



PART I: GET READY

REBEL SPEAK

**"WE HAVE IT IN OUR POWER TO BEGIN
THE WORLD OVER AGAIN."**

THOMAS PAINE



**"IT IS WELL ENOUGH THAT PEOPLE OF THE
NATION DO NOT UNDERSTAND OUR BANKING
AND MONETARY SYSTEM, FOR IF THEY DID,
I BELIEVE THERE WOULD BE A REVOLUTION
BEFORE TOMORROW MORNING."**

HENRY FORD

WHAT : **CAPITALISM**

Some rebel readers will have divergent viewpoints about capitalism from the outset (e.g., “capitalism is capable of great things” versus “capitalism is evil”). A word laden with many definitions, the topic is further complicated because there are multiple forms of capitalism in existence today.

A Rebel's Handbook defines capitalism as the modern form of capitalism currently unfolding in the United States. For the purposes of the handbook, the singular term embodies the cumulative role of business, government, and workers as they interrelate with our status quo.

Because the term is often misperceived as confusing, this section covers capitalism's guiding principles to distill what it actually is. The mechanics of how capitalism allegedly works in

theory and how it actually functions in practice are explained. A handbook for action rather than an econ textbook, readers interested in learning more about the economic intricacies of capitalism itself can refer to the handbook's *Rebel Toolkit* (page 149) for additional resources.

SHORTCUT: IF YOU ALREADY THINK THAT CAPITALISM STINKS, FEEL FREE TO SKIP AHEAD TO ACTIONS THAT DRIVE CHANGE IN PART II (PAGE 61). BEFORE DOING SO, REBELS ARE ENCOURAGED TO READ THE ONE-PAGE REBEL BULLETIN (PAGE 25), A CAUTIONARY TALE ABOUT THE PERILS OF ATTRIBUTING THE ENTIRETY OF OUR WOES ON A SINGULAR PROBLEM.

CAPITALISM UNPLUGGED

The term capitalism itself was first coined in the 1800s during the Industrial Revolution, when the capitalist framework we live in today was really revving to life. Lots of other competing or congruous isms, like communism and socialism, were being actively pitched to people during the same period.

Have you ever had a conversation with a friend about different political systems? You know, the one where someone says something like, “[fill in the blank]ism sounds promising in theory, but it just doesn’t work as well in practice.”

People typically make that statement about other isms but rarely about capitalism. That’s largely because capitalism has already succeeded in convincing most people that it’s the best way to go (even if some of these same people would simply argue that it’s the best of the worst).

The framework of big macro concepts like capitalism are so steeped in most of today’s culture that, at first glance, it can be hard to cull capitalism out and see what it is actually all about.

Paradoxically, lots of people would have a hard time defining the word even if asked. If you need proof, just ask a random stranger on the street to

define capitalism and see how they respond (likely, like you’re crazy for asking).

Although capitalism may be hard for someone to articulate, it’s considered today’s preeminent way of doing business. Capitalism is a driver for a whole lot of things happening in our lives. You know, stuff like needing to go to school, hold a job and pay rent. For all you econ geeks out there, also referred to as: marketplace credentials, monetary income, and privately-held property.

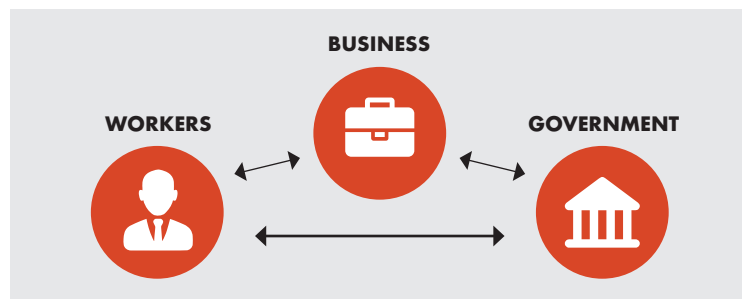
In theory, the opaque concept of capitalism definitely sounds pretty damn promising: an economic system where anyone can make it big and people have lots of freedoms (like the freedom of speech). Capitalism sells itself on the premise of ideals captured in the American Dream, that anyone has a shot to get rich if they work hard enough or conjure up the right winning idea.

So the question for you is this: if people are so quick to say other isms sound so much better in theory than practice, is it so unreasonable to place the world’s most applied economic theory under a magnifying glass and ask the same question of it?

CAPITALISM DEFINED (IN THEORY)

To better understand capitalism, let’s begin with an impartial understanding about how the form of capitalism that we have in place in the United States is supposed to operate in theory. Don’t worry: we’ll make this econ101 lesson short.

Put simply, capitalism can be defined as the constant push and pull between its three biggest players: business, government, and workers. These three players exist in a controlled market economy that is carefully designed to foster and encourage economic activity, while also promoting equality (or so the theory goes).



WORKERS;

Provides the workforce for business and government to operate. Worker spending helps stimulate the economy, which in turn helps to generate more jobs. Capitalism requires a range of workers, from people in suits earning the big bucks to help stimulate the economy, to police carrying guns to enforce capitalism’s rules.

BUSINESS;

Creates the jobs that pay people the salaries they need to live on. The golden rule for all businesses is that survival is based on turning a profit. For business corporations in particular, the golden rule is for this profit to help maximize shareholder value.

GOVERNMENT;

Exists as a steward of capitalism, almost like a referee. Government’s job is to make sure that capitalism’s rules play out fairly and safely (AKA: legally). In a democracy like the United States, citizenry is supposed to be integrally involved in governmental decision making in order to help ensure that the government does not become a crooked referee.

America's form of capitalism runs on a constant and healthy tension between these three big players. A system of checks and balances. On a basic level: workers depend on having a job so they can earn a livable wage and rely on government to regulate business so that their working conditions are safe.

In turn, government is dependent on the salary of the worker and the profit of a business so that they can collect taxes to operate. Finally, business depends on government to ensure everyone plays by the rules and on workers to power their businesses and purchase their products.

So there's the premise of our modern form of capitalism in a nutshell. But that nagging question still remains: like so many other isms, does today's implementation of capitalism also sound superior only in theory?

CAPITALISM DEFINED (IN PRACTICE)

Have you ever heard stories about how early U.S. coal mining camps worked? There's a good chance the answer is no because people don't like talking about it all that much. This is a fairly absent chapter from most history textbooks. It is a time period in American history when capitalism was thriving – but it didn't make capitalism look all too good in practice.

Most early coal camps worked something like this: employees put in really long shifts and faced extremely hazardous working conditions. Instead of being compensated with U.S. dollars, they were typically paid with scrip from the mining company, only good to cash in at mining camp stores (the stores were coincidentally owned by the camp owner).² Can you guess where this is going?

Groceries, drinks, clothes – basically everything – was purchased with scrip. And not surprisingly, some mining camp owners set the price of their store goods at exorbitantly high prices.³ The boss got rich while the miners got poorer.

Recognizing capitalism's perils, like the mining camps debacle, capitalist governments are, in theory, supposed to help stand with the people and make sure things happen fairly. The U.S. government arguably helped do this for quite a while – with tools like antitrust laws to break up big monopolies and campaign laws to ensure that capitalists could not buy elections.⁴

Citizen demand for equal opportunity protections, like fair voting and equitable education, was particularly successful in the Progressive Era (1890-1920). Rebels writers, like Jacob Riis and Ida Tarbel, helped call out corporate greed and energize change with their photos of income inequality and stories about big oil companies during this era.⁵

Fast-forward to today and some people continue to critique capitalism, or at the very least, the contemporary implementation of it. Concerns range from the indirect and often non-priced costs of doing business (also known as externalized costs), to the scarcity of resources that can be pervasive in capitalist-based economies. There are others who praise modern capitalism for the economic opportunities they say it continues to offer and the innovations it helps to cultivate.

But comparing capitalism at work in early American coal mining camps, the Progressive Era, and today can quickly make reading eyes go glassy.⁶ So in order to better understand how our current implementation of capitalism operates in practice, the following chapter overlays the theories of capitalism with the reality of our status quo.

"I AM NOT SO OPPOSED TO CAPITALISM THAT I HAVE FAILED TO SEE ITS RELATIVE MERITS. IT STARTED OUT WITH A NOBLE AND HIGH MOTIVE TO BLOCK THE TRADE MONOPOLIES OF NOBLES, BUT LIKE MOST HUMAN SYSTEMS IT FALLS VICTIM TO THE VERY THING IT WAS REVOLTING AGAINST. SO TODAY, CAPITALISM HAS OUTLIVED ITS USEFULNESS." DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

CAPITALISM IN ACTION: U.S. BANK BAILOUT

Capitalism in theory doesn't sound so bad. But today's capitalism in practice is arguably not always looking so hot.

