

Rethinking Our World

I agree with Frans de Waal, Lani Guinier, and Mary Kaldor about the need to rethink the way our world is run today. There are many problems, and they each suggest a way to solve one of them. De Waal's survival of the kindest, Guinier's proportional voting, and Kaldor's world court would all be wonderful, to a point. After this point, all of these good things would cease to be good. Therefore, we see that there are limits for each of these.

De Waal's survival of the kindest would be wonderfully useful in diminishing, if not eliminating, the effect of man's selfishness on daily life. In a world that was based more on survival of the kindest than our current one people would care about each other. They would be naturally moral and giving, much more often than we currently are. De Waal bases this opinion of man's natural goodness on Darwin's belief that, "Any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, the parental and filial affections being here included, would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience, as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well developed, or nearly as well developed, as in man". (De Waal, 353) There wouldn't be homeless people, or minorities who never get to have their say. Cutthroat competition would not exist, and there wouldn't be any of the dog-eat-dog mentality that pervades the financial and business markets today.

Unlimited survival of the kindest would also be a problem, though. There would be way too many providers for any service because there would be no competition. If there were no competition in society, there would be no drive to succeed, and thus, no satisfaction. Also, like Darwin saw, natural selection of some sort must be allowed to continue. If we were to support everyone, even the "weakest links" at all times, the entire

chain of humanity would eventually be weakened. There must be checks and balances in everything.

Similarly, Guinier's view on proportional voting instead of majority rule could be wonderful. All of the little people in the world, whose voices are not heard right now, would be heard. There wouldn't be minorities who had no say in how their governments worked. Everyone would be able to elect representatives from amongst their own communities, and make their votes count. Democracy would be truer to itself if it were run this way, as Guinier says, "For in the end democracy is not about rule by the powerful-even a powerful majority-nor is it about arbitrarily separating groups to create separate majorities in order to increase their share. Instead, the ideal of democracy promises a fair discussion among self-defined equals about how to achieve our common aspirations". (Guinier, 345) Proportional voting seems to be the fairest way to establish everybody on level ground, as "self-defined equals". It sounds like it should be the perfect solution.

Alas, unchecked proportional voting can also lead to problems. Different ones than there are in America currently, but problems none- the- less. There are many, many small political groups who all have a say in what should happen, but not really enough power to get elected or make any of their changes come about. Some of these small groups band together to gain power, and this often leads to chaos. A good example of this is the Knesset, in Israel. There is hardly ever a stable Knesset. Parties are always making noises about going back and forth between different camps because different parties share different views on different issues. It is often a mess. In order to prevent this from happening in America, I think that we should not be so hasty in completely scrapping the

majority rule model. We should try to create a system with a little bit of both proportional voting and majority rule. This may help to prevent some gridlock while giving everyone equal opportunities.

Kaldor, in her essay “Beyond Militarism, Arms Races and Arms Control”, also advocates equality. She describes several new types of armed forces, and several new types of warfare that have emerged since the Cold War, and explains that the fighters must be treated as our equals. Just because they may be denizens of smaller countries, or no countries at all, doesn’t mean that they don’t have to be reckoned with. These fighters have all come from different places, and they all have their own reasons, but they cannot be dismissed simply because they don’t have a country like America backing them. This has been discovered since the Cold War, in all the fighting during the 90’s. Kaldor is in favor of dealing with these marauders by establishing international tribunals and courts more and more often. She says, “Perhaps the most hopeful approach to the contemporary problem of controlling war, nowadays, is not through arms control but through the extension and application of international humanitarian law (the ‘laws of war’) and human rights law”. (Kaldor, 10) Kaldor is so sure that this is important because, “As argued above, violations of humanitarian law and human rights law are no longer ‘side effects’ of war, they represent the core the new warfare”. (Kaldor, 10) The old types of warfare are no longer viable, because they will cause way too much destruction. Therefore, in addition to calling these tribunals, she is, “talking about a collective commitment by states, international organizations and civil society to act when individual states fail to sustain these norms and to do so within a framework of international law”. (Kaldor, 11) In effect, this would be an agreement from all of the countries in the world

to meet as a court for whichever country needs to be brought to trial, for whatever reasons. This all sounds quite nice. A completely international agreement to act only humanely towards all other countries sounds positively utopian. It would be nice if it would actually get rid of all the current warfare problems.

The idea of all countries looking out for each other's welfare is quite nice, but I'm not sure I trust it wholly. I feel like it would be making the world into one big socialist country, in a way. We, the countries, would obviously have more autonomy than that right now, but what would prevent this group of countries from moving in that direction? Each country has its own identity and issues, and I'm not sure we'd all understand each other's issues in enough detail to actually do real justice to whatever issue we'd be working with. I feel like there just wouldn't be quite the depth of understanding that someone actually embedded in the issue would have. Also, because America is still considered one of the leaders of the free world, and because much of the world does think capitalistically and competitively, there would be a race for one-upmanship even if we were all to agree to work together. America would still just be seen as bullying other countries to do what it wanted them to. If modern warfare as Kaldor describes it really is gone, and it is because of the mass destruction it would cause, I think that there needs to be some other type of warfare or punishment for those who commit warfare-like crimes, in addition to this. Countries that are at all harsh will have to worry about being brought to court by the whole world, when maybe the whole world should have stayed out a little longer. It will continue to be a really fine line to wait to cross to know when to enter a situation, and when to let a country resolve its own issues.

I agree with De Waal, Guinier, and Kaldor about the need to rethink the way the world is today. Survival of the kindest, proportional voting, and a world court would all be wonderful; to a point! There are limits that should be put on each of these efforts to rethink the world.

**SAMPLE STUDENT PAPER**