of information. They became aware of two perils, one internal and the other external. Internally, it became clear that the people who wanted to protest were good at organizing themselves. But it was even more important that a space of information now existed that reached an increasingly broad segments of the population. As a 2020 study of Russian youth by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung discovered, 84 % of young Russians now rely mainly on the internet to acquire information. Young people rarely use what they call the »zombie box« anymore, i.e., TV with its controlled channels, especially if they want to get political information.

But that trend also explains why there is so much concern about the external danger: the use of media to try to influence the population. In a military analysis presented in 2013, the head of the General Staff, Valery Gerasimov, described a scenario he called hybrid warfare, in which states could be destabilized by conflicts kindled on the internet. Russia, he added, would have to find ways to counter this threat. The sabotage of Iran's uranium centrifuges by the American Stuxnet virus showed how vulnerable infrastructure could be to dangers emanating from the internet.

Further legal limits in the following years were driven by both factors: regulation of internet content and protection of the digital infrastructure.

Beginning in 2012, internet freedom was gradually restricted by law. The clampdown began with a blacklist of sites to be blocked. The list would be administered by the media oversight office and, according to Reporters without Borders, included over 290,000 sites. Next, the use of abusive language in the media, insults to religious values, and »homosexual propaganda« were outlawed. The latter term means portraying »non-traditional sexual relations« as normal in the presence of young people. In 2016 the Yarovaya Laws, named after their sponsor, were passed. They provide for data retention on a grand scale. Not only do connection data have to be preserved for three years, but even the contents of communications must be kept for six months.

What is more, this package of laws obliges email and messaging providers to help the intelligence services de-encrypt communications. In 2019 this legislation was again toughened considerably. The dissemination of »fake news« as well as disrespectful comments about the state and its organs were made punishable by law even though the meaning of those terms was never clearly spelled out. Finally, legislation regulating the conduct of foreign agents was expanded still more. The law actually states that Russian NGOs must register as foreign agents as soon as they receive any financing from abroad; moreover, they must reveal their status on all of their documents and publications. Under the expanded terms of the law, even natural persons can be considered foreign agents if they get money from abroad (regardless of the amount and source), express political views, and disseminate information to the broader public that has been derived from a medium registered as a foreign agent. In theory, a person who receives a bank transfer from relatives living abroad and shares a Facebook post from the *Voice of America* could be classified as a foreign agent. Although the law has been in effect since February, it has not yet been enforced.

Another law, passed in 2019, also falls into the area of protecting the internet against attacks from outside the country. It provides for a »sovereign internet« that explicitly aims at protecting the Russian web against foreign attempts at sabotage. Communications with the global network, which at this time are still free, henceforth will take place only via nodal points registered with the oversight authorities. In this way it will be possible to insulate the Russian internet and protect it against attacks from outside the country. At least, that is how the law has been justified.

It is sometimes easy to understand the reasoning behind certain laws – for example, to protect the population, especially its youthful component, from dangerous content, to fight terrorism and extremism, or to ward off attacks from foreign sources. Supporters of these laws also like to justify them by pointing to similar or identical laws in other, Western countries. And, in fact, certain aspects of those laws do address problems with which Western societies, too, are confronted.

There are at least two problems with the Russian laws. First, legislators frequently draft them in the vaguest of terms while giving little thought to what is technically possible, and that invites abuse. Second, lawmakers have barely even contemplated the creation of oversight institutions that could bring to light and limit the misuse of such laws.

In sum, although it makes perfect sense for a country to do everything possible to shield its own network, which after all constitutes part of its critical infrastructure, the Russian approach – uncoupling the domestic net from the rest of the world's – is highly questionable. Critical infrastructure also could be protected by setting up separate networks for the vulnerable domains while enabling controlled transitions to the global net.

So how can we square the observation that the Russian internet is relatively free with the (incomplete) list of restrictive laws? As far as the laws are concerned, the point is not primarily to get absolute control, but rather to intervene selectively and arbitrarily. Accordingly, some criminal court verdicts already have been handed down such as the one in the case of the well-known human rights activist Lev Panomarev

who was prosecuted for »liking« a foreign-originated appeal for a demonstration and sentenced to 15 days in jail for that offense. The state's goal here is to know as much as possible and to intervene repeatedly in order to set in motion a mechanism of self-censorship that is far more effective than any state-sponsored censorship scheme.

