# 1NC---Round 1---DRR

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### 1NC

#### Cap K.

#### Labor law is a tool of capitalist discipline. Legal protections subsume class struggle into the framework of capital accumulation, precluding class consciousness.

Dr. Maja Breznik 24. Researcher, Peace Institutem; Ph.D. in Sociology, University of Ljubljana; Research fellow, University of Padua; National Correspondent, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. “Less or More Labour Law for Social Change?” Industrial Law Journal, Volume 53, Issue 4.

As just discussed, legal form theorists consider labour law to be ‘capitalist law’ in so far as any improvement in labour rights is only possible if it facilitates the accumulation of capital or prevents exit from capitalism.34 Adams sees labour law as a historical answer to the structural contradictions of capitalism.35 Labour law indeed seeks to enable the normal reproduction of labour power and, in turn, to improve working conditions, but for the sole purpose, or at least with the effect of protecting capital overall against the self-destructive competition of individual capitalists. Although capital as class benefits from the social reproduction of labour, competition between individual capitalist firms creates an inexorable pressure for wage reductions. This endangers labour as a production factor and thereby the accumulation of capital generally. Labour law responds to this functional need of capital. Since workers’ rights are framed as part of private law, they depend for their enforcement upon the power of state entities which, however, will ultimately prioritise the interests of capital.

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In an alternative approach, McLoughlin and Hürzeler propose two ‘legal forms’: bourgeois law and labour law. They find support for their stance in Marx, who indeed criticised bourgeois rights for being ‘an illusory account of the exploitative social relations’ yet also supported factory laws because he believed that the legal reduction of working time, for example, could play a key role in the revolutionary project.37 Alain Supiot sets out similar views in Critique du droit du travail, first published in 1993.38 Supiot’s work is an important point of reference since he is one of the few contemporary theorists of labour law to address Pashukanis’s position, prior to the recent re-emergence of the legal form debate. Supiot’s starting point is that labour cannot straightforwardly be a com- modity given that it cannot be separated from the physical ‘person’ of the worker.39 The content of the labour relationship is a paid service arising from the person’s physical and intellectual activity;40 the physical body is the place where contractual obligations are performed. This creates a con- tradiction between the legal form of the labour relationship, that reduces labour to a commodity, and the physical body, which is not part of the exchange since a worker cannot be a commodity. Had it been otherwise, workers would be slaves. The contradiction appears when workers sell their labour power and become subordinated to the employer because at that moment workers lose control over their bodies. The role of labour law is to protect the body and save the skin of workers (all aspects of their biolog- ical existence via regulations on safety and health at work), protect their livelihood (without it, their position would be worse than for slaves), pro- vide for continuity of income also when workers are unable to work (due to illness, unemployment or retirement) and, finally, the continuity of income for the family and all members of the public (through social policies).41 This explains why Supiot (in common with Otto von Gierke, Karl Renner and Hugo Sinzheimer before him)42 considers labour law to be social law and as such antithetical to civil law. The biggest difference between the two lies in the fact that civil law is individual law, whereas social law (and labour law) is collective law according to Supiot. It can also be claimed that labour law is class law,43 in contrast to the general character of civil law. The specific character of collective or class law finds expression in the new type of legal rationality, even a new paradigm, because labour law could not have evolved without the support of the social sciences, which shed light on the working and living conditions of working families. Accordingly, the special feature of labour law is that it combines ‘legal’ and ‘social arguments’. This characteristic brings it into conflict with the civil legal order: while the two co-operate on the level of ‘legal arguments’, they inevitably conflict in the area of ‘social arguments’.44 law) is collective law according to Supiot. It can also be claimed that labour law is class law,43 in contrast to the general character of civil law. The spe- cific character of collective or class law finds expression in the new type of legal rationality, even a new paradigm, because labour law could not have evolved without the support of the social sciences, which shed light on the working and living conditions of working families. Accordingly, the special feature of labour law is that it combines ‘legal’ and ‘social arguments’. This characteristic brings it into conflict with the civil legal order: while the two co-operate on the level of ‘legal arguments’, they inevitably conflict in the area of ‘social arguments’. The above argument highlights contrasting perspectives on labour law: some see it as a capitalist law, others as a social, collective or class law. With this in mind, let us now return to the initial question: How do these theories intervene in social reality and what kind of social change do they imply? Supiot admits, not without irony, that labour law supervises the subordination of workers. He then tries to resolve the contradiction between the formal equality of the contractual parties and workers’ actual subordination to capital. The problem is solved in such a way that the autonomy and freedom of workers, which have been lost through subordination, are supplemented by collective rights such as the right to collective association, strike and collective bargaining.45 In this way, autonomy lost on the individual level is reasserted at the collective level, which in turn means that ‘freedom and subordination became legally compatible’.46 An inevitable consequence is that workers can become free and legally equal persons only when they break away from isolation, become a political class, act as the working class against the capitalist class and begin to change the material conditions of their existence.47 Legal form theory has an answer for Supiot’s argument. In his analysis of workers’ collective organising, Knox emphasises the historical achievement of the labour movement, whereby the post-Second World War legal regime ‘created the conditions for a trade union movement that represented the working class as a whole’.48 From the 1980s onwards, neoliberal reforms radically altered this legal regime (e.g. with restrictions on secondary actions and closed shops in the UK). However, Knox does not see the solution as restoring the legal framework that existed before the neoliberal reforms because, by failing to address the roots of labour exploitation, the post-war trade unions remained within the bounds of capitalism.

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What then is the issue? The problem is that workers’ collective rights are based on a definition of the worker derived from their status — that someone is a worker insofar as they are a member of a working collective and therefore of a company. A worker is defined a priori by belonging to an enterprise or employing organisation, not by belonging to a working class.

According to the legal form critique, while Supiot has resolved the contradiction on paper, his solution is unworkable in practice. The right to collectively organise cannot compensate for workers’ autonomy and freedom lost following their subordination to capital since access to these rights can only be exercised by workers with the status that arises from belonging to an enterprise organised along capitalist lines. As Knox and others observe, this means that collective organising has inevitably been transformed into self-interested, economic/corporate organisations. These organisations reinforce the divisions within the working class and the differences between workers. To take a contemporary example, they are more likely to augment the effects of the current economic restructuring, which has managed to break down the unity of workers through global production chains, cascades of sub-contractors and intermediaries on one hand, and a multitude of new legal forms of work on the other.

#### Capitalism’s unsustainable, ensuring extinction.

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One response to the current world in disorder is the revival of geopolitics to pursue partial interests and regain control in a world of limits and crises (Ioannides 2022). Shifting the coordinates of world politics towards confrontation resembles 20th century territorial conceptions of geopolitics, like territorial claims, control of national borders and resources, artillery and tank warfare. The world is in a transition phase (or interspace) between the old and a new world order, reminiscent of the destabilisation of the colonial world order a hundred years ago, when World War I erupted in a spiral of violence, followed by other crises such as the Spanish flu, the Great Depression and fascism, which led to the catastrophe of World War II (Scheffran 2009, 2014). Today it is about the crises of the fossil and neoliberal variants of globalized capitalism, which drive humanity down a path if it does not make a fundamental turnaround.

8.6.2 Power Shifts and Crisis in the Liberal World Order

The idea of a ’victory’ of the liberal democracies in the Cold War shaped thinking and action in parts of the West after 1990. This corresponded with the assumption that Western values, models and claims for power could be brought to a worldwide breakthrough. Thus, the West continued its century-long history of expansion, driven by a combination of economic growth, political power and military force (Scheffran 1996), reinforced by scientific and technological innovation, prosperity, and Western values. This was fuelled by the expectation that the West could solve the world’s problems in its own way: Enforcement of human rights, overthrowing dictatorships, democratic regime change and nation building, coping with climate change and other global problems. Following the 1992 Rio Summit, the issue of war and peace was neglected, although in a crowded, interconnected and multipolar world, armament and war can multiply insecurity and instability with other crisis drivers, such as globalisation and climate change.

Instead of ushering into a peaceful world order and using the peace dividend to tackle global problems, the U.S. and its allies used money and diplomacy as well as weapons procurement and military interventions to secure the liberal world order and further expand their lead. The justification by universal values was mixed with the assertion of own interests, which were usually prioritised. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the economic crisis of 2008, the chain of crises also affected the West and contributed to its destabilisation. Thus, the world today is more concerned with crisis management than with shaping the future, which would be more urgent than ever in view of interconnected problems, described earlier.

There are many reasons why the crisis of the liberal world order (Rupnik 2015) is now following the epochal upheavals three decades ago. Among them are inherent contradictions and limits of Western expansionism. Globalised capitalism produces not only winners but also losers, creates suffering and inequality, fractures and turbulences, neglect of social needs and identities that work against a stable order (Klein 2007). While Fukuyama (1989) translated the Western supremacy into the end of history, Huntington (1996) opposed the democratic-capitalist alignment with a ‘clash of civilizations’, with asymmetric conflicts and authoritarian politics. The spiral of violence continued, with hundreds of thousands of casualties and trillions of dollars for military budgets. NATO remained a military alliance rather than converting into a system of collective and common security. Military interventions showed the limits of high-tech warfare (Neuneck/Scheffran 2000b), leaving many problems unsolved, most clearly in the Afghanistan mission (2001–2021), which failed to achieve its objectives but resulted in enormous losses.

Although the nuclear arsenals are lower than in the Cold War, nuclear deterrence and the nuclear arms race continues. With nearly 13,000 nuclear weapons, there is a risk of their use in crises, wars and terrorist attacks. This is complicated by the ‘Revolution in Military Affairs’, which involves all areas of high technology, including missile defence, space armament and cyberwar (Neuneck/Scheffran 2000a). After the U.S. abandoned or did not ratify arms control agreements (ABM, INF, Open Skies, CTBT), the nuclear arms race became less regulated. Opportunities for comprehensive nuclear disarmament and supporting the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) were missed. Militarisation extends to missiles and missile defense systems, outer space and cyberspace, drone and hybrid warfare, vulnerability of military and civilian infrastructures, fake news and hate speech on social media, where the lines between war and peace are blurred (Scheffran 2018a, 2019b).

Global military spending rose to more than two trillion USD for the first time in 2021 (SIPRI 2022), and even more in 2022. The U.S. alone invested about $800 billion, as much as the following ten countries combined, about 2.7 as much as China ($293 billion), more than ten times as much as India ($76.6 billion), and twelve times as much as Russia ($65.9 billion). In addition came the military spending of other NATO countries, including the United Kingdom at $68.4 billion, and the sharp increase in German military spending (about $56 billion) which still missed NATO’s two percent target (SIPRI 2022). Together with growing arms exports, this creates a direct link between economic and military growth. Global military spending reached record levels when the Russian-Ukraine war triggered a drastic increase in 2022, reaching USD 2240 billion (SIPRI 2023). Other crisis indicators also increased substantially in recent years, such as violent conflict and forced displacement.

The more the expansive growth model encounters limits, the more evident are marginal costs and risks in a world facing intertwined multiple crises, conflicts and catastrophes that appear as wicked problems in complex crisis landscapes (Rittel/Webber 1973; Scheffran 2008). The compounding problems reinforce the erosion of the rule-based international order and loss of control by the Western hegemony (Brzoska et al. 2019; Taylor et al. 2020). The world of 1990 has given way to a confusing situation in complex crisis landscapes, fractures of globalisation and systemic turbulence. One explanation is that we are experiencing a world in transition, an interim period in which the old order is challenged by existential problems that can no longer be solved within the existing framework before a new order is found (Schröder 2022).Footnote6 Possible futures include global power shifts and geopolitical conflicts, especially between China and the United States, as well as multipolar power constellations with multiple competing orders where the liberal order could persist with limited scope (Flockhart 2016). Whether the limits to the Anthropocene are largely limits to the expansion of the Western world order or limits to humanity as a whole, depends on the policies pursued and their impacts on power structures. New solution pathways are required addressing the complexity of the challenges The chain of crises is reminiscent of the situation a hundred years ago, with World War I, the Spanish flu, the world economic crisis and fascism, which led to World War II. In today’s world political, security, environmental and social crises converge (Spangenberg/Kurz 2023), densifying and intensifying long-term trends and short-term events to an epochal turn (Zeitenwende) (Scheffran 2021a, b).

8.6.3 Geopolitics and Zeitenwende Between National Borders and Planetary Boundaries

At the turn of the millennium, the rift between the West and its former partner Russia became entrenched, creating the basis for today’s situation, reminiscent of the Cold War (Scheffran 2000a, b). Russia attempted to regain a voice in the international arena after a decade of weakness and ignorance of Russian security interests by the West in NATO expansion, Kosovo war, missile defence and arms control. Against this background, Russia increasingly pursued a more confrontational policy toward the West, through nuclear arms build-ups, hybrid wars and military interventions. Apparently the large Western dominance over Russia could neither guarantee security nor prevent Putin’s attack on Ukraine, perhaps even incited it by raising Russian threat perceptions. Accordingly, Russia is pushing great power claims, not only in areas of the former Soviet Union, but also in the Middle East, Africa and the Arctic. Attempts to include Ukraine into the Western sphere of influence and expand it to the Russian frontier led to violent reactions and a hardening of authoritarian structures in Russia, from the annexation of Crimea in 2014 to the illegal war against Ukraine since February 24, 2022. The West adopted massive sanctions against Russia and provided arms exports to Ukraine. On 27 February 2022 Chancellor Olaf Scholz switched into crisis mode and in his speech to the German Parliament declared a response to the supposed Zeitenwende (epochal turn) induced by Russia’s attack, providing 100 billion Euros in special funds for the German Armed Forces (Scholz 2023). It is questionable whether such a military-oriented turn can meet planetary security needs or rather feeds the arms race.

In Russia’s attack on Ukraine old and new geopolitics interfere in complex ways (Scheffran 2023a, b). The revival of old geopolitical strategies of confrontation, militarisation, arms race, violence, hot and cold war activate multipolar power shifts and rivalries, between the European Union and Russia, China and the United States, Global North and South. Europe is facing geopolitical challenges in all geographic directions: in the East by Russian threats and Putin’s power games, in the West by US nationalism and hegemony, in the South by the destabilisation of the Mediterranean region, and in the North by climate change, resource competition and rivalries in the Arctic. China is trying to reshape the international order and expand its global political influence. With the ‘New Silk Road’ on land and sea, a network of infrastructures is being created from East Asia to Europe and Africa. China challenges the West in key technologies and is preparing for military confrontation, especially in the South China Sea. The U.S., under President Joe Biden, is struggling to maintain its hegemony and forging alliances in the Indo-Pacific which is becoming increasingly armed (Brands/Gaddis 2021).

While the Ukraine war is a burning glass of old geopolitics, it also serves as a new geopolitical framing of emerging security issues, such as cyber and hybrid war, drone and space warfare, anti-globalisation and energy transition, environmental and climate change. The mindset of geopolitics is increasingly spreading in technically constructed spaces. New terrain is claimed not only in distant regions of the world or in outer space, but also in cyberspace of information war and in the nanoworld connecting physical, chemical and biological innovations at smallest scales (Ruhl et al. 2020). While distances are compressed in the micro-world of genomes and brains, the macro view of satellites and geographic information systems connects all areas globally. In the networks of social media internal and external worlds are bridged by interfaces potentially connecting and controlling humans (Zuboff 2019; Scheffran 2023b).

Corresponding to the declining relevance of national borders and shrinking spatial distances in a highly connected world society, the geo-economics of markets and geopolitical fault lines have gained relevance. Facing the limits of the Anthropocene the exploitation of natural resources, global warming and renewable energy are becoming new areas of geopolitics, giving territoriality a new meaning (Burles 2021; Scheffran 2023a, b). Climate change is drawing geographical maps of regional hot spots with high vulnerability and risk, while the quest for a green economy is selecting suitable places with high solar radiation and biomass productivity, strong flows of water, wind, geothermal, tidal, and ocean currents as well as related strategic materials. Driven by the social-ecological transformation new energy landscapes integrate natural and societal interactions in complex geopolitical frames of control, resistance and conflict, connecting local and global levels (Link et al. 2018). When natural limits are reached, efforts to adjust to the risk of these limits also grow, such as geoengineering to keep the climate system within boundaries which can create new side effects (Link et al. 2013; Maas/Scheffran 2012).

Critical approaches to geopolitics doubt that human behaviour is determined by geographical factors and criticise that borders, boundaries and barriers are used for political discrimination and exclusion, for example against poor, female, ethnic, religious or migrant groups (Scheffran 2023b). From a feminist and racial perspective, geopolitics serves to enforce patriarchal structures and white supremacy (Tilley 2014). In local contexts, participatory approaches and resistance can create spaces free of established power structures and help evolving alternative forms of Anthropocene Geopolitics (Dalby 2020). Integrative geography opens the possibility of developing interfaces with other disciplines and their interdisciplinary fusion. A key question is whether nation-states are able to manage today’s global challenges and interconnected crises. Nationalism provokes geopolitical conflicts which are major obstacles to effective and coordinated global strategies and solutions against climate change and other crises (Conversi/Posocco 2022). The propagated ideological ‘battle between democracy and autocracy’ is dividing the world into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ according to Western standards which found a geopolitical representation in the Russian-Ukrainian border as a frontier between the transatlantic Western world and the Eastern Eurasian land mass. Such a rift is constructing and justifying a new Cold War narrative and its proxy wars (Scheffran 2000a, b, 2023a, b).

The Ukraine war follows a similar logic as other wars which mobilise the means of violence of collective agents which are polarised into friend and foe, good and evil, mutually justify increasing threats that trigger a spiral of violence, move up the escalation ladder until the limits are reached in total war or further acts of war do not seem reasonable because of the costs and risks involved (Scheffran 2023c). Different from moral justifications, realist thinking explains the mechanisms of escalation and how to prevent them (Mearsheimer 2014; Kissinger 2022). The consequences are obvious: massive destruction of cities and vital infrastructure, numerous dead and wounded people, millions of refugees and existential hardships, accusations of genocide and ecocide, attacks on nuclear facilities, spirals of escalation on the threshold of world or even nuclear war. While Russia and Ukraine deployed massive military force, the West supplied heavy weapons and imposed tough sanctions and other means of economic warfare, which increased inflation and supply chain disruptions, volatility of food and energy prices as well as increased military spending, hitting a global economy battered by the Corona pandemic, with the most vulnerable suffering most. The war distracts attention and resources away from planetary security and constrains solutions to the environmental and social crises, as well as the willingness to cooperate, further fuelling the crisis (Scheffran 2022a, d).

This war ignores historical experiences of previous wars, revives geopolitical power struggles, rearmament and other violent conflicts. The continuing logic of war destroys the conditions for a sustainable peace order, consumes enormous funds and resources that are lacking to solve urgent problems, and pollutes climate and the environment. Instead of overcoming crises, it multiplies them into a permanent crisis and a perpetual war (‘sustained war’), which former U.S. President George W. Bush propagated two decades ago in Iraq and Afghanistan. Instead of getting used to crisis mode or fighting the consequences, it is more reasonable to prevent the origins and drivers. Without a self-critical analysis, the war could deepen the crisis of the Western world order (Neumann 2022; Koschorke 2023). The fossil war and the climate crisis confirm the conflict-prone nature of the fossil-nuclear energy system, re-enforcing the urgency to develop an alternative energy system that is less conflictive (Scheffran 2022a).

The negative nexus of environmental destruction, underdevelopment and violence could drive the world into a self-reinforcing vicious circle of interconnected crises which undermine the conditions for peace and sustainable development (Scheffran et al. 2014; Buhaug/von Uexkull 2021). Climate and environmental change impact human needs, critical resources and infrastructures that are essential for the provision of human security and societal stability. On the other hand, climate change could set the course for a dynamic and globally coordinated climate policy, strengthened by risk reduction and conflict management. Whether conflict or cooperation prevails depends on the social and political conditions as well as human responses and societal interventions. While reactive measures to avert disaster risk can increase conflict risk, cooperative and preventive strategies that strengthen institution building and collaboration in environmental peacebuilding tend to diminish conflict risk.

Conflict generally refers to social or political incompatibilities of actors who fail to reduce their differences and tensions to tolerable levels and undertake actions to enforce or articulate their interests, including violence, protests, riots and other forms of resistance (Ide et al. 2016). If different interests and tensions cannot be overcome or mediated, conflicting actions may undercut each other’s values and provoke escalating and extreme responses (Scheffran et al. 2014). Conflict risks combine the intensity and probability of harmful consequences, ranging from social disruption and small-scale communal violence to civil and interstate wars. The types of conflict vary with respect to the number of actors, casualties and the degree of violence. Collective violence consumes considerable resources and contains the risk of escalation.

Climate change is potentially associated with a wide range of conflictive issues, from disputes over scientific predictions, impacts und uncertainties of climate change to violent conflicts fuelled by the security risks of climate change. Most studies on climate-conflict linkages discuss the effects of various climate phenomena (e.g. change of temperature and precipitation, resource availability, weather extremes, sea-level change) on different phases of conflict (onset, initiation, prevention, escalation, prolongation, termination). In addition, measures to prevent and address climate risks can also become issues of conflict, in particular tensions over mitigation and adaptation, disaster management and damage limitation, climate geoengineering or the fair distribution of costs, risks, and benefits of climate change. Conflict parties can be nations, individuals, parties, companies, trade unions, activist groups and generations, among others. Most studies refer to armed conflict, in which actors use military force to achieve aims.

The concept of security has been expanded to include ecological dimensions and the availability of natural resources (Brauch et al. 2008, 2009, 2011). Environmental conflicts concern the use and degradation of exhaustible as well as renewable resources, regenerated in metabolic cycles, depending on the functioning and stability of ecosystems, which in turn are affected by conflicts. The unresolved problems of sufficient, equitable and future-oriented resource use can lead to significant conflicts. If it is not possible to achieve a lasting balance between human demands and usable resources, different resource conflict types are considered.

Conflict-relevant factors are the quantity of available resources, their benefits and risks, as well as their distribution and needs formulated by the actors involved. Depending on these factors, different types of conflict can be distinguished. (Scheffran 1998, 2020a).

Conflicts over resource scarcity and abundance: Since the 1990s, there has been an extensive scientific debate on how the scarcity of natural resources such as minerals, water, energy, fish, and land affects violence and armed conflict (Homer-Dixon 1994; Bächler 1998). While many case studies suggest that environmental degradation and resource scarcity undermine human well-being, the effect on violent conflict “appears to be contingent on a set of intervening economic and political factors that determine adaptation capacity” (Bernauer et al. 2012: 1). Population growth, increased demand, and unequal distribution can affect the availability of natural resources, as can overexploitation or pollution of resources and degradation of ecosystem services. Resource scarcity can weaken social and economic systems or undermine political agency and authority of governments. Associated restrictions on wealth, quality of life and basic needs, loss of identity and livelihood, economic stagnation and social disadvantage can increase the potential for conflict. Manifest conflict arises when people use means of conflict including violence to address scarcity. Often, it is not the scarcity of natural resources that drives conflict, but their abundance, which can result in a ‘resource curse’, for example when revenues from the extraction of valuable raw materials (diamonds, coltan, rare earths) are unequally distributed or are used to procure means of conflict (weapons, soldiers, equipment) by rebel groups or private security services.

Resource availability, distribution and equity conflicts: The distribution, access to and financing of resources are contested power factors on a national, regional or global scale. Conflicts are fought to increase or defend one’s share of resources, or because of injustice in resource distribution – especially in the North-South context, where one fifth of humanity claims four fifths of the wealth and thus of natural resources. Ecological marginalisation and unequal resource distribution contribute to underdevelopment and impoverishment of populations, and the loss of vital resources (for example, agricultural land) leads to economic decline, weakens institutions, and provokes conflict tensions. While wealthy residents of industrialised nations currently live quite well at the expense of people who are spatially and temporally distant, people in developing countries currently fare poorly not so much because of natural limitations as because of unequal distribution. Who gets which share of the resource pie depends on power structures and institutional distribution and negotiation processes. Examples include the allocation of usage quotas, for example in fisheries or emissions trading. The extent to which environmental and resource problems contribute to violent conflict has been subject of scholarly debate for three decades. Studies examine the impact of climate change on conflict, from international tensions to intra-societal disputes.

Conflicts arising from the risk of resource use: Anthropogenic disruption of natural systems and risks arising from resource use can lead to security risks and political tensions, become conflict multipliers, e.g. security risks from dams, proliferation of nuclear weapons, nuclear accidents, resource depletion (oil, uranium, strategic metals), pollution of air, water and soil, or global warming, contributing to the global risk society (Beck 1992). The worst consequences can induce a collapse of resource production and damage to people and society, for example through overfishing, destruction of rainforests and biodiversity loss, in particular when carrying capacity limits are exceeded. Disruptions of natural systems have triggered political disputes, e.g. on pollution and waste disposal, construction of dams, chemical and nuclear plants, but have also triggered cooperative solutions and relief efforts. Environmental disasters can affect aid and resolution capacities, but they can also trigger cooperative solutions and relief efforts.

Conflicting policy goals, strategies and actions: Various conflicts arise over conflicting values and goals of actors in environmental policy, and the decision on actions taken to influence natural or social systems. These include differences between human resource claims and ecological regeneration, the enforcement of guiding principles (well-being, peace, sustainable development) or protests against measures in environmental, energy or climate policy.

In real conflict situations, different conflict types can influence each other. The extent to which environmental risks lead to conflict depends on societal conditions, in particular conflict history, group identities, income, institutions, organisation and equipment of conflict parties, and the importance of resources for group interests. How conflicts are fought and resolved is based on the willingness to use conflict resources: Conflicts tend to escalate when actors mutually harm each other, triggering violence and exhaustion. Although environmental crises rarely lead to violent conflict between countries, they can have indirect effects on the international community, especially when they affect vulnerable countries with a lack of water, forests and fertile land. Where institutionalised conflict-regulation mechanisms are underdeveloped, environmental conflicts carry the risk of violent conflict. Often, environmental conflicts appear as ethnic conflicts, centre-periphery conflicts, or long-distance conflicts due to transboundary risk factors such as climate change, natural disasters, epidemics, radioactive pollutants, or rising resource prices. When large numbers of people migrate to ecologically fragile and conflict-affected regions, this can amplify conflict, especially in the absence of institutionalised conflict regulation. In some cases, however, environmental problems also lead to greater cooperation, for example in agreements on water use (Ide 2023).

The complex influences of environmental change are evident in conflicts over strategic raw materials, e.g. natural gas and oil exploitation in the Arctic and Gulf regions, conflict diamonds in Sierra Leone and Angola, coltan and tin mines in Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, uranium mining in indigenous peoples’ territories, rare earth mining in China or lithium in Bolivia, Chile and Argentina. Conflict potentials around renewable resources concern water scarcity in the Middle East and Central Asia, land use in Africa, bioenergy in North and South America, dams in South and East Asia; flooding and soil erosion in South Asia, deforestation in Haiti and Brazil, drug cultivation in Afghanistan and Colombia or fisheries in the North Atlantic.

Without strong reductions in CO2 emissions and temperature limitations of 1.5–2 °C by the end of the 21st century (one of the planetary boundaries), anthropogenic climate change continues and has serious consequences around the world. Growing energy demand leads to shortages, environmental pollution and global warming through the greenhouse effect. Severe impacts on ecological and social systems are expected by climate change which undermines economic development and human security, especially for poor countries and populations. Risks include sea-level rise, storms, floods, droughts, wildfires, and other weather extremes which affects the lives of millions of people. Global warming is exacerbating environmental problems such as water scarcity, weather extremes and species extinction, threatening agricultural production and degrading the livelihoods of people worldwide. It can increase tensions and, together with other causes, become a driver of forced displacement.

Natural and social systems are exposed to climate-related hazards “that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, as well as damage and loss to property, infrastructure, livelihoods, service provision, ecosystems and environmental resources” (definitions here are from the glossary of IPCC 2022a, b). The effect depends on their vulnerability which is the “propensity or predisposition to be adversely affected. Vulnerability encompasses a variety of concepts and elements including sensitivity or susceptibility to harm and lack of capacity to cope and adapt”. While impacts are the consequences of interactions between hazards, exposure and vulnerability, risk is the “potential for adverse consequences for human or ecological systems, recognising the diversity of values and objectives associated with such systems” (IPCC 2022a, b). Adaptation is “the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects, in order to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities” (IPCC 2022a, b). While hazard exposure can be considered less conflict related, vulnerability, impact and risk cannot, suggesting that the climate-conflict link is not a one-way road. Systems vulnerable to climate change experience risks to human life, income, well-being, health, migration and security and on societal infrastructures, assets, networks, stability and conflict. Vulnerability connects environmental risks with social conflict.

