# Living Wage

## 1ac

### 1ac---inequality

#### Advantage one is Inequality.

#### Recession is inevitable.

Irwin ‘24 – [Neil Irwin, chief economic correspondent of Axios. He reports on and analyzes the U.S. and global economies, the Federal Reserve, economic policy, financial markets, and how they all intersect. “The alarm bells for an economic downturn are clanging” (August 3, 2024), <https://www.axios.com/2024/08/03/recession-fears-alarm-unemployment>] TDI

Between the lines: There is a bit of a "boy who cried recession" phenomenon now, in which the fact that many forecasters made incorrect recession predictions two years ago is fueling complacency about the possibility that a serious downturn will arrive soon.

The big question now is whether the interest rate cuts that the Fed is nearly certain to commence at its mid-September policy meeting will be enough to arrest the emerging economic weakening before it goes too far.

To be clear, the economy is not in recession right now.

Employers added 114,000 jobs in July, GDP grew at a 2.8% annual rate last quarter, and the jobless rate is still only 4.3%, lower than in any month between June 2001 and May 2017.

Yes, but: The historical track record is clear. When the jobless rate rises as much as it has this year (from 3.7% in January to 4.3% in July) it rarely levels off, and more likely signals a tumble into recession.

Other economic data and anecdotal reports from major companies have been flashing warning signs of economic troubles ahead in recent weeks.

What they're saying: The situation is clear in a series of quotes from unnamed respondents to the Institute for Supply Management's monthly survey of manufacturers released Thursday, that showed significant contraction in business activity.

"It seems that the economy is slowing down significantly," said a machinery manufacturer. "Some markets that are usually unwavering are showing weakness," said one in mineral products.

"Sales are lighter, and customer orders are coming in under forecasts. It seems consumers are starting to pull back on spending," said a firm in food, beverage and tobacco products.

The bottom line: The U.S. economy is on solid footing for the moment, but alarm bells for the future are clanging.

#### A ‘one size fits all’ model causes rampant inequality.

Henwood ’23 – [Benjamin Henwood, PhD, MSW is the Albert G. and Frances Lomas Feldman Professor of Social Policy and Health at the University of Southern California. He directs the Center for Homelessness, Housing and Health Equity Research at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, and also holds a secondary appointment in the USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. "The American Dream: Living Paycheck to Paycheck" (2023), Ursinus College, https://digitalcommons.ursinus.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=ethics\_essay] TDI

Existing research shows there are many shortcomings of the one size fits all model. In this model, all fifty states are required to enforce the same price floor that is agreed upon by the federal government. An immediate issue with this model is that this minimum is different areas have different local economies, meaning a federal minimum can impact a given area's businesses much more than another. In short, certain businesses do not have enough money to pay for that wage expense along with other expenses. Evidence showed that businesses in states bounded by the federal minimum had a higher probability of exiting the market when the federal minimum was increased (Chatta, Oettl, and Singh, 2013). If the U.S. did not require this model, businesses would be able to adjust their minimum to their local economy, making it feasible for them to operate and pay their workers a fair wage for their area. Another issue with this model is that when the federal minimum is raised, it generally causes unemployment among the lowest-wage workers. This happens because when it is raised, all firm's wage expenses are increased, and to maintain or increase profits before the raise, they will generally look to cut the lowest wage workers first to save money (Neumark and Wascher, 2007). The largest issue is that most of the time when the wage is raised, it does not affect all employees equally. Under a 1990 federal minimum wage increase proposal, workers below the poverty line would only see about 11% of the gains from the proposal go into their pocket (Burkhauser and Finegan, 1990). The reason behind the lack of true impact is that all of these workers live in different areas meaning it will help some but may not help others. Given the evidence, it is quite clear the one size fits all model does not help the U.S. because there are many different economies and living situations across our nation.

Another strand of research examines both the positives and negatives of implementing a living wage. This would mean the minimum would be adjusted to propel families over the federal poverty line. Economists believe that giving employees a living wage benefits the employee, the employer, and society. It benefits society in the aspect that friends, family, and the state would no longer need to financially support their family friends, or fellow citizens that need it (Filene, 1923). This policy has been in practice in the city of Baltimore since 1994, and there also has been evidence that this policy practice does decrease poverty levels when enacted (Neumark, 2002). Although this policy does decrease poverty levels and has been put into practice, the primary issue with this proposal is that higher wages will generally limit employment opportunities as firms would have to pay a much higher wage for their employees, even if their employees have not earned that wage in terms of output production (Neumark, 2002.) This model also has the issue of agreeing on what exactly a living wage entails. In theory, it entails raising those above the poverty line, but at certain living wage definitions there are different benefits as well as issues (Adams and Neumark, 2004). This idea has the most approval from politicians and economists because it has been put into practice before.

#### Income inequality is inevitable. Investments in the workforce save costs by increasing productivity and lowering turnover.

ICCR ’23 – [Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, a coalition of faith- and values-based investors who view shareholder engagement with corporations as a powerful catalyst for change. “INVESTOR SUPPORT FOR a LIVING WAGE FOR U.S. WORKERS” (2023), https://www.iccr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/FINAL\_Living\_Wage\_Statement-11-15-23.pdf] TDI

The Gap between the Minimum Wage and a Living Wage

The U.S. federal minimum wage has remained stagnant at $7.25 an hour since 2009. Given cost of living increases, a worker earning the federal minimum wage today has effectively received a 28% pay cut.6

Addressing the issue of living wages is even more necessary today after the highest period of inflation in four decades caused a substantial reduction in real wages for American workers.7 Despite claims that rising wages are a main cause of inflation, wages can continue to grow while inflation declines.8

Estimates show that in 2022, 51% of all the workers at Russell 1000 companies, who in total made up about 15% of the employed population in the U.S. in 2021, are not earning a family-sustaining living wage.9 MIT’s Living Wage Calculator estimates that “a single mother with two children earning the federal minimum wage of $7.25 per hour needs to work 252 hours per week, the equivalent of almost six full-time minimum-wage jobs, to make a living wage.”10 Even in the 30 states where minimum wages are above the federal minimum wage,11 ranging between $8.75 per hour in West Virginia to $15.74 per hour in Washington, these state minimum wages are still not living wages. 90% of Americans live in a place where the living wage is $20/hr or more.12

Direct employees and contract workers in traditionally low-wage retail, restaurant, hospitality, and gig sectors are most likely to earn below the living wage.13 According to EPI, 21 million workers make less than $15 per hour.14 Shift reports that “56% of hourly service sector workers make less than $15 per hour and 25% make less than $12 per hour across 66 large companies.” 15 While workers at these companies earn sub-living wages, the CEOs take home extremely high pay, averaging $24.5 million in 2021, further exacerbating wage disparities.16 The AFL-CIO's Executive PayWatch analysis of 2022 executive pay at S&P 500 companies found an average CEO-to-median worker pay ratio of 272-to-1.17 Studies also point to the rise of stock buybacks as a contributor to income inequality, as buybacks benefit top executives and shareholders at the expense of investments in the workforce and innovation.18

By contrast, in the United Kingdom, significant progress has been made in raising the minimum wage closer to a real Living Wage rate (as determined by the UK Living Wage Foundation). A major factor in driving this change has been the adoption of the voluntary real Living Wage rate by businesses and the public sector, demonstrating the feasibility of implementing a higher base rate of pay. There is currently a gap of £1.58 between the UK Government’s “National Living Wage” for all workers over 23 years old (£10.42 across UK), and the “Real Living Wage” as determined by the UK Living Wage Foundation (£12 across UK), and the gap is wider for London. 19

The Business Case for Paying a Living Wage

From a business perspective, companies have a lot to gain from ensuring a living wage for their employees. While the assumption that paying a living wage will hurt a firm’s bottom line prevails, research suggests that paying a living wage is a long-term investment that can yield significant business benefits. Productivity increases when employees are motivated and incentivized. In The Case for Good Jobs, Zeynep Ton finds that making meaningful investments in the workforce as part of a “Good Jobs Strategy” benefits companies, their shareholders, and customers, while "paying workers low wages is actually very expensive for companies.”20

● London employers who implemented a living wage experienced improved worker morale, motivation, and productivity, better recruitment and retention, and reputational benefits beyond their workforces.21

● When comparing employer/employee performance in living wage and non-living wage workplaces in Canada, living wage workers are more loyal to their employers, more engaged at work, and have lower turnover.22

● In the U.S., despite raising the wages of its hourly and entry-level employees and dramatically lowering their healthcare costs, PayPal’s profits grew 28%.23

● Lower turnover following wage increases can also lead to cost savings; an increase in wages at the San Francisco airport led to a turnover decline of 34%, or a savings of $6.6 million per year.24

On the other hand, failing to create workplaces where all workers are engaged and their basic needs are met may expose companies to significant reputational and financial risk. This includes operational disruptions and costs incurred from high turnover, employee unrest, and labor shortages; reputational erosion and loss of consumer confidence and trust; worsening product and/or service quality; and even litigation and regulatory action.

#### Inequality must outweigh. It makes every existential risk inevitable by collapsing institutions.

Schmidt and Juijn ’24 [Andreas T.; Faculty of Philosophy, University of Groningen. DPhil in Philosophy from the University of Oxford., Daan; Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy., (2024), “Economic inequality and the long-term future”, Politics, Philosophy & Economics, 23(1), 67-99., https://doi.org/10.1177/1470594X231178502] TDI

Long-term effects

To assess the long-term effects of domestic income inequality in developed countries, we assume that all future wellbeing matters equally, even value experienced thousands of years into the future. Our contention is that inequality reduction makes a positive marginal difference to the expected value of the long-term future, primarily because it is more likely to decrease rather than increase existential risk. Our somewhat preliminary conclusion is thus that longtermists should favour inequality reduction.

We discuss several reasons for why inequality might have negative effects and one reason why it might have positive effects. The negative effects we discuss are climate change, the effect of inequality on public institutions, conflict and polarisation, and differential progress. The potential positive effect we discuss is that if inequality lowers growth rates, and if growth increases existential risk, then inequality could lower existential risk.

Climate change

As we learned in Short-term effects, inequality increases a wealthy country's carbon footprint. This is a problem. Climate change, as mentioned above, not only reduces wellbeing in the medium term, there are also longtermist reasons against it.

First, climate change itself is an existential risk, particularly given uncertainty around its tail-end risks (Ord, 2020: 4; 6). (Although, it is likely not the greatest existential risk (Ord, 2020: 5)).

Second, climate change is likely what Ord calls a ‘risk factor’: increasing or reducing climate change will likely affect the total existential risk, even beyond the probability that climate change itself will cause an existential catastrophe (Ord, 2020: 152). For example, increasing temperatures and more extreme weather imply that the fight for scarce resources such as sweet water will increase over the next decades (Global Peace Index 2019: Measuring Peace in a Complex World, 2019). Furthermore, deteriorating living conditions might lead to climate refugees who, in part, will flee to developed countries, which could lead to institutional destabilisation and conflict.

Finally, beyond extinction risk, climate change could put us on a suboptimal (non-extinction) trajectory: run-away climate change, for example, might put us on a path we cannot easily leave and which necessitates continuous costly adjustments, such as adapting to repeated flooding and adjusting agriculture to extreme weather irregularities. When aggregating those negative effects across time, those might add up to significant long-term costs.

Institutional quality and conflict

It is often argued that a country's long-term performance depends to a significant extent on the quality of its institutions, including its political and legal institutions (Acemoglu et al., 2005). Economic research mostly focuses on explaining long-term differences in growth rates. As seen above, some researchers argue that high inequality will reduce growth rates, among other things, because it can worsen institutional quality. However, besides facilitating economic growth, public institutions have other functions that matter from a long-term perspective. For example, disaster preparedness, education, public health, foreign policy, science policy, and many other areas could influence the expected value of the long-term future. If such things go badly, they could increase existential risk. Conversely, good institutions will help reduce existential risk. For many existential risk reduction strategies likely require public goods and collective action, which in turn require good public institutions (among other reasons, because some such public goods are unlikely to be provided by markets). So, it seems reasonable to assume that, with most other societal goals, good institutions can help deliver existential risk reduction. Here is a cheesy analogy: targeted actions like washing your hands regularly or getting a flu shot can reduce your risk of dying from an infection. But you will also do well investing in a strong immune system, as that is an ‘all-purpose good’ in lowering your risk of dying from any bacterium or virus. Investing in good institutions might similarly be an all-purpose-good: rather than tackling individual sources of existential risk directly, we improve conditions for tackling whatever existential risks may come our way.

There are several reasons why higher inequality could weaken institutional capacities for longtermist public goods.

First, there is some direct evidence that, whatever the causal pathway, inequality reduces institutional quality (which in turn typically leads to more inequality) (Chong and Gradstein, 2007; Savoia et al., 2010).

Second, high inequality can lead to elite capture. Empirical work on studying political and de facto legal power is difficult, yet there is a growing consensus that high levels of inequality can lead to elite capture and thereby reduce the long-term quality of legal and political institutions (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008, 2013; Bartels, 2018; Chong and Gradstein, 2007; Cummins and Rodriguez, 2010; Savoia et al., 2010; van Bavel, 2016). Further, if institutions are disproportionately geared towards elite interests, then they might be less likely to be geared towards positive long-term trajectories. We might see more rent-seeking and less investment in public goods. Moreover, if elite capture is strong enough, such capture, and the potential inequality that comes with it, can intensify going forward (Chong and Gradstein, 2007).

Now, one might object and wonder whether elite interests and longtermist interests will necessarily be misaligned. Could an enlightened elite not even be more longtermist than a more democratic system? Here are two potential arguments. First, wealthy donors fund a significant part of research and direct action on existential risk and longtermism (the Open Philanthropy Project, for example). Indirectly, inequality might thus reduce existential risk through such funding. Second, rich people might have a lower rate of pure time preference than less well-off people, which might make them more aligned with investing in long-term causes.

In response to the first argument, remember we here focus on income inequality reductions. Private funding only requires ‘enough’ wealth inequality going forward, it need not require elite capture. And reducing income inequality is unlikely to eradicate the required wealth inequality and the existence of big donors. In response to the second argument, we are sceptical that elite capture would translate a lower impatience rate into longtermist strategies in policy. First off, a successful transmission would require influence to be systematic and well-coordinated across time and, probably, across different elite actors. Yet lobbying and elite influence must often capitalise on shorter windows of opportunities, which makes well-coordinated intertemporal policy capture less likely. Second, even if rich people have a lower impatience rate in the sense that they might care more about returns on investment rather than direct consumption, this is quite different from being concerned with the far future. It would be a coincidence if being concerned with getting a good return in the next years (or even decades) on my own investment converged much with policies that protect the interests of far-future people.

Of course, such considerations are speculative. But, in any case, we think that, on balance, there are stronger reasons to believe elite capture would increase – rather than decrease – existential risk. First, elite capture often comes with rent seeking, which lowers institutional quality (Chong and Gradstein, 2007). Second, industries like oil, gas, weapons and others are often concentrated and well organised in exerting influence in law and legislation. Their interests and influence overall are likely to be more short-term than longtermist. Third, recent decades have seen a shift towards a stronger shareholder value orientation in corporate governance. A common criticism of this shift is that it incentivises more short-term decisions. Accordingly, corporate influence into public institutions will likely display short-termist bias too. Finally, we can, of course, imagine that ‘pro-longtermist elite capture’ could happen and gamble on that possibility. However, if strong democratic and legal oversight and the power to check elite influence is lost, we might struggle to reverse our gamble.

Third, high inequality is likely to reduce social capital and trust (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002; Knack and Keefer, 1997; Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005). Social capital and trust in public institutions in turn are important for effective public goods provision (Beugelsdijk et al., 2004; Knack and Keefer, 1997). Effective public goods provision, in turn, is important for (some) effective measures to reduce existential risk (and, more generally, to coordinate towards more valuable long-term trajectories). Therefore, high inequality could reduce societies’ capacities to effectively respond to large-scale challenges like existential risk.

Finally, some limited direct evidence suggests societies with higher social capital and lower inequality exhibit better preventive and adaptive outcomes for environmental risks and can show greater resilience to external shocks (Kahn, 2005; van Bavel et al., 2018). For example, Matthew Kahn provides some evidence that more equal countries, when controlled for GDP, have significantly lower death rates in natural catastrophes (Kahn, 2005). While smaller natural catastrophes are different from global catastrophic risk scenarios, resilience in such events might be somewhat indicative of societies’ resilience to catastrophic risks.

So, good social and institutional conditions could help reduce existential risk. Consider next how, conversely, bad conditions might increase existential risk. A key driver of existential risk is conflict, both between and within nation-states (or what (Ord, 2020: 175–9) calls a ‘risk factor’). Conflicts and arms races raise human-induced existential risks such as nuclear war, the outbreak of a bio-engineered virus or the launch of misaligned artificial intelligence. Note that an existential catastrophe could be set in motion either purposefully or accidentally. Both are more likely during conflict. Nuclear warheads, cyberweapons, and bioweapons could all be used purposefully to attack enemy states, leading to potential global escalation. But as past nuclear incidents and close calls during the Cold War show, arms races also increase the probability of accidental catastrophes (Schlosser, 2013).

Esteban and Schneider find that formal and empirical evidence suggests that political and social polarisation increases the risk of violent conflict, both intra-nationally and internationally (Esteban and Schneider, 2008). If income inequality increases polarisation, inequality may indirectly drive existential risk. Indeed, recent evidence suggests that income inequality can increase the degree of polarisation between groups of citizens. Bonica et al. find that the degree of polarisation within the US House of Representatives, for example, is accurately tracked by domestic income inequality, with correlation coefficients rising up to 0.95 depending on the chosen time-period (Bonica et al., 2013: 105–8). Of course, correlation does not imply causation and the correlation is likely at least partially the result of reverse causation or a confounding variable. That said, we should assign a non-negligible credence to inequality partially causing polarisation. Moreover, inequality and polarisation might also play some role in getting polarising and populist candidates elected (Piketty, 2018). In a preliminary analysis of US election data, Darvas and Efstathiou find that more unequal states were more likely to vote for Donald Trump, after controlling for variables such as income, race and education (Darvas and Efstathiou, 2016). Populist politicians – like Trump, Bolsonaro, and others – are likely bad news for existential risk reduction. They are less cooperative in delivering regional and global public goods and typically prefer riskier, and more conflictual and nationalistic policy styles.

Differential progress

We have surveyed some reasons why inequality might translate into worse institutional conditions for longtermism. Beyond more formal institutions and avenues for collective action, we might also consider the cultural, moral and informal social norms that could potentially impact existential risk or whose underlying values might get locked in in the future.

The simple idea is that countries that sustain low levels of inequality will foster – and require for their support – a public moral culture that values solidarity and cooperation. More egalitarian policies might in turn move citizens and leaders towards more altruism and stronger regard to moral and social considerations in decision processes. Societies that actively work against income inequality may thereby reinforce broadly ‘pro-social’ social norms. Arguably, more egalitarian attitudes and norms might support public goods provision and favour expanding one's moral circle to other countries and future generations. Countries with high levels of inequality, in contrast, might reinforce norms of competition, individualism, and personal responsibility. Policies that encourage competition and smaller moral circles also seem more likely to attract leaders that value individualism and competition. Indeed, as Wilkinson and Pickett note, more equal societies give more in development aid and score better on the Global Peace Index (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010: 227). Again, we may wonder whether these relationships are not partially explained by confounding variables or reverse causality. That said, the causal link through social norms and public morality has some intuitive force. If true – and drawing on what we said above – a public commitment to equality might support a public moral culture that values solidarity and cooperation, which could help reduce existential risk and lower the risk of negative value lock-in.20

A related idea is that egalitarian societies might provide better conditions for differential progress (Tomasik, 2015). The thought is that new technologies often pose a risk when they become available before society has developed the collective ‘wisdom’ to use them well. Technology should not develop too fast relative to progress in wisdom. Consider artificial intelligence for example. Bostrom argues that once artificial intelligences (AI's) outsmart humans in AI-creation, systems might iteratively improve themselves and potentially set in motion an intelligence explosion (Bostrom, 2014). Quite quickly, it might become difficult to control AI and align it with our interest. Such a scenario, if it happens, might still be some time away (or not). However, if we do not develop collective wisdom first, it might be too late by the time superintelligent AI arrives on the scene.

But what goes into the wisdom side of differential progress? Minimally, it requires effective institutions, values, and empirical insight and understanding. We have argued that equality might help strengthen the public institutions required for effective collective action to reduce existential risks. But society and the institutions governing it might also require public commitment to values conducive to longtermism. A commitment to equality and cooperation, and the norms required to sustain such a commitment, might help. Together then, equality could improve differential progress.21

Growth

As we concluded in Short-term effects, it seems slightly more probable that equality increases rather than reduces economic growth in developed countries. But that raises the question: under longtermism, is economic growth good or bad in expectation? For example, what if economic growth increases existential risk? Indirectly, equality would then increase existential risk too.

Theorists have advanced opposing views on whether economic growth is desirable under longtermism. On the one hand, faster economic growth speeds up technological progress, which gives us less time to work on their safety and can increase existential risk (Yudkowsky, 2013). Moreover, spill-over growth from developed countries can increase the number of nations with access to destructive technology. For example, as developing countries grow economically, they might increasingly afford nuclear technology. On the other hand, growth could also speed up the progress required to effectively manage existential risk. For example, very poor countries are less likely to fund innovative green technology or develop a vaccine during a global pandemic. Moreover, overall existential risk might drop dramatically once humanity becomes an interplanetary species (things would have to go wrong on two or more planets almost simultaneously in such a scenario, also see Ord, 2020: 194). Under higher growth rates, we might reach the ‘safe’ interplanetary state earlier, with less time overall for things to go wrong under a high-growth trajectory. And even in the here and now, as Kahn finds, richer countries are more resilient to shocks and have far fewer deaths in natural catastrophes (Kahn, 2005). Building on a model by Charles Jones, Leopold Aschenbrenner also argues that with higher incomes, humanity is willing to spend more on safety and proportionally less on existential-risk-increasing consumption (Aschenbrenner, 2020; Jones, 2016). Finally – and arguably most importantly – growth could strengthen cooperation by creating opportunities and incentives for positive-sum cooperation. Under stagnation, in contrast, self-interested behaviour primarily takes the form of zero-sum competition (Tomasik, 2015). Such zero-sum competition, in turn, increases the risk of conflict. More generally, Benjamin Friedman argues that in times of economic growth, countries tend to make more moral progress than during periods of stagnation (Friedman, 2006).

What are we to make of this discussion? Overall, our impression is that most longtermists are somewhat favourable of economic growth.22 At the same time, it is difficult to tell which of the above arguments should receive which weight. One reason is that economic growth rates do not go hand in hand with the rates of dangerous technological growth. Imagine, for instance, a Cold War-like scenario between the United States and China. Such an arms race would probably slow down economic growth as both countries lose major trade partners but nevertheless speed up development of state-funded destructive technology. Economic growth is a rather coarse-grained variable. Relatedly, the relevant counterfactual for us would also be: what kind of economic growth would we have under conditions of stark inequality? There is some chance that economic growth under inequality would have different characteristics than more ‘egalitarian growth’. For example, if societies are less cooperative, less inclusive and emit more greenhouse gases, they might have a less desirable type of economic growth. Alas, these questions are beyond our current scope. Further research into economic growth and longtermism, including the more specific interactions suggested, are clearly valuable.

Let us take stock. In our long-term analysis, several mechanisms suggested equality could, in expectation, improve the value of the long-term future, particularly by reducing existential risk, while only the mechanism via growth was uncertain. Thus, given our current evidence, longtermists should support inequality reduction.

What follows?

We have argued that, no matter the time horizon, we have instrumental reason to reduce within-country economic inequality (at current margins). What follows from this argument for what we ought to do all things considered?23

First, if you are a utilitarian, our argument shows that you ought to prefer more equality all things considered. Using a comparative and scalar notion, we can define utilitarianism as:

Utilitarianism: Out of two policy options, one ought to choose the policy that in evidence-relative expectation brings about a higher total well-being of all agents within the relevant timeframe.

For utilitarians, the pro-equality argument thus is not just pro tanto but all-things-considered and it robustly holds across a short, medium, and long-term time horizon.

But what do our arguments imply for theories other than utilitarianism? We now suggest that on most theories, our pro tanto argument either supplies an all-things-considered argument or, at least, a weighty pro tanto argument. To do so, we survey the ways in which someone can diverge from utilitarianism and whether that would challenge our argument. We will show that our pro tanto argument has important implications for how philosophers – of at least most stripes – should think about economic inequality. Of course, given space constraints, we cannot discuss all non-utilitarian positions in ethics and political philosophy. Instead, we focus on the most popular positions in contemporary discussions (and those we find somewhat promising).

Distributive concerns

Some reject utilitarianism because they care not only about aggregate wellbeing but also about its distribution. For example, in discussions on the value of equality, telic distributive egalitarianism is a popular position: it holds that, other things equal, distributive inequality between persons is intrinsically bad (Parfit, 1997; Temkin, 1993).24

How far distributive egalitarianism affects our arguments depends on its scope. If we think only within-country inequalities are intrinsically bad, or if those are disproportionally bad, then distributive egalitarianism would strengthen our conclusion: we would then have instrumental and intrinsic reasons to reduce inequality.

#### **Independently, inequality causes civil war---models show the brink is now.**

Turchin ’23 [Peter; Complexity Scientist, Ph.D. in Zoology from Duke University, B.A. in Biology from New York University; Penguin Press, “End Times: Elites, Counter-Elites, and the Path of Political Disintegration,” p. 176-182]

Thus, the heart of the MPF model is the relative wage and the wealth pump that it powers. When the relative wage declines, it leads to both immiseration and elite overproduction. Both, as we now know, are the most important drivers of social and political instability. However, outbreaks of instability—violent anti-government demonstrations and strikes, urban riots, terrorism, rural uprisings, and, if things really go to hell, state collapse and full-blown civil war—are the results of individual people’s actions. How does the model connect the structural drivers to people’s motivations? It assumes that the key role in all such events is played by extremists, those who have been radicalized and primed for aggression. When such radicals are few in relation to the rest of the population, they offer no serious threat to the stability of the regime, because they are easily isolated and suppressed by the police. But if they are many, they start coalescing into extremist organizations, which can credibly challenge the ruling class. The number of radicals in proportion to the total population, therefore, is a key variable that the MPF model needs to track.

The process of radicalization works like a disease that, as it spreads, changes people’s behaviors and makes them act in violent ways. The compartment of the MPF engine connecting structural drivers to unrest thus needs to model this dynamic of social contagion. It is quite similar to equations used by epidemiologists—for example, in forecasting the dynamics of COVID outbreaks.

The model keeps track of three kinds of individuals. The first is the “naive” type, corresponding to the susceptibles in the epidemiological framework. This is the class into which individuals are placed when they become adults. (The model tracks only individuals who are active adults; children and the retired elderly are not modeled, as they are assumed to have no effect on the dynamics.) Naive individuals can become “radicalized” by being exposed to individuals of the radical type (corresponding to infectious individuals in a disease model). The more radicals there are in the population, the higher the chance that a naive individual will catch the “virus of radicalism.”[3]

When a high proportion of the population is radicalized, sociopolitical instability is also high. Riots are easily triggered and readily spread; terrorist and revolutionary groups thrive and receive support from massive numbers of sympathizers; and the society is highly vulnerable to an outbreak of civil war. However, the relationship between the degree of radicalization and the overall level of political violence (measured, for example, by the number of people killed) is nonlinear. As the proportion of radicals in the population grows, it becomes increasingly easy for them to link up and organize, potentially leading to an explosive growth of revolutionary parties. There is also a threshold effect. As long as the power of revolutionary groups is less than the power of the state’s coercive apparatus, the overall level of violence can be suppressed to a low level. But should the balance shift in favor of radicals, the forces of the regime can suddenly implode, as we saw in numerous examples of state collapse in the previous chapter.

So far we’ve been speaking of “radicals” as though they are an interest group. But that’s not the right way to think about it. In reality, radicals usually don’t all belong to a single radical party. During periods of high political instability, there are many issues dividing the population and the elites. (We discussed this fragmentation of the ideological landscape in chapter 4.) Thus, there are many factions of radicals, each motivated by a different ideology and warring with other factions. Some become left-wing extremists, and others join right-wing organizations; still others become ethnic or religious extremists. And even within the right, as well as within the left, radical groups are splintered and may be more focused on internecine fighting than on fighting the opposite end of the ideological spectrum.

Generally speaking, an outbreak of political violence is dynamically similar to a wildfire or an earthquake. A single spark can start a prairie fire, as Mao famously said. But most sparks start little fires that go out before they manage to spread into conflagrations. Others grow to mid-size blazes. Only very few sparks start wildfires that sweep through all of the prairie. Complexity scientists have devoted a lot of attention to such processes in which the statistical distribution of the event size obeys a “power law.” Whether we quantify these processes in square kilometers of prairie burned down or the strength of an earthquake on the Richter scale—or the severity of political violence events as measured in the number of people killed—they all have the same type of dynamics. [4] In a prairie fire, whether the initial fire caused by a spark spreads depends on how much combustible material is in reach, and whether fire can jump from one patch of dried grass to another. In a revolution, whether the initial revolt against the regime spreads depends on the number of radicals (analogous to combustible material) and how well they are connected, or how fast they can expand their networks of rebellion. As a result of such autocatalytic, self-driving dynamics, an initially small event can unexpectedly blow up into a rare, large-scale disaster—a “black swan” or a “dragon king.”

Because the relationship between the radicalization quotient and the resulting scale of political violence is governed by a power law, normal statistics (e.g., the average level of violence) don’t work very well, and the MPF model captures possible outcomes by assessing the probability of really severe events, such as the American Civil War or the Taiping Rebellion. Such extreme events may not be highly probable, but we need to worry about them, simply because they have the potential to cause unimaginable human misery. Is a 10 percent probability of a second American civil war high or low? Put it in personal terms: Would you take a bet that could cause your personal extinction with a probability of 10 percent? I would not, even if offered a huge reward. You need to be alive to enjoy the prize, no matter what size it is.

Let’s get back to the MPF model. An additional element in the model is that a naive individual can become radicalized not only through contacts with other radicals but also through exposure to violence resulting from radical actions. For example, someone whose relative or friend was killed in a terrorist act perpetrated by right-wing extremists might join a left-wing revolutionary group. This second route to radicalization is also a kind of social contagion (but mediated by violence instead of radical ideology).

The third type of individual in the model, in addition to naïfs and radicals, is the “moderate” (corresponding to “recovered” in epidemiological models). This group comprises former radicals who have become disenchanted with radicalism and violence and have concluded that members of the society need to pull together and overcome their differences. The moderates differ from the naïfs in that they value peace and order above all, and they work actively to bring it about. In other words, naive individuals don’t have an active political program, radicals work actively to increase instability, and moderates work actively to dampen things down.

In summary, new radicals are created when naïfs encounter the already radicalized ones or are exposed to violence. The more radicals there are (and therefore the higher the rate of violence), the more likely that a naive individual becomes radicalized. However, moderates also have a role: “infection” by radicalism declines as moderates increase in number and exert their moderating, instability-suppressing influence.

The numbers of radicals, however, don’t grow without limit. As the level of violence increases, some radicals turn away from extremism and convert into moderates. The probability of a radical becoming disgusted with radicalism and turning into a moderate increases with the overall level of violence, but with a time delay, as high levels of political violence do not instantly translate into a social mood of revulsion against violence and a desire for internal peace. Violence acts in a cumulative fashion; several years of high instability, or even outright civil war, have to pass before the majority of the population begins to earnestly yearn for order.

The social contagion module of the MPF engine thus keeps track of the radicalization and moderation processes. Now it needs to connect to the dynamics of structural drivers of instability. This is done through the Political Stress Index (PSI), which combines the strength of immiseration and elite overproduction. [5] Popular immiseration is measured by inverse relative income (median family income divided by GDP per capita). Thus, when typical incomes fail to increase with economic growth, this factor causes the PSI to increase. Intraelite overproduction/competition is measured by the number of elites (including elite aspirants) in relation to the total population. The PSI “tunes” the probability that a naive individual becomes radicalized. When structural conditions result in high social pressures for instability, radical ideas fall on fertile soil and readily take root. Alternatively, if the PSI is low, an encounter between a naïf and a radical (or a naïf experiencing a political violence event) is unlikely to result in radicalization.

Now that we have the MPF engine, let’s use it to investigate the possible trajectories that the American social system could take beyond the 2020s. Keep in mind that this is a model (even a prototype) and its predictions should be taken with some degree of skepticism. The goal is not to predict the future but to use the model to understand how possible actions may shape different futures. The MPF engine is a kind of “morality tale,” like the story of a kind girl and an unkind girl, a narrative motif that is present in hundreds of traditional societies.

We start the engine in 1960 and first run it for the sixty years for which the history is fixed. From the MPF point of view, the most important trend during this time is the decline in the relative wage. The decline in the relative wage turns on the wealth pump, and elite numbers begin to increase in an accelerating manner. By 2020, both immiseration and elite overproduction, and thus the PSI, reach very high levels. The radicalization curve, tracking the number of radicals, which had been staying flat near zero, starts to grow after 2010 and literally explodes during the 2020s. So does political violence. At some point during the 2020s, the model predicts, instability becomes so high that it starts cutting down the elite numbers. Remember that MPF is a model, which means that it abstracts reality into mathematical equations. But in real life, instability causing declines in elite numbers is not abstract at all. Think about what happened in America as a result of the Civil War, when huge numbers of Southern elite men were killed on the battlefield and the rest were deprived of their elite status.

In the model, the cataclysm of the 2020s reduces elite numbers, which results in a decline in the PSI. Additionally, high levels of violence accelerate the transition of most radicals into moderates. The radicalization curve falls as precipitously as it rose and at some point after 2030 hits the minimum. Because radicals are the ones who drive violence, instability also declines. The social system regains its stability. But in this inertial scenario, the root cause of instability—the wealth pump—continues to operate. Gradually, elite numbers begin increasing. Meanwhile, the moderates who suppressed the 2020s peak of violence are slowly retiring and dying off. The uneasy peace holds for the next generation (twenty-five to thirty years), but then there is a repeat of the 2020s fifty years later. [6]

The inertial scenario thus predicts a rather grim future: an outbreak of serious violence during the 2020s and, if nothing is done to shut down the pump, a repeat every fifty to sixty years. What are the alternatives?

#### Guarantees nuclear war in every hotspot.

French ’20 [David; September 22; visiting professor at Lipscomb University, J.D. from Harvard University; Divided We Fall: America's Secession Threat and How to Restore Our Nation, “A World On Fire,” p. 130-136]

A World on Fire

The moment the United States split apart; every world leader knew a single, simple truth: Pax Americana was over. The peace that had been maintained through the overwhelming military and economic might of the United States would not hold. The security guarantees of a confused and broken nation meant nothing. Carrier battle groups that previously had ruled the seas sat in port while the new, opposing nations of the North American continent negotiated their fate.

American squadrons returned home as their pilots and crews chose sides in the Great Divorce. The portion of the North American continent that retained the name “United States of America”—while still economically powerful—was simply incapable of maintaining the military force or the security guarantees of a united nation, especially in the year following the split.

The United States tried to maintain deterrence in hot spots like South Korea, but rival great powers knew that the United States was in no condition to project meaningful force overseas. Even worse, the entire Western alliance had grown utterly dependent on U.S. logistical assets to move any kind of significant force beyond their own borders. Britain’s two carrier battle groups and France’s single aircraft carrier were insufficient to maintain any deterrent posture in the Far East, and they were barely adequate to project any real strength in the Atlantic.

Thus arrived a period that Russian and Chinese military planners quickly dubbed the “golden years.” They knew that the divided American nations would eventually settle on a security strategy. They knew that allied powers would ramp up their own military spending and eventually replace a large portion of the lost American power. But the key word was “eventually.” This would take time.

Modern weapons—including aircraft, main battle tanks, and ships—are extraordinarily complex. They can’t be produced at scale immediately, even if panicked national governments authorize emergency procurement programs. The divided American nations arranged hasty sales of prepositioned equipment, but it would still take time to recruit and train men and women to operate new weapons.

Consequently, China believed it could reclaim Taiwan without triggering a conflict with the United States. Russia knew that it could swallow the Baltic states and the Russian ethnic enclaves in southeastern Ukraine while NATO remained paralyzed. Russia moved first. Latvia and Lithuania fell to an influx of “little green men”—Russian soldiers in unmarked uniforms and vehicles—who took key airports and city centers within seventy-two hours, with hardly a shot fired.

Estonia was different. Estonia resisted fiercely, and so it received the full weight of the 8th Guards Mechanized Corps. The conflict was intense but brief. In one week, the Russians secured every major population center. In three weeks, every element of the Estonian military larger than a company was destroyed. After a month, only small bands of partisan fighters remained, and they could mount only sporadic attacks.

NATO did nothing. It could do nothing, aside from engage in furious denunciations and impose (ultimately short-lived) economic sanctions. The UN was utterly ineffectual, with China joining Russia to veto any meaningful Security Council resolutions. American airpower had largely returned home. American naval assets were in port in North America. And without American support, neither Britain, France, nor Germany could project any meaningful force to Estonia or any other Baltic state. So they stayed put rather than face sure, bloody defeat.

A Russian-engineered coup toppled the Western-allied government of Ukraine, and just like that, NATO withered. The old Eastern Bloc nations realized their vulnerability and—over time—entered into new security and trade agreements with their old Russian “allies.” Russia regained control of its near abroad, the old great power rivalries flared again, and for the first time in nearly a century, the world noticed the stirrings of German militarism as Germany rearmed as fast as possible to face a renewed and immediate Russian threat.

Events in Europe were destabilizing, but with the exception of thousands of dead in Estonia, they were relatively bloodless. The cost was largely strategic and economic, as the disruptions of the Great Divorce gutted Western economies even as they faced substantial new defense obligations.

The Far East wasn’t so fortunate. From the moment Chinese planners saw the United States reneging on its NATO commitments, they knew that Americans would not and could not aid Taiwan. There was not a single American carrier at sea west of Pearl Harbor. Not a single American surface ship was in position even to offer itself up as a “tripwire” to trigger an American response.

And so, China determined to transform its “one China” policy from political fiction to practical fact. It demanded Taiwan’s surrender as it began an immense, open, and obvious military buildup across the Taiwan Strait. The intent was clear—to convince Taiwan that resistance was futile.

But Taiwan had advantages that Estonia did not. First, there was the significant matter of the roughly hundred-mile-wide strait separating the island from the mainland. The second was the fact that Japan was shocked out of its isolation at the prospect of a united, hostile China with no American ally present to guarantee its security.

Japan mobilized its undersized (though technologically advanced) military, warned China against aggression, and then reached a fateful decision—to race to develop a nuclear deterrent. In spite of its unique history as the target of the world’s only atomic attacks, Japan knew that it had to rely on its own power to guarantee its security, and when facing a nuclear-armed China, Japan needed its own deterrent, urgently.

China believed that Japan was bluffing. Its planners refused to believe that the nation would transition from ingrained pacifism to outright militarism so quickly, and in the absence of any direct threat to Japanese sovereignty. So, China pressed ahead.

Taiwan rejected China’s demand for surrender as decisively as possible. Working with the Japanese military it re-created the surprise attacks of 1941 at scale, with the most modern and sophisticated weapons money could buy. China’s open preparations, designed to cow its rivals into submission, turned into the nation’s military Achilles’ heel. Japanese military doctrine, from Port Arthur to Pearl Harbor, emphasized the importance of the first strike, and strike first it did.

In part because of Chinese mistakes (after all, it had not fought a major conflict against a first-rate power since the Sino-Soviet border clashes in 1969) and in part because of Japanese tactical brilliance, Japanese and Taiwanese pilots achieved almost complete surprise. Missile and air strikes arrived virtually simultaneously, sinking Chinese naval craft and blanketing Chinese air bases with explosions. In a single day, Japanese and Taiwanese forces rendered an amphibious assault virtually impossible.

Humiliated and furious, Chinese leaders refused the immediate offer of peace and launched a massive conventional air and naval counterattack designed to destroy the Japanese and Taiwanese militaries, crush their economies, and make them sue for peace. Thus began the most significant Pacific air and naval conflict since World War II, one that eventually also drew Australia into the fray—while a wary South Korea mobilized its reserves and remained neutral as two old foes fought bitter battles in the seas and skies all around.

For months air raid warnings were routine in many of China’s and Japan’s great cities. Commercial shipping ground to a halt. International trade crashed. Chinese forces fully invaded and occupied Hong Kong. The global economic disruption that had been called the “American Recession” after the Great Divorce became the “Pacific Depression” as two of the world’s largest economies ground each other into the dust in the midst of an all-out air and naval war.

After maintaining a public posture of ambiguity regarding its nuclear program—an ambiguity designed to deter Chinese escalation—Japan dramatically announced its entry into the nuclear club with an underground test of a substantial 250-kiloton device. South Korea quickly followed suit. Taiwan indicated that it reserved the right to build its own bomb. Australia did not test a weapon, but it formally withdrew from both the Nuclear NonProliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty—two documents that had become all but meaningless in world affairs. The world began a round of runaway nuclear proliferation, as advanced nations in multiple world regions reached for their own arsenal of ultimate weapons.

In the meantime, the conventional war raged on. Slowly but surely, the Japanese gained superiority in the sky and on the seas. The Taiwanese air force, lacking either the F-35 or the F-15, struggled to defend its home island, but the Japanese exacted a fearful toll on Chinese aircraft, shooting them down far faster than Chinese industry could replace the losses. One by one, the Japanese sank China’s few aircraft carriers, and after six months of conflict, the Chinese navy was [destroyed] crippled, with its surface ships rarely venturing out from their heavily guarded ports.

A land war in China was unthinkable. Neither Taiwan nor Japan wanted to commit an entire generation of young men to large-scale ground combat, so the goal was air and naval superiority, followed by economic strangulation.

The war reached its end stage just as Japanese and Australian forces launched an ambitious series of amphibious landings designed to seize each and every disputed island in the Spratly and Senkaku island chains. With Chinese aircraft chased from the skies and the Chinese navy largely at the bottom of the sea, a military and economic noose was tightened in the South China Sea and East China Sea. Large sections of China were routinely plunged into blackout conditions by relentless attacks on the nation’s power grid, and economic deprivation was creating internal unrest.

Desperate to stop the fighting, China rattled the nuclear saber. It declared that the continued invasion of Chinese-claimed territory and the continued air strikes on the Chinese mainland represented an existential threat to the nation’s existence. Firebrands inside China urged leadership to use its nuclear arsenal while it still possessed a strategic edge—claiming that while China could absorb terrible losses, Japan would be effectively destroyed by a Chinese attack.

Unwilling to repeat the traumas of 1945, Japan stood down. It agreed first to a cease-fire in place, then to a negotiated withdrawal from seized Chinese territory—based on a Chinese agreement to completely demilitarize its disputed island possessions. China refused to enter into a lasting peace agreement with Taiwan. There was only an armistice. A humiliated China raced to rebuild its decimated navy and air force. In response, Japan built up its own air and naval forces to a size and power not seen since its days of empire.

As for Taiwan, it effectively declared its independence from China by successfully testing its own hydrogen bomb and building its own nuclear arsenal.

Europe and Asia were not the only flash points. With America in full retreat, Iran attempted to sprint to its own nuclear bomb, a move blocked— at least temporarily— by a series of Israeli air strikes that triggered Hezbollah rocket barrages into northern Israel.

With the eyes of the world focused elsewhere, Israel responded with overwhelming military force, unleashing its full arsenal on Hezbollah positions, invading southern Lebanon yet again, crushing Hezbollah, and driving its remnants out of missile range of Israeli civilians.

For the first time since Israel’s war for independence, there was no international outcry. The great powers were panicked by the reality and danger of much larger conflicts much closer to home. Saudi Arabia was quietly pleased at the blow to Iranian power, and after Hezbollah’s initial missile volleys, the militant group proved ineffectual in the face of a fully mobilized IDF.