Of course, the Russian security services – in this respect probably like most services of their kind in the world – have an interest in knowing as much as possible about the information that is circulating on the internet. Yet Russia's virtual future will not resemble the Chinese present. The effort to establish something like China's »Great Firewall« with all-encompassing content filters would hardly work in Russia. One reason is that Russia is not technically prepared to institute such a system. An example of the technical gap is provided by the messaging service Telegram. The Russian intelligence service insisted that the encryption codes of communications on this site be handed over, but the owner, Pavel Durov, who currently lives abroad, would not comply. As a result, the messaging service is now banned in Russia and is supposed to be shut down. Yet to this very day it is still available and used to some extent even by politicians. Moreover, walling off the domestic internet as China does would be unworkable in Russia for economic reasons. With its gigantic domestic market, the second largest economy in the world is big enough to offer many technical services on servers inside the country, whereas for Russia that would scarcely make sense. For one thing, rapid, unfettered connections, e.g., for data analysis or exchange of information between business firms, is economically crucial. Yet an even more important reason may be the nature of the society itself.

The Russian populace has grown up with a free internet. It zealously exploits the net's technical potential and would hardly be inclined to give that up. This is also – and especially – the case with expressions of opinion. Even in the Soviet Union there was already a protected space in which anyone and everyone could get upset, grumble about those at the top, and complain. It was like a kitchen table at home around which disgruntled citizens could sit and freely express their discontents. In post-Soviet Russia such »freedom of the kitchen« has continued in moderation even in public and above all in virtual spaces. People are allowed to get mad and gripe unless they actively call for a political struggle. But the passage of the law that prohibits disrespect for state organs already has signaled the revocation of this consensus, a move that has contributed to the obvious growth of a mood of protest during the past few months. Further restrictions or even an across-the-board enforcement of these laws will provoke considerable resistance.

Even though the Russian populace accepts the strong hand that rules the country, there is one thing that is still more important to them: the freedom to be allowed to get riled up sometimes about the leadership. On this score, Russians are simply too European.

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Gregor Hofmann

Better to Act Now than be Sorry Later

Taking stock after fifteen years of the Responsibility to Protect

The contending parties in armed conflicts often don't care much about the lives of the civilian population. Even in peacetime extremely serious human rights violations have occurred (such as the expulsion of the Rohingyas from Myanmar) in the context and under the cloak of »putting down rebellions.«

A few years ago, many observers actually hoped that mass crimes such as the genocide in Rwanda of 1994 or the atrocities committed during the civil wars of the Nineties and early Aughts would become a thing of the past. After all, heads of state and government attending the United Nations reform summit in 2005 had unanimously accepted the Responsibility to Protect or R2P. According to that principle, every state is responsible for protecting its population against mass crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. The international community was supposed to assist states to do so. If a state should fail to do so on a massive scale, the community of nations would be prepared to respond through the UN Security Council.

At the time, that resolution was celebrated as one of the most significant of the more recent developments in global politics. Many even envisioned the dawning of a revolution in international law. It seemed that the principle of the protection of the individual was gaining strength vis-à-vis the conception of sovereignty centered on the state. Fifteen years later, it is time to draw up a balance sheet. Does the Responsibility to Protect really have the power to influence behavior?

The concept of the Responsibility to Protect was not widely discussed among the general public until 2011, occasioned then by the intervention in Libya and the atrocities in Syria. Shortly thereafter some people were ready to certify its early demise. After all, hadn't NATO and its allies in Libya stretched their UN mandate too far? Rather than deploying military force solely to protect the civilian population from the Libyan government, they took sides in the civil war and toppled the Kaddafi regime. Voices were raised charging that the allies had intervened illegally in this affair. Then in Syria, the community of states stood by and did nothing as the violent suppression of demonstrations critical of the regime there gave way to a brutal civil war in which the regime did not even refrain from the use of chemical weapons.

Both conflicts are embedded in a broader trend: For ten years the number of armed conflicts has increased steadily all across the globe. In 2018 the conflict data bank of the University of Uppsala counted 128 wars and armed conflicts. A vanishingly small number of wars today fit the description of classical wars between states. More than three-quarters of them are armed conflicts between different non-state actors using violent means or else between the respective national governments and armed groups inside the country. Also included are internationalized intra-state conflicts, in which the parties receive support from other states (»proxy wars«).

Many of these violent conflicts are marked by the use of force on a massive scale against civilians. There have even been attacks on health care facilities, massacres of the inhabitants of entire villages, and sexualized violence. One indicator of these trends is an increase in the number of people who are fleeing from war and violence. According to the UN Refugee Agency, in 2018 on average 37,000 people were driven from their homes by violence every day.