An illustrative case study: how the government could have helped the people during the 2008 financial crisis but ended up helping out the big banks instead.

The largest banks in America messed up big time in 2008. In a bid to increase their customer base, banks loosened their standards for home mortgage loans. As a result, banks were doling out cash to some people who lacked the economic means to easily pay it back. For eager homeowners lured into perfect-sounding loans, it turned out that the deal was too good to be true.

Subprime mortgages were given to tons of people who could not make their make their monthly payments. As a result, many people who failed to make their mortgage payments accrued high debt and some ultimately ended up losing their homes.

The banks got themselves in dire financial straits: they needed money in response to all the debt they created.



OUR GOVERNMENT SPENT HUNDREDS OF BILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO BAIL OUT THE BANKS.⁷

Banks were the ones responsible for making the mistake in the first place: they knowingly deceived people. Doesn't it seem a little strange for our government to just bail them out?

Instead, our government could have figured out a way to loan the same amount of money directly to homeowners to help them out with their drowning debt and save them from losing their own homes.

This action, by its very definition, is arguably still capitalism: funds being utilized to provide credit and to keep the economy running. But it's a different kind of capitalism than the one our nation has grown used to because it is a kind where the government gives a hand up to the people instead of extending a hand out to big businesses.



"STATUS IS ALWAYS RIPE FOR SATIRE."

STEPHEN COLBERT

W H Y :

THINGS SUCK

As this chapter's title implies, and as you likely know, things are not all so fair and flawless in the world today. But as you also know, lots of people love to hate on today's problems. Simply griping about our woes is nothing new. What's new here is that we also explore capitalism's hand in the challenges we face.

Specifically, we examine the role of special interests and the 1% as they relate to our current status quo. These well-endowed special interests are fondly referred to herein as fat cats (a term first coined during the Roaring Twenties to describe wealthy political donors of the time).⁸

The Capitalism at Work table in this chapter provides brief descriptions of a wide range of issues that we face today. When you flip through the table some of you will presumably be more

concerned with one problem over another. Or you may be most worried about an issue missing entirely from the table (which you're encouraged to help fill in). Others may deny that some of these problems even exist.

This difference of opinion is okay: we can agree to disagree on the finer points. But at least there seems to be ever-growing consensus around this: things today feel like they're increasingly tipping out of balance.

Under siege from a myriad of threats, we candidly place today's status quo under a microscope in the table that follows. Not simply to blame all our woes on capitalism, but rather, to question a reality filled with issues like growing inequality, increasing armed conflict, and rising sea levels.

THE ISSUE

Inequality is Rising



THE LOWDOWN

There are unprecedented levels of inequality in the U.S today. The top 1% of Americans now owns 40% of the country's wealth, while 80% of our population holds just 7%.⁹ This disparate inequality is spreading all over the world. Nearly half of the world, or about three billion people, live on less than \$2.50 a day. At least 80% of the world lives on less than \$10 a day.¹⁰ *Note: stats such as these are in a constant state of flux and vary by source, but the overall trend of rising inequality remains unchanged.*

CAPITALISM'S HAND

Now that the 1% is holding onto so much money and power, they don't seem to want to just give up their clout. According to reports from the United Nations, the divide between the rich and poor is continuing to widen.¹¹ Today's capitalist landscape is defined by the rich getting richer while the poor get poorer. Our time-tested system of checks and balances appears to be tilting in the favor of special interests and the one percenters (AKA: fat cats).

"THE GOVERNMENT, WHICH WAS DESIGNED FOR THE PEOPLE, HAS GOT INTO THE HANDS OF THE BOSSES AND THEIR EMPLOYERS, THE SPECIAL INTERESTS. AN INVISIBLE EMPIRE HAS BEEN SET UP ABOVE THE FORMS OF DEMOCRACY."

WOODROW WILSON

THE ISSUE

People Are Being Tricked



THE LOWDOWN

By the numbers, we the people are clearly not too happy with today's state of affairs. 51 million eligible voters in America have not even registered into our system of voting.¹² And 42% of the citizens who are registered to vote are signed up as independents (with no stated affiliation to either the republican or democratic party).¹³ Yet, America has only had a democratic or republican president.¹⁴ With incongruous numbers such as these, we can safely infer that lots of people are tricked into the fallacy that their voice or vote do not matter.

CAPITALISM'S HAND

One of the biggest deceptions that fat cats like to propagate is this: that we the people are incapable of creating lasting and meaningful change. Why would fat cats trick us with such a rumor? Likely, because they realize that if lots people learned about all the things that suck in the world today, they would start to raise their voice. So hide the truth from us they do – like their reaction to what unfolded in Ferguson, Missouri in the fall of 2014. When rebels started roaring the rebel roar over the killing of Michael Brown at the hands of police officers, multiple journalists were arrested and the federal government declared a no-fly zone, effectively curtailing freedom of the press from the ground and in the skies.^{15, 16} There are fat cats today who fool people into thinking that our voices do not matter.

THE ISSUE

People Are Being Divided



THE LOWDOWN

Be it race, political ideology, religion, or gender – the fissures that divide us appear to be forever widening. For example, full-time female workers made 21.7% less than full-time male workers in 2013 median annual earnings. In 2014, full-time Hispanic female workers earned an average of 39% less than full-time white male workers on a weekly basis.¹⁷ Distressingly, the partitions between people don't end with salaries alone. 1 in 6 African-American men have been imprisoned in the U.S.¹⁸ Compare this to the one percenters at the top: approximately 4 in 6 Fortune 500 CEOs are white males.¹⁹

CAPITALISM'S HAND

Whether intentional or purely coincidental, stats such as these help indicate that today's implementation of capitalism is becoming increasingly inequitable. Skittish about the power of organizing, fat cats hold onto their power when the modus operandi is a people that stand divided. To put it another way, fat cats are rightfully afraid of the community-organizing wisdom that Benjamin Franklin imparted when he signed the Declaration of Independence: "We must all hang together, or assuredly, we shall all hang separately."²⁰

THE ISSUE

Civil Rights Are Under Attack



THE LOWDOWN

Classified government documents leaked by Edward Snowden reveal evidence of a systematic program to monitor phone calls and read emails of American citizens.²¹ In addition, local police departments are militarizing. According to Pentagon data, small municipal police departments have been given tens of thousands of machine guns, armored cars, and military aircraft.²² Despite efforts by the federal government to curtail these practices, countless phone conversations have already been recorded and police forces have been armored.^{23, 24}

CAPITALISM'S HAND

From a business perspective, fat cats win by collecting private online data that can optimize marketing tactics. Just think about how email vendors scan through your email so that they can deliver the most relevant ad to you. Stealthy marketing strategies like these are employed on the business front. On the government front, surveillance and militarization are often executed with safety as the primary rationale. Sure, no one wants to sacrifice safety, but as the police who protect us start to look more like soldiers than our allies, perhaps it is time to ask what civil liberties are compromised under the veil of protecting our freedom.

THE ISSUE

Armed Conflict is Increasing



THE LOWDOWN

In addition to fissures among we the people, nations themselves are becoming increasingly entangled in contentious disputes. According to United Nations reports, armed conflict is on the rise.²⁵ Over the last decade, 35 countries in the world experienced armed conflict.²⁶ Recent strife in geographically disparate places like Iraq, Crimea, and the South China Sea have resulted in countless lives lost and hundreds of billions of dollars in economic damages.^{27, 28, 29}

CAPITALISM'S HAND

Many conflicts in the world today can be traced to fat cats' insatiable appetite for natural resources. For example, a maritime zone with underwater oil resources estimated to be worth trillions of dollars is right off the Crimea coast (ergo, Russia invasion).³⁰ Experts estimate that there are troves of valuable mineral resources under the South China Sea floor (ergo, China's territorial claims).³¹ Furthermore, since the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Halliburton, a Fortune 500 company, has received \$39.5 billion in Iraq-related contracts (including one no-bid contract for over \$500 million).^{32, 33} If you're still scratching your head in search for connections between fat cats, governments, and warfare: look no further than Dick Cheney, the former Vice President of the U.S. (2001-2009) and the former CEO of Halliburton (1995-2000).³⁴ Ergo, corporate greed.

