### 1AC – UT – Internalism/Externalism

#### Ethics must solve the internalism-externalism paradox—either reasons for action are based on an agent’s internal motivation, or on a priori objective reasons. However, both of these accounts fail since internal motivations are contingent and arbitrary, while external reasons beg the question of a source for these reasons. The solution is constitutivism, or the idea that ethics must be based on the nature of agency. Only this can solve the paradox—concerns derived from the nature of agents are objective and non-optional, yet are motivational for all agents.

#### Thus, the meta ethic is constitutivism.

#### Prefer

#### [1] Agency is the only non-optional enterprise—everything is part of it. Every action part of an optional enterprise is part of agency. This round is part of my identity as a debater, but it’s also engagement in agency.

#### [2] Regress—trying to escape agency necessitates using rational reflection about what I ought to do, which is part of agency.

#### Next, reason is constitutive of action

#### [1] Decision making—Agents have infinite ends available to pursue but have a limited means to pursue them—that requires reason to choose which ends to pursue.

#### [2] Action theory—any action can be divided into infinite states of affairs—only intent can unify our action into intended means and ends. Takes out util—there would be infinite states of affairs we would have to evaluate.

#### Only reasons that can be universalized across all actions can be constitutive of agency since agency is the ability to set and pursue ends—that means reasons that can’t be universalized can’t be applied to all instances of agency. There’s no prior distinction between agents so everyone must be able to will a maxim universally.

#### Coercion isn’t universalizable—willing your own freedom while violating someone else’s is a conceptual contradiction.

Engstrom [Stephen Engstrom, (Professor of Philosophy @ the University of Pittsburgh) "Universal Legislation as the Form of Practical Knowledge" http://www.academia.edu/4512762/Universal\_Legislation\_As\_the\_Form\_of\_Practical\_Knowledge, DOA:5-5-2018 // WWBW]

Given the preceding considerations, it’s a straightforward matter to see how **a maxim of action that assaults the freedom of others** with a view to furthering one’s own ends results in a contradiction when we attempt to will it as a universal law in accordance with the foregoing account of the formula of universal law. Such a maxim **would lie in a practical judgment that deems it good on the whole to act to limit others’ outer freedom**, and hence their self-sufficiency, their capacity to realize their ends, **where doing so augments, or extends, one’s own outer freedom** and so also one’s own self-sufficiency.  Now on the interpretation we’ve been entertaining, applying the formula of universal law involves considering whether it’s possible for every person—every subject capable of practical judgment—to share the practical judgment asserting the goodness of every person’s acting according to the maxim in question. Thus in the present case the application of the formula involves considering whether it’s possible for every person to deem good every person’s acting to limit others’ freedom, where practicable, with a view to augmenting their own freedom. Since here **all persons are** on the one hand **deeming good both the limitation of others’ freedom and the extension of their own freedom, while** on the other hand, insofar as they agree with the similar judgments of others, **also deeming good the limitation of their own freedom and the extension of others’ freedom, they are all deeming good both the extension and the limitation of both their own and others’ freedom. These judgments are inconsistent** insofar as the extension of a person’s outer freedom is incompatible with the limitation of that same freedom.

#### **But, rights claims are not enforceable in the state of nature because of the problem of assurance—without the state, there is nothing that can ensure rights will be enforced. Exempting yourself from the state is impossible since any disagreement would be willing coercion.**

Ripstein 04 [Arthur Ripstein, (University Professor of Law and Philosophy, [University of Toronto](https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=view_org&hl=en&org=8515235176732148308)) "Authority and Coercion" Philosophy & Public Affairs, 32: 2–35, 2004, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2004.00003.x/abstract, DOA:12-16-2017 // WWBW]

Kant explains the need for the three branches of government in Rousseau’s vocabulary of the “general will.” Kant finds this concept helpful, since it manages to capture the way in which the specificity of the law and the monopoly on [the law’s] its enforcement do not thereby make it the unilateral imposition of one person’s will upon another. Instead, it is what Kant calls an “omnilateral” will, since all must agree to set up procedures that will make right possible. All must agree, because without such procedures, equal freedom is impossible, and so the external freedom of each is impossible. But the sense in which they must agree is not just that they should agree; it is that they cannot object to being forced to accept those procedures, because any objection would be nothing more than an assertion of the right to use force against others unilaterally. Once the concept of the General Will is introduced, it provides further constraints on the possibility of a rightful condition, and even explains the ways in which a state can legitimately coerce its citizens for reasons other than the redress of private wrongs. Kant’s treatment of these issues of “Public Right” has struck many readers as somewhat perfunctory, especially after his meticulously detailed, if not always transparent, treatment of private right. He treats these issues as he does because he takes them to follow directly from the institution of a social contract. The details of his arguments need not concern us here, because he does not claim that these exhaust the further powers of the state. Instead, he puts them forward as additional powers a state must have if it is to create a rightful condition, and it is the structure of that argument that is of concern here.

#### Thus, the standard is consistency with the omnilateral will.

#### Impact Calculus—

#### 1] Side-constraint – a just government may only protect the rights of its agents and nothing else. Other moral problems aren’t obligatory

#### A] is-ought gap – even if something is bad, it doesn’t logically follow that we ought not do it – that’s why we do immoral things even though we know its bad.

