



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on January 5, 2022

## COVID-19 Authoritarianism: A Test Run for Greater Tyranny?

One thing about precedents is that, well, they precede. Thus have many have been concerned that the new-found power politicians wield via COVID-19 restrictions will not be relinquished. And now an academic-authored article calling for climate authoritarianism has given people another reason to worry.

As Powerline's John Hinderaker [wrote](#) Saturday:



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The proto-fascists among us have delighted in issuing “emergency” orders relating to the coronavirus. These have included, among others, shutdowns and mask and vaccine mandates. The Governor of Minnesota went so far as to issue an “emergency” order prohibiting all residents of the state from leaving their houses without his permission.

Many have speculated that statist’s overreaction to covid has been a dry run for more “emergencies” to come. Indeed the supply of potential emergencies is large, particularly when “science” can reliably be deployed on behalf of the state.

Support for such speculation comes from an article published by Cambridge University Press under the auspices of the American Political Science Association. The article is titled “Political Legitimacy, Authoritarianism, and Climate Change” and was authored by Ross Mittiga, a young academic who ran unsuccessfully for the Virginia House of Delegates in 2017 as a Democrat.



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Mittiga is a quite young man who now is at a university in Chile teaching “classes on environmental political theory, public ethics, and the history of political thought,” his bio [informs](#). He’s also apparently a vegan (but, hey, stereotypes have no validity whatsoever!).

The young “professor” is also a “Climatopian.” As BallotPedia [related](#), providing one of his campaign statements: “As someone who has dedicated his career to studying the politics and ethics of climate change, no issue is more important to me — or central to this campaign — than the need for robust environmental protection and climate action.”

So “Mittiga is a true believer and he believes in the ‘whatever it takes’ approach to stopping the climate from doing what it does naturally,” commentator Andrea Widburg [writes](#). In his “article’s summary, we get Mittiga mournfully concluding that ‘contemporary political theory literature’ would answer ‘no’ to the question ‘Is authoritarian power ever legitimate?’ That, however, does not stop the panicked and intrepid Mittiga.”

As the academic [states](#), “I argue ... that there exists another, overlooked aspect of legitimacy concerning a government’s ability to ensure safety and security. While, under normal conditions, maintaining democracy and rights is typically compatible with guaranteeing safety, in emergency situations, conflicts between these two aspects of legitimacy can and often do arise.”

Hinderaker rightly points out that tyranny is always effected “for our own good.” But what is Mittiga using as a model for his climate-oriented for-our-own-good-ism? The Virus™, of course.

As he explains, “A salient example of this [security-imperative freedom-squelching] is the COVID-19 pandemic, during which severe limitations on free movement and association have become legitimate techniques of government.”

Legitimate? Not morally or constitutionally. Moreover, “Mittiga is unmoved by the fact that it’s becoming increasingly clear that those ‘severe limitations on free movement and association’ did nothing to slow COVID’s spread,” Widburg notes. “He would dismiss claims that, by making the population less healthy, COVID authoritarianism probably increased the number of unnecessary deaths, whether from COVID itself, or from untreated diseases (cancer, heart disease, etc.), suicides, and overdoses.”

No doubt. Roughly speaking, there are two types of people in the world: Those who believe in and seek Truth and make it paramount; and moral relativists, who don’t believe in Truth, put an agenda in its place and, therefore, rationalize away Truth when it conflicts with their worldly agenda-god.

As for Mittiga’s faux devil, he continued, “Climate change poses an even graver threat to public safety” than the coronavirus. “Consequently, I argue, legitimacy may require a similarly authoritarian approach.”

“While unsettling, this suggests the political importance of climate action,” the professor then concludes. “For if we wish to avoid legitimating authoritarian power, we must act to prevent crises from arising that can only be resolved by such means.”

If Mittiga really believes his prescription would forestall authoritarianism and not cement it, he’s profoundly naïve. For while there is some overlap, there are another two types of people in the world: The man-caused climate change thesis true believers — activists, some media and entertainment figures, academics, etc. — and the small group of demagogues who simply leverage the agenda for power. And the latter would end up running the show.



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“Climate change” is not a conflict such as WWII or the War Between the States. The reaction to the latter did help get the big government ball rolling, but it was apparent when those events were over. (Americans were different back then, too.)

It’s much as with the “war on COVID.” When is it *over*? First it was “just a two-week lockdown to ‘flatten the curve.’” This became, “Can’t reopen without 14 straight days of declining infections.” Then it was, “No return to normal without a ‘vaccine.’” Now it’s, “We must ‘vaccinate’ but maintain other restrictions just to be ‘safe.’”

“Climate change” would be even more open-ended. At least a virus could possibly mutate into a relatively innocuous form, or effective treatment protocols could be widely embraced. But while climate “cures” are administered now, the patient’s (Gaia’s) “recovery” lies decades down the road.

*And it always will.*

Echoing the [novel 1984](#), they’ll be saying, “Oceania was at war with Climate Change. Oceania had always been at war with Climate Change.”

The kicker is that, as I explained in “[Why the Greentopians Would Destroy the Earth](#),” Mittiga’s machinations would actually lead to environmental destruction. For, as history shows, that’s what authoritarians deliver.



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