Serving as arisk amplifier or threat multiplier, climate change accelerates and combines different factors of social vulnerability (IPCC 2014), in particular for countries with primarily agrarian societies and a high economic dependence on natural resource markets. If tipping points are crossed, cascading effects can destabilise the Earth’s climate (Steffen et al. 2018) and lead to global catastrophe (Kemp et al. 2022). Conflict-relevant mechanisms include lack of water and food, natural disasters, or environmentally induced migration. The combined effect of environmental change and social conflict can exceed adaptive and coping capacities of the affected systems which aim to maintain identity and resilience of affected units. Different geographical entities have diverse identities representing different nations, cultures and religions, levels of development and urbanisation which are interconnected. Interactions can be conflicting, cooperative and mutually adaptive, affecting societal stability in ambiguous ways.

#### The alternative is an economic commitment to a planned economy. It’s mutually exclusive.

Maxi Nieto 22. Professor & Researcher, Miguel Hernández University. “Market Socialism: The Impossible Socialism.” Science & Society, Volume 86, Issue 1.

4.1. The capitalist mode of production as an “organic system.” Faced with the superficial conceptions of conventional economics and market socialists, which did not address theoretically the constitutive structure of bourgeois society, Marx understood the capitalist mode of production as an “organic system” (Grundrisse) in which the different elements that compose it implicate and presuppose each other, forming a whole that is not simply the sum of its own parts, but an articulated totality with a specific operating logic that establishes the necessary conditions for its continuous self-reproduction and development. The process of exposition followed by Marx — clearly differentiated from the process of research — takes the form of a conceptual development by which categories are derived from one another in a logical sequence, beginning with the simplest and most abstract notions and advancing to the most complex and concrete. From this theoretical-methodological perspective, Marx shows that the market and capital are two organically connected instances that presuppose one another, so that they cannot exist separately. Understood as the universal circulation of commodities, the market is the form of manifestation of an atomized production structure where autonomous business units compete with one another seeking to maximize their profits (which is to say seeking to valorize their investments as capital, the final goal of all production).

Indeed, Marx demonstrates in Capital that the “simple circulation of commodities” (colloquially, “the market”) does not constitute an isolated or autonomous sphere of social reality, and much less does it refer to some form of precapitalist organization, a system of independent producers that never really existed. On the contrary, it represents a certain dimension or particular moment of an organic totality, such as the capitalist mode of production (unity of production, distribution, exchange, and consumption), which has its own operating logic and specific laws of motion. In Marx’s analysis, the sphere of commodity circulation appears as immediately visible on the surface of capitalist society itself, therefore presupposing it to be a structural totality. Only on the basis of fully developed capitalist production does the exchange of products become a truly universal phenomenon (as opposed to the restricted character it experienced in all previous societies). Thus, Marx’s research begins from a specific aspect of bourgeois society — such as exchange relations, but abstracted for methodological reasons from the existence of capital, which appears in a second phase of theoretical construction.

In the chain of logical-theoretical implications that leads to the notion of capital in Marx, there are two fundamental steps that occupy the first two sections of Volume I. First, it is established that the general circulation of commodities requires the category of money as a universally equivalent and autonomous form of value. Then it is shown that money can only become a truly autonomous form of value if it functions as capital (that is, as “self-valorizing value”), increasing throughout its circulation thanks to the generation of surplus value in production.

Marx thus derives the category of “capital” from the simple circulation of commodities, as an ulterior development of the determinations of the category of “money” and the functions recognized in that sphere. He offers this deduction as a transit from the “C–M–C circuit,” representing simple circulation, to the “M–C–M’ circuit,” which describes the circulation of money as capital. In the first circuit, money is only an intermediary in a process whose final goal is beyond mere circulation, in the consumption of commodities and therefore the satisfaction of needs. Money loses its autonomous existence the moment it is transformed into commodities, and its circulation is interrupted. From here it follows that money can only be an autonomous form of value if it never leaves circulation, and this happens only if it becomes the very aim of circulation, as in the M–C–M’ process. This second circuit requires a transit from the sphere of circulation, in which changes are registered in the form of value (between C and M), to that of production, the only terrain where surplus value can arise — a quantitative difference between the initial and final magnitude of value.

Thus, in its most abstract and essential determination (called the “general formula” by Marx), capital is a continuous process or movement: that of the “valorization of value” or “value in process,” and as such it constitutes an end in itself, an automatic process devoid of term or limit, to which individuals and their needs are subjected. It can then be said that the subject of the economic process is not people or social agents but capital itself, which must expand indefinitely, at an ever-increasing scale, leading Marx to speak of the valorization process as an “automatic subject.” Economic life is therefore governed by an abstract, impersonal, and ~~blind~~ power that imposes its need for self-reproduction on the will and needs of people. For Marx, this automatism alien to human consideration is most characteristic of the market process, and an essential reason behind his understanding that the market can never provide a basis for the construction of socialism, which is a project of social emancipation consisting precisely of conscious and democratic control of the economic process by a population seeking the satisfaction of its needs.

Universal exchange of commodities and capital would thus be internally and necessarily connected, presupposing each other within the same structural unit. The cycle of capital — the process of expanding an initial sum of value expressed in money — includes within a general economic interrelation both the phases of circulation (buying and selling) and of production (organization of work and generation of surplus). For this reason, circulation cannot be an autonomous sphere of the economic process but the expression of a particular aspect or moment of itself. Market relations are the necessary form of articulation of an atomized production system in which labors are carried out independently of each other, without submitting to any consideration or overall plan, and whose immanent purpose is expansion of value. In short, circulation (markets) and production (capital) make up two faces or spheres of a single economic structure. It should also be noted that this competitive framework, inherent in the fragmentation of social labor into private units, not only requires profit-seeking as an end in itself but also induces compulsive accumulation, and the need for constant productive reinvestment, which determines the ungovernable and turbulent functioning of the regime of market production.

Note that in this general characterization of capital as “value in process,” “self-valorizing value,” or “automatic subject,” labor-power as a commodity has not made an appearance, and therefore neither does the social relationship between the wage laborer and the owner of the means of production — which is what market socialists consider the essential characteristic of capitalist production. From the point of view of the essential determination that we are examining, the concrete agent in which valorization can be embodied is in fact entirely secondary. Hence, Marx conceived the figure of the capitalist owner as a mere “personification of an economic category,” “capital personified,” not as a true protagonist or subject of the economic process. In this sense, the capitalist will be “merely a cog” (Marx, 1976, 739) who executes the abstract logic of capital.

Although what has historically fueled this valorization process has been, of course, the exploitation of wage labor, this could also be accomplished by different sources: for example, by cooperative workers who must supply more work than its cost of reproduction to a process they do not control, which coercively imposes upon them the blind and external force of competition. Neither the legal status of the companies nor the type of social relations (vertical or horizontal) established within them will alter in any way this market logic or the general economic dynamics that derive from it. As long as the economy continues to be based on markets, production cannot be oriented toward satisfying social needs but must be directed to the valuation of investments.

Thus, at the level of abstraction considered here, the true presupposition of capital is not labor-power (or a free worker) as a commodity, but rather competition, which “subordinates every individual capitalist to the immanent laws of capitalist production, as external and coercive laws” (Marx, 1867, 739). This leads to the tendency to lower costs, to lengthen the working day, and to accumulate or extend markets. It is competition, in short, that forces production units to extract surplus labor from the producers (whether salaried or not) in ever-increasing quantities, in order to continually consign it to the automatic movement of “accumulation for the sake of accumulation, production for the sake of production” (Marx, 1867, 742), a requirement on which survival in the market depends.

In summary: understood as the universal exchange of commodities, the market necessarily expresses an economic structure based on private control of the means of production; and it presupposes the fragmentation of the productive apparatus into autonomous business units that, in order to survive in competition, need to maximize surplus value and continually reinvest it. The fragmentation of social labor requires that investments generate more value than the production costs incurred by them.

### 1NC

Disclosing ‘new’ when asked is a voting issue:  
1. UNFAIRNESS. New exploits every bias: card docs, reactivity, and the lack of a preround all destroy the neg and advantage the aff with a whole week (!!!) to comb our wiki.  
2. RESEARCH. The expectation of ‘new’ moots the pre-tournament, and novelty inflates the risk of otherwise asinine positions. Worse, the neg is forced to rush to generics, decimating education. That proves this resolutional: the preround is key to exclusive T interps, deterring untopicality.  
Disclosure solves. They get the benefit of novelty while equalizing costs for the neg.

### 1NC

#### T-Substantial.

**Interpretation: The aff must strengthen rights for 50 percent of workers.**

**“Workers” is the full set**

**ILO 81**. International Labor Organization. “Report VI (1): Safety and Health and the Working Environment.” International Labor Conference, 67th Session, https://webapps.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/1980/80B09\_513\_engl.pdf

5. For the purpose of the proposed instrument-

(a) the term " branches of economic activity " includes work in the public service ;

(b) the term " workers " means **all employed persons**, including public employees ;

(c) the term "workplace" should cover all places where workers need to be or to go by reason of their work and which are under the direct or indirect control of the employer ;

(d) the term "regulations" should cover all provisions given force of law by the competent authority or authorities.

#### “Substantial” is 50%.

CG 79. Comptroller General of the United States. “Matter of Westinghouse Electric Corporation.” https://www.gao.gov/assets/b-194530.pdf.

As can be seen from the above, the definition of **labor** surplus area concern for this purpose would be the new standard now contained in 41 CFR § 1-1.801. The new standard, at 41 CFR § 1-1.801(c) and (d), defines a labor surplus area concern as a concern that together with its first-tier subcontractors will perform substantially in a labor surplus area and the term "perform substantially" is defined as **more than 50 percent** of the contract price.

B-194530 5

#### Violation: the aff’s way less than that!

Egan & Wallace 25 [Matt Egan, award-winning senior reporter at CNN, covering business, the economy and financial markets across CNN’s television and digital platforms, Alicia Wallace, senior writer for CNN Business covering the economy and former Knight-Bagehot Fellow at Columbia University in New York, "Mass layoffs of federal workers could damage families and local economies — but may not dent the overall economy", CNN, 2-25-2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/25/business/federal-jobs-mass-layoffs-economy>] \*[language modifications]

That’s in part because the federal layoffs are expected to affect a small fraction of the much larger US labor force. The federal civilian workforce, which excludes military personnel and employees of the CIA and other military agencies, represents less than 2% of the total civilian labor force of 170.7 million.

**Vote neg:**

**FIRST---Unique Ground---it requires large changes from the squo, link uniqueness is dead if affs can only influence the size of the workforce well-below existing union density.**

**SECOND---Limits---anything less leads to hundreds of industries and shop-specific affs. Makes non-generic engagement impossible.**

### 1NC

#### States CP.

#### The fifty states and all relevant subnational entities should:

#### ---[remove the Agricultural Fair Practices Act's disclaimer clause, requiring good faith bargaining between distributors and antitrust-exempt farmworker collectives],

#### ---withold all cooperation with federal initiatives until the United States federal government [removes the Agricultural Fair Practices Act's disclaimer clause, requiring good faith bargaining between distributors and antitrust-exempt farmworker collectives],

#### ---through a limited constitutional convention, [remove the Agricultural Fair Practices Act's disclaimer clause, requiring good faith bargaining between distributors and antitrust-exempt farmworker collectives].

#### State action spurs follow on OR mounts pressure to overturn precedent, while boosting federalism.

Moshe Z. Marvit 17. Attorney and fellow at the Century Foundation, and co-author of *Why Labor Organizing Should Be a Civil Right: Rebuilding a Middle-Class Democracy by Enhancing Worker Voice*. “The Way Forward for Labor Is Through the States.” American Prospect. 9/1/17. https://prospect.org/labor/way-forward-labor-states/.

After eight years of the Republicans using a strategy of non-cooperation with President Obama, and now President Trump's open contempt for federal regulation and enforcement, many on the left have begun to push for a “progressive federalism” that relies more on state and local action on issues from climate change to minimum wage to immigration. Labor law should be included on their federalist bill of particulars, and broad federal preemption of labor law should also be challenged. Doing so would free states and cities to experiment with a variety of policies that would protect workers and more adequately allow them to exercise their rights of free association and collective bargaining at work. These experiments could then provide empirical data for national labor law reform, should the day ever come when Congress regains a taste for cooperation and compromise.

To create the ground for such experiments cities, states and unions should begin challenging the Supreme Court to reconsider the preemption doctrine that it wrote into the NLRA. Challenging preemption may lead to unlikely alliances that are not grouped easily into liberal and conservative camps. Even though the results of such a challenge would benefit labor, the promotion of federalist and strict statutory construction arguments are core principles of conservative legal thought. Getting the Supreme Court to overturn its past precedent is always an uphill battle, but it is not impossible.

Though the overall labor figures released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics show a movement in decline, labor's density and power is quite uneven. Labor is still a force in northern cities across the country, as well as major states such as California, New York, Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Hawaii, Pennsylvania, and throughout the Midwest. In many of these states and cities, laws could be passed that advance the original purpose of the NLRA—provided their hands were unbound. It is time for those concerned with workers' rights and with the future of labor in America to challenge the Supreme Court's misreading of the law.

### 1NC

#### Midterms DA.

#### The United States federal government should

#### maintain and enforce Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act

#### commit to and hold the 2026 midterm election

#### Dems win the house now That’s polymarket.

https://polymarket.com/event/which-party-will-win-the-house-in-2026

A graph of a graph of a house

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

#### And the Senate, but there’s no room for error.

Amelia Thomson 26. PBS News Hour/Associated Press. 1-14-26. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/democrats-see-a-narrow-path-to-win-the-senate-but-theres-no-room-for-error>

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Democratic leaders believe they have a path to winning the majority in November, though it's one with very little wiggle room.

The party got a new burst of confidence when former Rep. Mary Peltola announced Monday she'll run for the Senate in Alaska. Her bid gives Democrats a critical fourth candidate with statewide recognition in states where Republican senators are seeking reelection this year. Nationally, Democrats must net four seats to edge Republicans out of the majority.

That possibility looked all but impossible at the start of last year. And while the outlook has somewhat improved as 2026 begins, Democrats still almost certainly must sweep those four seats. First they must settle some contentious primaries, the mark of a party still struggling with its way forward after Republicans took full control of Washington in 2024. Importantly, they must also beat back challenges to incumbents in some of the most competitive states on the map.

And though some of Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer's top Democratic Senate recruits were lauded for their statewide success in pivotal states, some are nearly 70 or older, hardly the key to a lasting Democratic transformation.

Republicans doubt the chances Democrats can pull off such a task, considering most of the 2026 contests are in states that Donald Trump easily won in 2024.

Still, independent voters have drifted in Democrats' direction over the past year, according to a new Gallup poll, a slight breeze at Democrats' back they didn't expect a year ago when there was little path at all.

"I say it's a much wider path than the skeptics think, and a much wider path than it was three months ago and certainly a year ago," Schumer told The Associated Press Tuesday.

Republicans currently hold 53 seats, while the Democratic caucus has 47 members, including two independents.

4 statewide candidates in GOP-held states

Schumer argues that Peltola, elected twice statewide to Alaska's at-large House seat, puts the typically Republican-leaning state in play as a potential pickup for Democrats.

It's a development similar to other states where Schumer believes Democrats have recruited strong candidates: former three-term Sen. Sherrod Brown in Ohio, former two-term Gov. Roy Cooper in North Carolina and two-term Gov. Janet Mills in Maine.

But they hardly represent a quartet of guarantees. Brown, a longtime pro-labor progressive in increasingly GOP-leaning Ohio, and Peltola, who was elected during a special election in 2022, both lost reelection in 2024. Mills, finishing her second term as governor, faces a competitive primary challenge from progressive veteran and oyster farmer Graham Platner.

None of the four had runaway popularity with voters in their states in 2024. Right around half of voters had somewhat or very favorable views of all of them, with Cooper slightly higher and Brown slightly lower, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of the electorate.

READ MORE: Democrats are raising worries about Trump interfering in the midterms. The White House calls it 'fearmongering'

Age remains another issue. After President Joe Biden, in his early 80s, withdrew from the 2024 race amid concerns he was too old to serve, Democratic Senate leadership hasn't changed course. Schumer, 75, has recruited candidates who are older, with several top recruits – including Mills and Brown – well into their 70s.

"Voters sent a very clear message in 2024 that they're sick of the gerontocracy. They're sick of Democrats putting up old candidates and that they want some new blood," said Lis Smith, a national Democratic strategist. "And some of the recruits, like in Maine, seem to completely ignore the message that voters sent in 2024."

Schumer said winning back the Senate is paramount over all else.

"It's not young versus old. It's not left versus center. It's who can best win in the states," he said. "So, these are all really good candidates, and I don't think you look at them through one narrow prism. You look at who can win."

Primaries and party tensions

Before Democrats can test their general-election appeal, they must navigate some primaries that highlight lingering divisions within the party.

Platner, who has been endorsed by independent Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, has demonstrated formidable fundraising for his Maine contest, despite controversies surrounding past social media posts and a tattoo linked to Nazi imagery. Some Democrats worry his insurgent appeal could be a liability in November if he is the nominee.

In Michigan, Democratic Sen. Gary Peters' retirement has opened a seat in a state Trump carried narrowly. Republicans have unified behind former Rep. Mike Rogers, while Democrats face a crowded August primary after failing to recruit Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

Crowded or contentious primaries are also playing out in Minnesota, Texas and Iowa, forcing Democrats to devote resources even in states not central to their path to a majority.

Sen. Chris Van Hollen is part of an informal group of Democratic senators known as Fight Club that has been openly critical of party leadership's approach to the midterms. Van Hollen said the group has objected to what it sees as the Senate Democrats' campaign arm — controlled by Schumer — "wading into certain Democratic primaries."

"So, yes, we're taking a look at all of them," Van Hollen said of endorsing more progressive candidates.

Republicans also like their odds

Betsy Ankney, political director for the National Republican Senatorial Committee in 2020, acknowledged Democrats' desire to make the case for competitiveness but characterized Trump's presidential victories in Alaska and Ohio in 2024 — by 13 and 11 percentage point margins, respectively — as enormous hurdles.

She said Republicans are "rightly focused, on real tangible targets in Georgia, in Michigan," calling them "very real pickup opportunities."

Democrats' shot at the majority almost certainly depends on Sen. Jon Ossoff winning reelection in Georgia, where Trump won in 2024 by 2.2 percentage points, and holding Michigan, where Peters' retirement creates an open seat in a state Trump carried by 1.4 percentage points.

"It's not just about where the Democrats can play. It's about where we can play, too," Ankney said.

An unsettled political environment

Despite the challenges, Democrats see reasons for optimism in the broader political climate.

A new Gallup survey found 47% of U.S. adults now identify with or lean toward the Democrats, while 42% are Republicans or lean Republican. That gives Democrats the advantage in party affiliation for the first time since Trump's first term.

But the data strongly suggests that independents are moving toward Democrats because of their souring attitude toward Trump, rather than greater goodwill toward Democrats. The Democratic Party's favorability is still low, and Gallup's analysis found that, as more Americans identify as independents, they tend to gravitate toward the party that is out of political power — whether it's the Democrats or the Republicans.

Still, that appears to be a dynamic in Democrats' favor, as economic unease creeps into the election year with little time before the feelings lock into voters' political thinking, veteran Republican pollster Ed Goeas said.

"That creates an environment that will affect these Senate races," Goeas said, predicting House Republicans could lose their majority. He said Republicans are assuming the economy and the political environment are going to be better.

"I think they are going to end up getting frustrated going into the summer because, first of all, the economy is not on all levels improving. It's going to be a target-rich environment for Democrats," he said.

"It's going to be close."

#### Dems win now but it’s close. Beating Trump on affordability is key.

Julia Mueller 26. Elections reporter. “Democrats start 2026 with fresh momentum — and lingering challenges.” The Hill. 1/1/26. https://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/5668732-democrats-midterm-momentum-challenges/.

Democrats are heading into the midterm year energized by a string of recent electoral victories, but they also acknowledge the party faces tough challenges as it grapples with deeper troubles.

The party says it has found a winning strategy by emphasizing the high cost of living under President Trump, which helped propel their candidates to victory in a number of competitive races in 2025.

But even as they feel optimistic about flipping the House in the midterms, Democrats are still struggling with internal divisions they worry could haunt the party in years to come.

“Democrats are finding their way out of political wilderness and heading back into political power, with the help of Trump, his agenda. … But I don’t think we should mistake this for Democrats becoming, overnight, a lot more popular, or having fixed the tremendous failures that got us into this position,” Democratic strategist Sawyer Hackett said.

“Democrats do have to reconcile with how we landed ourselves in a second Trump term. … We still have work to do to kind of refine what our message is to the public.”

Democrats started 2025 divided over how to bounce back from their 2024 losses and how to respond to Trump’s second term. Donors voiced anger about the election results, party leaders disagreed about messaging, and the national party clashed over midterm primary moves.

But as the off-year election calendar ramped up, a string of blue victories and overperformances put wind in the party’s sails and lifted hopes that Democrats could make a comeback in Congress next fall.

Moderates Abigail Spanberger and Mikie Sherrill won by big margins in marquee governors’ races in Virginia and New Jersey, respectively, and democratic socialist Zohran Mamdani coasted to victory in New York City’s mayoral race. Democrats also won several smaller but significant contests across the country, flipping seats on a commission in Georgia and winning the Miami mayor’s office for the first time in decades.

On Tuesday, Democrats closed out 2025 with a special election win for a state Senate seat in Iowa, preventing Republicans from regaining a supermajority in the chamber.

“With the last special election of the year now decided, one thing is clear: 2025 was the year of Democratic victories and overperformance, and Democrats are on track for big midterm elections,” Democratic National Committee (DNC) Chair Ken Martin said in a statement following the Iowa victory.

2025’s record has already prompted Democrats to expand their target lists for both state legislatures and the House, where Republicans hold just a slim 220-213 advantage. Democrats need to net just three seats to flip the lower chamber, and party leaders such as former Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) are now predicting they can make it happen.

“The first half of 2025, electorally, was a lot of despair and I think, frankly, also a party deeply in confusion and disarray, trying to figure out what a new direction forward is and how we fumbled the ball so badly in the last presidential race. It was really divisive and really contentious,” said Cheyenne Hunt, executive director of the progressive advocacy group Gen-Z for Change, who ran for Congress in California last year.

The electoral wins in 2025 have shown “there is a path forward” as voters signal growing frustration with the Trump administration, she added.

“This referendum has proved that, even if we don’t totally have our story together as a party yet, people are looking for change and are not very pleased with the status quo,” Hunt said.

High prices, steep tariffs and strains stemming from 2025’s record-long government shutdown have dragged Trump to some of his lowest-ever approval ratings on the economy, which was the top issue for voters throughout the 2025 elections.

From Spanberger to Mamdani, Democratic candidates found success by putting significant focus on affordability and economic concerns, and many in the party want to lean into that even more in 2026.

But it remains to be seen whether that will be a sufficient strategy for the party to maintain its momentum through the midterms and beyond.

“All that obviously makes it easier for Democrats to constantly have something to throw against the wall,” said Democratic strategist Michael Ceraso, who’s worked on multiple presidential campaigns. “But I would argue I’m not quite sure if there’s a message that Democrats have proposed and driven that’s created the results we saw in November, or leading into the momentum that we’re seeing next year.”

Party leadership and operatives in and out of Washington “need to be very, very careful … to not have any sense of hubris,” Ceraso said. “I don’t think anybody should claim they really know how to win.”

#### Delivering on Pro-Labor policies locks in working-class support for Republicans

Eyal Press 25. Writer at The New Yorker. Author of *Dirty Work*, recipient of 2022 Hillman Prize for Book Journalism. PhD in Sociology @ NYU. Puffin Foundation Fellow at the Type Media Center, previously fellow at the Carnegie Corporation and the Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center at the New York public Library. “Josh Hawley and the Republican Effort to Love Labor.” The New Yorker. 5-30-2025. https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-lede/josh-hawley-and-the-republican-effort-to-love-labor

But even those who question Hawley’s motives don’t doubt his ambition, particularly as jockeying for 2028 begins. One thing he appears to recognize is that siding with unions has become popular even on the right. In March, American Compass, a conservative think tank, and YouGov conducted a survey that illustrated this fact. Among Republican respondents, the poll found that labor unions had a net favorability of eight percentage points. Among young Republicans, defined as those born after 1980, the margin was thirty-eight points. Young Republicans also overwhelmingly backed several provisions of the PRO Act that the survey tested, such as expediting the collective-bargaining process, posting information about labor rights in workplaces, and penalizing companies that violate the law.

Daniel Kishi, a policy adviser at American Compass and a former aide to Hawley, told me that the generational divide captured by the survey is mirrored among Republican elected officials, with those who entered office after the 2008 financial crisis—such as Hawley and Vance—more likely to view unfettered markets skeptically and to see rank-and-file union members as potential supporters. These officials understand that, while voters in union households still tend to back Democrats, the gap has narrowed, a dynamic that has enabled Trump to win states like Michigan and Pennsylvania. Some Republicans are even beginning to see the labor movement’s leaders as allies, rather than as Democratic operatives who will turn out the vote for their opponents—in particular Sean O’Brien, the general president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, who spoke at the Republican National Convention this past summer. Kishi believes that enacting some of the pro-union reforms that drew support from young Republicans in the American Compass survey could solidify the political realignment that has occurred in recent years, leading more and more blue-collar workers to view the Republican Party as their home.

Thus far, of course, what the Trump Administration has prioritized is not passing such reforms but selling influence to wealthy patrons and granting unchecked power to billionaires including Elon Musk, whose Department of Government Efficiency fired thousands of federal employees who are union members. On March 27th, Trump issued an executive order that cancelled the union contracts of nearly a million federal workers. The order is “by far the largest single action of union-busting in American history,” the labor historian Joseph McCartin recently told the Center for American Progress, which has estimated that it ended collective-bargaining rights for one of every fifteen workers currently protected by a union contract. Trump’s tax-and-spending bill contains a few measures designed to appeal to low-income workers, such as eliminating taxes on tips and overtime pay. But assessments by the Congressional Budget Office and other nonpartisan sources show that the benefits will go mainly to the wealthiest households, while the poorest ten per cent of Americans will see their income decline.

#### Dem house restrains Trump, solving a slew of existential threats.

Mitch Jackson 25. J.D., Western State College of Law, California Lawyer Attorneys of the Year (CLAY) Award, Attorney at Maneuver Mediation law firm. “The 2026 Midterms Could Save America — If We Show Up.” Uncensored Objection. 5/29/2025. https://mitchthelawyer.substack.com/p/the-2026-midterms-could-save-america

This is an urgent and unflinching call to action that argues the 2026 midterms may be our last, best chance to stop Donald Trump’s dangerous grip on power, restore constitutional checks and balances, and protect the future of American democracy. With Congress currently enabling the White House, the piece lays out in plain, forceful terms how a Democratic majority in the House and Senate could block further damage, reverse harmful executive actions, hold corrupt officials accountable, and defend fundamental freedoms under siege.

It connects the dots across the economy, environment, global alliances, civil rights, and the rule of law, showing how much is at stake and how much power voters still hold. For anyone who thinks their vote won’t matter, this article makes one thing clear: it absolutely does.

How Do You Feel Right Now?

I’m going to be honest: like many of you, I’ve felt a knot of worry in my stomach when I think about our country lately. Over the past several months, I’ve heard friends and neighbors say they’re discouraged, that they feel our democracy is slipping away. I understand that fear deeply, because I feel it too. But I’m not writing today to dwell on despair. I’m here to share a path forward.

We are not powerless. We, the everyday Americans, have the ability to change the course of history in the 2026 midterms. By voting for Democrats to take back the majority in both the House and Senate, we can restore the checks and balances that safeguard our democracy and begin to repair the damage being done right now. This isn’t just a political preference; it’s a democratic necessity. It’s how we save our democracy from a real and present danger.

Democracy at the Brink

President Donald Trump’s return to the White House in 2025 has brought our nation to a crisis point. In just a short time, his actions and rhetoric have inflicted serious harm on the pillars of American democracy.

We’ve watched as he casts aside constitutional norms and treats the presidency like a personal fiefdom. He’s openly undermining the rule of law, pardoning those who committed violence in his name and urging his Justice Department to target political rivals. He’s using words like “vermin” to describe his opponents and calling the free press the “enemy of the people,” language that shocks me as an American. This is not normal disagreement or routine politics; it’s an assault on the values that hold us together.

Our economy, too, is caught in the crossfire of chaos. Instead of working to lower costs for working families, Trump and his allies in Congress have focused on tax breaks for billionaires and gutting programs that everyday people rely on. They tried to slash health care for millions by cutting Medicaid, and they even moved to shrink food assistance for struggling families. While costs of groceries and gas went up for us, the only “plan” from this leadership has been more breaks for the wealthy and leaving the rest of us to fend for ourselves. It feels like the powerful are playing a different game entirely, one that leaves regular folks behind.

Socially, the fabric of our nation is being pulled apart. Rather than seek common ground, this administration doubles down on dividing us, by race, by religion, by who we love or where we come from. Hate crimes and violent extremism have been emboldened by wink-and-nod encouragement from our nation’s highest office.