Yet these are not the only mass crimes. Consider the example of Myanmar: In January of this year, the International Court of Justice called upon the government there to protect its Muslim minority, the Rohingyas, from possible genocide. Beginning in August of 2017, the police and military in Myanmar, under the pretext of combatting terrorism, had launched a campaign against the Rohingyas. Murder, rape, and arson were among the tactics used. More than 700,000 people fled toward Bangladesh. A fact-finding commission of the UN Human Rights Council charged the authorities with genocidal intent: namely, plotting the destruction of the Rohingya community in Myanmar. Yet the UN Security Council did not respond.

There are multiple reasons why the community of states has failed to respond to mass crimes. As in the past, the debate about how the Responsibility to Protect should be implemented stirs up controversy in the United Nations. Many countries offer rhetorical support to the idea behind the R2P, but they continue to look critically upon any international meddling in their internal affairs and want to see their sovereignty preserved. NATO's intervention in Libya in 2011 serves as their negative example. Besides, the UN Security Council repeatedly has been paralyzed by conflicts of interest among the great powers. The increasing fragmentation of the conflict landscape makes it more difficult to devise effective international responses to conflicts. At the same time, the world-wide rise of populist and/or nationalist movements generally weakens multilateralism. Willingness to take collective and, if necessary, even military action to help »distant foreigners« continues to diminish.

That tendency is also apparent when we consider how the UN Security Council acts on the Responsibility to Protect in its own work. To be sure, between 2005 and the end of 2019 the Council invoked the concept over 80 times in resolutions; but those primarily mandated pro-sovereignty, supportive measures such a peacekeeping, mediation, and aid for stabilization and state-building. To date, Libya remains the only case in which the Security Council has empowered member countries to use force in order to protect the civilian population without the agreement of the affected state.

Thus, the R2P turns out not to be an effective instrument for the protection of those suffering persecution; rather, it is more like a guideline indicating that, when confronted with mass crimes, the Security Council has to do *something*. Yet too frequently its reaction is to do little more than discuss the matter. For that reason, critics charge that the Responsibility to Protect is a dead letter.

Nevertheless, after 15 years the balance sheet on the Responsibility to Protect is not entirely negative. That responsibility cannot be equated simply with humanitarian military interventions. Because this is such a delicate topic, the UN Secretariat, some states, and NGOs try to shift the terms of the discussion from reactions to

mass crimes and the use of coercion to early prevention in collaboration with the governments and the civil societies of the affected countries. In this way, the focus of debate on preventing mass crimes shifts to conflict prevention as well as post-conflict peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding

As early as the first few years after the 2005 Resolution, former UN General Secretary Ban Ki-moon and the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect concentrated on mainstreaming the R2P in the United Nations; i.e., they pushed the idea that their goals in existing programs, measures, and instruments should be taken into account. Since 2009 the UN Secretary General has published annual reports on how the Responsibility to Protect should be implemented; for the most part, these have concentrated on the early prevention of mass crimes. António Guterres has continued this pattern. He has urged states to implement the Responsibility to Protect by relying on existing institutionalized mechanisms and institutions for the protection and advancement of human rights and respect for humanitarian international law. Beginning in 2019 he linked the R2P to his more ambitious agenda on conflict prevention. In his most recent report on the Responsibility to Protect, issued in 2019, he put the emphasis on lessons from prevention and measures that might prevent mass crimes from happening – or resuming.

One important aspect of the implementation of the UN's Responsibility to Protect concerns the protection of the civilian population. Nearly all of the newly authorized peace missions of the UN since 1999 have been tasked with protecting civilians. Resolutions on Darfur, the Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Mali, and the Central African Republic all contain direct references to the R2P. To be sure, UN peace missions frequently lack resources, adequate training for troops, and a uniform interpretation of the mandate by the states that are providing the troops. All this of course reduces their potential for responding effectively to mass crimes. However, studies show that the mere presence of the blue helmets on the ground can reduce violence against civilians.

Furthermore, many of the steps proposed by the UN and by experts to implement the Responsibility to Protect and to prevent mass crimes are at bottom *peacebuilding* measures that have proven themselves in the post-conflict phase. States are expected to promote effective, legitimate, and integrative governance and reform their security apparatuses so that the latter will respect basic human rights. In addition, they should guarantee the rule of law and promote participatory, accountable political institutions as well as equal access to justice. Other instruments on the peacebuilding list include mechanisms for the fair and transparent administration of economic resources and encouragement of dialogue toward conflict resolution and reconciliation processes at the local level. Peacebuilding is a vital tool for preventing mass crimes. But it should not be postponed until after the conflicts have already gotten underway; instead, it should be introduced at any early stage, when risk factors have begun to show up.