By the time the reduced United States and the new nations of North America reconstituted truly functioning militaries, reached sustainable security agreements, and began to claw back from economic depression, the world had changed. It was as if the clock had spun back more than a century, to the multi-power world that existed before the First World War— except with more great powers, more potential flash points, and far more terrible weaponry.

In 1914, the great powers had been concentrated in Europe, with Japan rising in the East. Now India, China, South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan all possessed formidable economies, growing militaries, and nuclear weaponry. China still coveted union with Taiwan (and revenge for its humiliating defeat). South Korea increasingly considered forceful unification with the unstable North. Japan and China nursed their ancient grudge, and Chinese and Indian forces clashed along their disputed boundary.

Back home in the old United States, global instability damaged economic prosperity. Americans who had once decried globalism and scorned American alliances now saw and experienced the high cost of lost international institutions. But even the terrible war in the Pacific seemed distant. A nation in the midst of dissolution had no time for worry about faroff conflicts. It pulled back into itself, dealt with its own upheaval from the great internal migrations, and each new North American division generated its foreign policy only after it fought back to economic stability.

Truth be told, there were Americans who liked the new world. They had always resented international dependence on American arms and American lives. They were glad to pull back to their new borders and had little interest in crises overseas. They saw the new nations as more in keeping with the intentions of the original Founders of the old United States, avoiding foreign entanglements and staying out of foreign wars. Freed from the burden of defending the world, the new nations believed they could pour their resources into their own people. Standing armies diminished. The new navies still sailed the seas, but the fleets were smaller. There were fewer carrier battle groups. There was no need to project overwhelming force, only to deter attacks.

And so the world settled into its new reality. Great-power conflict was no longer unthinkable, shifting alliances played havoc with international travel and international trade, and world economies became more unstable. Militaries abroad planned for future conflicts that Americans hoped and believed would not reach across the oceans to touch their shores. Isolationist and polarized Americans had broken the world their forefathers made, and they could not, ever, put it back together again.

III To Save America, Chart James Madison’s Course

15 Pluralism, a Beginner’s Guide

The scenarios outlined in the preceding three chapters represent a projection of what may happen if the polarizing trends I’ve outlined in this book continue unabated while the nation is subject to foreseeable, even predictable severe stress. The Calexit scenario is based on existing progressive fears that minority rule (empowered by the Senate and the Electoral College) will degrade national legitimacy at the same time that continued right-wing extremism degrades progressive self-governance. The Texit scenario, by contrast, is based on existing conservative fears that majority rule—unmoored from the principles of the founding—will discard the Bill of Rights, fundamentally rewrite the Constitution, and destroy conservative liberty and conservative communities.

#### Closing the living wage gap solves.

ICCR ’23 – [Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, a coalition of faith- and values-based investors who view shareholder engagement with corporations as a powerful catalyst for change. “INVESTOR SUPPORT FOR a LIVING WAGE FOR U.S. WORKERS” (2023), <https://www.iccr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/FINAL_Living_Wage_Statement-11-15-23.pdf>] TDI

How Living Wages Address Systemic Inequality

The social and economic benefits of living wages are consequential, and those benefits reverberate throughout society, the economy and by extension, diversified portfolios. Living wages reduce working poverty, which in turn helps tackle systemic inequality. These benefits are well-documented:

● “Closing the living wage gap worldwide could generate an additional $4.56 trillion every year through increased productivity and spending,” increasing annual GDP by more than 4%.25

● Income inequality slows U.S. economic growth by reducing demand by 2 to 4%.26

● A 1% increase in inequality leads to a 1.1% per capita GDP loss over a 5-year period. 27

● Gender and racial gaps created $2.6 trillion in losses to U.S. GDP in 2019.28 Eliminating racial disparity would add $5 trillion to the U.S. economy over five years.29

Particularly within the U.S. context, where deeply ingrained inequalities based on race and gender continue to persist, living wages are a practical solution to issues of systemic inequality. For low-wage sector workers, raising wages can create a more level playing field and improve the livelihoods of women and people of color, who make up the majority of this workforce.30 Some studies also suggest a correlation between wage increases for low-income workers and improved health outcomes for workers and their families.31 For companies that make commitments to racial justice, gender equity, and human rights, following through on these pledges requires investment in the wages of workers.

#### It increases consumer spending, reduces inequality, and generates jobs.

Roberts & Olinsky ’21 – [Lily Roberts, managing director for Inclusive Growth at American Progress, receiving a master’s degree in social work from Case Western Reserve University and a bachelor’s degree in military history and English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Ben Olinsky, senior vice president of Structural Reform and Governance and a senior fellow on the Economy team at American Progress. “Raising the Minimum Wage Would Boost an Economic Recovery—and Reduce Taxpayer Subsidization of Low-Wage Work” Cap20, https://www.americanprogress.org/article/raising-minimum-wage-boost-economic-recovery-reduce-taxpayer-subsidization-low-wage-work/] TDI

Since 2014, CAP has demonstrated that an increase in the minimum wage would significantly decrease the use of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), as millions of workers are currently paid so little that they must rely on the public social safety net. Indeed, an increase to the federal minimum wage (and the elimination of the subminimum wage for people who work for tips and people with disabilities) would have broad benefits for the economy beyond the wages of affected workers. Wage increases—particularly for those at the bottom of the income spectrum—increase community-level economic activity and support local businesses; reduce the amount by which taxpayers subsidize corporations for the low wages they pay; and reduce the pay inequalities for women and people of color that depress overall economic growth.

An increase to the minimum wage would be far from divisive: American voters have repeatedly signaled broad, bipartisan support for raising the minimum wage to $15. In November, 61 percent of Florida voters supported a ballot measure to do just that, even as the state’s voters backed Donald Trump for reelection. The percentage of Americans who say that they support raising the minimum wage has grown during the pandemic—66 percent of Americans supported raising the minimum wage in February 2020, while 72 percent supported it by August 2020.

The failure of the Senate in recent years to pass minimum wage legislation has meant real, tangible harm to American families. The last time Congress passed an increase to the minimum wage was in 2007, which fully phased in by 2009. Since 2009, America’s minimum wage workers have endured the longest period since 1938 without a pay raise, while the rising cost of living simultaneously eroded the value of the minimum wage by more than 17 percent. Last year, CAP put this into sharp relief by highlighting how much workers are losing each day the Senate fails to act:

While the Raise the Wage Act languishes in the Senate, workers lose $62 every eight-hour workday earning an hourly wage of $7.25 instead of $15. That’s $310 a week, $1,348 a month, and $16,174 a year. Eliminating these losses would also be a crucial step toward reducing existing pay gaps for women and particularly women of color, who disproportionately work in low-wage and tipped occupations.

As Congress works on coronavirus rescue legislation and a subsequent package to rebuild the economy, the minimum wage should not be dismissed. Raising the wages of low-income workers will stimulate the economy; substantially lower the amount the country spends on social safety net programs such as SNAP; and reduce economic inequality, thereby unleashing additional economic growth in a period of recovery.

Stimulate the economy by putting more money in workers’ wallets

Phasing in a minimum wage increase between 2021 and 2025 would boost consumer spending and economic growth as the country recovers from the public health and economic crises.

Different methodological approaches predict varying aggregate effects of minimum wage increases. However, calculations uniformly point toward wage increases begetting stimulus, especially wage increases for low-wage workers:

The Federal Reserve of Chicago determined that low-wage worker households spent an additional $2,800 in the year after a $1-per-hour increase to the minimum wage.

The most recent analysis from the Economic Policy Institute found that increasing the minimum wage to $15 by 2025 would generate $107 billion in higher wages. Their earlier analysis indicates that an increase from $7.25 to $9.80 per hour between 2012 and 2014 would have generated “approximately 100,000 new jobs.”

The Institute for Policy Studies calculates that for every extra dollar going into the wallet of a low-wage worker, about $1.21 is added to the overall economy.

#### Every empiric goes affirmative.

Henwood ’23 – [Benjamin Henwood, PhD, MSW is the Albert G. and Frances Lomas Feldman Professor of Social Policy and Health at the University of Southern California. He directs the Center for Homelessness, Housing and Health Equity Research at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, and also holds a secondary appointment in the USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. "The American Dream: Living Paycheck to Paycheck" (2023), Ursinus College, https://digitalcommons.ursinus.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=ethics\_essay] TDI

A living wage designed to cover the cost of living for a given individual or family should be implemented. The living wage will be calculated by taking into account housing expenses, food expenses, transportation expenses, childcare expenses, tax expenses, and insurance expenses. This living wage is to be enacted across all 50 states and when enacted will call for the one size fits all model to be completely dismantled. The living wage is designed to primarily help low-wage workers that struggle to make ends meet in the area they live.

This policy has been enacted before and has shown promise at the local level. Since the 1990s nearly 120 cities and counties across the United States have already adopted this policy. In the cities where it has been enacted, the policy has been shown to increase worker productivity, stabilization for low-wage workers, and decrease poverty levels (PolicyLink, 2021). In the cities where this policy has been enacted, the wage has ranged anywhere between $9-$16. Wages would have variations as different areas of the United States have different costs of living. For example, it is much more expensive to live in an urban area because of additional transportation, food, and rent expenses than it is to live in a rural area where someone can grow their food and build their own house. This proposal seems like a much better fit for the United States because studies have shown that mandated wage hikes, much like the model we currently use, do not reduce poverty. This is generally because these wage hikes are mandated across the country and do not affect all areas the same as the costs of living in areas that vary across the country (Dillman, 2000). Economists have also argued that a living wage would take a lot of stress off others who have to support those who currently do not make a livable wage. These parties include family members, close friends, and even the United States itself (Filene, 1923). The United States would no longer have to worry about increasing funding for its entitlement programs such as welfare and food stamps. As mentioned previously, this model has been practiced at the local level before. When taking a look at two specific cities, the results were quite positive.

Living Wage Proposal in Practice

In the City of San Diego positive effects have been apparent 10 years after they adopted the living wage mandate. Employees receiving a living wage reported a higher quality of life and reduce financial pressures. Employers reported higher retention rates and higher service quality (Policy Link, 2021). In 2009, 41% of employers reported that the enactment of the living wage reduced worker turnover and absenteeism (Policy Link, 2021). In San Diego, it seems that the living wage was able to positively impact both employees and employers. After carefully using data in their implementation, the city of Dallas passed a living wage of $10.37 in 2015 for sanitation workers. In a published study, it was reported that 92% of employees benefiting from living wage mandates were from the city of Dallas (Policy Link, 2021). This statistic eliminates the idea that if a living wage were passed workers would migrate to different cities to receive a living wage that may be higher than the one in their home city or area. The City was careful to use specific data from each geographic area within the city to carefully calculate a fair living wage. The City was also sure to add incentives to employers by creating a point system in which employers are rewarded for paying a living wage to their employees (Policy Link, 2021).

Living Wage Proposal Criticisms Refuted

When analyzed, some clear counterarguments can be made about this policy. One is how could the federal government ensure every business across the country can afford to pay a living wage. One way to do this is by funding these wages through the reallocation of current funds or taxes. A prominent living wage supporter Robert Pollin suggested a nationwide living wage could be covered by a wealth tax on a top percentage of the wealthiest citizens (Dilman, 2000). This tax would only be needed to help businesses that have the largest difference between the old minimum and new living wage geographically. The businesses that could afford it would be responsible to pay the living wage in their given area. Another common refutation is that when enacted there would be immense job loss for unskilled workers as businesses would be looking to hire more qualified individuals. This can be combated by giving tax credits to firms that offer entry-level training programs or starting government-funded training programs. The latter can be achieved by reallocating and adjusting the current budget rather than spending more money. These training programs would not guarantee any participant a job, but they would teach them the basics of working a low-wage job. This would help employers as they would not have to spend as much money training employees if they are already familiar with many protocols and tasks of a low-wage, entry-level job.

#### Low wages lock in secular stagnation.

Fontanari & Palumbo ’22 – [Claudia Fontanari, post-doctoral research fellow in economics at Roma Tre University, where she obtained her PhD in 2017 with a dissertation on the notion and measures of labor productivity. She has been visiting researcher during her PhD at the Humboldt University of Berlin. Antonella Palumbo, associate professor of economics at Roma Tre University. She received her Ph.D. in economics from Sapienza University in Rome. “Wage Stagnation and Productivity: Challenging the Conventional Analysis” (July 7, 2022), <https://www.ineteconomics.org/perspectives/blog/wage-stagnation-and-productivity-a-fresh-analysis>] TDI

In much of the advanced world, we have witnessed at least three decades of stagnating real wages and massive reductions in the labor share in income. Many analyses have documented these trends, reflecting on their causes and effects from very different standpoints. In the US economy, where the trend toward wage stagnation seems to be particularly strong, it goes together, according to Temin (2015), Storm (2017), and Taylor and Ömer (2020), with a ‘dualistic’ tendency of the economy, with growing polarization between a limited number of high-wage and high-productivity sectors and a growing mass of workers employed in low-productivity and low-wage sectors. Wage stagnation, Taylor and Ömer (2020) note, is also the basis of the growing inequality in personal and family incomes recorded in the USA as well as in many other societies.

The mainstream explanations of these trends generally rely on either globalization (Elsby et al, 2013) or technical progress, especially in the form of jobs-displacing automation (Autor and Salomons 2018, Acemoglu and Restrepo, 2017). Acemoglu and Restrepo (2020) also indicate automation as the main cause of growing intra-wage inequality, affecting especially low-qualified workers. The prevailing idea in the literature, it results, is that a combination of market mechanisms and exogenous shocks have made labor (and especially poorly qualified labor) superabundant with respect to other factors and the economy’s requirements.[1] Implicit or explicit, the message of the analyses that see the change in distribution as essentially the outcome of market forces is that there is little that policies can do, apart from somehow palliating the worst social consequences of the technological or commercial shocks.

Generally, however, these analyses fail to give an account entirely consistent with the data. As shown by Mishel and Bivens (2017), other waves of automation in the past did not result in a decrease in the wage share but rather went together with increased compensation and enhanced work conditions. Globalization and automation, note Stansbury and Summers (2020), cannot easily account for the concomitant extraordinary growth of profits unless other factors are also taken into account. Especially difficult to explain is the fact that the decline in the wage share and the stagnation of real wages have gone together in some periods (and most notably the 2010s) with a sustained growth of employment, also (and especially) of the low-wage variety, which testifies to a *strong* rather than weak demand for labor.

This leaves room for other, more ‘institutional’ explanations of the distributive shift. The latter may indeed be seen mainly as the product of social forces, i.e. changes in policies, institutions, and collective behavior that have produced a long-lasting loss of bargaining power for workers. It is not only a question of the increase in the oligopolistic power of employers, which enables them to reap as profits most of the productivity gains (Covarrubias et al 2019). Especially, as analyzed by Weil (2014), the diffusion of low-wage jobs in the US economy is related to the profound restructuring of the organization of business that has taken place in a variety of industries and firms since the 1990s, that included outsourcing activities and workers towards firms in which labor is comparatively less protected, and use of employment agencies. Weil especially focuses on the pressure of capital markets on big corporations to produce ‘value for investors’ and the role of information and communication technologies in enabling the coordination among workers of different firms. But policies have played an essential role in shaping the new institutions now prevailing on the labor market. As noted by Stansbury and Summers (2020) “changes in policy, norms, and institutions” have produced a “legal and political environment … in favor of shareholders and against workers.” The authors enumerate the laws “undermining unions’ ability to fund themselves and the increasing corporate use of union avoidance tactics, both legal and illegal.” The policy-induced loss of workers’ power over many decades can explain the comparatively prosperous periods as the 2010s have been characterized by wage stagnation.

This different conception of distribution as essentially shaped by social and institutional forces – which appears as supported by empirical evidence – has very different implications in terms of policy. Before coming to that, it is worth noting that, however divergent the diagnoses, not only is the decades-long trend itself towards wage stagnation little disputed in the literature, being evident in data, but there is also a certain consensus that something should be done. Many different analysts have advocated the need for measures that could at least in part check the tendency to wage losses, if only to avoid the worst effects of growing inequality in terms of social disintegration.

Against this background, it would be legitimate to expect that the recovery in nominal wages which has materialized in recent months in the USA should be saluted with relief and approval by economists of different persuasions, as a first sign of a changed situation and the beginning, perhaps, of an inversion of the long-term trend.

This is not so, as is well known. On the contrary, tight labor markets and rising wages, supposedly mainly brought about by excessively generous fiscal policy (especially in the USA), are now blamed, by more than one commentator, as the main source of unsustainable inflationary pressures. Among the most vocal advocates of the need to rein in wage growth, through a sustained increase in interest rates aimed at increasing unemployment, is the same Larry Summers who in Stansbury and Summers (2020) had shown how dramatic has been the loss of workers’ power in the recent decades. It is very difficult to imagine that such persistent causes of weakness as analyzed there have suddenly evaporated, albeit under the impetus of the exceptional post-covid conditions, so as to result now in an excess of workers’ power, with the inflationary consequences that this supposedly entails.

Though evoked as a threat to price stability, the occasional tightness of the labor market, which, as shown by Storm (2022), is in fact mainly the result of the enduring restrictions covid has imposed on labor supply – the continuing infection risks, the problems associated with childcare, the people kept away from actively seeking work by long-covid symptoms – is actually only a secondary cause of inflation and, especially, does not seem able to invert in any significant way the long-term trend towards real wage losses.

Actually, real wages have not risen in 2021 and are falling right now, both in the USA and in Europe, despite the historically low rates of unemployment. Moreover, the interest rates hikes currently taking place in the USA – and likely soon to be followed by similar rises in Europe – will in all probability be effective in raising unemployment, although this might occur through channels different from those traditionally indicated by textbooks (i.e., not through the disincentive to investment, but possibly through the impact on credit-financed consumption and the housing market). Combined with the economic consequences of the war in Ukraine and the current international instability, this is not unlikely to generate a recession. However ‘soft’ may be the landing, it will not increase labor’s strength. The trend towards compression of real wages and impoverishment of labor does not seem to be close to an end.

If wages are a problem, it follows, it is not the rise in nominal wages that should capture public attention, but rather the enduring weakness of real wage growth.

It is not only for reasons of fairness and social cohesion – which of course are of paramount importance because a social arrangement based on the increasing impoverishment of the largest part of the population obviously cannot be desirable – that wage stagnation should be regarded as a serious problem. It also produces economic effects that may have negative long-lasting consequences. In our new INET working paper, we focus on one of such possible effects and explore how stagnating real wages may have contributed in recent decades to the slowdown of US productivity.

In much literature, the relationship between wages and labor productivity is seen as unidirectional. If productivity growth may fail in some circumstances to be transmitted to wages, the possibility of reverse causation, whereby the dynamic of wages may be an important determinant of productivity growth, is generally little explored in the mainstream approach. This is due to the conception of distribution as endogenous to market forces (the relative scarcity of factors and their efficiency). Wages may be affected by productivity since slow productivity growth leaves less room for wage increases, but cannot generally exert an independent positive influence on productivity. Rather, if imperfections in the market mechanism or the interference of labor market institutions determining excessive workers’ power should cause wages to grow exogenously, this would imply increasing unit labor costs for the firms, loss of competitiveness, and loss of employment, with negative effects on growth. Productivity, in this theoretical framework, is typically seen as an indicator of technological efficiency, with its growth determined by technical progress or other supply-side factors as the accumulation of human capital.

In our paper, we start from a demand-led growth perspective, in which aggregate demand has a prominent role in determining both output growth and the growth of resources. Such an approach, we show, implies that productivity should be reconsidered, both in its definition and in its determinants. Far from being merely a measure of technological efficiency, observed output per unit of labor is also a reflection of the intensity of the use of resources, an intensity which is determined endogenously by the conditions in which the economy operates. The system is not endowed with mechanisms that continually ensure the tendency to produce close to the efficiency frontier, but the conditions of demand may well produce inefficiencies and waste of resources. It is within this flexible theoretical framework, in which productivity becomes a largely endogenous variable, that we explore the possible endogeneity of productivity growth to the dynamics of wages.

Our analysis takes inspiration from a conception of distribution – typical of the classical political economy of Smith, Ricardo, and Marx – as affected by social and institutional forces that are at least in part exogenous both to output growth and to productivity growth. This theoretical conception is perfectly compatible, it is hardly necessary to note, with the above-mentioned analyses that have documented the weight of political and institutional factors in shaping the trend of distribution in recent times.

In this theoretical context, wages may affect productivity not only indirectly, by expanding or depressing aggregate demand, but also directly. Following the analysis of Paolo Sylos Labini (1984, 1993), we analyze and distinguish in the paper two different direct effects of wages on productivity: one acting through induced technical progress – labor-saving innovations fostered by high wages – and a second one acting through the incentive that high wages represent towards a more efficient use of the labor input through reorganization of the production processes.

The first effect is triggered by an increase in the price of labor relative to the price of machines. Sylos especially underlines the role of competition, both in the domestic and in the international market, that forces firms, in a high-wage environment, to innovate in order to defend or increase their market shares. For its characteristics and its dynamic character, such an effect is very different from the neoclassical substitution mechanism based on the production function. The second effect is instead induced by an increase in wages relative to the price of output. This incentivizes firms towards a more efficient use of labor, through reorganizing production processes or work practices. Sylos labels this effect as the ‘organization’ effect. This effect is also conceived as acting dynamically since it entails a particular kind of innovation, i.e., ‘organizational’ innovations. Differently from the innovations entailing increased mechanization, these organizational innovations do not necessarily involve high investments in fixed capital and may thus take place more immediately (empirically, indeed, Sylos distinguishes the organization from the mechanization effect also for its faster action).

Our hypothesis is that these two effects of wages have each contributed to the productivity slowdown observed in the US economy. The dramatic distributional shift against wages has in our view reduced the incentive for technical innovation, at least in some sectors or sub-sectors of the economy. Moreover, it has constituted a strong incentive for firms in different sectors to build their business strategies by taking advantage of the mass availability of low-wage labor. Such strategies may involve using massively the labor input, often with the intermediation of other firms, which also implies the redistribution of employment, within the same sector, between firms with different work arrangements and different levels of productivity, thus entailing transformations along the various phases of the value-chains. To the workers, this may produce long and little-paid working hours, sometimes with the intermediation of types of contracts where the worker appears as self-employed or rather has multiple employers.

By analogy with farming techniques, we propose to label these strategies as based on ‘extensive’ vs ‘intensive’ use of labor in the production processes and the business organization. Extensive use of the labor input implies using cheap labor abundantly (in terms of heads or working time). Although such phenomenon has affected the various sectors with different intensity, we believe that the drift towards a more extensive use of the labor input is not limited to traditionally low-wage and low-productivity sectors, but may well have affected all those sectors which are susceptible to different forms of organizing production, including some important sectors in manufacturing, traditionally a high-productivity branch that has lately shown a slowing down of its productivity dynamics.

In the paper, we conduct two different exercises to test empirically our theoretical hypothesis on the US economy. In the first place, we propose a shift-share analysis of the dynamics of both productivity and wages in the USA in recent decades, to identify the main sectoral sources of change in the two variables. We also investigate the sectoral contributions to the cumulative growth of the wage-productivity gap. Through the shift-share analysis, we find that structural change may explain only a minor part of the weak dynamics of productivity, which is mainly due to factors acting within each sector. We also find that after a sharp change in distribution against wages, some historically high-productivity sectors switched towards slower productivity growth. This supports our hypothesis that the anemic growth of productivity may be partly due to the trend toward massive use of cheap labor. On the basis of this analysis, we advance the hypothesis that the disappointing growth in productivity is not only a structural phenomenon due to the growing weight of low-wage and low-productivity sectors but is also due to the recent trend towards the extensive use of labor even in traditionally high-productivity sectors. Indeed, after the 2008-09 crisis, a shift to a regime of low productivity growth seems to take place also in manufacturing.

Considering the central role of manufacturing in the US productivity slowdown, in the second place we focus our analysis on this sector, estimating the effects of wages on productivity through the productivity equation originally proposed by Paolo Sylos Labini. Our estimation of Sylos Labini’s productivity equation confirms the existence of two direct effects of wages, one acting through the incentive to mechanization and the other through the incentive to the reorganization of labor use. We also include two indicators that measure labor “weakness” in terms of duration and reasons for unemployment and we find that both stagnating wages and increasing labor insecurity do indeed contribute significantly to the decline of productivity.

This shows that the persistent deterioration in real wages and the wage share does not only raise social issues but may also produce permanent macroeconomic scars, in terms of long-term negative effects on the growth prospects of the economy.

The question is what could and should be done. As remarked above, if wage losses are regarded as the spontaneous outcome of market forces, they may be countered only in part, for example. by enhancing education and training programs for workers. By contrast, the idea that distribution is especially the product of social forces implies that society has the means, through the adoption of suitable policies and the reform of institutions, to change the course of events. As noted by Stansbury and Summers (2020), for example, “progressive institutionalists have long argued for pre-distribution alongside redistribution, strengthening worker power by changing the structure of labor market institutions…. Strengthening worker power can be an important countervailing force against firms’ dominance in product and labor markets… Overall, we believe that increasing worker power must be a central and urgent priority for policymakers concerned with inequality, low pay, and poor work conditions. If we do not shift the distribution of power toward workers, any other policy changes are likely to be short-term and insufficient.”

The problem of wages and work conditions is now crucial. Higher wages and safer and better jobs would not only re-orient firms towards higher productivity and more efficient organization. They would possibly also represent a serious incentive towards enhanced labor supply, thus easing one of the constraints currently concurring to inflation. The lasting wounds that the regime of low wages inflicts on the economy, in addition to what it entails for the greatest part of society, should be a matter of serious concern.

#### Wage growth is the deciding factor.

Servaas Storm 19, Ph.D. in Economics from Erasmus University Rotterdam, Senior Lecturer at Delft University, 12/12/2019, “The Secular Stagnation of Productivity Growth,” *Institute for New Economic Thinking*, Working Paper No. 108, https://doi.org/10.36687/inetwp108

5. Wage growth as a determinant of productivity growth

In the supply-side explanation of secular stagnation (of Figure 1), productivity growth is treated as an exogenous variable, and if and when it declines, real wage growth is forced down — because profit-maximizing firms will not allow unit labor costs to increase. What is neglected in this narrative, however, is that causality may run in the opposite direction as well: indeed, real wage growth is found to be a major determinant of productivity growth (Gordon 1987, 2015; Foley and Michl 1999; Marquetti 2004; Basu 2010; Storm and Naastepad 2012). Theoretically, the influence of real wage growth on labor productivity growth has been variously explained in terms of ‘induced technical change’ (Hicks 1932; Funk 2002; Brugger and Gehrke 2017), ‘Marx-biased technical change’ (Foley and Michl 1999; Basu 2009), or ‘directed technical change’ (Acemoglu 2002) — but the key mechanism is this: rising real wages, as in the U.S. economy during the period 1948-1972 (Table 2), provide an incentive for firms to invest in labor-saving machinery and productivity growth surges as a result; but when wage growth is low, as in the U.S. during 1972-2015 (Table 2), businesses have little incentive to invest in the modernization of their capital stock and productivity growth falters.

Seen this way, labor productivity growth is endogenous and (at least partly) determined by real wage growth. If so, then the secular stagnation of productivity growth in the U.S. economy must be attributed at least partly to the long-term decline in the growth rate of U.S. hourly real wages. This is illustrated in the mnemonic of Figure 2 by the arrow from ‘permanently low real wage growth’ to ‘decline in labor productivity growth’. The decline in real wage growth in turn is strongly associated with the post-1980 reorientation in macroeconomic policy, away from full employment and towards low and stable inflation, which paved the way for labor market deregulation, a scaling down of social protection, a lowering of the reservation wage of workers, and a general weakening of the wage bargaining power of unions (Storm and Naastepad 2012). The recent rise in persons ‘working in alternative work arrangements’ in the U.S. (Katz and Krueger 2016) is merely the culmination of this earlier trend. To empirically illustrate this point, Figure 3 shows that there is a statistically significant (at 1%) positive long-run relation between the degree of unionization and real wage growth in the U.S. (1948-2015). The association is remarkably strong: all by itself, the secular decline in unionization ‘explains’ about two-thirds of the long-term fall in real wage growth — which minimally suggests that domestic regulatory changes leading to greater job and income insecurity have contributed to real wage restraint.

However, real wage stagnation generates additional damage to potential output growth, as is illustrated in Figure 2. Stagnant real wage growth adds to the aggregate demand shortage, which lowers capacity utilization and capital stock growth in eq. (15), or alternatively, it reduces utilization and TFP growth in eq. (14). Either way, potential growth gets hurt — and economic growth slows down. The recognition that real wage growth is a major driver of productivity growth holds an important insight for macroeconomic policy, as Robert Gordon (1987, pp. 154-155) explains:

“… a stimulus to aggregate demand provides not only the direct benefit of raising output and employment, but also the indirect benefit of raising the real wage and creating substitution away from labor that boosts productivity [….] With this dual benefit obtainable from demand expansion, the case against demand stimulation must rest on convincing evidence that such policies would create an unacceptable acceleration of inflation.”

Higher wage growth may raise inflation considerably less than expected, in other words, because the rate of potential growth goes up in response to the increases in productivity, demand and actual output induced by the extra wage growth (see Figure 2; Storm and Naastepad 2012; Storm 2018; Girardi et al. 2018; Fontanari et al. 2019). If so, the reverse holds true as well: sluggish business investment in the U.S. has been a key factor behind the stagnation of TFP growth and has also been responsible for propagating hysteresis-like adverse consequences for TFP and potential output after 2008 (see Hall 2014; Ollivaud et al. 2016; Fazzari et al. 2017; Cynamon and Fazzari 2017; Girardi et al. 2018). This conclusion only becomes stronger once we acknowledge the ‘cumulative causation’ at work: sluggish investment weakens aggregate demand and this, in turn, weakens accumulation through the ‘accelerator effect’ — which was Nicholas Kaldor’s argument — as well as real wage growth, which reduces the rate of labor-saving technological progress (as argued here). Both ways, cyclical and/or structural demand shortfalls must carry over into lower growth of potential output.

[Figure 3 omitted]

6. Conclusion: weak demand growth pulls down potential output growth

The theoretical arguments and empirical evidence presented in this paper make the case for demand-led secular stagnation in the U.S. economy since the early 1980s. Obviously, no single chart or empirical test “proves” the case. Rather the case rests on a historical analysis of multiple pieces of evidence, which all point in the same direction. The present theoretical analysis and the evidence, when taken together, do lead to an unmistakable conclusion: demand is leading supply, in the short as well as in the long run — which is an insight that runs counter to today’s ‘decided opinion’. The important dynamic macro channels through which demand growth influences potential output growth, listed in Figure 2, deserve more attention in research.6 After all, it is through these channels that stagnant business investment leads to a slower adoption of new technologies, a more limited space for learning by doing and exploiting economies of scale, and — as Hansen rightly argued — a discouragement to (demand-pull) initiatives to uncover further possibilities for innovation.

Recognizing the importance of demand growth to long-run growth has profound and radically upsetting consequences for macro policy-making. Indeed, the all-too-neat separation between a ‘Keynesian’ short run and ‘supply-determined’ potential growth in the long run breaks down — and so do standard notions and measurements of ‘potential’ output growth and ‘output gaps’ (Fontanari et al. 2019). What must be recognized is that structurally weak demand growth forces down potential growth, whereas faster demand growth, supported by more expansionary, full-employment oriented fiscal and monetary policies, raises productivity growth and potential output. Conventional (supply-side) measures of potential output which ignore the dynamic demand-side channels, systematically overemphasize the ‘inflation barrier’ and methodically underestimate the margins for expansion of actual output (Fontanari et al. 2019) and thereby legitimate a structural deflationary bias in macro policy (Storm and Naastepad 2012; Girardi et al. 2018; Storm 2017). What is not recognized is that higher demand may gradually remove the scarcities and bottlenecks which in the short run might create inflation pressures. To illustrate this important point: as shown by a model analysis of Fazzari et al. (2017), it is entirely plausible for changes in demand growth from something like 1% to 3% to be accommodated by endogenous adjustments of supply, without generating additional inflation. Hence, we need new, more realistic and less biased measures of potential output growth, which take the dynamic impacts of demand on potential growth into account and remove all the unwarranted deflationary policy biases of existing approaches.

The unwarranted deflationary bias shows up in constant needless fiscal austerity, the abandonment of demand management in order to maintain full employment, overly restrictive monetary policy, and real wage stagnation (and rising income inequality), which jointly explain most, if not all, of the secular stagnation (as has been argued here). Real wage restraint directly reduces labor-saving technological progress and productivity growth. Moreover, when the top income-earners (‘the 1%’) are allowed to capture most of the growth, the economy’s central function to recycle income back into demand is deeply compromised. As real incomes stagnate for the large majority of households, weak aggregate demand in turn feeds into sluggish business investment and a decline in capital deepening and ultimately into a slowing down of productivity growth and potential growth (Figure 2). Stagnation is a sad instance of iatrogenesis, as it is a pathology caused by the exact economists whose task it is to improve the economy’s health. To do better, we must look more deeply at shifting social norms that affect wage setting and allow higher inequality, and think creatively about how income growth can be restored across the distribution. Understanding these issues is difficult; designing effective macro policies to keep up demand growth in line with full employment and with potential growth may be even harder. But one thing is clear: unless we discard ‘decided opinion’ that secular stagnation is an exclusively supply-side phenomenon and recognize that demand drives growth ‘all the way’ (see Taylor et al. 2019), macro policy will retain its deflationary biases and secular stagnation remains the ‘normal’. Hansen had it right after all.

#### Secular stagnation is a crisis accelerant---it collapses U.S. primacy, making nuclear war, prolif, and every great power conflict far more likely.

Michael Oppenheimer 21, Professor at the Center for Global Affairs of New York University, member of the Council on Foreign Relations, 2021, “The Turbulent Future of International Relations,” *The Future of Global Affairs: Managing Discontinuity, Disruption and Destruction*, Chapter 2, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-56470-4

Secular Stagnation

This unbrave new world has been emerging for some time, as US power has declined relative to other states, especially China, global liberalism has failed to deliver on its promises, and totalitarian capitalism has proven effective in leveraging globalization for economic growth and political legitimacy while exploiting technology and the state’s coercive powers to maintain internal political control. But this new era was jumpstarted by the world financial crisis of 2007, which revealed the bankruptcy of unregulated market capitalism, weakened faith in US leadership, exacerbated economic deprivation and inequality around the world, ignited growing populism, and undermined international liberal institutions. The skewed distribution of wealth experienced in most developed countries, politically tolerated in periods of growth, became intolerable as growth rates declined. A combination of aging populations, accelerating technology, and global populism/nationalism promises to make this growth decline very difficult to reverse. What Larry Summers and other international political economists have come to call “secular stagnation” increases the likelihood that illiberal globalization, multipolarity, and rising nationalism will define our future. Summers11 has argued that the world is entering a long period of diminishing economic growth. He suggests that secular stagnation “may be the defining macroeconomic challenge of our times.” Julius Probst, in his recent assessment of Summers’ ideas, explains:

…rich countries are ageing as birth rates decline and people live longer. This has pushed down real interest rates because investors think these trends will mean they will make lower returns from investing in future, making them more willing to accept a lower return on government debt as a result.

Other factors that make investors similarly pessimistic include rising global inequality and the slowdown in productivity growth…

This decline in real interest rates matters because economists believe that to overcome an economic downturn, a central bank must drive down the real interest rate to a certain level to encourage more spending and investment… Because real interest rates are so low, Summers and his supporters believe that the rate required to reach full employment is so far into negative territory that it is effectively impossible.

…in the long run, more immigration might be a vital part of curing secular stagnation. Summers also heavily prescribes increased government spending, arguing that it might actually be more prudent than cutting back – especially if the money is spent on infrastructure, education and research and development.

Of course, governments in Europe and the US are instead trying to shut their doors to migrants. And austerity policies have taken their toll on infrastructure and public research. This looks set to ensure that the next recession will be particularly nasty when it comes… Unless governments change course radically, we could be in for a sobering period ahead.12

The rise of nationalism/populism is both cause and effect of this economic outlook. Lower growth will make every aspect of the liberal order more difficult to resuscitate post-Trump. Domestic politics will become more polarized and dysfunctional, as competition for diminishing resources intensifies. International collaboration, ad hoc or through institutions, will become politically toxic. Protectionism, in its multiple forms, will make economic recovery from “secular stagnation” a heavy lift, and the liberal hegemonic leadership and strong institutions that limited the damage of previous downturns, will be unavailable. A clear demonstration of this negative feedback loop is the economic damage being inflicted on the world by Trump’s trade war with China, which— despite the so-called phase one agreement—has predictably escalated from negotiating tactic to imbedded reality, with no end in sight. In a world already suffering from inadequate investment, the uncertainties generated by this confrontation will further curb the investments essential for future growth. Another demonstration of the intersection of structural forces is how populist-motivated controls on immigration (always a weakness in the hyper-globalization narrative) deprives developed countries of Summers’ recommended policy response to secular stagnation, which in a more open world would be a win-win for rich and poor countries alike, increasing wage rates and remittance revenues for the developing countries, replenishing the labor supply for rich countries experiencing low birth rates.

Illiberal Globalization

Economic weakness and rising nationalism (along with multipolarity) will not end globalization, but will profoundly alter its character and greatly reduce its economic and political benefits. Liberal global institutions, under American hegemony, have served multiple purposes, enabling states to improve the quality of international relations and more fully satisfy the needs of their citizens, and provide companies with the legal and institutional stability necessary to manage the inherent risks of global investment. But under present and future conditions these institutions will become the battlegrounds—and the victims—of geopolitical competition. The Trump Administration’s frontal attack on multilateralism is but the final nail in the coffin of the Bretton Woods system in trade and finance, which has been in slow but accelerating decline since the end of the Cold War. Future American leadership may embrace renewed collaboration in global trade and finance, macroeconomic management, environmental sustainability and the like, but repairing the damage requires the heroic assumption that America’s own identity has not been fundamentally altered by the Trump era (four years or eight matters here), and by the internal and global forces that enabled his rise. The fact will remain that a sizeable portion of the American electorate, and a monolithically pro-Trump Republican Party, is committed to an illiberal future. And even if the effects are transitory, the causes of weakening global collaboration are structural, not subject to the efforts of some hypothetical future US liberal leadership. It is clear that the US has lost respect among its rivals, and trust among its allies. While its economic and military capacity is still greatly superior to all others, its political dysfunction has diminished its ability to convert this wealth into effective power.13 It will furthermore operate in a future system of diffusing material power, diverging economic and political governance approaches, and rising nationalism. Trump has promoted these forces, but did not invent them, and future US Administrations will struggle to cope with them.

What will illiberal globalization look like? Consider recent events. The instruments of globalization have been weaponized by strong states in pursuit of their geopolitical objectives. This has turned the liberal argument on behalf of globalization on its head. Instead of interdependence as an unstoppable force pushing states toward collaboration and convergence around market-friendly domestic policies, states are exploiting interdependence to inflict harm on their adversaries, and even on their allies. The increasing interaction across national boundaries that globalization entails, now produces not harmonization and cooperation, but friction and escalating trade and investment disputes.14 The Trump Administration is in the lead here, but it is not alone. Trade and investment friction with China is the most obvious and damaging example, precipitated by China’s long failure to conform to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles, now escalated by President Trump into a trade and currency war disturbingly reminiscent of the 1930s that Bretton Woods was designed to prevent. Financial sanctions against Iran, in violation of US obligations in the Joint Comprehensive Plan Of Action (JCPOA), is another example of the rule of law succumbing to geopolitical competition. Though more mercantilist in intent than geopolitical, US tariffs on steel and aluminum, and their threatened use in automotives, aimed at the EU, Canada, and Japan,15 are equally destructive of the liberal system and of future economic growth, imposed as they are by the author of that system, and will spread to others. And indeed, Japan has used export controls in its escalating conflict with South Korea16 (as did China in imposing controls on rare earth,17 and as the US has done as part of its trade war with China). Inward foreign direct investment restrictions are spreading. The vitality of the WTO is being sapped by its inability to complete the Doha Round, by the proliferation of bilateral and regional agreements, and now by the Trump Administration’s hold on appointments to WTO judicial panels. It should not surprise anyone if, during a second term, Trump formally withdrew the US from the WTO. At a minimum it will become a “dead letter regime.”18

As such measures gain traction, it will become clear to states—and to companies—that a global trading system more responsive to raw power than to law entails escalating risk and diminishing benefits. This will be the end of economic globalization, and its many benefits, as we know it. It represents nothing less than the subordination of economic globalization, a system which many thought obeyed its own logic, to an international politics of zero-sum power competition among multiple actors with divergent interests and values. The costs will be significant: Bloomberg Economics estimates that the cost in lost US GDP in 2019- dollar terms from the trade war with China has reached $134 billion to date and will rise to a total of $316 billion by the end of 2020.19

Economically, the just-in-time, maximally efficient world of global supply chains, driving down costs, incentivizing innovation, spreading investment, integrating new countries and populations into the global system, is being Balkanized. Bilateral and regional deals are proliferating, while global, nondiscriminatory trade agreements are at an end. Economies of scale will shrink, incentivizing less investment, increasing costs and prices, compromising growth, marginalizing countries whose growth and poverty reduction depended on participation in global supply chains. A world already suffering from excess savings (in the corporate sector, among mostly Asian countries) will respond to heightened risk and uncertainty with further retrenchment. The problem is perfectly captured by Tim Boyle, CEO of Columbia Sportswear, whose supply chain runs through China, reacting to yet another ratcheting up of US tariffs on Chinese imports, most recently on consumer goods:

We move stuff around to take advantage of inexpensive labor. That’s why we’re in Bangladesh. That’s why we’re looking at Africa. We’re putting investment capital to work, to get a return for our shareholders. So, when we make a wager on investment, this is not Vegas. We have to have a reasonable expectation we can get a return. That’s predicated on the rule of law: where can we expect the laws to be enforced, and for the foreseeable future, the rules will be in place? That’s what America used to be.20

The international political effects will be equally damaging. The four structural forces act on each other to produce the more dangerous, less prosperous world projected here. Illiberal globalization represents geopolitical conflict by (at first) physically non-kinetic means. It arises from intensifying competition among powerful states with divergent interests and identities, but in its effects drives down growth and fuels increased nationalism/populism, which further contributes to conflict. Twenty-first-century protectionism represents bottom-up forces arising from economic disruption. But it is also a top-down phenomenon, representing a strategic effort by political leadership to reduce the constraints of interdependence on freedom of geopolitical action, in effect a precursor and enabler of war. This is the disturbing hypothesis of Daniel Drezner, argued in an important May 2019 piece in Reason, titled “Will Today’s Global Trade Wars Lead to World War Three,”21 which examines the pre-World War I period of heightened trade conflict, its contribution to the disaster that followed, and its parallels to the present:

Before the First World War started, powers great and small took a variety of steps to thwart the globalization of the 19th century. Each of these steps made it easier for the key combatants to conceive of a general war.

We are beginning to see a similar approach to the globalization of the 21st century. One by one, the economic constraints on military aggression are eroding. And too many have forgotten—or never knew—how this played out a century ago.

…In many ways, 19th century globalization was a victim of its own success. Reduced tariffs and transport costs flooded Europe with inexpensive grains from Russia and the United States. The incomes of landowners in these countries suffered a serious hit, and the Long Depression that ran from 1873 until 1896 generated pressure on European governments to protect against cheap imports.

…The primary lesson to draw from the years before 1914 is not that economic interdependence was a weak constraint on military conflict. It is that, even in a globalized economy, governments can take protectionist actions to reduce their interdependence in anticipation of future wars.

In retrospect, the 30 years of tariff hikes, trade wars, and currency conflicts that preceded 1914 were harbingers of the devastation to come. European governments did not necessarily want to ignite a war among the great powers. By reducing their interdependence, however, they made that option conceivable.

…the backlash to globalization that preceded the Great War seems to be reprised in the current moment. Indeed, there are ways in which the current moment is scarier than the pre-1914 era. Back then, the world’s hegemon, the United Kingdom, acted as a brake on economic closure. In 2019, the United States is the protectionist with its foot on the accelerator. The constraints of Sino-American interdependence—what economist Larry Summers once called “the financial balance of terror”—no longer look so binding. And there are far too many hot spots—the Korean peninsula, the South China Sea, Taiwan—where the kindling seems awfully dry.