Instead of firmly denouncing white supremacists and conspiracy theorists, Trump often echoes their slogans or welcomes their support. It’s no wonder so many Americans feel a sense of dread and disunity. We are all tired of the constant outrage cycle and the feeling that we’re at each other’s throats. This is not the America we know and love, where despite our differences we used to believe we were on the same team.

Internationally, the United States’ standing has plummeted. Longtime allies are questioning whether they can rely on us, as President Trump cozies up to dictators and strongmen around the world. He has hinted at abandoning NATO and other alliances that have kept us safe for generations.

He pulled back on global agreements, like those on climate and human rights, leaving America isolated on the world stage. I can’t tell you how heartbreaking it is to see the country that once championed democracy and freedom now shaking the confidence of our friends and giving comfort to our adversaries. When America doesn’t lead with its values, the world becomes a more dangerous and unstable place.

All of this sounds dire, and it is. We have to face that truth head on: our democracy is at the brink. The Constitution, the economy, our unity as a people, and our global reputation are all under assault by a president who will stop at nothing to aggrandize his own power. It’s easy to feel hopeless hearing that.

But here’s the thing I want you to remember: this story isn’t over. We are not helpless spectators. America’s strength has always been the ability of its people to course-correct, to come together and insist on change when it’s needed most. And right now, what’s needed is a restoration of checks and balances. We need a Congress that will stand up and say no to this march toward authoritarianism and division. We need a Congress that works for us, the people, not for the president’s whims.

Checks and Balances: Why Congress Matters So Much

When the founders of our nation wrote the Constitution, they were deeply worried about any one person having too much power. That’s why they built a system of checks and balances, so no president could act like a king.

The legislative branch, Congress, was given the duty to be the people’s voice and a check on the executive branch. In plain terms, it’s Congress’s job to rein in a president who goes off the rails. For most of our history, this system has (more or less) worked. No matter which party a president came from, Congress was there to question, to oversee, and sometimes to say “hold on, that’s not right.” Checks and balances are the brakes on the car when the driver is speeding toward a cliff.

Right now, those brakes aren’t working. With Trump in the Oval Office and his party holding slim majorities in the House and Senate, the usual safeguards are failing. Instead of putting country over party, too many current congressional leaders have chosen to be rubber stamps. They’re either too afraid or too complicit to stand up to the President’s worst instincts.

We’ve seen congressional committees that should be investigating genuine problems instead wasting time targeting the President’s perceived enemies or spreading his preferred narratives. We’ve seen silence or shrugs in response to blatant abuses of power. This lack of pushback is exactly what enables the dangerous trajectory we’re on. When one party controls all levers of government and refuses to police its own leader, the checks and balances are effectively gone.

But here’s the hopeful part: we can fix this by changing who’s in Congress. In our democracy, the people are the ultimate check. If our representatives won’t do their job, we can fire them at the ballot box.

By electing a Democratic majority to the House and Senate, we will restore the balance that our system needs. I’m not talking about giving one party power just for the sake of it. I’m talking about ensuring that someone in power is finally willing to stand up to the president and say, “Enough.” We need lawmakers who will actually perform oversight, who will act as a co-equal branch of government instead of a subordinate.

Throughout history, there have been moments when Americans chose a new Congress to correct the course of a runaway presidency, and it worked. I think of 1974 after Watergate, or the 2018 midterms after Trump’s first two years, when voters elected a House that could hold the administration accountable. Those were turning points that pulled our country back from the brink. We have that same kind of moment before us in 2026. By voting for Democrats, we aren’t handing power to a party so much as we are reclaiming power for the people, via a Congress that will actually do its job.

The Powers Congress Can Use to Stop the Damage

How exactly can Congress constrain a president gone rogue? It’s important to understand that the legislative branch has real, tangible powers, tools that, in the right hands, can halt abuse and even begin to undo it.

If we flip the House and Senate, a Democratic-controlled Congress can deploy these powers on our behalf. Here are the major ways Congress can act as a safeguard:

Oversight and Investigations: Congress has the authority to oversee the executive branch. This means they can hold hearings and launch investigations into misconduct, corruption, or unconstitutional actions by the President or his administration. With a Democratic majority, those committees investigating would no longer turn a blind eye.

They can shine a bright light on what’s been happening behind closed doors. Think about the power of truth, when wrongdoing is exposed in the public eye, it becomes a lot harder for it to continue. Hearings can reveal, for example, if officials are abusing power, if taxpayer money is being misused, or if rights are being violated.

We saw this work in the past: it was congressional investigations that uncovered the Watergate scandal long ago, and more recently, a Democratic-led House in 2019 was able to investigate and impeach Trump over abuse of power. Oversight is a way of saying, “We’re watching, and you will be held accountable.”

Subpoena Power: As part of oversight, Congress can issue subpoenas to compel witnesses to testify and produce documents. This might sound technical, but it’s basically the power to force the truth out into the open.

Right now, a lot of truth is being hidden from the American people, whether it’s details about backroom deals, communication with foreign powers, or internal decisions that affect all of us. A Congress willing to use subpoena power can drag those facts into the sunlight.

For instance, if there are allegations that the administration is using government agencies to persecute political opponents or that officials are violating ethics laws, subpoenas can bring those officials before Congress to answer under oath. It puts a real check on abuse because lying under oath is a crime, and refusing a lawful subpoena can lead to contempt charges. In short, subpoenas are how Congress says, “You must tell the truth, whether the president likes it or not.”

The Power of the Purse: This is one of Congress’s most critical powers. Only Congress can appropriate money for government operations. In practice, this means if the President wants to fund a controversial project or enforce a harmful policy, a determined Congress can say, “Not with taxpayer dollars, you won’t.” A Democratic majority could block funding for any number of Trump’s harmful initiatives.

For example, if Trump issues an executive order that hurts the environment or sets up some kind of overreaching task force to target his critics, Congress can pass a budget that explicitly prohibits spending money on that. On the positive side, Congress can direct funding toward the things that help people, education, healthcare, disaster relief, infrastructure, and away from things that do harm. It’s an immense leverage point. Even the most powerful president cannot spend money that Congress refuses to provide. By controlling the purse strings, a Democratic House and Senate can effectively stop many of the damaging policies in their tracks.

Legislative Authority (Passing and Blocking Laws): Congress is the only branch that can make federal laws. With a majority, Democrats could block any new laws Trump’s allies try to push that would hurt our democracy or rights.

Think about proposals that may be on the table: a national abortion ban, cuts to Social Security or Medicare, laws undermining voting rights, or extremist cultural laws that attack LGBTQ citizens or other groups. Right now, those kinds of bills might have a chance. With a Democratic majority, they would never see the light of day.

Blocking bad legislation is vital, it prevents further damage. But it’s not just about defense. A new majority can go on offense by passing bills that protect our democracy and our people. Now, it’s true that Trump as president could veto bills he doesn’t like, but passing them still matters. It forces a public conversation and pressures even members of his party to take stands. In some cases, if enough Republicans feel the heat, Congress could even override a veto.

For instance, a law to safeguard elections or to help veterans shouldn’t be something a president vetoes without paying a political price. A Democratic Congress can put good legislation on his desk and dare him to reject it. And in any must-pass bills (like funding the government), they can include provisions that rein in abuses, knowing the President has to sign or face a shutdown that he’d be blamed for. In these ways, writing and shaping laws gives Congress immense power to direct the country’s course.

Advice and Consent (Senate’s Confirmation Power): The Senate has a unique role in confirming or rejecting the President’s appointments for key positions, from Cabinet secretaries to federal judges, including Supreme Court justices. If Democrats have the majority in the Senate, they can ensure that unqualified or extreme nominees don’t get rubber-stamped into lifetime judgeships or critical agency roles.

#### Dem win stops Golden Dome

Matthew Cox 25. Defense reporter since 1998; former media relations officer at Thales; former senior reporter for Military.com and Army Times. "General Says Commercial Space Industry is Ready for Golden Dome." Air & Space Forces Magazine. 05/02/2025. https://www.airandspaceforces.com/general-says-commercial-space-industry-is-ready-for-golden-dome/

But the Pentagon and the commercial space industry are capable of producing a successful missile defense system like Golden Dome, he said.

“It is technologically feasible,” he said. “It’ll be expensive, for sure, but we’re a wealthy nation. We could make the choice to prioritize it.”

As much as the space industry has evolved, Whiting cautioned that “there is some fragility in that defense industrial base and in that commercial space sector.”

In the past, several large companies have relied on a single subcontractor to supply critical components, which creates “a choke point for us,” Whiting said.

“Now we want to make sure that we have multiple companies that can field all the capabilities that we need,” he said. “This … is a world-leading effort for the United States and our commercial space companies, but there are some areas that we want to continue to invest in to make sure they’re as robust and resilient as possible.”

A key part of Golden Dome’s success will be developing its space-based sensor network, said Harrison, noting that the Pentagon’s Space Development Agency has already begun launching satellite prototypes to sense and track missiles from low Earth orbit.

The program’s first tranche of satellites was supposed to launch this year but is delayed. Tranche two has about 50 satellites under contract and in production.

While Golden Dome may be technologically possible, Harrison said, it might not be politically feasible. Its fate could be decided by the 2026 congressional midterm elections.

“If the House flips to the Democrats … how enthusiastic are they going to be to put extra money in the budget for Golden Dome with that name?” he said.

#### Golden Dome creates multiple scenarios for extinction---including space wars and first-strike instability.

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Golden Dome: Shield or Provocation?

Golden Dome represents Washington’s determination to maintain dominance in space and achieve near-absolute protection against missile threats. Yet this ambition risks fuelling instability. Undermining adversaries’ confidence in their nuclear deterrents, the system could spur a rush to develop countermeasures—hypersonic glide vehicles, penetration aids, and anti-satellite weapons—potentially driving the world back toward a level of strategic competition reminiscent of the Cold War.

Some U.S. allies, including Japan and Canada, have expressed interest in participation. While co-operation may strengthen capabilities and burden-sharing, it also reinforces perceptions of exclusive defence blocs. This risks deepening adversarial mistrust and undermining broader efforts at global stability. The system’s inspiration partly stems from Israel’s Iron Dome, which proved highly effective during Iran’s 2024 missile assault. Earlier this year, President Donald Trump stated that Canada would need to contribute US$61 billion to participate in the missile defence system ‘if they remain a separate, but unequal, Nation’. He further suggested that Canada should ‘become the 51st state’ to join Golden Dome without cost, underscoring how the programme raises complex questions of sovereignty, alliance obligations, and strategic dependence.War history books

Linking Technology and Strategy

Beyond engineering challenges, the capabilities envisioned for Golden Dome carry profound strategic consequences. The system’s potential to intercept missiles at multiple stages alters calculations of deterrence, both for allies and potential adversaries. Where traditional deterrence relied on the threat of retaliation, Golden Dome introduces the possibility of pre-emptive denial—an approach that reassures domestic audiences and partners but risks being perceived as destabilising by rival powers. Technical sophistication is thus inseparable from strategic impact: the architecture of the shield directly shapes the geopolitics it seeks to protect.

From Homeland Shield to Global Flashpoint

The reverberations of Golden Dome extend across regions and great-power rivalries. Russia and China jointly condemned the initiative as ‘deeply destabilising’, warning it undermines the principle of mutually assured destruction. China described it as having ‘strong offensive implications’, while both powers view it as an attempt to negate the balance between offensive and defensive arms.Geopolitics online course

In response, China is accelerating its anti-satellite and hypersonic programmes, with reports of a planned ‘Chinese Golden Dome’. Russia, perceiving its midcourse and terminal deterrent phases at risk, may expand the use of mobile launchers, decoys, and hypersonic glide systems. India, though not directly targeted, is advancing its Sudarshan Chakra initiative, which National Security Adviser Anil Chauhan described in August 2025 as ‘India’s own Iron Dome or Golden Dome’. European allies may welcome enhanced coverage yet face growing entanglement in U.S.–Russia and U.S.–China tensions.

The Space Dilemma

The militarisation of space presents profound risks for global security and long-term orbital sustainability. Absent robust governance frameworks, deploying armed systems in orbit erodes fragile norms, intensifies mistrust, and increases the danger of miscalculation. Dual-use technologies complicate verification, blurring the line between defensive and offensive deployments. Debris generated by weapons tests or intercepts threatens satellites vital to communications, navigation, and scientific research.

Mitigating these dangers requires co-operative governance, transparency measures, and new agreements on debris mitigation and rules of engagement. Without such measures, insecurity will fuel further militarisation, undermining both national security and the civilian benefits of space.

Strategic Risks and Operational Realism

Golden Dome confronts a host of risks. Adversaries may accelerate development of anti-satellite weapons, cyber capabilities, and countermeasures. Technology remains unproven at scale, and system integration may falter under the strain of complexity. Countermeasures such as manoeuvrable re-entry vehicles, hypersonics, or saturation strikes could overwhelm defences. Electronic warfare and cyberattacks threaten communications, while the high cost of replenishing satellites undermines sustainability. Above all, the enormous budget could drain resources from nuclear modernisation, conventional readiness, or emerging priorities such as cyber defence.War history books

Domestic and Political Dimensions

Domestically, Golden Dome’s trajectory will be shaped by politics as much as engineering. Major defence contractors—Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and Boeing—stand to benefit from lucrative long-term contracts, while congressional lobbying will influence funding allocations. Public opinion may prove fickle: enthusiasm for security could wane in the face of ballooning costs or perceptions that domestic priorities are being neglected. Partisan divides remain stark, with Democrats likely to emphasise arms control and norms, while Republicans frame Golden Dome as a symbol of U.S. technological strength.

International Security Architecture

Golden Dome sits uneasily within the broader arms control framework. The U.S. withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty in 2002 paved the way for ambitious missile defence projects but weakened the principle of strategic balance. The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 prohibits weapons of mass destruction in orbit but leaves conventional systems and missile defence platforms largely unregulated. Efforts such as the proposed Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space (PPWT) have stalled, leaving a dangerous governance vacuum. NATO allies may welcome enhanced protection yet remain wary of being drawn more deeply into U.S.–China and U.S.–Russia competition.

Escalation and Strategic Stability

Golden Dome could significantly undermine adversaries’ confidence in the survivability and effectiveness of their second-strike capabilities, a cornerstone of nuclear deterrence. By projecting the perception that U.S. missile defences could neutralise retaliatory forces, rivals may fear that their deterrent is vulnerable in a crisis, increasing the incentive to act pre-emptively to preserve strategic leverage. This mirrors classical security dilemmas: efforts to enhance one state’s defence can inadvertently intensify insecurity for others, raising the probability of miscalculation during tense standoffs.

The dual-use character of space-based assets—where sensors, satellites, and orbital platforms serve both civilian and military functions—further magnifies escalation risks. Attacks targeting these systems, even if intended as limited or defensive strikes, could be interpreted as offensive moves, triggering rapid and unpredictable responses. Civilian infrastructure essential for communications, navigation, weather monitoring, and commercial activities may become entangled in military conflict, complicating crisis management. The opacity of space operations, combined with the speed of orbital engagement and difficulty of attribution, could accelerate decision-making under uncertainty, leaving little room for de-escalation.

Economic, Ethical, and Normative Dimensions

Golden Dome threatens to fundamentally reshape U.S. defence priorities. The sheer scale of the programme implies that vast resources would be dedicated to its development, testing, and deployment, potentially diverting attention and funding from other critical areas such as nuclear triad modernisation, cyber resilience, and the readiness of conventional forces. This raises difficult questions about strategic trade-offs: investing heavily in near-absolute missile defence may come at the expense of capabilities that underpin broader national security and deterrence.

Ethically, Golden Dome raises pressing questions about the militarisation of a shared global commons. The deployment of orbital weapons—even for ostensibly defensive purposes—sets dangerous precedents, normalising weaponisation of space and potentially triggering competitive escalation. Normatively, the initiative challenges existing international frameworks that govern responsible behaviour in space. Without sustained multilateral dialogue, codified rules of conduct, and confidence-building measures, Golden Dome risks eroding the principles that ensure space remains accessible, safe, and sustainable for all states and future generations. In effect, the project is as much a test of global governance and international responsibility as it is a demonstration of technological prowess.

Shifting Regional Balances and Global Dependencies

Golden Dome’s implications extend far beyond the immediate interests of the U.S., Russia, and China, reshaping regional security dynamics and influencing strategic calculations across the globe. Its announcement signals a shift in the balance of power, compelling allies and adversaries alike to reassess their defence postures and long-term security strategies.

In the Middle East, Israel may become integrated into Golden Dome, joining a broader U.S.-led missile defence network and enhancing its already advanced capabilities while signalling alignment with American strategic priorities. Gulf states, notably Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar, may seek participation to counter Iran’s expanding missile and drone arsenal, deepening military interdependence with Washington. While such involvement could strengthen regional security for allies, it risks heightening tensions with adversaries and further entrenching competing security blocs.

On the Korean Peninsula, North Korea is likely to accelerate its missile and nuclear programmes, perceiving Golden Dome as a direct challenge to its deterrent and sovereignty, and as a destabilising initiative that could heighten the risk of nuclear confrontation extending into space. South Korea may consider closer integration with U.S. missile defence systems, including potential operational coordination with orbital sensors or joint deployments. This raises critical questions about strategic autonomy, alliance obligations, and entanglement in broader great-power rivalries.

Beyond these immediate theatres, states in the Global South confront profound asymmetries. Countries lacking the technological, economic, or industrial capacity to develop comparable missile defence systems may become increasingly dependent on U.S.-led protection arrangements. Such dependency could reinforce global hierarchies of security provision, amplifying debates over sovereignty, strategic reliance, and inequality. Perceptions of exclusion may also drive secondary effects, including regional arms buildups, pursuit of asymmetric deterrence strategies, or alignment with alternative security providers, further complicating the international strategic landscape.

Guardianship and Consequence

Golden Dome is both shield and spark: a testament to U.S. technological ambition and a potential catalyst for global instability. Its technical feasibility remains uncertain, yet its impact on strategic stability, arms control, and space governance is already profound. Whether the project stabilises or destabilises will depend on both engineering breakthroughs and deliberate political choices.

### 1NC

#### Advantage CP.

#### The United States federal government should:

#### ---citing international custom, declare it is impermissible to [remove of the Agricultural Fair Practices Act's disclaimer clause, requiring good faith bargaining between distributors and antitrust-exempt farmworker collectives].

#### Meanwhile, the counterplan declares the aff’s protection of unions impermissible, revitalizing international custom.

Kushtrim Istrefi 25. Assistant Professor of Human Rights Law and Public International Law with the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM) at Utrecht University. Luca Pasquet. “Mind Your Attitude: The Erosion of International Law?” https://www.ejiltalk.org/mind-your-attitude-the-erosion-of-international-law/

In international law, however, attitude plays a significantly different role in shaping norms, influencing the use of international institutions, and determining the authority of law. What States think is a crucial factor in the formation of customary international law. Opinio juris – the belief that a practice is legally required – is shaped by State attitudes and perceptions. Moreover, consent, the foundation of international legal obligations, can be expressed through various means, including tweets, public statements, and even phone calls. This makes language a critical element of international law. In fact, international law is fundamentally dependent on words and attitudes.

According to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the attitude of States more than their actions determine the strength or weakness of the validity of legal norms. Addressing the issue of repeated violations of international law, the ICJ in the Nicaragua case stated that:

“If a State acts in a way prima facie incompatible with a recognised rule, but defends its conduct by appealing to exceptions or justifications contained within the rule itself, then whether or not the State’s conduct is in fact justifiable on that basis, the significance of that attitude is to confirm rather than to weaken the rule”.

As Hart observed, a legal system can only exist if its secondary rules are “effectively accepted as common public standards of official behavior by its officials” (p 116). Thus, beyond the question of compliance, in order to understand the relevance of international law in international affairs, one must ask whether States are still willing to use the language of international law to define what is permissible in international politics.

The attitude of States towards international has not always been amicable. Jens David Ohlin, in his book Assault on International Law, shows concerted efforts made by State officials, legal advisers and academics to undermine international law and its compliance. However, these assaults – driven by self-interest – targeted specific norms and institutions. There is a fundamental difference between contesting specific rules of the game and refusing to play the game as a whole, and while the examples discussed by Ohlin seem to mostly illustrate the former attitude, recent developments seem to highlight a growing tendency towards disregarding the international legal system in its entirety. Looking at the current global affairs, the general attitude of certain powerful States towards international law has never been worse. According to the US President Trump, “[h]e who saves his Country does not violate any Law”. Reading this in the context of his recent statements and narrative one can easily conclude that Mr Trump is not referring to circumstances precluding wrongfulness under ARSIWA when he refers to actions that justify saving the country. Instead, it suggests that national interests, whatever they imply, may justify any kind of action in international affairs. On this ground, he has not excluded the possibility of the use of force to take over Greenland and has threatened other neighbouring countries.

Attitude is usually matched with behaviour, and it is this combination that may erode international legal order as a whole. Sanctions against the International Criminal Court (ICC) aim to paralyse an international organisation and send a clear message against international accountability. The recent approach of Mr Trump with regards to Russia-Ukraine peace talks further undermines not only the position of Ukraine, but of international law as a whole. By favouring a negotiation where everything is on the menu, we disregard the fact that acquisition of territory through aggression is prohibited under international law, the obligations to ensure reparations, and that there should be international criminal responsibility for international crimes. This attitude also suggests that amnesties for international crimes are open to negotiation, and power sharing arrangements incompatible with human rights could be accepted.

This new attitude of disregard for international law is matched with a new attitude of rubbish justifications for breaches of international law. In the wake of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, Fuad Zarbiyev, argued that the most remarkable thing concerns Putin’s attitude towards international law. Zarbiyev distinguishes lies, used by other States in relation to other breaches of international law, and the bullshit argumentation in the case of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine:

“the allegations of the United States about the development of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and the latter’s links with terrorist organizations were lies because even though they were factually inaccurate, they were made with an eye on the truth. In contrast, Russia’s allegations about the genocide in Ukraine are bullshit because they were made without the slightest attention to or concern with the truth. But more generally, I submit that all the justifications put forward by Russia in connection with the invasion of Ukraine are situated vis-à-vis international law exactly how bullshit is situated vis-à-vis the truth: they are not on either side of the game of international law”.

Zarbiyev reminds us that “there are justifications and justifications… [and] taking Putin as offering international legal justifications would be adding insult to injury.”

Attitudes and behaviours are contagious, and this is especially so when it concerns the actions of powerful States. According to philosopher René Girard, humans’ ability to copy each other was the characteristic that most differentiated us from other animals. In his view, imitation also explains our desires – they are copied from others, either consciously or unconsciously. Following on Girard’s work, Pieter Thiel claims that China and the United States are increasingly becoming ‘mimetic doubles’ of each other. As they compete more strenuously to be the world’s number one power, and mirror each other’s strengths in order to advance that goal, they will inevitably become more and more alike – and their mutual antipathy will grow.

The fact that the attitude of disregard for international law characterises the approach of global superpowers is particularly worrying. The capacity of international law to inform the behaviour of States is in fact largely dependent on the willingness of the most powerful States to observe and engage with international law. In The Concept of Law, Hart stressed that while “no individual is so much more powerful than others, that he is able, without cooperation, to dominate or subdue them for more than a short period’, in ‘international life’ there are ‘vast disparities in strength and vulnerability between the states” (p 195). Whereas the “approximate equality among individuals would [make] obvious the necessity for a system of mutual forbearance and compromise which is the base of both legal and moral obligation, the inequality between the units of international law is one of the things that has imparted to it a character so different from municipal law and limited the extent to which it is capable of operating as an organized coercive system” (ibid). Although the pessimistic stance of Hart towards international law is well-known, it is hard to deny that the disparities among States make it necessary to involve powerful States in international institutions, and in the game of international law more at large. To provide an illustration, the veto power of the five permanent members of the Security Council was the price that the international community was willing to pay in order to ensure the survival of the UN project despite macroscopic power disparity. Acting within the framework of international law is, we contend, in the best interest of every State, including the most powerful ones. However, given the de facto inequality among States, it is not impossible to imagine a world where regional powers play their own individual games, opting out from or simply ignoring universal legal rules and principles.

Since the end of WWII, our discipline was based in a belief that when a State feels compelled to justify its actions in terms of international law, it acknowledges rather than disregards its relevance. At times international law was used only as a performative act, but other times it has also encouraged behaviour of compliance, solidarity and cooperation. Most importantly, it has ensured that international law is intact, despite flaws, weakness and moments of desperation.

International lawyers have traditionally criticised the ‘hypocrisy’ of international actors which deliberately violated international norms while speaking the language of international law and human rights. However, it would be a mistake to believe that the disregarding attitude of some States towards international law is just a more direct way to conduct business as usual. Despite its undesirability, the hypocritical use of international law preserves the grammar, categories and criteria of international law for future use and signals that international law continues to be perceived as an authoritative discourse. By contrast, the alternative put forward by some actors seems to consist in a logic where everything that is physically possible is acceptable if it serves national interest.

The current attitude toward international law brings a new and unprecedented challenge to the world legal order. It undermines international law as a basis for resolution of disputes in international relations, and makes international institutions redundant in their task to ensure and monitor compliance. History of the 1930s and the end of the League of Nations teaches us that the end of such rules and institutions has a potential to produce horrors that we have witnessed twice in the past century. It is precisely because of the latter that all States must react against the bullisation of international law, and step in to protect international law and institutions. The response of 79 States in support of the ICC against the US sanctions, and the recent UN General Assembly resolution condemning Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, despite and especially considering the US, Russia and China’s objections, are a move in the right direction. European States have the power and platforms to do more in this regard, and the Global South can be a valuable partner in ensuring that the conversation on reform is distinct from one that undermines international law.

#### Declaration of CIL as prior and binding without state consent crystallizes a generalized legal order that’s necessary to respond to existential threats

Dr. Rebecca Crootof 16, PhD in Law from the Yale University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, JD from Yale Law School, Executive Director of the Information Society Project, ISP Research Scholar, and Lecturer in Law at Yale Law School, “Change Without Consent: How Customary International Law Modifies Treaties”, Yale Journal of International Law, 41 Yale J. Int'l L. 237, Summer 2016, Lexis

This Article challenges that presumption by presenting situations where customary international law has both lessened and expanded states' treaty rights and obligations, thereby supporting the few scholars who have posited - usually in purely theoretical works - that customary international law may modify treaties. By advancing a doctrinal justification for such modification based on lex posterior, this Article also contributes to the growing literature questioning whether the legitimacy of the binding nature of international legal obligations can be grounded solely in state consent. This argument is novel to the extent that it presumes that general - rather than universal - acceptance of a new customary rule may be sufficient to work a treaty modification, thereby avoiding the holdout problem inherent to multilateral treaty modification under the Vienna Convention's consent-focused rules (whereby a single state can upset the consensus of the majority).

Finally, this Article advances the counterintuitive argument that this less consensual basis for treaty modification requires a state to engage in more consensus-respecting conduct. When a state wishes to argue against a traditional understanding of a treaty provision, the usual approach of adaptive interpretation - attempting to reinterpret a treaty's text to permit an action previously understood as forbidden - actually encourages states to act unilaterally and risk destabilizing the international legal order. In contrast, a state that bases its legal argument on the claim that the treaty has been modified by subsequently developed customary international law will have to identify and engage in coalition-building conduct.

Part I reviews how treaties were historically relatively flexible bilateral agreements concluded against a stable background of default customary international law. While foundational customary norms and bilateral agreements are still the norm, today's international legal structure is complicated by a proliferation in multilateral treaties and an increasing demand for international regulation of new areas, technologies, objects, actions, and ideas. In the absence of directly relevant treaty law, and in need of reliable guiding principles, states are developing practices standardizing their rights and duties in these new spheres. As a result, treaty text is increasingly running up against conflicting state action and swiftly developing customary international law. Part II describes consent-based means of modifying treaties and concludes that these traditional methods do not legitimately resolve all conflicts between treaty and later-in-time customary international law. Part III demonstrates that the possibility of treaty modification by customary international law has long existed in the international legal structure and evaluates different doctrinal justifications for such modification. Part IV employs the threatened U.S. unilateral use of force in Syria as a case study to tease out the relative benefits and drawbacks of these different means of treaty modification.

I. A New International Legal Order

Customary international law and treaty law are the two primary sources of international legal obligations. Sometimes they operate independently, governing particular fields; sometimes they serve as mutually reinforcing regulations; sometimes one fills the other's lacunae; sometimes they mandate apparently contradictory actions. As this Article is concerned with how customary international may modify treaties, this Part traces how, due to ideological, geopolitical, and technological developments, the relationship between these two sources of international legal obligations has grown more complicated and more prone to conflict.

[\*242]

A. The Classic Account

1. Stable Customary International Law

A rule of customary international law is recognized as existing when states generally engage in specific actions (the "state practice" requirement) and accept that those actions are obligatory or permitted (the "opinio juris sive necessitatis" element). Thus, unlike custom in many domestic legal systems, which derives much of its authority from its long-standing nature, customary international law has no formal temporal requirement. Instead, a rule of customary international law is authoritative because states generally abide by it in the belief that it is law.