THE ISSUE

Government is Paralyzed



THE LOWDOWN

Partisan bickering between America's leading political parties boiled over in 2013: our federal government temporarily shut down due to the inability of Congressional leaders to reach consensus on a budget. The shutdown cost taxpayers billions of dollars in lost revenue and economic stagnation.³⁵ Today, people are taking note of this childlike behavior – approval ratings of U.S. Congress have dipped to an all-time historic low of around 15% in 2015.³⁶ Congress's self-inflicted paralysis and the public's eroding faith in them do not cast Congress in the best light to help solve the litany of issues we face today.

CAPITALISM'S HAND

Through aggressive lobbying and influential campaign donations, fat cats have long helped embolden elected officials to take certain positions on legislative issues. These fat cats received a massive victory over the people in a 2010 Supreme Court decision that continues to rattle America.³⁷ In a 5-4 ruling, the Supreme Court declared that donations from corporations are protected under the First Amendment – essentially removing any limits on corporate campaign donations. The ruling, *Citizens United vs. Federal Election Commission*, has ushered in a new era of fat cat spending in elections.³⁸ Today, less than 1% of Americans contribute 68% of all election funding in the U.S.³⁹ In the 2016 Presidential election, just 158 families have provided nearly 50% of all campaign contributions in the early part of the election cycle.^{40, 41}

THE ISSUE

Food & Water Supplies Are in Jeopardy



THE LOWDOWN

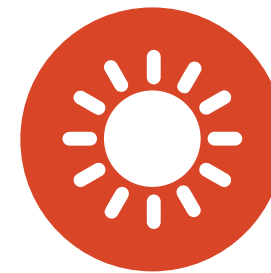
Contemporary agricultural practices provide cause for stomachs to turn: from the rampant use of pesticides (which have been proven to leach into drinking water supplies),⁴² to deplorable conditions for farm animals,⁴³ to nationwide food recalls,⁴⁴ to the routine practice of feeding antibiotics to livestock to help fatten them up.⁴⁵ Actions such as these come with a cost. Take antibiotics for instance: approximately 15 million pounds of antibiotics are fed to the farm animals in the U.S. each year.⁴⁶ As a result, doctors are finding that people are becoming increasingly antibiotic resistant.⁴⁷

CAPITALISM'S HAND

Like other industries, agriculture is becoming dominated by a few fat cats at the top: almost 30% of federal agricultural subsidies go to the top 2% percent of America's biggest farms.⁴⁸ And as the legislative record indicates, these agro-fat-cats succeed in swaying our federal government. For example, amidst heavy industry lobbying in 2011, Members of Congress declared that pizza should count a vegetable on public school menus (claiming that tomato paste is a vegetable).⁴⁹ As fat cats fallow our farmland and overrun our aquifers, we the people face threats like antibiotic immunity and contaminated drinking water.^{50, 51}

THE ISSUE

Human-Caused Climate Change is Unchecked



THE LOWDOWN

Climate change is a hot enough issue that the next chapter is wholly dedicated to it. In a snapshot: climate-warming trends over the past century are very likely due to human activities. But don't take the handbook's word for it: Nearly 100% of the world's climate change scientists agree with this very statement.⁵² These scientists warn that business-as-usual is causing the world to inch closer to an irreversible tipping point of unbearable living conditions and mass extinctions.⁵³ They tell us that all the issues outlined in the chapter will be further exacerbated by unchecked greenhouse gas emissions.⁵⁴

CAPITALISM'S HAND

Capitalism is integrally linked to human induced climate change, beginning with the age of Industrialization when smoke stacks first starting dotting our horizons.⁵⁵ Today, there are fat cats who profit from our business-as-usual that wrangle off attempts to rein in our runaway greenhouse gas emissions. Some of them go so far as to propagate mistruths on the matter: there are over 90 climate change counter-movement organizations in the U.S. with a cumulative annual income of more than \$900 million.⁵⁶ And the myths these fat cats disseminate seems to work: to date, the U.S. government and global leaders have not taken the actions requisite for reducing our greenhouse gas emissions down to the levels that scientists implore.⁵⁷

THE ISSUE

Et Cetera



THE LOWDOWN

The issues captured in this table are representative of some but not of all of the significant problems we face today. What are some other issues you can think of that are not included in the chart? Readers are invited to think of a topic they find most problematic in the world today and build out their own list of grievances. These problems can be shared online with other rebels.

CAPITALISM'S HAND

After thinking of the issue(s) that concern you most, distill down the issue and see if you can identify some of the underlying drivers that perpetuate this problem. If you peel back the layers far enough, can you find the special interest groups involved? Can you identify the linkage between the issue and capitalism? As all the points outlined in this chapter demonstrate, there is a good chance that the answers to these questions will be yes.

REBEL BULLETIN :

PLAY WITH CATS, NOT HUNT FOR WITCHES

America's history is punctuated by startling periods in which our citizenry mistakenly chased scapegoats and so-called straw men rather than confront the underlying issues they faced at the time.

- It began in 1692 when a wave of hysteria spread that witches were possessing people. In the ensuing Salem Witch Trials, dozens of citizens were accused of witchcraft and 19 people were executed.⁵⁸
- Widespread paranoia struck again during World War II, when 100,000+ Japanese-Americans citizens were imprisoned in Relocation Camps for widespread fear they were allegiant to Japan.⁵⁹
- Mass hysteria reared itself yet again during the Cold War, when the Red Scare gripped our nation. Citizens endured an era of surveillance and job loss because of their political viewpoints.⁶⁰

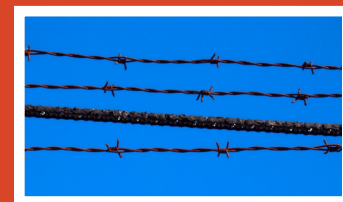
Each of these travesties occurred in monumental and challenging times. And as the table in this chapter highlights, we're also living in a difficult time, faced with significant hurdles like climate change and inequality.

Massive problems, like climate change, are complex and often have more than one underlying force at play. After all, there are non-capitalist countries that also have runaway greenhouse gas emissions. There are also some large corporations actively working toward reducing their environmental footprint.

If these previous periods of American history have but one lesson to yield, perhaps it is this: that there is futility to mistakenly chasing a straw man when faced with truly calamitous times.

As such, please dispel any notion to embark on a foolhardy witch-hunt for fat cats in a flash of group hysteria. It would be unfair and incorrect to simply ascribe all of today's woes on one group alone. In addition to compromised morality, there is nothing all that fun or productive about exerting energy on pointing fingers.

With principles like this in mind, we disrupt capitalism and crack jokes not to insult or harm fat cats, but rather, to raise awareness about the problematic status quo that we all share.





**“OUR LIVES BEGIN TO END THE DAY
WE BECOME SILENT ABOUT THE
THINGS THAT MATTER MOST.”**

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

WHEN : TODAY, CLIMATE CHANGE

For those of us already schooled in the monumental threat of climate change, the imminent need to question our status quo is largely self-evident. For others, climate change can be shrouded in the same kind of mystery as terms like capitalism.

The fallacy that climate change is difficult to wrap our arms around is a strange one because nearly 100% of the world’s scientists have reached consensus about what causes climate change and have meticulously researched and documented its injurious impacts.⁶¹

In the same way that we placed capitalism under a microscope in the preceding chapter, let’s now shine some light on climate change itself to define what it is, what causes climate chaos, and why taking action today

is so critical. In tandem with defining climate change, we also assess how capitalism transacts with this threat.