Multipolarity

We can define multipolarity as a wide distribution of power among multiple independent states. Exact equivalence of material power is not implied. What is required is the possession by several states of the capacity to coerce others to act in ways they would otherwise not, through kinetic or other means (economic sanctions, political manipulation, denial of access to essential resources, etc.). Such a distribution of power presents inherently graver challenges to peace and stability than do unipolar or bipolar power configurations,22 though of course none are safe or permanent. In brief, the greater the number of consequential actors, the greater the challenge of coordinating actions to avoid, manage, or de-escalate conflicts. Multipolarity also entails a greater potential for sudden changes in the balance of power, as one state may defect to another coalition or opt out, and as a result, the greater the degree of uncertainty experienced by all states, and the greater the plausibility of downside assumptions about the intentions and capabilities of one’s adversaries. This psychology, always present in international politics but particularly powerful in multipolarity, heightens the potential for escalation of minor conflicts, and of states launching preventive or preemptive wars. In multipolarity, states are always on edge, entertaining worst-case scenarios about actual and potential enemies, and acting on these fears—expanding their armies, introducing new weapon systems, altering doctrine to relax constraints on the use of force—in ways that reinforce the worst fears of others.

The risks inherent in multipolarity are heightened by the attendant weakening of global institutions. Even in a state-centric system, such institutions can facilitate communication and transparency, helping states to manage conflicts by reducing the potential for misperception and escalation toward war. But, as Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu argues in his chapter on the United Nations, the influence of multilateral institutions as agent and actor is clearly in decline, a result of bottom-up populist/nationalist pressures experienced in many countries, as well as the coordination problems that increase in a system of multiple great powers. As conflict resolution institutions atrophy, great powers will find themselves in “security dilemmas”23 in which verification of a rival’s intentions is unavailable, and worst-case assumptions fill the gap created by uncertainty. And the supply of conflicts will expand as a result of growing nationalism and populism, which are premised on hostility, paranoia, and isolation, with governments seeking political legitimacy through external conflict, producing a siege mentality that deliberately cuts off communication with other states.

Finally, the transition from unipolarity (roughly 1989–2007) to multipolarity is unregulated and hazardous, as the existing superpower fears and resists challenges to its primacy from a rising power or powers, while the rising power entertains new ambitions as entitlements now within its reach. Such a “power transition” and its dangers were identified by Thucydides in explaining the Peloponnesian Wars,24 by Organski (the “rear-end collision”)25 during the Cold War, and recently repopularized and brought up to date by Graham Allison in predicting conflict between the US and China.26

A useful, and consequential illustration of the inherent challenge of conflict management during a power transition toward multipolarity, is the weakening of the arms control regime negotiated by the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Despite the existential, global conflict between two nuclear armed superpowers embracing diametrically opposed world views and operating in economic isolation from each other, the two managed to avoid worst-case outcomes. They accomplished this in part by institutionalizing verifiable limits on testing and deployment of both strategic and intermediate-range nuclear missiles. Yet as diplomatically and technically challenging as these achievements were, the introduction of a third great power, China, into this two-country calculus has proven to be a deal breaker. Unconstrained by these bilateral agreements, China has been free to build up its capability, and has taken full advantage in ramping up production and deployment of intermediate-range ground-launched cruise missiles, thus challenging the US ability to credibly guarantee the security of its allies in Asia, and greatly increasing the costs of maintaining its Asian regional hegemony. As a result, the Intermediate Nuclear Force treaty is effectively dead, and the New Start Treaty, covering strategic missiles, is due to expire next year, with no indication of any US–Russian consensus to extend it. The US has with logic indicated its interest in making these agreements trilateral; but China, with its growing power and ambition, has also logically rejected these overtures. Thus, all three great powers are entering a period of nuclear weapons competition unconstrained by the major Cold War arms control regimes. In a period of rapid advances in technology and worsening great power relations, the nuclear competition will be a defining characteristic of the next decade and beyond. This dynamic will also complicate nuclear nonproliferation efforts, as both the demand for nuclear weapons (a consequence of rising regional and global insecurity), and supply of nuclear materials and technology (a result of the weakening of the nonproliferation regime and deteriorating great power relations) will increase.

Will deterrence prevent war in a world of several nuclear weapons states, (the current nuclear powers plus South Korea, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Turkey), as it helped to do during the bipolar Cold War? Some neorealist observers view nuclear weapons proliferation as stabilizing, extending the balance of terror, and the imperative of restraint, to new nuclear weapons states with much to fight over (Saudi Arabia and Iran, for example).27 Others,28 examining issues of command and control of nuclear weapons deployment and use by newly acquiring states, asymmetries in doctrines, force structures, and capabilities between rivals, the perils of variable rates in transition to weapons deployment, problems of communication between states with deep mutual grievances, the heightened risk of transfer of such weapons to non-state actors, have grave doubts about the safety of a multipolar, nuclear-armed world.29 We can at least conclude that prudence dictates heightened efforts to slow the pace of proliferation, while realism requires that we face a proliferated future with eyes wide open.

The current distribution of power is not perfectly multipolar. The US still commands the world’s largest economy, and its military power is unrivaled by any state or combination of states. Its population is still growing, despite a recent decline in birth rates. It enjoys extraordinary geographic advantages over its rivals, who are distant and live in far worse neighborhoods. Its economy is less dependent on foreign markets or resources. Its political system has proven—up to now—to be resilient and adaptable. Its global alliance system greatly extends its capacity to defend itself and shape the world to its liking and is still intact, despite growing doubts about America’s reliability as a security guarantor. Based on these mostly material and historical criteria, continued American primacy would seem to be a good bet, if it chooses to use its power in this way.30

So why multipolarity? The clearest and most frequently cited evidence for a widening distribution of global power away from American unipolarity is the narrowing gap in GDP between the US and China. The IMF’s World Economic Outlook forecasts a $0.9 trillion increase in US GDP for 2019–2020, and a $1.3 trillion increase for China in the same period.31 Many who support the American primacy case argue that GDP is an imperfect measure of power, that Chinese GDP data is inflated, that its growth rates are in decline while Chinese debt is rapidly increasing, and that China does poorly on other factors that contribute to power—its low per capita GDP, its political succession challenges, its environmental crisis, its absence of any external alliance system. Yet GDP is a good place to start, as the single most useful measure and long-term predictor of power. It is from the overall economy that states extract and apply material power to leverage desired behavior from other states. It is true that robust future Chinese growth is not guaranteed, nor is its capacity to convert its wealth to power, which is a function of how well its political system works over time. But this is equally the case for the US, and considering recent political developments is not a given for either country.

As an alternative to measuring inputs—economic size, political legitimacy, technological innovation, population growth—in assessing relative power and the nature of global power distribution, we should consider outputs: what are states doing with their power? The input measures are useful, possibly predictive, but are usually deployed in the course of making a foreign policy argument, sometimes on behalf of a reassertion of American primacy, sometimes on behalf of retrenchment. As such, their objectivity (despite their generous deployment of “data”) is open to question. What is undeniable, to any clear-eyed observer, is a real decline in American influence in the world, and a rise in the influence of other powers, which predates the Trump administration but has accelerated into America’s free fall over the last four years. This has produced a de facto multipolarity, whether explainable in the various measures of power—actual and latent—or not. This decline results in part from policy mistakes: a reckless squandering of material power and legitimacy in Iraq, an overabundance of caution in Syria, and now pure impulsivity. But more fundamentally, it is a product of relative decline in American capacity—political and economic—to which American leadership is adjusting haphazardly, but in the direction of retrenchment/restraint. It is highly revealing that the last two American presidents, polar opposites in intellect, temperament and values, agreed on one fundamental point: the US is overextended, and needs to retrench. The fact that neither Obama nor Trump (up to this point in his presidency) believed they had the power at their disposal to do anything else, tells us far more about the future of American power and policy—and about the emerging shape of international relations—than the power measures and comparisons made by foreign policy advocates.

Observation of recent trends in US versus Russian relative influence prompts another question: do we understand the emerging characteristics of power? Rigorously measuring and comparing the wrong parameters will get us nowhere at best and mislead us into misguided policies at worst. How often have we heard, with puzzlement, that Putin punches far above his weight? Could it be that we misunderstand what constitutes “weight” in the contemporary and emerging world? Putin may be on a high wire, and bound to come crashing down; but the fact is that Russian influence, leveraging sophisticated communications/social media/influence operations, a strong military, an agile (Putin-dominated) decision process, and taking advantage of the egregious mistakes by the West, has been advancing for over a decade, shows no sign of slowing down, and has created additional opportunities for itself in the Middle East, Europe, Asia, Latin America, the Arctic. It has done this with an economy roughly the size of Italy’s. There are few signs of a domestic political challenge to Putin. His external opponents are in disarray, and Russia’s main adversary is politically disabled from confronting the problem. He has established Russia as the Middle East power broker. He has reached into the internal politics of his Western adversaries and influenced their leadership choices. He has invaded and absorbed the territory of neighboring states. His actions have produced deep divisions within NATO. Again, simple observation suggests multipolarity in fact, and a full explanation for this power shift awaiting future historians able to look with more objectivity at twenty-first-century elements of power.

When that history is written, surely it will emphasize the extraordinary polarization in American politics. Was multipolarity a case of others finding leverage in new sources of power, or the US underutilizing its own? The material measures suggest sufficient capacity for sustained American primacy, but with this latent capacity unavailable (as perceived, I believe correctly, by political leadership) by virtue of weakening institutions: two major parties in separate universes; a winnertake-all political mentality; deep polarization between the parties’ popular bases of support; divided government, with the Presidency and the Congress often in separate and antagonistic hands; diminishing trust in the permanent government, and in the knowledge it brings to important decisions, and deepening distrust between the intelligence community and policymakers; and, in Trump’s case, a chaotic policy process that lacks any strategic reference points, mis-communicates the Administration’s intentions, and has proven incapable of sustained, coherent diplomacy on behalf of any explicit and consistent set of policy goals.

Rising Nationalism/Populism/Authoritarianism

The evidence for these trends is clear. Freedom House, the go-to authority on the state of global democracy, just published its annual assessment for 2020, and recorded the fourteenth consecutive year of global democratic decline and advancing authoritarianism. This dramatic deterioration includes both a weakening in democratic practice within states still deemed on balance democratic, and a shift from weak democracies to authoritarianism in others. Commitment to democratic norms and practices—freedom of speech and of the press, independent judiciaries, protection of minority rights—is in decline. The decline is evident across the global system and encompasses all major powers, from India and China, to Europe, to the US. Right-wing populist parties have assumed power, or constitute a politically significant minority, in a lengthening list of democratic states, including both new (Hungary, Poland) and established (India, the US, the UK) democracies. Nationalism, frequently dismissed by liberal globalization advocates as a weak force when confronted by market democracies’ presumed inherent superiority, has experienced a resurgence in Russia, China, the Middle East, and at home. Given the breadth and depth of right-wing populism, the raw power that promotes it—mainly Russian and American—and the disarray of its liberal opponents, this factor will weigh heavily on the future.

The major factors contributing to right-wing populism and its global spread is the subject of much discussion.32 The most straightforward explanation is rising inequality and diminished intergenerational mobility, particularly in developed countries whose labor-intensive manufacturing has been hit hardest by the globalization of capital combined with the immobility of labor. Jobs, wages, economic security, a reasonable hope that one’s offspring has a shot at a better life than one’s own, the erosion of social capital within economically marginalized communities, government failure to provide a decent safety net and job retraining for those battered by globalization: all have contributed to a sense of desperation and raw anger in the hollowed-out communities of formerly prosperous industrial areas. The declining life expectancy numbers33 tell a story of immiseration: drug addition, suicide, poor health care, and gun violence. The political expression of such conditions of life should not be surprising. Simple, extremist “solutions” become irresistible. Sectarian, racial, regional divides are strengthened, and exclusive identities are sharpened. Political entrepreneurs offering to blow up the system blamed for such conditions become credible. Those who are perceived as having benefited from the corrupt system—long-standing institutions of government, foreign countries and populations, immigrants, minorities getting a “free ride,” elites—become targets of recrimination and violence. The simple solutions of course, don’t work, deepening the underlying crisis, but in the process politics is poisoned. If this sounds like the US, it should, but it also describes major European countries (the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic), and could be an indication of things to come for non-Western democracies like India.

We have emphasized throughout this chapter the interaction of four structural forces in shaping the future, and this interaction is evident here as well. Is it merely coincidence that the period of democratic decline documented by Freedom House, coincides precisely with the global financial and economic crisis? Lower growth, increasing joblessness, wage stagnation, superimposed on longer-term widening of inequality and declining mobility, constitute a forbidding stress test for democratic systems, and many continue to fail. And if we are correct about secular stagnation, the stress will continue, and authoritarianism’s fourteen-year run will not be over for some time. The antidemocratic trend will gain additional impetus from the illiberal direction of globalization, with its growth suppressing protectionism, weaponization of global economic exchange, and weakening global economic institutions. Multipolarity also contributes, in several ways. The former hegemon and author of globalization’s liberal structure has lost its appetite, and arguably its capacity, for leadership, and indeed has become part of the problem, succumbing to and promoting the global right-wing populist surge. It is suffering an unprecedented decline in life expectancy, and recently a decline in the birth rate, signaling a degree of rot commonly associated with a collapsing Soviet Union. While American politics may once again cohere around its liberal values and interests, the time when American leadership had the self-confidence to shape the global system in its liberal image is gone. It may build coalitions of the like-minded to launch liberal projects, but there will be too much power outside these coalitions to permit liberal globalization of the sort imagined at the end of the Cold War. In multipolarity, the values around which global politics revolve will reflect the diversity of major powers, their interests, and the norms they embrace. Convergence of norms, practices, policies is out of the question. Global collective action, even in the face of global crises, will be a long shot. To expect anything else is fantasy.

#### Revitalizing the U.S.-led order solves a litany of risks.

Richard Haass 22, President of the Council on Foreign Relations, previously served as Director of Policy Planning for the US State Department, September/October 2022, “The Dangerous Decade: A Foreign Policy for a World in Crisis,” https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/dangerous-decade-foreign-policy-world-crisis-richard-haass

There are decades where nothing happens, and there are weeks where decades happen.” Those words are apocryphally attributed to the Bolshevik revolutionary (and Foreign Affairs reader) Vladimir Lenin, referring to the rapid collapse of tsarist Russia just over 100 years ago. If he had actually said those words, Lenin might have added that there are also decades when centuries happen.

The world is in the midst of one such decade. As with other historical hinges, the danger today stems from a sharp decline in world order. But more than at any other recent moment, that decline threatens to become especially steep, owing to a confluence of old and new threats that have begun to intersect at a moment the United States is ill positioned to contend with them.

On the one hand, the world is witnessing the revival of some of the worst aspects of traditional geopolitics: great-power competition, imperial ambitions, fights over resources. Today, Russia is headed by a tyrant, President Vladimir Putin, who longs to re-create a Russian sphere of influence and perhaps even a Russian empire. Putin is willing to do almost anything to achieve that goal, and he is able to act as he pleases because internal constraints on his regime have mostly disappeared. Meanwhile, under President Xi Jinping, China has embarked on a quest for regional and potentially global primacy, putting itself on a trajectory that will lead to increased competition or even confrontation with the United States.

But that is not all—not by a long shot. These geopolitical risks are colliding with complex new challenges central to the contemporary era, such as climate change, pandemics, and nuclear proliferation. And not surprisingly, the diplomatic fallout from growing rivalries has made it nearly impossible for great powers to work together on regional and international challenges, even when it is in their interest to do so.

Further complicating the picture is the reality that American democracy and political cohesion are at risk to a degree not seen since the middle of the nineteenth century. This matters because the United States is not just one country among many: U.S. leadership has underpinned what order there has been in the world for the past 75 years and remains no less central today. A United States riven internally, however, will become ever less willing and able to lead on the international stage.

Call it a perfect—or, more accurately, an imperfect—storm.

These conditions have set off a vicious circle: heightened geopolitical competition makes it even more difficult to produce the cooperation demanded by new global problems, and the deteriorating international environment further fuels geopolitical tensions—all at a time that the United States is weakened and distracted. The frightening gap between global challenges and the world’s responses, the increased prospects for major-power wars in Europe and the Indo-Pacific, and the growing potential for Iran to cause instability in the Middle East have come together to produce the most dangerous moment since World War II. Call it a perfect—or, more accurately, an imperfect—storm.

To warn of danger is not to predict the future. Ideally, things will turn out for the better. But good things rarely happen on their own; to the contrary, left to their own devices, systems deteriorate. The task for U.S. policymakers, then, is to rediscover the principles and practice of statecraft: to marshal national power and collective action against the tendency toward disorder. The goal must be to manage the collision of old geopolitics and new challenges, to act with discipline in what is sought, and to build arrangements or, better yet, institutions where there is sufficient consensus. To do all that, Washington will have to prioritize establishing order over fostering democracy abroad—at the same time as it works to shore up democracy at home.

### 1ac---plan

#### The United States ought to require that workers receive a living wage.

### 1ac---right to work

#### Advantage two is Right to Work.

#### A decline in the power of labor will culminate in extinction---a right to work in accordance with international law is necessary.

Carrillo ’21 [Raul; 2021; Associate Research Scholar at Yale Law School, Chair at Modern Monetary Network, J.D. from Columbia Law School; “Labor,” Tipping Points in International Law: Commitment and Critique; ASIL Studies in International Legal Theory, pp. 196-217]

Labor has seen better days. The early twenty-first century has witnessed a worldwide decline in the power of unions and labor movements generally.1 “Rights talk” is understandably the last discourse many labor scholars want to revisit. After all, labor rarely receives a fair hearing in the courts. Historically, the “most utopian elements of the labor movement” have avoided judiciaries as anti-democratic sites of agitation.2 And yet, without arguing for rights beyond workplace bargaining power, unions and labor movements have consistently been defeated by arguments for “negative” individual rights.3 As a result, we should contemplate rights based reforms beyond labor union empowerment, including guaranteed jobs.4 Such reforms need not (and should not) be won through the courts. Nor should they be treated as ends unto themselves. But they should be won. The stakes are staggering. Labor injustice has become ecocidal.5 *[insert footnote 5]* See generally Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Global Warming of 1.5°C at 177–283 (Vale´rie Masson-Delmotte et al. eds., 2019), https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/ (detailing the risks of global warming of 1.5°C or more, including ecosystem and species loss; increased drought, heatwaves, and flooding; declining ocean and agricultural productivity; decreased water and food security; and continuing sea-level rise into the next century). *[end footnote 5]* Since the industrial revolution, economic growth, development, and poverty reduction have depended on the exploitation of natural resources, but particularly from the global south.6 Fossil fuels have driven access to energy, transportation, and quality of life improvements for many workers. Yet with a perpetual lack of bargaining power as a class – and for many, additional disadvantages due to other identities – workers around the globe are locked into the perpetuation of a climate catastrophe that will destroy our homes and terminate the species.

This chapter argues that the full realization of the “right to work,” found in several treaties in international law, would require, on its own terms, “true full employment”, wherein everyone who wants a job is entitled to one-vis-a-vis a state party. Moreover, whereas some courts and scholars have argued that true full employment is economically impossible for most states or all states due to lack of fiscal resources, advances in monetary theory (and critical legal theories of money, public finance, and macroeconomics) suggest this is not the case. Indeed, although there exists a spectrum of monetary sovereignty and different states face different geopolitical and financial pressures, many of the assumptions that suggest the “right to work” is economically impractical to realize in full effect should now be discarded. Public monetary and financial systems can be reconfigured to directly create jobs and full employment, as well as other collective workers’ rights, to say nothing of preserving human life on this planet.

11.1 the right to work under international human rights law

The right to work – generally conceived as an individual entitlement to a job paying wages capable of supporting a dignified existence – has a long history across the globe, within liberalism, socialism, and other traditions.7 Although the right to work may not have figured prominently in the politics leading to the French Revolution, it was the “first right in importance” for the new Jacobin state.8 Indeed, the right to work was first encoded as a human right in the French Constitution of 1793.9 Over the next 150 years, right to work claims featured in the programmatic goals of both revolutionary and reformist political, social, and religious movements (though just as often ignored).10 In the aftermath of World War II and the birth of the United Nations (UN), the right to work finally attracted significant enough attention to be recognized in numerous human rights agreements.11 Over the following decades, it has also been recognized in several national constitutions to various degrees, even among countries with markedly different labor systems.12

Today, Article 23A of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) declares that “everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.”13 The drafters understood the obligation required the state to at least strive to achieve full employment as recognized in Articles 55 and 56 of the UN Charter.14 Although the UDHR is not a treaty, it has arguably evolved into a “statement of customary international law.”15 The UN Millenium Development Goals also include the objective of “full and productive employment for all, including women and young people.”16

The preambles of several International Labor Organization (ILO) treaties similarly point to the right to work. As a general matter, the ILO maintains the 1940s definition of “full employment” as a “situation where all persons seeking employment have been provided with paid positions.”17 However, only a few ILO conventions deal with employment creation, much less direct job creation by state parties.18 For instance, Article 1 of ILOConvention 122 calls for member states to declare and pursue an active policy designed to promote “full, productive and freely chosen employment.”19 ILO Convention 168 on Employment and Protection against Unemployment requires “[e]ach Member shall declare as a priority objective a policy designed to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment by all appropriate means . . . ”20 Moreover, it requires that each member “shall endeavour to establish, subject to national law and practice, special programmes to promote additional job opportunities and employment assistance . . . for identified categories of disadvantaged persons . . . such as women, young workers, disabled persons, older workers, the long-term unemployed, migrant workers lawfully resident in the country and workers affected by structural change (emphasis added).”21

In some fashion, the right to work is also found in Article 6 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR),22 Article 11(1)(a) of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),23 Article 5(e)(i) of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD),24 Article 15 of the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (the African Charter),25 Article 1 of the European Social Charter (the European Charter),26 Article 6 of the Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (the San Salvador Protocol),27 the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Convention),28 and several other international treaties.29

These treaties have not been interpreted to provide individuals an administratively or judicially enforceable right to a job. Neither, of course, have they been interpreted to invoke a collective right to true full employment (obviating the proverbial “reserve army of labor”).30 As a first-order matter, not all of the treaty interpretations agree that a right to a job should serve as the positive instantiation of the right to work,31 nor do they tend to impose an obligation on party states to guarantee an immediate right to work but importantly, they do adopt policies that are meant specifically to gradually secure such right.32

For instance, the right to work is predictably the first right mentioned in the ICESCR. In 2005, the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR) published General Comment 18 on the Right to Work,33 affirming that the right to work is inherent to human dignity and essential for realizing other human rights. The guidance even notes that Article 6 is interdependent with Article 7, which recognizes the universal right of everyone to “the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work,” and adopts a principle of nondiscrimination.34 And furthermore, it indicates that special measures should be taken to reduce the unemployment rate among disadvantaged groups, including women, younger people, older people, migrants, and disabled people.35 Yet General Comment 18 also clarifies that in order to fill the Article 6 obligation – to recognize “the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely choose or accepts” – the state party to the covenant need only adopt “policies and techniques to achieve steady economic, social and cultural development under safeguarding fundamental political and economic freedoms to the individual.”36

Moreover, General Comment 18 fails to delineate what constitutes a programmatic failure to comply with Article 6. States are only required to develop a “national employment strategy,”37 including job training programs geared toward private sector employment.38 The capacity to do more for full employment is not demanded, even of states with sufficient financial resources. James W. Nickel has described this absence of any requirement for a ratifying government to serve as the “employer of last resort” as the “most striking” thing about ICESCR’s approach to the right to work.39 General Comment No. 18 states that any person whose right to work has been violated should have full access to judicial or similar remedies, but thus far, the failure of a ratifying state to provide employment to everyone who wants to work has not been deemed a violation of the right to work.40 One cannot claim a right to work against a state under ICESCR simply because one wants a job.41

11.1 full employment & jus cogens

When one examines the need for full employment in the context of other labor rights under these treaties, and the realities of existing labor systems, the absence of a mandate for full employment makes little sense. Above all, this is because the international treaties discussed in this chapter generally bar labor discrimination.42 For example, Article 2(2) of the ICESCR requires that the rights set out in the Covenant “will be executed without discrimination.”43 Even during times of financial crisis or hardship, state parties are not permit- ted to apply “retrogressive policies” in a discriminatory manner.44

There can be no doubt that today’s labor systems feature all sorts of discrimination.45 One might argue this is why these international treaties exist. One might also argue this is why the United States has not ratified many of them. But simple prohibitions against discrimination in labor practices have not tended to bring about equal treatment at the nation-state level. In her recent essay, Inequity as a Legal Principle, Lua Kama´l Yuille examines employment law to demonstrate that inequity is law’s “leitmotif.”46 Statutes like the US Civil Rights Act of 1964 are intended to prevent the failure or refusal to hire individuals because of their “race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.”47 And yet, decades of legal history demonstrate that systematic and systemic discrimination and unfairness – labor “injustice” as Yuille distinguishes it – permeates the law (and thus legal constructions like the labor system).48

Indeed, most labor systems today are defined not merely by discrimination, but segregation and rampant inequality – within states and between states. Most developing countries have abundant natural resources, but all have unemployed, underemployed, or under-qualified domestic labor.49 Making matters worse, the geo-financial architecture is such that job creation in developing countries often relies on imports of intermediate and capital goods, rather than the creation of domestic substitutes. Many workers in developing countries produce raw materials and “low-value-added” goods for developed countries. Many of the firms producing such goods are involved in “dirty supply chains.” In this condition, industrial giants reap the fruits of productive processes that involve unsafe and unsanitary conditions, long working hours, forced overtime, discrimination, sexual harassment, and other forms of workplace violence.50 Many workers trapped in low-wage sectors often find themselves trapped within firms promoting war, incarceration, deportation, in addition to climate change and other forces that threaten the very communities from whence the workers come.

One could argue that states have an obligation to provide employment in order to satisfy other labor rights, especially a right to nondiscrimination. Indeed, true full employment becomes fundamentally necessary when one looks at the right to work via the peremptory, non-derogable norm against certain forms of nondiscrimination recognized by the international community. For instance, a prohibition on racial discrimination is well-established as jus cogens.51 The Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) has recognized nondiscrimination and equality before the law, in general, as jus cogens in nature: “any discriminatory treatment with regard to the protection and exercise of human rights entails the international responsibility of the State.”52 The IACtHR argued that in order to comply with jus cogens principles of equality and nondiscrimination, states are obligated to take affirmative action to reverse or otherwise change discriminatory situations, including with respect to third parties who maintain these discriminatory situations.53

Some scholars argue that socio-economic rights are a necessary condition for the realization of jus cogens human rights (for example, the right to life), and should thus also receive the status of jus cogens norms.54 Such a case can be made for the right to work given the stratification and structural discrimination within labor systems. If a norm qualifies as jus cogens then an executive, legislative, or judicial act does not excuse a state’s violation of that norm.55 Full employment is a prerequisite for fair employment overall.56

#### Recognizing the right to work spills over and is a direct enabler of other rights.

Sarkin & Koenig ’11 [Jeremy; Mark; Feb. 2011; Professor of Law and International Human Rights, previously at University of the West Cape, Hofstra and Tufts Fletcher School; Development professional currently working with the International Security Sector Advisory Team, a unit of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces; Human Rights Quarterly; “Developing the Right to Work: Intersecting and Dialoguing Human Rights and Economic Policy,” vol. 33, no.1, p. 1-42]

Human rights do not develop steadily or along a linear path. While some conceive of the long-term development of human rights as a natural and even logical progression, actual advances or regressions in human rights protections cannot be separated from real world events. Such developmental paths see rights evolve in particular ways at specific times depending on what is happening in the world. A recent example of this process has been the reduction in the use of the death penalty in the United States. While this is a significant advancement of human rights, a crucial reason for fewer executions being carried out is economics-the price of keeping people on death row, litigating death penalty cases, and carrying out the death penalty are costs that US states are no longer as willing to endure. 1 To assume this was a change based purely on the grounds of morality or public opinion would be overly simplistic; the role of shrinking budgets and increased fiscal responsibility must be acknowledged.

Recognizing the connection between real world events and developments in human rights, it stands to reason that major crises, catastrophes, tragedies, and other cataclysmic events have served to push and pull inter national and domestic regimes towards the recognition, solidification, and enforcement of human rights.2 In the last decade, 11 September 2001 had perhaps the most fundamental impact on human rights protection, not just in the US, but around the world. However, as the panic immediately following that event seems to have waned, human rights protections are again on the rise, though on a path still affected by that important event and its aftermath. In the coming decade, the major world event that will determine the development of the international human rights regime is not yet clear, but the financial difficulties that have led the world into the new decade may prove to be a strong candidate.

 Developmental narratives of specific human rights have, in most cases, been carefully explored for most fundamental civil and political rights. These so-called first generation rights are still deemed by many to be at the apex of a hierarchy, and thus more worthy of protection relative to other rights. With these rights often dominating international discourse, the international community has unfortunately paid less attention to understanding the waxing and waning interest in social, economic, and cultural rights. These rights are still deemed by some to be second generation rights, positioned lower in hierarchy of rights and therefore of lesser importance. However, periods of major economic distress, such as the financial crisis and world-wide recession that began in 2008 and 2009, can temporarily alter the artificial human rights hierarchies and result in an increased focus on socioeconomic rights, just as political upheavals often inspire the devotion of more thought and attention to civil and political rights.

The right to work is a clear example of this process. This right is important because the fundamental value of work to the individual and collective experiences of people cannot be underestimated—work affects the human experience on a number of levels. Work is about the generation of income, but also about individual fulfillment, the constitution of one's identity, and social inclusion. As such, work should surely be recognized as belonging to the sphere of human rights.3 Work provides individuals in a society with an element of human dignity as key contributors to that civilization, while also providing remuneration, which might allow them to secure an adequate standard of living.4 Perhaps it might best be stated that "[w]ork is a human right because it is a means to an end—human survival."5

The right to work should also not be overlooked in its role as an enabler for other rights. Work is absolutely crucial for survival rights such as food, clothing, and housing. Work also directly affects the level of attainment an individual may reach for a host of other human rights, such as education, culture, and health.6 While most would argue that the right to work can never be truly guaranteed, as there will likely always be some level of unemployment, work continues to be "an essential part of the human condition,"7 and should clearly be considered within the context of rights-based discourse.

 While the importance of work to individuals and societies would hardly seem debatable, the right to work remains controversial. This is because the right touches upon the "outcrop of often deeply submerged but sincerely held differences between reasonable people about the most fundamental questions of political philosophy, including the nature of liberty and the appropriate role of the State in preventing inequality."8 While these differences s in political philosophy do not necessarily change, during periods of depression or recession the right to work, as a concept, does gain greater prominence as the realities of widespread unemployment are impossible to ignore. At these times, the right has been successfully reintroduced through the human rights discourse into discussions on markets and economic policy. Conversely, during periods of sustained economic growth, there is a shift in focus to increasing rates of growth and preventing inflation, leaving many decision makers to discount the perceived value of human rights, including the right to work.9 Throughout these cycles, the right to work has never been firmly established as positive human rights law that creates very clear and specific obligations for nation-states.

Without any clear consensus on the right to work, especially one that is supported both during times of economic hardship and affluence, long standing debate has continued during the past two decades. While there have been few points of general agreement, there have been shifts in the discussion. What was once a dialogue focused mainly on the need to seek "full employment," has now shifted to a debate on whether all members of society should be guaranteed an "unconditional basic income (Bl) sufficient to support a modest but dignified existence."10 Basic income advocates argue that conventional ideas of the right to work focus too narrowly on wage employment. Rather than viewing the right to work as the right to obtain a paying job, they argue that it is a right to pursue an occupation of one's own choosing.11 There is a difference between "labor," which can be menial and extremely difficult, and "work," which involves using one's abilities to achieve in activities of one's choosing, which may include artistic accomplishments or teaching and caring for loved ones.12 As one scholar notes,

to conceive of work only as those activities through which a monetary consid eration is obtained is to have a very limited idea of what work means, and it is even worse to rely on the market to determine what is and what is not work. ... Work can be defined as all those activities which combine creativity, conceptual and analytic thought and manual or physical use of aptitudes.13

 As unemployment has not been satisfactorily ameliorated by conventional means, many have advocated that having a basic income should be a right. This may seem like a radical concept to some, but the idea is certainly not a new one. Many societies, in fact, have already adopted basic income ap proaches for persons who cannot work due to advanced age.14 The basic logic behind these measures for the elderly—that those who are disadvantaged in the labor market and cannot find appropriate work or are simply unable to work need a basic income to sustain a sufficient standard of living—can be applied to society more generally. Some therefore believe that "what should be equalized in a good society of the 21st century is basic security, which encompasses basic income security. This should be a right.”15

While certain scholars and activists have continued to develop the dialogue around the right to work, in reality the right is rarely discussed, let alone focused upon among policy makers or broader segments of society. A number of explanations for this lack of engagement on the issue have been suggested. The inaccessibility of economic dialogue for rights-based language and the tense political context in which the treaties forming the legal basis for the right to work in international law were negotiated are perhaps the most common reasons cited to explain the limited attention paid to the right to work. These challenges do not, however, completely explain the lack of development of the right. The political tensions between capitalist and socialist nations did indeed affect the way in which the right was writ ten into international law, but as that tension has been drastically reduced in recent years, there has been no substantial change in the approach by countries to the right to work. The tension between economics and human rights dialogue is certainly an important topic to be considered as well, but it is not a challenge unique to the right to work. All socioeconomic rights have been affected by this contrast in language and approach.16

While the problems of politics and economics have contributed to the lack of attention being paid to the right to work, what has uniquely set back the development of the right has been a steady process of dividing the right to work into pieces. This segmentation introduced a hierarchy of rights within the divided right. Many theorists, activists, and governments have contributed to this division as they have approached the right to work with specific goals in mind. Several distinct aspects or components of the right to work have been identified, and specific actors have pushed for a hierarchy of importance within those pieces, on the basis of political or institutional objectives as opposed to a concerted effort to explore and develop the right itself. As a result of this process, contemporary perspectives on the right to work tend to conceive of a conglomeration of interrelated rights. There has therefore been no consensus built on what the core elements of the right are, and how the entire right should be developed and sustained. These differences have prevented even seemingly natural allies like the labor and human rights movements from working together to promote the right to work.17 While this maneuvering has resulted in careful consideration of certain aspects of the right, the right of every individual to a job has largely been neglected.18

Challenges facing the establishment of a strong right to work also include debates that have surrounded all protected socioeconomic rights. Advocates often argue that constitutionalizing such rights makes them justiciable, in other words reviewable by the courts. Thus, opponents of socioeconomic rights argue that enforcement is problematic. They argue that courts should not have these types of review powers because they lack the necessary expertise and institutional competence to decide the relevant questions. Within the right to work, such a review would include determinations such as what standard of living is appropriate in a given society.19These opponents further argue that having the interpreters of the law essentially become lawmakers, especially before the right to work has been clearly written into national laws, goes well beyond the mandates of a judge in most systems worldwide.20

 Discussions on the role of the judiciary in relation to socioeconomic rights are not at all one-sided; advocates for these rights have long argued that socioeconomic rights need to be justiciable in order to function like and with other rights. They assert that when the courts fail to adjudicate such rights, or fail to include socioeconomic rights in broadly framed civil and political rights, such as equality, life, or security of the person, they apply rights in a discriminatory manner by excluding from protection many of the most vulnerable groups. Some nations have recognized the importance of socioeconomic rights, such as India, which protects socioeconomic rights by viewing them as directive principles of state policy.21 But this type of action has not become sufficiently widespread as to represent a more cohesive international trend. Scrutiny around socioeconomic rights is often deflected by opponents with the argument that the protection of a right such as the right to work is dependent on the unique context of the country, especially in terms of the availability of resources. Without the resource capacity to ensure the protection of a right to work, it is meaningless to explicitly provide for such a right.22

#### Establishing a right to work through a living wage solves.

Eriksson ’15 – [Stina Eriksson, Uppsala University. "The Right to a Living Wage: The Obligations of States Parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to Realise the Right to a Living Wage" (2015), [https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:846161/FULLTEXT01.pdf](https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2%3A846161/FULLTEXT01.pdf)] TDI

4.1 Respect, Protect and Fulfil

4.1.1 Respect

In terms of respect, the State is obliged to refrain from interfering directly or indirectly with individuals’ enjoyment of any human right. This includes, for example, respecting property and resources owned by individuals, freedom of association, and respecting the right to strike. 94 This obligation also includes that whenever States are required to undertake positive measures for the realisation of rights, it should be done in manner which sufficiently respects individuals’ freedom.95

States should respect collective agreements aimed at introducing and maintaining favourable conditions of work. Such agreements could for example include the setting of wages for those unionised. But this also means that States must respect the individual employment contract between an employer and a worker, and recognise its legal effect. In order to respect, the States parties must review legislation, e.g. corporate laws and regulations, to ensure that they do not constrain a right laid down in the Covenant.96 Thus, the States parties should take measures to respect the right to a living wage by taking positive action to review minimum wage laws within its territory or undertake legislative measures if such are not in place.

Furthermore, the obligation to respect includes a strong presumption that States should refrain from taking deliberate retrogressive measures, i.e. limiting rights already implemented in the domestic legal order.97 Hence, the obligation to respect the right to a living wage puts limitations to the possibility to, for example, lower minimum wages in times of financial crises and recession. States who have taken retrogressive measures must show that such have been adopted after most careful considerations and scrutiny of other alternatives.98

As an example, the regulation of the fixing of minimum wages in Convention No. 131 allows adjustment of minimum wages after economic development, which could enable retrogressive measures concerning wages if a State suffers a recession. However, seeing to the discussion regarding the difference of a living wage compared to a minimum wage in the previous chapter, such retrogressive measures may be hard to justify in regards of living wages.

4.1.2 Protect

In order to protect a right, States must take measures to ensure that third parties, such as employers in the private sector, do not disturb the workers’ enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. Measures have to be taken to prevent, investigate and punish violations of just and favourable conditions of work through legislation, judiciary, policies and remedial action. States shall secure sanctions and penalties to third parties that violate the rights. 99 This obligation can be argued to imply a ‘horizontal effect’ of rights. 100 In the draft general comment the Committee holds that the obligation to protect includes obligations of corporations to respect the right to just and favourable conditions of work, through laws and policies set by States parties.101

The Committee is quite firm on the measures needed to protect economic, social and cultural rights – sanctions, remedies and legislation. However, the nature of legislative and sanctionary mechanisms is fully left to the States to decide upon. This leaves the States parties with a great margin of appreciation in how the protective measures shall be designed in detail.

This obligation to protect is of particular importance in terms of labour rights, as many workers are employed in the private sector.102 The Committee holds in its draft general comment that this specifically includes an obligation to legislate minimum wages and minimum standards of working conditions in order to protect workers from exploitation by their employers.103

4.1.3 Fulfil

The States parties’ obligation to fulfil is closely related to the provision in the ICESCR to progressively realise economic, social and cultural rights.104 The steps taken to fulfil the rights are the means of realisation, and usually constitute the positive measures that have to be taken by a State party. The obligation to fulfil has been further divided, and includes measures to facilitate, promote and provide a right.105

With *facilitate* the Committee suggests that States shall undertake positive measures and enabling strategies to assist workers to enjoy their labour rights as set out in laws, policies and regulation.106 States must also regularly review the impact of laws, policies and regulations with a view to update their standards, including mechanisms to systematically asses the minimum wage level. Furthermore, the States parties should create adequate dialogue mechanisms between workers and employers, and construct incentives regarding wages.107

In order to *promote* just and favourable conditions of work the State shall take efforts to educate and raise awareness about the rights. 108 This includes providing advice on issues concerning the rights to all workers and employers. *Provide* requires the States parties to provide just and favourable conditions of work, where the individual or a group is unable to enjoy the right by their own means.109 An example of this is providing incentives for private sector employers to make working spaces accessible for persons with disabilities. 110 Or possibly, providing the same with incentives to introduce living wages.

4.1.4 Conclusions on Respect, Protect and Fulfil

The obligations to respect and protect usually requires less State resources than the obligation to fulfill. Fulfill could place a greater burden on a State’s resources, as allocation for social security, food schemes and housing is needed. Measures within the frame of respect and protect, on the other hand, are of a kind that can be implemented without delay as neither necessarily would require extensive State resources. Respect in its essence, calls for States to refrain from action to enable the enjoyment of the right.

Protect however, in regards of protecting individuals from third parties, might require administrative resources such as legislation, inspectorates and remedies. Such efforts are needed to secure rights for workers against their employers.111 Instead, the real burden of the obligation to protect is on the third party, whom has to comply with the State party’s adopted measures to provide the right. This particularly is the case with living wages, where a rise in wages and the implementation of a living wage policy would not burden the States resources directly, but rather the employers in the private sector. The resource allocation is not from a State party’s budget, but from the resources of the private sector.

However, such measures are rather intervening for the third party, and therefore the State party’s positive measures have to be balanced with the freedom of individual, i.e. the employers’ freedom. This brings up the principle of the dual freedoms of rights. A State party acting to secure the positive right of workers when protecting them, at the same time have to show respect, the negative right, towards the employers.

4.2 The Progressive Realisation of the ICESCR

As already noted in section 2.2.3, article 2(1) of the ICESCR provides that States shall take steps to the maximum of their available resources, with a view to progressively achieve the full realisation of the rights recognised in the Covenant by all appropriate means, particularly through the adoption of legislative measures. The key elements of the article which will be dealt with in this section are “take steps by all appropriate means” and “maximum available resources”.

4.2.1 Take steps

The obligation to take steps in the ICESCR lays down an obligation on States parties to act to progressively achieve economic, social and cultural rights within a reasonably short time after ratifying and implementing the Covenant.112 The steps to be taken shall be deliberate, concrete and clearly targeted,113 and should include legislative measures, judicial remedies, constitutional recognition, as well as administrative, financial, educational and social measures.114 Thus, the Committee is rather demanding and has quite a strict interpretation of what to ’take steps’ implies.

The obligations of conduct and result are relevant when discussing the provision to take steps. The provision to take steps by all appropriate means in article 2 (1) ICESCR is held to obligate the States of result, but gives the States a choice of conduct to achieve the result, as the appropriate means are not specified.115 Therefore, the rights in the ICESCR are often stated only to hold the obligation of result.

However, for all economic, social and cultural rights, this is not entirely true. Certain rights, such as the ICESCR article 11 (2) (a) states, that to realise the right to adequate food, measures should be taken to improve methods of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific knowledge. These should be considered obligations of conduct found in the ICESCR. 116 For the justiciability of the rights in the Covenant, it has been argued that the obligations of conduct have to be clarified. For those provisions in the ICESCR where obligations of conduct are not provided for, such rights are left at a general level, challenging the justiciability of those rights.

Eide argues that it is only when such general rights are broken down to more specific components that they become justiciable. 117 Looking at article 7 (a) (ii) specifically, the Sates parties’ obligation to ensure a remuneration that provides all workers with a decent living for themselves and their families in accordance with the provisions in the ICESCR, seem general and fundamentally an obligation of result. No provisions on how this right shall be achieved are given. This can be compared to article 6(2), which clearly include an obligation of conduct as it requires States parties when taking steps to achieve the full realisation of the right to work to include technical and vocational guidance and training programmes.118

However, the Committee’s general comments are a way of clarifying and adding to the rights’ substance where the provisions themselves lack obligations of conduct. The general comments commonly include explicit examples of measures that should be taken by States parties. What is more, guidance in the Committee’s expectations of what steps should be taken can be found in the reporting instruction States parties are to follow when constructing their State reports. As shown in section 2.5.2.1 Sates parties shall indicate if they have legally established a minimum wage and if the minimum wage is systematically indexed and periodically reviewed and determined at a level that provides all workers and their families with an adequate standard of living.