Research on the risk factors for mass crimes underscores the fact that the worst atrocities don't just appear out of nowhere. A social climate in which such actions become conceivable and possible develops slowly. The warning signs include systematic discrimination, the exclusion of certain groups, unequal access to resources, and the economic disadvantaging of some parts of society. Social cleavages can lead to violence even in peacetime when agitators incite the populace. It is therefore worthwhile to address the social causes of tensions between different groups in the population to make society more resilient against such risks. Part of that effort involves revisiting past cases of excessive violence. Societies that have endured genocides or crimes against humanity run a greater risk that such crimes will be repeated.

Action rather than regrets

In short, the responsibility to protect has been elaborated conceptually in broad terms. By now there also exist a variety of inter-state formats in which the representatives of states and non-governmental organizations can exchange ideas about preventive measures and mount training programs. At this point, more than 60 states have identified so-called R2P focal points intended to coordinate their governments' activities with respect to the responsibility to protect.

The next step is to translate all this into concrete action. In 2019, UN General Secretary António Guterres rightly criticized a »growing gulf between the commitment at the 2005 world summit to the Responsibility to Protect and the daily experience of endangered population groups« around the globe.

That will require a shift in priorities in foreign policy and in development cooperation. Once relevant risks have been identified, diplomatic influence must be exercised upon the governments of the affected states at a much earlier stage, even at some cost to other interests. A better personal and financial endowment of UN peace missions could protect people in immediate danger and help prevent a new outbreak of post-conflict violence.

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Ulrike Franke
Succesful, yes, but are there any Alternatives?

What NATO must do to reinvent itself for the 21st century

NATO is the most successful military alliance in history, but now – in the eighth decade since its founding – it has drifted into choppy waters. For Europe and Germany, there is still no alternative to it. Nevertheless, there is no time like the present to contemplate alternatives.

Seventy-one years ago, on April 4, 1949, representatives from Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Canada, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United States, and the United Kingdom met in Washington, DC to sign the North Atlantic Treaty. Thus, those twelve countries became the founding members of the *North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (NATO). It is unlikely that any of those representatives could have imagined what the Organization would look like in the years to come, and many of them might well have harbored doubts that NATO would still exist in the 21st century.

Today, NATO has thirty members, including ten countries that used to be members of the Warsaw Pact or were part of the Soviet Union. The alliance continues to grow. Its thirtieth member, the Republic of North Macedonia, joined just this year. Together, the NATO countries have a defense budget of $ 1.03 trillion (as of 2019). It is expected that the defense budgets of all the member states will decrease due to the corona pandemic. Currently, NATO is engaged in missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, in the Mediterranean, and in support of the African Union in Somalia. In addition, the alliance conducts regular air patrols to defend NATO's eastern flank. In the context of its shared nuclear defense doctrine, the United States military has stationed around 180 nuclear warheads in four European NATO countries and in Turkey. These help to maintain a protective nuclear umbrella over the alliance. Only once in its seventy-one-year history, in the aftermath of the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, has the alliance needed to invoke the mutual defense obligation clause in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. For those reasons it scarcely seems exaggerated to call NATO the most successful military alliance in history.

Nevertheless, the celebration of the alliance's seventy years of existence, held in London last year, were more than subdued. Great Britain previously had volunteered to organize the festivities. The plan was to kill two birds with one stone: not only to put on a solemn celebration of the alliance's seventieth birthday, but also to show of the success of the country that had just left the European Union. Instead, at that time Brexit was still incomplete and NATO was so disunited that the organizers tried hard to keep exchanges of opinion to a minimum.

There are indeed quite a few causes of friction. For example, there is Turkey, which in recent years has proven to be a difficult ally. Democracy and freedom of the press are fragile there and have been increasingly undermined ever since the coup attempt of 2016. A more urgent problem for NATO is of a military nature.

Turkey has decided to purchase the Russian ground-to-air missile system known as S-400. Critics fear that, as a result of the sale, Russia might obtain critical information that could undermine both NATO's air defenses and their interoperability. In Syria the Turkish military is acting in a way that was unsuitable for a NATO member. It also speaks volumes that in 2017 Germany felt compelled to withdraw its Tornado reconnaissance planes, along with their attendant personnel, from Turkey's Incirlik air force base and move them to Jordan, which is not even a NATO member, due to longstanding quarrels with Turkey.