DEFINING CLIMATE CHANGE

There is widespread agreement about how climate change is defined.⁶² According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, “climate change refers to any significant change in the measures of climate lasting for an extended period of time.”⁶³ Our climate is indeed changing. The earth’s average temperature has risen by 1.4°F over the past century and is projected to rise further in the coming decades.⁶⁴

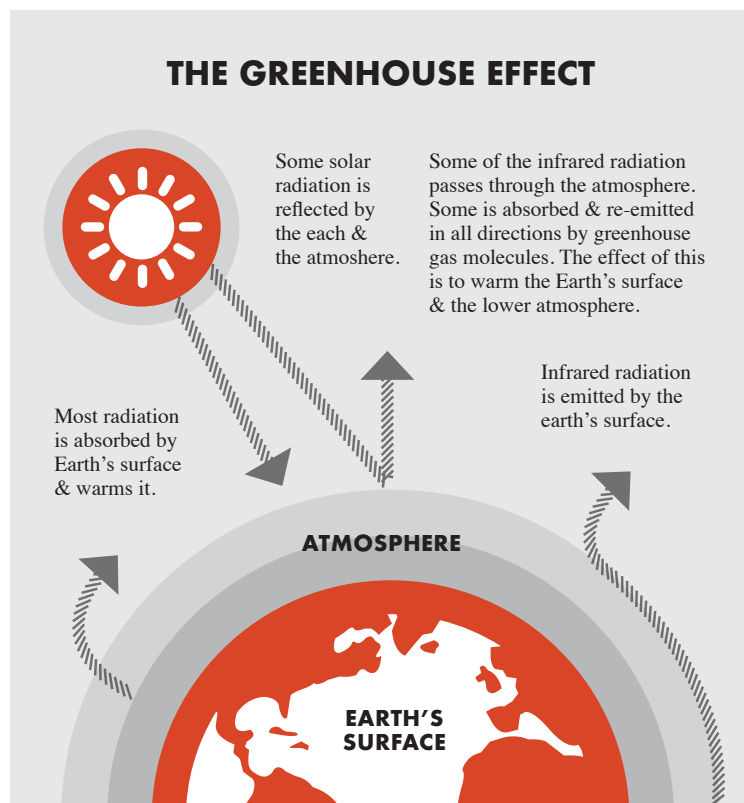
There is also widespread agreement about what causes climate change: 97% of the world’s climate scientists concur that climate-warming trends

over the past century are very likely due to human activities.⁶⁵ In the last 100 years, we have released unprecedented amounts of carbon dioxide and other noxious greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Scientists explain that these emissions are the main driver of human-induced climate change.⁶⁶

The term greenhouse gas itself encompasses a number of pollutants including carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and fluorinated gases.⁶⁷

Aptly categorized as greenhouse gasses, emissions from these sources help fuel the greenhouse effect that is changing our climate. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: “greenhouse gases act like a blanket around earth, trapping energy in the atmosphere and causing it to warm.”⁶⁸

The process of the naturally occurring greenhouse gas effect (without human-caused warming) is illustrated in the graphic below.



If you've ever stepped into a greenhouse, then you already have an idea of how the greenhouse gas effect works when it works the right way. By trapping in the sunlight's heat, a greenhouse makes things warmer. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, “the greenhouse effect is natural and necessary to support life on Earth.”⁶⁹

If you have been in a greenhouse before, you've also likely observed plants growing within the greenhouse (warmed by the sun and insulation). But when inside this greenhouse, you probably felt a bit warm. Maybe uncomfortably warm. Now think about what would happen if people turned up the heat in that greenhouse in a big way. The plants that had been growing inside would die off and you yourself couldn't survive within that heat for too long.

And it is here where we get to the rub. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, “the buildup of greenhouse gases can change Earth's climate and result in dangerous effects to human health and welfare and to ecosystems.”⁷⁰

Recognizing that 97% of the world's scientists tell us that climate-warming trends are very likely caused by human activity, the obligation for action becomes all the more paramount. We are faced with a scenario where it is our hands are fixed on the world's thermostat.⁷¹

“HUMAN INFLUENCE ON THE CLIMATE SYSTEM IS CLEAR, AND RECENT ANTHROPOGENIC EMISSIONS OF GREENHOUSE GASES ARE THE HIGHEST IN HISTORY. RECENT CLIMATE CHANGES HAVE HAD WIDESPREAD IMPACTS ON HUMAN AND NATURAL SYSTEMS. WARMING OF THE CLIMATE SYSTEM IS UNEQUIVOCAL, AND SINCE THE 1950s, MANY OF THE OBSERVED CHANGES ARE UNPRECEDENTED OVER DECADES TO MILLENNIA. THE ATMOSPHERE AND OCEAN HAVE WARMED, THE AMOUNTS OF SNOW AND ICE HAVE DIMINISHED, AND SEA LEVEL HAS RISEN.”

INTERNATIONAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE, FIFTH ASSESSMENT REPORT

As the chart below demonstrates, the impacts of turning up the earth's thermostat will be far from fun. All information included in the Climate Change Impacts chart below comes from the U.S. Government's *2014 National Climate Assessment* to explain what human-caused climate change is projected to do to our world.⁷²

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS



DEADLY HEALTH RISKS

Historical episodes of extreme heat have caused widespread fatalities and extreme heat is only projected to increase with climate change. Climate change is also increasing risks of respiratory stress from poor air quality and increased heat.⁷³



FOOD SHORTAGES

Farms are expected to suffer from stresses due to extreme heat, disease, and heavy downpours. Changing weather will make growing seasons more difficult. Projected food shortages are expected to trigger forced migrations.⁷⁴



UNDRINKABLE WATER

Climate change is increasing the likelihood of water shortages. Water quality is currently diminishing in many areas from contaminant and sediment concentration after heavy downpours.⁷⁵



FISHLESS OCEANS

An increase in acidic ocean water will inhibit the formation of shells, skeletons, and coral reefs. This changing ocean chemistry, coupled with changing ocean temperatures, is expected to jeopardize aquatic ecosystems.⁷⁶



WRECKED ECOSYSTEMS

If left unchecked, climate change can cause the extinction of entire species. Stressors like droughts, wildfires, and pest outbreaks (for example, bark beetles in the West) are already harming ecosystems.⁷⁷



BROKEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Sea level rise, storm surge, and heavy downpours are causing billions of dollars of damage to U.S. infrastructure. Climate change is projected to further intensify this infrastructure damage.⁷⁸



ATTACK ON INDIGENOUS CULTURES

Climate change is undermining indigenous ways of life by altering the environment. Language, ceremonies, cultures, practices, and food sources that evolved in concert with the environment are being placed at risk.⁷⁹

FEELING THE HEAT

Since climate scientists first began warning about human-caused climate change in the 1970s, the world has been reticent to heed their calls and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. And today, we're starting to feel the heat.

We use three ways to measure global surface temperature and all of them tell us that the earth has warmed since 1880.⁸⁰ The ten warmest years on record having occurred since 2000. Most of the U.S. has recently incurred unprecedented periods of high temperatures, heavy downpours, or drought.⁸²

Today, ice sheets in Antarctica are melting. In 2014, climate scientists reported that a large section of a Western Antarctica ice sheet began

melting and that it is now impossible to curtail the melting of this particular section. Scientists predict that this ice sheet will destabilize neighboring ice sheets, leading to sea-levels rising by as much as 10 feet. Notably, scientists have warned about the impact of human-caused climate change on this particular ice sheet since 1978.⁸³

The reverberations of climate change are not felt in Antarctica and America alone. Rising seas have also overtaken other parts of the world, like the Pacific Islands, where freshwater supplies are being inundated with undrinkable saltwater.⁸⁴ Alarming, recent episodes of armed conflicts have also been linked to climate change impacts. For example, the scarcity of resources in Sudan (triggered by desertification) helped precipitate a prolonged civil war and massive waves of refugees.⁸⁵

If these climatic proof points are not conclusive enough to demonstrate that climate change is here, then consider this: the U.S. government is currently arming itself for climate change. Confidential Department of Defense documents leaked by Edward Snowden reveal the government is preparing for “future resource wars over water, food, and energy” caused by climate change.⁸⁶

The Department of Defense warns that the resource shortages triggered by climate change could lead to “anti-government ideologies” that “threaten government stability.” Leaked documents reveal that the government is currently training 20,000 troops to respond to the civil unrest that they predict climate change will help engender.⁸⁷

Although the world witnessed public calls for diplomacy during the 2015 United Nations Conference on Climate Change, Snowden’s leaked documents highlight that our government is simultaneously preparing for climate change by developing militarized tactics to subdue people who care about climate change action.⁸⁸ This leaked intelligence implores we the people to call for a more tenable solution.