That being said, because of the generalized state practice requirement, customary international law was slow to develop in a world of limited communication and sporadic technological advances. Accordingly, historic customary international law comprised long-established, well-known, and relatively fixed rules governing relations among all states. It regulated the recognition of new states and state responsibilities; the exchange of diplomatic counsels and their immunities; the conduct and resolution of wars; the creation, interpretation, and termination of treaties; and other subjects associated with state interaction.

2. Flexible Treaties

Against this background of static customary norms, states concluded [\*243] bilateral treaties - written documents memorializing agreements between two states - clarifying their respective legal rights and duties. These treaties were relatively flexible legal regimes: they could be modified or terminated with the consent of states parties, by the conclusion of a subsequent, conflicting treaty between the same parties, by the denunciation of one party after a material breach by the other, or by a fundamental change in circumstances or other supervening event resulting in the impossibility of performing a promised legal obligation. Additionally, certain types of treaties - for example, commercial or trading treaties or treaties of alliance - were generally presumed to allow for unilateral denunciation. Accordingly, treaties have long been celebrated as a source of adaptive positive law that reflects states parties' needs.

B. The Modern World

Today's international legal structure is far more complicated. Certain customary rules still serve as background defaults governing many areas of state interaction, and the majority of new treaties are still bilateral. But two factors - the rise of multilateral treaties and swiftly developing customary international law - have changed the dynamic between treaty and customary international law, resulting in treaties sometimes being the fixed backdrop against which new state practice and norms develop.

1. Constitutive Treaties

The past century has seen a dramatic rise in multilateral treaties - treaties [\*244] concluded by multiple countries that often aspire to universal participation. As early as the 1920s, scholars were recognizing that there were "an increasing number of multilateral treaties." According to one study, eighty-six multilateral treaties were concluded in the century between 1648 through 1748 - but more than two thousand such treaties were concluded in the twenty-five years between 1951 and 1975! This proliferation might be traced to a growing conviction that certain global problems - including combating the training and financing of transnational terrorist organizations, minimizing human-driven climate change, and reducing the development or use of weapons of mass destruction - are best addressed through global solutions.

### 1NC

#### Lacan K.

#### The cultural fantasy of collective bargaining reinforces unattainable desire, creating a vicious cycle of exploitation.

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Based on the Lacan perspective (as cited in Bloom, 2013), it is argued that employability ends up in self-exploitation. The Lacan frame informed the conceptual model of the study. Lacan argued that we desire something that is missing in our lives. For completeness in our lives, we desire things such as power, prestige, wealth, status, knowledge, etc. Employees in contemporary organizations constantly desire employability and then positions of higher authority, status and prestige. This is followed by a desire for learning, growth, development and self-mastery. Bloom (2013) discussed that employability is a cultural fantasy that shapes the identity around the desire to benefit from an employable self and self-mastery. Fantasy happens via illusory strivings for a perfect and model/ideal future in which current troubles will not happen. Voronov and Vince (2012) argued that fantasies have a strong influence on a person’s actions and preferences in organizations. The cultural ideals of the marketplace and managers shape individual identities. Employees constantly engage in learning and developmental activities to improve and nourish their careers. Specifically, this paper argues that in this process, employees strive to remain relevant to their organization, engage in employability activities and end up being self-exploited. Ironically, despite the abundance of literature in the domain of employability, the different streams of research on employability have explored the various aspects of employability (Greco et al., 2019; Kassotaki, 2019; Maurer, 2002; McDonald and Hite, 2005; Van Dam et al., 2006; Van der Pol, 2011; Wilms et al., 2019), but the dark side has been ignored or overlooked. Thus, the picture of employability presented in the literature to date is incomplete.

Given the body of scholarly work in this field, it is appropriate to reflect on this debate, its themes and perspectives. It is a novel perspective on employability research because not enough research has explicitly investigated or explored the potential implications of employability related self-exploitation. The study has theoretical implications. This discussion will help us better understand the phenomenon of employability. It will give employability scholars a new road map. Furthermore, the research will help inform practice and improve policy and decisionmaking. Accordingly, this study was carried out to develop and test a theoretically comprehensive model that included learning, commitment, employability and self-exploitation.

The study employed the psychoanalytic approach to employability. Fantasies, according to Lacan (Bloom, 2013), play an important role in shaping people’s self-hood. People form an elusive vision of their romanticized self: a more appealing version of the socially endowed self that motivates individuals to strive for a perfect and model future in which current problems do not occur. The romanticized self is linked to culturally fabricated fantasies. People are constantly working on and attempting to master their socially provided selves. One such example is employability. Employees in work environments construct illusory self definitions. Their occupation choice ensures that current performance will meet the requirements of an ideal future, free of life’s existing hiccups.

According to Lacan and Alan (1981) framework, broad system-level (economic and social) factors shape micro factors. Individuals as units of a system are influenced by cultural and market ideals. The Lacanian viewpoint is applied to individual employability-related behavior in an organization. According to Bloom (2013), individuals strive to continuously improve their employability. They overcome their personal and financial estrangement by increasing their self-exploitation. Individual thinking and employability-related decisions are influenced by structural factors such as labor market conditions, etc. However, structural or systemic factors are outside the scope of this study.

The paper focuses specifically on individual employability-related behavior. The psychoanalytic lens provides a distinct approach to understanding employability. Scholars (such as Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 2002) have debated that employability is the essence of proclaimed empowerment, which includes not only obtaining employment but also ‘controlling their employment fate’. In reality, it is far from empowering workers and instead increases their reliance on capitalist ideologies and managerial control (Cremin, 2010). According to Costea et al. (2007), organizations exploit individuals’ desire for employability. They foster a culture in which management’s agency and power are re-established through the formation of a committed and autonomous labor force/employees.

The norms of reciprocity (Blau, 2017; Cook et al., 2013; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; emphasize that one party’s investment is returned by another party’s investment. When applied to the employee-employer relationship, the employer’s investment creates an obligation in the employee to return the investment. That sense of obligation to reciprocate leads to commitment and individual participation in employability activities. Furthermore, the illusive view of commitment that reflects employees striving to model an ideal future is continuance commitment followed by the drive to remain employable. It instils in people: that they have an obligation to repay the employer’s investment. And that leaving an organization means having few or no options.

The central concept of Lacan’s psychoanalysis is fantasy (Driver, 2017). Individuals become affectively committed to aspects of society that provide endurance and protection from the emotional pain associated with everyday failures. Fantasies have a significant impact on an individual’s preferences and activities, as well as on organizations, political life and pro-social work (Clancy and Vince, 2019; Glynos, 2003; Voronov and Vince, 2012). Lacanian framing demonstrates that micro-level effects are linked to larger societal and institutional discourses, making it appropriate to shed light on the relationship between learning, commitment, employability and self-exploitation.

The prior literature does not portray self-exploitation as a detrimental aspect of employability. In reality, though, it is the unfavorable result of a misguided notion of autonomy and self-determination. Self-identity mastery allows managers or bosses to dictate or control career choices and take advantage of their employees. People who engage in self exploitation out of a false sense of self-determination and self-mastery are alienated or estranged from their true selves. By examining employability as a cultural fantasy that leads to exploitation, this study contributes to the body of literature on employability and advances developed knowledge on the topic. The study examines workers in the context of their working environments, which display their decisions regarding the employable self. The proposed conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1.

#### Describing climate migration as a driver of conflict causally results in fascism and endorses xenophobic racism. Instead, decenter the security paradigm in the context of migration. It’s entirely possible to endorse labor policy without fascist justifications, but not to combine the two.

Giovani Bettini 24, PhD. Sr Lecturer in the Lancaster Environment Centre at Lancaster University; Anna **Casaglia**, 10/4/2024, “From denial to domestication: Unpacking Italy’s right-wing approach to climate migration and security.” sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016718524001404, Daniel M. Gallagher III

The gradual fading out of climate denial – with the scientific evidence of global warming now unquestionable and impacts already dramatically tangible – opens pressing questions on how right-wing political formations, which in many parts of the world (not least in Europe) have ascended to power, will signify climate change. How is global warming being inscribed into conservative policy agendas and rhetoric? Will we see attempts to relativise the threat posed by climate change and de-prioritise it (Wullenkord, 2022, Skoglund and Stripple, 2018), or attempts to delay action (Carton, 2019, Lamb et al., 2020)? Or could forms of eco-fascism become widespread?

The way in which the right-wing signifies the nexus climate-migration-security can be seen as a litmus test. Indeed, the idea that large-scale displacement could become a threat multiplier igniting conflict and thereby menacing regional or international security has widely circulated – with less progressive observers waiving the spectre of a climate exodus to legitimise the tightening and militarisation of borders. While in a humanitarian framing climate refugees are portrayed as the victims of global warming in need of rescue and deserving legal protection (Byravan and Rajan, 2022), the figure of the climate refugee has also been one of the key vehicles for the securitisation of climate change (cfr. White, 2011, Boas, 2015, Boas and Rothe, 2016). Social scientists and migration scholars have been sceptical about the discourse since its inception (Suhrke, 1994, Black, 2001, Castles, 2002), and narratives on a climate exodus from the global South have been stigmatised for reproducing racial lines (Baldwin, 2022, Ahuja, 2021, Telford, 2018) and for justifying a militarisation of borders (White, 2011).

While a rich scholarship offers more nuanced understandings of climate mobilities (e.g. Boas et al., 2019, Durand-Delacre et al., 2021), pressing questions are still open, not least regarding how climate mobilities concretely figure in actual political contexts, how notions of security are changing in the face of the climate emergency, and how climate migration enters the everyday performance of right-wing populism in (re)shaping the geographies of borders, climate vulnerabilities, and (in)security. Indeed, critical scholars have started exploring the prospect that environmental protection and climate adaptation could foster or justify forms of ecobordering (Turner and Bailey, 2021), and exacerbate the already profound inequalities that some refer to as forms of climate or eco-apartheid (Rice et al., 2021, Heron, 2023).

Our contribution to such debates is twofold. First, we argue for a decentring of the spatialities of debates on climate mobilities and in/security. The wealth of research on Anglophone contexts stands out against the scant attention devoted to how the same matters are articulated within non-English speaking countries, which are most often objectified into ‘case studies’ on vulnerability and displacement. Second, we suggest focusing on the national political level, a site in which several domains of security are shaped and enforced. This scale is rather overlooked in debates on climate change and security, where most work (with notable exceptions, see e.g. Boas, 2015, Cons, 2018, von Lucke, 2020, Nash, 2023, Nash, 2024) has focussed either on the supranational or international scale or on local contexts.

Contributing to filling this gap, this paper investigates how climate migration has entered the lexicon and agendas of Italian political parties, and how this is negotiated as a security issue. The Italian case is extremely relevant considering Italy’s role in European migration processes. Indeed, the securitisation of migration and the enforcement of borders have been defining traits across the Italian political spectrum. In this context, the alleged ‘fight against illegal immigration’ is a billboard issue for the ruling right-wing coalition, charged with heavily securitised and racialised terms. Furthermore, the recent series of climate extremes in Italy has contributed making climate denial a residual position, since the unfolding of the climate crisis has become manifest and tangible. This mainstreaming of the climate emergency marks a new, ‘post-denial’ phase, which deserves close investigation.

The rich literatures on the resurgence of eco-fascism, on the political ecologies of the (far-)right, and on the narrative repertoires that could pave the way for forms of climate apartheid (Bulli, 2019, Malm and Collective, 2021, Bailey and Turner, 2023, Forchtner, 2019, Lockwood, 2018) offer precious tools to conceptualise how right-wing formations are and will be ‘absorbing’ the climate emergency. However, and to state the obvious, the specific articulation of ecology, migration and security pushed at a certain time by a movement or party (e.g. whether they mobilise the spectre of a ‘climate exodus’) is highly contingent and contextual, and also dependent upon discursive struggles among and within political formations. It is in light of this contextual processes that the article focuses on one specific political context, the Italian.

#### The impact is fascism.

Alexander Stagnell 25. Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Rhetoric at the Free University of Brussels. “Tragedy, Then Farce: Slavoj Žižek’s Theory of Populism.” *Crisis & Critique* 12(1). p. 324-341.

The Domestication of Objet a

In the contemporary political landscape, Marx’s old formula ‘first as tragedy, then as farce’ seems particularly adapt when applied to the trajectory of populism. The hopeful energy of the early 2010s, marked by for instance the Occupy Movement, the Arab Spring, and the electoral breakthroughs of movements like Syriza and Podemos, soon gave way to tragedy: the rise of right-wing populists like Donald Trump and the repeated failures of left-populist political movements to translate their popularity into durable structural changes. Today, the farcical dimension of populism is not only embodied by the theatrical antics of Trump and other right-wing populist leaders across the globe, but also by in increasingly populist radical center. This centrist establishment, once aligned with progressive causes as a way to combat a more radical left, has begun disavow ‘wokeness’ and the concern for representation and inclusion of minorities, instead positioning itself as a voice for the poor and the working-class against the alleged overreach of ‘woke PMC’s’ and ‘symbolic capitalists’.43

This centrist attempt at populism offers an image of a society in need of balancing the relations between classes, a manner of depicting class relations which Žižek associates with fascism and populism. What is assumed within such perspectives is the restoration, or at least the formation, of a harmonious society capable of, at the minimum, limiting the effect of social antagonisms. However, “[f]or a Marxist,” as Zizek writes, “the relationship between classes is by definition that of a discord and imbalance, so that the only way to abolish class antagonism is to abolish classes as such.”44 Yet, is it not precisely the same issue that plagues Laclau’s populist theory? Consider his own example of the populist logic in action:

Let me give an example of how isolated demands emerge, and how they start their process of articulation. This example, although it is imaginary, corresponds pretty well to a situation widely experienced in Third World countries. Think of a large mass of agrarian migrants who settle in the shantytowns on the outskirts of a developing industrial city. Problems of housing arise, and the group of people affected by them request some kind of solution from the local authorities. Here we have a demand which initially is perhaps only a request. If the demand is satisfied, that is the end of the matter; but if it is not, people can start to perceive that their neighbours have other, equally unsatisfied demands – problems with water, health, schooling, and so on. If the situation remains unchanged for some time, there is an accumulation of unfulfilled demands and an increasing inability of the institutional system to absorb them in a differential way (each in isolation from the others), and an equivalential relation is established between them.45

What this example reveals is that the emergence of a populist subject, the people, is contingent not upon any immanent structural antagonism, but on the failure of the state to meet isolated demands. The political identity that emerges is, at root, a response to administrative inadequacy, not to the irreconcilable logic of class struggle. In this view, populism becomes a reactive movement aimed at restoring balance, an appeal to the authorities to rectify a dysfunctional distribution of resources or attention. A call for populism is, in other words, a call for a rebalancing of the current configuration of society. This is in turn brings us to Žižek’s critique of liberal democracy as the ultimate horizon for Laclauian populism. Apropos the relation between antagonism and democracy in Laclau, Žižek writes:

Democracy it may seem, thus not only can include antagonism; it is the only political form that solicits and presupposes it, that institutionalizes it. What other political systems perceive as a threat (the lack of a “natural” pretender to power), democracy elevates into a “normal” positive condition of its functioning. The place of power is empty, there is no natural claimant for it, polemos or struggle is irreducible, and every positive government must be fought out, gained through polemos. 46

Against the threat of post-political depoliticization, a return to populism as “the democratic element in contemporary representative systems” appears tempting. However, as this struggle between the existing hegemony and its populist counterpart is inscribed within an existing framework, as a call from the people to the big Other to fulfill its demands, democracy must be assumed as “a basic structural feature”47 of every populist situation. The issue, once again, lies in theory not in practice. So, when Žižek claims that “[t]he conclusion to be drawn is that populism (the way we supplemented Laclau’s definition of it) is not the only mode of existence of the excess of antagonism over the institutional-democratic frame of regulated agonistic struggle”48, we need to think the excess of populism, the reason that it is sometimes good enough in practice, from a different theoretical perspective. The aim must be to avoid what Zizek describes as Laclau’s mistake of inscribing into democracy an antagonistic struggle as the middle ground between two extremes, “on the one side, the celebration of heroic struggle-confrontation that suspends democracy and its rules [….] [and] on the other side, the evacuation of true struggle out of the democratic space so that all that remains is anemic rule regulated competition […].”49 Such a perspective only constitutes a domestication of the immanent antagonism.

#### Vote neg for authentic self-affirmation. That rewires the ecological system of debate.

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All systems are being experienced concurrently (Ancis & Davidson, 2013). The self constantly seeks empathic attunement through the roles, activities, and settings that an ecological system provides or withholds (Blau & Wagman, 2022; Heft, 2001; Strozier et al., 2022). Similar to how the self object functions in the dyad, selfobjects function in the environment to maintain an individual’s cohesive sense of self (Kohut, 1971). When the environment is conducive to self-affirmation, the ideals that pattern it are fluid and liberating (Brandchaft et al., 2010; Kassouf, 2023). The environment is able to be idealized via feelings of belonging and comfort. The self feels “at home” in engaged systems that afford the individual to develop freely with current capacities. In turn, the environment optimally reacts to the individual in ways that promote exploration, self-determination, and community involvement. The self is supported by the environment and creates ideal conditions for the self to grow without threat or fear of fragmentation (Kohut, 1977). Likewise, the environment is not fearful of its own disintegration or fragmentation throughout its interactions with the developing individual (Kohut & Strozier, 1985).

Conversely, failure to affirm ontological selfhood through empathic transference thrusts the individual into what Fanon calls “a zone of nonbeing” (Fanon, 1952, p. xii) or what Kohut would describe as fragmentation (Kohut, 1971). When rigid ideals are used to determine a macrosystem, which then pattern all systems beneath it, selfobject failure via the environment is likely to follow. Instead of selfhood being sustained, the environment operates with a collective narcissistic rage to affirm its own rigid grandiose ideals that can never be attained (Foucault, 2013; Kohut, 1977; Preciado, 2025). All systems are a unique area within the selfobject milieu that can empathically fail an individual even if other systems within the broader ecosystem are empathically attuned to them.

As the self acts, the environment reacts and vice versa. This is sensible in psychodynamic understanding and much more so in an intersubjective systems framework, specifically regarding the leading edge and trailing edge. The self is constantly having to navigate the hopes and dreads that are entangled within an environment (Zimmerman, 2019). The hope of one system may be the dread of another. Depending on power relations, these can be developmentally emboldening or catastrophic to the self-structure.

Take for example the Black Panther Party movement that took place in the late 1960s to the early 1970s. For many in the movement or those associated with it, the authentic self was optimally responded to by the environment thanks to the microsystems the BPP created. However, these microsystems tailored to the hope of black liberation and self-determination conflicted with the dread of fragmentation possessed by the exosystem and greater macrosystem of white hegemony that ruled United States culture, controlled federal resources, and launched numerous propaganda campaigns to control the discursive norms surrounding black liberation (Bloom & Martin, 2016).3 When revolutionary culture engaged counter-revolutionary hegemony, psychological consequences on the BPP members across the organization followed due to the malice of the systems that encased the BPP.

The action and reaction between the self and the environment are almost always misaligned, often resulting in narcissistic injury, sometimes leading to trauma. Across the world in every region, someone is empathically failed by the systems they are encased within. Yet, with an intersubjective self-psychology logic of the leading edge, as this destruction is taking place it does not alter that the individual is still striving to belong and function in a given ecosystem (Paul et al., 2019). The tension between the environment repressing the nuclear self and the self’s striving to belong in the environment causes dynamic shifts of self-concept on a daily basis. These shifts extend the empathic attunement of a therapist beyond the bounds of the clinical dyad and connect the contextually entangled selves of both therapist and patient.

Clinically speaking, Brandchaft et al. (2010) initially argued that the self was entangled solely in the context of the patient and therapist dyad. Paralleling the enmeshment of children with a caretaker, the self is paralyzed by recurring rigid structures produced by intersubjective factors. However, extended beyond the dyad, patterns appear across other ecological systems entangling the self. These patterns occur across numerous systems, represented by activities, roles, affect, and self-concepts that entangle the “authentic and purest self” central to self-organization (Brandchaft et al., 2010, p. 107). Both the patient and therapist’s selves are dynamically engaged across various systems that are then brought into the therapeutic setting.

Therapy does not take place solely in an intersubjective context but also in an intersectional one (Nathan et al., 2013). The self is constantly having to mitigate communication based on what’s acceptable within that environment by paying attention to roles, activities, discursive norms, and relations that encase the self-structure (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For hegemonic culture groups, this takes minimal effort whereas for individuals on the margins of society, mobilizing the nuclear structure is laborious due to the rigidity of the systems that entangle the self-structure (Brandchaft et al., 2010; Layton, 2020; Rebadulla et al., 2024).

Unique to each individual will be the degree to which the environment has empathically sustained or failed the selfobject relationship and thus each system will need to be disentangled from one another in order to understand where these empathic failures lie. These failures can be from national identities, state institutions, community conflict, religious beliefs, socioeconomic systems, all in addition to the caregiver dyad that has commonly been the focus of self-psychology.

The authentic self resembles the nuclear self-concept; but is interdependent and connected to entangled systems. Kohut originally envisioned a “virtual self” structured by caregiver projection that is then introjected and structured by the child (Seligman, 2005). Similarly, the authentic self is bidirectionally projected and affirmed environmentally. Authenticity is determined by the congruence of internal affect systems and external ecological systems. How they engage with one another in context determines how authenticity will present itself. Kohut (1971) and Neisser (1994) labeled this dynamic engagement as “multiple selves”; however, this doesn’t resolve how the auxiliary selves and the central nuclear self were connected. The selves that are projected are not necessarily “false” selves but are the myriad projections of the authentic self in response to the environment.

### 1NC

#### Gorgias Paradox.

#### The aff cannot win without establishing certain baseline conditions for their proposal, all of which are wrong.

#### First, nothing exists, which means there is no reason to vote aff because there’s no impact, solvency, or inherency.

#### Second, there is no way to apprehend things even if they do exist and if we could, they would already exist, which creates an inherency paradox for the aff since we either can’t apprehend things and there’s no basis for their case or we can, and they must therefore be assumed to exist, in which case the aff has already happened.

#### Finally, even if things exist and we can apprehend them, we cannot communicate them because we must translate them into logos which is a substance incommensurate to the attributes we translate, and the medium always stands between rhetors and auditors.

#### Vote neg on presumption because the structural advantages of the aff and the impossibility of proving a negative to deny a non-falsifiable case make this a requirement for deliberation whenever one team indicts the status quo as they have, which is also why “any-risk” logic is an unacceptable rigged game.

SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, CIRCA 200 C.E. Paraphrasing Gorgias’s lost work On the Nonexistent, Against the Schoolmasters, <http://users.wfu.edu/zulick/300/gorgias/negative.html>)

66 Now he concludes in the following way that nothing exists: If <anything> exists, either the existent exists or the nonexistent or both the existent exists and the nonexistent. But, as he will establish, neither does the existent exist nor the nonexistent, as he will make clear, nor the existent and <the> nonexistent, as he will also teach. It is not the case then that anything exists.

67 More specifically, the nonexistent does not exist; for if the nonexistent exists, it will both exist and not exist at the same time, for insofar as it is understood as nonexistent, it will not exist, but insofar as it is nonexistent it will, on the other hand, exist. It would, however, be entirely absurd for something to exist and at the same time not to exist. The nonexistent, therefore, does not exist. And to state another argument, if the nonexistent exists, the existent will not exist, for these are opposites to each other, and if existence is an attribute of the nonexistent, nonexistence will be an attribute of the existent. But it is not, in fact, true that the existent does not exist. <Accordingly>, neither will the nonexistent exist.

68 Moreover, the existent does not exist either. For if the existent exists, it is either eternal or generated, or at the same time eternal and generated. But it is neither eternal nor generated nor both, as we shall show. The existent therefore does not exist. For if the existent is eternal (one must begin with this point) it does not have any beginning.

69 For everything which is generated has some beginning, but the eternal, being ungenerated, did not have a beginning. And not having a beginning it is without limit. And if it is without limit it is nowhere. For if it is somewhere, that in which it is, is something other than it, and thus if the existent is contained in something it will no longer be without limit. For the container is greater than the contained, but nothing is greater than the unlimited, so that the unlimited cannot exist anywhere.

70 Moreover, it is not contained in itself. For in that case container and contained will be the same, and the existent will become two things, place and body (place is the container, body the contained). But this is absurd. Accordingly, existence is not contained in itself. So that if the existent is eternal it is unlimited, and if it is unlimited it is nowhere, and if it is nowhere it does not exist. Accordingly, if the existent is eternal, it is not existent at all.

71 Moreover, neither can the existent be generated. For if it has come into being, it has come either from the existent or the nonexistent. But it has not come from the existent. For if it is existent, it has not come to be, but already exists. Nor from the nonexistent. For the nonexistent cannot generate anything, because what is generative of something of necessity ought to partake of positive existence. It is not true either, therefore, that the existent is generated.

72 In the same way it is not jointly at the same time eternal and generated. For these qualities are mutually exclusive of each other, and if the existent is eternal it has not been generated, and if it has been generated it is not eternal. Accordingly, if the existent is neither eternal nor generated nor both at once, the existent should not exist.

73 And to use another argument, if it exists, it is either one or many. But it is neither one nor many, as will be set forth. Therefore, the existent does not exist. For if it is one, it is an existent or a continuum or a magnitude or a body. But whatever of these it is, it is not one, since whatever has extent will be divided, and what is a continuum will be cut. And similarly, what is conceived as a magnitude will not be indivisible. And if it is by chance a body it will be three?dimensional, for it will have length, and breadth and depth. But it is absurd to say that the existent is none of these things. Therefore, the existent is not one.

74 And moreover it is not many. For if it is not one, it is not many either, since the many is a composite of separate entities and thus, when the possibility that it is one was refuted, the possibility that it is many was refuted as well. Now it is clear from this that neither does the existent exist nor does the nonexistent exist.

75 It is easy to conclude that both the existent and the nonexistent do not exist either. For if the nonexistent exists and the existent exists, the nonexistent will be the same thing as the existent as far as existence is concerned. And for this reason neither of them exists. For it is agreed that the nonexistent does not exist, and the existent has been shown to be the same as the nonexistent and it accordingly will not exist.

76 Of course, if the existent is the same as the nonexistent, it is not possible for both to exist. For if both exist, they are not the same, and if the same, both do not exist. To which the conclusion follows that nothing exists. For if neither the existent exists nor the nonexistent nor both, and if no additional possibility is conceivable, nothing exists.

77 Next it must be shown that even if anything exists, it is unknowable and incomprehensible to man. For, says Gorgias, if things considered in the mind are not existent, the existent is not considered. And that is logical. For if "white" were a possible attribute of what is considered, "being considered" would also have been a possible attribute of what is white; similarly, if "not to be existent" were a possible attribute of what is being considered, necessarily "not to be considered" will be a possible attribute of what is existent

78 As result, the statement "if things considered are not existent, the existent is not considered" is sound and logically follows. But things considered (for this must be our starting point) are not existent, as we shall show. The existent is not therefore considered. And more over, it is clear that things considered are not existent.

79 For if things considered are existent, all things considered exist, and in what ever way anyone considers them. Which is absurd. For if one considers a man flying or chariots racing in the sea, a man does not straightway fly nor a chariot race in the sea. So that things considered are not existent.

80 In addition, if things considered in the mind are existent, nonexistent things will not be considered. For opposites are attributes of opposites, and the nonexistent is opposed to the existent. For this reason it is quite evident that if "being considered in the mind" is an attribute of the existent, "not being considered in the mind" will be an attribute of the nonexistent. But this is absurd. For Scylla and Chimaera and many other nonexistent things are considered in the mind. Therefore, the existent is not considered in the mind.

81 Just as objects of sight are said to be visible for the reason that they are seen, and objects of hearing are said to be audible for the reason that they are heard, and we do not reject visible things on the grounds that they are not heard, nor dismiss audible things because they are not seen (since each object ought to be judged by its own sense, but not by another), so, too, things considered in the mind will exist even if they should not be seen by the sight nor heard by the hearing, because they are perceived by their own criterion.

82 If, therefore, someone considered in the mind that chariots race in the sea, even if he does not see them, he should believe that there are chariots racing in the sea. But this is absurd. Therefore, the existent is not an object of consideration and is not apprehended.

83 But even if it should be apprehended, it would be incapable of being conveyed to another. For if existent things are visible and audible and generally perceptible, which means that they are external substances, and of these the things which are visible are perceived by the sight, those that are audible by the hearing, and not contrariwise, how can these things be revealed to another person?