New threats

Yet Turkey's behavior is just one of the problems that the NATO alliance is struggling to resolve right now, and it is not even the most existential one. At the seventieth anniversary celebration in London, eyebrows were raised over the spat between US President Donald Trump and his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron. Amazingly, on this occasion it was Trump who defended NATO against Macron. In an interview with the magazine *The Economist*, the French head of state had pronounced the alliance »brain-dead,« referring to the lack of agreement within the alliance on what to do about Turkey's operations in Syria. Trump called these statements »insulting« – an astonishing reaction, given that Trump had been criticizing NATO regularly ever since taking office. For instance, on previous occasions he had declared NATO »obsolete« and »as bad as [the free trade agreement] NAFTA.« According to the *New York Times*, Trump had even considered taking the USA out of the alliance.

There it is: the existential threat. If the USA leaves, NATO is finished. Although it may be an organization with thirty members, let's not deceive ourselves: militarily, this is a »The USA plus all the others« club. Of the previously mentioned $ 1.03 trillion defense budget of all the NATO member-countries, $ 730 billion (i.e., more than two-thirds) come from the USA. And American nuclear weapons guarantee the nuclear umbrella. Or, as Macron put it in his interview with *The Economist*, »NATO only works when the guarantor of last resort functions as such. I would say that we should re-evaluate NATO's reality in light of the engagement of the United States.«

The NATO reality that Macron is addressing consists in growing doubt about America's willingness to come to the aid of other members in case they come under armed attack. Much of this has to do with Donald Trump, whose regular criticisms of NATO and especially of those members whose defense budgets are too low, are being heard with concern in NATO's Brussels headquarters and in European capitals. True, previous US presidents have expressed criticisms of so-called »free riding.« Yet Trump's critique is more fundamental. In him the USA has a president who basically is questioning the usefulness of allies.

Nevertheless, Europe should by no means think that it can just wait out this US president. In Germany, especially, the idea seems prevalent that the USA guarantees Europe's security because Americans like Europe, share our values, and are our friends. That there are such shared values and friendship is not in dispute here;

however, in international politics it is interests that matter. Geopolitically, the USA is focusing increasingly on China. Russia and Europe are becoming less important. There is no guarantee that American protection of Europe will last eternally. It is not yet clear how American policy will change in reaction to the corona pandemic. But it is conceivable that isolationist tendencies will intensify. Given this background, Macron's wake-up call was right on target.

If Europe wants to ensure the security of its citizens in the coming decades as well, the first thing it must do is make an effort to keep the Americans in NATO. Second, at the European level and in the long run, we must improve capabilities and processes enough to get along even without the United States playing such a dominant role.

Germany and Europe must make a clear commitment to NATO. Central to that commitment will be a more vigorous effort to reach the defense spending target of 2 % of GDP to which the NATO members agreed in 2014. On that score Europe was on a good track before the corona crisis, despite all the criticism from Donald Trump. The defense budgets of European NATO countries have been increasing since 2014, yet at least 19 countries have fallen short of the aspirational target, including Germany. It is important to emphasize that the rising defense budgets were indeed intended to show the USA that Europe is ready to do its part. Yet that money does not go to NATO, nor is it given to the USA in the form of »protection money.« Rather, we are talking about spending more money for our own military forces and our own defense, in short, something that should be absolutely fundamental to Europe's interests. In this context Germany, especially, should have a leading role. As long as that country fails to meet the defense spending target, it is easy for other countries to hide behind Germany's laggard status.

Second, efforts must be redoubled to expand defense and cooperation capabilities at the European level. Important steps have already been taken: Even within the EU there is a mutual assistance clause that resembles Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. In Article 42.7 of the Lisbon Treaty, the members of the EU have reassured each other that, in case of an armed attack, they can rely on receiving »all of the assistance and support in their [allies'] power.« Of course, real military capabilities must be available if such assistance is going to be effective. For that two things are needed: more investment and greater cooperation to avoid costly small-state particularism. In the last few months too much time and energy have been devoted to delineating differences in positions within Europe, especially those between Germany and France. Yet Germany's approach (»remain transatlantic and become more European«) doesn't differ as much as many people claim from Macron's admonition to reflect on what the world would look like without the American security guarantee.

It would be desirable for Europe and Germany if, after another 70 years have elapsed, we could look back upon a positive development of NATO. The alliance will have to change in order to keep going. But in the past, it has been good at doing just that. We Europeans must begin to expand our defense capabilities for two reasons: to improve the allocation of burdens within NATO and be better prepared

in case the alliance comes to an end and Europe must guarantee its security all by itself.