THE IMPERATIVE FOR ACTION

Put simply, if immediate action is not taken to substantially reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, we’re fucked. The overwhelming majority of climate scientists warn that simply keeping on with today’s business-as-usual will bring us to the feared climatic “tipping point” of mass extinctions, melting ice caps and unbearable living conditions.⁸⁹

Scientists also tell us that: “the choices we make today will affect the amount of greenhouse gases we put in the atmosphere in the near future and for years to come.”⁹⁰ These climate scientists tell us that even with immediate action, we will still incur climate change impacts. They also tell us if we take meaningful action soon, then we can avert some of climate change’s most dire impacts.⁹¹

Heeding the call of the scientific community, global leaders started making some action toward a meaningful climate solution at the 2015 United Nations Conference on Climate Change. For the first time in the world’s history, representatives from 195 countries acknowledged the importance of climate change and reached a landmark accord committing their nations to lower greenhouse gas emissions.⁹²

A milestone accomplishment, the accord is alleged to stop the atmosphere from warming to more than 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit over the preindustrial average.⁹³ 3.6 degrees marks the tipping point where scientists warn of irreversible climate impacts like melting ice, rising sea levels, increased flooding, and supply shortages.⁹⁴

While the 2015 accord is widely acknowledged to be a critical step to drive climate change action, it is also widely recognized to fall short of some key steps that are requisite for lasting climate progress. Shortcomings include:

- The accord lacks any enforcement mechanism to ensure that the greenhouse gas reduction commitments are actually achieved.⁹⁵
- Entire industries with significant greenhouse gas emissions, such as aviation and maritime, are entirely omitted from the agreement.⁹⁶
- Not all sections of the agreement are legally binding; meaning that future elected leaders could renege on their nation’s commitments at anytime.⁹⁷

These potentially fatalistic deficiencies urge us to ask: is token action that falls short of achieving climate justice more insidious than taking no action at all?

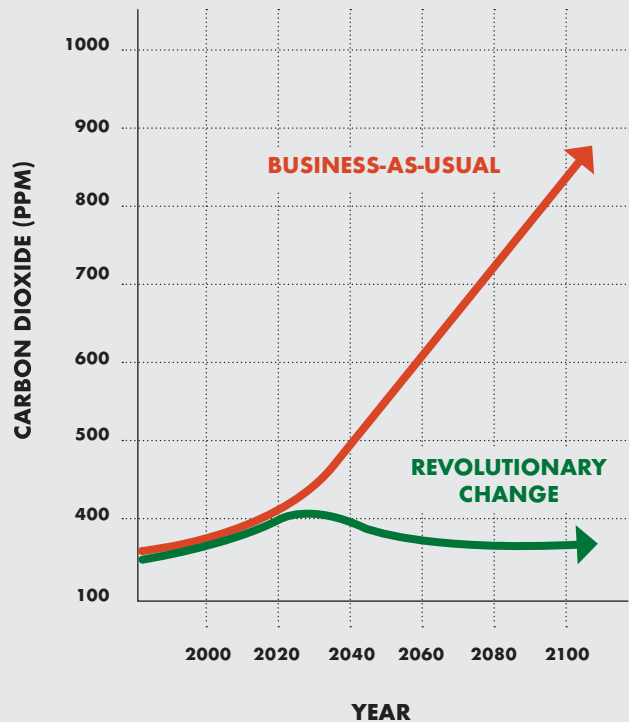
Recognizing that this tentative framework fails to tackle climate change’s most harmful impacts, the chart on the following page visualizes the amount of projected carbon dioxide (CO₂) atmospheric concentrations under two scenarios: business-as-usual with zero action taken and revolutionary change to rein in our emissions in a monumental way.⁹⁸

CO₂ measurement is a fitting indicator of climate change progress because it is the primary greenhouse gas that is emitted from human activity. The importance of CO₂ is especially paramount because over 80% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions come from this particular source.¹⁰⁰

As the chart on the following page highlights, the unchecked release of CO₂ is projected to bring the world to 800 parts per million (ppm is a ratio of carbon dioxide molecules to all other molecules in the atmosphere). 800 ppm leads us to the feared climatic tipping point of unbearable living conditions.¹⁰¹

On the other hand, the revolutionary reduction of our emissions would result in bringing our current 400-ppm levels of CO₂ down to 350-ppm – a target widely acknowledged by scientific experts as the necessary level for our future.^{102, 103}

PROJECTED ATMOSPHERIC CO₂ CONCENTRATIONS



To give some more flavor between the difference of what 800-ppm and 350-ppm means, the table at right overlays climate change with the same issues we examined in the Capitalism at Work table.

The table at right underscores how the problems we face today will either be magnified or alleviated by the business-as-usual or revolutionary pathway.

CLIMATE CHANGE SCENARIOS

TODAY'S PROBLEM

BUSINESS-AS-USUAL

(CO₂ CONCENTRATIONS RISE TO 800 PPM)

REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE

(CO₂ CONCENTRATIONS REDUCE TO 350 PPM)

INEQUALITY IS RISING

Low-income and at-risk communities are most impacted by climate change's injurious impacts.¹⁰⁴

Innovations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions promote job growth and drive economic opportunities.

PEOPLE ARE BEING TICKED

Fat cats continue spend substantial sums of money to propagate climate change myths.¹⁰⁵

Raising awareness about climate change helps spur national and international policies to address the issue.

PEOPLE ARE BEING DIVIDED

Climate change is projected to cause mass migrations and social turmoil; further dividing we the people.¹⁰⁶

People band together to tackle climate change and rein in our greenhouse gas emissions.

CIVIL RIGHTS ARE UNDER ATTACK

The Pentagon is already training 20,000 troops to subdue climate rebels. Civil rights continue to crumble.¹⁰⁷

Improved living conditions and a better quality of life curtail the need for repressive governments to subdue climate change activists.

ARMED CONFLICT IS INCREASING

Armed conflict is rises as much as 50% due to variations in climate and precipitation.¹⁰⁸

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions has a direct correlation to curtail episodes of armed conflict.

CLIMATE CHANGE SCENARIOS CONT.

GOVERNMENT IS PARALYZED

Despite the overwhelming amount of scientific evidence, some Members of Congress continue to deny that climate change exists.¹⁰⁹

People's demand for climate change action helps to compel our leaders to take the much-needed steps toward progress.

FOOD & WATER JEOPARDIZED

Climate change substantially interrupts food production and reduces the amount of available drinking water.¹¹⁰

Sustainable farming practices are implemented to minimize environmental degradation.

HUMAN-CAUSED CLIMATE CHANGE IS OCCURRING

All of the problems outlined throughout this table continue to magnify, leading to unlivable conditions.

Solving climate change means taking significant and courageous actions to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

CAPITALISM = CLIMATE CHAOS

If climate change poses such substantial and immediate threats, why is so little action being taken to solve this problem? Further, why is the 2015 United Nations climate accord at such grave risk of failure?

Despite the overwhelming evidence of human-caused climate change, there is not a widespread public outcry for progress. Only 44% of Americans believe that humans are causing this problem.¹¹¹ In a perplexing point of

comparison, polling indicates that 77% of Americans believe that there are signs that aliens have visited our earth.¹¹²

To better understand the underpinnings of zany numbers such as these, we must revisit *A Rebel Handbook's* central antagonist, capitalism. Today, there are over 90 anti-climate change organizations in the U.S. operating with an annual budget of over \$900 million who are actively spreading climate change myths.¹¹³

Why, in today's status quo, would fat cats want to drop so much money simply to spread a whole bunch of hullabaloo? The answer is surprisingly simple: tackling climate change means changing business-as-usual and there are lots of fat cats who fail to see the market opportunity that lies with radical economic and social-based innovation.

Coincidentally, some of the most influential climate mythologists are fat cats with ties to the same industries directly responsible releasing large amounts of greenhouse gas emissions.¹¹⁴ According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: deforestation, industrial processes, and large-scale agricultural practices are all responsible for contributing to climate change. By far, the largest greenhouse gas emissions stems from burning coal, oil, and natural gas for energy.^{115, 116}

The lengths that fat cats in these industries have gone to in order to propagate climate mistruths ought to raise eyebrows. Recent reports suggest that large oil companies have known about the perils of climate change since the 1970s and have actively worked to hide its risks from the general public.¹¹⁷

Other fossil-fuel-hungry industries have gone even further to conceal inconvenient climate truths. For example, Volkswagen was caught red-handed

installing clandestine software into their cars in order to sidestep legally required greenhouse gas emissions testing. As a result, cars with this secret software emitted up to 40 times the allowable levels of pollution before the crime was uncovered in 2015.¹¹⁸

Some difficult questions arise when recognizing the direct hand of fat cats in human-caused climate change. But topics like if it is greedy individuals or the nature of capitalism itself that perpetuates climate inaction are complex ones to deliberate. As such, this is fodder for further discussion (examined more extensively in Part III on page 119, where we weigh the merits of capitalist and post-capitalist solutions).

At this point of the rebel fight, the bigger and most pressing takeaway is that no meaningful and substantial climate change action is being taken in today's rendition of capitalism. There are fat cats among us who are actively working to derail tenable climate solutions. The longer revolutionary change is delayed, the more injurious the impacts of climate change will become.