Much criticism has been directed towards the onerous formulation of article 2(1), which is held to make it rather impossible for governments to comply with its obligations.119 Indeed, the UN is strict in putting obligations on the States parties to expeditiously take steps, and to a certain extent how it shall be done, but in terms of the time frame of the result nothing is said. There is no clear direction as to when the obligations are to be met or have been met.120

4.2.2 Maximum Available Resources

The phrasing “maximum of available resources” leaves some room for flexibility for States parties depending on their level of development. This acknowledges that due to scarce resources the full realisation of rights might only be achieved over a period of time. 121 The progressive realisation is a ”necessary flexibility device, reflecting the realities of the real world and the difficulties involved for any country in ensuring full realisation of economic, social and cultural rights.”122 It also reflects a sense of realism, in how the provision accepts that a lack or resources, both financial and other – human, technological and information resources – can hurdle the full implementation of the rights in a State.123

However, the Committee has established that the implied immediate obligation to take steps is irrespective of the level of available resources.124 A lack of resources cannot ever justify inaction or indefinite postponement of realising the rights. 125 Compliance evaluation by the Committee is assessed in the light of resources available to the State.126 One of the hardest challenges is how to measure the compliance of the obligations,127 and especially in the light of available resources as the terms also raises some doubts to its meaning. But as has been touched upon above, and will be further developed below, the right to a living wage may not require too much of State resources to be realised, making it hard for States to argue a lack of resources to justify any non-compliance with article 7 (a) (ii) of the ICESCR.

4.3 Minimum Core Obligations

The Committee has found that States parties to the Covenant are under an immediate obligation to prioritise the satisfaction of minimum core obligations of the Covenant. These are held to be ’minimum essential levels of each right’.128 There is a presumption that all States, irrespective of their level of economic development,129 will be able to immediately implement the minimum core obligations within each right.130 If only few resources are needed to fulfil a right, similar realisation levels are expected from poorer and more resourceful States respectively.131

The burden of proof lies on the States to justify its (in)actions by showing that every effort to use, and prioritise, the resources at its disposal has been done to satisfy the minimum essential levels of the rights. Failing to ensure such minimum core obligations constitutes a violation of the Covenant. 132

The Committee has suggested in its draft general comment that it is a minimum core obligation to legislate minimum wages. In relation to this statement, the Committee holds that the minimum wage legislation shall be non-discriminatory and non-derogable, and set in consultation with workers and employers, their representative organisations and other relevant partners. The minimum wage shall be fixed taking into account relevant economic factors indexed to the cost of living so as to ensure a decent living of workers and their families.133 States parties that do not realise these minimum core obligations will be considered violators of article 7 (a) (ii) ICESCR.

#### Revitalizing worker rights solves climate change and pandemics.

Frey et al. ’21 – [Diane F. Frey, PhD, Gillian Macnaughton, JD, MPA, DPhil, Andjela H. Kaur, PhD, CRC, and Elena K. Taborda, PhD. “Crises as Catalyst A New Social Contract Grounded in Worker Rights” (December 2021), https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8694294/] TDI

The title of this article hints at a sci-fi nightmarish trifecta of challenges for workers—climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and extreme economic inequality. Unfortunately, they are real and not nightmares. Further, they are unfolding and compounding in real time. Conditions today are similar to those a little over 100 years ago, when a global flu pandemic and post-World War I economic devastation coincided with the founding of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which was intended to secure peace through social justice, including worker rights. Like COVID-19, the 1918 influenza pandemic caused a high degree of economic uncertainty, and the ILO’s work on establishing the global standards that benefitted workers’ health and well-being had a direct impact on the economic recovery.[1](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8694294/#r1) Inspired by this past example, this article looks again to worker rights as key to addressing the current trifecta of challenges for workers.

Crises often act as catalysts, presenting opportunities for societal transformation.[2](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8694294/#r2) Recovery from the COVID-19 crisis has opened space to address climate change and extreme inequality, two other crises that have attracted far too little attention and action over the past 30 to 40 years. Thus, proposals such as the United States’ “Build Back Better” plan aim to rebuild the economy, drastically impacted by COVID-19, in a manner that also addresses myriad other problems in society. Two intertwined issues of particular importance to workers that are at the center of such proposals for the COVID-19 recovery are climate change and extreme economic inequality. Thus, the COVID-19 recovery holds potential to improve conditions for workers and their families by also addressing climate change and extreme economic inequality.

Given this opportunity, many actors have been working to identify solutions. Among them, human rights nongovernmental organizations, such as the Center for Economic and Social Rights, and trade union movements, such as the European Trade Union Confederation and the International Trade Union Confederation, have seized this opportunity to propose that worker rights be central to a new social contract that would transform the existing neoliberal social contract—prioritizing market logics—under which the present crises have arisen.[3](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8694294/#r3) This article joins these calls. It argues that a social contract grounded in human rights would address these three interacting crises and ensure greater protection of the health and livelihoods of workers and their families.

Following this introduction, the second part of the article presents the intersecting impacts of COVID-19, climate change, and growing economic inequality on the human rights of working people, particularly their rights to health and decent work, an underlying determinant of health. It thus sets the stage for discussion of possible solutions to the problems presented. The next part then explains the concept of “social contract” and describes the dangers of the current neoliberal social contract for workers and the incorporation of that paradigm into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 8 on economic growth and decent work.[4](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8694294/#r4) It also presents recent ILO proposals for new and transformative social contracts, which have been highly influenced by the neoliberal paradigm. Finally, the subsequent part presents an initial exploration for a social contract grounded in human rights by examining the three intertwined crises through the lens of the right to decent work as defined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The overarching argument in this article is that human rights—specifically worker rights—provide a just and effective foundation for a new and transformative social contract to address these three crises for workers and their families.

#### Climate change causes fast extinction.

Malm ’20 [Samuel; August 11; M.A. from Uppsala University, Disciplinary Domain of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts, Department of Philosophy; Digitala Vetenskapliga Arkivet, “Does Climate Change Justify a Global Epistocracy?” p. 44]

Climate change’s negative impact on humans is hardly something up for questioning. The World Health Organization believes that between 2030 and 2050 the effects of climate change will be an additional of 250 000 deaths every year; due to diarrhoea, malaria, heat stress and malnutrition.1 Accordingly, we can expect millions of deaths to occur, and the increased frequency of natural disasters will push the expected death toll even further. Additionally, the rising sea levels, and other environmental consequences, will cause an unprecedented flow of climate refugees towards areas that still are unaffected by the change. If we thought the impact was huge from the people fleeing the Syrian civil war, or the present corona pandemic, we should expect the climate disaster to be countless times larger. The pressure on societies and intergovernmental organisations will become tremendous, and we would be naïve if we did not expect this pressure to create additional suffering and death. What is then the cause of climate change? It is the result of anthropogenic acts, i.e., it is our current way of living that is causing the heating of the planet. Like a greenhouse, our planet is becoming hotter by the way that carbon dioxide traps more heat in the atmosphere, and by consequent increase the global average temperature. Additionally, it sets off other reactions that add positive feedback to the warming, e.g., creation of water vapour or the reduction of ice caps.

Now, this paper does not intend to demonstrate the truth of these claims, and if the reader is still sceptical about climate change, and its anthropogenic cause, numerous sources can justify and explain these facts better, for instance, rapports from IPCC. 2 Accordingly, I will assume these facts to be true, and that climate change will cause a state of affairs that contains a great deal of suffering and death; besides the possibility of civilisational destruction or human extinction. Thus, the circumstances are dire. So, let us summarise these detrimental effects into a single claim. Here it is:

State Of Affairs No Reduction: A state of affairs where climate change causes tens of millions of deaths, countless instances of additional human suffering, and the possibility of causing a collapse of human life as we know it.

This is what I will take as the effect of doing nothing to halt climate change. This then begs the question: If our current behaviour has such terrible consequences, why have we not implemented policies that prevent climate change?

1.2 What is the nature of the problem?

There are two ways to answer this question: we can give a historical description of how the issue has been misconstrued by interests that have a lot to gain from the status quo or, that we are dealing with a special type of problem that is particularly difficult for us to confront.3 In this paper I will only deal with the second dimension. Additionally, we can divide this dimension into two groups: first, we can describe how humans, by their very nature, are poorly endowed to deal with such problems as climate change, secondly, that the problem of climate change is what sociologists call a “wicked problem”. I will discuss the first aspect later on when describing psychological barriers. Now, I want to address characterising climate change as a wicked problem.

During the ozone depletion, discovered in the late seventies, the world’s states quickly came together and implemented the Wien protocol in 1985; a protocol that set down some policies for protecting the ozone layer. Subsequently, in 1987 the Montreal Protocol was implemented, that resulted in the complete removal of the chemical substances that created the ozone depletion.4 Why have we not seen the same collective action towards climate change? Well, first, we must clarify that in the case of the ozone depletion, the solution was much easier to implement; it took the removal of a few ozone-depleting substances. However, solving the problem of climate change is much more wicked (supposedly) and is said to fall under a specific type of problem posited by Horst Rittel in the late 1960s; wicked problems.5 These are deep problems that do not present you with a clear solution. Now, my initial definition of the problem seems to fly against this deepness, i.e., I have claimed there is a clear solution. However, those that see it as a wicked problem would contend that my definition is only one way to conceptualise the problem, and that there is a spectrum of definitions that seem more or less correct. What does this mean? Dale Jameison describes this well:

“There are many different ways of conceptualising the problem of climate change, each of which finds different resources relevant to its solution and counts different response as success and failures. If the problem is fundamentally one of global governance, then new agreements and institutions are what are needed. If the problem is market failure, then carbon taxes or a cap and trade system is what is required. If the problem is primarily a technological failure, then we need an Apollo program for clean energy or perhaps geoengineering. If climate change is just the latest way for the global rich to exploit the global poor, then the time has come for a global struggle for justice. This problem of multiple frames is characteristic of what are called “wicked problems.” And wicked problems are extremely difficult for political systems to address successfully.”6

I understand the appeal to find all these different ways to conceptualise the problem of climate change. However, I do believe we are doing ourselves a disfavour if we explain the lack of action in preventing climate change, and by consequent justify this inaction, by appealing to this problem of multiple frames. We should ask why it is of benefit to consider all these multiple frames when trying to stop climate change? I take it that the answer to this is our desire for finding the most accurate conceptualisation of the problem so that we can implement the most optimal solution. I believe this is wrong. At its core, we know the solution to the problem (reduce greenhouse gases) and we should accept the risk that we will implement a sub-optimal solution. Waiting around for the most accurate conceptualisation of the problem is counterintuitive, especially when we contemplate the risk it entails. The goal should not be too solve this problem of multiple frames by, for instance, taking steps to secure a unanimous acceptance of some particular framing of the problem, and by consequent enact the most optimal solution to climate change. Setting this as our aim is just to promote even more inaction; we need to accept a sub-optimal solution. I believe this desire to find the optimal solution which does not entail people having to accept a reduction in their current standard (no one gets elected by promising to reduce economic growth and causing other detrimental effects on their electorate) better explains our inaction then characterising climate change as a wicked problem. As Broome writes: “the economics and politics of climate change has concentrated on finding the best solution to the problem of climate change.”7 Meaning that we are looking for a solution without sacrifice — and by consequent choose business as usual.

Nevertheless, I believe we should not put too much importance on the wickedness of the problem. We know what it takes, and our technological achievements are well-equipped to deal with the problem (since it also has created the problem). Implementing some policies that reduce greenhouse gases is better, even if they are sub-optimal, then postponing taking any preventive measures.

Nevertheless, before closing this section, there is one more aspect of the problem of climate change that we ought to face; the need for immediate action. This aspect is of high importance, and we should not take it lightly; even though it fills a short space in this paper. Climate change has been going on for a long time, and year by year we increase the yearly outpour of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, e.g., the last year (2019) we increase the outpour even more.8 Additionally, we are taking a risk when we do not know what positive feedback we are potentially setting off by not reducing the outpour. Accordingly, we need to accept the fact that the problem of climate change has the character of demanding our immediate action.

1.3 Clarifications

Before turning to the argumentation for this paper’s thesis, some clarifications are necessary. One of these is the role of “political authority”. When I argue that we have good reasons to prefer an epistocracy, I am arguing that we ought to accept the epistocratic method as the political authority and that this authority is legitimate, i.e., it has some moral justification for establishing a normative relation between it (political authority) and the subjects. There are several conceptual accounts of “political authority”, and I will use the right to rule account. This account portrays a more morally robust account of the relation between an authority and a subject. It essentially describes a kind of ideal political community where a deeper moral connection is present. 9 I believe this is what we think of when trying to evaluate the legitimacy that a political system, as in a state, have in coercing a population, and the subjects have a moral duty to obey the authority. This will be the conceptual definition of political authority. It has a moral right to rule and coerce people into obeying its political system of institutions that regulate the behaviour of its subjects and set out the course for where the political entity is heading, i.e., which state of affairs we realise in the future.

2. Introducing the Solution

In this section, I will demonstrate why we ought to accept The Solution as a true normative claim, i.e., why we ought to take political action to prevent State Of Affairs No Reduction from coming into existence.10 Here is the claim:

The Solution: Reduce the global outpour of greenhouse gases to a level that has an excellent chance of causing the avoidance of State Of Affairs No Reduction.

One helpful way to characterise the normativity of The Solution is as a navigational problem. Where do we want our global society to be heading? I believe we can characterise the possible directions as a binary choice between The Solution and Not-The Solution. The second option I describe as follows:

Not-The Solution: Continue the outpour of greenhouse gases with the consequences that State Of Affairs No Reduction has an excellent chance of being actualised.

Now, even though The Solution contains multiple ways to get implemented, they all share the same normative content of causing a reduction of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.11 Accordingly, it is this goal, and how it dictates the changes needed in our global institutions that are of such vital importance. By contrast, Not-The Solution shares the same normative content of taking no action that will prevent State Of Affairs No Reduction. Given this binary choice, I believe our intuition tells us that we ought to choose The Solution. What could speak in favour of Not-The Solution? Is there some option of Not-The Solution that we have a better reason to prefer? Maybe someone would contend that the uncertainty that surrounds climate change gives us good reasons to postpone taking any action, or, that other goals are much more important. Now, before addressing these concerns, perhaps our intuition becomes stronger (that we ought to choose The Solution) if I provide some scenario that could work as an intuition pump. Here is such a scenario:

*The Bus Ride*: So, picture, if you will, a bus that is on a direct course towards a large tree that will cause a great deal of suffering and death upon impact. Inside, the people are busy doing whatever they see fit, spending their time to make the bus ride as comfortable and meaningful as possible. However, there is a group of scientists that have analysed and investigated the devastating effect of this course, and that they need to perform some necessary action to avoid the tree. Perhaps they all need to drop what they are doing and give up some of their time jolting the bus enough so that the bus will miss the tree.

Accordingly, the world is the bus, the people on the bus is the world’s population, and the jolting of the bus is The Solution.12 I believe our intuition tells us that we ought to perform the necessary actions in order to prevent the bus from hitting the tree. What could possibly be more pressing? Do we have good reasons to do something else? Is the uncertainty of how bad the impact will be, and when it will occur, good reasons to not start jolting the bus?

Weighing different values against each other is tricky, and there are many scenarios where it is contentious if we should promote, for instance, equality or liberty. Some could argue that we ought to increase economic prosperity since it will maximise well-being for all humans; others will argue that securing peace takes priority; social justice; or environmental concerns. However, whatever we see as the road to the common good the implementation of The Solution is superior in its importance, because it secures that there will be a ground to put the road on. We will certainly not have social harmony in a state of affairs where climate disaster is present; the economy will suffer the consequences of the climatic impact on everything from production to transfer, and we have good reasons to believe conflict and tension will arise when the situation gets worse.

Now, perhaps some could say that it is immoral to demand that people make sacrifices to reduce greenhouse gases. I believe this is wrong. The implementation of The Solution will not demand a tremendous amount of hardship for the effect world population.13 Like Peter Singer’s case where we should sacrifice our clothes in order to save a child from drowning in a pond, we ought to sacrifice some niceties in order to save ourselves, and future generation from State Of Affairs No Reduction.14 Accordingly, the sacrifices necessary do not entail some morally questionable acts, i.e., reduce the level of greenhouse gases by killing off a portion of humans. I am talking about, for example, having to reduce flying to a necessary minimum, or, pay more in taxes so we can develop, and build, the technology that reduces the outpour of greenhouse gases, e.g., solar panels. Furthermore, it is the affluent world that will have to bear the biggest load of these necessary sacrifices. Especially, since the cause of climate change comes from the increased material standard enjoyed by people in affluent countries. They should, by consequent, accept the moral responsibility to combat the harm this wealth is causing, and going to cause. Or, put differently, the economic prosperity that has created this wealth is the cause of the climatic change, and the cost of emitting greenhouse gases has been an externality unaccounted for by either the consumers or the producers (a Pareto sub-optimal state of affairs). Additionally, it is common-sensical that if one group have very few resources, and another group has an abundance of resources, we should not solve a common problem by removing the few resources from the first group. The harm created by the amount of resources in the prosperous group should yield a good reason for them, bearing the bigger load.

Additionally, we should also accept that since anthropogenic acts cause State Of Affairs No Reduction, it leaves us with an additional moral reason to implement The Solution (leaving aside just the badness of State Of Affairs No Reduction). We bear the responsibilities of our actions, and these actions will harm countless future human beings.15 Even if we do not bear the responsibility of stopping climate change individually, we should not prevent our institutions from being reshaped in a way that solves the problem of climate change. I would even contend, if we are living in a democracy, we have a moral duty to use our political power (vote), so we take the necessary steps to implement something like The Solution.16 (Perhaps, this could also be interpreted as a reason for restricting universal suffrage (the democratic process) and justify an global epistocracy.) Possibly, in a counterfactual world where a non-anthropogenic event will cause a similar type of harm (for instance an impact by a meteorite), it could be argued that we have no responsibility to prevent this event since we are not the actors that create this event. I believe this is a weak argument for not preventing the impact from the meteorite. However, in the case of climate change that argumentation is not available since we are responsible for it.

One final thing is that The Solution is hardly a discriminatory or biased policy. Certainly, different groups will be affected differentially by the policy, and, as have been said, the affluent part of the world should bear the biggest load. However, the policy itself places no higher importance on any person or group. Satisfying, what Vandamme calls, a quality of (substantive) impartiality: “understood in a moral and substantive sense, as a property of public policies and of a political order, can be simply defined as not favouring some groups or individuals over others for morally arbitrary reasons.”17

2.1 Uncertainty of Climate Change

What then about uncertainty and the effect it has on the normativity of The Solution? Perhaps, someone would argue that since there is still uncertainty in the range of negative impact that climate change will have, and the lack of knowledge when things will start to get truly harmful, we can delay making any decision until the facts are in. I believe this is wrong. As Broome writes: “If you can costlessly delay a decision till all the information is in, you should delay it. But when delay itself is risky, it is not a sensible remark.”18 Choosing Not-The Solution and thus gamble in the hope that it will not have the consequence of suffering and death in order to avoid making a sub-optimal decision, that in hindsight is evaluated as unnecessary is, I believe, immoral and irrational.19 Accordingly, in the same way that it is rational to invest in a fire extinguisher, in case a fire starts in your house, it is rational to invest in the removal of the possibility of a climate disaster in the future. Why is this? I believe that Expected Value Theory is a good guide to adopt when facing uncertainty. Broome summarises this theory nicely:

“When the quantitative outcome of some process is uncertain, the expectation of the outcome is calculated as follows. Take each of the possible values of the outcome and multiply each by the probability of its occurring. Add up all of these products. The sum is the expectation. It is just a weighted average outcome, where the weights are the probabilities.”20

Even if it is a very small probability that climate change will have civilisational ending results, the great badness that this state of affairs constitutes should warrant our immediate action to avoid this scenario. Perhaps, there could be a case for not implementing The Solution if it would demand a large number of sacrifices, and by delaying this implementation we could remove additional uncertainty. For instance, what if people in The Bus Ride had to kill fifty per cent of the passengers, by throwing them off the bus, in order to avoid the tree. Certainly, given this tremendous sacrifice an argument could be had why we should delay implementing necessary precautions. However, even though the aggregation, of the small sacrifices every individual has to make, could become large, it does not constitute this tremendous sacrifice in The Bus Ride. The small sacrifices everyone have to make is easily overshadowed by the badness of State Of Affairs No Reduction. Accordingly, I still take it that we have better reasons to prefer The Solution than Not-The Solution even though climate change will always be immersed in uncertainty. We only have one opportunity to run this experiment, so we should not gamble with the outcome.

Nevertheless, I will not try and persuade the reader more of the badness of State Of Affairs No Reduction and that we ought to implement the Solution. Possibly, the discussion of the next section will bear some support for the accuracy of The Solution.

#### Pandemics prompt spiraling overreactions that culminate in nuclear, bio, and chemical war.

Suzuki ’21 [Tatsujiro; 2021; Director and Professor at the Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition, Nagasaki University, Former Vice Chairman of Japan Atomic Energy Commission; Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, “Pandemic Futures and Nuclear Weapon Risks: The Nagasaki 75th Anniversary Pandemic—Nuclear Nexus Scenarios Final Report,” vol. 4]

The Challenge: Multiple Existential Threats

The relationship between pandemics and war is as long as human history. Past pandemics have set the scene for wars by weakening societies, undermining resilience, and exacerbating civil and inter-state conflict. Other disease outbreaks have erupted during wars, in part due to the appalling public health and battlefield conditions resulting from war, in turn sowing the seeds for new conflicts. In the post-Cold War era, pandemics have spread with unprecedented speed due to increased mobility created by globalization, especially between urbanized areas. Although there are positive signs that scientific advances and rapid innovation can help us manage pandemics, it is likely that deadly infectious viruses will be a challenge for years to come.

The COVID-19 is the most demonic pandemic threat in modern history. It has erupted at a juncture of other existential global threats, most importantly, accelerating climate change and resurgent nuclear threat-making. The most important issue, therefore, is how the coronavirus (and future pandemics) will increase or decrease the risks associated with these twin threats, climate change effects, and the next use of nuclear weapons in war.5

Today, the nine nuclear weapons arsenals not only can annihilate hundreds of cities, but also cause nuclear winter and mass starvation of a billion or more people, if not the entire human species. Concurrently, climate change is enveloping the planet with more frequent and intense storms, accelerating sea level rise, and advancing rapid ecological change, expressed in unprecedented forest fires across the world. Already stretched to a breaking point in many countries, the current pandemic may overcome resilience to the point of near or actual collapse of social, economic, and political order.

In this extraordinary moment, it is timely to reflect on the existence and possible uses of weapons of mass destruction under pandemic conditions – most importantly, nuclear weapons, but also chemical and biological weapons. Moments of extreme crisis and vulnerability can prompt aggressive and counterintuitive actions that in turn may destabilize already precariously balanced threat systems, underpinned by conventional and nuclear weapons, as well as the threat of weaponized chemical and biological technologies. Consequently, the risk of the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), especially nuclear weapons, increases at such times, possibly sharply.

The COVID-19 pandemic is clearly driving massive, rapid, and unpredictable changes that will redefine every aspect of the human condition, including WMD – just as the world wars of the first half of the 20th century led to a revolution in international affairs and entirely new ways of organizing societies, economies, and international relations, in part based on nuclear weapons and their threatened use. In a world reshaped by pandemics, nuclear weapons – as well as correlated non-nuclear WMD, nuclear alliances, “deterrence” doctrines, operational and declaratory policies, nuclear extended deterrence, organizational practices, and the existential risks posed by retaining these capabilities – are all up for redefinition.

A pandemic has potential to destabilize a nuclear-prone conflict by incapacitating the supreme nuclear commander or commanders who have to issue nuclear strike orders, creating uncertainty as to who is in charge, how to handle nuclear mistakes (such as errors, accidents, technological failures, and entanglement with conventional operations gone awry), and opening a brief opportunity for a first strike at a time when the COVID-infected state may not be able to retaliate efficiently – or at all – due to leadership confusion. In some nuclear-laden conflicts, a state might use a pandemic as a cover for political or military provocations in the belief that the adversary is distracted and partly disabled by the pandemic, increasing the risk of war in a nuclear-prone conflict. At the same time, a pandemic may lead nuclear armed states to increase the isolation and sanctions against a nuclear adversary, making it even harder to stop the spread of the disease, in turn creating a pandemic reservoir and transmission risk back to the nuclear armed state or its allies.

In principle, the common threat of the pandemic might induce nuclear-armed states to reduce the tension in a nuclear-prone conflict and thereby the risk of nuclear war. It may cause nuclear adversaries or their umbrella states to seek to resolve conflicts in a cooperative and collaborative manner by creating habits of communication, engagement, and mutual learning that come into play in the nuclear-military sphere. For example, militaries may cooperate to control pandemic transmission, including by working together against criminal-terrorist non-state actors that are trafficking people or by joining forces to ensure that a new pathogen is not developed as a bioweapon.

To date, however, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the isolation of some nuclear-armed states and provided a textbook case of the failure of states to cooperate to overcome the pandemic. Borders have slammed shut, trade shut down, and budgets blown out, creating enormous pressure to focus on immediate domestic priorities. Foreign policies have become markedly more nationalistic. Dependence on nuclear weapons may increase as states seek to buttress a global re-spatialization6 of all dimensions of human interaction at all levels to manage pandemics. The effect of nuclear threats on leaders may make it less likely – or even impossible – to achieve the kind of concert at a global level needed to respond to and administer an effective vaccine, making it harder and even impossible to revert to pre-pandemic international relations. The result is that some states may proliferate their own nuclear weapons, further reinforcing the spiral of conflicts contained by nuclear threat, with cascading effects on the risk of nuclear war.

#### Leadership under the UDHR creates cooperative frameworks to solve LIO erosion, authoritarianism, and pandemics.

Koh ’20 [Harold; June 2020; Sterling Professor of International Law at Yale Law School; American Foreign Service Association; “Why U.S. Leadership Matters for the Global Defense, Protection and Promotion of Human Rights,” https://afsa.org/why-us-leadership-matters-global-defense-protection-and-promotion-human-rights]

Yet like all governments, the United States is legally bound to obey all international human rights obligations embedded in customary international law or treaties that the United States has ratified. The fundamental rights enshrined in the UDHR encompass not just freedom of thought, conscience and religion, but also the rights of immigrants; the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; and the right to equal protection from discrimination; as well as such crucial economic, social and cultural rights as the right to health, including reproductive health.

The commission’s initiative to reframe a distinctively U.S. version of human rights gives license to every other country to define for itself which human rights it will choose to recognize: Compare this effort with China’s claim to respect only those “human rights with Chinese characteristics.” Should the commission continue down this path, its work will only sharpen the U.S. reputation for “negative exceptionalism” and diminish our “positive exceptionalism”: our long-term capacity to lead international human rights institutions and innovation.

By downgrading and slanting the role of human rights, this administration has not just rejected the bipartisan foreign policy pursued by many past administrations; it has rejected a time-tested approach to international cooperation to promote human rights and advance the rule of law. When I served as DRL assistant secretary under Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, we worked to pioneer a continuing State Department initiative to build a “Community of Democracies.” That initiative’s simple underlying notion—echoing Immanuel Kant’s Perpetual Peace (1795)—was that law-abiding nations should live not under world government, but in a law-governed international society, where free sovereign states can engage in mutual discourse to achieve shared goals based on shared respect for the rule of law.

A Global System to Promote Human Rights

Remarkably, after World War II, the United States helped to erect a version of the global system that Kant envisioned. Through the Marshall Plan, the United States supported the revival of an economically united Europe, led by the European Union and protected by NATO, that became our indispensable global partner in promoting human rights. This approach to global governance formed the basis for the United Nations—our system to end war and promote human rights—and associated international institutions to govern international monetary flows, trade and development. The United States became the indispensable balance wheel of a values-driven system of global governance that empowered like-minded nations to organize ambitious multilateral attacks on all manner of world problems.

The last few years have offered instead a disturbing counter-vision—hauntingly evocative of the “spheres of influence” painted by George Orwell’s 1984—of a system where global megapowers are increasingly indistinguishable from one another in their authoritarianism and commitment to disinformation. These great powers ignore the violation of human rights and the rule of law in other spheres and violate them within their own, forging cynical alliances and manipulating public opinion to make today’s adversaries tomorrow’s allies. Physical and economic barriers are going up everywhere; European unity is cracking; and the global commitment to human rights and the rule of law seems to be eroding. Without consistent U.S. leadership, we risk returning to the balkanized world that helped bring about the devastations of the last century.

As a nation, we must ask: Are we really ready to follow this dead end? If we downgrade human rights in favor of a more “pragmatic” foreign policy, what makes us different from any other country? After all, advancing human rights is our founding national credo. Abandoning America’s leadership role is both contrary to our interests and risks further global destabilization.

It is a false dichotomy to claim that a pragmatic foreign policy must “balance” the pursuit of our national interests with the preservation of our fundamental values, including the defense and protection of human rights. Paramount among our national interests must always be the preservation of our fundamental values. For ours is not a country built on a common race, ethnicity or religion. Instead, America is an idea: “we hold these truths to be self-evident.” If we do not consistently defend, protect and promote human rights at home and abroad, we will lose our distinctive national identity.

Particularly in a time of COVID-19, climate change and refugee outpourings, U.S. leadership matters in the global defense, protection and promotion of human rights. The coronavirus pandemic has unveiled the close global intertwining of environment, health, economy and human rights. Climate-caused injury destroys animal habitats, triggering zoonotic (animal-to-human) diseases, causing pandemics that shatter lives, exacerbating income inequality and spurring the rise of authoritarian governments that perpetuate climate injury. Unless we break this vicious cycle, more pandemics will surely come.

This unsettling moment of instability and uncertainty makes it all the more urgent that we get back to first principles, both at home and abroad. There is still time to return our human rights policy to simple values: telling the truth, setting an example, and pursuing a consistent vision of human rights protection for the past, present and future.

#### Only a clear signal of prioritizing positive rights-based framework can reorient institutions AND bolster UDHR compliance.

Raffass ’14 [Tania; 2014; Postgraduate researcher at the School of Political Social Inquiry, Monash University; Australian Journal of Human Rights; “Unemployment and punitive activation as human rights issues,” vol. 20, iss. 1, p. 1-30]

\*\*Note – SER = socioeconomic rights, CPR = civil and political rights

While the duty to work has been increasingly enforced through welfare-to-work policies, it has become accepted that the right to work cannot be, as ‘no judge can force employers to hire unemployed people’ (Dahrendorf 1990, 148). Judicial enforcement against existing (private) employers, however, does not exhaust the notion of rights implementation. The judiciary is not the only branch of the government, and the private sector is not the only sector of the economy that can exist. States parties are under various obligations to realise human rights, including the right to work. This makes governments even in market societies (at least those that have ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)) addressees against which right-to-work claims can be pressed — contrary to Kirchgassner (2009, 41). States parties are obligated to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, including the right to work. The obligation of fulfilment further breaks down into the obligations to provide, facilitate and promote the right to work (CESCR 2006, paras 23–28). The obligation to provide includes measures to ‘overcome unemployment and underemployment’ (CESCR 2006, para 26), and even though direct job creation is not mentioned explicitly in the document, it must be an implied measure of last resort if the right to work cannot be fully realised without it. In the developing world, the resource constraint, which was the pretext for limiting the obligations of states parties under the ICESCR to ‘progressive realisation’, is an obstacle to the implementation of both covenants, not only the ICESCR (Nickel 1978–79, 167ff). In the OECD world, however, the resource constraint is not a valid excuse: both covenants should be immediately enforceable there. The ‘unwillingness’— as distinct from the ‘inability’ — of a state party to comply with its obligation to undertake the necessary measures ‘to the maximum of its available resources’ (Art 2.1) to ‘guarantee the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work that he freely chooses or accepts’ (Art 6.1) represents a violation of obligations under the covenant (CESCR 2006, para 32).

Sceptics of the right to work exaggerate both the importance and the effectiveness of judicial enforcement of CPR in the absence of supportive legislative–administrative efforts and underestimate the possibility of litigating the right to work in the presence of legislative–administrative support (Harvey 2004; Nickel 1978–79, 156–57). CPR may remain practically unenforced, despite being justiciable. Illustrations of this can be found even in the homeland of constitutionalism, where trade unions, for example, have never been able to flourish despite the freedom of association protected by the Supreme Court (Harvey 2004, 712–13). On the other hand, specialist expertise, comparable to that which exists in CPR jurisprudence, can be accumulated in the area of SER jurisprudence as well, and this process is already under way (Langford 2009).

Jurisprudential involvement in the enforcement of SER is useful, but not decisive to their realisation. Thus, a comparative study of redistributive patterns in the countries that have made SER justiciable has shown reversals or, at best, a lack of advancement in redistribution, proving that socio-economic litigation does not matter much in isolation (Hirschl and Rosevear 2011). On the other hand, international and domestic constitutionalisation of rights is a powerful mechanism of cognitive change, as it helps to reorder priorities in the public mind (Harvey 2004, 715, 719). Thus, the dismissal of SER due to the canonical interpretation of rights as negative freedoms has worked in favour of deregulation, privatisation and reduced social spending (Hirschl 2004, 100–48). Conversely, their recognition as goals that trump other policy goals (which is the essential function of a human right) is likely to bolster their public legitimacy and political mobilisation in their support. Employment ‘is too important for human well-being to be available only to some’ (Nickel 1978–79, 160). The corresponding entitlement therefore requires special protection against cost–benefit calculations that can move majorities to exclude a minority of co-citizens from employment for the sake of price stability and reduced taxation. This special protection is afforded through elevating a vital interest into a constitutional/human right (Nickel 1978–79, 160). When the interests of financial capital are given priority and work is treated as just one resource among others, economists concern themselves with finding a non-accelerating unemployment rate of inflation. However, if they recognised employment as a human right, they would be looking for a non-accelerating inflation rate of unemployment (Branco 2009, 37). There needs to be a reorientation in the evaluation of macro-economic policies from measuring their efficiency for the purposes of competitiveness, which is the arch-criterion for neoclassical economics, to measuring how well they serve the purposes of the realisation of SER, which (even non-ratifying) states are obligated to pursue under international law (Balakrishnan, Elson and Patel 2010).

Now, is employment vital enough an interest to be considered a human right? SER can be justified both directly and by linking them to the better-established CPR (Nickel 2008, 999–1000). A freestanding justification for the right to employment, for example, can be built within a Rawlsian framework. According to Rawls, the highestorder interest of persons is to carry out a conception of the good life that incorporates justice and satisfies the Aristotelian orientation towards self-development through the realisation of one’s capacities in pursuit of complex undertakings. It seems to follow from this premise that the pursuit of a freely chosen occupation is indispensable to a truly human life, and that opportunities of this kind ought to be available to everyone as of right (Nickel 1978–79; Zannoni and McKenna 2007, 564ff).

Linkage arguments can be developed on three levels within the International Bill of Rights. First, unless it is ensured that every person wanting to work has a suitable job, the other entitlements specified in Art 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) cannot be ensured either. It is necessary to recall at this point that the human right to work is complex in structure. As first set out in Art 23 of the UDHR, it includes:19

• three economic rights:

– to be actually employed (‘everyone has the right to work … and to protection against unemployment’);20

– ‘just and favourable conditions of work’; and

– ‘just and favourable remuneration’;

• one equality right — ‘equal pay for equal work’; and

• two basic liberties:

– free choice of employment; and

– trade union association.

This cluster of work-related entitlements was later reaffirmed in three Articles of the ICESCR, which is one of the two legal instruments that enable the implementation of the UDHR. Article 6.1 reads that the right to work ‘includes the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses and accepts’; Art 7 guarantees ‘just and favourable conditions of work’, including ‘fair wages’, ‘equal pay for equal work’, and ‘safe and healthy working conditions’; and Art 8 covers trade union rights.

All these should be seen as interdependent dimensions of the right to work. Full employment cannot realise the right to work unless all the other employment-related rights are observed. By the same token, it is difficult to secure the rights at work in a job-short economy (Harvey 2007). For example, when there are (much) fewer job openings than jobseekers, it is practically impossible to establish whether or not one has been denied employment out of prejudice; that is why employers are almost never sued over discrimination in hiring (Harvey 2000, 50–51). The currently prevalent approach to protecting human rights in employment that focuses on the removal of legal and institutional barriers to competition will not solve the problem of discrimination. A recent illustration is the proposed Fair Employment Opportunity Act, introduced to the US Congress on 29 January 2014. The Bill seeks ‘to prohibit consideration of an individual’s status as unemployed in screening for or filling positions’ (§ 2b). Under conditions of full employment, this kind of legislation would not be necessary, but when every job opening attracts tens or even hundreds of applications, it cannot achieve anything beyond stopping employers from explicitly discouraging applications from unemployed individuals, which is apparently common in the United States (Pear 2011).

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union places ‘the right to engage in work’ (Art 15.1) under the rubric of ‘freedoms’. The right to work is structurally the same as the right to education: if you are free to get education but are not provided with access to education, the freedom has no content; it is purely formal. That must be why Art 14 of the Charter concerning the right to education also specifies ‘the possibility to receive free compulsory education’. The common issue is not that one is prohibited from becoming employed (unless someone is a non-citizen without a work permit), but that one is not given an opportunity to ‘engage in work’. Conversely, unless you are hired, you are actually prohibited from working; your freedom to work is denied to you. Even under this formulation, unemployment can be construed as a denial of a rightful freedom.21

As unemployment levels go up, employer power expands while a diffused sense of insecurity spreads throughout the workforce, making it more difficult even to retain the achieved levels of job ‘decency’ let alone to demand any further workplace improvements. Thus, as Harvey argues, the quantitative (jobs for all), qualitative (decent pay and conditions; employment security; workplace governance) and distributive (non-discrimination) dimensions of the broader right to work are inseparable (Harvey 2007). Without the right to work understood as secured employment opportunities for all, the equality of opportunity and the rights at work that liberal human rights defenders traditionally prioritise cannot be fully realised.

The second linkage argument is that the right to be actually employed in a paying job is not only the lynchpin of the work-related set of rights, but is also pivotal to the realisation of the whole set of SER. Harvey’s second point is that having a decent job ordinarily translates into enjoying an adequate standard of living for that person, which is the object of the entitlements stipulated in Art 25.1 of the UDHR. Furthermore, a society that employs everyone who is willing to work creates a greater surplus available for social security transfers, while at the same time reducing the need for such transfers and thus leaving more resources to be used for advancing commonweal in other ways — such as improvements in public education and medical care. There are also savings to be made from eliminating the social costs of unemployment, such as the elevated incidence of crime and heart disease (Harvey 1989, ch 3; 2007; 2008). That is why, in his earlier full employment proposal, Harvey was appealing to utilitarian reason as well as humanitarian conscience. Leaving a segment of the productive population out of the national productive effort, when that segment then needs to be supported through public assistance, is economically irrational, as it reduces the aggregate national income (Harvey 1989).

Lastly, being instrumental to the fulfilment of other SER is not where the importance of the right to work ends. The effects of mass unemployment create and exacerbate the existing divisions in society, undermining democratic equality. A tax-paying majority egged on by business leaders to defend their ‘hard-earned dollar’ from being depleted by both inflation and welfare-related taxation first excludes a segment of the population from the economy and then victimises the excluded discursively and with policies of austerity and compulsion. Democratic decisions are not necessarily just, as they reflect normatively unfiltered private interests, and this is one such instance where democracy produces injustice by catering to self-seeking preferences of the majority. A heightened competition for jobs also fuels xenophobic attitudes, victims of welfare and of ethnic chauvinism often being the same people (Toens 2007, 162–64). In this kind of acrimonious climate, it is only to be expected that the disadvantaged minority will see their effective enjoyment of CPR curtailed as well. It is understandable then why, according to para 5 of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, ‘the international community must treat human rights’ as being ‘indivisible, interdependent and interrelated’. However, when the indivisibility doctrine is invoked, it is usually with a narrow focus on the basic rights of subsistence,22 while the importance of promoting the quantitative aspect of the right to work as a durable solution to securing subsistence is overlooked.