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Hendrik Hegemann

Terrorism: A Political Problem, not a War

Confronting the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the disease linked to it, COVID-19, French president Emmanuel Macron concluded in March of 2020 that France was in a »health war« (»guerre sanitaire«). Likewise, the American President Donald Trump characterized the struggle against the novel coronavirus as »our great war« and himself as a »war president.« To be sure, there is nothing new about the deployment of analogies such as these in circumstances that differ from warfare in the classical sense. In fact, those comparisons have a rather long history. For example, in 1964 Lyndon B. Johnson declared a »war on poverty,« and beginning in the early 1970s the USA waged a so-called »war on drugs« both nationally and internationally. Whatever the differences may be, one suspects that references to the war metaphor in all of these cases were meant to emphasize the extraordinary scope of the challenge in question, as well as the need for far-reaching collective countermeasures. The hope lurking in the background here is that in a »war« everyone should unite in the struggle against the common foe and mobilize all available forces.

But the most prominent example of this sort of rhetoric is probably the »war on terrorism« proclaimed in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attack. Faced with the terror of »9/11«, the American government under George W. Bush declared war on transnational terrorism, especially in the form of Al Qaeda, and confronted other countries with the alternative of either »being with us or with the terrorists.« In the years to come, the United States along with some of its allies resorted to military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq, and did not shrink from torturing prisoners, for example by using waterboarding. Bush's successor, Barack Obama, officially abandoned the idea of a »war on terror.« Still, even he failed in the campaign to close down the prison camp at Guantánamo Bay. Indeed, he even doubled down on the use of combat drones and special forces to carry out the »targeted killing« of suspected terrorists.

Even after two decades, the narrative of a war on terrorism is still prevalent. Although many European countries have not explicitly adopted the idea of a war on terrorism, the war metaphor has by no means been confined to the USA. Thus, in the wake of the attacks in Paris of November, 2015, former French President Fran-

çois Hollande likewise declared war on the Islamist terrorism of Islamic State. In the interim his successor, Emmanuel Macron, has been calling for an expansion of the military campaign against terrorism in the Sahel zone; toward that end, he, too, already has resorted to drone attacks in the region. Also, following the failed coup of summer, 2016, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has authorized extensive military actions mainly aimed at the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and other groups, to fight alleged or real terrorists.

The proclamation of a war on terrorism surely underestimates the complexity of the problem of terrorist violence, but it will bring about far-reaching consequences and generate enormous side-effects. Terrorism as a special strategy of politically motivated violence cannot be finally defeated, nor will it simply disappear. When it comes to combatting terrorism, the best we can do is to push back, albeit in temporally and spatially limited ways, against specific terrorist groups and campaigns. Since the so-called war on terrorism lacks any concrete goal, it has spilled over increasingly into other spheres of life and dragged on and on with no clear end in sight, at which point society could again return to a »state of peace.« The state of emergency has become normalized and gotten us accustomed to drastic measures that – as with Guantánamo Bay – persist somewhat to this very day.

The mobilization of public support and the emphasis upon the seriousness of the situation may be understandable in times of crisis. Yet falling back on the war metaphor always has real-world consequences. The implication is that all countermeasures are legitimate while all other values such as human rights and liberties need to take a back seat. The apparently clear juxtaposition of friend and foe along with the supposed urgency of the situation make it harder to weigh and balance different policy options. In fact, before long opposition begins to be portrayed as verging on treason. In addition, war rhetoric contains a bias in favor of certain policy options – those involving the use of military force – that overshadow others, such as negotiations or broad-gauged preventive measures.

Many political actors use the terror charge primarily as a political label intended to delegitimize as far as possible certain actions, persons, and convictions while legitimizing particularly harsh countermeasures, such as torture, that would be scarcely imaginable in other cases. Especially in authoritarian states this kind of labeling also can be weaponized against groups and political opponents the regime dislikes. As early as 1974 one terrorism researcher, Bruce Jenkins, noted that it is always »what the bad guys do.« Thus, in the battle against such personified evil any and all means would seem legitimate. For that reason, the »war on terrorism« quickly crosses red lines. Furthermore, real terrorists thrive on this logic. They deploy their scarce resources against states that are actually far superior to them in order to force the latter into expensive and long-drawn-out hostilities that in turn stir up new fears and conflicts. The media and the public sphere can intensify this dynamic still more if their reporting dramatizes the public staging of terrorist violence, for example by livestreaming it on TV screens.