“MAN IS A PART OF NATURE, AND HIS WAR AGAINST NATURE IS INEVITABLY A WAR AGAINST HIMSELF.”

RACHEL CARSON



"HOPE WILL NEVER BE SILENT."

HARVEY MILK

WHERE : **SEA TO SHINING SEA**

The "where" is fairly straightforward: everywhere. As we have discussed, climate change will impact the entire planet – necessitating rebels from all corners of the world to link arms in our demand for a just future.

Today's implementation of capitalism is marked by the relentless pursuit of global growth and expansion in order to maximize revenue. From clear-cutting forests in the Amazon, to natural resource disputes in the South China Sea, to recent attempts to mine minerals from asteroids in outer space – the tentacles of hungry fat cats and the environmental degradation caused by these exploits reach far and wide.^{119, 120, 121}

As the result, the "where" is focused quite broadly: wherever there is

capitalism, there should also be people questioning the status quo and helping to drive progress. One particularly acute place of focus is the United States. As one of the world's largest greenhouse gas emitters, the U.S. has a clear and integral role to play in helping to address greenhouse gas emissions.¹²²

As the world's wealthiest nation (measured by gross domestic product), the U.S. also represents the epicenter of modern capitalism.¹²³ However, we would be shortsighted if we did not also consider America's rippling economic impact on other countries throughout the world when identifying the nature of global inequality.

In the subsections that follow, we examine what it means to question the status quo as a rebel in America.

We also explore what impact this concentrated power of wealth has on other countries by looking at economic theories like externalized costs. Importantly, we highlight how social media tools like Facebook and Twitter enable rebels to be connected everywhere in the world with unprecedented ease and affordability.

While the economics of externalities, technicalities of greenhouse gas emissions, and nuances of social media and can grow quite intricate in nature, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. summed it up quite simply during the Civil Rights struggle of the 1960s with his notion to pursue justice everywhere.¹²⁴

“INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS A THREAT TO JUSTICE EVERYWHERE.”

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

REBELS IN AMERICA

When reading through the colossal injustices we face in the Things Suck chapter on page 15, it can be easy to become overwhelmed. Someone might be inclined to make a statement like: “I’m just one person. The actions I take in my community cannot singlehandedly solve climate change or counter the big-time injustices inequality.”

If you yourself have a predisposition to make a statement such as this, you’re not wrong. One singular person can admittedly not solve massive issues like climate change. But being a rebel in America is not solely about working to tackle the biggest problems we face. Being a rebel in America is also about living out the words prescribed by Dr. Martin King Jr.: calling out all injustices, from the minute to the massive, when we bear witness.

For these readers that might remain unconvinced that localized injustices can and do occur in this great nation, the three examples below are intended to showcase the myriad of injustices we faced in 2015.

- **CENSORSHIP IN ACTION (NJ):** When insurrection occurs, like the people’s response to the police shooting of unarmed Michael Brown in Missouri, those in power like to curtail the people’s voice. Consider Trenton,

New Jersey for example: where an approved and installed mural commemorating Michael Brown was sandblasted away by authorities.¹²⁵

- **SHAKING PEOPLE’S HOMES (OK):** The stories of environmental degradation in America are vast and numerous. Take Oklahoma for instance, which experienced over 500 earthquakes in 2014, placing both people and property at risk. The Oklahoma state government conceded that the state’s exponential rise in earthquakes is “very likely” caused by fracking for natural gas.^{126, 127}
- **POLITICAL MALFEASANCE (MO):** Political injustices occur across states, in large cities, and in small towns. Let us consider what transpired in the small town of Parma, Missouri as one example. In November 2015, Tyus Byrd was elected to serve as the first African-American Mayor of Parma, replacing a politician who served as mayor for 37 years. Just hours before her swearing in ceremony, five out of the six town’s all-white police force quit and other municipal officials resigned.^{128, 129}

Whether you are already aware of these three particular injustices or the stories are news to you, these disparate incidents are intended to help illustrate the range of grievances we rebels incur on a daily basis and the geographic diversity in which they happen.

By sounding the alarm about either specific or system-wide injustices, one voice helps to call out the problems we face, raises awareness around these issues, and creates linkages between seemingly disparate injustices. However, doing so across our 3,500,000+ square mile nation is not the simplest task.¹³⁰

When America’s first rebels were fighting the rebel fight in the 1700s, their struggle centered within the confines of just 13 colonies. During the American Revolution, community-based militias were formed across the colonies. Instead of traveling far and wide, rebel militias remained in their hometowns to safeguard their local communities.¹³¹

While our country is certainly a whole lot larger today than it was then, the American revolutionary tactics of community solidarity, skepticism of authority, and co-operative self-help are still germane. The rebel fight for progress greatly benefits from people keeping their eyes open for injustices and crying foul if injustices occur within their communities. Unlike rebels

from the 1700s, no guns are required today: we have other rebel tools to raise awareness, like social media and nonviolent rebel jokes.

From the street corners of small towns, to the remote wilderness locations of capitalism's environmental exploits, to the centers of big cities – we rebels have long been there and we will continue to be there, roaring the rebel roar. And one of the best perks: no commuting time or travel expense required.

“CLIMATE CHANGE DOES NOT RESPECT BORDER; IT DOES NOT RESPECT WHO ARE RICH AND POOR, SMALL AND BIG. THEREFORE, THIS IS WHAT WE CALL ‘GLOBAL CHALLENGES,’ WHICH REQUIRE GLOBAL SOLIDARITY.” BAN KI-MOON

REBELS IN THE WORLD

With America sitting at the epicenter of today's capitalist exploits, many of the strategies in this handbook are designed to target capitalism in America. These tactics can and should be reworked and repositioned because rebels of the world are equally critical to the success of the rebel fight.

There are two central reasons why rebels in America and rebels throughout the world need to link arms to combat the multitude of injustices we face today. One is that global action is needed to rein in the sum total of our greenhouse gas emissions and truly

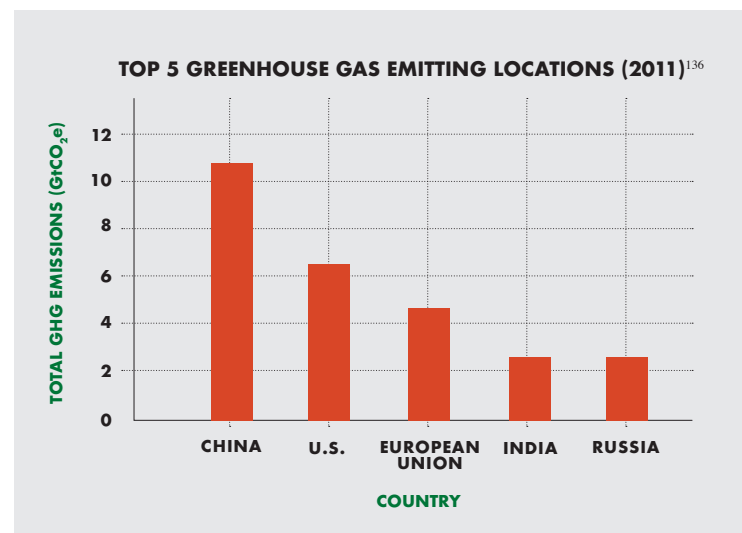
tackle climate change. The other is that today's implementation of capitalism in America has a direct impact on people all over the world.¹³²

As discussed earlier in the Climate Change chapter on page 27, human-induced climate change started really revving to life during the Industrial Revolution – and America had a key hand in defining the age of industrialization.¹³³ Since the Industrial Revolution first began, humans have increased atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations by approximately a third from pre-industrial levels.¹³⁴

While early industrializers like the U.S. and Europe might not have as many carbon-polluting factories and incidents of compromised air quality that they once did when helping to birth the Industrial Revolution, the smoke stacks of Industrialization have not disappeared. They have simply migrated over to other countries.¹³⁵

Today, some of the nations with ever-increasing greenhouse gas emissions are ones that are themselves going through the transformative process of increasing their manufacturing output.¹³⁶ With the luxury of retrospect in America's own episode of industrialization, there is an opportunity to learn from the past and help avert some of the harmful externalities generally tethered to industrialization.

For example, industrialization typically goes hand in hand with the painful reality of externalizing costs (like the price of polluting, child labor, and unlivable wages). Costs like these are not often reflected on the price tag of what's for sale in stores today. But if enough rebels around the world are roaring the rebel roar against injustice and inequality, we the people stand a greater chance of bringing attention to issues such as these. By doing so, we can help avert inhumane working conditions and environmental injustice.