#### B] Logic – the omnilateral will is inescapable which means that a government that violated the side-constraint wouldn’t even be a just government.

#### **2] Actor spec**

#### A] Solipsism problem – governments aren’t experiential subjects and lack intentions which means that other ethical frameworks aren’t binding. Only the omnilateral will can carry binding moral obligations toward the protection of freedom because of its constitutive purpose. And, bindingness outweighs because binding theories are the only ones that can guide action which is the only purpose of ethics.

#### B] Topic specificity – the topic asks what a just government ought to do which means that ethical frameworks must define the role of the government, means material consequences and empirical contingencies don’t link.

#### 3] Yes intent-foresight distinction – you’re not culpable for moral violations that you didn’t intend.

#### A] Fallibility – Consequences cause infinite other consequences which we can’t perfectly predict which means that foresight isn’t binding but intention is because it is constitutively moral or immoral

#### B] Action Freeze – agents could always abuse freedom which would justify never guaranteeing rights in the first place which is incoherent. The FW solves because it establishes a method for preventing coercive actions.

#### Prefer additionally:

#### 1] In setting an end, any agent must regard freedom as a necessary good. This is a side constraint on ends-based theories—if freedom is not a necessary good, then other agents can impede on the ends you set.

Gewirth 84 bracketed for grammar and gendered language [Alan Gewirth, () "The Ontological Basis of Natural Law: A Critique and an Alternative" American Journal Of Jurisprudence: Vol. 29: Iss. 1 Article 5, 1984, https://scholarship.law.nd.edu/ajj/vol29/iss1/5/, DOA:9-10-2018 // WWBW]

Let me briefly sketch the main line of argument that leads to this conclusion. As I have said, the argument is based on the generic features of human action. To begin with, **every agent acts for purposes [t]he[y] regards as good. Hence, [t]he[y] must regard as necessary goods the freedom and well being that [is] are the** generic features and **necessary conditions of his action and successful action in general**. From this, it follows that **every agent logically must hold or accept that he has rights to these conditions.** For **if he were to deny that he has these rights, then he would have to admit that it is permissible for other persons to remove from him the very conditions of freedom** and well-being **that, as an agent, he must have. But it is contradictory for him to hold both that he must have these conditions and also that he may not have them.** Hence, on pain of self-contradiction, every agent must accept that he has rights to freedom and well-being. Moreover, **every agent must further admit that all other agents also have those rights, since all other actual or prospective agents have the same general characteristics of agency on which he must ground his own right-claims.** What I am saying, then, is that **every agent, simply by virtue of being an agent, must regard his freedom and well being as necessary goods and must hold that** he and **all** other actual or prospective **agents have rights to these necessary goods.** Hence, every agent, on pain of self-contradiction, must accept the following principle: Act in accord with the generic rights of your recipients as well as of yourself. The generic rights are rights to the generic features of action, freedom, and well-being. I call this the Principle of Generic Consistency (PGC), because it combines the formal consideration of consistency with the material consideration of the generic features and rights of action.

#### 2] The Kantian subject is the opposite of abstract and embraces an embodied subject—universalizability is essential to mutual recognition of others.

Farr 1 Arnold Farr (prof of phil @ UKentucky, focusing on German idealism, philosophy of race, postmodernism, psychoanalysis, and liberation philosophy). “Can a Philosophy of Race Afford to Abandon the Kantian Categorical Imperative?” JOURNAL of SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY, Vol. 33 No. 1, Spring 2002, 17–32.

“One of the most popular criticisms of Kant’s moral philosophy is that it is too formalistic.13 That is, the universal nature of the categorical imperative leaves it devoid of content. Such a principle is useless since moral decisions are made by concrete individuals in a concrete, historical, and social situation. This type of criticism lies behind Lewis Gordon’s rejection of any attempt to ground an antiracist position on Kantian principles. The rejection of universal principles for the sake of emphasizing the historical embeddedness of the human agent is widespread in recent philosophy and social theory. I will argue here on Kantian grounds that although a distinction between the universal and the concrete is a valid distinction, the unity of the two is required for an understanding of human agency. The attack on Kantian formalism began with Hegel’s criticism of the Kantian philosophy.14 The list of contemporary theorists who follow Hegel’s line of criticism is far too long to deal with in the scope of this paper. Although these theorists may approach the problem of Kantian formalism from a variety of angles, the spirit of their criticism is basically the same: The universality of the categorical imperative is an abstraction from one’s empirical conditions. Kant is often accused of making the moral agent an abstract, empty, noumenal subject. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Kantian subject is an embodied, empirical, concrete subject. However, this concrete subject has a dual nature. Kant claims in the Critique of Pure Reason as well as in the Grounding that human beings have an intelligible and empirical character.15 It is impossible to understand and do justice to Kant’s moral theory without taking seriously the relation between these two characters. The very concept of morality is impossible without the tension between the two. By “empirical character” Kant simply means that we have a sensual nature. We are physical creatures with physical drives or desires. The very fact that I cannot simply satisfy my desires without considering the rightness or wrongness of my actions suggests that my empirical character must be held in check by something, or else I behave like a Freudian id. My empiri- cal character must be held in check by my intelligible character, which is the legislative activity of practical reason. It is through our intelligible character that we formulate principles that keep our empirical impulses in check. The categorical imperative is the supreme principle of morality that is constructed by the moral agent in his/her moment of self-transcendence. What I have called self-transcendence may be best explained in the following passage by Onora O’Neill: In restricting our maxims to those that meet the test of the categorical imperative we refuse to base our lives on maxims that necessarily make our own case an exception. The reason why a universilizability criterion is morally signiﬁcant is that it makes our own case no special exception (G, IV, 404). In accepting the Categorical Imperative we accept the moral reality of other selves, and hence the possibility (not, note, the reality) of a moral community. The Formula of Universal Law enjoins no more than that we act only on maxims that are open to others also.16 O’Neill’s description of the universalizability criterion includes the notion of self-transcendence that I am working to explicate here to the extent that like self-transcendence, universalizable moral principles require that the individ- ual think beyond his or her own particular desires. The individual is not allowed to exclude others as rational moral agents who have the right to act as he acts in a given situation. For example, if I decide to use another person merely as a means for my own end I must recognize the other person’s right to do the same to me. I cannot consistently will that I use another as a means only and will that I not be used in the same manner by another. Hence, the universalizability criterion is a principle of consistency and a principle of inclusion. That is, in choosing my maxims I attempt to include the perspective of other moral agents.