Instead, we should understand terrorism as a definite strategy of politically motivated violence about which we already have accumulated some experience in

the past. Therefore, it is neither a war nor a state of emergency that would justify the use of any and all means. Rather, for most societies it poses a serious albeit not an existential problem, for which there is no panacea ready at hand but rather a variety of options for getting it under control. In this context it is worthwhile to distinguish between ways of coping with terrorist violence both within and outside of extensive armed conflicts.

According to statistics provided by the Global Terrorism Index, in 2018 nearly three-quarters of the 15,952 victims of lethal terrorist violence worldwide were to be found in just five countries: Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia, and Syria. Complex armed conflicts are taking places in all of these countries, where terrorism is adopted as only one violent strategy among others. These conflicts represent the real problem – one that does indeed urgently require a sustainable solution, which will in turn necessitate the support of the international community. In such cases and in certain situations the deployment of military force sometimes may be *one* component of a broad-gauged, long-term strategy tailored to the concrete, individual case. At the local level these cases feature bewildering configurations of conflicts involving a variety of actors. The worst possible way to deal with them is to subsume all of them under the one-sided and short-sighted heading of a war on terrorism.

When it comes to combatting terrorist violence inside of largely peaceful democratic societies, the logic of a war on terrorism misses the point even more. The roots of terrorist violence are usually to be found within one's own society. In the case of Germany, and not only there, right-wing extremist and right-wing-radical violence has started to become the dominant factor. These groups cannot be defeated by a short, intensive struggle culminating in a clear victory. History teaches that all terrorist campaigns end sometime and all terrorist groups disappear sometime. In some instances, that happens quite quickly, while in others it takes decades. In many cases groups disband due to lack of support and success. In others the underlying political conflicts are pretty much resolved through negotiations and compromises. In still other cases long-term countermeasures taken by the state cause the wellsprings of terrorist violence to run dry. Thus, it is crucial to devise pragmatic, broad-gauged strategies with staying power and concrete goals. In this effort state and society can learn lessons from historical experiences in confrontations with terrorist violence and make use of an extensive toolkit of options. Included here would be not only the classic investigative work done by the police and secret services, but also measures that make it harder to commit such acts in the first place (e.g., terror-proofing some especially vulnerable public spaces) or that involve counter-narratives and alternative interpretive schemes. Nor should we forget programs aimed at prevention and deradicalization.

Even though there is no universal, one-size-fits-all recipe, the problem of terrorist violence can be handled politically within the guideposts set by democracy and the rule of law. There is no need to put up with the indirect harm caused by a supposed state of war or of emergency. Therefore, we should also pay heed to the kind of concepts we use in the confrontation with terrorist violence and what consequences are associated with them. Even if the prevention of terrorist attacks may

unite many otherwise very different political actors on matters of principle, demo-cratic politicians, of all people, should not subordinate everything to this common goal. They should also remind their allies that a war narrative is misleading and certainly doesn't justify the use of any and all means. Those experiences might be able to help us even in the current coronavirus crisis.

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Michael Dauderstädt

The Future of Lonely Capitalism

No one has analyzed global inequality better than Branko Milanović, and for that he is justly famous. His books, including the one to be reviewed here, have been trans-lated into numerous languages. In fact, a German edition of his most recent work appeared just this May, issued by Suhrkamp. The original English version is entitled *Capitalism, Alone: The Future of the System that Rules the World.* In 2018 Milanović was awarded the Hans-Matthöfer-Prize by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung for his pre-vious book, *Global Inequality*. In contrast to his earlier research, which draws on a broad statistical base to illuminate the evolution of the global economy, and espe-cially the distribution of income and wealth, this time Milanović takes a look into the future, venturing onto terrain less well-grounded empirically.

In so doing he builds upon his previous work. A few of his central findings are laid out at the beginning: For the first time in human history the world is working within a single economic system, capitalism. But it comes in at least (one might add) two different versions: the Western liberal-meritocratic brand (typified by the USA since about 1980) and Eastern political capitalism (illustrated by China since around 1990). Milanović devotes the first two lengthy chapters to each of these systems.

Western capitalism is the product of a long historical development. It has evolved from the classical capitalism that prevailed prior to World War I (prototypically in Great Britain) through the social democratic variant (a welfare state combined with Keynesian economic policy as in Western Europe and the USA until 1980) to its present-day neoliberal form. Milanović defines these system-variants more pre-cisely by examining the differing structures of inequality in each. By contrast, politi-cal capitalism is a much more recent phenomenon that emerged from state-socialist systems controlled by Communist parties. The author devotes a rather extensive thread of his argument to the thesis that communism's historical role has been to overcome underdevelopment in peripheral countries of the world capitalist system.