REBELS ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

What do the Triangle Fire in New York, NY and seemingly unrelated factory collapse in Dhaka, Bangladesh have in common? In the case of the 1911 Triangle Fire, over 100 garment workers burned to death inside a New York City factory.¹³⁷ In the 2013 Bangladesh incident, a structurally unsound factory collapsed and over 1,000 garment workers lost their lives.¹³⁸

Although separated by space and time, both incidents resulted in a significant loss of life for at-risk workers and underscore the ongoing struggle for workplace justice in the labor movement.^{139, 140} In each case, workers faced hazardous conditions to drive down consumer costs (locked doors in New York and an unsafe building in Dhaka). Both also embody the externalized costs of capitalism in action.

Seemingly disjointed injustices can be overlaid and better understood when we employ social media to connect the dots between the true costs of commodities under capitalism. Entirely new conversations can take place with social media, like how the geography of externalized costs has shifted between 1911 and 2013.

The online world presents opportunities for rebels to band together like never before, soaring above geographi-

cally bounded constraints and bringing together various outcries of injustice. For example, police involvement in the geographically dispersed fatalities of U.S. citizens like Eric Garner, Michael Brown, and Freddie Gray have amplified into a unified call for action with the World Wide Web.¹⁴¹

Rebels throughout the world can now communicate and collaborate on ideas more easily. Conversations no longer have to be led by global world leaders or capitalist executives flying from country to country. As a result, rebel strategies designed for one community can be reworked and shared online to be more impactful in another community or country. Success with any specific rebel struggle can be disseminated widely to share lessons learned. And injustices can be broadcasted immediately when they occur.

Some rebels face political landscapes dominated by repressiveness and censorship. However, with the advent of the online world, rebels in some areas can more easily navigate through these roadblocks. When possible, they can share stories of the rebel struggle and learn how to safely and effectively pursue social change in their home communities.

The world is counting on it.

“CENSORSHIP IS SAYING: ‘I’M THE ONE WHO SAYS THE LAST SENTENCE. WHATEVER YOU SAY, THE CONCLUSION IS MINE.’ BUT THE INTERNET IS LIKE A TREE THAT IS GROWING. THE PEOPLE WILL ALWAYS HAVE THE LAST WORD - EVEN IF SOMEONE HAS A VERY WEAK, QUIET VOICE. SUCH POWER WILL COLLAPSE BECAUSE OF A WHISPER.” AI WEIWEI



**"NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF
THOUGHTFUL, COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN
CHANGE THE WORLD; INDEED, IT'S THE
ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS."**

MARGARET MEAD

WHO :

REBELS AND NON-REBELS

Unlike capitalism, which is often nebulous and difficult for people to define, the word rebel often evokes immediate concern or sharp criticism. We rebels are called liars by some climate change skeptics. We are labeled as troublemakers and rule-breakers. But ultimately, most rebels are simply concerned citizens who dare to question the status quo.

During America's last revolution, people were broadly classified as loyalists or rebels. Loyalists, or non-rebels, were married to the status quo and did not rally behind American Independence. Rebels fought for the change that established the United States of America.

We're faced with a similar plight around the myriad of problems we face today. Rebels: let the fun begin.

Non-rebels: you're invited to join the rebel fun anytime.

***"THE FIRST
RESISTANCE
TO SOCIAL
CHANGE IS TO
SAY IT'S NOT
NECESSARY."***

GLORIA STEINEM

NON-REBELS

- Non-rebels do not believe today's problems are real.
- Non-rebels may be scared about today's problems but are under the illusion that there is not anything they can do to help.
- Non-rebels are loyalists committed to the status quo.
- Non-rebels may be too afraid to take action or too apathetic. They may be cynics who do not believe that change is possible.
- Non-rebels are generally the ultra-wealthy: the 1% of American's we discussed earlier that hold 40% of our country's wealth.¹⁴² They may be the CEOs of large corporation making hundreds of millions of dollars a year.¹⁴³
- Non-rebels include the oligarchs who have taken our government hostage, like that 1% of American's who contributed 68% of all United States election funding in 2012.¹⁴⁴
- Non-rebels are Democrat or Republican leaders collecting campaign contributions from this 1%. There were 435 House

Elections in 2012. The candidates that outspent their opponents won 95% of them.¹⁴⁵

- Non-rebels are also people who safeguard the 1%. They may be police officers, FBI agents, or soldiers.
- Non-rebels are anyone that has been sold on the idea that there is no way of doing business better than the way it is done today.
- Non-rebels are people with the freedom to switch teams and become rebels.

REBELS

- Rebels are people that know how to have fun.
- Rebels come from all walks of life. Old and young, tall and short, conservative and liberal. Anyone from any race, religion, gender, or sexuality can enlist in the rebel fight.
- Rebels question why things are the way they are and dare to dream that the world can become a better place.
- Rebels are the 99%. We are the majority and we are agents of change.

- Rebels can be parents who take action to protect their children's future, or children who take action because they see the imperative for progress.
- Rebels are individuals who demand that all people have equal political, social, and economic freedoms – regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, creed, religion, age, or disability.
- Rebels might be academics who have learned that studies without action are not enough to incubate progress. This includes climate scientists who are ready to come out of hiding and agitate about the imminent need for climate action.
- Rebels could be families who have suffered from the pangs of hunger and are ready to demand their slice of the American Dream.
- Rebels can be immigrants that implore their fellow citizens for a level playing field to advance upon. Rebels could also be any of the 60 million refugees that question a status quo in which they are driven from their homes by war and persecution.¹⁴⁶
- Rebels are indigenous peoples who organize to stop being trampled on by capitalism's way of doing business.
- Rebels are musicians, artists, dancers, and poets who help inspire us for change.
- Rebels are people who work together and have each other's back. They put petty differences aside and unite to work together for a global good.
- Rebels are nonviolent because they know that words and jokes, not weapons, ultimately win the war.
- Rebels do not simply complain about today's problems: they drive progress with disruptive innovations.
- Rebels have fun. Rebels create change.



**"IF YOU WANT TO TELL PEOPLE
THE TRUTH, MAKE THEM LAUGH.
OTHERWISE, THEY'LL KILL YOU."**

OSCAR WILDE

HOW : **FUN, CAPITALISM'S KRYPTONITE**

The "how" is easier than anyone who dictates our status quo wants us to think. The how is based on identifying the pillars that hold up capitalism and utilizing the principles of social change to disrupt these pillars. If we rebels chip away at the pillars that prop up capitalism, these actions help call out are perilous status quo and demonstrate that we the people stand ready for change.

In equally good news: the how is much more fun than fat cats would like people to think. Laughter has and always will be more everlasting than a bullet. And this, in essence, is our how.

Here, we identify the pillars of capitalism and tenets of social change,

and examine why fun ends up making social change a more powerful force to counter the myriad of injustices we face today.

CAPITALISM'S PILLARS

Capitalism requires the success of businesses, the stability of government and the cooperation of workers. Capitalism's twelve core pillars are outlined on the following page.



BUSINESS

PROFIT:

Businesses need to generate profit to stay in business.

OWNERSHIP:

Business profit is contingent on capitalists owning economic assets, thus the concept of things like “private” property.

CAPITAL:

Businesses need to raise capital to continue expanding. Think: lines of credit and the stock market.

EFFICIENCY:

Time is money in capitalism. The more efficient a business can be, the more profit they stand to make.



GOVERNMENT

TAXES:

Government needs money to operate and it primarily collects these funds through taxes and fees.

RULES:

Capitalism thrives on stability so it creates a set of rules for people to obey. For example, imposing an early curfew for rebels.

ENFORCEMENT:

Government needs to be able to enforce its rule in order to keep capitalism as the ruling party.

CURRENCY:

Capitalism runs on currency: the exchange of money between people is what keeps capitalism going.



WORKERS

CONSUMPTION:

The more people consume, the more their money helps pay other capitalists. Capitalism relies on this consumption.