84 For that by which we reveal is logos, but logos is not substances and existing things. Therefore we do not reveal existing things to our neighbors, but logos, which is something other than substances. Thus, just as the visible would not become audible, and vice versa, similarly, when external reality is involved, it would not become our logos,

85 and not being logos, it would not have been revealed to another. It is clear, he says, that logos arises from external things impinging upon us, that is, from perceptible things. From encounter with a flavor, logos is expressed by us about that quality, and from encounter with a color, an expression of color. But if this is the case, logos is not evocative of the external, but the external becomes the revealer of logos.

86 And surely it is not possible to say that logos has substance in the way visible and audible things have, so that substantial and existent things can be revealed from its substance and existence. For, he says, even if logos has substance, still it differs from all the other substances, and visible bodies are to the greatest degree different from words. What is visible is comprehended by one organ, logos by another. Logos does not, therefore, manifest the multiplicity of substances, just as they do not manifest the nature of each other.

87 Such being, in Gorgias' view, the problems, insofar as they are valid, the criterion is destroyed. For there would be no criterion if nature neither exists nor can be understood nor conveyed to another.

### 1NC

#### Delaware CP.

#### The State of Delaware should determine that corporations have a duty to [bargain in good faith between distributors and antitrust-exempt farmworker collectives].

#### The counterplan alone ensures DExit

George Shepherd 21. Professor of Law, Emory University School of Law. "Not Just Profits: The Duty of Corporate Leaders to the Public, Not Just Shareholders." University of Pennsylvania Journal of Business Law, 23.3, 823-861.

The currently dominant view of the corporation ignores history, is harmful and unfair, and should be rejected in favor of the view that existed for the United States’ first 150 years. Corporate leaders should be required to manage their corporations in the public interest as compensation for the state’s granting their corporations limited liability. Without limited liability, the corporation could not exist. Only because of limited liability can a corporation raise sufficient sums from equity investors to complete its projects.85 Limited liability is a valuable resource that the government controls. As it did in the United States’ early decades, the government should distribute this resource to corporations only on the condition that corporations compensate the government for the valuable resource by operating in the public interest.

A way to assure that corporations implement this duty to serve the public interest would be to impose the duty not only on the corporation itself, but also on the corporation’s officers and directors. In other situations where the government distributes benefits to professionals, the professionals are required to promote the public interest.86 For example, state governments provide lawyers with the valuable monopoly right to sell legal services; no one other than lawyers can provide such services. In return, lawyers are required to act as “officers of the court,” and to act in the public interest. 87 Furthermore, they are held to a higher standard of behavior than nonlawyers: the state will deny a legal license to a person who has been convicted of a serious crime.88

Similarly, certified public accountants have a duty to act in the public interest.89 Again, this is appropriate because the government has provided the accountants with the large benefit of the monopoly right to perform certain accounting services.90

Corporate officers and directors too should have a duty to lead their corporations in the public interest. The states have provided corporations with the valuable benefit of limited liability. Like lawyers and accountants, corporate officers should be required to reciprocate by acting in the public interest. Because the state has provided the corporation with the benefit of limited liability, the corporation’s leader has a duty to run the corporation to benefit the public.

Perhaps this duty should be described in a way that resembles how the duty for lawyers is described. A lawyer is called an “officer of the court.” A corporate officer or director might be called an “officer of the public.”

This duty for corporate leaders to manage their corporations as officers of the public would help protect groups that are vulnerable to corporations’ behavior. A corporation might protect communities that surround its factories by not immediately closing less-profitable factories. Cigarette manufactures might choose to leave the cigarette business, even if the business were profitable.

The penalties for violating this duty would be the same penalties that punish lawyers and accountants who violate their respective ethical duties. Just as some criminal acts disqualify a person from serving as a lawyer, a person’s acts that harm the public interest should disqualify said person from serving as a director or officer of a corporation. If a corporate leader causes their corporation to harm the public interest, the government should have the authority both to remove them from their corporate position and to eliminate their corporation’s limited liability.

Although federal or state courts, especially Delaware courts, might impose this duty as part of the common law, the duty might be best imposed at the federal level, by federal statute. Otherwise, state courts and state legislatures have a strong economic interest not to impose such a requirement. A state that did impose such a requirement would be at a disadvantage in the market for incorporations in which states compete to attract corporations to incorporate there. For example, Delaware might fear that it would lose its dominance in this market if it imposed a requirement that corporations promote the public interest. Corporations would reincorporate in other states that did not impose the requirement. To assure that the requirement governs all corporations in all states, federal legislation might be necessary.91

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This is not an extreme proposal. Instead, the proposal would return corporate governance to the requirements that existed for the United States’ first 150 years.92 Until the mid-1950s, it was understood that corporations should operate in the public interest.93 The current prevailing approach of hard profit maximization is extreme, deviating from a system that had existed for almost 200 years. My proposal is conservative: it would return corporate governance to its moderate mainstream.

VII. Current Responses Are Inadequate

In the last decades, and even more recently, there have been halting suggestions that corporations assume obligations to more than shareholders. As discussed in the introduction and bibliographical appendix, scholars have made various proposals.94 Two other approaches have arisen from industry itself. First, some companies have chosen to become “benefit corporations,” also called B corporations. Second, a group of corporate leaders has suggested that corporations should have duties to more than shareholders. I discuss each in turn and explain why both are inadequate to achieve the goal of appropriate corporate responsibility.

A. Benefit Corporations

Benefit Corporations are normal corporations that have voluntarily committed to serving interests other than those of shareholders. Indeed:

Just what is a benefit corporation? A for benefit corporation has the same structure as a traditional for-profit corporation. Each has a board of directors, officers, and shareholders who own shares in the company. The officers and directors run the business, yet the shareholders can hold them accountable for the decisions they make. Shareholders have several means to do this, including filing a shareholder lawsuit.

The difference between a traditional corporation and a benefit corporation is in its purpose. A traditional for-profit corporation’s purpose is to make profits for shareholders. This means that corporate managers are judged based on the company’s financial performance. They may face shareholder action if they make decisions that sacrifice profits to achieve nonmonetary goals.

A benefit corporation still has a profit-making goal, but it also has a broader public benefit purpose: to make a material positive impact on society and the environment. Managers must work to achieve this purpose and therefore they have flexibility to make decisions that balance profits with social causes and environmental responsibility.

The first benefit corporation law was enacted in Maryland in 2010, and currently about 30 states allow them. A benefit corporation is best suited to a company that has an important social or environmental mission but also wants to generate profits. For example, Yonkers, NY-based Greyston Bakery was founded in the early 1980s to give hard-to-employ people a new chance in life. It is profitable, has stayed true to its mission, and has developed new community programs. It reorganized as New York’s first benefit corporation in 2012. 95

Additionally, while it may vary from state to state, forming a benefit corporation is no more difficult than forming a normal C corporation:

Benefit corporation laws vary somewhat from state to state but, in general, a benefit corporation must have a general benefit purpose stated in its articles of incorporation. A B corporation is formed by filing articles of incorporation with the state—the same as with a traditional corporation.

In most states, a BENEFIT ORGANIZATION must demonstrate that it is upholding its public benefit purpose by publishing an annual benefit report that assesses social and environmental performance using a third-party standard. The report must be sent to shareholders and published on the company’s website. State law also may require it to be filed with the state.

Because they may sacrifice profits in order to achieve social goals, for-benefit companies may not be as popular with investors as traditional profit-centered corporations. Owners of benefit corporations may have to develop a strategy to attract investors that value contributions to social or environmental causes as highly as they value profits.96

Whether a given benefit corporation achieves the goals that it establishes for itself is based on the honor system; by itself, registering as a benefit corporation does not require the corporation to achieve these goals. However, the corporation may also agree to monitoring by an outside entity. For example, the corporation may not only become a benefit corporation, but also become certified by an outside organization as a certified B Corporation:

Another way to show that a business is focused on environmental and social goals is to apply for B CORP. CERTIFICATION through the nonprofit organization B Lab. Certification is available to all types of businesses, including traditional corporations and LLCs. Some businesses, like King Arthur Flour Company and Greyston Bakery, are organized as benefit corporations and also are B Lab certified B corporations.

Certification involves completing an assessment that evaluates the company’s overall impact on its stakeholders. The assessment is then reviewed by B Lab staff members, who may require supporting documentation. Some companies must amend corporate formation documents or bylaws to include a general benefit purpose. B Lab also offers a free tool that can assist companies in meeting their annual benefit corporation reporting requirements.

Forming a benefit corporation can help a company fulfill a social purpose without risking shareholder action for placing social good ahead of profits. Certification and reporting requirements help business managers assess progress and set new goals. And, in an era where so many are trying to be authentic and sustainable, becoming a BENEFIT COMPANY helps you stand out from the crowd by demonstrating your commitment to your employees, your community, and the environment.97

That some corporations may choose to become benefit corporations is admirable. However, the existence of benefit corporations does not achieve the goal of imposing a duty to serve the public interest on all corporations. A corporation becomes a benefit corporation only if its organizers choose to do so. The large majority of companies that do not choose to become a benefit corporation have no enhanced duty to the public.98

B. The Business Roundtable’s Statement

The Business Roundtable is an association whose members are CEOs of major U.S. corporations.99 For decades, the group indicated that the goal of a corporation should be to promote the interests of the corporation’s shareholders.100 However, in 2019, the group issued a statement that suggested that corporations should consider the interests of a broader group of stakeholders. The “Statement on the Purpose of a Corporation” provided:

Americans deserve an economy that allows each person to succeed through hard work and creativity and to lead a life of meaning and dignity. We believe the free-market system is the best means of generating good jobs, a strong and sustainable economy, innovation, a healthy environment and economic opportunity for all.

Businesses play a vital role in the economy by creating jobs, fostering innovation and providing essential goods and services. Businesses make and sell consumer products; manufacture equipment and vehicles; support the national defense; grow and produce food; provide health care; generate and deliver energy; and offer financial, communications and other services that underpin economic growth.

While each of our individual companies serves its own corporate purpose, we share a fundamental commitment to all of our stakeholders. We commit to:

Delivering value to our customers. We will further the tradition of American companies leading the way in meeting or exceeding customer expectations.

Investing in our employees. This starts with compensating them fairly and providing important benefits. It also includes supporting them through training and education that help develop new skills for a rapidly changing world. We foster diversity and inclusion, dignity and respect.

Dealing fairly and ethically with our suppliers. We are dedicated to serving as good partners to the other companies, large and small, that help us meet our missions.

Supporting the communities in which we work. We respect the people in our communities and protect the environment by embracing sustainable practices across our businesses. Generating long-term value for shareholders, who provide the capital that allows companies to invest, grow and innovate. We are committed to transparency and effective engagement with shareholders.

Each of our stakeholders is essential. We commit to deliver value to all of them, for the future success of our companies, our communities and our country.101

As with the benefit corporation, the Business Roundtable’s statement is merely aspirational. It does not require corporations to do anything. It is a suggestion by some powerful CEOs that they might consider the interests of stakeholders other than shareholders. It does not require the CEOs to consider these other interests.

Moreover, the statement is unenforceable. If a CEO were to ignore other stakeholders’ interests and continue to focus solely on shareholders’ interests, neither the CEO nor their corporation could be punished. No one would be able to sue to enforce any rights of other stakeholders.

Looked at most favorably, the statement is a statement of aspiration that might inspire some corporate leaders to think more broadly beyond shareholder maximization. A more cynical view would be that the statement is public relations hot air, which is designed to make corporations seem more appealing, while requiring them to do nothing.

The statement does not appear to have marked a dramatic turning point in corporate behavior. Indeed, a recent study shows that, more than a year after the statement was issued, those companies whose executives signed the statement have done no better in serving the public interest than those whose executives did not sign it. 102 Corporations whose executives signed the statement did not change their objectives beyond shareholder primacy. 103

This failure is easy to understand. As before, a CEO who focused on something other than profits might soon be out of a job. Disgruntled shareholders would have them fired. Alternatively, the resultant declining stock price would make the corporation an enticing takeover target, which again would result in the CEO being fired.

As with the benefit corporation, the statement allows corporate leadership to continue on as before, but with a new public relations halo.

VIII. Corporate Responsibility And Vulnerability

Various stakeholders of corporations are uniquely unprotected from their vulnerability to the corporations.104 Often, a corporation holds large power over the workers and surrounding community, and they are at the corporation’s mercy. Workers and the surrounding community must make large investments in the corporation, which, under traditional law, the corporation can destroy at its whim, with no recourse for the workers and community. 105

A. Employees of the Corporation

Employees of a corporation must often make large investments in the corporation, the value of which the corporation can easily destroy. For example, workers often must move to a new community when the corporation hires them, cutting off valuable ties with their former communities.

Likewise, workers must invest in the specific skills that the corporation requires, skills which often will not be transferable to another corporation.

The workers and their families establish valuable social ties with institutions in the community, such as schools and churches.

The workers buy houses in the community.

The value of all of these investments will decline or even be completely lost if the corporation decides to close its local plant. If the workers are forced to move, the workers’ ties to the community will be lost. The value of the workers’ non-transferable employer-specific skills will be destroyed.

Likewise, if the corporation closes, this will cause the value of the real estate in the surrounding area to decline, decimating the value of the former workers’ homes.

Examples of this are the many workers in the industrial middle of the United States, whose lives were shattered when corporations closed manufacturing plants.

B. The Surrounding Community

Apart from the workers, the community surrounding a major corporate employer is also unprotected from its vulnerability. Families and businesses invest in the community. If the corporation leaves, the whole community is devastated.

Likewise, if the corporation begins emitting larger amounts of pollution, the community is often defenseless. Because the community depends so deeply on the corporation, the community can neither confront the corporation nor defend itself against the corporation, for fear that the corporation will leave.

Examples of communities that have been devastated by corporate decisions are present through the U.S.’s industrial middle.

C. The Environment

Because the corporation holds power over the surrounding community, the surrounding community cannot effectively demand that the corporation reduce pollution. The community fears that environmental activism will cause the corporation to leave for another area or another country. Accordingly, the environment enjoys few protections against its vulnerability.

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D. Unions

Because the corporation can threaten to leave, the corporation has effective power to destroy unions. Unions have declined as corporations have moved their factories from union areas in the U.S.’s north to non-union areas in the south. Workers have gotten the message: if you try to organize a union, the corporation will leave and destroy your community.

This is what happened when Amazon suddenly revoked its commitment to build a large headquarters near New York City. The community had made various requests that Amazon protect workers and the environment. Rather than agree to them, Amazon left. To workers and communities, the message is clear. If you request protections from a corporation, your jobs and community are at risk.

The duty that I propose in this paper would permit corporations’ workers and communities to enjoy some resilience and to be protected to some degree from their vulnerability to corporations. Corporate law presently provides many protections to shareholders who have invested in a corporation. My proposal provides protections to the workers and communities who have invested in a corporation not just with money, but with their lives. My proposal would require a corporation to consider the interests of all investors in it, including workers and the surrounding community, not just shareholders.

The proposal would also be fair and efficient. Just as it is fair and efficient for shareholders to expect a reliable return on their money investment in the corporation, the corporation should be required to attempt to provide its workers and the surrounding community with a similar reliable return on their nontransferable investment—or, at minimum, to consider in the corporation’s decision-making the workers’ and community’s interests.

IX. Conclusion

Over the past century, corporations have freed themselves of a duty that they previously had: the duty to promote the public interest. The recent development of the benefit corporation does not change this. Any publicspirited acts that corporations take as benefit corporations are purely voluntary. A corporation can choose not to be a benefit corporation. If it chooses to be a benefit corporation, it still has complete discretion whether to act in the public interest.

Likewise, the recent statement by the Business Roundtable does not impose any new duties. It merely suggests that corporate leaders might aspire to promote the interest of “stakeholders” other than stockholders. However, the statement does not specify how exactly the leaders should do this. Nor does it provide any enforcement or penalties if they don’t.

Instead, a new duty should be created for corporate leaders to act in the public interest. Just as lawyers are required to be “officers of the court,” corporate leaders should be “officers of the public.” Just as some criminal acts disqualify a person from serving as a lawyer, acts that harm the public interest should disqualify people from serving as directors and officers of corporations. If a corporate leader harms the public interest, the government should have the authority both to remove them from their corporate position and to eliminate their corporation’s limited liability.

Furthermore, if corporations violate this duty to act in the public interest, limited liability should be eliminated for that corporation’s shareholders. If the corporation fails to provide the quid, then the corporation and its shareholders should no longer receive the quo.

This new duty could be created by the courts. For example, the Delaware courts could hold that corporate directors and officers have a fiduciary duty that runs not only to the corporation, but also to other stakeholders. Just as lawyers and accountants have duties beyond serving their clients, corporate leaders would also have duties to serve the public interest.

Alternately, this public duty could be achieved through legislation. It could be done at the state level. For example, the Delaware legislature could pass a statute that imposes the new duty.

The duty could also be imposed by federal legislation.106 There would be benefits of this. With federal legislation, the duty would be consistent across all jurisdictions. In contrast, market forces would probably prevent this duty from arising in the states, either in state legislatures or state courts. No state would act individually to impose such a duty for fear of losing incorporations to other states that do not impose the duty. Accordingly, the best way to impose the duty would be through federal legislation, which applies to all states, and which gives no state an advantage in the market for incorporations.

#### DExit is key to eliminating shareholder primacy

Adam Chodorow and James Lawrence 20. Jack E. Brown Professor of Law at the Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law at Arizona State University. Associate at Fennemore Craig, P.C., J.D. 2019, Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law at Arizona State University. "The Pull of Delaware: How Judges Have Undermined Nevada’s Efforts to Develop Its Own Corporate Law." Nevada Law Review, 20.2, 401-426.

III. Nevada’s Story

In 1991, Nevada sought to join the ranks of states that had rejected Unocal and Revlon117 by adopting Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 78.138.118 Nearly identical to the Massachusetts statute discussed above, NRS 78.138 permitted directors and officers of Nevada corporations to consider the interests of employees, customers, society as a whole, and the long-term interests of the corporation.119 Perhaps most important, Nevada’s constituency statute also plainly applied in the takeover context, noting that directors may consider whether “these interests [are] best served by the continued independence of the corporation.”120 The stated purpose of the statue was to modernize Nevada corporate law with regard to takeovers and to “encourage[] those wishing to acquire [Nevada] corporations to negotiate with the board of directors . . . before attempting to do so.”121 But despite these efforts to deviate from Delaware law, Nevada courts were reluctant to do so.

In Hilton Hotels Corp. v. ITT Corp., 122 the United States District Court for the District of Nevada relied extensively on Delaware case law to enjoin ITT’s use of defensive tactics in a takeover battle.123 In 1997, Hilton Hotels Corp. announced a $6.5 billion124 tender offer for the stock of Nevada-based ITT Corp.125 ITT sought to block Hilton’s acquisition by staggering the board126 so that only one-third of ITT’s board would be up for election at any annual shareholder meeting,127 thereby preventing Hilton from quickly gaining control of ITT’s board of directors.128 ITT moved to implement its plan without shareholder approval.129 Hilton sued to enjoin ITT from doing so, arguing ITT’s plan breached its directors’ fiduciary duties.130

Despite NRS 78.138, which explicitly applied to hostile acquisitions, the Hilton court began its analysis by noting that there was no on-point Nevada statutory or case law dealing with hostile takeovers or the ability of target boards to implement defensive measures.131 The court then turned to Delaware case law.132 The ITT board “argue[d] that Nevada does not follow Delaware case law [because NRS] [Section] 78.138 provides that a board, exercising its powers in good faith and with a[] view to the interests of the corporation can resist potential changes in control of a corporation based on the effect on constituencies other than the shareholders.”133 But the court interpreted Nevada’s constituency statute as consistent with the Delaware’s heightened standards: “Delaware case law merely clarifies the basic duties established by the Nevada statutes,” the court noted.134 “This Court will not eliminate the principles articulated in Unocal . . . and Revlon . . . without any indication from the Nevada Legislature . . . that that is the legislative intent.”135 The court permanently enjoined ITT’s defensive measures.136

A. The Nevada Legislature Responds

In response to Hilton Hotels Corp., the Nevada Legislature amended the state’s corporate law in 1999 to make explicit that Nevada does not follow Delaware case law.137 The legislative intent behind the amendments was to abrogate the Hilton court’s use of Delaware’s enhanced standards and “preserve[] the application of the business judgment rule even in takeover situations” for Nevada corporate boards.138 The Nevada Legislature created NRS 78.139, dealing specifically with takeovers.139 Much like the Maryland and Indiana anti takeover laws discussed above140 , NRS 78.139 precluded courts from reviewing director conduct with any greater scrutiny than the business judgment rule, even in takeover situations.141 The amendments also refined Nevada’s constituency statute by reinforcing the notion that corporate boards could appropriately resist takeover by considering non-shareholder interests and that neither Revlon nor Unocal apply in such cases. 142

#### Shareholder primacy causes extinction

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[[Begin Abstract]]

The purpose of the corporation is contested. The heart of the debate is whether corporations ought to maximize shareholder value, or rather balance shareholder gains against the welfare of other constituencies. Lawyers and policymakers alike commonly hold that most corporations rightly regard the interests of shareholders as their highest priority. Even after repeated challenges from scholars,1 high-profile statements from corporate executives,2 and the promise of ESG investments,3 the common view is that maximizing shareholder value is the law. And while other non-corporate legal fields such as labor law, tax law, consumer laws and environmental laws may strive to protect the interests of stakeholders, corporate law instructs officers and directors to prioritize shareholders.

The paper challenges this interpretation of corporate law. It argues that even without any changes to current regulation, a constituency-oriented obligation to consider the social and economic impact of corporate conduct on corporate stakeholders exists within current corporate law.

By analyzing the legal framework of corporate law in Israel, the US, and the UK it is possible to show that corporate law itself is capable of a broader interpretation; and that such interpretation—one that considers the impact of corporate behavior on social welfare—is necessary for a sustainable society. With unprecedented corporate power, and the threats it poses to the environment and to democratic principles, its reinforcement of structures of privilege and its role in deepening inequality, the interpretation of corporate law needs to re-conceptualize corporate purpose. After a series of global crises has exacerbated and exposed the frailty of our social structures, a new interpretation of corporate law is required, one which identifies the duty to consider the wellbeing of the corporate constituencies. We argue that this duty is already embodied in current regulation. The law of corporations in all three jurisdictions allows for such a reading.

[[End Abstract]]

Introduction

On February 24, 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion to Ukraine.4 A coordinated response by the West followed; many countries sent military and humanitarian aid,5 and a unified front of the U.S., the EU, and the UK implemented a series of economic sanctions against Russia. The U.S. banned Russian oil imports, and the UK joined in freezing the assets of Russia’s central bank and in seizing assets of the oligarchs of Putin’s inner circle. The objective of these sanctions was to cut Russian economy off from the global markets. Interestingly, the role of transnational corporations in Russia’s isolation was vital. After only a few days of war, large multinational corporations have pulled out of the Russian economy. Oil and gas companies such as BP, Shell, and ExxonMobil cut their investments in Russian energy companies;6 finance companies such as Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and PayPal suspended their business dealings in Russia;7 tech giants Samsung and Sony suspended shipments to Russia, and Apple has restricted its Apple Pay services.8 The most significant blow to Russian economy was its partial disconnection from SWIFT, the global messaging system for financial transactions. SWIFT is a non-state international cooperative of banks, linking more than 11,000 institutions in over 200 countries,9 founded as a member-owned cooperative society under Belgian law, and is controlled and owned by its members.10 While some central banks are also members of SWIFT, its governing structure guarantees that the control of the organization is proportional to the volume of usage of its services. As an organization comprised mostly of private banks, it is regarded as a “neutral third party” and in previous political crises, such as that of Iran in 2012, it was very late to respond to an international campaign pressing it to join the sanctions against Iran. In its attempt to stay neutral in 2012, SWIFT initially insisted that the system is “only a secure messaging service,” and that its activities fell “beyond the remit of current law.”11 A press release from February of 2012 by SWIFT, along the same lines, stated that it was “committed in maintaining its role as a neutral global financial communications network.”12 It wasn’t until the U.S. Senate Banking Committee proposed legislation to permit the sanctioning of SWIFT that it reluctantly joined the effort to cut off Iranian finance. On this occasion, however, SWIFT has joined the sanctions against Russia.

The significance of the private sector’s cooperation with the embargo on Russia in 2022, illustrates the extent to which corporate discretion and conduct impacts geopolitical, economic, and social issues. While the majority of transnational corporations chose to join the opposition against Russia’s aggression on this occasion, it seems that things might have turned out very differently had they acted only in accordance with their financial interests and refrained from acting on ethical grounds. In the past, more often than not, they turned a blind eye. The very same companies that withdrew from Russia have not only ignored, but have also, at times, benefitted from atrocities taking place in other parts of the world. Boeing, for instance, which suspended its operations in Russia in March of 2022,13 has made huge profits from the war in Yemen,14 a war that, according to the UN, has placed over 20 million people in need of humanitarian aid.15 Shell, quick to divest from Russian oil and gas companies, has been accused of complicity in horrific crimes committed by the Nigerian military in the 1990s.16 BP was responsible for the single largest environmental disaster ever, the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010.17 Other examples abound.18 For better or worse, corporate impact far exceeds an imagined neutral and detached marketplace.

It is our contention that law does not do enough to hold private power responsible for undermining human well-being. The reason, however, lies not in law itself, but in its cultural environment.19 This is true not only in the face of wars, a global pandemic, or the imminent climate crisis, but also in what may seem the most mundane of circumstances, that in fact shape our public sphere, communities, and lives.

Indeed, corporate power is everywhere. From Google, Amazon, and Meta, to Pfizer and Moderna, state regulators and legal scholars alike express growing concerns with the overwhelming power of corporations.20 But while countless articles and books are written on corporate excessive power, and while high-profile declarations by corporate leaders promise to “ensure a more inclusive prosperity” through corporate action,21 not much real change is in evidence. Corporations rarely consider the detrimental impact of their conduct on other constituencies and focus on share value as the (almost) exclusive measure of their success. The law of corporations, as currently understood, is failing to respond. We argue that the reason for this is that corporate culture pushes the interpretation of law towards an assumption of shareholder primacy. But that this is neither the only possible interpretation of the law, nor a desirable one.

The paper challenges the conservative, dominant, interpretation of corporate law in the U.S., the UK, and Israel. It argues that the multifold, and growing, power of corporations, and the threats it poses to democratic principles and environmental issues, its reinforcement of structures of privilege and its role in deepening inequality, mandates the adoption of a different, constituency-oriented, reading of the law. We will show that the law in all three jurisdictions already allows for such a reading and argue that adopting a constituency-oriented interpretation reflects an understanding of the corporate entity which is better fitted for today’s challenges.

The paper proceeds as follows. It starts, in the first part, with a depiction of the growing corporate power, through the lens of a series of global crises that have both exacerbated and exposed much of the frailty of our social structures; it then moves to discuss the changing equilibrium between corporations and states, mainly through privatization in its many forms; the last section of the first part focuses on the rise of the CSR discourse and the changing social expectations from corporations, which have led, in part, to growing doubts about the dominant paradigm of shareholder value maximization. Special attention will be devoted to the web platform corporations, the global impact of which on people’s lives has become unparalleled. The purpose of this part is to present the overwhelming increase of corporate power in the past few decades, in both magnitude and reach. This, we argue, mandates re-thinking the role of corporations that can be facilitated through a broader reading of corporate law.

The most urgent change, we believe, is to re-conceptualize corporate purpose. Corporations are not neutral economic spheres but social institutions, embedded within society. This must lead to recognizing their legal responsibility. The integration of a standard of responsibility into corporate regulation will naturally result in the rejection of the shareholder primacy norm as a legal imperative.

We will not engage with the economic case for rejecting the shareholder primacy norm. Rather, we will build on it, and focus our attention on highlighting the urgency of pushing back on corporate power by re-interpreting current law, and re-conceptualizing corporate purpose. We show that this transformation does not require any legislative amendments, as current law already includes a latent requirement for corporate responsibility and already allows for a broader reading of corporate purpose. What needs to change is the doctrines that coddle corporate interests.

The second part of the paper will analyze the legal status of corporations in Israel, the UK and the U.S. It will show that while much has been written about the purpose of the corporation as more than just a vehicle to enable investment or produce profits, and while the laws prescribing its status allow for a broader understanding than the shareholder primacy norm, these broader interpretations have not been applied.

Against this backdrop, the third part of the paper will offer a different perspective on corporate law. Its essence is a re-conceptualization of the place of corporations in society, one that denies their standing as a private entity operating in an allegedly neutral economic sphere, but rather highlights their status as socio-economic enterprises, inseparable from the broader social context in which they operate.

I. Corporate Power

In 1995, when the Israeli Corporate Law Reform bill was introduced in Parliament, Larry Page and Sergey Brin had only just met, and the Google corporation was, at best, a vague idea. Facebook was founded as an open social network just two months prior to the enactment of the UK Companies Act of 2006, and Apple’s iPhone had not yet been released. The world we live in today, in which the total market value of the five big tech companies is at 7 trillion USD,22 is different from any world the legislators of both company laws could have even imagined. The transformation in corporate power, its ubiquity and countless manifestations, translates into an ever-growing impact on both global and local social realities. Corporate power, and its potential to cause harm, require a more suitable legal perception of the corporate entity. Dethroning the shareholder primacy paradigm as the overarching interpretive norm of corporate law is a necessary first step, as it impedes such change.