One result of this systemic transformation, which is closely linked to globali-zation, is a power shift in the global economy to the detriment of the traditional

northwestern center. The high growth rates of political capitalism pose a challenge to its meritocratic-liberal counterpart and mark the onset of a new kind of systemic competition within capitalism. Yet both systems display high and increasing levels of inequality. Both of them are democratic only to a limited degree. In the West the interests of the (wealthiest) one percent dominate politics despite the fact that citizens are formally equal. In the East, the political sphere clearly does control the economy, but there the interests of power and wealth are similarly intertwined.

Milanović devotes the second part of his book to the future, where he begins by analyzing the effects of globalization on capitalism. Here, the focus is on migration, which is driven primarily by global inequality. He worries that it will jeopardize the redistributive European welfare state, which mainly attracts migrants who take a pessimistic view of their ability to create value in the future. Conversely, migrants with a higher potential for value creation tend to prefer destination countries with less redistribution such as the United States. The integration of capital markets and chains of value creation permits poorer countries to catch up, generates additional profits, and intensifies inequality.

Welfare states come under pressure and leftist parties tend to drift toward protectionism. Global corruption is on the rise, because globalization weakens countervailing control options and interests.

Where does the author think capitalism is headed? The prospects are not encouraging, at least not from a social-democratic perspective. Money and profits rule, while traditional value systems (family, morality) lose importance when everything becomes a commodity. However, Milanović doesn't expect that robotics and artificial intelligence will bring about massive job losses, nor does he believe that a universal basic income is the answer. He would like to see one of two progressive types of capitalism succeed: either people's capitalism or egalitarian capitalism.

In people's capitalism, incomes (which continue to diverge quite a bit) consist of income from capital and labor in equal proportions. There is not much redistribution, but there is free health care and education for all, which insures social mobility. In egalitarian capitalism income differentials are minimal, whether derived from capital or from labor. For that reason, that state can confine itself to insuring against social risks (e.g., illness).

In conclusion Milanović offers four suggestions that would bring us closer to these socially responsible variants of capitalism: a progressive tax system with high rates levied on inheritance; more investment in education; differential civil rights, which might indeed make migrants worse off, but should assuage some of the reservations that native-born citizens have against them; and a ban on private financing of electoral campaigns in order to roll back the political influence of the rich. In these respects, he hews rather closely to the line taken by most left-wing/ progressive programs, except where his proposals on immigration policy are concerned.

With this book the author once again has met the expectations that his earlier works have inspired in his readers. He advances a clearly argued and well-organized analysis that draws on great quantities of data as well as on third-party research when questions arise that are less germane to his central area of research compe-

tence: inequality. But here we encounter a certain weakness in this otherwise persuasive work. The author is silent about the entire literature of the »varieties of capitalism« school and of comparative political economy as well. Yet the latter reach conclusions that are more nuanced than, and to some extent even at odds with, those presented by Milanović (such as Torben Iversen and David Soskice's *Democracy and Prosperity: Reinventing Capitalism through a Turbulent Century*). It would have been interesting and probably also quite rewarding to witness a direct confrontation between their research and Milanović's.

Another lacuna in this book, one that is perhaps even more troubling, concerns climate change, which is surely of great significance for the future of capitalism. Milanović is worried about war and inequality, and about the erosion of moral foundations, but not about the environment and the planet. Yet the question of which of the two systems, political or liberal-meritocratic capitalism, is best able to manage the needed transformation toward decarbonization would not just be interesting; it might even be the crucial criterion for judging the respective merits of each system in the future. In the short run, a comparison of the two systems' respective abilities to manage the COVID-19 crisis might be instructive, since both factors, openness and state enforcement capacity, influence its success or failure. To the extent that climate protection requires us to limit growth, the question also arises: How should we distribute growth across the globe and what impact will that have on inequality, whether between or within countries. The latter issue is otherwise at the center of Milanović's thinking.

On the whole, Milanović again has given us a thoroughly stimulating book, one that provides, in broad brushstrokes, an empirically well-supported and provocative analysis of the evolution of global society from the vantage point of inequality. It is an easy read for non-specialists, even though it might take a second look for them to fully grasp some of the quantitative relationships involved. To those interested in advancing a social democratic political agenda, it provides arguments in favor of equalizing opportunities in life and controlling economic power. But the book also lays bare the harsh political and economic realities that stand in the way of such policies and to which we must find responses.

Branko Milanović: Capitalism, Alone: The Future of the System That Rules the World; Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 2019; 304 pages, $ 29.95.

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