#### 3] Performativity—freedom is the key to the process of justification of arguments. Willing that we should abide by their ethical theory presupposes that we own ourselves in the first place. Thus, it is logically incoherent to justify a standard without first willing that we can pursue ends free from others.

#### 4] Isolating unconditional worth within the other is uniquely liberatory and the basis from which other theories begin, so my offense turns and outweighs yours.

Farr 2 [Arnold Farr [Professor of philosophy at University of Kentucky, focusing on German idealism, philosophy of race, postmodernism, psychoanalysis, and liberation philosophy]. “Can a Philosophy of Race Afford to Abandon the Kantian Categorical Imperative?” JOURNAL of SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY. Vol. 33, No. 1. Spring 2002.]

Whereas most criticisms are aimed at the formulation of universal law and the formula of autonomy, our analysis here will focus on the formula of an end in itself and the formula of the kingdom of ends, since we have already addressed the problem of universality. The latter will be discussed ﬁrst. At issue here is what Kant means by “kingdom of ends.” Kant writes: “By ‘kingdom’ I understand a systematic union of different rational beings through common laws.”32 The above passage indicates that Kant recognizes different, perhaps different kinds, of rational beings; however, the problem for most critics of Kant lies in the assumption that Kant suggests that the “kingdom of ends” requires that we abstract from personal differences and content of private ends. The Kantian conception of rational beings requires such an abstraction. Some feminists and philosophers of race have found this abstract notion of rational beings problematic because they take it to mean that rationality is necessarily white, male, and European.33 Hence, the systematic union of rational beings can mean only the systematic union of white, European males. I ﬁnd this interpretation of Kant’s moral theory quite puzzling. Surely another interpretation is available. That is, the implication that in Kant’s philosophy, rationality can only apply to white, European males does not seem to be the only alternative. The problem seems to lie in the requirement of abstraction. There are two ways of looking at the abstraction requirement that I think are faithful to Kant’s text and that overcome the criticisms of this requirement. First, the abstraction requirement may be best understood as a demand for intersubjectivity or recognition. Second, it may be understood as an attempt to avoid ethical egoism in determining maxims for our actions. It is unfortunate that Kant never worked out a theory of intersubjectivity, as did his successors Fichte and Hegel. However, this is not to say that there is not in Kant’s philosophy a tacit theory of intersubjectivity or recognition. The abstraction requirement simply demands that in the midst of our concrete differences we recognize ourselves in the other and the other in ourselves. That is, we recognize in others the humanity that we have in common. Recognition of our common humanity is at the same time recognition of rationality in the other. We recognize in the other the capacity for selfdetermination and the capacity to legislate for a kingdom of ends. This brings us to the second interpretation of the abstraction requirement. To avoid ethical egoism one must abstract from (think beyond) one’s own personal interest and subjective maxims. That is, the categorical imperative requires that I recognize that I am a member of the realm of rational beings. Hence, I organize my maxims in consideration of other rational beings. Under such a principle other people cannot be treated merely as a means for my end but must be treated as ends in themselves. The merit of the categorical imperative for a philosophy of race is that it contravenes racist ideology to the extent that racist ideology is based on the use of persons of a different race as a means to an end rather than as ends in themselves. Embedded in the formulation of an end in itself and the formula of the kingdom of ends is the recognition of the common hope for humanity. That is, maxims ought to be chosen on the basis of an ideal, a hope for the amelioration of humanity. This ideal or ethical commonwealth (as Kant calls it in the Religion) is the kingdom of ends.34 Although the merits of Kant’s moral theory may be recognizable at this point, we are still in a bit of a bind. It still seems problematic that the moral theory of a racist is essentially an antiracist theory. Further, what shall we do with Henry Louis Gates’s suggestion that we use the Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime to deconstruct the Grounding? What I have tried to suggest is that instead of abandoning the categorical imperative we should attempt to deepen our understanding of it and its place in Kant’s critical philosophy. A deeper reading of the Grounding and Kant’s philosophy in general may produce the deconstruction35 suggested by Gates. However, a text is not necessarily deconstructed by reading it against another. Texts often deconstruct themselves if read properly. To be sure, the best way to understand a text is to read it in context. Hence, if the Grounding is read within the context of the critical philosophy, the tools for a deconstruction of the text are provided by its context and the tensions within the text. Gates is right to suggest that the Grounding must be deconstructed. However, this deconstruction requires much more than reading the Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime against the Grounding. It requires a complete engagement with the critical philosophy. Such an engagement discloses some of Kant’s very signiﬁcant claims about humanity and the practical role of reason. With this disclosure, deconstruction of the Grounding can begin. What deconstruction will reveal is not necessarily the inconsistency of Kant’s moral philosophy or the racist or sexist nature of the categorical imperative, but rather, it will disclose the disunity between Kant’s theory and his own feelings about blacks and women. Although the theory is consistent and emancipatory and should apply to all persons, Kant the man has his own personal and moral problems. Although Kant’s attitude toward people of African descent was deplorable, it would be equally deplorable to reject the categorical imperative without ﬁrst exploring its emancipatory potential.