Corporate power, however, is only one aspect of the new global reality. The changing equilibrium between transnational corporations and states should be considered as well, as it exposes the diminishing power of people around the world to take part in shaping their own environment. The globalization process, which in many ways was only emerging when the Israeli corporate law reform bill was introduced, played a crucial role in these two parallel processes: on one hand, the boosting of corporate power—legally, economically and politically;23 and on the other hand, the retreat of the state, and the erosion of its sovereignty in shaping independent socio-economic policies, especially in fiscal and monetary aspects, and, in turn, in terms of the robustness of welfare policies.24 Globalization affects the power balance between corporations and governments in various ways: first, the global mobility of corporations induces a “race to the bottom,” reflected in tax breaks and trade agreements, intended to draw corporate investment. Corporate global mobility also allows corporations to make use of tax havens and financial secrecy agreements and regulations. Both practices, in turn, reduce tax revenues for hosting states, and diminish the scale and quality of the social services it can offer.25 In addition, aggressive tax planning allows further wealth accumulation by corporations, fortifying their economic power. This too works in their favor vis-à-vis states. Finally, trade agreements and regulatory contracts that corporations take a major role in drafting, and which are only loosely overseen by parliaments, leads to light, nontransparent regulation that usually serves the interests of capital, rather than those of the public.26

Another aspect of the effects of globalization on the erosion in state sovereignty is the impact of international institutions, such as the world bank and the IMF on the economic policies of many states. These have advanced a neoliberal agenda that has led many poor countries to eliminate trade barriers, as well as reducing subsidies in support of their local agriculture or industry. The direct beneficiaries were banks and transnational corporations.27

Yet another aspect of the weakening of the state is the privatization of public services. Under the neoliberal philosophy, “government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem,” as President Reagan famously declared.28 The implications are setting the “small government” as an objective, strengthening the private sector, and the recommodifications of goods and services. The culmination of this process is the privatization of services that are traditionally thought of as distinctively public, such as defense, incarceration, and policing.29 The assumption of superior private efficiency, and the quest for international economic competitiveness are important contributors to the retreat of the state from a variety of economic activities. The natural beneficiaries are corporations, who correspondingly acquire a more central position in the social and economic sphere.

The implications of these processes for the public interest are not encouraging. The IMF, in itself an agent of globalization for many years, published in 2017 a comprehensive study concluding that the mobility of capital and labor, coupled with the small government agenda, are a major cause of the rapid growth in inequality.30 Research also shows that when governments are more involved in public services, inequality decreases, and economic growth is enhanced.

One of the most significant aspects of corporate dominance is the growth of the tech platform giants (Google, Meta, Apple, Amazon, etc.), who have become, in the past two decades or so, major actors in the global economy. The “Big Data” age, and the unprecedented monitoring of every aspect of human activity, has turned cyberspace into the most salient locus of the changing equilibrium between states and corporations. The platform corporations have become the gate keepers of the vast content available on the web. Through search engines, social networks, e-commerce and more, these platform corporations control, via nontransparent algorithms, the way information is presented, used, interpreted, and exposed to billions of users around the world. Their advantage in dictating the terms of agreement with individual clients, and the ability to take down, promote or block content or users, endows the platform corporations with de facto control over knowledge, its hierarchy, its traffic, focus, and ultimately over public opinion, and its perception of reality—actual or imagined.31

Under the current interpretation of corporate law, these companies strive to maximize shareholder value, which often leads to harmful business strategies affecting personal autonomy, democracy, mental wellbeing, etc.32 An example is Facebook’s exploitation of user information without their consent or knowledge in the Cambridge Analytica scandal to support Trump’s presidential campaign.33 In this sense, the power of these corporations transcends that of governments, and reflects the potential danger they pose to human rights and wellbeing. This new reality challenges the classic theory that considers the state as the major threat in this regard.

It is not surprising, therefore, that new attempts to better regulate these aspects of private power—in both antitrust and privacy34—are slowly becoming more common. As we will argue below, however, these specific regulatory additions are not enough. What is required instead is a new interpretive paradigm for corporate law—one that is not guided by the shareholder primacy norm but rather takes into account the broad implications of corporate conduct on society at large.35

We have thus far described the shift in power relations between states and corporations, especially as a result of the globalization and privatization processes, and with a focus on the unique position of platform corporations as significant agents of this change. These have resulted in the rise of the corporate social responsibility movement and the changing expectations from corporations.

Since the end of the 1990s and especially following the uncovering of harmful practices by transnational corporations, the discussion of corporate social responsibility has made progress, especially among civil society organizations, but also among the general public. Stakeholder discourse is becoming more demanding and various civil-society campaigns are trying to rein in corporate conduct. As the private sphere expands into the public domain, the interest of the public in the private sphere grows. This includes a deeper scrutiny of harmful corporate practices, production conditions, employment terms, detrimental impact on the climate and human rights breaches. Civil society organizations push corporations to meet higher normative standards. Using consumer boycotts, urging divestments, fair trade campaigns, class actions, etc., these demands may resonate in corporate boardrooms.36

Another aspect of the same phenomenon is the “business and human rights” discourse that has also developed in recent years with an impact on social expectations from corporations. The business and human rights movement argues that human rights law, mostly restricted to states, should be extended to transnational corporations.37 Its efforts are bearing fruit, and in 2011, the UN Human Rights council published guiding principles on Business and Human Rights, asserting that corporations, in addition to states, must also respect human rights.38 While this is not a legally binding document, the UN principles enjoy wide support from leading corporations as well. In 2019, the UN Human Rights Council issued a draft-treaty aimed specifically at corporations in relation to human rights.39 While there is still a long way to go before, and if, it is ratified, the draft is yet another signal for the growing understanding that private power must be restrained, and that managing the company to maximize shareholder value is no longer viable (if indeed it ever was).

In response, corporations themselves and especially those in the public eye, have started to voluntarily adopt a range of socially responsible practices,40 which in turn further stimulated social expectations of responsible behavior. The academic managerial discourse, especially in Europe,41 has also begun to focus more on questions of business ethics, corporate social responsibility, sustainability, and business-and-community relations, reflecting a shift from the contractual-corporate paradigm to a stakeholder model. It seems fair to say, then, the debate today no longer questions the necessity of corporate social responsibility, but rather considers its proper scope.

As will be shown below, however, these changes have not permeated into law itself, or, more accurately, have not informed a broader interpretation of equivocal legal concepts. Corporate and legal actors throughout are still prioritizing shareholder value.42

The first part of the paper focused on the profound transformation in the power relations between states and corporations, showing that globalization, privatization, and the rise of platform corporations have brought about an urgent need to review the overarching principles that inform corporate purpose. A change in public opinion, more aware of the problems of the unregulated power of large corporations and its potential to cause harm, have made possible a normative shift in which corporate social responsibility is now expected. In terms of law, this shift should translate into a new perception of corporate purpose.

It is impossible to discuss the role of corporations in society without mentioning the crises the world has gone through over the past few years— some of which are linked directly to corporate conduct. Most urgent is the climate crisis, defined by the UN as the “defining crisis of our time.”43 Human activity, mostly carried out by corporations, is responsible for the emission of greenhouse gas into the atmosphere. Mining, production, and use of coal, oil and gas releases billions of tons of CO2 causing an unprecedented, and dangerous, rise in temperatures. The consequences are, and will become, devastating.44 The arctic is melting, causing sea levels to rise, threatening the flooding of inhabited lands and cities across the globe; extreme weather conditions, natural disasters and non-perishable human trash lead to soil degradation and desertification. Hyper consumerism leads to reckless deforestation. Business as usual has, literally, devastating implications. However, the fossil fuel industry is still on course to invest billions of dollars into new infrastructure, and to further extract coal, oil and natural gas in both Europe and North America.45 In Europe, it was only following the Russian invasion to Ukraine in February of 2022 that the Nord stream project, owned and led by a consortium of European energy companies, was re-considered. The Nord Stream gas pipeline, described as a climate disaster,46 is one of the largest energy infrastructures in Europe. In addition to its detrimental effect on gas emissions when put to use by consumers, it is also putting the Baltic ecosystem in danger.47 Energy corporations are making huge profits while we edge closer to an ecological disaster. A 2019 study shows that only twenty corporations are responsible for 35% of the total CO2 emissions since 1965, when the dangers of fossil fuel were already known.48

Corporations are accelerating the climate crisis by blocking regulatory initiatives. The hyper consumerist culture corporations strive to foster and spread drives societies across the globe to an excessive use of natural resources. The paradigm of maximizing shareholder value and short-term growth leads these corporations to externalize the costs to society and the environment. As the next part will show, current law allows a much-needed paradigm change. It is up to legal actors to apply a different interpretation to the law, one that corresponds better to the challenges.

### 1NC

#### Regulatory Analysis CP.

#### The United States federal government should assemble and consult a Congressional Office of Regulatory Analysis over [removing the Agricultural Fair Practices Act's disclaimer clause, requiring good faith bargaining between distributors and antitrust-exempt farmworker collectives].

#### That solves the case and creates a regulatory model to break down polarization.

Jennifer Nou 25. Ruth Wyatt Rosenson Professor of Law at the University of Chicago Law School. “Transcending Partisanship in Regulatory Reform.” The Regulatory Review. April 23, 2025. https://www.theregreview.org/2025/04/23/nou-transcending-partisanship-in-regulatory-reform/

One explanation for regulatory reform’s shortcomings is the fraught nature of the enterprise. In Graham’s view, it has long been too polarized: Republicans are perceived to tout only deregulation and Democrats the opposite. A major theme of Graham’s account, however, is that political party is not destiny. Graham astutely points to many instances of Republican administrations pursuing social regulation and Democratic administrations demanding deregulation. For example, he highlights the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s efforts to phase out ozone depleting chemicals during the Reagan Administration and President Bill Clinton’s efforts to liberalize financial markets.

4

Another central lesson of the book is the importance of matching reformist ambitions with the resources necessary to carry them out. Some of the most existential challenges to OIRA early in its history, for example, arose mostly because it lacked capacity. According to Graham, with only 90 staff members in the 1980s, OIRA simply could not engage in regulatory review as well as evaluate information collection requests as required by Congress. As a result, OIRA had to “triage” without any clear standards for how to do so. The blowback from Congress prompted several reforms, such as increased disclosure and Senate confirmation of OIRA’s administrator. Even though these reforms may have been ultimately salutary, they highlighted the perils of reforms without resources.

On this theme, Graham effectively highlights the stakes of the U.S. Supreme Court’s recent efforts to shift regulatory policymaking from the President to Congress. The Court’s “major questions doctrine,” for example, calls for Congress to make the most important regulatory decisions absent clear delegations to the executive branch. Threats to revive the nondelegation doctrine similarly call for legislators to set regulatory policies, leaving only details and fact-finding for agencies. Graham points out, however, that for Congress to take on this role, it must have the appropriate institutions and capacity.

To this end, Graham proposes a Congressional Office of Regulatory Analysis (CORA), which would analyze new regulatory legislation much as the Congressional Budget Office analyzes the budgetary impacts of bills. CORA would analyze the potential benefits, costs, and distributive impacts of a bill before congressional members cast their votes. Presumably this task would become more tractable as Congress legislates with increasingly detailed and specific mandates. Graham points out, however, that CORA must be adequately staffed for such a task. Otherwise, the risk is that regulatory policy choices are made without the analysis necessary for sound decision-making.

#### Extinction.

Gro Brundtland 20. First woman Prime Minister of Norway and former Director-General of the World Health Organization, leading advocate on global preparedness for pandemics, put sustainable development on the international agenda; The Elders, “Nationalism and partisan politics make it harder to tackle the existential threats to humanity,” https://theelders.org/news/nationalism-and-partisan-politics-make-it-harder-tackle-existential-threats-humanity

The strange new reality of Covid-19 is forcing huge changes on all of us, some of which may become permanent features of how we live, work and organise our societies.

We are all being called upon to become more flexible, more adept with technology and more collaborative across borders and time zones.

I would like to commend the organisers of this Virtual People’s Forum, particularly the UN 2020 Partnership and Together First, for their ambition and dedication in bringing all of us speakers together.

2020 was always going to be an important year for those of us who are committed to the values and institutions of multilateralism. The year marks the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the detonation of the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the creation of the United Nations.

These interconnected anniversaries highlight the need for sustained vigilance to protect global peace, in the knowledge of the devastating consequences of tyranny, war and weapons of mass destruction.

But today the whole world faces a threat as deadly as any arsenal, and which makes a mockery of any pretentions to national “greatness” or superiority over others.

Covid-19 knows no borders and does not respect national sovereignty. The pandemic is leaving a devastating cost; first and foremost in human lives, but also in terms of economic growth, political momentum and social inequality.

It has exposed the interconnected nature of global risks, and the extent to which even well-resourced health systems can be rapidly overwhelmed when crises hit.

A global crisis demands a global response. Yet the virus has struck at a time when the multilateral system was already subject to a sustained and targeted assault. This has made it harder for leaders and institutions to respond effectively and save lives, as we can see with the failure thus far of the UN Security Council to agree a resolution in support of the Secretary-General’s call for a global Covid-19 ceasefire.

I served as the Director-General of the World Health Organisation during the SARS crisis in 2002-3. This means I am very conscious of the importance of multilateral cooperation in tackling pandemics, and of the difficulties that multilateral institutions, including the WHO, face in persuading member states to respond in the global interest to such threats.

It is essential that countries support the work of the WHO and provide it with the necessary funding to carry out its work, including through implementing the recommendations of the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board.

The WHO should be enabled to work on behalf of the entire world, acting solely on the best available scientific and medical evidence.

The virus will not be overcome unless states work together, pooling resources and expertise to strengthen health systems, develop an effective vaccine, protect health workers and provide the necessary care to all who need it in society, including vulnerable groups such as refugees, migrants, the elderly and infirm.

For developed countries, this responsibility extends to supporting poorer states with humanitarian aid, debt relief and political counsel via the mechanisms of the UN, G20, World Bank and other international fora.

This network of international covenants and institutions, agreed and constructed since the end of the Second World War with the United Nations at its core, is far from perfect.

There are strong arguments for reviewing and reforming institutions and processes, particularly so the multilateral system better reflects the diversity of the human family and gives a voice to women, young people and other marginalised groups in society.

But it has nevertheless decisively supported the pursuit of peace, security and the protection of human rights, as well as economic and social improvements, around the globe, for over seven decades.

This is why it is so important now, in the UN’s 75th anniversary year and in the face of this deadly pandemic, for member states and global citizens to recommit themselves to the values of the UN Charter.

The siren songs of isolationism and populist nationalism need to be countered with a strong global chorus in support of cooperation, justice and human rights.

Narrow nationalism and partisan politics not only hamper an effective response to Covid-19, they also make it harder for the world to collectively tackle the existential threats that will continue even after this pandemic abates, in particular climate change and nuclear weapons.

### 1NC

#### Rates DA.

#### Prices are lowering and future rate cuts are almost guaranteed.

Scott Kanowsky 1/14. Reporter for Investing.com. “Wells Fargo Sees One More Rate Cut Coming Before Powell’s Fed Chair Term Ends.” 1/14/26. https://www.investing.com/news/economy-news/wells-fargo-sees-one-more-rate-cut-coming-before-powells-fed-chair-term-ends-4447243

In a note to clients, the strategists predicted that a 25-basis point drawdown would come before Powell steps down, finishing an eight-year run at the helm of the world’s most influence central bank.

Another equally-sized rate reduction is then projected to be rolled out this summer, with a new Chair at the head of the Fed’s Board of Governors.

The comments from Wells Fargo come after the Trump administration launched a criminal investigation into Powell, a move the Fed Chair said was a "pretext" to sway interest rate policy. President Donald Trump has frequently badgered and criticized Powell and the Fed for not aggressively cutting rates, even after the central bank rolled out multiple drawdowns last year in a bid to support a weakening labor market.

Concerns around the Fed’s ability to set interest rates free of political influence, long seen as a bedrock feature of the American financial system, have been raised following the start of the investigation into Powell.

Some investors have wondered whether Trump will also look to appoint a loyalist as Powell’s replacement.

Against this backdrop, uncertainty has clouded over the path ahead for Fed interest rates. According to CME FedWatch, the central bank is tipped to keep rates steady at its next meeting later this month, but unveil two more cuts some time this year. When exactly those reductions would be announced remains unclear, however.

"The broader FOMC has been divided in recent months about the appropriate stance of monetary policy, while the recent Department of Justice subpoenas to the central bank further increase the scrutiny and pressure on U.S. monetary policymakers," the Wells Fargo analysts said.

They added that the most recent labor data "continue to point to a jobs market that is modestly on the wrong side of full employment," referring to one of the Fed’s two core mandates, along with maintaining price stability.

Other figures have also pointed to a softening labor picture, with employers are neither hiring nor firing workers. Inflation data earlier this week, meanwhile, showed underlying price growth easing in December.

#### The plan flips it. That controls the direction of economic crises.

Joshua Cova 24. Postdoctoral researcher at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies. "On industrial relations and inflation: a long-term perspective." *European Review of Labour and Research*, 30.3, 278-284.

Introduction

In most advanced capitalist democracies, the years 2021–2023 will be remembered as a period marked by a resurgence of inflation, an economic phenomenon that, for many countries, had long been largely dormant. Although there seems to be little doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic’s supply chain shocks and Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine and the ensuing increases in food and energy prices constitute the exogenous shocks that increased inflation for most countries in 2021–2023 it is clear that, on the whole, the severity of inflation is – and has been historically – also determined by country-specific dynamics. Explanations of the causes and solutions of this recent bout of inflation have proven, predictably, to be contentious. Policy-makers and researchers at the time were divided on whether this recent inflationary episode can be construed as transitory and therefore dependent on a combination of unique factors that may come to pass, or whether, on the contrary, the inflation of 2021–2023 bears the hallmarks of a caesura in global economic dynamics and might instead presage a kind of ‘permanent inflation’, in which central banks’ target of a 2 per cent inflation rate becomes increasingly untenable.1 Rising inflation rates have also sparked heated discussions regarding the extent to which supply-side or demand-side variables are the more likely culprits with regard to price increases, and whether solutions to alleviate price and cost-of-living pressures should, as a consequence, lean towards supply-side or demand-side measures. This article, by adopting a long-term perspective, examines the relationship between industrial relations and inflation in advanced industrialised economies.

In this article, we focus on one commonly cited reason for progressively higher inflation rates, namely the power of organised labour in demanding expansionary wage policies, which can then lead to higher inflation. Whether inflationary dynamics remain entrenched in an economy, however, is also contingent on the power of organised labour and, in a time of real wage stagnation and diminished labour power, it stands to reason that organised labour has lost its institutional ability to entrench wage growth systematically. It is within this context that we re-examine the long-term relationship between industrial relations indicators and the onset of inflation. It is not only the recent wave of double-digit inflation rates that motivate us to analyse the relationship between industrial relations and inflation differentials through a historical lens, but it is also the fact that across a number of advanced economies, social actors have shown signs of an institutional revival. A wave of often successful strikes in the United States and the United Kingdom, the supposed paragons of liberal market economics, indicate that industrial relations and collective bargaining institutions might perhaps play a more important role in mitigating the incidence of cost-of-living crises in the near future (Minchin, 2024; Visser, 2024). It is worth noting that industrial action in the past years has affected not only different countries, but also different sectors, as strikes concerning rising cost-of-living expenses have affected the generally more unionised public sector (for example, health care and education), as well as the private sector. Understanding the ways in which industrial relations have or have not contributed to higher inflation rates in leading economies thus seems to be of significant contemporary relevance, too.

Our findings can be inserted within two distinct academic research strands. First, we aim to address the voluminous political economy research on the institutional supply-side determinants of inflation. Broadly speaking, economists have argued that strong labour market institutions, usually operationalised by high unionisation, high collective bargaining coverage rates and strong employment protection legislation, lead to greater wage resistance and a stronger persistence of inflationary dynamics in the event of an inflationary shock. While our statistical analyses do not confute this claim, they aim to qualify it by illustrating empirically that the relationship between industrial relations institutions and the entrenchment of inflation varies considerably not only between countries but also, crucially, over time. This constitutes an aspect of the study of industrial relations indicators and inflation that we argue has been insufficiently addressed in existing research. In addition to trying to enrichen our understanding of the relationship between industrial relations indicators and inflation differentials, we aim to speak to the once vibrant debate in economic sociology, which conceptualised inflation as a fundamentally distributional problem. This research tradition underlined the fact that inflationary outcomes are not only the result of distinct political choices, but are also symptomatic of changing relations between capital and labour.

A caveat is in order: this article does not seek to investigate the determinants of inflation. This topic has been covered extensively by economic researchers across various fields, who have pointed to a wide variety of explanations, from trade integration to fiscal policy. Instead, we shall focus on the relationship between indicators of workers’ strength and inflation differentials, and how this relationship has evolved over time.

We aim to contribute to the literature on the labour market-institutional determinants of inflation by arguing that analyses of the relationship between industrial relations and inflation need to do more to incorporate a temporal dimension. Analyses that examine the effects of industrial relations systems on inflation differentials typically focus on a broad period, which commonly ranges from the 1960s and 1970s to the early 2000s. They therefore do not take into consideration the changing impact that industrial relations indicators have had on inflationary growth over time. This, we argue, overstates the negative effect of strong industrial relations indicators on the persistence of inflation. In our statistical analyses, we show that the mediating role that industrial relations play in influencing the effects of an exogenous shock on higher consumer prices has been subject to significant changes over time. In short, our empirical approach thus aims to take time more seriously.

We begin by employing a ‘standard’ time-series cross-sectional analysis. Like much of the existing literature in the field, we also find that by taking in the longue durée a positive relationship does indeed show up between strong industrial relations and protective labour markets and inflation growth. When segmenting the relationship over time by means of different statistical estimation techniques, however, we find that the power of industrial relations institutions has progressively declined when it comes to entrenching inflationary growth. These empirical analyses indicate that labour market institutions have progressively lost the institutional power needed to translate exogenous shocks into persistent inflation.

Our argument, in brief, is that while in the 1970s inflationary dynamics were affected by the strength of industrial relations, the progressive erosion of collective bargaining institutions and the systematic decline of union membership rates have changed the relationship between social actors and inflation rates significantly. This also has important implications for policy-makers. In fact, our study indicates that drastic monetary tightening, designed to attenuate the effects of nominal wages and prevent possible wage-price spirals, may, in a time of weaker social actors, only have a partial effect in addressing the causes of inflation.

Inflation as a distributional conflict between capital and labour

While in recent decades, researchers have construed inflation mainly in monetarist or fiscal terms, research from the field of economic sociology, historically, has understood inflation as a fundamentally distributional problem, which at its core concerns the power relations between employers and organised labour (Goldthorpe, 1978; Rowthorn, 1977; Tarling and Wilkinson, 1977). According to this view, the primary factor influencing the inflation rate lies in the balance of power between workers and capital. It is therefore a result of the conflict between capital and labour for the distribution of economic output. When labour is empowered, it can demand higher wages, which in turn push prices upward, which contributes to inflation through a wage-price spiral. Conversely, when the working class lacks power, wages tend to stagnate, resulting in a lower inflation rate, which benefits capital. Specifically, the nexus that exists between workers’ power and inflation hinges on two separate elements: structural power and associational power (Hung and Thompson, 2016; Schmalz et al., 2018; Wright, 2000). Structural power denotes the existence of favourable conditions in the labour market, which allow workers to bargain for higher wages from a position of strength. The tight labour markets, with low unemployment and high job vacancy rates, which characterised advanced capitalist democracies in the post-war era are examples of strong structural power; in other words, the economic power wielded by workers was considerable. Conversely, associational power denotes the organisational power that trade unions and collective bargaining institutions wield in an economy and is indicative of the institutional ability of labour market institutions to push their wage demands through. This power is typically measured by unionisation and collective bargaining coverage rates, along with the degree of centralisation and coordination within the wage-setting process.

As is well known, workers’ structural and associational power reached an all-time high during the post-war era. During that time, strong labour market institutions helped to undergird the post-war Fordist wage-led growth model. This model was based on the following, theoretically self-reinforcing, mechanism: consumption drove up demand, which in turn increased incomes. Firms, in order to keep up with higher wage demands, needed to become more productive and invest more. This virtuous cycle of Keynesian demand management was brought down by stagflation, which brought to light the endogenous problems in the post-war wage-led growth model. While a full employment regime, strong social actors and high wage-setting centralisation were undoubtedly beneficial for workers, labour discipline progressively broke down as median incomes grew. Prices grew more than productivity and, as already posited by Polish economist Michał Kalecki in a prescient paper written in 1943, economies became subject to destructive wage-price spirals. Thus, organised labour’s increasing wage demands resulted in a ‘pay explosion’ that progressively squeezed capital profits (Arrighi, 2009).

The inflation trajectories in most advanced capitalist democracies exhibited – as confirmed by Bai and Perron’s (1998) statistical test for the existence of structural breaks (Figure 1) – a clear inflection point in the late 1970s. Indeed, the subsequent period saw a significant decrease in inflation rates, as well as lower macroeconomic volatility for most advanced economies. This period has been termed the ‘Great Moderation’. Existing scholarship has provided a variety of reasons for this transformation. Broadly speaking, they point to good policy or to structural reasons as explanations (Bernanke, 2004). Researchers in the former camp have underscored the fact that monetary policy and the decision to delegate interest rate setting power to independent and conservative central banks, which supposedly are not subject to the same ‘time inconsistency’ problems as elected officials and appear to be better suited to anchoring inflationary expectations, have been a key policy development in taming inflationary growth (Galí and Gambetti, 2009; Rogoff, 1985).

[[Figure Omitted]]

This view is not without its critics, however. Indeed, other researchers have focused on structural elements, over which domestic policy can have limited control. They have noted that since the 1970s supply-side shocks in food and energy have become less severe (Stock and Watson, 2003). Thus, overdependence on oil and OPEC-imposed prices have significantly reduced across advanced industrialised economies, as countries have increasingly diversified their energy supply bases, tapping into alternative energy sources, such as natural gas, or developing and expanding domestic energy production (such as renewable energy or fracking). Another set of explanations has prioritised the analysis of labour market dynamics over monetary explanations as the reason for lower inflation. Thus, according to Perry and Cline (2016), decreasing wage shares, lower wage costs and weaker social actors, in the form of lower collective bargaining coverage and lower unionisation rates, have been conducive to moderating wage demands and have thus led to a period of sustained inflationary moderation. Moreover, the combination of lower import prices, stemming from the opening up of national markets, and intensified international competition has contributed to reducing inflation rates in most advanced industrialised economies. The impact of globalisation on inflation reduction becomes evident when considering the significant offshoring of supply chains and utilisation of foreign labour, which have effectively lowered operating costs and prices for firms (Auer and Fischer, 2010). While the growing economic and financial interdependence between economies has led to increasingly synchronised inflation cycles, it has also made countries more susceptible to supply-side shocks (Figure 2) (Ferguson and Storm, 2023).

[[Figure Omitted]]

Irrespective of what interpretation one favours in explaining the onset of the period termed the ‘Great Moderation’, it is incontrovertible that the post-1970s period has coincided with a progressive (economic) liberalisation of the labour market, weakening social actors and hollowing out labour market institutions across different types of market economy (Baccaro and Howell, 2017). International organisations such as the IMF and the OECD began to argue in their policy recommendations (for example, the OECD’s Jobs Strategy or the IMF’s Conditionality plans) that liberalised (deregulated) labour markets were better able to achieve economic growth. These recommendations also had a profound impact on the direction of European labour market reforms (Dostal, 2004). The question of which labour market institutions and industrial relations systems are more capable of bringing down inflation rates has also attracted significant scholarly attention. Bowdler and Nunziata (2007), in their analysis of the relationship between union density rates and inflation, thus found that higher unionisation rates put upward pressure on inflation. When controlling for wage-setting centralisation they find that the more centralised a country’s wage-setting system, the more attenuated the effect of trade union density on raising inflation. Corporatist labour market institutions can thus moderate union demands for higher wages. In their empirical analysis, they also found evidence that stronger employment protection is associated with higher inflation. Other researchers have argued that the effect of extensive wage-setting coordination on lowering inflation becomes stronger the more independent a country’s central bank is (Cukierman and Lippi, 1999). Moreover, according to Hall and Franzese (1998), the more coordinated and centralised the wage-bargaining process is, the more responsive wage-setters will be to signals from an independent central bank, and thus the less likely it is that the central bank will have to resort to restrictive monetary policies that would increase unemployment. In other words, the effect of an independent central bank on unemployment is moderated by the extent of wage bargaining coordination in a country.