#### LIO erosion causes extinction.

Yuval Noah **Harari ‘20**, Professor in the Department of History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, “How to Survive the 21st Century: Three Existential Threats to Humanity,” Journal of Data Protection & Privacy, vol. 3, no. 4, 03/11/20, p. 463–468

As we enter the third decade of the 21st century, humanity faces so many issues and questions, that it is really hard to know what to focus on. So I would like to use the next 20 minutes to help us focus on all the different issues we face. Three problems pose existential challenges to our species. These three existential challenges are nuclear war, ecological collapse and technological disruption. We should focus on them. Now nuclear war and ecological collapse are already familiar threats, so let me spend some time explaining the less-familiar threat posed by technological disruption. In Davos, we hear so much about the enormous promises of technology — and these promises are certainly real. But technology might also disrupt human society and the very meaning of human life in numerous ways, ranging from the creation of a global useless class to the rise of data colonialism and of digital dictatorships. Socio-Economic Upheaval Automation will soon eliminate millions upon millions of jobs, and while new jobs will certainly be created, it is unclear whether people will be able to learn the necessary new skills fast enough. Suppose you are a 50-year-old truck driver, and you just lost your job to a self-driving vehicle. Now there are new jobs in designing software or in teaching yoga to engineers — but how does a 50-year-old truck driver reinvent himself or herself as a software engineer or as a yoga teacher? And people will have to do it not just once but again and again throughout their lives, because the automation revolution will not be a single watershed event following which the job market will settle down into a new equilibrium. Rather, it will be a cascade of ever bigger disruptions, because artificial intelligence (AI) is nowhere near its full potential. Old jobs will disappear, new jobs will emerge, but then the new jobs will rapidly change and vanish. Whereas in the past humans had to struggle against exploitation, in the 21st century, the really big struggle will be against irrelevance. And it is much worse to be irrelevant than exploited. Those who fail in the struggle against irrelevance would constitute a new ‘useless class’ — people who are useless not from the viewpoint of their friends and family, but useless from the viewpoint of the economic and political system. And this useless class will be separated by an ever-growing gap from the ever more powerful elite. The AI Revolution Creating Unprecedented Inequality Between Classes and Countries In the 19th century, a few countries like Britain and Japan industrialised first, and they went on to conquer and exploit most of the world. If we are not careful, the same thing will happen in the 21st century with AI. We are already in the midst of an AI arms race, with China and the US leading the race, and most countries being left far, far behind. Unless we take action to distribute the benefit and power of AI between all humans, AI will likely create immense wealth in a few high-tech hubs, while other countries will either go bankrupt or become exploited data colonies. Now we are not talking here about a science fiction scenario of robots rebelling against humans. We are talking about far more primitive AI, which is nevertheless enough to disrupt the global balance. Just think what will happen to developing economies once it is cheaper to produce textiles or cars in California than in Mexico? And what will happen to politics in your country in 20 years, when somebody in San Francisco or Beijing knows the entire medical and personal history of every politician, every judge and every journalist in your country, including all their sexual escapades, all their mental weaknesses and all their corrupt dealings? Will it still be an independent country or will it become a data colony? When you have enough data, you do not need to send soldiers in order to control a country. The Rise of Digital Dictatorships and Global Monitoring This danger can be stated in the form of a simple equation, which I think might be the defining equation of life in the 21st century: B ×C×D =AHH! Which means? Biological knowledge multiplied by computing power multiplied by data equals the ability to hack humans, ahh! If you know enough biology and have enough computing power and data, you can hack my body and my brain and my life, and you can understand me better than I understand myself. You can know my personality type, my political views, my sexual preferences, my mental weaknesses, my deepest fears and hopes. You know more about me than I know about myself. And you can do that not just to me, but to everyone. A system that understands us better than we understand ourselves can predict our feelings and decisions, can manipulate our feelings and decisions and can ultimately make decisions for us. Now in the past, many governments and tyrants wanted to do it, but nobody understood biology well enough, and nobody had enough computing power and data to hack millions of people. Neither the Gestapo nor the KGB could do it. But soon at least some corporations and governments will be able to systematically hack all the people. We humans should get used to the idea that we are no longer mysterious souls — we are now hackable animals. That is what we are. The power to hack humans can be used for good purposes — like providing much better healthcare. But if this power falls into the hands of a 21st-century Stalin, the result will be the worst totalitarian regime in human history. And we already have a number of applicants for the job of 21stcentury Stalin. Just imagine North Korea in 20 years, when everybody has to wear a biometric bracelet that constantly monitors your blood pressure, your heart rate, your brain activity 24 hours a day. You listen to a speech on the radio by the great leader, and they know what you actually feel. You can clap your hands and smile, but if you are angry, they know, you will be in the gulag tomorrow. And if we allow the emergence of such total surveillance regimes, do not think that the rich and powerful in places like Davos will be safe, just ask Jeff Bezos. In Stalin’s USSR, the state monitored members of the communist elite more than anyone else. The same will be true of future total surveillance regimes. The higher you are in the hierarchy — the more closely you will be watched. Do you want your chief executive officer or your president to know what you really think about them? So it is in the interest of all humans, including the elites, to prevent the rise of such digital dictatorships. And in the meantime, if you get a suspicious WhatsApp message, from some Prince, do not open it. Now if we indeed prevent the establishment of digital dictatorships, the ability to hack humans might still undermine the very meaning of human freedom. Because as humans will rely on AI to make more and more decisions for us, authority will shift from humans to algorithms and this is already happening. Already today billions of people trust the Facebook algorithm to tell us what is new, the Google algorithm tells us what is true, Netflix tells us what to watch, and the Amazon and Alibaba algorithms tell us what to buy. In the not-so-distant future, similar algorithms might tell us where to work and who to marry, and also decide whether to hire us for a job, whether to give us a loan, and whether the central bank should raise the interest rate. And if you ask why you were not given a loan, and why you the bank did not raise the interest rate, the answer will always be the same — because the computer says no. And as the limited human brain lacks sufficient biological knowledge, computing power and data — humans will simply not be able to understand the computer’s decisions. So even in supposedly free countries, humans are likely to lose control over our own lives and also lose the ability to understand public policy. Already now, how many humans understand the financial system? Maybe 1 per cent, to be very generous. In a couple of decades, the number of humans capable of understanding the financial system will be exactly zero. Now we humans are used to thinking about life as a drama of decision-making. What will be the meaning of human life when most decisions are taken by algorithms? We do not even have philosophical models to understand such an existence. The usual bargain between philosophers and politicians is that philosophers have a lot of fanciful ideas, and politicians basically explain that they lack the means to implement these ideas. Now we are in an opposite situation. We are facing philosophical bankruptcy. The twin revolutions of infotech and biotech are now giving politicians the means to create heaven or hell, but the philosophers are having trouble conceptualising what the new heaven and the new hell will look like. And that is a very dangerous situation. If we fail to conceptualise the new heaven quickly enough, we might be easily misled by naïve utopias. And if we fail to conceptualise the new hell quickly enough, we might find ourselves entrapped there with no way out. Technological disruption of not just our economy, politics and philosophy but also our biology In the coming decades, AI and biotechnology will give us godlike abilities to reengineer life, and even to create completely new life forms. After four billion years of organic life shaped by natural selection, we are about to enter a new era of inorganic life shaped by intelligent design. Our intelligent design is going to be the new driving force of the evolution of life and in using our new divine powers of creation, we might make mistakes on a cosmic scale. In particular, governments, corporations and armies are likely to use technology to enhance human skills that they need — like intelligence and discipline — while neglecting other humans skills – like compassion, artistic sensitivity and spirituality. The result might be a race of humans who are very intelligent and very disciplined but lack compassion, artistic sensitivity and spiritual depth. Of course, this is not a prophecy. These are just possibilities. Technology is never deterministic. In the 20th century, people used the same industrial technology to build very different kinds of societies: fascist dictatorships, communist regimes, liberal democracies. The same thing will happen in the 21st century. AI and biotech will certainly transform the world, but we can use them to create very different kinds of societies. And if you are afraid of some of the possibilities I have mentioned, you can still do something about it. But to do something effective, we need global cooperation. Global Problems that Demand Global Solutions Whenever a leader says something like ‘My country first!’ we should remind that leader that no nation can prevent nuclear war or stop ecological collapse by itself, and no nation can regulate AI and bioengineering by itself. Almost every country will say, ‘Hey, we don’t want to develop killer robots or to genetically engineer human babies. We are the good guys. But we can’t trust our rivals not to do it. So we must do it first’. If we allow such an arms race to develop in fields like AI and bioengineering, it does not really matter who wins the arms race — the loser will be humanity. Unfortunately, just when global cooperation is more needed than ever before, some of the most powerful leaders and countries in the world are now deliberately undermining global cooperation. Leaders like the US president tell us that there is an inherent contradiction between nationalism and globalism, and that we should choose nationalism and reject globalism. But this is a dangerous mistake. There is no contradiction between nationalism and globalism. Because nationalism is not about hating foreigners. Nationalism is about loving your compatriots. And in the 21st century, in order to protect the safety and the future of your compatriots, you must cooperate with foreigners. So in the 21st century, good nationalists must be also globalists. Now globalism does not mean establishing a global government, abandoning all national traditions or opening the border to unlimited immigration. Rather, globalism means a commitment to some global rules. Rules that do not deny the uniqueness of each nation, but only regulate the relations between nations. The World Cup: An Effective Model for Global Cooperation The World Cup is a competition between nations, and people often show fierce loyalty to their national team. But at the same time, the World Cup is also an amazing display of global harmony. France cannot play football against Croatia unless the French and the Croatians agree on the same rules for the game. And that is globalism in action. If you like the World Cup — you are already a globalist. Now hopefully, nations could agree on global rules not just for football, but also for how to prevent ecological collapse, how to regulate dangerous technologies and how to reduce global inequality. How to make sure, for example, that AI benefits Mexican textile workers and not only American software engineers. Now of course, this is going to be much more difficult than football — but not impossible. Because the impossible, well we have already accomplished the impossible. We have already escaped the violent jungle in which we humans have lived throughout history. For thousands of years, humans lived under the law of the jungle in a condition of omnipresent war. The law of the jungle said that for every two nearby countries, there is a plausible scenario that they will go to war against each other next year. Under this law, peace meant only ‘the temporary absence of war’. When there was ‘peace’ between — say — Athens and Sparta, or France and Germany, it meant that now they are not at war, but next year they might be. And for thousands of years, people had assumed that it was impossible to escape this law. But in the last few decades, humanity has managed to do the impossible, to break the law and to escape the jungle. We have built the rule-based liberal global order that, despite many imperfections, has nevertheless created the most prosperous and most peaceful era in human history. Peace has changed ‘Peace’ no longer means just the temporary absence of war. Peace now means the implausibility of war. There are many countries that you simply cannot imagine going to war against each other next year — like France and Germany. There are still wars in some parts of the world. I come from the Middle East, so believe me, I know this perfectly well. But it should not blind us to the overall global picture. We are now living in a world in which war kills fewer people than suicide, and gunpowder is far less dangerous to your life than sugar. Most countries — with some notable exceptions like Russia — do not even fantasise about conquering and annexing their neighbours. Which is why most countries can afford to spend maybe just about 2 per cent of their gross domestic product on defence, while spending far, far more on education and healthcare. This is not a jungle. Unfortunately, we have gotten so used to this wonderful situation that we take it for granted, and we are therefore becoming extremely careless. Instead of doing everything we can to strengthen the fragile global order, countries neglect it and even deliberately undermine it. The global order is now like a house that everybody inhabits and nobody repairs. It can hold on for a few more years, but if we continue like this, it will collapse — and we will find ourselves back in the jungle of omnipresent war. We have forgotten what it is like, but believe me as a historian — you do not want to be back there. It is far, far worse than you imagine. Yes, our species has evolved in that jungle and lived and even prospered there for thousands of years, but if we return there now, with the powerful new technologies of the 21st century, our species will probably annihilate itself. Of course, even if we disappear, it will not be the end of the world. Something will survive us. Perhaps the rats will eventually take over and rebuild civilisation. Perhaps, then, the rats will learn from our mistakes.

#### Democracy plugs existential risks from a laundry list of impacts.

Haydn Belfield 23, Research Associate and Academic Project Manager at the University of Cambridge's Centre for the Study of Existential Risk, 2023, “Collapse, Recovery, and Existential Risk,” *How Worlds Collapse: What History, Systems, and Complexity Can Teach Us About Our Modern World and Fragile Future*, pp. 74-76, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003331384

A world dominated by totalitarian states would be more incompetent, more war-prone, less cooperative, and more inhibitive of progress than one dominated by democratic states. Our current world is not particularly competent, peaceful, cooperative, or progressive—a totalitarian-dominated world would be worse. It would increase the risk of another collapse and extinction and could shape the future toward less desirable trajectories (Beckstead, 2013).

Totalitarian states are incompetent. They are bad at forecasting and dealing with disasters (Caplan, 2008).16 This can be seen most clearly in the great famines of Communist China and the USSR, in which millions died (Applebaum, 2017; Becker, 1996; Dikotter, 2010; Snyder, 2010). In comparison, functioning multiparty democracies rarely, if ever, experience famines (Sen, 2010). “Established autocracies” (or “personal”/“sultanist”) are particularly bad, as there are few checks or restraints on arbitrary rule and the whims and ideology of the single individual, even from other elites (Svolik, 2012). From the inside, the “inner circle” around Mao, Stalin, and Hitler seems incredibly chaotic, with elites strongly incentivized to conceal information and encouraged by the autocrat to squabble and feud—so they are divided (Conquest, 1992; Kershaw, 2008; Zhang & Halliday, 2006). If totalitarian states are worse at addressing social, environmental, and technological problems, then a world dominated by them would likely be worse at responding to risks of collapse and extinction.

A world dominated by totalitarian states is more likely to have major wars. States with near-universal adult suffrage rarely (if ever) go to war with one another (Barnhart et al., 2020), so a world dominated by democracies has fewer wars. Miscalculation might be a particular problem for totalitarian states due to personalization and disincentives for accurate information, leading to well-known strategic disasters such as Hitler and Stalin’s blunders in World War II (Bialer, 1970; Noakes & Pridham, 2001), or at a smaller level, Saddam Hussein’s rejection of diplomacy (Atkinson, 1993). War makes collapse and extinction more likely, by raising the chance of weapons of mass destruction being used.

Linked to this, totalitarian states are less cooperative than democratic states. While cooperation is possible (Ginsburg, 2020), their internal norms are characterized by paranoia and treachery, and their lack of transparency limits their ability to credibly commit to agreements. This is bad for all risks that require cooperation such as pandemics or climate change (Tomasik, 2015).

Finally, continued social and scientific progress is likely to reduce risks of collapse and extinction. Social progress could reduce global inequality and other risk factors. Scientific progress could help address natural risks and climate change (Sandberg, 2018), differentially increase defensive rather than offensive power (Garfinkel & Dafoe, 2019), and solve safety challenges in AI or biotechnology (Russell, 2019). However, as we will now discuss totalitarian states would likely inhibit social progress.

A central question from a longtermist perspective is: Which values should shape the future? I would argue that we should prefer it to be shaped by liberal democratic values. This is not to say that the current democracy-dominated world is perfect—far from it. The fate of billions of factory-farmed animals or hundreds of millions of people in extreme poverty makes that abundantly clear. However, democracies have two advantages. First, democracies have space for cosmopolitan values such as human rights, plurality, freedom, and equality. These are better than those that characterize life under totalitarianism: Fear, terror, subjection, and secrecy. Second, they have within themselves the mechanism to allow progress. In the last 100 (or even 50) years, the lives of women, LGBT people, religious minorities, and non-white people have dramatically improved. Our “moral circle” has expanded, and could continue to expand (Singer, 1981). The arc of the moral universe is long, but given the right conditions, it might just bend toward justice (King, 1968). A global society dominated by these values, and with the possibility of improving more, has a better longterm potential. A totalitarian-dominated world, on the other hand, would reduce the space for resistance and progress—distorting the human trajectory.

We should be particularly concerned about “bottlenecks” at which values are particularly important—where there is a risk of “locking-in” some particular set of (possibly far from optimal) values. While they are currently far-off, future technologies such as artificial general intelligence, space settlement, life extension (of autocrats), or much better surveillance could enable lock-in (Caplan, 2008).17

Conditional on them avoiding new catastrophes, world orders dominated by totalitarians could be quite long-lasting (Caplan, 2008). Democracies can undermine authoritarian and totalitarian regimes through the following ways: Control, including conquest; contagion through proximity; and consent, promoting receptivity toward democratization (Whitehead, 2001). Democracies can actively undermine these regimes through war, sanctions, hosting rebellious exiles, or sponsoring internal movements. Passively, through contagion, they offer a demonstration that a better, more prosperous life is possible. For example, in the final years of the USSR, ordinary Soviet citizens were able to see that the West had a higher standard of living—more innovation, more choice, and more consumer goods. The elites were able to read books from the outside, and travel—Gorbachev’s contacts and friendships with European politicians may have made him more favorable to social democracy (Brown, 1996). Democracies can undermine the will and capacity of the coercive apparatus (Bellin, 2004). However, in a world not dominated by democracies, all these pressures would be far less.

A world in which, say, totalitarian regimes emerged as dominant after World War II (for example if the USA was defeated) could be self-reinforcing and long-lasting, like the self-reinforcing relationship of Oceania, Eurasia, and Eastasia (Orwell, 1949). Orwell’s fictional world is characterized by constant low-grade warfare to justify emergency powers and secure elites, and with shifting alliances of convenience as states bandwagon and balance, thereby preventing any resolution. A totalitarian-dominated world order could be rather robust, perhaps for decades or even centuries.

A long-lasting totalitarian-dominated world would extend the period of time humanity would spend with a heightened risk of collapse or extinction, as well as increased potential for distortion of the human trajectory and the possibility that a “lock-in” event may occur. This example illustrates the possibility of a “negative recovery,” resulting in a trajectory with less or no scientific and social progress and a less favorable geopolitical situation, which would threaten the destruction of humanity’s longterm potential.

## Inequality

### 1ar---at: stagnation defense

#### Income inequality widens the gap between productivity and pay, which locks in slow growth.

Bivens ’17 – [Josh Bivens is the chief economist at the Economic Policy Institute (EPI). His areas of research include macroeconomics, inequality, social insurance, public investment, and the economics of globalization. He has a Ph.D. in economics from the New School for Social Research and a bachelor’s degree from the University of Maryland at College Park. “Inequality is slowing U.S. economic growth” (December 12, 2017), https://www.epi.org/publication/secular-stagnation/] TDI

Income inequality in the United States has risen dramatically since the late 1970s, and the issue has drawn heightened attention in recent years. In the past decade, economic observers have also become increasingly worried about “secular stagnation”—or a chronic shortfall of aggregate demand, fearing that this shortfall will constrain American economic growth in coming years. These two phenomena—rising inequality and chronic weakness of demand—are related. Specifically, rising inequality transfers income from low-saving households in the bottom and middle of the income distribution to higher-saving households at the top. All else equal, this redistribution away from low- to high-saving households reduces consumption spending, which drags on demand growth.

This paper argues that a key lever for solving the problem of secular stagnation is halting, or even reversing, the root cause of rising inequality: the growing wedge between productivity and pay for typical American workers. Following are our key findings:

* A stunningly large upward redistribution of income has characterized the American economy in recent decades. In 1979, the bottom 90 percent of American households claimed roughly 70 percent of total income in the U.S. economy. By 2016, this share had fallen to around 60 percent.
* By far the most important driver of this upward redistribution is the growing wedge between economy-wide productivity growth (a measure of income generated in an average hour of work in the United States) and hourly pay of typical American workers since the mid-1970s. Had these two measures grown together the way they did in earlier eras, there would have been no possibility of upward income redistribution.
* A strong and growing body of macroeconomic evidence shows that the U.S. economy needs lower and lower interest rates simply to provide the same growth of aggregate demand over time. In short, something is pushing down the growth rate of aggregate demand, and macroeconomic policies need to become more and more expansionary in each successive year simply to hold demand constant. This development has sometimes been labeled “secular stagnation.”

The rise in inequality has contributed significantly to the downward pressure on demand growth that is labeled secular stagnation. Inequality has transferred income from low- and middle-income households with relatively low savings rates towards higher-income households with higher savings rates. All else equal, this transfer drags on demand growth as consumption grows more slowly. This transfer will likely slow growth in aggregate demand by an estimated 2 to 4 percentage points of gross domestic product (GDP) every year going forward from today. 1

* The demand drag imposed each year by rising inequality is equivalent to the peak *boost*to economic demand provided (in 2010) by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA, the stimulus package passed in the first months of the Obama administration). Essentially to offset the hit to demand posed by rising inequality, we’d need to enact a policy each and every year that delivers a boost of the rough magnitude of the peak ARRA boost.
* One puzzle that arises in the causal chain linking rising inequality to slower demand growth is that the personal savings rate measured in the National Income and Product Accounts (NIPA) has actually *declined*, not risen over recent decades. However, a closer analysis of the data and economics behind savings behavior shows that the declining savings rate measured conventionally in the NIPAs does not capture many ways in which savings of high-income households have increased. The most important fact is that unrealized capital gains spurred by corporate stock buybacks are not captured in the NIPA personal savings measure. However, these unrealized gains do constitute large increases in wealth (which is a form of savings) for shareholders.

### 1ar---at: econ da

#### The plan increases employment.

White ’20 – [Martha White, NBC News contributor who writes about business, finance and the economy. “Increasing the minimum wage would help, not hurt, the economy” (October 23, 2020) NBC News, https://www.nbcnews.com/business/economy/increasing-minimum-wage-would-help-not-hurt-economy-n1244586] TDI

Establishing a $15 wage floor has been a long-term goal of union-backed advocacy groups, which began putting pressure on big companies like McDonald’s and Walmart to pay workers $15 an hour in 2012. The Democratic Party made a $15 minimum wage part of its platform ahead of the 2016 election season. A handful of states with high costs of living — California, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York — as well as some cities have adopted laws that will raise the minimum wage to $15 over time, and 29 states as well as the District of Columbia have minimum wages higher than the federal one.

The issue clearly resonates with voters: “Wages” was the most-searched topic in 44 states during the debate (the top search in the remaining six states was “unemployment”). Surveys indicate, though, that Trump’s view is out of step with that of most Americans: Two-thirds want to see a $15 minimum wage, according to the Pew Research Center.

Business groups have argued that raising the minimum wage forces business owners to fire workers, a claim echoed by Trump in the debate. The reality is more complex: The evidence of job loss is inconsistent, and the benefits are accrued by some of the country’s most vulnerable populations.

In terms of reducing income and wealth disparities, a rising minimum wage is a good thing. “The benefits in terms of reducing inequality — getting money into people's pockets, stimulating the market — are very well proven,” said Till von Wachter, professor of economics and director of the California Policy Lab at the University of California, Los Angeles.

“The best evidence is that judiciously set minimum wages make a lot of sense. They raise earnings, reduce individual and family poverty, and have no measurable negative effects on employment,” said David Autor, an economics professor at MIT and co-chair of the MIT Task Force on the Work of the Future.

A report last year by the Congressional Budget Office found that a $15 minimum wage would increase the income of 27 million workers, 17 million of whom currently earn below that amount with the remaining 10 million earning just over $15 an hour, but all of whom would see their wages rise due to what economists call the “spillover effect.”

When adjusted for inflation, today’s minimum wage gives workers far less buying power than it once did. Since peaking 52 years ago, purchasing power of the minimum wage has fallen by 31 percent — the equivalent of $6,800 for someone working full-time at minimum wage for a year.

“The real value of the federal U.S. minimum wage is at a historic low,” Autor said. “I'd be happy to see something like $12 or $13, indexed to inflation so it doesn't again sink to irrelevance within 10 years.”

A $15 wage would lift 1.3 million households above the poverty line — but the flip side could be fewer jobs. The CBO estimated a median loss of 1.3 million jobs, although it also acknowledged considerable ambiguity with that figure. “Findings in the research literature about how changes in the federal minimum wage affect employment vary widely,” the agency said.

A 10 percent increase in base pay is associated with a 1.5-percentage-point increase in the likelihood that workers will remain with their current employer, which can translate to significant cost savings for companies.

Given the sweeping societal impact a higher minimum wage would have on the lives of the poorest Americans, von Wachter said policymakers should deem this potential an acceptable risk. “We accept these small efficiency costs because we think it's valuable to provide that redistribution. We accept a trade-off between costs and benefits,” he said, adding that most of the studies have yielded no evidence of higher minimum wages triggering job losses.

Some research has even found the opposite — that is, a higher minimum wage can increase employment in some situations. When studying employment practices of big chain stores, von Wachter found that raising the minimum wage had the most positive effect in labor markets dominated by just a few large employers.

Other data suggests that higher pay improves worker satisfaction and leads to lower turnover, which can help mitigate employers’ higher payroll costs. According to Glassdoor, a 10 percent increase in base pay is associated with a 1.5-percentage-point increase in the likelihood that workers will remain with their current employer, which can translate to significant cost savings for companies. Replacing a low-wage worker costs about 16 percent of that worker’s annual salary.

A minimum wage that hasn’t risen since 2009 will only become increasingly unsustainable for the people relying on it, experts say. “There’s a lot of headroom to raise it [and] workers would benefit,” Autor said. “We can afford to do better.”

#### Robust academic research goes aff. The plan reduces taxpayer costs and increases consumption.

Roberts & Olinsky ’21 – [Lily Roberts, managing director for Inclusive Growth at American Progress, receiving a master’s degree in social work from Case Western Reserve University and a bachelor’s degree in military history and English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Ben Olinsky, senior vice president of Structural Reform and Governance and a senior fellow on the Economy team at American Progress. “Raising the Minimum Wage Would Boost an Economic Recovery—and Reduce Taxpayer Subsidization of Low-Wage Work” (Jan 27, 2021), https://www.americanprogress.org/article/raising-minimum-wage-boost-economic-recovery-reduce-taxpayer-subsidization-low-wage-work/] TDI

Broad consensus in the academic research over the past 30 years has debunked the idea that raising the minimum wage causes employers to employ fewer people. Economists found that a $15 minimum wage would not reduce employment even in areas that currently have the lowest wages. Dozens of careful studies have explored how minimum wage laws affect earnings and employment, influenced by the seminal 1994 work of David Card and Alan Krueger. In spring 2019, prominent economists in the US and the UK published an analysis of 138 state-level minimum wage changes since 1979, finding that the overall number of low-wage jobs remained unchanged after the increase and that low-wage workers who were already earning above the minimum also saw modest wage increases. In fact, in 2014, the 13 states that raised their minimum wages added jobs at a faster rate than the states that did not, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

New analysis from CAP Distinguished Senior Fellow Austan Goolsbee shows that individual consumer choices driven by fear of COVID-19 infection—not legal closures or stay-at-home orders—largely drove changes in consumer traffic and spending. This indicates that once vaccination rates increase and fear of exposure decreases, consumer spending patterns will readjust if consumers have sufficient funds to spend.

The post-pandemic economy will provide a strategic moment to ensure that those in low-income households (who are more likely to spend each additional dollar they receive in pay than higher-income people) will be able to increase their consumption as needed. New research demonstrates that minimum wage increases have a particularly strong effect on households’ real spending on food, particularly food prepared away from home. This category of increased spending would be particularly beneficial to a recovering restaurant sector.

Ensure that taxpayers aren’t subsidizing corporations for workers’ low pay

Paltry pay with ever-decreasing purchasing power ensures that many people who work full-time for minimum wage pay rely on programs such as SNAP and Medicaid to provide food and health care for their families. This effectively means that the federal government is subsidizing low-wage employers for their labor costs while their workers barely scrape by.

CAP has a body of work demonstrating how minimum wage workers use SNAP to keep food on the table for their families—requiring taxpayers to subsidize corporations who underpay their workers.

A groundbreaking 2014 CAP report by University of California, Berkeley economist Michael Reich and Rachel West found that a contemporaneous proposal to raise the minimum wage to $10.10 per hour would reduce SNAP enrollments by 3.1 to 3.6 million people, resulting in an annual decrease in program expenditures of nearly $4.6 billion.

Rachel West then updated these figures in a 2015 CAP piece for proposals to increase the minimum wage to $12 per hour. West found that SNAP spending would fall by an estimated $5.3 billion each year in today’s dollars, saving taxpayers more than 7 percent in overall SNAP expenditures. When fully implemented, West also found that savings would total $52.7 billion over the following decade.

In this piece, CAP highlighted a subsequent University of California, Berkeley study that estimated U.S. taxpayers foot the bill for $152.8 billion in government assistance programs for low-wage workers each year in lieu of their employers paying adequate living wages and benefits.

In a 2019 piece, economist Arindrajit Dube examined the impacts of minimum wage hikes on workers in the bottom 30 percent of income, finding that increases confer significant income gains to these workers. Dube also observed that when accounting for the effects of government assistance programs (noncash transfers, including SNAP, school lunches, and housing subsidies) and tax credits (EITC and child tax credits), those income gains were only two-thirds as large. The offset represents a significant reduction in taxpayer expenditures, effectively substituting work-based earnings for public assistance. Dube also observes that a “reduction in public benefits like SNAP can be efficiency enhancing, since in principle these programs are funded using taxation that can have deadweight losses.”

#### Studies and surveys prove.

Luce ’17 – [Stephanie Luce, Professor of Labor Studies at the School of Labor and Urban Studies, and Professor of Sociology at the Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY). She received her BA in economics at the University of California, Davis and both her PhD in sociology and her MA in industrial relations from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. “Living Wages: A US Perspective” (July 14, 2017), *Employee Relations* 39 (6): 863–74. https://doi.org/10.1108/er-07-2017-0153] TDI

Impacts of living wage on workers and employers

When the modern living wage movement began in the 1990s the dominant mainstream view within the economics profession was that wage mandates were a destructive policy. When employers were forced to pay wages higher than a worker’s marginal productivity they would choose to cut jobs. Policymakers often echoed this sentiment, claiming that living wage ordinances were “job killers.” Opponents further argued that living wages could lead to higher prices for consumers, higher taxes in cities, and industries leaving cities for fear of an anti-business climate ( Janis, 2011).

By the late 1990s as more living wage ordinances were enacted, it became difficult for opponents to maintain their arguments. While a few studies asserted harmful impacts on employment, an increasing number of “natural experiments” compared cities and counties with higher wage mandates (in the form of living wage ordinances or state minimum wages) to those that did not raise their wage. Increasingly, the studies found little to no impact on employment. Furthermore, surveys of employers found some positive impacts: lower turnover, higher productivity, and in some cases, greater efficiency (Chapman and Thompson, 2006; Schmitt, 2013; D’Arcy and Davies, 2016). Still, a few studies still find evidence of job loss, particularly for teenagers (Neumark et al., 2014; Neumark, 2015).

Some critics argued that the wage increases would have little impact on workers lives because higher incomes would mean that workers lose eligibility for government programs, such as food stamps and tax credits (Burkhauser and Sabia, 2007). Worker surveys find that there is a range of outcomes, with some workers ( particularly single parents with several young children) losing more benefits, but that on average, workers are better off with the pay rise (Chapman and Thompson, 2006; Pollin et al., 2008).

#### A living wage stimulates consumer spending.

Roberts & Olinsky ’21 – [Lily Roberts, managing director for Inclusive Growth at American Progress, receiving a master’s degree in social work from Case Western Reserve University and a bachelor’s degree in military history and English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Ben Olinsky, senior vice president of Structural Reform and Governance and a senior fellow on the Economy team at American Progress. “Raising the Minimum Wage Would Boost an Economic Recovery—and Reduce Taxpayer Subsidization of Low-Wage Work” (Jan 27, 2021), https://www.americanprogress.org/article/raising-minimum-wage-boost-economic-recovery-reduce-taxpayer-subsidization-low-wage-work/] TDI

Reducing inequality will lead to higher, more sustainable growth

Over the past decade, CAP research and policy recommendations have documented how inequality slows growth, with a particular focus on economic inequality that stems from structural racism and sexism. Decreasing income inequality and working toward the elimination of the wealth gap (another disparity that stymies overall growth) requires targeted policies to build economic security. Raising the minimum wage is one tool for combatting this inequality—and therefore stimulating growth.

Women (and women of color in particular) are overrepresented in minimum wage work, and CAP research demonstrates that this is especially true in occupations in which people receive tips but are paid as little as $2.13 per hour by their employer. The National Women’s Law Center calculates that “for women working full time in states with a minimum wage of $10 per hour or more, the wage gap is 34 percent smaller” than the wealth gap in states with a $7.25 minimum.

CAP research shows that 64 percent of women were the sole or primary breadwinner for their family in 2017, and women account for most consumer spending in the economy. Nearly 59 percent of workers who are paid the federal minimum wage are women. Therefore, increasing the minimum wage is particularly likely to stimulate consumer spending.

Black and Latino workers are disproportionately represented in occupations with the lowest wages. Nearly one-third of all Black workers and one-quarter of all Latino workers would get a raise under a $15 minimum wage. Decreased income inequality would lead to an increase in overall economic growth, as economic growth in the United States is constrained by income inequality.

Conclusion

Rather than continuing to subsidize corporations that pay paltry wages to workers—which means that those workers must find necessary support in the social safety net—a higher minimum wage would boost millions of families out of poverty and further stimulate the economy. As we move toward a post-pandemic economic recovery, increased money to families who are the most likely to spend any marginal dollar will have an outsize effect on consumer spending. A minimum wage increase would give an overdue raise to workers and would be well-timed for an economic recovery.

#### The wage is adjusted regularly, which zeroes the link.

Kovanen ’21 – Arto Kovanen, PhD in economics from Purdue University. He’s taught microeconomic, macroeconomics and international finance at universities in the United States and Finland. “Establishing a Living Wage” (May 13, 2021)] TDI

In Kovanen (2021), we proposed a metric for setting the federal minimum wage level. This would replace the current, in our view an ad hoc, adjustment in the federal minimum wage with an automatic, market-driven approach where the federal minimum wage would be anchored to median hourly earnings and consequently could be adjusted on a regular basis (possibly annually) to changes in the median hourly earnings. Besides being a market-driven metric, it aligns well with historical data for adjustments in the federal minimum wage. This suggests that the government in the past, at least implicitly, has used the median hourly earnings as a metric for setting the federal minimum wage. It would prevent over-adjustments in the federal minimum wage level (i.e., setting the federal minimum wage level too high compared to the conditions in the labor market), thereby protecting least skilled workers from rising labor costs. Chart 1 has been reproduced from Kovanen (2021) and shows that the federal minimum wage tracks closely one-third of the median hourly earnings (green line). The federal minimum wage has also stayed below the hourly earnings of least skilled workers (with less than high school education; red line). Given large disparities across the states’ minimum and average wage levels, the analysis in Kovanen (2021) also illustrates that it is essential to keep the federal minimum wage at a level that would not unduly exaggerate disparities between states and distort the competitiveness of local and regional labor markets.

What was not addressed in Kovanen (2021) concerns the concept of “living wage”, which is often defined as a level of income that would ensure individuals and households have adequate incomes to meet basic living needs. It provides another way of reducing income gaps and poverty. There is no agreement what the appropriate level of living wage should be, and understandably, it is likely to fluctuate substantially across the country, being higher in large urban centers and lower in rural parts of the country. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) maintains a database, which provides one reference point to assess the level of the living wage. A recent article by Nadeau (2020) further suggests that the living wage level in the United States in 2019 was $16.54 per hour, corresponding to $68,808 in annual income. The study assumes a family of four and two working adults, each parent would work 40 hours/week. This is different from our definition (see later).

## Right to Work

### 1ar---at: not binding

#### States have a legally binding obligation to enforce a living wage.

Eriksson ’15 – [Stina Eriksson, Uppsala University. "The Right to a Living Wage: The Obligations of States Parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to Realise the Right to a Living Wage" (2015), [https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:846161/FULLTEXT01.pdf](https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2%3A846161/FULLTEXT01.pdf)] TDI

The main objective with a global system to ensure human rights and protecting the weaker party, is to set the protection of workers to a minimum level common for all States. In regards of living wages, an international and common commitment to enforce remuneration sufficient for a decent standard of living for workers and their families would secure that all workers would at least have a decent living in common. Naturally, the cost of living and what would be considered a living wage would vary in between Sates parties and even between regions within such States. But at least no State party would be able to use its low wages, insufficient to meet basic human needs and human rights, as their comparative advantage. This would level the playing field in the global economy and is a vital step in securing that labour is not used as a commodity.17

However, governments seem to fret that an increase in wages will decrease investments and thus have a negative effect on the economic development of the country.18 It shall be noted that this is not a problem exclusive of the living wage, but of all labour rights, as it is repeatedly shown that retrogressive measures in regards of labour standards are used in order to ”boost” economies in times of recession. Just arguments as they in a sense are – it is basic macroeconomic thought that an increase in labour protection will have corporations refrain from employing and investing – this really sheds light on the core issues with the living wage debate. Countries with the lowest wages, and the most poverty and poverty related implications, refrain from increasing minimum wages in order to attract investments. For this reason, an international standard should be promoted in order to ensure the right for workers globally to earn a living wage and in this way level the playing field among States. International regulation is a crucial part of international labour law when there is a lack of incentive on the domestic level.19

2.3 Labour Rights in International Human Rights Instruments

In the ILO Constitution (1919) it is stated that universal and lasting peace only can be established by social justice, and that protecting labour rights is vital to this effect.20

Labour rights was subsequently recognised as human rights in UN instruments. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) (hereinafter: UDHR) and the ICESCR are essential in relation to labour rights, as they provide provisions securing the right to work,21 the right to form trade unions,22 the right to strike,23 as well as the right to fair and equal remuneration.24 But most important for this writing is article 23(3) of UDHR which provides that:

 Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity.

And the corresponding provision included in article 7 (a) (ii) ICESCR which holds:

The States parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions at work which ensure, in particular: (a) Remuneration which provide all workers, as minimum, with: […] (ii) A decent living for themselves and their families in accordance with the provisions of the present Covenant.

As established in the demarcation of this thesis, the right to a living wage under article 7 of the ICESCR is the focus of my writing. To provide the reader with a greater understanding of general human rights law and its principles, obligations which rises from ratifying human rights treaties, and the monitoring of States’ obligations, a brief assessment is found in the subsequent sections.

2.4 International Human Rights Law

The fundamental human rights instruments of the UN are the UDHR, the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (1966) (hereinafter: ICCPR) and the ICESCR. The two Covenants and the UDHR are all gathered in the so called ’Bill of Human Rights’ and are the primary basis for the UN’s activities to promote, protect and monitor human rights and fundamental freedoms.25

2.4.1 The Binding Nature of the UDHR, ICCPR and ICESCR

The UDHR holds the basic human rights, and although it is not a binding instrument in international law, due to its status as a recommendation by the general assembly, it is one of the more authoritative instruments on human rights and its provisions have been incorporated in other treaties. 26 UDHR is argued to be considered customary international law.27

The ICECSR and the ICCPR are legally binding on the State parties after ratification,28 thus making the human rights therein legally enforceable. Ratification by its definition means that a State party has established its consent to be bound by a treaty,29 and through this consent they have committed to realise the rights set in the Covenants. When a Covenant has been ratified, the State party has accepted to apply the obligations and ensure that domestic legislation and practice is compatible with their international commitment.30

2.4.2 The Relation Between the Two Covenants

The two Covenants are considered complements to the UDHR; the ICCPR establishes and expands the civil and political rights held in the UDHR, and the ICESCR the economic, social and cultural rights ditto. Civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights are ”universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated”, 31 and their realisations equally important. However, the status and legality of economic, social and cultural rights has been heavily argued.32 This is much due to the different wordings in the obligating provisions of the ICESCR and ICCPR respectively.

ICCPR article 2(1) reads as follows (emphasis added):

“Each State party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or other status.”

The corresponding article in the ICESCR is differently formulated. Article 2(1) ICESCR (emphasis added):

“Each State party to the present Covenant undertakes to take steps, individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Covenant by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures.”

### 1ar---at: us not key

#### U.S. domestic policy is key to create commitment to international rights.

Wilken ’17 [Marie Wilken, 6-22-2017, "U.S. Aversion to International Human Rights Treaties," Global Justice Center: Human Rights Through Rule of Law, [https://globaljusticecenter.net/blog/773-u-s-aversion-to-international-human-rights-treaties /](https://globaljusticecenter.net/blog/773-u-s-aversion-to-international-human-rights-treaties%20/)]

The United States prides itself on being a champion of human rights. Since its founding, the United States has often identified its belief in inalienable rights as a trait that has differentiates it from other countries. The United States pioneered international human rights law when Eleanor Roosevelt chaired the committee that drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the precursor to many international human rights treaties. In the U.S. Department of State’s annual Human Rights Reports, it judges other countries’ human rights records. However, it is difficult to take U.S. commitment to human rights seriously when it regularly favors domestic political concerns over the international human rights community and continually demonstrates a unique reluctance to ratify international human rights treaties.

The United States is alone among other industrialized Western countries in its reluctance. It did not begin to ratify major human rights treaties until the late 1980s, taking almost 40 years to become the 98th country to ratify the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. It still has not ratified many significant human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights—part of the International Bill of Human Rights. The United States also has not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), one of only seven countries who hasn’t including Iran, Nauru, Palau, Somalia, Sudan and Tonga. The United States and Somalia are the only countries that have not ratified Convention on the Rights of the Child.

When the United States does ratify treaties, it uses a unique process that diminishes the treaties’ intended effects. Before the treaty is voted on, Justice Department lawyers search the documents for human rights protections that are more stringent than, and therefore would add to, U.S. law. When found, the United States limits the scope of the treaty by drafting a reservation, declaration, or understanding (RUD) to combat it and sends the treaty, RUDs attached, to the Senate for ratification.

To further strip the treaty of power, the United States declares that treaties are “not self-executing.” This means that without implementing legislation (domestic law guaranteeing the same protections), the treaty is unenforceable in domestic courts. The government often argues that implementing legislation is unnecessary because all the rights in the treaty (except those excluded in the RUDs) are already protected by U.S. law. This leaves citizens without the ability to invoke the treaty in court.

Moreover, because the United States has not ratified the first Optional Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, citizens cannot appeal to UN Review committees—groups of experts who hear complaints from citizens who believe their treaty rights have been violated. These U.S. procedures prevent substantive participation in the international system of human rights, leaving citizens to rely on non-comprehensive domestic protections.

There are a few factors motivating U.S. aversion to international human rights treaties. Many scholars point to the historical context of when the treaties were first being developed in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The Cold War fostered fears about the spread of communism and totalitarianism, and these fears became linked to the international human rights project. Conservatives also opposed these treaties because they viewed them as the federal government’s effort to address racial segregation and discrimination in the South.

This doesn’t explain why these attitudes have persisted. Some suggest that it is the nature of the U.S. government. Treaties require the approval of two-thirds of the Senate or “congressional-executive agreements”—but the latter are not used for human rights treaties. But what prevents ratification via Senate supermajority? The answer: an attitude.

Human Rights Watch Executive Director Kenneth Roth describes the American attitude towards international human rights law as “fear and arrogance—fear that international standards might constrain the unfettered latitude of the global superpower, and arrogance in the conviction that the United States, with its long and proud history of domestic rights protections, has nothing to learn on this subject from the rest of the world.” Scholars suggest that this isolationist attitude—partly driven by fears that international treaties would erode federalism—leads to acceptance of international human rights law only when it merely affirms existing domestic law.

Refusing to ratify human rights treaties weakens U.S. international leadership and deprives American citizens of protections they deserve. The United States is willing to sign onto substantive trade agreements but not human rights agreements, and this superficial participation in the international human rights community reveals its priorities. Human rights treaties are more than symbolic affirmations of values. They are legal foundations that can translate into human rights victories for citizens. (For examples of how international treaties like CEDAW have been used in domestic courts in other countries, see GJC’s CEDAW Casebank.) Only after ratifying these treaties, making them self-executing, and using domestic law to uphold them can the United States genuinely be the human rights champion it has so long claimed to be.

### 1ar---add-on---china

#### Current human rights frameworks are being recalibrated to fit China’s interests.

Griffiths ’23 [David Griffiths, Griffiths is Associate Fellow with the International Law Programme at Chatham House. He received his BA from the University of Oxford and his MA from the University of London; 4-19-2023, "Human rights diplomacy," Chatham House – International Affairs Think Tank, https://www.chathamhouse.org/2023/04/human-rights-diplomacy, ashrit]

China seeks to recalibrate the human rights system to its interests, but does face constraints. Concerned states should respond not with a narrow focus on China itself but with an ambitious global strategy that engages with the priorities of China’s allies.

China has worked hard for the influence it has accrued in the human rights system. One of the questions for the future of human rights diplomacy is what China intends to achieve with this influence in the long term. This is a subject of debate among analysts of Chinese foreign policy. The key question, as one academic reflected, is whether China’s goal is ‘to make the world safe for autocracy, or to make it no longer safe for democracy’.104 In other words, is Beijing’s objective to blunt the threat to its interests from the human rights system by rendering it as ineffective as possible? Or does it intend to remake the human rights machinery entirely, as part of an international system recalibrated to China’s worldview?

The answer is tied to speculation about the future of the CCP and its leadership. As one observer of China explained, the history of the People’s Republic is often interpreted as cycles of relative openness and repression, and the Xi Jinping era belongs to the latter.105 But even the most optimistic reading of the long-term future would point towards growing pressures from China that progressively threaten to weaken the human rights system in significant ways.

In its overall engagement with the multilateral system, China has generally tended to position itself as a responsible actor. It is taking an ever more active approach. In line with its rapid economic growth, it has become the second-largest donor to the UN regular budget, at 15 per cent in 2022, well ahead of third-placed Japan (8 per cent) and quickly catching up with the US (22 per cent, which is the upper limit).106 China’s best-known contribution is in the area of peacekeeping, where its contribution of personnel is more than double the combined total of the other P5 members, and its financial contribution is second only to that of the US.107 Chinese nationals lead four of the 15 specialized UN agencies – one interviewee stressed that, in terms of committee posts, China ‘leaves no position unfilled’.108 There are 27 UN entities with a base in China (although OHCHR is not among them).109 The Chinese government has regularly stated its commitment to the SDGs, while UN secretary-general Guterres has attempted to make a conceptual link between the SDGs and the BRI, notably at the Belt and Road Forum in May 2019.110

But there is a different tenor to China’s engagement with the human rights system. The foundations of the system were put in place before the People’s Republic of China joined the UN in 1971, replacing the Republic of China (Taiwan), and the CCP has always seen it as an unwelcome constraint.111 It was not surprising, therefore, that ‘Western freedom, democracy, and human rights’ were enumerated as existential threats to the CCP in a leaked internal party communiqué from 2012, known as Document 9.112

China’s influence in the human rights sphere is a function of its economic and political heft, both of which have grown substantially over the past two decades. A combination of BRI investments and debt purchases have tied numerous countries financially to China. But there are also strong economic disincentives against standing up to Beijing’s interests. China’s withdrawal from trade talks with Norway after the Nobel Committee awarded its 2010 Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo,113 its freezing of many Australian imports after the Australian government called for an independent inquiry into the origins of COVID-19 in 2020, and its economic and diplomatic ostracism of Lithuania after the latter invited the Taipei government to open a representative office under the name of Taiwan, all stand as warnings against countries less able to withstand such pressure.