VOTING:

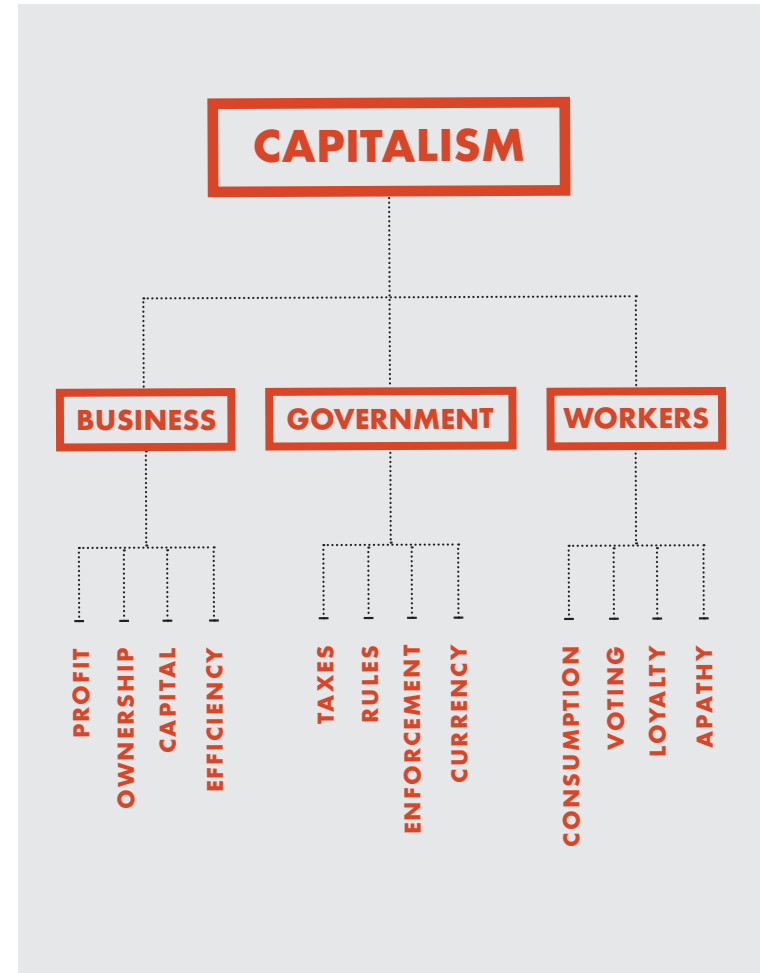
Voting helps keep capitalist government’s running: people have to support capitalist candidates to legitimize a victory.

LOYALTY:

Capitalism wins if people think it’s the best way to live.

APATHY:

If people have stable jobs and a decent quality of life, they’re not as likely to question capitalism or break the rules.



THE CHAIN OF SOCIAL CHANGE

The chain of social change is based on simple and historically proven principles. Each of the strategies in the handbook is rooted in these principles because rebels linking together are stronger than capitalism's shaky foundation.¹⁴⁷

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE:

Civil disobedience is about taking direct action and daring to disavow laws that are widely understood to be unjust. For example, breaking the Jim Crow laws (1890-1965) that legally called for African-American segregation. The premise of civil disobedience is that when lots of people start to say no to orders, compliance cannot be forced upon us.

GUERRILLA TACTICS:

Successful social change movements generally employ clever and cunning guerrilla tactics that can outmatch and outpace the cumbersome bureaucracy of larger systems, like capitalism. The premise behind guerrilla warfare is that targeted disruptions that require few people can still have a strong punch. With historical roots in warfare itself, guerrilla tactics have burgeoned to include nonviolent strategies like performance art and guerrilla gardening.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING:

Movements are only successful if they organize lots of people. People working together are more effective than people working apart. There are lots of people fighting for different areas of social change today. Unifying around a singular theme, like capitalism, helps to grow rebel ranks.

NONVIOLENCE:

Thinking about bringing a knife to the drone fight? Think twice because you'll most certainly lose. But that's ok, because organizing through nonviolence has proven to be more effective (think about the civil right success in the '60s against those unjust Jim Crow laws). Rebels should not only use nonviolence because it helps us win, but also because of our moral compass. How can we be agents of positive change if we perpetuate violence and harm?

GENERATING AWARENESS:

Ultimately, all social change is for naught if the tactics employed do not help to raise awareness. Generating public awareness helps earn support and grows the ranks of rebels.



CAPITALISM'S BORING TACTICS

VERSES

FUN REBELS IN ACTION

Rebels have been at the rebel fight throughout our nation's history. American-Indian Wars. Shay's Rebellion. The Underground Railroad. The Bonus Army. Pullman Strike. Civil Right's Movement. Alcatraz Occupation ('69). WTO Summit. Occupy. Ferguson. Now. To name a few.

Fat cats have billions of dollars at stake and they always get scared when people start expressing discontent with the way that they've been running the show. Capitalism has generally beaten back us rebels in the same old way with the same old tactics. Check out the two photos at right to see how little had changed in their strategy from 1999 to 2012.



America's Rebels (1999) World Trade Organization Summit. Seattle, WA.

Rebels: Laughter > Pepper Spray

*OUR FIGHT IS NOT NEW BUT
OUR TACTICS ARE REVAMPED.
WE'RE FOCUSED ON HAVING
FUN AND TRYING TO MAKE
CAPITALISTS LAUGH FOR ONE
OF THE FIRST TIMES IN THE
REBEL STRUGGLE.*



America's Rebels (2012) Occupy Protests. Davis, CA.

FUN, CAPITALISM'S KRYPTONITE

Capitalism's survival is dependent on finding winning ways to beat back social change strategies. And capitalists have found lots of powerful tactics against classic social change methods. Cleverly, they often manage to do so without infringing upon the First Amendment protections of speech, press, and assembly.¹⁴⁸

Take the case they make to try and persuade someone to sit out a protest, for example. Showing up to a protest is not inherently illegal, but getting pepper sprayed in the face at a protest blows. In fact, it sucks so much that lots of people might think twice about participating in the first place.

And consider what capitalists did to neutralize another rebel classic: hunger strikes. Capitalists watched Mahatma Gandhi use hunger strikes to nonviolently disrupt colonialism in India and they certainly wanted to find a way to stop a repeat.¹⁴⁹

Now fast-forward to what capitalists do to hunger strikers in the present day. Jihad Ahmed Mujstafa Diyab was held for over 12 years at Guantanamo Bay without a trial. In protest, he went on a hunger strike. In response, the U.S. Government ruled that Diyab could be force-fed, effectively taking

away his singular right to dissent. The force-feeding procedure involved strapping Diyab into a restraint chair and inserting a tube through his nose and down his throat.^{150, 151}

Some classic social change tactics, such as hunger strikes, have been rendered inert. But here's some good news: even though hunger strikes were once a preferred social change tactic, there are other nonviolent tactics that can be safer.

Today, becoming a rebel for progress does not have to go hand-in-hand with pepper spray or hunger strikes. Contrary to what fat cats might tell us, the road to progress can actually be a lot of fun. With this in mind, the strategies in *A Rebel's Handbook* are dually designed to disrupt capitalism's pillars and to have fun.

That's largely because capitalism's biggest weak point is that it takes itself too seriously. As you'll see in Part II on page 61, pranks, jokes, and laughter are all very dangerous forces for capitalism. If we can have fun AND disrupt capitalism, then we are at the beginning of an entirely new chapter in the rebel fight toward progress.

Though we rebels might march onward with the fortification of laughter, our forward steps for progress do not come at the expense of forgetting the rebel past and the countless sacrifices that have been made. While the high-pressure fire hoses and police dogs unleashed on nonviolent civil rights protesters in the 1960s is the antithesis of fun, the courage demonstrated by our rebel forebears remains everlasting.¹⁵²

Mahatma Gandhi's rebel work in India serves as another beacon of hope from our rebel past. In 1930, Gandhi's enduring Salt March against British colonialism precipitated the arrests of nearly 60,000 dissidents in the months that followed. Gandhi's nonviolent act of civil disobedience during the Salt March were cunning and simple: breaking an unjust law that prevented Indians from collecting and selling salt in order to disrupt British profit margins.¹⁵³

The making of salt in 1930s and standing up to water canons in the 1960s urges us rebels to acknowledge the historical sacrifices that have been made, and that will doubtlessly continue to be made in the ongoing rebel struggle for progress. This reality of risk grows all the more acute today: the powers that imperil progress demonstrate an ever-increasing willfulness to pepper spray us, force-feed us, and spy on us.

Despite the formidable power of those who impede the inevitability of progress, any attempt to subdue our rebel roar is ultimately in vain. No one can ever take away our freedom to smile and make someone else laugh with a rebel joke. The indelible power of laughter is an unbreakable foundation with which a pathway to progress can be built upon.

Rebels: if we're not laughing, we're losing.

“STRENGTH DOES NOT COME FROM PHYSICAL CAPACITY. IT COMES FROM AN INDOMITABLE WILL.” MAHATMA GANDHI