In a more recent analysis, Jaumotte and Morsy (2012) illustrate, based on a panel dataset of eurozone countries, that high employment protection, intermediate wage-setting coordination and high union density increase the persistence of inflation. Similarly, Hung and Thompson (2016) find empirical evidence that inflation is connected to the power distribution between labour and capital, and establish, through a panel data analysis, that there is a positive relationship between the wage share and unionisation, on the one hand, and rising inflation, on the other. In the literature, the causal mechanism that often links labour market institutions to higher inflation rates is a ‘second-round’ effect, which takes the form of a wage-price spiral. In a wage-price spiral higher inflation leads to higher wage growth, which then leads to higher prices, which then leads to higher wages. On this account, social actors, in an effort to catch up with rising prices, up their nominal wage demands. As already noted by Kalecki (1943), social actors negotiate on nominal wage increases because real wages are structurally determined by the pricing power of firms and existing market power relations. Nevertheless, empirical evidence for the historical existence of wage-price spirals has been mixed. While Lucotte and Pradines-Jobet (2023) argue, by using a vector autoregression (VAR) estimation strategy, that higher unionisation rates and wage indexation arrangements are linked to greater inflationary persistence in the aftermath of a price shock, a 2022 analysis conducted by the IMF (Alvarez et al., 2022) found scarce historical evidence for the existence of wage-price spirals. In other words, the acceleration of nominal wage growth does not necessarily lead to changes in inflation rates. In an analysis of US labour market data during the recent inflationary episode, Domash and Summers (2022) conclude that for the most part there is no statistically significant effect of wage growth on the lagged value of inflation. This would indicate that, at least in the recent past in the United States, inflation has been a poor predictor of price growth. The reason US wage growth has not kept up with rising cost-of-living indicators has also been attributed, among other things, to workers’ declining power in the US economy (Stansbury and Summers, 2020). This brings back the question of whether it makes sense to compare the inflationary period of the early 2020s to the 1970s, a time in which social actors’ labour market power was significantly higher than it is today. As Storm (2022) concluded, ‘drawing historical parallels between the current inflation and the stagflation of the 1970s is not helpful; unlike in the 1970s and after decades of labour market deregulation and union bashing, […] workers are relatively powerless and incapable of protecting their real wages in this inflationary era’. This is further supported by comparing the varying levels of industrial action between the two time periods. Indeed, according to the UK Office of National Statistics (ONS), while in the 1970s the average number of working days lost due to industrial action was over 12 million a year, the figure for 2022–2023 was only 2.5 million.2 While this figure marks an increase compared with the average days lost due to industrial action in the preceding two decades (which averaged 570,000), it is low compared with the 1970s where the average annual growth in the UK consumer price index corresponded to 12.5 per cent and the average days lost to industrial action were in the millions.

The recent inflationary spike of 2021–2023 has rekindled discussions on the drivers of persistent inflation. Among many other factors, policy-makers and analysts have been concerned that the higher energy and food prices caused by a combination of exogenous supply shocks might become entrenched in the economy through wage-price spirals. As central banks have sought to apply monetarist solutions to inflationary developments by raising the interest rates, policy-makers’ focus has also been on wage policies and the labour market (Cova, 2023). Thus, Philip Lane, chief economist of the European Central Bank, warned that ‘wage inflation will be a primary driver of price inflation over the next several years’,3 and Andrew Bailey, Governor of the Bank of England, cautioned workers to stop demanding higher pay.4 Economists have also noted that low unemployment does not bode well for taming inflationary pressures. In an NBER publication, Domash and Summers (2022) found evidence that high job vacancies/quit rates are associated with higher wage inflation. Contrary to these explanations, however, a novel and innovative understanding of the 2021–2023 inflationary spike has emerged, namely sellers’ inflation. This explanation identifies corporations that exploit supply chain bottlenecks as the main culprits with regard to persistent inflation. A range of empirical analyses that examined the recent increase in inflation have confirmed that, at a time of widespread income stagnation, there is growing evidence that corporate profits and price mark-ups have been driving up inflation rather than wage-price spirals (Matamoros, 2023; Weber and Wasner, 2023). To be sure, while wage-price spirals always constitute a theoretical possibility, the entrenchment phase of inflation is not a necessary condition for inflation, but rather hinges on the institutional strength of organised power in the economy.

The limits of monetary policy

As is well known, the textbook monetary response to an overheated economy experiencing significant price increases is to raise interest rates. Monetary policy in the form of interest rate hikes is aimed at reducing the money supply, making borrowing more expensive and ‘cooling down’ the economy by reducing aggregate demand. Resort to monetary policy in an effort to intervene on the demand side might prove an ineffective instrument, however, if inflation is driven primarily by external supply-side factors, which are beyond the control of domestic demand-side policy solutions. Nevertheless, once inflation started increasing significantly towards the end of 2022, central banks reached for the interest rate lever as a tried and tested method of cutting inflation. At the time of writing (May, 2024), the ECB’s deposit interest rate, at 4 per cent, is at the highest level in the bank’s history. This is a notable departure from the recent years of negative interest rates. Key to the decision on whether to raise interest rates is the development of national wage dynamics, which obviously also depends on the underlying institutional strength of organised labour. Thus, for example, the ECB in its decision to maintain its interest rate policy unchanged in March 2024 cited sustained wage growth and lower labour productivity as a contributing factor.5

#### Uncontrolled economic crises ensure extinction thru nuclear use, exotic weapons, and societal reseilience.

John Braithwaite 24. The Australian National University, Acton Simple Solutions to Complex Catastrophes, Sustainable Development. Chapter 2 “Rapid Cascades, Coupled Crises”. Chapter Open Access First Online: 27 February 2024 pp 9–49. Accessed via Emory Libraries.

Complexity of risk is something modernity accelerates. So is coupling of risk from one kind of crisis to another kind, and speed in the globalization of crises. Crises today cascade faster into one another. This is true of economic and ecological crises, the globalization of disease, and security crises. Crises develop increasingly rapidly because of accelerating innovation in global capitalism. Social media platform innovation accelerated the rapid spread of lies to the point of outpacing older, simpler institutions for the proliferation of truths. This includes lies that motivate new forms of dangerous behavior like advocating a coup to put right an allegedly stolen election, or the lie that war can be waged to sustain a new Caliphate to conquer the Middle East and Africa.

Improved professionalization in the proliferation of falsehoods led to election of climate change deniers during the very period of history when it became too late for fully effective catastrophe prevention. New technologies of cyberwarfare, cybercrime and cyberterrorism, new space warfare by electromagnetic and cyberspace technologies, and new ways of disabling them in space, may cascade to horrific hails of space wars. Coupled cascades put us at risk from cyber-threats that tip security systems toward cascades of nuclear weapons use by accident, miscalculation, or linkages to faulty technologies.

Russia, China, and the United States may not be far from capability for multiple forms of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), not only MAD by nuclear weapons, but also Mutual Assured Digital Destruction (MADD) through digital time bombs planted, ready to explode on demand, in electricity grids and other systems that serve nuclear weapons targeting, hospitals, telecommunications, and more. They would explode with malware designed to activate during a crisis. No one knows how advanced great powers are in achieving MADD capability. Only technological pessimists could think that while kinetic MAD is within their grasp, cyber MADD never will be.

The June 27, 2017 cyber-attack on Ukraine by Russia turned Ukrainian screens black everywhere. Money could not be withdrawn from ATMs. Ukrainians could not be paid, send or receive mail, pay at gas stations, or buy a train ticket or groceries. Worse, Ukraine could not monitor radiation levels at Chernobyl and Zaporigia. This combined with effects on hospitals rendered the cyber-attack a war crime against humanity. NATO-based companies with major operations in Ukraine were also devastated. Merck and Fedex alone were hobbled at a cost of $1 billion as the Russian malware infected their worldwide communications (Perlroth 2021, 18). A couple of years later, before and after covid and when Ukraine staggered from an unprecedented measles outbreak, Russian trolls surged anti-vaccination dogmas across Facebook accounts of young Ukrainian mothers (Perlroth 2021, 19). War cascaded to escalated epidemic severity.

Russia also attacks NATO states with anti-vaccination messages intended to cause health harm, but more fundamentally to sow division in ways that intersect with other cleavages based on politics, race, neoNazi belief systems, class, and religion. Other states target Russia and China in the same ways; others target this kind of sowing of internal divisions against Israel; Israel in turn sows divisions among Palestinians and Iranians. From unimagined sources seeds are sown for future fascism and war. The argument of this book is that restorative diplomacy, genuine healing among old enemies, is the fundamental solution to this problem that has worked again and again throughout history in persuading old enemies against future meddling in one another’s domestic politics. It is just that restorative prevention and healing are more imperative than in the past, during an era when cyber operations are almost totally undeterrable and do such great crime and war harm that is extremely difficult to prevent technologically. Cybercrime is already the most common and damaging form of property crime for these reasons (Braithwaite 2022); soon cyberwar could become the most harmful form of warfare when the first case of Mutual Assured Digital Destruction turns all the screens black on both sides of alliances fighting a large war.

Russia would be better off had it restored diplomatic relationships with NATO states so they stopped meddling in Russia’s internal affairs, ended financial sanctions against Russia, ceased costly proxy warfare against Russia to defend Ukraine. The United States would be better off had it not provoked Putin to meddle in US politics without which Donald Trump would have been defeated by Hilary Clinton in 2016 (Levin 2020). That meddling has been so effective in dividing Americans against one another that even a coup against an elected government could be attempted. It has been effective in stoking fires of neo-fascism in America, in costing US companies losses as high as a billion dollars from Russian hacks, in causing US taxpayers to suffer an inflation shock and the loss of trillions of dollars preparing Ukraine for war only to see its ally lose big chunks of its territory. A continuation of great power politics as usual is a lose-lose game compared to restorative diplomacy that heals the hurts that motivate all these crimes and weakens both great powers vis a vis China (Chapter 8).

Mutual Assured Destruction capabilities with the satellite communications that allow aircraft to land, and other critical forms of communication may not be far off. Russia and China can already destroy the coupling of financial systems and the internet between Europe and the United States. Subsea cables are responsible for 97% of the data and information flows of transcontinental communication and finance (Acharya 2023). Enemies can cut cables somewhere along a vast ocean floor without being detected. Early in 2022 when Russian President Putin was rattling his nuclear saber, Britain and NATO messaged that cutting submarine cables would be ‘an act of war’ (Bone 2022).

This is an example of chokepoint deterrence because there is little prospect this century that humankind could build the number of satellites that would be required with the bandwidth of what cables can do. Russia cut trans-Atlantic cables on a number of occasions during milder crises of the Cold War. Repairing them can take weeks; then they can be cut again. Or Russia could then follow up by cutting another between the United States and Japan/Korea. The United States could reciprocate. Russia is coupled by cable to a lot less wealth than could be destroyed via the coupling of the United States with Europe or Japan. The coupling most vital to Russia since the war in Ukraine commenced is to China and its allies, not vulnerable cable connections across vast oceans. Google is doing it alone to build its own undersea cable to link its North and South American operations and data centers. This may be an attractive Russian escalation target along some future Russian trajectory to threatening MADD—with few Russian companies traveling that line. MADD by this means requires cutting many cables at once because single cuts can be re-routed along an alternative line, though with significant cost. Something that may have protected the West from the concerted attacks on undersea cables may be that China is a big player in the telecommunications and subsea cable industry. On the one hand, that is not much of an assurance perhaps for a future war with China, backed by Russia. On the other hand, this is another instance of how economic interdependence retains the potential to motivate peacemaking.

Coupling makes us wealthier and more capable of solving problems. Yet the more coupled, the more vulnerable we are. This book argues that because we can no longer ‘contain’ our enemies from cutting our coupling, nor they contain us from cutting theirs, there is no choice but to get better at turning enemies into friends. We can beat cyberbombs into cybershares that plough furrows of digital and quantum cooperation. We must beat nuclear bombs into nuclear fusion that we share to solve our mutual climate and energy crises. Fear of MADD can motivate the peace movement to educate us on where to seek shelter inside buildings when a nuclear mushroom cloud appears on the horizon. It is a mistake to think that messages on what to do will appear on our screens and airwaves; they may all turn blank at the moment the mushroom appears.

Hence, a second fundamental of this book is that rapidity of change is compounded by the tightly coupled character of crises. As Warren Buffet said of the international economic crisis in 2008, risks today are more coupled than in the past, so the collapse of a US bank more readily cascades to collapse of European banks. This is a fact of life. It is also a fact that we become wealthier as banks sell to one another. Bank dominoes fell at first because they were infected with securitized US subprime loans that were bad loans; in no time banks were collapsing because other banks were. Banks did not know how infected with bad loans other banks might be. So they stopped trusting them. This bleeding rapidly congealed the lifeblood of interbank lending.

A tipping point toward systemic collapse was passed when interest rates on risky interbank lending became so high that banks were stuck with bundles of mortgages in good loans. They were unable to sell them to prop up their liquidity. They could not pay their debts. The only line of credit they could access was taxpayer bailout. Risk therefore became both more complex and more systemic. Systemic risks are risks that result in crises of whole systems, as opposed to breakdowns of bits of systems. Systemic risk means that collapse of one bit of a system cascades to many bits infecting other bits with catastrophe. In contemporary risk societies (Beck 1992) characterized by compressed space–time (Harvey 1989) and just-in-time logistics for ensuring that all capital is at work rather than tied into inventory, risk complexity can cascade quickly to systemic global crises.

## Adv 1

**Sustainability---AT: Agriculture---1AR**

**Investments in regenerative agriculture solve farms and offset other sectors.**

**AEM 23**. Trade association representing manufacturers. "Sustainability in Agriculture: How the Industry is Answering the Call to Produce More with Less." Association of Equipment Manufacturers. 9/11/2023. aem.org/news/sustainability-in-agriculture-how-the-industry-is-answering-the-call-to-produce-more-with-less

MORE FARMERS WILL ANSWER THE CALL RELATED TO SUSTAINABILITY.

With a focus on improving soil health through natural methods rather than chemicals, sustainable agriculture is an old idea that has been gaining traction among sustainability advocates and farmers. In 2019, General Mills committed to advance regenerative agriculture on 1 million acres of farmland by 2030. In February, the USDA announced that it will invest $1 billion to support America’s climate smart farmers, ranchers and forest landowners.

Mitchell Hora, founder and CEO of Continuum Ag, is on a mission to advance regenerative agriculture, promoting techniques such as no-till farming, the use of cover crops and grazing livestock on crop land. He works with farmers in 38 states and 16 different countries.

Regenerative agriculture at scale is in its infancy. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, just 12% of farm acres were no-till, 11% were reduced tillage, and just 2% of farm acres utilized cover crops.

Hora’s approach relies on Haney soil tests that measure both organic and inorganic nutrients, software to analyze soil data, experimentation and insights to help farmers profit from the start. Hora’s 700-acre family farm in Iowa, has been no-till since 1978 and utilized cover crops since 2013. As soon as possible after harvest, Hora plants a cover crop and continues to let it grow in the spring. “In the spring we will plant green and then terminate the cover crop later based on soil moisture data,” said Hora. Careful management of the carbon nitrogen ratios and understanding the organic nutrients in the soil is necessary.

Since planting cover crops, the Hora’s have maintained above average yields on corn and soybeans while using 33% less nitrogen, 100% less potassium, and 75% less phosphorous, and a 100% less lime. The amount of organic matter in the soil increased by 1.43% from 2010-2020.

More organic matter in the soil also means greater resiliency to floods and drought. Soil with more organic matter holds more water during an extreme rainfall, reducing runoff. It also can support plants better during droughts.

“The average farm in the U.S. can only infiltrate a half-inch of water per hour,” said Hora. “On our farm, we can infiltrate four inches of rainfall in five minutes.”

Hora also hasn’t had to replant crops and no longer purchases federal crop insurance. All of this improves the bottom line of the farm.

“If you enable the biology to do the work for you, you don’t have to spend money on inputs,” said Hora.

“The savings of precision ag are real,” added Goins. “It’s a little bit here and a little bit there, but the savings add up.”

Carbon credits are another reason why sustainable agriculture practices may flourish. The National Academy of Sciences estimates that regenerative agriculture can sequester 250 million tons of carbon dioxide in the U.S. annually, or around 4 % of our emissions. Farmers could be paid for carbon credits to offset the emissions of corporations.

**Innovation fixes ag.** It’s happening now.

Steve **Cohen 24**. Professor of public management and environmental policy at Columbia University, senior advisor and former executive director of Columbia University's Earth Institute. "The Emerging Field of Sustainable Agriculture." State of the Planet. 3/25/2024. news.climate.columbia.edu/2024/03/25/the-emerging-field-of-sustainable-agriculture/

I grew up in Brooklyn and have spent most of my life living in Morningside Heights in Manhattan; my only exposure to farming life was during the last of my five years living in Franklin, Indiana, when I delivered the Daily Journal Newspaper to farmers in rural Johnson and Brown counties. Occasionally, when the farmers were a little short of cash, they paid for their newspapers with produce. I know very little about farming, except that farmers seem to be the hardest-working people I’ve ever known. Modern industrial farming has made American agriculture the most productive in the world, but it is capital-intensive, risky, and polluting. An emerging movement in sustainable agriculture is developing, which promises continued productivity with less pollution. According to the Union of Concerned Scientists:

“There’s a transformation taking place on farms across the United States. For decades, we’ve produced the bulk of our food through industrial agriculture—a system dominated by large farms growing the same crops year after year, using enormous amounts of chemical pesticides and fertilizers that damage our soil, water, air, and climate. This system is not built to last, because it squanders and degrades the resources it depends on. But a growing number of innovative farmers and scientists are taking a different path, moving toward a farming system that is more sustainable—environmentally, economically, and socially. This system has room for farms of all sizes, producing a diverse range of foods, fibers, and fuels adapted to local conditions and regional markets. It uses state-of-the-art, science-based practices that maximize productivity and profit while minimizing environmental damage. Sustainability also means the whole system is more resilient to droughts, floods, and other impacts of climate change that farmers are already seeing. Though the move to this type of system often involves some up-front costs, smart public policies can help farmers make the shift.”

### Biodiversity Defense---1NC

#### Establishing a national consistent decline in biodiversity is impossible. Different types of biodiversity, species, and regions show different trends.

Maria Dornelas 23. researcher in biodiversity and professor of biology based at St. Andrew's University. “Looking back on biodiversity change: lessons for the road ahead.” 5/29/23. Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences. Vol 375. Issue 1881. https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/full/10.1098/rstb.2022.0199?casa\_token=Y-bRD07ptBoAAAAA%3Az3S3qNu\_N0ngjd1DxjXOwzpefvtoxrAHq5\_5Ua4f56xYgZR5xzwTsi6fh069LucBr2rh1I0\_LhUY1zU#d1e1810

In summary, we are not close to a globally consistent answer to the question about total change in abundance or biomass for large taxonomic groups like insects, birds or fishes. Many of the terrestrial datasets mentioned above probably do not sample the regions with dramatic declines (e.g. intensively built or agricultural areas), which would limit their use to estimate global averages, but would instead make them representative of biodiversity trends for the very large areas outside of urban and high-intensity agricultural areas (figure 1b). Nonetheless, the literature shows us that for many taxa at many locations, we observe high variability centred around mean trends in biomass or abundance that are not drastically different from zero. There are more studies reporting declines than increases, and declining groups are usually either targeted for substantial harvesting, like trees and large predatory fishes, or are known to be sensitive to major global change drivers (e.g. climate change for amphibians and corals, pesticides for some birds and insects). There are also important cases where abundances seem to be increasing, possibly as a result of improved conditions, such as freshwater insects in some parts of Europe and North America [77]. Careful thinking about spatial, temporal, and taxonomic averaging (see next section), as well as averaging across functional groups (cf. [39,81]) will improve our understanding of abundance and biomass trends in the Anthropocene. 4. Steps going forward Controversies are useful in stimulating research. However, it is useful to determine when they have been resolved, and to identify what knowledge gaps remain. Importantly, an integral component of resolving controversies is identifying where differences of opinion hinge on methodological approaches [180]. It is clear that different estimates of temporal change in biodiversity include differences that are both methodological and ‘real'. For example, in estimates of change in abundance, some studies focus on total abundance or biomass estimates for the entire assemblage (e.g. [77]), others represent agglomerated measures of population changes (e.g. [37]), while yet others represent averages across species within specified regions (e.g. LPI). Within the studies that focus on averages, the choice of arithmetic or geometric means changes the overall pattern. Geometric means of growth rates (e.g. LPI) have been shown to exaggerate extreme (and often the shortest) time series. Likewise, vote counting (per cent of species increasing and decreasing) can give very different results than estimating trends in total abundance or biomass because the most abundant species contribute more strongly to the latter and tend to dominate the overall pattern. Thus, it is important to choose methods of averaging across taxa that are appropriate for the goals and questions and to avoid direct comparisons among disparate methods. Estimating trends that are representative of the entire planet, or any large region of the planet, will usually require combining multiple sources of data. In doing so, it is critical to consider the statistical power of contributing datasets, and to apply analytical approaches that carefully consider the underlying uncertainty and allow it to propagate appropriately. In this context appropriate meta-analytical methods should be used, either through the independent calculation of metrics of interest from sampling effort standardized raw data (e.g. [4,36]), or through the use of two-stage models (e.g. [44]). In addition, most studies also include some kind of spatial averaging. However, as a hypothetical example, a 50% decline overall could result from a 50% decline in each sub-region, a 100% decline in half the sub-regions and a 0% decline in the other half, or even a 100% decline in two thirds of the sub-regions and a 200% increase in one third of the sub-regions. Differentiating which of these scenarios are occurring is important because their implications for conservation and ecosystem function are quite different. Nevertheless, individual sites, entire regions and taxa show genuinely different and potentially opposing trends in species richness, spatial beta-diversity, abundance and/or biomass. As data and studies have accumulated, they have revealed there is extensive variability in biodiversity trends, and that we see gains and losses of species and individuals that result in a balance of net decreases in some situations, and increases in others (figure 2). Recognizing this variation allows us to seek the underlying explanations for different patterns of biodiversity change. For instance, the rate and direction of changes vary spatially and between realms [36,42], as well as with the magnitude of different anthropogenic drivers, such as climate and land-use change [31,59,82,181]. However, much remains to be understood, as most of the variation in biodiversity trends still remains unexplained, with the added challenge that drivers of change co-occur in different combinations [124,182], making attribution a difficult task. Many studies confirm that there is a consistent signal of compositional change over time. While some turnover is to be expected even in the absence of strong environmental change [127], there are signs that turnover is accelerating [132]. Importantly, it is likely that composition changes are associated with functional and phylogenetic changes, which do not necessarily follow taxonomic diversity trends. For example, North Sea fish communities diverged in taxonomic composition over time but converged in species traits [64]. For birds, taxonomic, functional and phylogenetic diversity increased over time in North America [39,183] while Leroy et al. [47] reported a balance of increases and declines in functional diversity at local scales, but increasing trends at a regional scale, and a decline globally. Climate change and fishing pressure led to opposing effects on the functional diversity of commercial fish communities in the China Seas [184]. Local, but not regional, phylogenetic diversity declined over a 19-year time series of grassland vegetation in California [185], while plant communities have become homogenized both taxonomically and phylogenetically in Europe [49] and across the globe [151]. Thus, it remains challenging to accurately predict the winners and losers of the ongoing environmental changes. Important gaps remain in our knowledge of other facets of biodiversity, like genetic diversity, which remain largely unexplored, particularly at larger scales [186]. One of the few broad scope analyses revealed similar patterns to species richness, with generally weak or non-significant (and scale-dependent) effects of land use and human density on the intraspecific genetic diversity of greater than 17 000 species of birds, fishes, insects and mammals [187]. Other studies, however, have estimated losses of varying magnitude. For instance, a approximately 6% loss in genetic diversity since the industrial revolution was estimated for 91 species, being most severe for island species (average decline of 28%) [188], while a global loss of greater than 10% of genetic diversity was recently suggested from extrapolations of a subset of species responding to habitat loss [189]. Conversely, an increase in genetic variation following invasion was detected in both exotic and native populations for several species [190]. The evidence for a signal of biodiversity change, but not necessarily widespread loss for most measures at most spatial scales, highlights the difference between the quantity of biodiversity in a given place, and the value that particular individuals and societies assign to particular species and particular ecosystem configurations. More biodiversity, or a particular type of species or community, may or may not be desirable given a particular set of values. For example, in the management of global rangelands for improved grazing, removal of woody species can have trade-offs including detrimental impacts on biodiversity [191]. However, it is important to note that stakeholders' values are not typically determined by scientific findings, but rather by economic and societal factors related to livelihoods or highly personal moral, ethical, philosophical and political judgements. There may be important gaps between what different groups of people value, as well as between what most people value and what maximizes ecosystem function and resilience [192]. Despite the accumulation of data and proliferation of studies, important blind spots about how biodiversity is changing through space and time remain. The data available to measure change in biodiversity is consistently biased spatially, taxonomically, and with regard to anthropogenic drivers of change [193,194]. Given the variation uncovered by spatial analysis of biodiversity time series (e.g. [36,42]), as well as across taxa in the same locations (e.g. [133,195]) it is important to note that all conclusions to date are contingent on the availability of data in time, space and across taxa. We emphasize the need for improved representation of under-sampled regions and taxonomic groups. At the same time, large volumes of data are available today and we contend that these are sufficient to draw firm conclusions in relation to locations and taxa for which data are available. As we seek to expand the data to quantify these patterns, we should strive to improve representation, rather than expand to collect more of the same data. The largest ecosystem on the planet, the deep sea, remains grossly under-represented in biodiversity databases, and polar and tropical regions are also poorly covered. The most disturbed and the most pristine locations are under-represented from biodiversity databases on change through time, at a global scale [194]. Moreover, combining datasets collected with different methods continues to create important challenges to detect and attribute biodiversity change. Ideally, we would be implementing stratified random sampling of biodiversity using standardized methods across the entire planet [196,197]. Importantly, even if we start today, it will take a substantial period for time series to accumulate. Like the saying about the best time to plant a tree, the best time to begin stratified monitoring has already passed. The second best time to start is now. 5. Conclusion There is substantial variability in biodiversity trends across metrics, scales, taxa and regions. A simplistic narrative of ubiquitous biodiversity loss does not reflect the current knowledge of empirical patterns. Recognizing this variability is imperative. Across space, time and taxa, increases and declines in a single metric of biodiversity can occur simultaneously, and different components of biodiversity may show decoupled trends. Importantly, this variability implies that our knowledge gaps matter because biodiversity monitoring is biased and there are many blind spots. Although we argue for the importance of recognizing nuance in biodiversity patterns, it is easy to fall into the trap of ubiquitous context dependence, preventing us from identifying general patterns. Instead, we argue for taking advantage of the variability in trends to help us determine what is happening in places and at times where biodiversity is changing towards outcomes aligned with our values, and where it is not. The next stage of biodiversity synthesis, that has already begun [e.g. [31,44]), will need to bring together different perspectives and quantitative analyses to improve our understanding of not only the rates and magnitudes of biodiversity change, but to quantitatively attribute those changes to drivers across the Anthropocene across scales. Identifying the types of human actions that promote preferred biodiversity trajectories will equip us to make informed decisions in biodiversity policy.

#### Loss is not existential.

Dr. John Halstead 19. PhD, University of Oxford, researcher at Founders Pledge; citing Dr. Peter Kareiva, PhD in ecology and evolutionary biology, Cornell University, director of UCLA’s Institute of the Environment & Sustainability; also citing Valerie Carranza, PhD student in Kareiva’s lab, 5/1/2019, “Centre for the Study of Existential Risk Six Month Report: November 2018 - April 2019,” https://forum.effectivealtruism.org/posts/zbZxisJRJBCdtYvh9/centre-for-the-study-of-existential-risk-six-month-report

Can you explain what the mechanism is whereby biodiversity loss creates existential risk? And if biodiversity loss is an existential risk, how big a risk is it? Should 80k be getting people to go into conservation science or not?

There are independent reasons to think that the risk is negligible. Firstly, according to wikipedia, during the Eocene period ~65m years ago, there were thousands fewer genera than today. We have made ~1% of species extinct, and we would have to continue at current rates of species extinctions for at least 200 years to return to Eocene levels of biodiversity. And yet, even though significantly warmer than today, the Eocene marked the dawn of thousands of new species. So, why would we expect the world 200 years hence to be inhospitable to humans if it wasn't inhospitable for all of the species emerging in the Eocene, who are/were significantly less numerous than humans and significantly less capable of a rational response to problems?

Secondly, as far as I am aware, evidence for pressure-induced non-linear ecosystem shifts is very limited. This is true for a range of ecosystems. Linear ecosystem damage seems to be the norm. If so, this leaves more scope for learning about the costs of our damage to ecosystems and correcting any damage we have done.