### 1AC – Advocacy

#### I affirm: A just government ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike. I don’t defend implementation but instead the truth of a value judgement.

### 1AC – Contention

#### [1] Right to Strike defends liberty for workers to both set and pursue their own ends and resist coercion from others, Gourevitch ’18:

Gourevitch, Alex. “A Radical Defense of the Right to Strike.” *Jacobin* 2018. https://jacobinmag.com/2018/07/right-to-strike-freedom-civil-liberties-oppression

Workers have an interest in resisting the oppression of class society by using their collective power to reduce, or even overcome, that oppression. Their interest is a liberty interest in a double sense. First, resistance to that class-based oppression carries with it, at least implicitly, a demand for freedoms not yet enjoyed. A higher wage expands workers’ freedom of choice. Expanded labor rights increase workers’ collective freedom to influence the terms of employment. Whatever the concrete set of issues, workers’ strike demands are always also a demand for control over portions of one’s life that they do not yet enjoy. Second, strikes don’t just aim at winning more freedom — they are themselves expressions of freedom. When workers walk out, they’re using their own individual and collective agency to win the liberties they deserve. The same capacity for self-determination that workers invoke to demand more freedom is the capacity they exercise when winning their demands. Freedom, not industrial stability or simply higher living standards, is the name of their desire. Put differently, the right to strike has both an intrinsic and instrumental relation to freedom. It has intrinsic value as an (at least implicit) demand for self-emancipation. And it has instrumental value insofar as the strike is an effective means for resisting the oppressiveness of a class society and achieving new freedoms. But if all this is correct, and the right to strike is something that we should defend, then it also has to be *meaningful*. The right loses its connection to workers’ freedom if they have little chance of exercising it effectively. Otherwise they’re simply engaging in a symbolic act of defiance — laudable, perhaps, but not a tangible means of fighting oppression. The right to strike must therefore cover at least some of the coercive tactics that make strikes potent, like sit-downs and mass pickets. It is therefore often perfectly justified for strikers to exercise their right to strike by using these tactics, even when these tactics are illegal. Still, the question remains: why should the right to strike be given moral priority over other basic liberties? The reason is not just that liberal capitalism produces economic oppression but that the economic oppression that workers face is in part created and sustained by the very economic and civil liberties that liberal capitalism cherishes. Workers find themselves oppressed *because* of the way property rights, freedom of contract, corporate authority, and tax and labor law operate. Deeming these liberties inviolable doesn’t foster less oppressive, exploitative outcomes, as its defenders insist — quite the opposite. The right to strike has a stronger claim to be protecting a zone of activity that serves the aims of justice itself — coercing people into relations of less oppressive social cooperation. Simply put, to argue for the right to strike is to prioritize democratic freedoms over property rights.

#### 2] The omnilateral will necessitates the recognition of the right to strike

#### A] An agent can constitutively set and pursue ends which means that recognition of those rights are key to protect agency – anything else would mean that strikes are impermissible which would be coercive.

#### B] Right to strike is key to prevent coercion – employer disputes justify state intervention to arbitrate and decide who is correct.

#### 3] Its intrinsically coercive – workers striking is an assertion of agency which means that refusing to recognize their agency is contradictory because it assumes the agency to refuse their right in the first place.

### 1AC – Underview

#### 1] 1AR theory is legit – anything else means infinite abuse

#### – drop the debater – 1AR is too short to make up for the time trade-off

#### – no RVIs – 6 min 2NR means they can brute force me every time

#### – competing interps – reasonability narrows the theory debate to one issue of brightline, making it easy for the Neg to collapse to the issue in the long 2NR

#### – 1AR theory is the highest layer – the NC has 7 minutes to be abusive and 6 minutes to leverage the abuse against 1A theory in the 2N, making checking abuse lexically impossible

#### 2] Ideal theory is best

#### a) action theory – we’d constantly be fixing injustices as a precondition to ethical action so we never get to the bottom of what is actually ethical

#### b) relevance - every society has different injustices that occur – the resolution is a universal values statement which means you cannot universalize any theory under nonideal theory

#### c) every ethical theory can be misused – but that isn’t a problem with ethical principles, that is a problem with us – also means we should reclaim the true function of these ethical concepts in places like debate to challenge the way they are misunderstood

#### d) real world injustices need universal ideal principles to ground them and explain why they are wrong. Saying 100 lives still assumes 1+1 = 2 which requires a priori rules.

