



Death of the Middle Class + Secular Economic Stagnation = How Trade with Communist China Is Destroying Democracy & Capitalism: How Liberal Economic Theory has Been Misrepresented to Justify Trade with a Communist Country, and How to Save Our Way of Life Before it Goes the Way of the Soviet Union

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In *Death of the Middle Class + Secular Economic Stagnation = How Trade with Communist China Is Destroying Democracy and Capitalism*, Mark Jeia presents one simple argument: developed countries should stop all trade with China. But the reasoning and solutions behind it are a lot more complex.

The book is well organized and logically arranged. It starts with a clear statement of the problem, which revolves around the author's belief that democracy is threatened by the decline of household incomes and stagnation in productivity. Three "real causes" are outlined, including how established economic theory harms workers, how cheap labor stymies innovation, and how free markets cannot have free trade with monopolies. Subsequent sections explore possible solutions and what economists commonly say are the causes.

Jeia consistently calls out the media and "economic liberals" for misrepresenting established economic frameworks to justify free trade with China, which supports a low-wage workforce, and whose economic and political systems are rooted in communism. His argument is that trade harms populations of developed countries because it affects the balance of labor, technological innovation, global capitalism, and the bargaining power of consumers. "Economic liberals" are referenced multiple times throughout the book, but Jeia never clearly defines this term. Doing so would have provided a better understanding of his point of view.

Despite the hefty subject matter, *Death of the Middle Class* is solidly written and is easy to follow, forgoing most economic jargon. It is laid out in a logical order and flows well.

The author writes entirely from his own experience of working in global financial markets, with very few references to outside sources. While he clearly knows his stuff, his level of experience is presented rather vaguely. Jeia states that providing too many details of his background would put his career at risk. A better understanding of his economic expertise would lend a lot more credibility to the book. The book's title and subtitle are too long, as are the chapter titles and subheadings, interfering with the book's readability.

Death of the Middle Class also includes forty-three charts and graphs, despite the author mentioning several times that he doesn't like to include too many statistics in his writing. The data presented is not always connected to the text. The argument might have been better presented by directly showing how the data support its points.

Jeia says *Death of the Middle Class* is for a lay audience, and his writing and examples support this statement. His argument is not too academic and can be easily understood by anyone with a basic knowledge of economics.

ERICA SWEENEY (April 20, 2017)

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