Thirdly, ecosystem services are overwhelmingly a function of the relations within local ecosystems, rather than of global trends in biodiversity. Upon discovering Hawaii, the Polynesians eliminated so many species that global decadal extinction rates would have been exceptional. This has next to no bearing on ecosystem services outside Hawaii. Humanity is an intelligent species and will be able to see if other regions are suffering from biodiversity loss and make adjustments accordingly. Why would all regions be so stupid as to ignore lessons from elsewhere? Also, is biodiversity actually decreasing in the rich world? I know forest cover is increasing in many places. Population is set to decline in many rich countries in the near future, and environmental impact per person is declining on many metrics.

### Food Wars Defense---AT: US Spillover

#### America is insufficient for food security because of export locations.

Anne Weir Schechinger 16. M.S. in Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics at Michigan State University, Senior Economics Analyst at EWG; Craig Cox, M.S., in Agricultural Economics at University of Minnesota, October 2016, “Feeding the World: Think U.S. Agriculture Will End World Hunger? Think Again,” https://static.ewg.org/reports/2016/feeding\_the\_world/EWG\_FeedingTheWorld.pdf

These same voices often claim that doubling American production is a moral imperative, not simply a market opportunity. They say people will go hungry if U.S. farmers don’t respond (see sidebar). In some cases, they imply or even say outright that the collateral damage to natural resources, the environment, human health and ecosystems that would result from meeting this moral imperative would be regrettable but unavoidable. Finally, they argue that “modern” farming systems that rely heavily on biotechnology, fertilizers and chemicals are the only way U.S. farmers can meet this challenge, and that hewing to more agro-ecological methods of producing agricultural bounty will put countless people at risk of hunger and malnutrition.

Many farmers sincerely believe this. Others use this scenario more cynically to pursue political or business objectives. In either case, the “moral imperative” to feed the world has become an important rationale for maintaining the status quo in U.S. farm policy. It has also been deployed to deflect attention from the damage that “modern” agriculture does to the environment and human health, and to discredit calls for reform.

This self-serving narrative is being challenged, however. José Graziano da Silva, director-general of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the U.N., has argued compellingly that the persistence of hunger in the world, and the growing damage that “modern” agriculture does to soil and biodiversity demonstrate that this model of food production “is no longer acceptable.”4 Graziano and a host of other experts say the true solution to ending world hunger, while protecting environmental resources, is to improve the productivity and income of small farmers in the developing world, while promoting sustainable agriculture and “agro-ecology” everywhere.

EWG dug into agribusiness’ oft-repeated mantra to assess whether it reflects reality. It is true, of course, that many people across the globe do suffer from hunger and malnutrition, and improving their diets while ensuring that millions more don’t suffer the same fate is indeed a moral imperative. It is critical, therefore, that U.S. policies contribute effectively to ending hunger and malnutrition, but right now, these policies verge far from the truth.

Global demand for more diversified diets is expanding as millions of people in developing nations become affluent enough to afford a better, or at least different, diet. This is a welcome development and U.S. farmers have an important opportunity to serve this market through world trade. But meeting this demand—largely for meat, meat products and animal feed—does not carry the same moral imperative as lifting people out of poverty and hunger. The argument that we should accept the collateral damage from doubling U.S. production of grain and meat to satisfy a demand of this type hardly holds water.

As a first step toward improving understanding of America’s role in combating hunger, EWG examined current agricultural export data in detail to determine who gets fed by U.S. agriculture, and with what products. We analyzed agricultural trade and production data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the international Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the FAO of the U.N.. Export demand is driven by consumption, so export patterns provide key information about which agricultural products are consumed worldwide.

SPECIFICALLY, WE INVESTIGATED:

1. The top 25 agricultural products the U.S. exports.
2. The primary countries that receive U.S. agricultural products.
3. The amount of U.S. exports that go to countries considered to have high or very high rates of undernourishment.
4. The share of undernourished countries’ food supply that comes from U.S. exports and food aid.

This report summarizes our findings.

TOP 25 U.S. AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS

In 2015, just 25 products accounted for 73 percent ($97.7 billion) of all U.S. agricultural exports ($133.05 billion), according to the most recent data5 (see Table 1 below). Besides the 26th product, all other agricultural products contributed less than 1 percent each. Over 100 of them contributed less than 0.5 percent each.

Ten years of data, from 2006 through 2015, show similar results, as do the five years of data from 2011 through 2015. However, the second smallest product in 2015’s top 25—walnuts—dropped out of the top 25 over several years, overtaken by soybean oil or bovine hides. Grain sorghum was also more prominent in 2015 than in many of the previous years.

EWG classified the 25 top export products in five categories: (1) animal feed, (2) meat and dairy, (3) food grains, (4) fruits, vegetables and nuts, and (5) other—based on how the products are primarily used. Soybeans, for example, can be used as food for either animals or humans, but were assigned to the animal feed grouping because the vast majority of soybeans are fed to animals. Globally, about 85 percent of soybeans are “crushed” and turned into meal for animal feed and oil for human food.6 The meal-to-oil ratio of soybean exports varies by country, but in the U.S., about 80 percent of crushed soybeans become animal feed.7 Uncrushed soybeans, which comprise a relatively small amount of the total, have food, feed, seed and industrial uses.

Corn is also in the animal feed category. Much more corn is used as animal feed than as human food—about 44 percent is used for feed in the U.S., compared to only 12 percent for food.8 Soybean meal and “other feeds and fodder” are also in the animal feed category.

Although wheat is used as animal feed in the European Union and some other parts of the world, EWG classified it in the food grains category because globally, the majority of the wheat supply is used for food. Other products in the food grains category include rice and “other grain products” such as millet, quinoa and pasta.

Table 1 omitted.

The meat and dairy category includes beef, chicken and pork, and dairy products like cheese and milk. The fruits, vegetables and nuts category is also self-explanatory and includes fruits, vegetables, nuts and “miscellaneous horticulture products” such as spices and vegetable byproducts. The “other” category consists mostly of cotton, beverages, sugar products, waxes and oils.

In 2015, animal feed contributed 40 percent ($39.3 billion) of the total value of the top 25 U.S. agricultural exports; meat and dairy contributed 16 percent ($15.2 billion); “other” 16 percent ($15.6 billion); food grains 14 percent ($13.7 billion); and fruits, vegetables and nuts 14 percent ($14.0 billion) (see Figure 1 below). Throughout the 2006-2015 decade, the breakdown of the top 25 exports was fairly consistent. On average, 41 percent of total value came from animal feed; 15 percent from meat and dairy; 18 percent from “other;” 15 percent from food grains; and 10 percent from fruits, vegetables and nuts.

Figure 1 omitted.

Together, animal feed, meat and dairy products yielded 56 percent ($54.5 billion) of the value of the top 25 U.S. exports in 2015 and a striking 41 percent of the value of all U.S. agricultural exports. In all, over half of the value of the top 25 exports and almost half the value of all agricultural exports was from meat, meat products and animal feed.

EWG used the same five categories to analyze all U.S. agricultural exports—not just the top 25 products—in 2015 to the top 20 importers, and found that animal feed made up 31 percent of their total value. Meat and dairy accounted for 19 percent; fruits, vegetables and nuts 22 percent; food grains 10 percent and “other” made up 18 percent (see Figure 2 below).

Animal feed exports to the top 20 destinations were highly concentrated— just seven products accounted for $35.6 billion of total agricultural export value in 2015. Soybeans and soybean meal alone made up 18 percent ($21.1 billion) of total exports. Other categories were much less concentrated: meat and dairy had 34 products for a combined $21.3 billion value; food grains had 14 products for $11.3 billion; fruits, vegetables and nuts had 57 products for $25.4 billion; and “other” had 48 products for $20.9 billion.

Together, meat, dairy and animal feed accounted for 50 percent ($57 billion) of the value of all exports to the top 20 destinations, meaning that half the total export value was earned by products that help people in wealthier countries eat more meat.

For the 2006-2015 decade as a whole, 33 percent of the value going to the top 20 export destinations came from animal feed; 18 percent from meat and dairy; 11 percent from food grains; 18 percent from fruits, vegetables and nuts; and 20 percent from “other.” The combined export value of meat, dairy and animal feed was very close to the 2015 figure— averaging 51 percent.

DEVELOPED COUNTRIES ARE THE MAIN EXPORT DESTINATIONS

The U.S. only provides a small portion of total world agricultural production. According to the U.N. FAO, in 2013 (the most recent year available) the value of U.S. agricultural production made up only 9.5 percent of the global total.9

The U.N. Development Program uses a system of development indicators to rank each country’s development status as low, medium, high or very high based on measures of life expectancy, income and level of education.10

In 2015, the top 20 importers of U.S. agricultural products—19 individual countries and the European Union—accounted for 86 percent ($114.4 billion) of the total value of U.S. agricultural exports. Only 14 percent went to the other 100-plus destinations. On average, the top 20 importers accounted for 85 percent of all U.S. agricultural exports throughout the 2006-2015 decade. Most of the 20 importers were similar every year, with the exceptions of Russia dropping out in 2014 and 2015, and Guatemala and India being added in 2015. In 2015, most of the top value went to countries with very high or high development scores, and none went to countries with high rates of hunger.

In 2015, 50 percent of the value of America’s agricultural exports to the top destinations went to the European Union and seven countries the U.N. rates very high for development; 39 percent went to six countries rated high; and just 8 percent went to five countries rated medium. Taiwan, which did not have a human development rating due to a lack of data, accounted for 3 percent of the exports’ value (see Table 2 below). (The United States is rated very high for development.)

Between 2014 and 2016, nine of the 20 top importers of U.S. agricultural products enjoyed very low rates of hunger, according to the FAO.11 Nine countries had moderately low rates of hunger and only two had moderately high hunger. FAO ranks a country as suffering a very high hunger rate if 35 percent or more of the population is undernourished; high at 25 to 35 percent undernourished; moderately high at 15 to 25 percent; moderately low at 5 to 15 percent; and very low at less than 5 percent. None of the top 20 importers had high or very high rates of undernourishment, so U.S. agricultural exports mainly went to countries where less than 25 percent of the population is going hungry. (The United States is rated very low for hunger.)

Despite their overall low rates of undernourishment, some countries among the top export destinations do struggle with malnutrition, resulting from a combination of undernourishment and obesity. Millions of people suffer from malnutrition in four countries—China, Indonesia, India and Mexico—that were main U.S. agricultural export destinations in 2015, according to the International Food Policy Research Institute’s 2014-2015 Global Food Policy Report.12 The Institute considers 11 percent (150.8 million) of China’s population, 15 percent (190.7 million) of India’s population and 9 percent (21.6 million) of Indonesia’s population to be undernourished. But in China and Indonesia, the number of overweight or obese people is more than double the number who are undernourished, and 11 percent of India’s population is overweight or obese.

Likewise, being overweight or obese are the main reasons people in Mexico are malnourished. The Institute reports that undernourishment affects a negligible percentage of Mexico’s residents, but 69 percent (82.6 million) are overweight or obese. The Institute cites three main reasons why malnutrition is a problem in these countries despite their impressive rates of economic growth:

growing inequality in wealth and education;

a surge in urbanization, and associated dietary shifts from cereals toward sugary, salty and fatty foods; and

domestic food security programs that do not target the neediest or focus on nutrition.

Table 2 omitted.

U.S. agricultural exports to China, Indonesia and Mexico do nothing to alleviate these problems and may actually contribute to a rise in the overweight and obese populations. In 2015, most of the value of America’s agricultural exports to these three countries came from meat, dairy and animal feed products: 70 percent of the value to China, 65 percent of the value to Indonesia and 60 percent of the value to Mexico. India, at 6 percent, was the only country in which meat, dairy and feed accounted for a low share of import value, mainly because 45 percent of its total imported value was from almonds alone.

A TINY AMOUNT OF U.S. EXPORTS GO TO THE HUNGRIEST COUNTRIES

According to the U.N. FAO, from 2014 to 2016 four countries were experiencing very high undernourishment and 15 had high undernourishment.13 All had low or medium human development scores, which are correlated with undernourishment.

U.S. agricultural exports to these 19 hungry countries were valued at only $719.3 million—a tiny 0.5 percent of total U.S. agricultural exports in 2015. Exports to the top 20 destinations were 158 times greater than those to the 19 undernourished countries (see Figure 3 below). The 10-year average data is not directly comparable because the list of undernourished countries has changed since 2006. However, the value of U.S. agricultural exports to the countries with very high or high undernourishment over the decade averaged only 0.7 percent of the value of total agricultural exports.

Many of these nations have small populations, and having fewer people corresponds to lower agricultural imports. However, some of the top 20 importers have smaller populations than the 19 hungriest countries but still import considerably more agricultural products from the U.S. In 2013, for example, a number of the 19 hungriest countries had larger populations than Hong Kong, but the value of Hong Kong’s agricultural imports in 2015 was much greater.

Among the 19 hungriest countries, Haiti and Yemen together accounted for 63 percent of all U.S. agricultural exports to the group (see Table 3 below). Agricultural exports to the other undernourished countries were small and unevenly distributed.

The breakdown of products in the five export categories was very different for the 19 undernourished countries compared to the top 20 destinations. Hardly any of the agricultural export value going to the 19 hungriest countries was in animal feed in 2015, and over half of the value was in food grains (see Figure 4 below). In the hungriest countries, animal feed made up just 2 percent of the export value ($16.8 million). Food grains were at 59 percent ($426.4 million); fruits, vegetables and nuts were at 9 percent ($67.5 million); meat and dairy were at 22 percent ($156.9 million); and “other” was at 8 percent ($56.5 million).

Figure 3 omitted.

Combined, meat, dairy and animal feed accounted for a much lower percentage of export value to the 19 undernourished countries than to the top 20 export destinations. Those two categories accounted for 50 percent of the top importers’ values but only 24 percent of the hungry countries’ values. Overall, U.S. exports delivered little meat to the hungry countries.

Table 3 omitted.

On average for the 2006-2015 decade, 3 percent of the undernourished countries’ imported values came from animal feed; 18 percent from meat and dairy; 59 percent from food grains; 8 percent from fruits, vegetables and nuts; and 13 percent from “other.” The average value of the meat, dairy and animal feed breakdown for the decade was 21 percent—a little less than in 2015.

U.S. EXPORTS AND AID PROVIDE LITTLE OF HUNGRY COUNTRIES’ FOOD

U.S. food exports and food aid made up a tiny portion of the total food supplies of the 19 hungriest countries. EWG calculated the value of each country’s total food supply by adding net domestic food production and net food import values reported by the U.N. FAO14 to total food aid reported by the OECD, in accordance with FAO methodology.15 The Organization’s food aid data encompassed official development assistance in the form of food aid, food security assistance and emergency food aid.16 Due to the combination of different data sources, the food supply calculations are estimates and may not represent exact values.

Figure 4 omitted.

On average, in 2013 (the most recent year with data), gross food imports from all exporting countries contributed 22.9 percent of the undernourished countries’ food supplies. U.S. food exports made up just 1.2 percent of the total.

Although the U.S. provided almost half of all food aid to the hungriest countries, total food aid made up a diminutive fraction of these countries’ food supplies. In 2013, the share of the total food supply from food aid provided by OECD countries averaged only 2.2 percent. The United States provided 48.9 percent of that food aid, but U.S. aid accounted for only 1.1 percent of the total food supplies in the 19 hungriest countries.

Together, food exports and food aid from the U.S. constituted an inconsequential amount of the 19 undernourished countries’ total food supplies—averaging 2.3 percent. The U.S. contribution to food supplies ranged from a high of 17 percent in Haiti to a low of almost zero in TimorLeste (see Table 4 below). Overall, food aid and gross food imports to the 19 undernourished countries accounted for 25.1 percent of their total food supplies, dwarfing the 2.3 percent U.S. contribution.

### Regenerative Ag---1NC

Alt causes to biod collapse like pollution in other industries.

Aslany’s impact is warmign. Can’t solve emissions in other countries and fossil fuels alt cause.

### Ag Resilience---1NC

#### Ag resilience is resilient!

Sören Köpke 22. Postdoctoral researcher and lecturer in International Agricultural Policy and Environmental Governance. “Interrogating the Links between Climate Change, Food Crises and Social Stability.” 2022. Earth. Vol 3. Issue 2. https://www.mdpi.com/2673-4834/3/2/34

The line of argument of both the environmental security school and collapse theorist, at least with regard to agriculture-dependent developing countries, follows this chain of causation, loosely adapted from the critical discussion by Peluso and Watts [26] (p. 17): climate change → food crisis → heightened competition → breakdown of social order (1)where “climate change” is one instance of adverse environmental change, and food crisis stands for the social effects of environmental scarcity. There is a severe disconnect between the body of knowledge produced by scholars of famine and food insecurity, and the environmental security school, as well as climate collapse theorists. The latter tend to ignore the rich historical evidence on the character, societal context, political economy, and anthropology of large-scale devastating food crises. As will be elaborated in the following, contemporary famine scholars are fairly unanimous that (a) drought and other severe climatic disasters are not necessarily the main factors leading to famines, even if it appears that way, since (b) famines have a political context that is often more important than other factors; in addition, (c) famines and the distribution of suffering reflect social hierarchies within the afflicted societies, and (d) even large-scale famines do not necessarily lead to a complete collapse of a polity’s functioning, as (e) food systems are highly interconnected and complex. These five statements will now be discussed in turn. Agricultural drought—the insufficient availability of water, or, more precisely, soil moisture, for crop cultivation—is among the most frequent causes of yield failure and may lead to food insecurity crises, and in the most extreme, famine. Drought years are recurrent in water-stressed regions and countries. There are manifold coping strategies to drought on the household level pursued by rural people and subsistence-farming households, including, but not confined to, using up supplies on stock, taking up debt, leaving out meals, making use of “famine food”, searching for off-farm work, selling land, farm animals and valuable items, and temporal migration (i.e., to distant relatives) [62,63,64,65,66]. In a number of regional contexts, there is also the phenomenon of seasonal hunger [67,68], essentially a coping strategy to get by with scarce food resource over the year. On the level of famine management and mitigation by state authorities or international donors, famine relief in the form of humanitarian emergency food aid is often applied; additional measures include food price stabilization and bans on exports [69,70]. Although these interventions have their own setbacks [71], food aid and other famine management measures are much more preferable for the avoidance of high mortality rates than neglect and lack of response on the side of the governing authorities, as historic examples show [72,73]. Mid-term strategies for prevention of drought-famine include technological interventions, such as investments in irrigation infrastructures and landscaping against soil erosion or introduction of famine-resistant crop varieties [74], or governance intervention, such as the implementation of social security systems and public health care, and instatement of early warning systems [75,76]. Hence, drought-famines are not mere natural disasters, but represent a failure of policies and institutions. This points to the political nature of large-scale food crises. Furthermore, food insecurity crises often arise in the context of armed conflict and interstate wars, a statement which does not only apply to organized violence in the 20th century but holds true to these days. Table 1 lists major famines from 1917–2018; climatic aspects are in the foreground for a number of modern famines, yet the context of armed conflict is present in a large number of cases. Strong evidence of authoritarian politics as a direct cause of devastating famine can be found in the Stalinist famine (Holodomor) in 1930s Soviet Ukraine [77,78] and the Great Leap Forward famine in the People’s Republic of China (1958–1962) [79,80]. The latter is arguably the most lethal hunger catastrophe in history in terms of victims’ number quantity. Hunger is weaponized by aggressors against unwanted populations; the Siege of Leningrad (1941–1944) by Nazi Germany is a historical example [81]. The strong interrelation between organized violence and large-scale food crises leads Alex de Waal [82] to speak of many modern famines as “forced mass starvation”. Having now established that many, if not most, modern famines are not the result of drought and harvest failure alone, but consequences of armed conflict, policy failure, and neglecting assistance to starving populations, the question can be raised of who is suffering from famine and food crises. The dominant view with regard to the political economy of food crises is based on Amartya Sen’s [83] insight that, rather than declining food availability, the lack of ability to access food—the lack of “entitlements” to food—was crucial in understanding the genesis of famine. When purchasing food becomes costly, the poorer parts of a population are suffering and starving at first. Famines are then as much an issue of distributive justice as of food economics or agriculture [84]. This “distributionist” perspective [24] is principally accepted [85]; however, it does not appear to convince neo-Malthusians of the fallibility of their arguments. Following these three general arguments, it is clear that elites and upper strata of society are generally affected by food crises to a much lesser degree than more vulnerable populations, creating what Ó Gráda calls “hierarchies of suffering” [86]. This does not preclude that famines do not have lasting and traumatic consequences to surviving individuals and households and to affected communities and societies, yet it raises questions surrounding hunger crises and social stability, which have a complex interrelation. Acute famine is generally not associated with social upheaval, as famine-affected people are likely to be too weak to engage in protest or even armed uprising [73]. Yet, there is a very robust linkage between food insecurity crises and social unrest. The vector connecting both variables is usually food prices. Food (price) riots are a phenomenon observed up to the present day [87,88,89,90]. While empirical evidence suggests that food security crises as consequence of rising food prices are neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for social unrest, the expectation of food insecurity can be a strong motivator to engage in protests or riots [91]. In recent history, the 2010–2011 “Arab Spring” appears as a confluence of conditions where rising food prices overlapped with radical loss of legitimacy of authoritarian rulers and long-boiling socioeconomic tensions [92,93]. Here, the connection between global food price volatility and political consequences on the national level underline the last argument: The interdependence within the global food economy links production, processing, and consumption through trade in international markets [94]. Upstream—through trade in fertilizers, pesticides, machinery, and irrigation technology—and downstream—food exports—commodity chains are creating complex interdependencies [95].

## Adv 2

### Radicalization---1NC

#### No food-based radicalization or societal collapse.

Maureen J. Purcell 24. Ph.D., M.A., Postdoctoral Researcher, UCI Blum Center for Poverty Alleviation. Former Lecturer, Environmental Law, California State University, Long Beach. "Book Review: Food or War." Environment & Security, Volume 2, Issue 2.

A criticism of *Food or war* is that the titular argument that food has a role in the *genesis* of conflict becomes muddled with the positive feedback loop argument couched within the food–war nexus Cribb describes. The former seems to neglect the role of conflict in causing food and hunger crises, emphasizing only a one-way relationship from food crisis to war. This is not to say that Cribb does not present both pathways of this nexus—he does and in compelling fashion—but rather that the evidence supports a slightly different and more cyclical hypothesis than the central thesis.

Similarly, in emphasizing the inarguably important role of food in relationship to conflict, other variables critical for understanding the conflict cycle are ignored. Full bellies do not premise utopia as Cribb seems to extrapolate from his material. A well-fed populace is not one without ideological, moral, or political differences—all of which have been implicated in the conflict cycle. At times Cribb likens food stress to “tinder” (e.g., pp. 140–141, 149), which would suggest, perhaps more appropriately, that the state of the food system is a necessary but not sufficient element of initiating conflict. While the argument posited is never that food is the only cause, the other contributors are rarely if at all mentioned, leaving the non-expert reader without a sense of what else contributes to this complex issue.

Finally, while the main argument is persuasive (if at times muddled) some statements would benefit from supporting evidence while others would specifically be better supported by scientific evidence rather than popular science journalism or news media. This is particularly true of each instance in which the female gender is ascribed particular personality traits in universal fashion in apparent disregard for feminist critiques of stereotyping. Trying to anticipate this very critique, Cribb states, “This isn’t gender stereotyping. It’s an observation about how different kinds of humans think” (2018, p. 201), which does not offer the credibility to his argument that he thinks it does. From a science communication perspective, the mixing of scientifically supported and unsupported claims at times makes it difficult to determine what is a tested and true understanding and what is Cribb’s personal perspective.

### Megacities---1NC

Resilience defense answers megacities.

### Indo-Pak War Defense---1NC

#### No India-Pakistan war.

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It is cavalier, therefore, to dismiss the possibility of nuclear deterrence with the wised-up line that correlation does not equal causation. Indeed, it suggests incuriosity, given we have historical evidence to draw upon. Nuclear-armed states really have hesitated to attack other nuclear-armed states, given the prospect of suffering unacceptable return fire. India and Pakistan since proliferating have not ceased competing. But both have been more mutually cautious than during the pre-nuclear era, when they fought three conventional wars. Every postwar generation entertains the dream of global disarmament Since then, they have engaged in brinkmanship they have taken care to control, such as the 1990 Kashmir confrontation, and fought a brief and highly constrained peripheral war in 1999. Nuclear proliferation in its early, “nascent” phase can trigger threats and instability. But there is an unignorable pattern of limitation followed by de-escalation efforts between states with nuclear forces, as when India and China squared off in border skirmishes recently. Indeed, evidence of the real force of nuclear deterrence lies precisely in the United States’ determined efforts to prevent proliferation by others. Wanting a free hand, it knows proliferation would constrain its power. Even the slight risk of nuclear escalation either precludes options to attack, or takes them quickly off the table. In crises, even the superpower was deterred. Washington’s cautious, calibrated steps in the 1958 Berlin crisis drew partly on President Dwight Eisenhower’s increasing risk-aversion, his well-founded belief that the coming of the Soviet Union’s thermonuclear capability would mean, in the event of escalation, tens of millions of immediate fatalities. Likewise, in most hypothetical wargames, including on the Soviet side, possessors were reluctant to engage in massive nuclear strikes. In recent time, hawks in the Trump presidency advocated a “bloody nose” limited pre-emptive strike on North Korea, only for the executive branch to conclude “no attack plan could confidently preclude escalation or collateral damage”. Now compare the reluctance to attack North Korea, which successfully advanced its nuclear programme, with the fates of Libya’s Colonel Gaddafi and Iraq’s Saddam Hussein, who abandoned theirs. So nukes really do inhibit wars between nuclear “pairs”, if only we care to look. And like most things, nukes have mixed effects and varying outcomes. Nuclear deterrence doesn’t always work in warding off attacks. It just works a hell of a lot.

#### No nuke escalation---stability/instability paradox caps escalation.

David Brewster 19. PhD; National Security College at the Australian National University; Distinguished Research Fellow with the Australia India Institute. “India-Pakistan: Shadow Dancing in the Himalayas.” Lowy Institute. 2/27/2019. https://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2019/02/27/india-pakistan\_shadow\_dancing\_in\_the\_himalayas\_112976.html

Nuclear war theorists tell us that competing nuclear-armed states inhabit what is called a “stability/instability paradox”. The fear of mutually assured destruction can create a form of stability at a strategic level (as we saw during the Cold War). But nuclear weapons can simultaneously create instability by making lower levels of violence relatively safe, because escalation up the nuclear ladder is perceived as too dangerous. In other words, by creating a nuclear ceiling that both sides do not wish to breach, there is also space for conflict underneath that ceiling. How large that space is will depend on the players involved. The India-Pakistan relationship is a great example of this. Pakistan has been a master in pursuing asymmetric strategies against India underneath the nuclear ceiling. This has included adopting a first-use doctrine and the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in an effort to blur nuclear red lines (creating space underneath the ceiling). It has supported major terrorist attacks inside India, including the 2001 attacks on the Indian Parliament and the 2008 attacks in Mumbai. It has of course long supported terrorist attacks in Kashmir. In past years, the nuclear threat from Pakistan has prevented New Delhi from responding forcefully to these actions – India’s failure to undertake a military response to the 2008 Mumbai attacks being one example. India is essentially a status quo power, whose first objective is often just to maintain the status quo. But as Pakistan is learning, the stability/instability paradox works in both directions. In 2016, after Pakistan-supported terrorists attacked an Indian Army base at Uri, Modi ordered a raid by Indian special forces against an insurgent’s camp in Pakistan occupied Kashmir. The so-called “surgical strike” was heralded as a major victory against terrorism. But while whole books have even been written about it – and even a movie – the details remain somewhat hazy. For its part, Islamabad claimed that the so-called “surgical strikes” never happened, and later invited foreigners to tour the area to “prove” that nothing happened. Each side, wanting to believe its own version, went away with honour served. We are seeing a similar dance now. These latest strikes allow the Modi government to trumpet a major victory against Pakistan, apparently “pre-empting” further imminent attacks against India. This time Delhi turned up the heat a little, striking near Balakot in (undisputed) Pakistan territory rather than in Pakistan occupied Kashmir. And, perhaps incidentally, Balakot is only around 60km from the city of Abbottabad, Osama bin Laden’s old hangout. For its part, Pakistan has again claimed that the strikes never happened and that the Indian planes were in fact forced by the Pakistan Air Force to jettison their bombs in uninhabited mountains and flee. Again, Pakistan has offered to show foreigners around a place somewhere near Balakot to show that nothing happened there. Nevertheless, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan met with Pakistan’s National Security Committee (which controls Pakistan’s nuclear weapons) and then announced that Pakistan would respond to the (non) attack “at the time and place of its choosing”. Whether Delhi and/or Islamabad feel the need to take further public action remains to be seen. But both will seek to manage events. The stability/instability paradox tells us that there may be room to move underneath the nuclear ceiling – sometimes considerable room – but also that the nuclear ceiling is still definitely there.