**Permissibility and presumption affirm**

**1] Gridlock- otherwise we would not be able to justify morally neutral actions like drinking water since there isn’t a prohibition and we would needlessly have to prove an obligation.**

**2] Trivialism- statements are true until proven false, if I told you my name you’d believe me.**

#### 3] Affirming is harder - A] 7-4-6-3-time skew makes every 1ar speech a time crunch that can’t justify a proactive obligation B] They know the aff but we don’t know the NC so the burden is on them. Structural skew O/W on reversibility since it can’t be changed.

#### 4] Negation Theory- Negating requires a complete absence of an existing obligation

Negate [is to]: to deny the existence of

That’s Dictionary.com- “Negate” https://www.dictionary.com/browse/negate.

### Advantage

#### Climate Strikes are illegal and threaten the employment and wages of strikers – legal recognition solves

Chilton 19 [Sarah Chilton; an employment, discrimination and partnership lawyer qualified in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, and a partner at CM Murray LLP in London; 9/16/19; "Climate Strike: The End Of Your Employment?"; Forbes; https://www.forbes.com/sites/sarahchilton/2019/09/16/extinction-rebellion-the-end-of-your-employment/?sh=ef8e0eb3ad82; 10-21-2021] //Miller

This is not a strike in response to a particular workplace issue, making it quite different to the strikes we are used to seeing. Over the years we have seen strikes by train drivers, junior doctors and pilots, usually in relation to pay, conditions and health and safety. This strike would be quite different. It is not a protest against the conditions imposed by a particular employer, but a strike about an issue much bigger than any one employer or industry. Is there a right to strike in the U.K.? Strikes are almost always unlawful as they involve employees breaching their employment contracts, by withdrawing their work from the employer. The law in the U.K. provides that, as long as certain strict conditions are met, employees will not be dismissed, and the trade union organizing the strikes would not be sued for inducement to breach the employee contracts (which action could otherwise be taken if the strike was not in compliance with the legal requirements). Strikes complying with these conditions are typically called “lawful strikes.” Before the trade union can organize a “lawful strike” it needs to ballot the members in compliance with strict rules, and needs a majority to vote in favor of the industrial action. If it does not comply with these requirements the strike will be unlawful, meaning that the employer can take legal action against the union, either to seek an injunction from the courts to prevent the strike, or to seek financial damages. The individual employees participating in an unlawful strike could be dismissed for breaching their employment contracts . Any employee participating in a strike, even a lawful one, is not entitled to be paid for the time they are on strike and therefore withholding their labor from the employer. Longer strikes can therefore have a significant impact on an employee’s earnings in the relevant period. What are the consequences of an “unlawful strike”? The Climate Change Strike is not organized by a union, there has been no ballot or compliance with any requirements. Employees who choose to strike and not turn up to work on September 20 or 27 will most likely breach their employment contracts and will not be entitled to pay for the time on strike and, perhaps more importantly, they may be dismissed by their employers. It doesn’t matter the reason, not turning up to work in this way is an unauthorized absence and can be treated by an employer in the same way as an employee not turning up to work for any other reason without permission, including, for example, faking a sick day. So, for those keen to make their voices heard, is there a way for employees to participate without running the risk of dismissal? An employee could take part in the strike by seeking an authorized absence from the employer, i.e. taking it as holiday or as agreed unpaid leave. The practical issue for employees in this situation will be that, if many of their colleagues also want to participate in a strike, and also seek approval for the time off, the employer will have a difficult decision to make and may only sanction some employee requests, to ensure adequate staffing cover. An employee does not have a right to take a particular day as holiday, and there is no general right to unpaid leave. Some employees may also have used up all their holiday entitlement for the year, especially those who have a holiday year running to end December, and at a time when the summer holidays have just come to an end. What can employers do if they want to support the Global Climate Strike? Many employers will be supportive of raising awareness of the serious issue of climate change. Environmental policy is increasingly moving up the agenda for businesses. Intelligent Hand Dryers, a company based in Sheffield, England, announced recently that employees may receive disciplinary warnings and could ultimately be dismissed if they use disposable coffee cups with plastic linings, plastic water bottles and sandwich packets with plastic windows at work. If employers want to support the Global Climate Strike, they could organize an agreed walkout, to allow employees to participate in protests or other activities at a particular time, or they could organize an event with employees, which involves doing something to help the environment or raise awareness of the issues. An employer could also review or implement a new workplace environmental strategy which seeks to put in place some measures within the workplace to reduce the impact of the business' and employees’ behavior on the environment. If employers are implementing or changing policies, they must do so in accordance with the law which may in some cases require consultation with employees about any changes before they can be implemented. It will be a risk for employees to strike on September 20 or 27 without permission from their employers, but, if an employer is facing such a strike, working with employees in advance, to take action over climate change as opposed to threatening disciplinary action, may, in the longer term, be more beneficial both for the environment and wider staff morale.

#### Internal Action by workers solves emissions, green tech, lobbyists, and the largest causes of climate change

Sax 20 [Sarah Sax; A journalist based in Brooklyn, NY, who reports on climate change and environmental justice; 4-23-2020; "Employees Are Fighting For A New Cause At Work: The Climate"; HuffPost; https://www.huffpost.com/entry/employee-activism-climate-change\_n\_5ea04b1ac5b6a486d082480d; 10-26-2021] //Miller

At the end of February, thousands of cleaning workers in Minneapolis marched in what's believed to have been the first union-authorized climate strike in the United States. The protesters, many of them immigrants and people of color who have seen their communities harmed by everything from air pollution to drought, wanted their employers to take action on climate change. Employed by more than a dozen subcontractors, these workers clean corporate buildings that are home to major companies like Wells Fargo and United Health Group. Their demands ranged from a guarantee of more environmentally friendly cleaning products to funding for a "green technician janitorial training program," which could help them push for more substantial changes during their day-to-day operations rather than wait for top-down measures. Employee activists like those in Minneapolis are on the rise. And unlike the traditional union focus on better pay, benefits and working conditions, they're pushing for something even bigger ― for companies to align with their values when it comes to one of the world's biggest issues. Namely, climate change. As public concern about global warming has risen, companies had already come under pressure from investors, shareholders and consumers to adopt more ambitious climate-related targets for their operations and products. But now that pressure is also coming from within. A recent survey of 375 global executives found that 4 out of 5 companies expect an "unprecedented rise in workplace activism" over the next three to five years ― with sustainability and climate change an increasing concern. While strikes and walkouts may still be the most high-profile forms of employee protest, workers are also taking their efforts online and connecting with those in other departments to amplify their voices. In November, thousands of Google employees signed a letter circulated online demanding that the company take more aggressive action on climate change. Physical protests with signs and chanting workers are obviously not wise during the COVID-19 crisis ― and more immediate concerns like health and job security are likely taking priority ― but employees' climate demands have not disappeared. "I don't think [the coronavirus pandemic] will halt employee activism. Not being prepared for a major crisis like COVID-19 has demonstrated how ill-prepared we will be for extreme weather events due to climate change," said David Levine, co-founder and president of the American Sustainable Business Council. Climate activists and advocacy organizations hope this new wave of activism from inside companies, driven largely by millennials, could be the key to getting businesses to do more than just "green" their operations. It could force companies to support ― rather than oppose ― serious government action on climate change or else risk losing valuable employees. "We need companies to be really ambitious in what they're doing in their operations. And we need employees to push them to be more ambitious in that work," said Bill Weihl, a former Facebook and Google sustainability executive who now runs the nonprofit advocacy group ClimateVoice, which pushes companies to go "all in" on climate change issues. "But the thing that we really need them to step up and do," Weihl said, "is add their voice on the side of science-based climate policy everywhere." Corporations Speaking Out Advocates like Levine and Weihl argue that in the absence of U.S. leadership on the federal level, companies need to step to the front on climate change. In 2015, nations agreed to limit temperature rise this century to below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) under the Paris climate accord. Since then, the number of Fortune 500 companies pledging to reduce their carbon emissions has quadrupled, according to a 2019 report from the consultancy firm Natural Capital Partners ― with employee demands identified as a key driver behind much of this corporate action. Microsoft and Google parent company Alphabet, for instance, recently made climate pledges in part prompted by employees demanding more action. But according to Weihl, the **companies leading on climate** tend to **focus on** their **own operations**, while remaining almost entirely **silent on** the bigger public **policy changes that are needed**. There is a political risk in speaking out. **Without** public **policy changes**, however, "**we are not going to decarbonize** anywhere near fast enough," he said. And if other companies don't get involved, Weihl added, "that means the energy companies that are pushing in the wrong direction will continue to dominate the discussion." Over the next decade ― the timeframe that the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says is crucial for avoiding catastrophic global warming ― corporate action will need to focus not only on operational measures like installing more solar panels but also on pushing for smart, science-based climate policy. Fred Kruger, president of the nonprofit Environmental Defense Fund, implored CEOs in an open letter last year to "unleash the most powerful tool they have to fight climate change: their political influence." Employee activism is critical to driving this shift, Weihl said. He contrasts it with consumer activism. "If a company has 10 million customers, you have to move a lot of people before the company really notices and cares," he said. But most companies have far fewer employees than that ― which means smaller numbers of workers speaking up can have a big impact. Throw in the need for companies to recruit and retain employees, and workers' voices become that much more powerful. Engaging With Employees Perhaps no company's employee activism has been more in the spotlight recently than Amazon's. Last September, along with several other corporations, Amazon made its "climate pledge," committing to net zero carbon by 2040 and 100% renewable energy by 2030, ahead of a massive planned employee walkout. Then in February, the online giant announced a $10 billion fund to fight climate change. While broadly supportive of CEO Jeff Bezos' pledge and the climate fund, employees continue to push Amazon to embrace climate action across its entire business, protesting its role in providing oil companies with the technology to find drillable oil faster and in funding climate change denial groups. The relationship between Amazon and its employees remains contentious, as criticism rises over its response to both climate change and working conditions during the pandemic. In April, the company reportedly fired two employees who had been outspoken about climate change. During a virtual webcast organized by Amazon Employees for Climate Justice on April 16 ― which the company reportedly tried to thwart ― the two urged their former co-workers to stage a virtual walkout to protest their firings and the treatment of warehouse workers amid the COVID-19 crisis. Some companies have been proactive in accommodating their employees ― such as Patagonia and Ben & Jerry's, which closed their shops for the Global Climate Strike last September ― but Amazon has done the opposite. It recently introduced a policy barring employees from publicly criticizing the company without prior approval. When asked about the rise in employee activism and the firing of the two workers, an Amazon spokesperson told HuffPost that "we support every employee's right to criticize their employer's working conditions, but that does not come with blanket immunity against any and all internal policies. "The price of ignoring or dismissing employee activism could be huge. According to a survey by law firm Herbert Smith Freehills, employee activism could cost organizations up to 25% of their global revenue each year due to the disruptive nature of strikes and reputational damage leading to lost business. "Today the purpose of a company has to align with climate change and employees are calling really strongly for that," said Farid Baddache, the CEO and co-founder of the sustainability consulting and impact investing firm Ksapa. The Future Workforce Figuring out how to navigate a world in which employees expect businesses to operate with a purpose beyond the bottom line may not be easy for companies, but it is critical because this new wave of activism is connected to the shifting demographics of the workforce. Millennials now make up over a third of the U.S. workforce, constituting the largest share of any generation. They are more likely than older generations to be employee activists, according to one survey by Weber Shandwick. And according to LinkedIn's 2018 Workplace Report, 86% of millennials would consider taking a pay cut to work for companies whose values aligned with their own. For Jake Elliott, 34, who specifically chose to work for Vermont solar power company SunCommon because the firm shared his values, climate change is "the number one most important thing." "When you look at global carbon emissions, the majority of carbon emissions are coming from businesses, so it is an obligation and requirement of business to address the climate crisis," he told HuffPost. Younger generations "don't want to commit to work for a company that is contributing to climate change," said Baddache, "or if they believe that the company is part of the problem rather than the solution." Corporate America is increasingly aware of this. "The talent Adobe wishes to recruit and retain expects us to set meaningful climate goals and work to meet them," Vince Digneo, sustainability strategist at Adobe has said previously. "Our employees want to see us take good action but not just among a flurry of other companies doing the same thing ― it has to have a meaningful impact." This sentiment is true not just among current employees but also future ones. A group of law students at Yale and Harvard, for example, are boycotting internships with Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison because it represents Exxon Mobil. They're accusing the law firm of enabling the destructive impact of the world's largest oil company in the climate crisis. "Companies need to hire people and they need to retain people," Weihl said. This will all become more difficult "if they are on the wrong side of an issue that many of their employees see as an existential threat to their future."

#### Striking is needed for active climate reform

**Schaeffer 20** [Felipe Schaeffer Neves; political and environmental analyst. Felipe has worked for years with outdoor education focused on social projects for people in vulnerability situations. He expands its work from a holistic view of society, offering critical analyses, effectively correcting failures and fostering social and humanitarian awareness. Not to mention his ability to dialogue with the team, both personally and digitally. It was a pleasure to work with Felipe over the years; November 09, 2020; Climate Strikes: how effective is it to participate in them?; <https://lfca.earth/strikes/>] //Miller

This holistic approach to climate striking realizes how interconnected all social issues are and, as a form of nonviolent civil disobedience, is proving to be very effective in turning the spotlight to the climate crisis. Furthermore, striking, as a way of collective action, makes people feel empowered and more hopeful. This promotes awareness at the micro level and greater media attention at the macro level. In addition, it increases public pressure on elected officials and creates a fertile ground for discussing new strategies for halting global warming. A 2019 study published in the Journal of Environmental Psychology suggests **that striking can promote** the most important psychological factors **for fighting climate change**. This is **because** of the sense **of empowerment** that **collective action can create** on people. Whilst **you may not feel** like **your voice is being heard by carrying a sign alone** (though this is precisely what Greta Thunberg did), this very **action becomes much more powerful when carried out together with tens of thousands of people pressing for the same demands.** Striking implies collective action, which is all the more encouraging than isolated efforts, inasmuch as humans are social animals. The feeling of hopelessness and despair that inevitably emerges as we face the facts can be overpowered by a sense of community and solidarity. Obviously, this is not to dismiss individual environmental efforts, such as recycling, ethical consumerism, and veganism; these actions go hand in hand with striking. In fact, these two spheres – individualism and collectivism – are intertwined in the ever-evolving understanding of self and one’s place within the natural and social worlds. The socially constructed notion of individualism is simply not enough of a force to face the biggest crisis of our times. With this in mind, strikes are places where ideas emerge, disinformation is demystified and strategies can be discussed. It is the moment when people see their concerns being shared by many and their hopes being multiplied. A typical practice for displaying one’s active involvement in the strikes and the general climate movement is the use of hashtags on social media. It is a simple yet clever way to share with one’s circle of friends and family their concerns and participation, and to call attention to which actions are being planned. Some of the most popular hashtags circulating on social media are (in order of popularity): #climatestrike, #climatechange, #fridaysforfuture, #climate, #climatecrisis, #globalwarming, #gretathunberg, #climateaction, #savetheplanet and #climatejustice. The **uproar** caused **by the press is also a major contribution** brought about by the strikes. The more people participate, the louder the “buzz” and, consequently, the bigger the interest of the media in the cause. The dissemination of the ideals of the movement is important to raise awareness amongst the population, and having allies in the media is extremely important for this. Major news outlets, such as the Guardian in the UK and the New York Times in the US, regularly publish articles and op-eds about the climate strikes. For instance, during the last climate week of action, in September of this year, the Guardian reported extensively on the protests, covering in detail what was taking place around the globe, the numbers, their demands, and rationale. **Striking can have a great effect on policy-making**. That is, p**oliticians tend to listen to what is being demanded** from the **masses**, after all, **they are the electorate.** The **bigger the strike, the more of a chance of gaining space in political agendas**. Eventually, there will be an **election** right down the road, **which is why politicians take these actions seriously**. An example of this is **England**, where **campaigners managed to pressure their government into banning various single-use plastic items, like straws, stirrers, and cotton buds, earlier this year**. In Europe, the European Parliament passed a law banning disposable plastic, which will take effect next year, and in the US eight states have already banned it, with the prospect of more states following suit. Moreover, an increasing number of **countries** are **pledging to become carbon neutral** in the next few years, ranging from 2030 to 2050. This is much **owed to the efforts of climate activists**, who use collective action as their weapon for policy-change. As this recent [empirical research](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s42055-020-00035-0) concluded, climate activism indeed leads to a legislation change in favor of the environment. If you want to participate in climate strikes, the best way to go forward is to keep an eye out for organizations such as [Fridays For Future](https://fridaysforfuture.org/), [Global Climate Strike](https://globalclimatestrike.net/), [Extinction Rebellion](https://extinctionrebellion.de/), amongst others. These groups are in the vanguard of the new climate movement and they are global, having branches in many of the major world cities who meet regularly to debate strategies for action. They also organize and publish actions via social media groups, guiding participants on what to take, how to act, and what to do in the strikes. Their approaches differ slightly, with Fridays For Future being a more young-led movement whilst Extinction Rebellion amounting to a slightly older crowd. Both advocate non-violence and non-proprietary destruction in their strikes. The actions that occur in strikes are varied but, usually, performative. Some people may dress in flamboyant clothes, with costumes related to their cause, and hold signs with impact messages, dancing, singing, and interpreting altogether. This is not mandatory but is a good strategy used to call media and public attention to their movement. In a sense, the more attention is drawn to the strike the better. The location, route, and meeting place are also strategically important. Fridays for Future, for example, has an [interactive map](https://fridaysforfuture.org/action-map/map/) with the location of each strike around the world, which remains the same every Friday. On the other hand, Extinction Rebellion changes the location according to the [event's theme](https://extinctionrebellion.de/veranstaltungen/), making it possible to be in places such as public institutions, corporate headquarters, or tourist transit locations. Each of these actions is organized collectively and informed to the participants, so it is important to be informed before going on strike. There are, of course, other tools for manifesting discontent and building a movement. Signing and creating petitions is a great way to gather support for the climate cause, which is almost effortless. A petition should not replace striking however, but they can complement each other as they possess particular virtues. For instance, an online petition can go viral worldwide, gathering thousands of signatures (and even millions in some extreme cases) in support of the cause, which works brilliantly to raise awareness and build momentum for the next strike. It is also a great way to create a connection with people and educate them about the climate, as well as making the demands more clear and accessible to the public. A good example of this is a petition against oil drilling in the Arctic, which at the time of writing of this article had gathered over a million signatures and was still live, so you can [sign it](https://www.change.org/p/arctic-slope-regional-corporation-protect-polar-bears-no-oil-drilling-in-the-arctic-wildlife-refuge?signed=true). Another tool in the climate activist’s toolbox is the boycott of companies, political parties, and any institution judged to be unlawful, immoral, and/or environmentally-unfriendly. Boycotting has proven to be very effective; two examples: in 2018 The Body Shop had to declare itself animal cruelty-free after a massive boycott campaign, and in 2010 Nestlé was forced to commit to a zero deforestation policy in its palm oil supply chain after only eight weeks of an intense boycott campaign. Boycotts get the attention of big companies because they hit them where it hurts: their market share and reputation. The website [ethicalconsumer.org](https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/ethicalcampaigns/boycotts) provides a comprehensible list of corporations to be boycotted, the reasons for it, and who is calling for the boycott. Perhaps one of the biggest victories for the boycott movement was the end of Apartheid in South Africa. As an active movement throughout the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, it was instrumental in ending the Apartheid regime of racial segregation. In the case of South Africa, the boycott movement operated at first as a consumer and academic boycott of products and services. Then, governments under pressure felt inclined to apply economic sanctions, and in 1970 South Africa was even expelled from the Olympics. Though unrelated to climate change, this illustrates how boycotting can work effectively to achieve extremely ambitious goals. Just like politicians, private companies also tend to take stock of their consumers’ behavior. Thus, if a substantial amount of people boycott companies that are known to disregard the new normative climate concerns, chances are that this company will revise their modus operandi hastily. Boycotting and petitioning are excellent companions to striking, the former two as passive forms of collective actions, and the latter as an active way to engage in civil disobedience and make climate demands heard. The aforementioned climate strikes of 2019, with the huge number of people that were mobilized, illustrate how effective strikes really are. