

Dead, Dying, Alive, . . . or Zombified Project

Overview

There have been myriad articles written over the last year about one IR concept or another becoming obsolete. Focused mostly on whether the foundational foreign policy concepts of President Joe Biden were similar to those of a dying star or shining bright just before devolving into a black hole, many of these writers put the period at the end of the Liberal World Order experiment created in the ashes of the Second World War. There are many other policies, issues, and concepts that we also must interrogate to determine, in this age of uncertainty, are they “dead, dying, or still very much alive?” But what if the name of the concept still exists but doesn’t resemble what it meant when it was first conceived? In this case, the concept is “Zombified.” For this distinction, consider what forces at work have turned this concept into one that is empty of the gravitas its original meaning had. Think fascism—today the word is thrown around with little connection to the tenets laid out by Mussolini.

Concepts below are put into categories based on Carnegie Council’s four guiding principles.

These principles are:

1	The commitment to international cooperation is a moral proposition because it goes to the essence of ethics—recognizing what is common for all, while managing the intrinsic and inevitable differences between and among people.
2	The defense of democracy in the U.S. and globally requires confronting autocrats who discriminate based on ethnicity, gender, and religion, and who deny basic freedoms to their citizens.
3	Fidelity means honesty, integrity, and a good-faith effort at serving the truth. Rhetoric certainly matters, and in an age of disinformation, leaders must fight against lies, willful deception, and deliberate misrepresentation of facts.
4	The humanitarian imperative is the duty to save lives and alleviate suffering through humane and equal treatment. As violence and cruelty abound in conflict zones around the world, mounting effective humanitarian responses remains the essential moral imperative of our time.

Deliverable 1: A traditional research paper

Your task is to first explain the historical context of the concept or the journal article (two to three paragraphs). Embedded in the historical context, make use of Carnegie Council's [key terms](#) to help build definitions and understanding of what are generally accepted principles of international politics. Then you should delve into the concept (consider major academics who write on the topic in two to three paragraphs) and describe what are the major components or factors being explained. The third task is to bring the concept to present day and find articles, journal essays, and/or opinion pieces that either affirm the concept, put it into question, or mark it as a carcass. Here again, Carnegie Council is an excellent source to use. Different concepts below will have links to articles that will help guide you in furthering your understanding of what has possibly stayed the same over the last few years and what has fundamentally changed. The articles are excellent supports to help you develop your determination of whether the key concept is dead, dying, alive, or zombified.

All evidence needs citations and you can use quality Internet sources as well as academic sources.

Deliverable 2: An in-person debate

Your task is to develop talking points on one of the concepts below to ultimately debate another student in class on whether the concept is still either very much alive or dying. A debate involves two sides with one side supporting a resolution and one side opposing it. For each concept, the resolution would be:

Resolved: That the modern interpretation of _____ has diverged significantly from its historical roots.

Students should be assigned concepts in pairs to research the side supporting the resolution (the affirming side) and opposition to the resolution (the opposing side). To prepare, students should research the topic and find authors who are experts on the concept. Students should organize their research and use current events to support their position. Students should make use of Carnegie Council's [key terms](#) to help build definitions and understanding of what are generally accepted principles of international politics before researching how the term has adapted to the present or has stayed stagnant in our understanding of it.

The debate itself would follow a tradition debate format: The first speaker is on the affirming team, followed by a member of the opposing team giving the rebuttal. The second speaker on the affirming team gives a response, followed by a speaker on the opposing team. Allow each team to have five minutes at the end of the debate to prepare final arguments and a rebuttal.

At the end of the debate, have audience members either write a short exit ticket on which position swayed them the most or allow for classroom discussion on what was heard and which argument was most compelling.

Principles and concepts to consider:

Principles	Concepts to consider	Articles to support research
1	The commitment to international cooperation	Illiberal Narratives and Shifting Values: Examining Competing Visions of the US and its Role in the World ; Soft Power-The Means to Success in World Politics ; Conceptual Issues and Theoretical Analysis of Sovereignty
2	The defense of democracy in the U.S. and globally	Ethics in a Post-Liberal World; After Liberal Hegemony: The Advent of a Multiplex World Order
3	Fidelity	How to Renew and Rebuild After a Brush with Authoritarianism ; The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism
4	The humanitarian imperative	Moral Dilemmas and Political Tradeoffs in Peacekeeping Operations ; Defining Genocide