However, these assertive responses to Global North countries are part of China’s broader diplomatic positioning and its proposition to the Global South. China’s economic investments in developing countries do not automatically translate into influence or uncritical support, but they do offer a welcome alternative to economic and political dependency on countries in the Global North,114 and there is genuine admiration for China’s economic achievements and the political system which is perceived to have enabled them.115 The right to development narrative championed by China resonates with countries in the Global South, especially in Africa, for reasons of both principle and politics. Similarly, an interviewee from an Asian country said, ‘if they bring jobs to our country, that is part of human rights too’. China has been successful in building a network: the Like-Minded Group of Developing Countries (LMDC) constitutes a bloc of sorts, on which it can count for support.116 As one interviewee stated, China’s narrative about restoring multilateralism117 comes from a position of confidence that it has the necessary support. It is a way of saying to its opponents, ‘count the votes’.118

The most basic task for Beijing in its human rights diplomacy is self-protection. It has proven adept at shielding itself from criticism with the aid of other countries. The annual resolutions on Tiananmen Square in the UNCHR were a regular embarrassment, but China developed a long record of defeating them with the use of ‘no-action’ resolutions proposed by its allies.119 It has been able to continue in much the same vein in the HRC. For example, Foot has shown how, during China’s 2018 UPR, it was able to stack the floor with friendly comments and push NGOs aside.120 This was consistent with its record as the most active country in obstructing NGO accreditations,121 and forcibly preventing individuals from testifying at the UN.122 China has used similar tactics in relation to alleged human rights violations in Xinjiang. Numerous statements of condemnation at the HRC and UNGA have been countered with statements defending China, which have a larger number of countries in support. That China’s group of supporters has gradually dwindled in size, and that China received the fewest votes of those states elected at the most recent HRC election, led then executive director of HRW Ken Roth to speculate in 2021 that:

[T]he day may soon arrive when UN bodies can begin to adopt formal resolutions criticizing at least some aspects of Beijing’s repression.123

That remains possible but has certainly yet to materialize. The visit of the UN high commissioner for human rights, Michelle Bachelet, to China in May 2022, was widely criticized as a public relations victory for China.124 The long-awaited OHCHR report on the human rights situation in Xinjiang was released by Bachelet around nine minutes before her term expired on 31 August 2022.125 The 46-page report was accompanied by a 122-page response from China. The report was hard-hitting and concluded that China’s actions against the Uyghur population in Xinjiang ‘may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity.’ In the September 2022 HRC session, the US and others proposed a draft decision noting the report and calling for a debate at the next Council session. However, this proposal was narrowly defeated126 – only the second time a resolution had ever failed a vote in the HRC. It remains to be seen whether appetite remains for a fresh attempt and, if so, which countries may be persuaded to change their position.

But while China has continued its success in avoiding censure, it also has a more proactive agenda. A Chatham House report published in 2012 concluded that:

[T]here is strong evidence that a newly confident China is experimenting with a more assertive style of diplomacy on international human rights issues generally.127

This analysis has broadly been vindicated in the decade since.

The main elements of China’s agenda for the human rights system have remained relatively consistent in the post-Tiananmen years: to constitute it as a system based on ‘dialogue’ and technical cooperation between states, with little or no place for criticism, and no meaningful role for civil society.128

One important element of China’s effort to undermine or neuter the system is the blandness and ambiguity of the language it uses on human rights. This deployment of ‘discourse power’ is supported by hundreds of Confucius Institutes located around the world, and the creation of around 15 human rights centres within Chinese universities.129 This strategy can boast a measure of success. Since 2017, Xi Jinping has embraced the concept translated benignly into English as ‘community of shared future for humankind’. This phrase captures the idea of a collective with a shared fate.130 It has been summarized by Malin Oud as ‘a vision for a world order that emphasises sovereignty, respect for different political systems, and “win-win cooperation” among states’,131 in what amounts to a repudiation of an accountability-based system. In March 2017, the CCP noted its success in introducing the phrase into a resolution for the first time during the 34th session of the HRC.132 In the following session, held in June 2017, the HRC adopted China’s first solo-sponsored resolution – putting forth its discourse on the right to development133 – which has since become a biennial resolution. In December 2017, the Beijing Declaration that emerged from the first South–South Human Rights Forum advanced several core ideas from China’s human rights doctrine in the name of a wider group of developing countries. China also successfully sponsored a series of annual HRC resolutions on ‘Promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights’ in 2018, 2020 and 2021. In February 2021, Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi used his remarks to the HRC to call for a ‘people-centered approach’ to human rights, with a view to promoting ‘all-round development of the people’.134 The language is benign, denuded of accountability and plays to the CCP’s own domestic source of legitimacy – namely, its economic record. On its own terms, China is de facto a human rights success story.

#### That immediately causes extinction AND upends liberalism.

Fei-Ling Wang 19, Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, Professor at the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, 10/24/2019, “The China Order: A Challenge for the U.S. and the World,” https://www.thecipherbrief.com/column\_article/the-china-order-a-challenge-for-the-u-s-and-the-world

It is no longer hard to see that the rising power and the mounting pugnaciousness of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) have become a comprehensive challenge for the United States. China’s Machiavellian policies and actions at home and abroad have turned an otherwise naturally complementary Sino-American economic relationship into a near zero-sum, if not already a zero-sum, competition for market, jobs, technology, and financial primacy. Beijing now openly flexes its new muscles in its neighborhood and beyond to resist, reduce, and replace American leadership and presence everywhere possible, seeking to undermine the U.S.-led international economic order and American-anchored collective security arrangements. The PRC has been burning billions, for example, hoping to replace the U.S. dollar with the over-printed Chinese Renminbi (RMB). Extraordinarily heavy extraction of its own economy, the world’s second largest, and its enormous foreign currency reserve resulting from the gross imbalance in U.S.-China trade have enabled the PRC to massively expand its military. That military is already the world’s second largest; its navy, for example, is projected to soon surpass the U.S. Navy in fleet tonnage. At the same time, massive but opaque spending sprees has allowed the PRC to actively procure power and proxies even inside the United States, positioning Beijing to reshape international opinions and norms more easily than ever.

What is less known, perhaps, is that the rising PRC state also seeks an overhaul of the very world order that has enabled the greatest advances of human civilization over the past few centuries – the Westphalian system of nation-states. This world order was codified in the 17th century, expanded to a global scale in the 20th century, and now is in its post-World War II and post-Cold War iteration — the so-called America-led Liberal International Order (LIO). The rise of Chinese power, under the autocracy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), is not just contesting U.S. national security and American global leadership but also the existing world order. Never since the heyday of the Cold War has the world seen such a full challenge to the United States and to the Westphalian system.

The CCP is leading the PRC toward a Chinese Dream of a world order in its own image, which I call the China Order. The China Order is a millennia-old political tradition and ideology that mandates a unitary, authoritarian (often totalitarian), omnipotent and omnipresent government for the whole known world. This alternative world order has had a variety of euphemisms in the long history of China: from tinaxia yitong (unification of all under heaven) and shijie datong (world’s grand harmony) in the imperial past, to Mao Zedong’s world solidarity for Communist revolution only forty years ago, to now Xi Jinping’s community of common human destiny. The China Order has powerfully revived to guide rising PRC power, under the banner of a Chinese version of globalization, ingeniously taking advantage of the various calls in our time for global governance to address transnational issues such as climate change, inequality, epidemics, and terrorism.

This China Order is normatively and practically at fundamental odds with the LIO version of the Westphalia system that enshrines comparison and competition among nations coexisting with equal sovereignty. The China Order has been widely addictive to the powerful and ambitious in history, whether they have been ethnically Han or not. It has been highly effective in practice, in great part because it became deeply legitimized and internalized in elite Chinese culture over many centuries. The China Order is now the sole acceptable model of the world under the authoritarianism known as the Qin-Han polity that the PRC now practices. But under this world order, as documented by The China Order (#ad), human civilization is socio-economically very suboptimal and hopelessly stagnant, inevitably shortchanging the lives of just about everyone, especially nonelites, as the tragic and often catastrophic history of Eastern Eurasia under the China Order before the nineteenth century amply demonstrates.

Since 1949, when the PRC restored traditional Chinese autocracy under the guise of imported Marxism-Leninism, the CCP has been ceaselessly and callously fighting its own people internally and the United States and American allies externally to preserve its monopoly over power. Only sheer exhaustion and near collapse could force the CCP to slow down and retreat, at home and abroad. External powers have influenced and facilitated the rise of PRC power, but have so far failed to transform the Qin-Han autocracy and its China Order ideal, thus remaining unable to change Beijing’s world views and global pursuits. Various, often false, rationalizations have justified the continuation of American/Western engagement with the PRC, which has greatly enriched and enabled the CCP to persist in its consolidation of power. Beijing’s push for power is nothing personal; it is a brand of authoritarianism just happens to be anchored in the remarkably persistent belief that failing to achieve control over the whole known world would spell the loss of the “mandate of heaven” and political extinction. Thus, the CCP is driven (or doomed) to methodically and opportunistically seek ever greater influence.

The rise of China, or more precisely the ever-greater power of the PRC state, represents a shift of the distribution and concentration of power in the international system (conceptually known as power transition) and an effort to reorder the units in the system and change the system’s governing norms. Chinese leaders have already openly claimed that they are now moving to the center of the world stage, leading a revolutionary change in the world order, upending the Peace of Westphalia established “four hundred years ago,” in the words of PRC leaders This points to a systemic change of world politics and a choice for all of us at the grandest possible scale: a scale that could reshape nations and redirect the path of human civilization. The PRC’s challenge is therefore greater than the struggle between the two European ideologies of Capitalism and Communism. The confrontation between the U.S.-led LIO and the PRC-dreamed China Order transcends these often vaguely defined civilizational clashes.

If the PRC challenge, the rise of an unscrupulous, ever more resourceful and determined PRC state, is not managed well and promptly, the United States will have to face a much worse choice in the not too distant future between tragic capitulation and a desperate war for its national security and world leadership and for the way in which humankind is organized worldwide. In the age of many kinds of weapons of mass destruction, this will be a harrowing decision.

Of course, one may argue that the grandiose China Dream of a China Order may be just another pretentious way for the CCP to invoke traditional, nationalist, and populist ideals to justify its autocratic governance of the Chinese people forever, similar to the splendid slogans and missions fabricated by many other dictators. Perhaps the highly insecure CCP leadership is fighting for its survival, not world domination. However, words have consequences. Propaganda and dilution often greatly mesmerize and mislead the pretenders themselves. More importantly, the CCP has been steadily following up its words with action and money for years (basically nonstop since 1949); it has just pledged over 10 times the total sum of the Marshall Plan (in today’s dollars) for its Belt and Road Initiative alone, for instance.

As the logic of the China Order dictates, the rising Chinese power will not stop short of unseating the United States and reordering the world, unless Beijing’s Qin-Han polity is transformed and/or the ever richer and more powerful PRC is checked. The alternatives, American capitulation or world war, are horrific to contemplate, but not necessarily impossible. Unlike in Hollywood, the “good” guys do not always win necessarily in the real world. A mighty autocracy that tightly controls one-fifth of humankind, willfully spends a disproportionately larger portion of the fruits of the world’s second largest economy, and vows (even if only hypocritically) to reform and reorder the world under its leadership, is and will always be a mortal challenge to the national security of the United States. America’s global position and way of life, world peace, and the overall world order all rest on how the PRC challenge is managed—soon.

# Neg

## Inequality

### 1nc---solvency

#### The plan can’t solve poverty.

Matt Bruenig 3-22-2018. Lawyer, Juris Doctor from Boston University, founder of the People's Policy Project. "Some Notes on Federal Job Guarantee Proposals." People's Policy Project. https://www.peoplespolicyproject.org/2018/03/22/some-notes-on-federal-job-guarantee-proposals. DL

Poverty Mistakes

As part of trying to sell the idea of a jobs guarantee, advocates make claims about poverty that are untrue and contradicted by their other statements.

Kelton says:

[1] What we believe is that anyone whose working full time in America should not be living in poverty. [2] And that means choosing a wage that will allow a family of three or four to have one person working and to pull that family out of poverty. So we start at $15 an hour.

Paul says:

[1] The federal job guarantee would provide a job, at non-poverty wages, for all citizens above the age of 18 that sought one. … [2] The federal job guarantee would provide a job at a minimum annual wage of $24,600 for full-time workers (poverty line for a family of four) and a minimum hourly wage of $11.83.

In both cases, statement (1) claims the job guarantee is going to ensure people who work full time are not in poverty, but then statement (2) clarifies that this is not true for anyone who lives in a family with more than four members.

To provide a wage that really ensured no person who works full time is in poverty, the amount would need to be $26 per hour, as that corresponds to the official poverty threshold for families with nine or more members. Even that is too low though. The Census poverty thresholds arbitrarily cut off at nine members, but families can definitely be larger than that. In the 2016 CPS ASEC file, the largest family unit is 16 members. If you extrapolate out the Census poverty thresholds to a family that size, a true non-poverty wage would need to be around $40 per hour.

Presumably the reason the JG advocates do not propose a $40 wage is because that would be impractically high for many reasons. But what this insight should also tell you is that this is not a particularly good way to eliminate in-work poverty. It is already the case that people who work full time and live alone are not in poverty. What makes workers fall into poverty is the existence of nonworker family members (children, disabled, students, unemployed, elderly) who live with them. The way super-low-poverty countries get that way is by ensuring each of these nonworker populations receives an adequate transfer income: pensions, child benefits, unemployment benefits, etc. Nothing else can get the job done and I’d say it’s broadly unhelpful to the project of poverty eradication to keep pretending otherwise.

#### It’s mathematically impossible.

Brennan ‘19 – Jason Brennan, Robert J and Elizabeth Flanagan Chair, Strategy, Economics, Ethics, and Public Policy, McDonough School of Business, Georgetown University. “Should Employers Pay a Living Wage?” (2019), https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3724-y] TDI

Is It Even Possible for Everyone to Get a Living Wage?

Sanders’s and the MIT Living Wage Project’s standards are quite high compared to the actual wages/annual income most people in the world receive, even after we adjust for the differences in the cost of living. Consider that the US considers the poverty line for an American living alone to be about $11,500/year. By Sanders’s and the MIT Living Wage Project’s standards, this falls below a living wage. Yet a person living in the United States at the poverty line, even once we adjust for the high cost of living in the US, is still among the richest 14% of people alive today, earning more than six times the income of the typical person worldwide.8

Recall that Sanders’s campaign aimed for $15/h, which suggests an annual income of $30,000. While this is not high by US standards, Global Rich List calculates that (even adjusting for the cost of living), an American making $30,000 is in the top 1.23% of income earners in the world.9 Similarly, GivingWhatWeCan estimates that such an American is in the top 3.8% of income earners, making 21 times the global average.10 While the precise distribution of PPP-adjusted income in the world is slightly disputed, what’s not disputed is that almost every person in the developed world, including those at their country’s official poverty line, are much richer than most people in the world (van der Vossen and Brennan 2018).

This brings us a to significant problem with the idea of a living wage. Unless we define a “living wage” as very low, then there cannot be a blanket duty for every employer worldwide to pay a living wage. Ought implies can. That is, a person cannot have a duty to do X unless she is able to do X (Glüer 2015). But given the current state of economic development, it’s not possible to pay everyone a living wage, at least not by Sanders’s or MIT’s standards.

PPP-adjusted world product, that is, the total amount of economic production per year, adjust to the cost of living, is about $119.4 trillion.11 That’s the total value of all goods, services, government activity, and so on. Imagine, unrealistically, that I could wave a magic wand, which will convert all of this production into income, and also split all the production among equally among all people, without causing any loss of production.

Even if I waved that magic wand, PPP-adjusted per-capita world product would then be about $16,100, close to the American poverty line, or about half of Sanders’s annualized living wage.12 Note, however, that the global labor force is about 3.445 billion. If my magic wand split all current production equally among workers, then each worker would receive just under $35,000.13 Still, those 3.445 billion workers would then need to support the remaining 3.888 billion non-workers, and so, again, world product per capita is only about $16,100. So, in this scenario, when I wave my magic wand, no one earns a living wage.

#### Economic regulations lack discipline and crush productivity.

Brennan ‘19 – Jason Brennan, Robert J and Elizabeth Flanagan Chair, Strategy, Economics, Ethics, and Public Policy, McDonough School of Business, Georgetown University. “Should Employers Pay a Living Wage?” (2019), https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3724-y] TDI

Distortionary Efects of Paying Workers

In a market, prices are an information system (Hayek 1945). They are a function of supply and demand, and reflect the relative scarcity of diferent resources in light of people’s wants and desires.

One of the important functions of the profit and loss system is to discipline people to make more productive choices. To illustrate, suppose some people find soft yellow metal in the ground. They might, absent a market, use it to line their roofs or to build fancy bocce balls. But when they see that the metal goes for over $1000/ounce on a market, they would be induced to use it more productively. Or, suppose a sculptor has an idea of buying hundreds of new MacBooks, smashing them to bits, and then gluing the pieces together to form Ninja Turtles figurines. If he can only sell the resultant figures for $50, hundreds of thousands less than his cost, he learns quickly to stop making such statues. That’s a good thing: from a social point of view, he’s destroying value.

Similar remarks apply to workers. While economic productivity and Pareto-efficiency are not the only things that matter, they do matter. The more productivity we have, the more we can meet people’s needs and ensure that everyone lead a decent life. And so, at least prima facie, we should be wary of moral principles or economic regulations which induce people to do jobs they are bad at.

#### The plan worsens inequality and productivity. UK goes neg.

Bourne ’23 – [Ryan Bourne, R. Evan Scharf Chair for the Public Understanding of Economics at Cato and is the author of the recent books *Economics In One Virus*,and *The War on Prices*. “Job Quality Takes the Hit When Minimum Wage Is Raised” (December 7, 2023), <https://www.cato.org/commentary/job-quality-takes-hit-when-minimum-wage-raised>] TDI

The Resolution Foundation’s latest report presents a puzzle about low-wage jobs in Britain. Since the national minimum wage was introduced in 1999, aggressive hikes in it have been a “policy triumph”, the report says, boosting pay for women and the young without causing major net job losses. Yet over that same period, job satisfaction among low-paid workers has declined. Before the minimum wage’s introduction, a solid 70–75 per cent of the lowest earners were satisfied with their jobs. This dropped to only 57 per cent before the pandemic.

Despite a much higher minimum wage, the think tank points out that low-paid employees often lack the “security, flexibility, or control” at work that higher earners enjoy. A striking example is that half of shift workers get less than a week’s notice for their schedules. Moreover, low earners face more volatile hours and pay, along with stingier sick benefits. Black and disabled workers are disproportionately affected by such “bad jobs.”

The report thus argues for new government “rights” to address these deficiencies. But what if these issues in part reflect businesses’ reactions to the higher minimum wages that the report celebrates?

Jeffrey Clemens, an American economist, has shown that companies often adapt to higher minimum wages not just by laying off workers or raising prices, but through various other cost-saving strategies. These include limiting new hiring, slashing non-cash perks, reducing workplace comforts, enforcing stricter performance monitoring, or more rigidly managing workers’ hours and schedules.

While these adjustments help to mitigate rising wage costs, they can make jobs less pleasant, stable, or lucrative for employees. In other words, as the minimum wage increases, employers often take actions that reduce the perceived quality of jobs. This can make the roles less satisfying than rising hourly pay might suggest.

There’s growing evidence that these effects are substantial. Researchers at the London School of Economics discovered, for example, that zero-hours contracts, which offer no guaranteed work hours, surged in low-wage sectors, particularly social care, after the higher national living wage was introduced in 2016. Similarly, in the US, studies indicate an increase in unpaid internships and contract clauses limiting employees’ job options, correlating with minimum wage rises.

Frontier Economics, a consultancy firm, found that the UK introduction of the higher national living wage led to slower job growth in low-paid industries. This can increase stresses on existing employees as businesses expand. Especially in agriculture and warehouses, there’s been a noticeable trend of managers more closely monitoring and squeezing workers harder.

Research by the Low Pay Commission has revealed that in response to the national living wage, 20 per cent of businesses cut free amenities, staff discounts, or break times. Other companies trimmed overtime pay and training provision. The latter can limit employees’ future career prospects, further dampening their satisfaction with their roles.

These findings help to make sense of the bigger picture. There’s little to no evidence that the recent minimum wage increases we’ve seen to 65 per cent of median pay (from only 46 per cent in 1999) have boosted productivity. The lack of widespread layoffs must therefore logically be due to some combination of higher prices, employers evading the law, and firms making these adjustments to job quality.

### 1nc---inequality low

#### Inequality is decreasing---AFF evidence is doomerism.

James Pethokoukis, 1-12-2024, senior fellow and the DeWitt Wallace Chair at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), where he analyzes US economic policy, "When It Comes to the State of the American Economy, Let’s Keep It Real," American Enterprise Institute - AEI, https://www.aei.org/economics/when-it-comes-to-the-state-of-the-american-economy-lets-keep-it-real/, KL

Of course, if your goal is merely to spread misinformation—kind of common social media—you’re probably not too concerned about getting the facts wrong over and over and over. Such a person is also probably not too interested in info suggesting American poverty is way lower than many people think. As a group of economists write in the new study “Evaluating the Success of the War on Poverty since 1963 Using an Absolute Full-Income Poverty Measure”: “While the official poverty rate fell from 19.5% in 1963 to 10.5% in 2019, our absolute full-income poverty measure—which uses a fuller income measure and updates thresholds only for inflation—fell from 19.5% to 1.6%.”

Or how about a recent study by Gerald Auten and David Splinter that found that income inequality has changed little over time, challenging the widespread notion that it has substantially increased. Specifically, they discovered that the top one percent of income earners received nine percent of after-tax income in 2019, only a slight increase from eight percent in 1960. Then there’s research by my AEI colleague Michael Strain that found income inequality across all households—after accounting for taxes and government transfers and estimated with a Gini coefficient—fell by more than five percent between 2007 and 2019.

The impulse to push doom and gloom is alluring, I know. So on it goes, another day, another questionable stat overstating economic troubles. As such the good work countering such presenting economic reality also continues.

#### Immigration is an alt cause and inequality is set to decline.

Henderson ’18 – [David Henderson, research fellow with the Hoover Institution. He is also a professor of economics at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. “Income Inequality Isn’t The Problem” (February 20, 2018), <https://www.hoover.org/research/income-inequality-isnt-problem>] TDI

Finally, has economic inequality been increasing or decreasing? The wrong way to answer that question is by comparing the wealth of billionaires to the wealth of the poorest people on earth. The correct way is to compute something called the Gini coefficient. This coefficient, which can range from 0 to 1, measures income inequality. With total income equality, the Gini would be 0; with total inequality, which would mean one person having all the world’s income, the Gini would be 1. So what has happened to the Gini coefficient over time? Economists Tomas Hellebrandt and Paolo Mauro reported the answer in a [2015 study](https://piie.com/publications/working-papers/future-worldwide-income-distribution) for the Peterson Institute for International Economics. They found that between 2003 and 2013, the worldwide Gini coefficient fell from 0.69 to 0.65, indicating reduced income inequality. Moreover, the two economists predict that by 2035, income inequality will decline further, with the Gini coefficient falling to 0.61. The reason is not that higher income people will do worse but that lower income people in some of the poorest countries, like India and China, will do much better because of economic growth.

If the problem we care about is poverty, then the calls to tax the rich and reduce income inequality are misguided. Instead, we should be cheering for policies that lead to higher economic growth. One other important measure is increased immigration. Allowing more immigration into the United States would allow people to move from low-productivity jobs in poor countries to higher-productivity jobs in America. That would dramatically improve the plight of the poor while also improving, but by a smaller margin, the well-being of the rich. Piketty, for all his faults, put his finger on how to do so. He wrote: “A seemingly more peaceful form of redistribution and regulation of global wealth inequality is immigration.  Rather than move capital, which poses all sorts of difficulties, it is sometimes simpler to allow labor to move to places where wages are higher.”

#### Inequality is at an all-time low.

Salmon ’23 [Felix; 06/14/2023; chief financial correspondent at Axios; "Global economic inequality at lowest level in nearly 150 years," Axios, https://www.axios.com/2023/06/14/global-economic-inequality //The St. Mark’s School of Texas, Anish Guddati–Class of 2024]

This century has known a stunning decrease in global income inequality, bringing it down to levels not seen in well over a century. That's the conclusion that Branko Milanovic, one of the world's foremost inequality researchers, comes to in an important essay for Foreign Affairs.

Why it matters: The U.S. has only about 4% of the world's population. Increasing equality is good for the planet as a whole, but it foreshadows an end to U.S. hegemony.

By the numbers: Inequality is measured using the Gini coefficient, which runs on a scale from 0 (perfect equality) to 100 (where one person would have all of the world's income).

On that scale, inequality fell from 69 in 2000 to 60 in 2018 — and is almost certainly even lower today. That means the world is more equal now than at any point since about 1875.

#### Inequality is decreasing at a lightning pace.

Yascha Mounk 7-16-2023, Professor of the Practice of International Affairs at Johns Hopkins University, a Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, expert on the crisis of liberal democracy and the rise of populism, PhD in Government from Harvard University. "Goodbye to the Prophets of Doom." Atlantic. https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/07/economics-inequality-piketty-milanovic/674702/. DL

During the Great Recession, public discourse about the economy underwent something of a Great Disappointment.

For much of the country’s history, most Americans assumed that the future would bring them or their descendants greater affluence. Despite periodic economic crises, the overall story seemed to be one of progress for every stratum of the population. Those expectations were largely borne out: The standard of living enjoyed by working-class Americans for much of the mid-20th century, for example, was far superior to that enjoyed by affluent Americans a generation or two earlier.

But after the 2008 financial crisis, those assumptions were upended by a period of intense economic suffering coupled with a newfound interest among economists in the topic of inequality. Predictions of economic decline took over the conversation. America, a country long known for its inveterate optimism, came to dread the future—in which it now appeared that most people would have less and less.

Three arguments provided the intellectual foundation for the Great Disappointment. The first, influentially advanced by the MIT economist David Autor, was that the wages of most Americans were stagnating for the first time in living memory. Although the income of average Americans had roughly doubled once every generation for most of the previous century, wage growth for much of the population began to flatline in the 1980s. By 2010, it looked as though poorer Americans faced a future in which they could no longer expect any real improvement in their standard of living.

The second argument had to do with globalization’s impact on the worldwide distribution of income. In a graph that came to be known as the “elephant curve,” the Serbian American economist Branko Milanović argued that the world’s poorest people were experiencing only minor income growth; that the middle percentiles were benefiting mightily from globalization; that those in the upper-middle segment—which included many industrial workers and people in the service industry in rich countries, including America—had seen their incomes stagnate; and that the very richest were making out like bandits. Globalization, it seemed, was a mixed blessing, and a distinctly concerning one for the bottom half of wage earners in industrialized economies such as the United States.

The final, and most sweeping, argument was about the nature and causes of inequality. Even as much of the population was just holding its own in prosperity, the wealth and income of the richest Americans were rising rapidly. In his 2013 surprise best seller, Capital in the Twenty-First Century, the French economist Thomas Piketty proposed that this trend was likely to continue. Arguing that the returns on capital had long outstripped those of labor, Piketty seemed to suggest that only a calamitous event such as a major war—or a radical political transformation, which did not appear to be on the horizon—could help tame the trend toward ever-greater inequality.

The Great Disappointment continues to shape the way many Americans think about the current and future state of the economy. But as the pandemic and the rise of inflation have altered the world economy, the intellectual basis for the thesis has begun to wobble. The reasons for economic pessimism have started to look less convincing than they once were. Is it time to revise the core tenets of the Great Disappointment?

One of the most prominent labor economists in the U.S., Autor has over the past decade provided much of the evidence regarding the stagnation of American workers’ incomes, especially for those without a college degree.

The U.S. economy, Autor wrote in a highly influential paper in 2010, is bifurcating. Even as demand for high-skilled workers rose, demand for “middle-wage, middle-skill white-collar and blue-collar jobs” was contracting. America’s economy, which had once provided plenty of middle-class jobs, was splitting into a highly affluent professional stratum and a large remainder that was becoming more immiserated. The overall outcome, according to Autor, was “falling real earnings for noncollege workers” and “a sharp rise in the inequality of wages.”

Autor’s past work on the falling wages of a major segment of the American workforce makes it all the more notable that he now sounds far more optimistic. Because companies were desperately searching for workers at the tail-end of the pandemic, Autor argues in a working paper published earlier this year, low-wage workers found themselves in a much better bargaining position. There has been a remarkable reversal in economic fortunes.

“Disproportionate wage growth at the bottom of the distribution reduced the college wage premium and reversed the rise in aggregate wage inequality since 1980 by approximately one quarter,” Autor writes. The big winners of recent economic trends are precisely those groups that had been left out in preceding decades: “The rise in wages was particularly strong among workers under 40 years of age and without a college degree.”

Even after accounting for inflation, Autor shows, the bottom quarter of American workers has seen a significant boost in income for the first time in years. The scholar who previously wrote about the “polarization” in the U.S. workforce now concludes that the American economy is experiencing an “unexpected compression.” In other words, the wealth gap is narrowing with surprising speed.

Autor is not the only leading economist who is calling into doubt the underpinnings of the Great Disappointment. According to Milanović, his “elephant curve” proved so influential in part because it confirmed fears many people had about the effects of globalization. His famous graph was, he now admits, an “empirical confirmation of what many thought.” He is no longer so sure about that piece of conventional wisdom.

A few years ago, Milanović set out to update the original elephant curve, which was based on data from 1988 to 2008. The result came as a shock—a positive one. Once Milanović included data for another decade, to 2018, the curve changed shape. Instead of the characteristic “rise, fall, rise again” that had given the curve its viral name, its steadily falling gradient now seemed to paint a straightforward and much more optimistic picture. Over the four decades he now surveyed, the incomes of the poorest people in the world rose very fast, those of people toward the middle of the distribution fairly fast, and those of the richest rather sluggishly. Global economic conditions were improving for nearly everyone, and, contrary to conventional wisdom, it was the most needy, not the most affluent, who were reaping the greatest rewards.

In a recent article for Foreign Affairs, Milanović goes even further. “We’re frequently told,” he writes, that “we live in an age of inequality.” But when you look at the most recent global data, that turns out to be false: In fact, “the world is growing more equal than it has been for over 100 years.”

### 1nc---inequality impact

#### Inequality doesn’t degrade institutions.

Edwards and Bourne 19 [Chris Edwards occupies the Kilts Family Chair in Fiscal Studies at Cato and is the editor of Down​siz​ing​Gov​ern​ment​.org. He is a top expert on federal and state tax and budget issues. Before joining Cato, Edwards was a senior economist on the congressional Joint Economic Committee, a manager with PricewaterhouseCoopers, and an economist with the Tax Foundation; Ryan Bourne occupies the R. Evan Scharf Chair for the Public Understanding of Economics at Cato and is the author of the recent book Economics In One Virus. He has written on numerous economic issues, including fiscal policy, inequality, minimum wages, infrastructure spending, the cost of living and rent control., “Exploring Wealth Inequality.” Policy Analysis No. 881, Cato Institute, Washington, DC, November 5, 2019. https://​doi​.org/​1​0​.​3​6​0​0​9​/​P​A.881.]

6. Inequality Does Not Erode Democracy A popular idea on the political left is that wealth inequality undermines democracy. New York Times columnist Krugman asked, “Can anyone seriously deny that our political system is being warped by the influence of big money, and that the warping is getting worse as the wealth of a few grows ever larger?”173 And Senator Warren exhorted: “You’ve got things that are broken in your life; I’ll tell you exactly why. It’s because giant corporations, billionaires have seized our government.”174 A former lead economist at the World Bank, Branko Milanović, claimed: In every political system, even a democracy, the rich tend to hold more political power. The danger is that this political power will be used to promote policies that further cement the economic power of the rich. The higher the inequality, the more likely we are to move away from democracy toward plutocracy.175 The designers of Senator Warren’s wealth tax plan—economists Saez and Zucman—favor higher taxes on the rich to resist a supposed “oligarchic drift that, if left unaddressed, will continue undermining the social compact and risk killing democracy.”176 Similarly, Vanessa Williamson of the Brookings Institution argues that “the purpose of high tax rates on the rich is the reduction of vast fortunes that give a handful of people a level of power incompatible with democracy.”177 **Are such fears justified? No**, for numerous reasons. The political views of the wealthy are not homogeneous, and on many issues, they track the views of the **rest of the population**. When the preferences of the wealthy are different, they are often not followed by policymakers, who ultimately need votes, not money. Finally, the empirical evidence is complex, but it appears that money does not buy elections, and wealthy self‐​funded candidates often do **poorly**. The Preferences of the Wealthy Do the wealthy have different policy preferences than the rest of us? If they do not have different policy preferences, then even if they had large political clout, it would not affect policy outcomes. The breakdown of policy views of broad lower‑, middle‑, and higher‐​income groups are quite similar. Alexander Branham, Stuart Soroka, and Christopher Wlezien note that empirical research generally shows that “preferences across economic groups, especially the middle and rich, do not differ much in many policy areas. In these instances, it does not matter whether public policy is more responsive to one group—policy will end up in the same place.”178 In their 2017 analysis of 1,779 poll questions on policy, they found, “in nearly 90 percent of cases, majorities of the middle and rich are in agreement.”179 On 80 percent of questions, majorities of all three income groups agreed, albeit with differing degrees of enthusiasm. Political scientist Martin Gilens notes that “the affluent are no more (or less) likely to be of one mind on the proposed policy changes in my dataset than are Americans within low and middle incomes.”180 Pew Research found that individuals with family incomes above $150,000 are equally likely to identify as Republican or Democrat (33 percent to 32 percent).181 Within every income group there is, of course, a broad range of policy views. Jonah Goldberg noted the diversity among billionaires: “George Soros, Tom Steyer, and other liberal billionaires are in a hammer‐​and‐​tongs political battle with Sheldon Adelson, Charles and David Koch, and other conservative or libertarian billionaires.”182 Similarly, the top 10 wealthiest members of Congress are five Democrats and five Republicans. There is little class solidarity among the wealthy. We used Roll Call’s “Wealth of Congress” database to compare support for social programs in roll call votes from 2009 through 2018 with the net worth of House and Senate members.183 In Figure 3, each dot is a member of Congress. Support for redistribution is modeled by examining how members of Congress voted in roll calls on subjects containing the following terms: Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, Welfare, Entitlement, CHIP, or SNAP. The figure and a simple regression reveal that there is a correlation between politicians’ wealth and their support of social programs among Democrats, but there is no correlation among Republicans.184 The figure shows that party label is a much more important factor than wealth in explaining the votes. Democrats are much more supportive of social programs and clustered at the top of the chart, while Republicans are clustered at the bottom. The key determinant of their voting records on these issues is party affiliation, not wealth. Clearly then, being wealthy does not by itself determine one’s political preferences. However, subcomponents of the wealthy may lean in particular political directions. A recent study looking at campaign contributions estimated that 57 percent of S&P 500 chief executives are Republicans and only 19 percent Democrats.185 Also, Gilens’s work on the preferences of the top 10 percent of income earners found some differences in political preferences compared to the rest of the population.186 The top 10 percent have somewhat stronger opposition to taxes and business regulation. They also tend to be less protectionist on trade policy; less conservative on religious and moral issues; and more supportive of foreign aid, top income and capital gains tax cuts, gas tax increases, and restraint in Social Security and Medicare spending. Evidence on the views of the extremely wealthy is scarcer. But a survey by Benjamin Page, Larry Bartels, and Jason Seawright of 104 wealthy individuals in Chicago in 2011 found differences in political preferences from the rest of the population for those with a net worth of $40 million or more.187 This group was more likely than others to think excessive government spending and budget deficits were the most important economic problem the country faced. They were also more likely to want to cut Social Security, healthcare, food stamps, and homeland security spending than the rest of the public and less likely than the broader public to support a federal jobs guarantee and more redistribution. However, even this elite group supported progressive taxation at about current rates. They also wanted a progressive Social Security system but were split on whether high earners should pay more to fund it. On regulation, they favored intervention in areas where scandals have occurred but considered small businesses to be overregulated. There are some differences within this top group—professionals generally had more liberal views than business owners, managers, and investors. Do the Rich Have Disproportionate Political Power? On many issues where the wealthy do have different preferences than the rest of us, it does **not appear that they get their way in policy**. Data show that the wealthy are very concerned about federal budget deficits, yet today’s deficits are massive, and neither party seems interested in tackling the problem. Donald Trump won the presidency promising trade protectionism, unreformed entitlement programs, reducing immigration, and putting conservative judges into courts. None of those positions are particularly popular among the very wealthy. However, Trump does support deregulation and tax cuts, which the wealthy have a relative preference for. But interestingly, not one CEO in the Fortune 100 had donated to Trump’s election campaign by September 2016. His victory did not stem from influence by the wealthy but more from grassroots opposition to wealthy coastal elites. The rich have less direct influence on electoral outcomes or policy platforms than is commonly believed.188 Some scholars disagree with that view. Using a data set primarily covering 1981–2002, Gilens analyzed the relative influence of high earners in situations when opinions between income groups differed.189 He concluded that the federal government is responsive to the public’s preferences, but it is more strongly responsive to the preferences of the most affluent. He focused on issues with an average preference gap in survey data of at least 10 percentage points between the rich and the rest and concluded: When less‐​well‐​off Americans hold preferences that diverge from those of the affluent, policy responsiveness to the well‐​off remains strong but responsiveness to lower‐​income groups all but disappears.190 However, Gilens’s methodology is problematic.191 He admits there are exceptions to his conclusions, and we think those exceptions are large. On Social Security, Medicare, education, and public works spending, for example, policy outcomes appear more responsive to the preferences of the poor and middle class than the rich. Those policy areas account for about half of all federal spending.192 Adding in defense spending, which research suggests the super‐​wealthy also favor cutting, brings that share to more than 60 percent. Thus, for most of the federal budget, the reform approach relatively favored by the wealthy is generally not followed. Gilens’ study exaggerates the influence of the rich for another reason. By looking at differences in the relative strength of support for policies, “a federal policy enacted with the support of 80 percent of the wealthy and 70 percent of the middle and lower class would count as evidence of the upper class’s greater political clout.”193 But that would be a policy that is strongly supported by all income groups. In their 2017 study, Branham, Soroka, and Wlezien looked at policy outcomes just on those issues where majorities of the middle class and rich disagree.194 In these situations, the rich got their way 53 percent of the time versus 47 percent of the time for the middle class. That is a fairly small difference, though one that increases slightly in favor of the rich when there are stronger differences in opinion. In other words, when the majority of the rich favors a policy and a majority of the middle class opposes it, the policy is adopted 37 percent of the time, compared to 26 percent of the time when the rich oppose and the middle favor. Over the 22‐​year period examined by the authors, that means the rich got their way 11 more times than the middle class, equivalent to just one bill every two years. This indicates that the rich’s views may be favored in federal policy outcomes, but the size of the effect is small. Finally, a statistical study by Eric Brunner, Stephen Ross, and Ebonya Washington found that the views of the rich were not favored in legislation. They created a unique data set based on 77 times from 1991 to 2008 that California state legislators voted on the same proposal as the public voted on in a referendum. They compiled information on the ballot votes by neighborhood income levels and found: Contrary to popular view, we do not find that less income means less representation. Analyzing the voting behavior of state legislators on 77 proposals on which both the legislature and the public cast ballots, we find first that the opinions of higher and lower income voters within a district are highly correlated on these issues and thus it is impossible to represent the views of one group and not also represent the views of the other. What differences there are in representation do not result in lower income voters’ consistent disadvantage. While Republican legislators more frequently vote congruently with the view of their highest income constituents, Democrats are more likely to vote the view of their lowest income constituents… . What is clear is that our findings on representation by income group have more to do with party than with income.195

#### No social collapse nor aggression---state capacity checks.

Hanania ’20 [Richard; October 29; Research Fellow at Defense Priorities, and a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies at Columbia University; Washington Post, “Americans hate each other. But we aren’t headed for civil war,” https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/civil-war-united-states-unlikely-violence/2020/10/29/3a143936-0f0f-11eb-8074-0e943a91bf08\_story.html]

Despite its appeal, this view betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of political violence. Historically, the academic literature on the causes of civil war was divided into two categories: Some scholars viewed such conflicts as a predictable outcome whenever there were deep grievances within national populations, while others stressed the importance of citizens having an opportunity to act on those resentments. Much of the discussion about violence in the United States today centers, implicitly, on the grievance model, holding that if we know how much different tribes of Americans hate each other, we can predict the likelihood of fighting in the streets.

But scholars now prefer the opportunity model, thanks to large-scale studies that examine political violence worldwide with cutting-edge statistical methods. Grievances and societal cleavages exist everywhere, waiting to be exploited. What distinguishes the countries that descend into civil war from those that do not is the lack of state capacity to put down rebellion — for reasons rooted in politics, economics or geography.

You might expect, for instance, states that lack democracy, that have diverse populations or that discriminate against minorities would be at the highest risk of internal conflict, because such conditions foment bitter grievances. But in fact, those qualities are at most loosely correlated with civil war, as scholars like the Stanford University political scientists James Fearon and David Laitin and the University of California at San Diego’s Barbara F. Walter have shown.

Rather, civil wars happen where the state is weak. Lower levels of wealth predict civil war, because poor countries lack the law enforcement and military capability to put down armed rebellions. That helps to explain recent conflicts in such varied countries as Yemen and Congo. Power vacuums, as occurred during and after decolonization, after American regime-change wars and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, create uncertainty about who is in charge and can inspire those who seek power to take up arms. There are other factors, too: States that are rich in oil see more civil war because the potential payoffs of a successful rebellion are higher — but this applies only up to a certain level of income, after which point the government is often able to buy off or destroy any potential challengers.

The Balkans offer a ready example of how grievance based on ethnic tension must be intertwined with the collapse of order for groups to take up arms against one another. While various ethnolinguistic communities there long eyed each other with suspicion, going back to the days of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires, those tensions did not lead to violence for most of the region’s history, including during the nearly half-century of communist rule. But when the Soviet empire fell and communist governments were discredited, parts of Yugoslavia began to declare independence. Serbs, Bosnians, Croats and Albanians, incited by political opportunists and demagogues, fought wars against one another for a decade, drawing in the international community, until sovereign states emerged with new, widely accepted borders.

In one influential 2006 study representative of the new school of thought — one that examined 172 countries from 1945 to 2000 — the political scientists Havard Hegre, of the Center for the Study of Civil War, and Nicholas Sambanis, of Yale University, used advanced statistical tools to determine which of 88 factors most consistently predicted civil war. Grievance-based measures like authoritarian government and ethnolinguistic diversity ranked low or had no discernible effect (although the latter did predict internal conflict when the analysis included the lowest level of conflict measured, defined as 25 or more deaths in a year). In contrast, Hegre and Sambanis found that measures of opportunity like a small military establishment and rough terrain — which offers a base from which rebels can strike — had a much stronger and more consistent effect.

Geography is a surprisingly potent variable in predicting civil war — and can confound even moderately strong states. During such conflicts, governments usually control the cities, and rebels form bases in relatively inaccessible regions like mountains, forests and swamps. Countries that have had problems with mountain-based minorities include Russia, which has confronted rebels in Chechnya, and Turkey, which is still fighting Kurds in the southeast of the country. (Until the 1990s, the Turkish government even referred to Kurds as “Mountain Turks,” denying their identity while acknowledging the geographical nature of the problem.)

Even with the most difficult geographic conditions, however, wealth and government power tend to erase opportunities for rebellion. Consider that in 1948 and 1949, South Korea faced a communist-led uprising on Jeju Island — which lies in the Korea Strait, about 60 miles from the mainland — in a conflict that cost as many as 30,000 lives, mostly civilian. A poor, newly independent South Korea had difficulty bringing that island under control and relied on brutal tactics to do so, including summary executions. But now that South Korea has joined the club of modern, industrialized states with advanced militaries, the idea of a region like Jeju rebelling has become unthinkable.

Wealth and military power explain why, in the United States, civil war is likely to remain a metaphor. Its per capita gross domestic product is about $62,000 a year, among the highest in the world, and its military is clearly capable of wiping out any challenges to state power. (The U.S. Civil War occurred when the nation had a per capita GDP comparable to that of a developing nation today, and when military technology was limited to rifles and cannon.) The Pentagon has 1.3 million active-duty personnel, can find terrorists on the other side of the world and wipe them out with the push of a button, and boasts a command-and-control structure with no recent history of factionalization. There is no swamp or mountain peak that is beyond the easy reach of the U.S. military.

#### There’s zero statistical relation to conflict.

Ariely ’15 [Gal; 2015; Politics and Government Professor at Ben–Gurion University; Globalizations, “Does National Identification Always Lead to Chauvinism? A Cross-national Analysis of Contextual Explanations,” vol. 13]

With respect to internal explanations, the effects of income inequality and ethnic diversity are presented in Table 3. Models 3.1 and 3.2 indicate that neither directly affects chauvinism. H4 is therefore not supported. The results suggest, however, that both have a negative effect on the national-identification slopes. Contrary to our expectations, countries with higher levels of economic and ethnic division appear to exhibit a weaker relation between national identification and chauvinism. While these findings might seem to contradict H5, the pattern was caused by outliers. After excluding South Africa—the most unequal and ethnic diverse country in our sample—the effect of ethnic diversity is not even of borderline significance. After excluding Chile—the most unequal country in our sample—the interaction effects for economic inequality were also far from significant. The results, therefore, do not support H5.21

<<TABLE 3 OMITTED>>

Conclusions

During the historic phone call between President Obama and Iranian President Sheikh Hasan Rouhani in September 2013, the latter stated that his country's nuclear program ‘represents Iran's national dignity’.22 This declaration reflects the common perception that Iran's nuclear program mobilizes Iranians in support of resisting further national humiliation at the hands of foreigners (Moshirzadeh, 2007). This reflects the important role national feelings play in the contemporary international arena. Evidence from other examples—such as the Israeli-Palestine conflict—indicates that national identity serves as a key factor in conflict resolution. The prominence of national feelings is not limited to the Middle East, their effect on public attitudes towards international issues, and conflicts also being manifest in the West (Billig, 1995; Kinder & Kam, 2010).

It is thus hardly surprising that scholars seeking to develop a better understanding of conflicts adopt a social-psychology perspective, replacing the deterministic view that identification with one's in-group necessarily leads to antagonism towards out-groups with an examination of the broader social context. In line with this approach, the present paper focuses on the way in which political and social contexts encourage chauvinistic views towards the international arena and how they affect the relation between national identification and chauvinism.

Integrating various social and psychological theories, we investigated two external contextual explanations (globalization and conflict) and an internal explanation (social division). Employing cross-national survey data, we examined the relation between national identification and chauvinism across 33 countries. The findings indicate that a positive relationship exists between national identification and chauvinism across most of the countries, although the level differs from country to country. Using a multilevel regression analysis, we tested to see whether globalization, conflict, and social division correlate with this variation. The results indicate that social and political contexts are related to chauvinism and the ways national identification and chauvinism are linked. Although a closer relation exists between national identification and chauvinism in more globalized countries, globalization failed to explain the variation in chauvinism itself. These findings support the notion that globalization highlights the importance of national identity (Calhoun, 2007; Castells, 2011). While those sections of globalized societies that are attached to their country also tend to resist international cooperation and endorse hostile views, the complexity of the phenomenon—as evinced by the divergent findings of previous studies (e.g. Jung, 2008; Norris & Inglehart, 2009)—calls for further research of this interpretation. The fact that the current study is cross-sectional must also be taken into account, the findings adducing the relation but not the causal relations between the variables. In contrast to experimental studies, the present design is similarly limited in its ability to offer a robust control for alternative explanations.

Another external factor found to be relevant—to a certain degree—was conflict. Countries that suffered large numbers of deaths in conflicts and mobilized resources and personnel exhibited higher levels of chauvinism. When other indices for conflict were used, however, these results were not replicated. A possible explanation for this finding lies in the inherent limitation in the way in which conflicts are measured across various countries. Measuring international conflicts is a challenging task (Anderton & Carter, 2011). While the ways of measuring conflict were chosen because they reflect different dimensions of conflict in order to be representative of a wide range of countries, the problem of comparability cannot be ignored. An alternative explanation may derive from the fact that only deaths from conflict and resources/personnel mobilization are sufficiently significant to contribute to chauvinism. The limitations of our measurements of conflict and research design mean that this idea must remain speculative, however. In addition, it is important to emphasize that the sample of countries is also limited as many countries are not involved in conflict and there is also limited variation in the types of conflicts.

Contrary to what the divisionary theory of national mobilization would lead us to expect, neither economic inequality nor ethnic diversity were related to chauvinism or affected the relation between national identification and chauvinism. This finding might also be explained by the limitation of the current research design. The number of countries included in the ISSP 2003 National Identity Module being relatively small and the sample only covering countries with available survey data, the results relate solely to this specific sample of countries. Across another set of countries, social division might play a far more significant role. Another explanation might be the meaning given to national identification and chauvinism across the countries. While evidence exists for the comparability of the scales across most of the countries, the divergent meaning probably attributed to them in Germany, the United States, and Israel might form an additional limitation.

### 1nc---civil war

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#### No civil war impact.

Chris Blattman 22, Professor of Global Conflict Studies at The University of Chicago, 7/5/2022, "The United States is not headed for civil war," https://chrisblattman.com/blog/2022/07/05/the-united-states-is-not-headed-for-civil-war/, cc

In 2016, democracy rating organizations began downgrading the United States, some scoring American institutions below that of El Salvador, then Nigeria, then Iraq. Then, following the Jan. 6 insurrection last year, articles and books began predicting something scarier: another civil war.

The most sensational accounts foretold a national breakup, neighbor killing neighbor. The more level-headed ones warned of something still dire: a far-right insurgency waging a long campaign of bombings and attacks. The disturbing evidence emerging from the Jan. 6 congressional hearings merely underscores such concerns.

These worries are understandable but flawed. After a career studying civil wars small and large, organized violence in the United States strikes me as extraordinarily unlikely. Worse, focusing on civil war dangerously distracts Americans from the real risks.

That is my op-ed for USATODAY, published Sunday. There was a surge of articles and books this past year. A piece by Karen and Gregory Treverton, a book by Stephen Marche, and Barbara Walter’s bestseller. I see things differently.

Now, those prophesizing war have a point. If you take civil conflict from recent history, you find a chillingly familiar list of initial conditions: politics hardening along identity lines; a surge of armed groups; an erosion of institutions. Ethnic polarization and democratic backsliding are especially persistent predictors of state collapse.

But apply this to the United States with care. The data driving these results comes from predicting massive acts of violence – genocide or revolutionary wars – almost all from low- and middle-income countries. It’s dubious to use these models to predict a different phenomenon – low-scale insurgency – in America or other rich, advanced democracies.

America’s democracy numbers also don’t add up. In 2015, raters like the Polity Project gave the United States a perfect score of 10 – one it had enjoyed for decades. Then Donald Trump was elected president, and America’s score fell to 8.

In 2019, after the failed impeachment of Trump, Polity’s score fell further to 7. Finally, on Jan. 7, 2021, immediately following the insurrection, Polity announced a drop to a 5, meaning “no longer a democracy.”

Political scientists woke up, as rapid plunges to this level are persistently correlated with outbreaks of civil war.

But this slide is suspicious. It would mean that American democracy today is several points below that of 1859, on the eve of the Civil War, and when a majority of adults were barred from voting. It would put present-day U.S. institutions on par with other 5’s, like Haiti and Somalia. Meanwhile, countries like Hungary – the poster nation for democratic backsliding – maintain a perfect 10.

This defies credibility. One suspects that it’s the democracy raters who have become politicized, not American institutions. The backslide is surely exaggerated. So, then, are predictions of civil war.

The fact is, even societies with hardened identities rarely erupt in conflict. One study looked at every ethnic pairing in Africa and Eastern Europe in the late 20th century and found no more than 1 in 1,000 turned violent in a given year.

So, yes, if you trace back from a civil war you find polarized politics, or a surge of protest and arms. But trace back from periods without war and you will find a lot of the same conditions. These are not automatic forerunners of violence.

Here’s why: As a general rule, enemies prefer to loathe one another in peace. That’s because war – especially civil war – is disastrous. It kills people, destroys economies and weakens the country to outside enemies. This gives all sides huge incentives to avoid violence.

For anyone who doubted these horrific consequences, the events of Jan. 6, 2021, offered a painful reminder. This may be why far-right movements and violent political acts have declined since the insurrection.

Because of these costs, most political factions don’t fight. An extremist militia in the United States would be no exception. Few things are harder than launching an insurgency against a powerful state. Intelligence services will hunt you down. Justice systems will jail you. You will live clandestinely, full of hardships. This is why even the most disaffected groups are often dissuaded from violence. Better to use politics by normal means.

Those who do see violence ahead for America often point to the Troubles in Northern Ireland – a rare example of insurgency in a wealthy democracy. I draw comfort from this comparison. Northern Ireland was far more polarized and factionalized than America today. It also had a decades-long history of a well-organized, clandestine armed movement with broad public sympathy.

Naturally there are parallels to America today, but the differences in scale and seriousness are vast.

Another key difference is the state response. British forces had limited intelligence and were indiscriminately violent. When a Catholic boy in Derry threw a flaming bottle of fuel, the British military would sweep in and arrest half the neighborhood, beating (even killing) a few. Insurgent leaders joked that the British state was their best recruiter.

U.S. security services are less partisan, more targeted and restrained. The FBI disrupts most militias before they lay their first bomb. And if a far-right fundamentalist does demolish a building, federal agents don’t round up all the Proud Boys for 20 miles and beat them up. They mount an investigation and see the perpetrator prosecuted.

### 1nc---stagnation

#### It’s totally misunderstood AND inevitable due to demographics.

Krugman ’22 [Paul; June 21; American economist who is the Distinguished Professor of Economics at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York; New York Times, “Is the Era of Cheap Money Over?” https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/21/opinion/inflation-interest-rates-fed.html]

The basic answer is that since 2000 and especially since the global financial crisis, businesses have persistently been unwilling to maintain a level of investment spending that used all the money households wanted to save, unless interest rates were very low. This condition has the unfortunate name “secular stagnation” — unfortunate because it’s widely and wrongly construed as an assertion that it means slow growth, not low interest rates. The idea of secular stagnation was introduced in the 1930s, but the postwar boom made it seem irrelevant. Then Japan began experiencing persistent weakness and very low interest rates in the 1990s, and in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, the whole advanced world found itself in a similar condition.

What causes secular stagnation? The best guess is that it’s largely about demography. When the working-age population is growing slowly or even shrinking, there’s much less need for new office parks, shopping malls, even housing, hence weak demand. And as you can see in this chart, America’s prime-working-age population, which grew rapidly for many decades, began stagnating just about the time interest rates began sliding:



And these demographic forces aren’t going away. If anything, they’re likely to intensify, in part because the rate of immigration has dropped off. So there’s every reason to believe that we’ll fairly soon go back to an era of low interest rates.

#### Labor-force participation is extremely high and increasing.

Sparshott 23 [Jeffrey Sparshott, Wall Street Journal economics reporter; “Americans in Their Prime Are Flooding Into the Job Market”; July 22, 2023; https://www.wsj.com/articles/americans-working-job-market-prime-age-9fdc339b]//eleanor

The core of the American labor force is back.

Americans between 25 and 54 years of age are either employed or looking for jobs at rates not seen in two decades, a trend helping to counter the exodus of older baby boomers from the workforce. Economists define that age range as in their prime working years—when most Americans are done with their formal education, aren’t ready to retire and tend to be most attached to the labor force.

In the first months of the pandemic, nearly four million prime-age workers left the labor market, pushing participation in early 2020 to the lowest level since 1983—before women had become as much of a force in the workplace. Prime-age workers now exceed prepandemic levels by almost 2.2 million.

That growth is taking a little heat out of the job market and could help the Federal Reserve’s efforts to tamp down inflation by keeping wage growth in check.

Women lead the way

The resurgence of midcareer workers is driven by women taking jobs.

The labor-force participation rate for prime-age women was the highest on record, 77.8% in June. That is well up from 73.5% in April 2020.

Men, however, tend to be employed at higher rates. The overall prime-age participation rate rose in June to 83.5%, the highest since 2002.

The big draw: a tight labor market. The unemployment rate has hovered near a half-century low for more than a year, and job openings outnumber the ranks of unemployed. Employers can’t be as choosy or selective, William Rodgers, vice president and director of the Institute for Economic Equity at the St. Louis Fed, said earlier this month.

Employers “are more apt to be willing to work with candidates—in this case it’s working with moms, or parents in general,” he said. “Tight labor markets can help to punish those who discriminate in hiring and compensation.”

Other factors are also at play. Women aren’t having as many children—there were about 3.66 million births in 2022, 655,000 fewer than the peak in 2007—so child-care responsibilities have decreased.

Julia Pollak, chief economist at ZipRecruiter, said it is possible for women’s participation to rise further if employers adopt or the government requires additional family-friendly policies. U.S. female participation lags behind that of other industrialized economies in part because of the cost of child care, which is subsidized elsewhere.

Rising wages lure workers, counter demographic shifts

Employers raised wages, offered employees more flexibility and improved benefits in recent years.

Average wage gains remain elevated this year and have recently surpassed inflation. And Americans are logging more hours of work from home than they did before the pandemic.

Employer recruitment efforts helped offset some broader demographic shifts, including an aging population and rise in retirements.

The share of the population age 55 and over in the labor force climbed steadily from the mid-1990s through the 2008 financial crisis and remained elevated for more than a decade. The Covid-19 pandemic pushed many out of the workforce, and some older workers haven’t returned, particularly those over 65.

Much of the decline in the overall participation rate was anticipated as baby boomers aged out of the workforce, but the rise in prime-age workers meant the drop wasn’t as steep.

The Congressional Budget Office in January 2020, just before the pandemic hit, forecast the overall participation rate to deteriorate steadily through the 2020s, moving down to 62.4% in the second quarter of this year

Instead, the rate was a couple of ticks higher in June at 62.6%, supported by prime-age workers.

“It seems like there is almost no cap on the supply of workers, only a speed limit on how fast we can bring them in,” Pollak said, referring to both rising prime-age participation and an influx of immigrants into the workforce.

#### Growth-rates are trendless, economic cycles theory is wrong, and productivity growth decline is a result of innovations and population.

Borsato 23 [Andrea Borsato is a Postdoctoral Researcher at CNRS BETA, University of Strasbourg, University of Lorraine, Strasbourg, France; “Does the Secular Stagnation hypothesis match the data? Evidence from the USA”; Journal of Post-Keynesian Economics; August 4, 2023; https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01603477.2023.2242346?casa\_token=yRUimAgNe4kAAAAA%3AkgDmBAcJvyR7EKLQSMuv4xdtQoBVrzhHjCE6AFv7JSOLaZohS7Ts8W64zqivlizDqyL3Ro5VF\_nb3g]//eleanor

Concluding remarks

This paper proposed a systematization of the concept of Secular Stagnation focussing on US historical macroeconomic data from 1870 to 2022. Once departed from Hansen (Citation1939), this work examined its post-2007 revival by Prof. Summers and others. I showed that the term “Secular Stagnation” is somewhat misleading as used in the literature. On the one hand, the literature applies the concept to describe an economy affected by an overall slowdown in economic growth. Yet, it is shown that the growth rate of GDP per capita has been trendless since 1870. In other words, the current weak performance is a return to the pre-Golden Age growth. On the other hand, the Secular Stagnation hypothesis as in Summers (Citation2014a, Citation2014b) suffers from serious theoretical drawbacks. He limits the analysis to the post-2007 world and to the weak economic performance emerged out of the Great Recession. Though the crisis has persistently affected the economy, this paper argued that it is reductive to explain every fact in terms of economic cycles. Summers examines only the very recent past. Furthermore, the ZLB economics as in Summers relies on some contradictory hypotheses that undermine its actual admissibility (Di Bucchianico Citation2020; Palley Citation2019).

The most important contribution of this essay is that we should regard Secular Stagnation as a problem of labor and multifactor productivity growth: their growth decline since the 1970s cannot be associated with any return to past performance. In that case, we should even talk about a phenomenon that involves a time span longer than what considered in most present-day debates on the topic. My findings support the arguments according to which stagnating-demand policies and the general increase of income inequality depressed investments and productivity growth (Hein Citation2015, Citation2016; Arestis Citation2021), as well as some support to supply-side viewpoints à la Gordon (Citation2012, Citation2015) and Eichengreen (Citation2015). The two authors associate the decrease in productivity growth with faltering innovations also paired with the overall decline in population growth.

#### It's also global and inevitable. Empirical studies prove it has no effect.

The Economist ’15 [The Economist; March 5; Internationally regarded British newspaper; The Economist, “Still, not stagnant,” https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2015/03/05/still-not-stagnant]

Is America stuck in a rut of low growth, feeble inflation and rock-bottom interest rates? Lots of economists believe in the idea of “secular stagnation”, and they have plenty of evidence to point to. The population is ageing and long-run growth prospects look dim. Interest rates, which have been near zero for years, are still not low enough to get the American economy zipping along. A new paper published by the University of Chicago’s Booth School of Business, however, reckons that secular stagnation is not quite the right diagnosis for America’s ills.\*

A country in the grip of secular stagnation cannot find enough good investments to soak up available savings. The drain on demand from these underused savings leads to weak growth. It also leaves central banks in a bind. If the real (ie inflation adjusted) “equilibrium” interest rate (the one that gets an economy growing at a healthy clip) falls well below zero, then central bankers will struggle to push their policy rate low enough to drag the economy out of trouble, since it is hard to push nominal (ie, not adjusted for inflation) rates deep into negative territory. Worse, in the process of trying, they may end up inflating financial bubbles, which lead to unsustainable growth and grisly busts.

Stagnationists argue that this is not a bad description of America since the 1980s. Real interest rates have been falling for years, they note, a sign of a glut of savings. Recoveries from recent recessions have been weak and jobless. When growth has perked up, soaring asset prices and consumer borrowing appear to have done the heavy lifting.

The authors of the Chicago paper—James Hamilton, Ethan Harris, Jan Hatzius and Kenneth West—dispute this interpretation of events. Stagnationists are right, they note, that real interest rates have been falling, and have in fact been negative for much of the past 15 years. But low real rates do not necessarily imply that future growth will be weak, as many economic models assume. The authors examine central-bank interest rates, inflation and growth in 20 countries over 40 years. They find at best a weak relationship between economic growth and the equilibrium rate. If there is a long-run link, they argue, it tends to be overshadowed by other factors.

After the second world war, for example, government controls on rates (“financial repression”) prevented the market from having its say. In recent years short-run woes have dragged down the equilibrium rate, such as the “50-miles-per-hour headwinds” that Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, described in 1991, when bad loans pushed big American banks to the brink of insolvency. The authors note that such stormy periods are usually short-lived, and that when the headwinds abate the equilibrium rate tends to pop back up.

They also reckon the stagnationists are misinterpreting some of the evidence. Growth in the 1990s was not illusory, they argue. The stockmarket boom only really got going in 1998, after America’s unemployment rate had already fallen below 5%.

The expansion of the 2000s looks like a better example of secular stagnation. Investment in housing, which rose from 4.9% of GDP in 2001 to 6.6% at the market’s peak in 2006, helped sustain the boom. Rising house prices made Americans feel flush, propelling consumer spending. Expanding credit added about one percentage point to growth each year, says the paper.

Yet the behaviour of the economy in this period looks more like a product of distortion than stagnation. At the time China and oil-producing states were running enormous current-account surpluses with America and building up large foreign-exchange reserves, contributing to what Ben Bernanke, Mr Greenspan’s successor as Fed chairman, labelled a “global saving glut”. Expensive oil and rising Chinese imports placed a drag on growth that more or less offset the boost from housing. Take away the savings glut and the housing boom, and the American economy would not necessarily have grown any faster or slower, just more healthily.

#### Productivity is high and GDP growth will bounce back.

Capital Economics, 10-15-2023, "What will the global economy look like in 2050?," https://www.capitaleconomics.com/what-will-global-economy-look-2050, KL

Below are excerpts from our latest annual Long Run Economic Outlook, a comprehensive analysis of how advanced and emerging economies will perform in the years to 2050. Access to the complete report, including extensive long-term forecasts, is available as part of a subscription to our CE Advance premium product or to our dedicated Long Run coverage.

* The war in Ukraine has added to other shocks triggering a fracturing of the global economic system. This will reinforce some of the structural trends that were already set to weaken the long-term growth prospects of emerging markets (EMs), in particular. Although global GDP growth will bounce back after this year’s slowdown, it will settle at around 2.5%, below the average of 3.7% between 2000 and 2019. (See Chart 1.)
* Output is back to pre-pandemic levels in all but the few countries shown in Chart 2. In the big picture, the pandemic has caused only minor lasting damage. Nonetheless, productivity in some EMs has been dented by the impact on the capital stock, while labour markets in some developed markets (DMs) have not recovered fully. Migration has rebounded; instead, the problem is lower participation. (See Chart 3.) This may yet be reversed if governments tackle problems such as the rise in long-term sick.
* One long-term impact of the war will be to accelerate Russia’s shift towards isolation and hinder her catch-up. As for the West, the war has highlighted the threat of cyberattacks on critical infrastructure, although major economic ramifications would only be likely if an attack on the financial sector triggered a bank run.
* The war is also pushing the West to greater energy security. In the near term, this might delay progress towards climate ambitions, but ultimately it should accelerate the transition towards renewable energy. We are optimistic about the ability of technology and economic incentives to help reduce emissions.
* Our assumption for carbon dioxide emissions is consistent with the global average surface temperature rising to about 1.8°C above its pre-industrial level by 2050. (See Chart 4.) This would be between the IPCC’s low and intermediate scenarios and mean that global warming has little effect on our economic forecasts to 2050 for most countries.
* Demographics remain a more important driver of the long-term prospects of most economies, with Chart 5 showing those countries facing the biggest fall in their working age populations over the coming decades. A pick-up in productivity growth may help to mitigate the impact of a declining labour force in DMs. The recent release of artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots has highlighted the potential opportunities created by generative AI. But China and those countries aligned to it will suffer from reduced technology and investment flows between the US and China blocs.
* The monetary tightening being implemented should be sufficient to ensure that inflation comes back to its target. But inflation is unlikely to return to the below-target rates seen before the pandemic. (See Chart 6.) The structural factors that previously pushed it down, including globalisation and demographics, have eased or gone into reverse.
* And inflation could be more volatile than in recent decades. Global warming may cause more extreme weather events. And the China-led bloc has easier access to the raw materials needed for the green transition, which it might leverage for political means. (See Chart 7.) Assuming this volatility is biased to the upside, then inflation may average a little above target.
* Nominal interest rates have risen to the highest levels since 2008. But with equilibrium real interest rates still likely to be very low, they are likely to return to fairly low levels by historical standards once inflation falls. (See Chart 8.)



World in 2050

India to rise to third place

* Our long-term projections for real global GDP growth of 2.5% per annum imply that the world economy will be just over twice as big by 2050 than it was last year. (See Chart 9.)
* EMs currently account for 47% of the world economy. With GDP growth in EMs set to outpace that in DMs, even if by a smaller margin than in the past, their share of the world economy will exceed 50% in around 2028 and reach 60% or so by 2050. (See Chart 10.)
* Perhaps a more relevant way to view the world than the EM/DM split is the relative weight of the US-bloc and China-bloc. The share of global output accounted for by the China-led bloc increased sharply from 9% in 1990 to 27% today. (See Chart 11.) But this share is unlikely to be any bigger in 2050, in part due to the productivity-sapping effects of fracturing. And many of the faster-growing EMs, including India, are more aligned to the US.
* The countries that have grown the most by 2050 will be those with rapid population growth, especially those in Sub-Saharan Africa. (See Chart 12.) But countries with the biggest growth of GDP per capita will be those that achieve the fastest productivity catch-up with countries at the technology frontier.
* These include countries that will benefit from the green transition (e.g. Chile). And some (e.g. Mexico and Poland) will profit from becoming bigger suppliers of products such as electronics as part of the reconfiguring of supply chains in the US and euro-zone. That said, none will see the type of growth rates that China enjoyed during its heyday in the 2000s.
* Of the ten economies that are currently the biggest in the world, India stands out for being set to see strong growth of its population and GDP per capita. (See Chart 13.) By 2050, India will have gone from the 5th to the 3rd biggest economy in the world and account for the same share of global GDP as the euro-zone. Indonesia will have entered the top 10, and Italy dropped out. (See Table 19 on page 47.) Meanwhile, Bangladesh and Vietnam will jump up around 20 places to 15th and 16th place respectively. A falling population and a productivity-sapping emphasis on self-sufficiency will prevent China from overtaking the US as the biggest economy.
* We expect the US to retain the top spot as it drives new advances in areas like artificial intelligence. A rebound in investment should facilitate the use of this technology by other DMs and boost their productivity growth. But other factors such as structural rigidities will stop them catching up with the US in terms of GDP per capita; in fact, by 2050, most will have fallen further behind. (See Chart 14.)
* In theory, there is scope for steady economic growth and fairly low interest rates to reduce public sector debt burdens as happened in DMs after the Second World War. But there is an added challenge now from ageing populations. (See Chart 15.) We assume governments take action to offset most of the rise in age-related costs. So, we expect debt to GDP in major DMs in 2050 to be close to current levels. But there is a risk that governments do not have the political will to do this. A far larger debt ratio might not matter for some countries such as the US, but elsewhere it could trigger a debt crisis.
* Inequality within DMs was rising before the pandemic and could revert to an upward trend if technological progress disproportionately benefits the better-off. That is one reason, alongside trend growth staying relatively low, why equilibrium real interest rates are unlikely to have risen much by 2050. (See Chart 16.)



#### Nationalism from economic crises doesn’t escalate.

Eric Taylor Woods & Robert Schertzer 20, Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of East London, Ph.D. from the London School of Economics and Political Science; Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto, Ph.D. in Government from the London School of Economics and Political Science, “COVID-19, nationalism, and the politics of crisis: A scholarly exchange,” Nations and Nationalism, Vol. 26, No. 4, October 2020, https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12644

In our view, this account gives too much power to nationalism as the key driver of conflict. We know many of the conditions and logics that drive interstate warfare, and COVID-19 does not necessarily lead us down these pathways. As others have argued, the pandemic has created significant logistical issues for mass troop mobilization, it has shaken the confidence of states and leaders and there is no necessary link between economic downturns and warfare—recessions are a bad predictor of interstate conflict (Posen, 2020; Walt, 2020). While nationalism can shape decisions and introduce irrationality, it does not necessarily have the structuring power to overcome the current barriers to interstate warfare. The view that increasing nationalist sentiment will inevitably lead to violent conflict also oversimplifies nationalism. This logic assumes that nationalism is always dangerous and illiberal, which in our view is an outmoded that builds on a normative distinction between bad (ethnic) and good (civic) forms of identity.

#### No US leadership impact.

Fettweis ‘18 — Political Science Professor at Tulane University. (Christopher; Published: 2018; “Psychology of a Superpower: Security and Dominance in US Foreign Policy”; Columbia University Press; Accessed: August 15, 2021; https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/fett18770)//CYang

The effect of an aloof United States on some regions need not be imagined because it already exists. In South America, the U.S. Southern Command has a minuscule operating budget and no troops to speak of, despite its theoretical “responsibility” for the entire continent. The United States maintains no significant physical presence in Africa or large swaths of Asia. A Yellowstone supereruption would presumably not change security calculations in these areas much at all.

Europe would be similarly unaffected, sat least in the short term. The United States currently maintains 95,000 troops from all services in its European Command, none of whom are tasked with maintaining the internal stability of its allies. During the Cold War, U.S. troops did not involve themselves in the domestic conflicts of their host states, unlike their Soviet counterparts. Their job was always to protect Europe from without, not within. The continent is the world’s most stable, its countries the most cooperative, and its people the least martial. It would probably take more than the removal of U.S. troops for ash-cleaning duties to bring back security dilemmas, arms races, and conflict. Borders have hardened, as have norms of conflict resolution. No one can know for sure, of course, but Europe does not seem to be a good candidate for chaos in the absence of the United States.

Without the presence of U.S. forces, much of the Middle East would be unstable and chaotic. With the presence of U.S. forces, much of the Middle East is unstable and chaotic. A supervolcano erupting in Wyoming would not have much impact on the security of the world’s most dangerous region. Israel would be just as safe as it was before, since its marked military superiority over all potential rivals is the ultimate guarantor of its security, not U.S. troops or ships. Without the prospect of help from Uncle Sam, the failing governments of Iraq and Libya, as well as the rebels in Syria and our allies in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Jordan, and elsewhere, would learn to become more self-sufficient. Perhaps they would even make long-term deals with their rivals. It might be good to throw them out of the U.S. nest and encourage them to fly on their own or crash. Fears of a resurgent Iran would be articulated by the usual suspects, no doubt, but both history and the realities of power suggest Tehran would find it hard to dominate its neighbors, even if it had the will to do so.

The regions that would be of most concern in such a scenario would be the peripheries of those once and potentially future great powers, Russia and China. To believers in the “deterrence model,” first described by Robert Jervis four decades ago, weakness is provocative, and the post-U.S. world would seem everywhere weak. 128 Moscow and Beijing would attempt to expand their influence, and ultimately perhaps their borders, once they were assured that they would face no pushback from Washington. Perhaps gradual interference in their near-abroads, such as we have already seen in eastern Ukraine, northern Georgia, and the South China Sea, would occur with increasing frequency in the vacuum left by a U.S. withdrawal.

While such expansion cannot be ruled out, especially in the long run, large border adjustments would probably not occur in the absence of U.S. power, for least two reasons. First, the removal of American troops would not alter the calculations regarding the costs and benefits of conquest in the twenty-first century. Although absorbing neighbors sometimes paid substantial dividends in the pre–information age, today territory is unrelated to wealth. 129 The people of larger states are not automatically better off than those of small ones. India is not richer than Singapore; Russia would not benefit from invading Ukraine; China would hardly be materially better off if it ruled Taiwan. The other members of the international system might not be able to stop such adventurism militarily, but they can certainly punish it economically. The costs related to invasion and the inevitable problems that arise during occupation would outweigh any possible benefits that may accrue. Conquest in a trading system is profoundly irrational, and the incentives for peace are strong.

Rational calculations are not the only motivations for cross-border violence. As Norman Angell argued a century ago, people have to believe that war is not worth the cost before they will forswear it. 130 The quest for glory and prestige has sent many an army into motion over the centuries; Alfred Thayer Mahan responded to Angell’s rationalism a century ago by pointing out that “nations are under no illusion as to the unprofitableness of war itself” but honor often compels them to fight anyway. 131 By 2017, however, those calculations have changed. It is not at all clear that glory still automatically accompanies conquest. The second reason to believe that Russia and China might not dominate their near-abroads in an essentially U.S.-free world is that the behavioral norms of the New Peace discourage aggression. Imperialism invites opprobrium, not admiration. This does not mean that such assaults could not happen — Genghis Khan was unconcerned about opprobrium, for instance, and Vladimir Putin might be too — but surely it is significant that conquest has been all but absent since the Second World War. The unipole is not the only thing restraining potential combatants; both their material and reputational interests do so as well.

If and when a catastrophic supervolcanic eruption weakens the United States, other countries would still have substantial interest in maintaining the overlapping network of international economic and political institutions that serve the interests of all members. All would want to see free trade and investment continue unmolested, whether or not the global policeman could punish violators. Most would continue to place some value on international law, human rights, and the UN system. Why any state would want to move backward to a mercantilist time of pure self-help and violence would be difficult to imagine. It is 2017, not 1717.

Volcanologists assure us that someday Yellowstone will awaken with terrifying fury. The human and material cost will be immense, but the ramifications for international security may not be as dramatic. While it might take that kind of event to settle the questions concerning hegemonic-stability theory once and for all, we can still use our imaginations to anticipate the kind of reaction that the system would have if the global 911 is taken off the hook. Even more decisively than a Trump superpresidency, a supervolcano eruption would test the New Peace and settle forever debates over the importance of unipolarity. Until then, one can only imagine what the system would be like without the United States. And the smart money would be with those who say that it would probably look pretty much the same, with very small amounts of conflict and warfare, even if few people seem to notice.

In the end, what can be definitely said about the relationship between U.S. power and international stability? Probably not much that will satisfy partisans. The pacifying virtue of U.S. hegemony will remain largely an article of faith in some circles in the policy world. Like most beliefs, it will resist alteration by logic and evidence. Beliefs rarely change, so debates rarely end.

For those not yet fully converted, however, perhaps it will be significant that corroborating evidence for the relationship is extremely hard to identify. If indeed hegemonic stability exists, it does so without leaving much of a trace. Neither Washington’s spending, nor its interventions, nor its overall grand strategy seem to matter much to the levels of armed conflict around the world (apart from those wars that Uncle Sam starts). The empirical record does not contain much support for the notion that unipolarity and the New Peace are related. At the same time, three common psychological phenomena suggest that hegemonic stability is particularly susceptible to misperception. U.S. leaders probably exaggerate the degree to which their power matters. Researchers will need to look elsewhere to explain why the world has entered the most peaceful period in its history.

## Right to Work

### 1nc---solvency

#### Binding the US to international law fails---we will just selectively decide where it exists.

John Dugard 23, Professor of Law in the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria, LL.D. from the University of Cambridge, “The choice before us: International law or a ‘rules-based international order’?”, Leiden Journal of International Law, 02-21-2023, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0922156523000043

There are several reasons that may explain why the United States prefers to invoke a ‘rules-based international order’ and not international law.

First, the United States is not a party to a number of important multilateral treaties that constitute an essential feature of international law. It is not a party to the Law of the Sea Convention which means that it is compelled to reprimand China for threatening the ‘rules-based international order’ in the South China Sea rather than international law. 22 It is not party to a number of fundamental treaties governing international humanitarian law, including the 1977 Protocols to the Geneva Conventions on the Laws of War, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Nor is it a party to the Rights of the Child Convention or the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Inevitably this makes it difficult for the United States to hold states accountable for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law to the extent that these rules are not considered by the United States to be part of customary international law.

Second, the United States has placed interpretations on international law justifying the use of force 23 and the violation of international humanitarian law that are controversial and contested. Its interpretation of the right of self-defence to allow pre-emptive strikes 24 and the use of force against insurgents/militants characterized as terrorists are widely disputed. 25 The resort to the use of force as a species of humanitarian intervention in the 1999 bombing of Belgrade, conducted under the auspices of NATO, 26 is likewise disputed. The interpretations placed on Security Council resolutions by the United States and the United Kingdom, to authorize the use of force in Iraq in 200327 and Libya in 201128 have been much criticized as unlawful pretexts for regime change. The denial of prisoner-of-war status to Taliban soldiers detained at Guantanamo Bay following the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2002 has been questioned on the ground that it violates Article 4 of the Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. 29 The use of drones in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Yemen to kill hostile militants/terrorists, which the United States has justified as permissible self-defence, has been criticized as a violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law. 30 It seems that the United States finds it more convenient – and possible – to uphold contested interpretations of international law of this kind under the broad ‘rules’ of the RBO than to justify them under the stricter rules of international law. 31

Third, the United States is unwilling to hold some states, such as Israel, accountable for violations of international law. They are treated as sui generis cases in which the national interest precludes accountability. This exceptionalism in respect of Israel was spelled out by the United States in its joint declaration with Israel on the occasion of President Biden’s visit to Israel in July 2022, 32 which reaffirms ‘the unbreakable bonds between our two countries and the enduring commitment of the United States to Israel’s security’ and the determination of the two states ‘to combat all efforts to boycott or de-legitimize Israel, to deny its right to self-defence, or to single it out in any forum, including at the United Nations or the International Criminal Court’. This commitment explains the consistent refusal of the United States to hold Israel accountable for its repeated violations of humanitarian law, support the prosecution of perpetrators of international crimes before the International Criminal Court, condemn its assaults on Gaza (best portrayed as excessive enforcement of the occupation of Gaza and not self-defence as the United States argues 33 ), insist that Israel prosecute killers of a US national (Shireen Abu Akleh), criticize its violation of human rights as established by both the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly, accept that Israel applies a policy of apartheid in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 34 and oppose its annexation of East Jerusalem. 35 And, of course, there is the refusal of the United States to acknowledge the existence of Israel’s nuclear arsenal or allow any discussion of it in the context of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. 36 Such measures on the part of Israel are possibly seen as consistent with the ‘rules-based international order’ even if they violate basic rules of international law.

Of course, double standards, exceptionalism, and hypocrisy are a feature of the foreign policies of states that accept international law and do not favour the RBO. Such conduct must be condemned as it undermines the notion of accountability for all states, irrespective of their position and friends in the international community. The amorphous ‘rules’ of the RBO, however, make it easier for a state to provide special treatment to another state and to condone its violations of international law. The United States is able to justify its refusal to hold Israel accountable for its violations of international law by arguing that international law as interpreted by the United States – the RBO – allows assaults on Gaza as self-defence against terrorism, the assassination of militants/terrorists by drones, the application of apartheid, the annexation of territory, and the continuation of an occupation which is widely seen as illegal.

These explanations for the United States’ preferred invocation of the RBO do not apply consistently to other states of the Western alliance. Most are parties to most multilateral treaties. Only the United Kingdom participated in all the controversial military interventions named above, although some were undertaken under the umbrella of NATO. And most Western states have been prepared to hold Israel accountable for its violations of international law, albeit only in word. This probably explains why Western leaders have used the term RBO interchangeably with international law and appear to treat the two orders as synonymous. This means that the RBO is largely an order advocated by the United States.

#### CIL fails.

Curtis A. Bradley 10, Richard A. Horvitz Professor, Duke Law School and Mitu Gulati, Professor, Duke Law School, “Withdrawing from International Custom”, Yale Law Journal, 120 Yale L.J. 202, November 2010, Lexis

C. Externalities and Agency Problems

Having addressed the two arguments we have found in the literature in favor of the Mandatory View, we now develop two additional arguments that offer somewhat stronger support for that View: the problem of interstate externalities and the danger that governments will be unfaithful agents for their populations. As we explain, these arguments provide support for limiting opt-out under certain circumstances, but they do not support the conclusion that all of CIL should be subject to the Mandatory View.

1. Externalities

Many activities that nations engage in, such as waging war, polluting the atmosphere, manipulating their currency values, or financing international terrorism, impose externalities on others. Globalization has heightened the likelihood that one nation's actions - for example, in dealing with an internal financial crisis - can generate global effects. A chief target of international law, therefore, is conduct that generates interstate externalities. Such international law might seem to be a prime candidate for the Mandatory View, in that nations might be tempted to exit CIL rules when they are able to externalize costs of activities on others. 250

As an initial matter, it is important to keep in mind that this externalities argument can at best offer only partial support for the Mandatory View. Many types of state conduct, especially conduct carried out within a nation's territory, will not necessarily produce substantial externalities. Moreover, externalities will often be sufficiently distributed or insignificant such that they will not [\*264] provide an appropriate justification for legal constraints. Basic Coasean bargaining also teaches us that, even when externalities are significant or unevenly distributed, they may not by themselves provide a justification for the Mandatory View, particularly when transaction costs are low and parties can negotiate over the externalities. 251 It is possible, therefore, that the best solution to some international externalities is simply to have the affected parties negotiate a solution with the externality-producing nation.

In any event, there is a broader problem with linking the Mandatory View to externalities: it assumes that the requisite state practice and opinio juris will develop to address situations in which nations impose nonreciprocal and substantial externalities. This assumption, however, is doubtful. Consider the international law prohibition on waging aggressive war. This prohibition was established after two horrific world wars confirmed the externalities that can be generated by this conduct. The Mandatory View thus might seem to make sense for this prohibition. Importantly, though, CIL was not viewed as an effective means of regulating the problem of aggressive war. Instead, it was regulated in the U.N. Charter, a treaty that has been ratified by essentially all nations of the world. 252 Further, this treaty establishes an international institution - the Security Council - that has unique authority to enforce compliance with the Charter, even through the authorization of military force against the violating nation. Alas, even the U.N. Charter framework has proven insufficient for regulating the issue, as countless wars of various scope (albeit not on a worldwide scale) have been waged since the Charter was established in 1945.

Other examples of modern externalities are consistent with this conclusion. Consider four of the most pressing problems of the day: global warming, the proliferation of small arms, financial contagion, and terrorist financing. It seems unlikely that these issues can be adequately addressed by CIL. Absent monitoring and verification systems, nations have an incentive to cheat and free ride on the efforts of others. Further, if there are enough nations that benefit from imposing externalities on others, they will resist the attempts of others to constrain them, at least absent some inducement, which itself may require collective action. This is why, in the global warming context, there has been so much effort to establish a comprehensive treaty, such as the Kyoto [\*265] Protocol. 253 In the case of financial contagion, the efforts toward setting up rules or principles of responsible sovereign behavior are only beginning to be considered by international treaty-based bodies such as the IMF, the Paris Club, the World Bank, and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). 254 In the case of small arms proliferation, efforts toward producing an international treaty via the United Nations have been ongoing, but slow. 255 Much the same story can be told regarding terrorist financing. Progress has been made not through CIL, but rather through binding resolutions of the Security Council and various treaties. 256 The point is that in none of these cases has CIL been able to generate effective rules to constrain misbehavior.

#### I-law fails.

**Hannum ’22**---Hurst; Professor of International Law, Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy, Tufts University. February 25, 2022; “International Law Says Putin’s War Against Ukraine is Illegal. Does That Matter?”; *United States News*; https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2022-02-25/international-law-says-putins-war-against-ukraine-is-illegal-does-that-matter; //CYang

Under no scenario is Russia’s armed invasion of Ukraine legal under contemporary international law and norms.

Self-defense is the only justification for use of force against another country, according to international law. This condition is found in the U.N. Charter and is binding for all 193 U.N. member countries.

The charter’s only clear exception to prohibiting the use of force is self-defense, “if an armed attack occurs” against a country. Rescuing citizens who are trapped or in danger in another country is recognized as a form of self-defense. But these interventions are strictly limited to evacuating citizens, not overthrowing governments.

Nothing that Ukraine has done to date could be construed as an “armed attack” on Russia and justify any Russian claim to self-defense.

Even if Putin’s false claim that Ukraine is targeting Russian-speakers in eastern Ukraine were true, it would not justify the countrywide attacks he has unleashed.

Intervening for humanitarian reasons, such as trying to prevent large-scale loss of life or suffering, has been asserted by a few countries and activists as another rationale for use of force. But this justification has not yet been widely accepted, unless the U.N. Security Council authorizes the intervention. It did so when it authorized a U.S.-led military force in Somalia in 1992 to help prevent famine.

How is international law enforced? “Almost all nations observe almost all principles of international law … almost all of the time,” a highly respected U.S. law professor, Louis Henkin, wrote in 1979. There is no standing international police force to enforce international law. Compliance is primarily in the hands of countries themselves.

The International Court of Justice, created by the U.N. and located in the Hague, Netherlands, decides disputes between countries, including alleged violations of the U.N. Charter. But only 73 countries out 195 have accepted the court’s jurisdiction. The U.N. Security Council also has the authority to authorize the use of force under the U.N. Charter in order to maintain international peace and security. This option is unrealistic in the situation of Ukraine because Russia has a permanent seat on the council---along with the other four permanent members: the U.S., U.K., France and China---and thus holds veto power over any decision. Finally, either the U.N. Security Council or individual countries may impose economic or diplomatic sanctions if necessary, as the U.S. and European countries have done. But such actions can have only an indirect impact on deterring or ending a war.

There is probably no law, international or domestic, that enjoys universal compliance. The challenge to enforce international law remains---a challenge laid bare most recently and blatantly by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

### 1nc---climate

#### No ‘ecocide’ or climate impact.

Bailey ’20 — Ronald; Science Correspondent at Reason, Member of the Society of Environmental Journalists and the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities. August 1, 2020; “The Global Environmental Apocalypse Has Been Canceled”; *Reason Magazine*; https://reason.com/2020/08/01/the-global-environmental-apocalypse-has-been-canceled/

According to these activists and politicians, humanity is beset on all sides by catastrophes that could kill off civilization, and maybe even our species. Are they right?

Absolutely not, answers the longtime environmental activist Michael Shellenberger in an engaging new book, Apocalypse Never: Why Environmental Alarmism Hurts Us All. "Much of what people are being told about the environment, including the climate, is wrong, and we desperately need to get it right," he writes. "I decided to write Apocalypse Never after getting fed up with the exaggeration, alarmism, and extremism that are the enemy of positive, humanistic, and rational environmentalism." While fully acknowledging that significant global environmental problems exist, Shellenberger argues that they do not constitute inexorable existential threats. Economic growth and technological progress, he says, can ameliorate them.

Shellenberger's analysis relies on largely uncontroversial mainstream science, including reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Food and Agriculture Organization. And as a longstanding activist, Shellenberger is in a good position to parse the motives behind the purveyors of doom.

Shellenberger's activism is the real deal. To raise a donation to the Rainforest Action Network, he charged his friends $5 to attend his 16th birthday party. At 17 he went to Nicaragua to experience the Sandinista revolution. In the 1990s he worked with the Landless Workers' Movement in Brazil.

In 2003, Shellenberger and allies launched the New Apollo Project to jumpstart a no-carbon energy revolution over the next 10 years. In 2008, Time named him "A Hero of the Environment." He co-founded the ecomodernist Breakthrough Institute, which advocates the use of advanced technologies such as nuclear power and agricultural biotechnology to decouple the economy from the ecology, allowing both humanity and the natural world to flourish. More recently, he founded Environmental Progress, which campaigns for, among other things, the deployment of clean modern nuclear power. He is an invited expert reviewer of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's next assessment report.

Ohio Passes Controversial Conscience Clause for Doctors

So what does he say about climate change? "On behalf of environmentalists everywhere, I would like to formally apologize for the climate scare we created over the last 30 years," he wrote in an essay to promote his new book. "Climate change is happening. It's just not the end of the world. It's not even our most serious environmental problem." Needless to say, there are environmentalists everywhere who do not believe they have anything to apologize for. A group of six researchers assembled by the widely respected Climate Feedback fact-checking consortium rated his article as having low scientific credibility.

Shellenberger doesn't devote much of Apocalypse Never to the science behind man-made climate change. He basically accepts the consensus that it's a significant problem and instead focuses on various claims about the harms it is supposedly already causing. In that promotional essay, he argues that (1) human[s] being are not causing a "sixth mass extinction," (2) the Amazon rainforests are not the "lungs of the world," (3) climate change is not making natural disasters worse, and (4) fires have declined 25 percent around the world since 2003.

Shellenberger isn't denying the reality of man-made climate change. He's arguing that humanity is already adapting to the ways climate change has been making weather patterns evolve, and that we will continue to adapt successfully in the future. His book is ultimately a sustained argument that poverty is world's most important environmental problem, and that rising prosperity and increasing technological prowess will ameliorate or reverse most deleterious environmental trends.

#### Warming will be gradual, cushioned by inevitable intermediate mitigation.

Wade ’21 [Robert H.; 2021; Professor of Global Political Economy at the London School of Economics, DPhil and MPhil in Social Anthropology from Sussex University, Master’s in Economics from Victoria University, BA in Economics from Otago University; Global Policy Journal, “What is the Harm in Forecasting Catastrophe Due to Man-Made Global Warming?” https://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/blog/22/07/2021/what-harm-forecasting-catastrophe-due-man-made-global-warming]

Conclusion

I have argued that the “plausible” risks of climate change are commonly exaggerated within the climate community. Recall for example, Christiana Figueres, 2020, “The scary thing is that after 2030 it basically doesn’t really matter what humans do”; Kevin Drum, 2019, “[The Green New Deal] would only change the dates for planetary suicide by a decade or so”; Frank Fenner, 2010, “We’re going to become extinct. Whatever we do now is too late.” Many more in the same doomsday vein.

We have seen that the standard global warming models have a powerful built-in bias to exaggerate the rate of future temperature rise, as seen in (most of) them “hindcasting” temperature rises several times faster than actually observed. We have seen that forecasters commonly take “worst-case scenarios” as “likely scenarios in the absence of radical action” (eg reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050), to the point where Nature recently published a paper sub-titled, “Stop using the worst-case scenario for climate warming as the most likely outcome”.

The dismaying thing is that scientists and advocates have been making catastrophising global warming forecasts of this kind for decades past, normally dated some 10 to 30 years into the future. The due date comes without catastrophe, but never a retrospective holding to account. Rather, on to the next catastrophising forecast another 10 to 30 years ahead. Scientists-writers-activists know the catastrophe forecasts get the attention, the clicks, the research funding. We saw the exaggeration mechanism spelled out by Richard Betts of the BBC, Holman Jenkins of the Wall St Journal, and climate scientist Judith Curry.

The built-in exaggeration of the costs of climate change blunts the parallel with nuclear power plants. We know with high certainty the costs of nuclear explosions. We know the costs of global temperature going above 1.5 C above “pre-industrial” much less certainly, and we can see the mechanisms by which the likely costs are being systematically exaggerated.

On the other hand, there is abundant evidence that even without the doomsday exaggerations the plausible risks of climate change could be very serious, in particular because of the inherent political economy difficulty of getting needed global or regional cooperation when political action is mostly at the level of sovereign nation states (see the G20).

Coal power generation is the single biggest source of GHG emissions, and emissions from coal consumption will probably not fall fast, whatever the promises. First, coal is cheap, accessible and generates reliable power for many developing countries; in Asia, coal alone generates 40 percent of energy consumption, much higher than the world average of 29 percent. (12) Second, developing countries, including China, assert a strong claim on carbon space to power their economic development. They see it partly as a matter of fundamental justice, since developed countries emitted most of the CO2 that is already in the atmosphere and seas as the necessary condition for them becoming developed. Developed countries promise finance and technical assistance on a massive scale to accelerate the energy transition in developing countries – and have a long track record of leaving promises as promises. (See the global distribution of Covid vaccines. See the results of vaunted “voting reform” in the World Bank, leaving the US with 17% and China with 6%.) What is more, the Japanese government plans up to 22 new coal power plants, as it closes nuclear plants in the wake of Fukushima.

Then comes a question: does drawing attention to the doomsday exaggerations of the CCC – “disaster”, “catastrophe”, “extinction”, “fiddling while the planet burns” - serve to reduce the political and public pressures for necessary ameliorative action, in a world where powerful fossil lobbies seek to block or delay such action for reasons independent of “evidence”? Should “Third Way” essays like this one not be published, because “give them (deniers, sceptics) an inch and they will take a mile”? To what extent must mass publics be “panicked” in order to induce enough collective political and business action – national, international – to substantially slow the growth of GHG emissions? If we can sustain emission- and temperature-curbing action only by holding up the certainty of disaster, catastrophe, extinction, then better to let the doomsday exaggerations continue as the necessary condition for that ameliorative action. What is the harm, when the alternative is ruin for humanity and the biosphere?

The danger is that the repeated wild exaggerations produce a public backlash, a discrediting, and a strengthening of the many “deniers” who see “leftists, governments, and the United Nations” as the source of malevolence in the world. A more accurate accounting of the evidence would (hopefully) produce a more calibrated and sustained public and business response.

What to do? (13)

The IPCC should allocate some 10% of its budget to a Red Team, dedicated to independent scrutiny of its evidence and conclusions (especially the Summary for Policymakers). (14) The IPCC should revise its mandate to require it explicitly to focus on interactions between natural forces and human actions, as it is now almost required not to, biassing its assessment of the state of scientific knowledge towards “man-made global warming” as an almost separate system.

Learned societies should more actively seek to understand and publicize the reasons for repeated large-scale discrepancies between “hindcasts” and “forecasts” on the one hand and actual observations on the other, discrepancies strongly biased towards “disaster”.

It is particularly important that the knee-jerk attribution of extreme weather events to global warming be challenged with reference to evidence. Judith Curry explained – quoted earlier -- why CCC advocates have a powerful incentive to attribute cases of extreme weather to global warming, tout court. She has recently written, “Apart from the reduced frequency of the coldest temperatures, the signal of global warming in the statistics of extreme weather events remains much smaller than that from natural climate variability, and is expected to remain so at least until the second half of the 21rst century.” She goes on to amplify a point made earlier about the limits of the climate models used for the IPCC assessment reports: they are driven mainly by predictions of future GHG emissions. They do not include predictions of natural climate variability arising from solar output, volcanic eruptions or evolution of large-scale multi-decadal ocean circulations. They do a particularly poor job of simulating regional and decadal-scale climate variability. (15)

Participants on both sides have to learn the art of respecting the principle of free speech while maintaining the standards of civil discourse.

While I have stressed the CCC’s support for urgent and radical changes to the way we live, work and govern, some CCC champions argue that the world economy could continue on a largely unchanged growth trajectory provided that we switch fast from fossil fuels to renewables. Indeed, this switch is beginning to happen fast, with coal and nuclear energy production unable to compete without subsidies in areas where natural gas, wind and solar resources are readily available.

But to say that life can continue as before provided we substitute renewables for fossil fuels obscures the huge difficulties for many developing countries of getting out of fossil fuels while growing fast enough to reduce the income gap with developed countries.

We must give high priority to investments in “clean coal” technologies, such as carbon capture, storage and use, to make the dirtier coal cleaner in existing and new coal-power plants; and link coal-power retirement to the coming on-stream of attractive alternatives. The multilateral development banks have recently or will soon announce bans on coal power. The G7 leaders meeting in mid 2021 promised to stop using government funds to finance new international coal power plants by the end of 2021. China’s Belt and Road Initiative should increase its pressure on host countries to cut back on dirty coal and boost clean coal and renewables.

A high and immediate priority is to build a robust financing and technical assistance mechanism for help from developed to developing countries. The Paris Agreement instituted a Mitigation pillar and an Adaptation pillar. Intense debate took place around the third, Loss and Damage, the name of a mechanism to compensate for the destruction that Mitigation and Adaptation cannot prevent. Developed countries by and large have sought to marginalize the Loss and Damage pillar, as they have long sought to marginalize Special and Differential Treatment for developing countries in trade and investment agreements. “Finance is something that really rich countries, particularly the US, have made sure that there is no progress and not even discussion on”, remarked Harjeet Singh, senior advisor at Climate Action Network International. (16)

My “forecast” is that in the next two to three decades to midcentury we will make rapid progress in scientific knowledge about weather and climate, helped by longer and more accurate satellite and ocean records and by a new generation of climate models that operate at one to ten kilometers scale (as distinct from the current models’ 50 kilometer scale). We will probably continue to make rapid progress in decoupling GHG from GDP growth, with a combination of state direction-setting and private innovation focused on transformations in energy, transport, buildings, industry and agriculture, using incentives like research and development subsidies and tax credits for technology investment, and penalties for carbon-intensive activities. (17) In transport, this entails coordination across urban planning decisions, public transport investment, future of remote working, infrastructures for electric charging and hydrogen loading. (18) Transformations in these systems are already underway, and the prospect of vast new green investments, supported and under-written by the state, will intensify them. These green investments will open productive investment opportunities previously limited by stagnant wages and rising debt, which have driven investment into increasingly speculative ventures. If by two or three decades ahead it looks as though the second half of this century could well experience globally extreme climate and ocean events, we will be much more knowledgeable about what to do than we are today. (19)

### 1nc---pandemics

#### Large-scale diseases do NOT cause war---they dampen conflict.

Barry. R. Posen 20. Ford International Professor of Political Science at MIT and Director Emeritus of the MIT Security Studies Program. 4/23/2020. “Do Pandemics Promote Peace?” <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2020-04-23/do-pandemics-promote-peace>. DOA: 9/2/2020. SIR.

As the novel coronavirus infects the globe, states compete for scientific and medical supplies and blame one another for the pandemic’s spread. Policy analysts have started asking whether such tensions could eventually erupt into military conflict. Has the pandemic increased or decreased the motive and opportunity of states to wage war? War is a risky business, with potentially very high costs. The historian Geoffrey Blainey argued in The Causes of War that most wars share a common characteristic at their outset: optimism. The belligerents usually start out sanguine about their odds of military success. When elites on both or all sides are confident, they are more willing to take the plunge—and less likely to negotiate, because they think they will come out better by fighting. Peace, by contrast, is served by pessimism. Even one party’s pessimism can be helpful: that party will be more inclined to negotiate and even accept an unfavorable bargain in order to avoid war. When one side gains a sudden and pronounced advantage, however, this de-escalatory logic can break down: the optimistic side will increase its demands faster than the pessimistic side can appease. Some analysts worry that something like this could happen in U.S.-Chinese relations as a result of the new coronavirus. The United States is experiencing a moment of domestic crisis. China, some fear, might see the pandemic as playing to its advantage and be tempted to throw its military weight around in the western Pacific. What these analysts miss is that COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, is weakening all of the great and middle powers more or less equally. None is likely to gain a meaningful advantage over the others. All will have ample reason to be pessimistic about their military capabilities and their overall readiness for war. For the duration of the pandemic, at least, and probably for years afterward, the odds of a war between major powers will go down, not up. PAX EPIDEMICA? A cursory survey of the scholarly literature on war and disease appears to confirm Blainey’s observation that pessimism is conducive to peace. Scholars have documented again and again how war creates permissive conditions for disease—in armies as well as civilians in the fought-over territories. But one seldom finds any discussion of epidemics causing wars or of wars deliberately started in the middle of widespread outbreaks of infectious disease. (The diseases that European colonists carried to the New World did weaken indigenous populations to the point that they were more vulnerable to conquest; in addition, some localized conflicts were fought during the influenza pandemic of 1919–21, but these were occasioned by major shifts in regional balances of power following the destruction of four empires in World War I.) That sickness slows the march to war is partly due to the fact that war depends on people. When people fall ill, they can’t be counted on to perform well in combat. Military medicine made enormous strides in the years leading up to World War I, prior to which armies suffered higher numbers of casualties from disease than from combat. But pandemics still threaten military units, as those onboard U.S. and French aircraft carriers, hundreds of whom tested positive for COVID-19, know well. Sailors and soldiers in the field are among the most vulnerable because they are packed together. But even airmen are at risk, since they must take refuge from air attacks in bunkers, where the virus could also spread rapidly. Ground campaigns in urban areas pose still greater dangers in pandemic times. Much recent ground combat has been in cities in poor countries with few or no public health resources, environments highly favorable to illness. Ground combat also usually produces prisoners, any of whom can be infected. A vaccine may eventually solve these problems, but an abundance of caution is likely to persist for some time after it comes into use. Major outbreaks damage national economies, which are the source of military power. The most important reason disease inhibits war is economic. Major outbreaks damage national economies, which are the source of military power. COVID-19 is a pandemic—by definition a worldwide phenomenon. All great and middle powers appear to be adversely affected, and all have reason to be pessimistic about their military prospects. Their economies are shrinking fast, and there is great uncertainty about when and how quickly they will start growing again. Even China, which has slowed the spread of the disease and begun to reopen its economy, will be hurting for years to come. It took an enormous hit to GDP in the first quarter of 2020, ending 40 years of steady growth. And its trading partners, burned by their dependence on China for much of the equipment needed to fight COVID-19, will surely scale back their imports. An export-dependent China will have to rely more on its domestic market, something it has been attempting for years with only limited success. It is little wonder, then, that the International Monetary Fund [forecasts](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oz56lV17s9o) slower growth in China this year than at any time since the 1970s. Even after a vaccine is developed and made widely available, economic troubles may linger for years. States will emerge from this crisis with enormous debts. They will spend years paying for the bailout and stimulus packages they used to protect citizens and businesses from the economic consequences of social distancing. Drained treasuries will give them one more reason to be pessimistic about their military might. LESS TRADE, LESS FRICTION How long is the pacifying effect of pessimism likely to last? If a vaccine is developed quickly, enabling a relatively swift economic recovery, the mood may prove short-lived. But it is equally likely that the coronavirus crisis will last long enough to change the world in important ways, some of which will likely dampen the appetite for conflict for some time—perhaps up to five or ten years. After all, the world is experiencing both the biggest pandemic and the biggest economic downturn in a century. Most governments have not covered themselves with glory managing the pandemic, and even the most autocratic worry about popular support. Over the next few years, people will want evidence that their governments are working to protect them from disease and economic dislocation. Citizens will see themselves as dependent on the state, and they will be less inclined to support adventures abroad. At the same time, governments and businesses will likely try to reduce their reliance on imports of critical materials, having watched global supply chains break down during the pandemic. The result will probably be diminished trade, something liberal internationalists see as a bad thing. But for the last five years or so, trade has not helped improve relations between states but rather fueled resentment. Less trade could mean less friction between major powers, thereby reducing the intensity of their rivalries. In the Chinese context, less international trade could have positive knock-on effects. Focused on growing the domestic economy, and burdened by hefty bills from fighting the virus, Beijing could be forced to table the Belt and Road Initiative, an ambitious trade and investment project that has unnerved the foreign policy establishments of great and middle powers. The suspension of the BRI would soothe the fears of those who see it as an instrument of Chinese world domination. Interstate wars have become relatively rare since the end of World War II. The United States and the Soviet Union engaged in a four-decade Cold War, which included an intense nuclear and conventional arms race, but they never fought each other directly, even with conventional weapons. Theorists debate the reasons behind the continued rarity of great-power conflict. I am inclined to believe that the risk of escalation to a nuclear confrontation is simply too great. COVID-19 does nothing to mitigate such risks for world leaders—and a great deal to feed their reasonable pessimism about the likely outcome of even a conventional war.

#### COVID proves pandemics are pacifying.

Deirdre Shesgreen 20. Foreign Affairs Reporter at USA Today. 4/28/2020. “'War and disease travel together': Why the pandemic push for a global cease-fire is gaining ground.” <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2020/04/28/coronavirus-un-secretary-wants-global-cease-fire-amid-pandemic/5163972002/>. DOA: 9/4/2020. SIR.

When the head of the United Nations first called for a “global cease-fire” on March 23, it seemed like a quixotic quest that would fall on the deaf ears of warring guerrillas, militant terrorists and belligerent governments across the globe. But over the past month, fighters from [Colombia](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-52090169) to [Ukraine](https://www.unian.info/war/10932227-mp-ukraine-asks-russia-via-osce-to-ensure-full-ceasefire-in-donbas-amid-coronavirus-crisis.html) have signaled a willingness to put down their weapons as the world confronts [a deadly pandemic](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019) that could devastate civilian populations and armies alike. The [15-member U.N. Security Council](https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/) may vote as early as this week on a resolution that demands an “immediate cessation of hostilities in all countries on its agenda” and calls for armed groups to engage in a 30-day cease-fire, according to a draft of the measure obtained by USA TODAY. Its fate is uncertain, and experts say it comes with many caveats and exceptions – including a loophole that could allow Russia to continue [bombing civilians in Syria](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2020/03/13/syria-war-bashar-assad-prospers-9-years-barbarity-confusion/4939671002/). Right now, world powers are still quibbling over several provisions. The Trump administration has objected to any language expressing support for [the World Health Organization](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2020/04/22/who-chief-tedros-adhanom-ghebreyesus-pilloried-by-trump-and-gop-allies-amid-coronavirus-pandemic/5163962002/), among other provisions – disputes that could sink or stall the effort. President Donald Trump has blasted the WHO being biased toward China and accepting Beijing's statements about the coronavirus outbreak at face value. A State Department official declined to comment on the draft, citing ongoing negotiations. The official, who was not authorized to speak on the record, said the Trump administration supports the call for a global cease-fire but wants to ensure it will not hinder U.S. counterterrorism missions. If it passes, experts say its impact could be significant – albeit not sweeping – during an otherwise bleak moment of global crisis. “This is not a piece of paper that’s going to save the planet, and it’s not even going to stop some of the nasty wars that are burning out there,” said Richard Gowan, an expert on the United Nations and peacekeeping with the International Crisis Group, a nonpartisan organization that seeks to prevent conflict. “But it’s at least something which could help ease middle-sized and smaller conflicts in countries ranging from [Colombia to Sudan](https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/global-ceasefire-call-deserves-un-security-councils-full-support), where we know that armed groups are actually interested in pausing violence and talking about peace during the COVID crisis.” It could also help staunch the flow of refugees in some war-ravaged countries – and thus slow the spread of COVID-19, said Barry Posen, an international professor of political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "War and disease travel together and are usually causative," Posen said. While a global cease-fire may sound lofty and idealistic, he said, it's also [quite practical](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2020-04-23/do-pandemics-promote-peace?utm_medium=newsletters&utm_source=fatoday&utm_campaign=Do%20Pandemics%20Promote%20Peace?%20%20%20&utm_content=20200423&utm_term=FA%20Today%20-%20112017), particularly in places like Syria and Yemen, where health care is scarce and civilians are extremely vulnerable to disease. "The intrusion of COVID into that situation would make what's already a horror show into an even bigger horror show," he said. "If you can do a little something to suppress these wars at the moment, you would also be doing a little something to suppress the disease." And because these conflicts are also producing refugees, it could help limit the further spread of the illness if civilians are not forced to flee conflict zones. [In this handout image released by the United Nations, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres holds a virtual press conference on April 3, 2020, at UN headquarters in New York. Guterres Friday renewed his call for a global cease-fire, urging all parties to conflict to lay down arms and allow war-torn nations to combat the coronavirus pandemic. "The worst is yet to come," Guterres said, referring to countries beset with fighting like Syria, Libya and Yemen. "The COVID-19 storm is now coming to all these theatres of conflict."](https://www.un.org/sg/en) The United Nation's secretary-general, , has used both lofty rhetoric and harsh reality in his pitch for the cease-fire. "There should be only one fight in our world today: our shared battle against COVID-19," he said in an [April 3 news briefing](https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1061012) on his effort. French President [Emmanuel Macron](https://www.ft.com/content/317b4f61-672e-4c4b-b816-71e0ff63cab2) has also championed the cease-fire proposal. So far, about 16 armed groups and more than 100 countries have endorsed the measure, according to an informal tally kept by U.N. officials. A few examples: In Colombia, a [left-wing rebel group](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-52090169) known as the ELN agreed to a cease-fire starting April and said it would consider reviving peace talks with the government. In Yemen, one side of that brutal war – the [Saudi Arabia-led coalition](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-saudi/saudi-led-coalition-announces-one-month-extension-of-yemen-ceasefire-idUSKCN2261GS) – agreed to a unilateral cease-fire for at least a month, to help control the spread of coronavirus in a country already ravaged by starvation and other diseases. The Houthis, backed by Iran, have not yet signed on. In Syria, the Kurdish-led [Syrian Democratic Forces agreed](https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/36baafd8-e08b-4e7f-bedc-3acb28c5ba90) to a cease-fire, saying its fighters would defend themselves against attacks but not engage in offensive military action. “We hope that this humanitarian truce will help to open the door for dialogue and political solution and to put an end to the war in the world and Syria,” the SDF said in a statement.

#### Empirics prove that pandemics spur international cooperation which tubes their nebulous, laundry-list impacts.

Payam Mohebbi 20. Professor of History at the University of Tehran. 3/17/2020. “Coronavirus, a vaccine to prevent World War III!” <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/446238/Coronavirus-a-vaccine-to-prevent-World-War-III>. DOA: 9/4/2020. SIR.

Over the past centuries, countries have been proud of their high incomes and wealth, and have always sought to rule over other countries, a move which ultimately has led to war. It has also been considered as one of the main causes of World War I and World War II. On the other hand, epidemics that had spread in the past resulted in huge casualties due to the lack of vaccines and antibiotics and acted as controlling factors of the world’s natural population. By taking a look at the outcome of these events, one will find out that the First World War, which had been waged due to the same territorial expansions, ended with the outbreak of Spanish flu, as it inflicted financial burden and living costs on countries and made political leaders make peace. It is noteworthy that rich countries in the past, because of their high income, used to turn to make arms and inciting the world to war. Therefore, the world’s leaders talked with each other through the power of the weapon. But, at the present time, when the world is struggling with a global pandemic (the coronavirus), instead of thinking about the former ideals, all states and leaders around the world should find a way to protect people from a hostility that is not even seen. This global pandemic has proven to the whole world that the rich and the poor are all equally vulnerable to disease and the class gap does not have anything to do with it. In fact, the possibility for a rich country to be infected is the same as a poor country, and the casualties will be the same at the end. It is true that the coronavirus has resulted in many difficulties and deaths, but, by creating the sense of sympathy and weakness, it could make us all realize that it does not matter whether we are Iranian, American, rich, poor, black or white, as we are vulnerable to the virus to the same degree.

### 1nc---lio

#### LIO resilient, BUT alt causes.

Hirsh ’19---Michael; senior correspondent; December 27, 2019; “Why the Liberal International Order Will Endure Into the Next Decade”; *Foreign Policy*; https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/12/27/why-liberal-international-order-will-endure-next-decade-2020-democracy/

Title: Why the Liberal International Order Will Endure Into the Next Decade

Subtitle: It’s true that democracy, globalism, and free trade are under assault, but they may prove stronger than the forces arrayed against them in the 2020s.

It’s become fashionable to wonder whether the liberal international order can survive the malign forces that have been lining up against it during the 2010s—what the Wall Street Journal called the “Decade of Disruption.” But based on recent trends, it’s a fair bet that democracy, globalism, and open trade will endure handily into the third decade of the 21st century.

Start with the state of democracy. Nothing has been more alarming to internationalists than the one-two punch of U.S. President Donald Trump and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who have taken power in two of the world’s oldest and most important democracies by awakening the old demons of nationalism. With Trump focusing his ire on NATO and the World Trade Organization, and Johnson stalking out of the European Union, the two leaders have transformed the once-hallowed “special relationship” from a bulwark of global stability (sullied though it was by the Iraq War) into what looks more like a wrecking ball. Elsewhere, illiberalism has overtaken young democracies, such as Hungary and Poland, and even threatened mature ones with the rapid rise of nationalist parties such as the Alternative for Germany and Norbert Hofer’s anti-immigrant Freedom Party of Austria. In the world’s largest democracy, India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party appear to be sending the same message. And there are considerable doubts about whether the democratic body politic possesses an immune system strong enough to fight off a plague of cyber-generated misinformation and disinformation, and systemic hacking by such autocrats as Russian President Vladimir Putin.

But democracy just won’t give up, and in 2019—which could justly be called the year of global protest—it kept reinventing itself at the grassroots. This has been happening in the most unlikely of places around the globe, in countries such as Iran, Lebanon, Iraq, Chile, and above all in Hong Kong, where thousands of determined protesters have braved bullets and tear gas, embarrassing Chinese President Xi Jinping even as he brutally consolidates his autocratic rule on the mainland. Perhaps the U.S. and British democracies are becoming decadent—and 2020 will tell us a lot about that question come November—but the idea of democracy remains a powerful, ever-replenishing urge that, as sociologists and political scientists have long told us, only gets stronger the more that income and educational levels increase around the world.

The international economy is also undergoing some severe stress tests—and surviving remarkably intact. The year 2019 began with deep-seated fears that Trump’s trade wars would help trigger a global recession—and among the most concerned was Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell, who midway through the year suggested he and other central bank chiefs simply didn’t know how bad things could get. “The thing is,” Powell said, “there isn’t a lot of experience in responding to global trade tensions.” Growth and investment are still slowing due in large part to the uncertainty Trump has created, but fears of a recession have receded. It turns out the U.S. president cannot single-handedly return the United States to the days of Smoot-Hawley—even his fellow neonationalist Boris Johnson believes in free trade—and the domino effect of retaliatory tariffs that followed in the 1930s, setting the stage for world war. (In June 1930, under the Smoot-Hawley Act, the United States raised tariffs to an average of 59 percent on more than 25,000 imports; just about every other nation reacted in tit-for-tat protectionist fashion, severely depressing the global economy.)

Today, the complexities of a deeply integrated global economy and its supply chains may prove too much to undo—even for the most powerful person on the planet.

And what of the institutions of the international system? The United States has always had an uneasy relationship with its post-World War II progeny, principally the United Nations, the WTO, and NATO—despite helping create them—and Trump only gave expression to an American id that was long seething under the surface. True, Trump is demeaning these institutions to an unprecedented degree and demanding far more of them. But he’s only saying more stridently what was said by, say, President Barack Obama, who also criticized the NATO allies for being free-riders, and former President George W. Bush, whose administration privately mocked the alliance and sneered at the U.N. (Another little-remembered precursor to Trump was President Bill Clinton’s feisty first-term trade representative, Mickey Kantor, who once said he wasn’t interested in free-trade “theology” and preferred that Americans behave like mercantilists.)

Trump is making a serious run at denuding the WTO by taking down its appellate court, but even that institution is likely to outlast a 73-year-old president who, at most, has only four more years in office to wreak havoc on the global system. This is especially likely because he is now mostly alone in his anti-globalist passion with the departure of his deeply ideological national security advisor, the militant John Bolton.

Let’s not forget either that the advent of Trump and Johnson represents a legitimate backlash to major policy errors made by the elites who have dominated the international system. George W. Bush led the Republican Party badly astray with his strategically disastrous Iraq War and fecklessness over the deregulation of Wall Street, which set the stage for the biggest financial crash since 1929 and the Great Recession. That turned voters off to traditional Republican thinking and opened the door to Trump’s unlikely takeover of the party. Something similar happened in Britain, when Bush’s partner in these neoliberal economic delusions and his ally in an unnecessary war, the once-popular Labour leader Tony Blair, set the stage for Labour’s eventual handoff to the socialist Jeremy Corbyn. (A shift that was, in turn, analogous to the ascent of Sen. Bernie Sanders, Sen. Elizabeth Warren, and the left inside the U.S. Democratic Party in response to the rise of Trump’s 2016 presidential rival Hillary Clinton, who was seen as pro-war and too friendly to Wall Street.)

But the larger point is that Trump and Johnson are only the latest stresses to a system that, since the end of the Cold War, has suffered some pretty major ones and yet endured. In the quarter-century since then, financial markets collapsed several times, and the global economy has remained intact. Islamist terrorists have struck at major capitals around the world, and a clash of civilizations hasn’t ensued. The world’s two largest economies, the United States and China, incessantly bicker, but they’re still doing business. Ivory tower realists continue to be dead wrong in their predictions that the international system will fall back into anarchy, even when politicians like Trump are doing their best to make that happen. On the realist view, the so-called West and its institutions should have disintegrated after the Cold War with the disappearance of the Soviet Union; as Owen Harries wrote in Foreign Affairs in 1993, “The political ‘West’ is not a natural construct but a highly artificial one. It took the presence of a life-threatening, overtly hostile ‘East’ to bring it into existence and to maintain its unity. It is extremely doubtful whether it can now survive the disappearance of that enemy.”

#### *Roe* thumps.

Kirby ’22---Jen; Foreign and National Security Reporter at Vox. June 30, 2022; "Why America’s allies are worried about the end of Roe"; *Vox*; https://www.vox.com/23186751/roe-supreme-court-europe-world-reaction; //CYang

The United States Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* just as President Joe Biden was preparing to leave for Europe for meetings with America’s closest allies, first at the Group of Seven and then at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Summit.

A president’s foreign trip is sometimes a respite from domestic turmoil, but the news followed Biden abroad. World leaders talked about it. They tweeted about it. The European press wrote about it. Some people protested in solidarity, in places like Paris.

But the Supreme Court’s overturning of a 50-year precedent establishing a constitutional right to an abortion would have been a jolt, globally, no matter the timing. It collided with a question that has percolated with particular ferocity since the Trump administration, which is something like: Who is America, now?

“People are waking up to the realization that our democracy is nowhere near as expansive, is nowhere near as nimble, as perhaps they thought [it] to be when it comes to accommodating these new challenges that we’re facing,” said Omar Guillermo Encarnación, professor of political studies at Bard University.

Not all allies and partners likely have the same interpretation of the merits of the Supreme Court ruling; the news, for example, didn’t seem to resonate as strongly in South Korea, according to Politico’s Alex Ward. But at least across much of Western Europe, where majorities are pro-abortion rights, leaders have largely framed this as a step backward for women’s rights and human rights. That puts the US on an entirely different course from many of its closest allies, and may further weaken the US’s leadership on human rights.

Beyond the substance of the opinion, the decision rattles because of what it means for America, and its political divisions, and how that might translate into how reliable and stable America and its institutions remain. The Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization decision overruling Roe is about to open up another huge chasm in American political life, said Sarah Croco, a professor of government and politics at the University of Maryland. “I think this is just one more huge signal: The country’s not predictable anymore,” Croco said.

Of course, the Supreme Court’s decision is a domestic matter, and it won’t have the same effect as, say, pulling out of a major multilateral treaty. Stephen Wertheim, a senior fellow at the American Statecraft program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. said it was unlikely to have a major effect on allies and partners, but coming after other examples, like President Donald Trump and January 6, “it may contribute to a sense that the United States seems like a less familiar place, particularly to Europeans. Less aspirational, and so more distant.”

Biden promised allies at the start of his presidency that “America is back.” On the global stage, he has tried, from rejoining global institutions to the deep consultations with allies around the Ukraine war. But in Europe, especially, no one is quite sure how long that will last. The Supreme Court didn’t create that doubt. It’s just another reminder that such doubts aren’t going away.

“Is that something which, in and of itself, makes people kind of question the relationship with the US?” said David O’Sullivan, who served as EU ambassador to the United States from 2014 to 2019. “No, but in terms of the direction of travel, I think it’s yet another worrying indication of the deep divisions in American society.”

Roe may damage America’s soft power

On the same day the Supreme Court overruled Roe, Germany repealed a Nazi-era law that banned abortion providers from advertising or providing information about their services. It is part of a larger pattern: In the past 25 years, nearly 60 countries have expanded access to reproductive rights, according to the Center for Reproductive Rights. The United States is just one of four countries---Poland, Nicaragua, and El Salvador being the others---that has rolled back rights since 1994. That group isn’t exactly the cohort of democracies the United States often sees itself as the leader of.

Though, to be clear, the US has always swung back and forth when it comes to promoting reproductive rights as part of its foreign policy; Republicans withdraw and Democrats restore funding for certain programs.

The Roe decision is in some ways more visible than, say, the funding for a UN agency. As experts said, gender and women’s rights have long been a rallying point for US foreign policy. The Dobbs decision isn’t the first thing to expose the gaps between America’s ideals and its realities, but it could make it harder for the US to take that stand. “It’s taking this huge step back, and so the soft power of the US is damaged in several ways,” said Michaela Mattes, an associate professor in international relations at the University of California Berkeley.

And Supreme Court rulings can matter internationally. Brown v. Board of Education---the landmark anti-segregation case---also helped the United States show the world it was trying to live up to post-World War II ideals of human rights, and it helped in the larger ideological battles of the Cold War between democracy and communism. As former Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said in 2004: “To sum up, Brown both reflected and propelled the development of human rights protection internationally. It was decided with the horrors of the Holocaust in full view, and with the repression of Communist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe a current reality.”

Encarnación pointed out that, when it comes to civil liberties, “it’s been a long, long, long, long, long, long, long time since the Supreme Court led the world” in policy or laws. (Same-sex marriage, maybe the last big progressive ruling, was already legal in about 20 countries when that ruling came down in 2015.) The question is whether Dobbs will have influence, but in an entirely different direction---either further damaging the US’s ability to advocate for human rights, or being used to justify rollbacks to women and human rights in other places.

“This is something that we saw with Brown v. Board of [Education]---how a domestic federal ruling had global dimensions,” said Joyce Mao, associate professor of history at Middlebury University. “The overturning of Roe may have a similar cultural, political, and diplomatic importance that is going to absolutely influence the way in which potential allies and existing allies view American democracy.”

America, the unpredictable

Allies and others have gotten pretty concerned and disillusioned with the United States before, as during the Iraq War. But then came Donald Trump, who did things like threaten to pull out of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, actually pull out of the Iran deal negotiated with European partners, and start trade wars with allies. Also, Twitter wars. Things that seemed like bipartisan constants in American foreign policy were no longer.

But the Trump era also exposed how deeply divided and polarized America was, culminating in January 6, 2021, and the election fraud lies, which have only hooked themselves deeper into American political life. Biden is president, and right now, relations with allies and partners are copacetic, even invigorated. But that no longer feels permanent.

The Supreme Court’s decision fits into this larger pattern of unpredictability, which makes it hard to know where America will be in the next months, a few years, or a decade. As experts said, US institutions, including internationally, were often seen as creating this framework of stability---yes, different political parties won, there were tensions between branches, but pragmatism tended to prevail. “That pragmatism in terms of execution has been lost---and *Roe* and Dobbs illustrated that to the nth degree,” Mao said.

### 1nc---democracy

#### Democratic peace is statistically disproven---it’s conflict driving

Dr. Daina Chiba 21, Associate Professor of Political Science in the Department of Government and Public Administration at the University of Macau, Ph.D. in Political Science from Rice University, LL.M in Jurisprudence and International Relations from Hitotsubashi University, and Dr. Erik Gartzke, Professor of Political Science at the University of California, San Diego, PhD in Political Science from the University of Iowa, “Make Two Democracies and Call Me in the Morning: Endogenous Regime Type and the Democratic Peace”, 2/19/2021, https://dainachiba.github.io/research/make2dem/Make2Dem.pdf

The democratic peace—the observation that democracies are less likely to fight each other than are other pairings of states—is one of the most widely acknowledged empirical regularities in international relations. Prominent scholars have even characterized the relationship as an empirical law (Levy 1988; Gleditsch 1992). The discovery of a special peace in liberal dyads stimulated enormous scholarly debate and led to, or reinforced, a number of policy initiatives by various governments and international organizations. Although a broad consensus has emerged among researchers regarding the empirical correlation between joint democracy and peace, disagreement remains as to its logical foundations. Numerous theories have been proposed to account for how democracy produces peace, if only dyadically (e.g., Russett 1993; Rummel 1996; Doyle 1997; Schultz 2001).

At the same time, peace appears likely to foster or maintain democracy (Thompson 1996; James, Solberg, andWolfson 1999). A vast swath of research in political science and economics proposes explanations for the origins of liberal government involving variables such as economic development (Lipset 1959; Burkhart and Lewis-Beck 1994; Przeworski et al. 2000; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Epstein et al. 2006) and inequality (Boix 2003), political interests (Downs 1957; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003), power hierarchies (Moore 1966; Lake 2009), third party inducements (Pevehouse 2005) or impositions (Peceny 1995; Meernik 1996), geography (Gleditsch 2002b), and natural resource endowments (Ross 2001), to list just a few examples. Each of these putative causes of democracy is also associated with various explanations for international conflict. Indeed, some as yet poorly defined set of canonical factors may contribute both to democracy and to peace, making it look as if the two variables are directly related, even if possibly they are not.

We seek to contribute to this literature, not by proposing yet another theory to explain how democracy vanquishes war, but by estimating the causal effect of joint democracy on the probability of militarized disputes using a quasi-experimental research design. We begin by noting that some of the common causes of democracy and peace may be unobservable, generating an endogenous relationship between the two. Theories of democracy and explanations for peace are at a formative state; it is not possible to utilize detailed, validated and widely accepted models of each of these processes to assess their interaction. Indeed, to a remarkable degree democracy and peace each remain poorly understood and weakly accounted for empirically, despite their central roles in international politics. We address the risk of spurious correlation by applying an instrumental variables approach. Having taken into account possible endogeneity between democracy and peace, we find that joint democracy does not have an independent pacifying effect on interstate conflict. Instead, our findings show that democratic countries are more likely to attack other democracies than are non-democracies. Our results call into question the large body of theory that has been proposed to account for the apparent pacifism of democratic dyads.

#### Democratic backsliding is global and inevitable.

James Dean, 1-17-2024 citing a new research paper by Rachel Beatty Riedl, John S. Knight Professor of International Studies and director of the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies at Cornell, and a professor in the Department of Government, in the College of Arts and Sciences (A&S), and in the Cornell Jeb E. Brooks School of Public Policy, Kenneth Roberts, the Richard J. Schwartz Professor of Government (A&S) and the faculty fellow leading Einaudi’s democratic threats and resilience research initiative, Paul Friesen, Einaudi’s democratic threats postdoctoral fellow, Jennifer McCoy, professor of political science at Georgia State University, "Democratic decline a global phenomenon, even in wealthy nations," Cornell Chronicle, https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2024/01/democratic-decline-global-phenomenon-even-wealthy-nations, KL

Democratic backsliding is occurring in an unprecedented number of wealthy countries once thought immune to such forces – the United States among them, finds a new analysis led by Cornell political scientists.

To inform debates about where backsliding is happening – and to highlight strategies for resistance – the researchers identified episodes of decline in nearly 40 countries since 1990, from Armenia to Zambia. Half exceeded the wealth threshold above which social scientists have previously believed advanced, industrial democracies could not break down, including most of the countries the scholars classified as exhibiting “severe” backsliding.

Increasingly, the researchers said, threats to democracy are emerging not from dramatic coups, military aggression or civil war, but from autocratic leaders leveraging democratic institutions – election officials, legislatures, courts and the media – to consolidate executive power. Such processes are incremental and harder to recognize in real time, they said, and may exacerbate polarization that further weakens trust in democracies.

“Globally and in the United States, we see a new pattern of democratic erosion using institutions to restrict democratic rights and participation,” said Rachel Beatty Riedl, director of the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies at Cornell. “With record numbers of people expected to participate in elections around the world this year, now is the time when resistance strategies need to be practiced to buttress and safeguard democracy.”

Riedl, the Einaudi Center’s John S. Knight Professor of International Studies and a professor in the Department of Government, in the College of Arts and Sciences (A&S), and in the Cornell Jeb E. Brooks School of Public Policy, is the first author of “Democratic Backsliding, Resilience, and Resistance,” published Jan. 17 in the journal World Politics. Co-authors are Kenneth Roberts, the Richard J. Schwartz Professor of Government (A&S) and the faculty fellow leading Einaudi’s democratic threats and resilience research initiative; Paul Friesen, Einaudi’s democratic threats postdoctoral fellow; and Jennifer McCoy, professor of political science at Georgia State University. The article is a part of a symposium to mark the 75th anniversary of World Politics, where Riedl is a member of the editorial committee and Roberts is a member of the editorial board.

Recently, debates among scholars have centered on the extent and nature of democratic backsliding globally, with some warning that long-standing, affluent democracies are at risk while others argue such fears are overblown. Conclusions are heavily shaped by coding decisions around thresholds that establish where and when backsliding begins, the degree of decline and when episodes recede or end – critical moments when resistance factors may be identified, the scholars said.

“Even where backsliding does not cause democracy to break down or be replaced by some form of dictatorship, it involves a significant erosion in the quality and stability of democratic governance,” Roberts said. “It degrades democratic citizenship and undermines the ability of citizens to use democratic institutions to hold rulers accountable.”

Based on the 38 cases categorized as experiencing minimal (a group including the U.S.), moderate or severe decline – the team identified four pathways of backsliding. The most dominant one was “executive aggrandizement,” where an incumbent executive and political party exert control over democratic institutions, weaken checks and balances and limit opposition. Archetypal cases include Benin, Hungary, Nicaragua and Turkey.

A second pathway is “elite collusion,” where incumbents, allied officials and corporate leaders work to co-opt opposition leaders and independent media through patronage and spoils, a process observed in Indonesia, Guatemala and Peru. A third pathway, seen in Tunisia, involves a “self-coup,” in which executives close or neutralize democratic institutions like courts and legislatures to centralize power and eliminate accountability. A final set of cases demonstrates democratic resilience and recovery, where institutions and mobilized citizens hold backsliding in check – as in Malawi, Moldova and South Korea.

The threshold analysis and case studies highlight several sources of resilience and strategies for resistance, the researchers determined. Opposition parties are particularly important to resisting autocratic incumbents, they said, and must set aside policy differences to unify around the goal of defending democracy.

“Timing is also key,” Riedl said. “If you can identify threats to democracy and respond to them in the early stages, you’re much more likely to be able to resist backsliding. If erosion goes too deep and too far, it’s much more difficult to recover.”

Turkey and Hungary are examples of the latter scenario, she said, while Poland represents a more optimistic case, having bounced back from severe democratic decline. The researchers said the democratic character of civil society, courts, legislatures, bureaucracies and the media should never be taken for granted.

“Democracy is never consolidated but has to be continually practiced and improved,” Riedl said. “Contestation of ideas and priorities within shared rules is at the heart of democratic citizenship and leadership; in order to effectively contest the ideas, we have to uphold the rules in spirit and in practice. This research helps identify who is doing that and how.”

The research was supported by the Einaudi Center and the U.S. Agency for International Development.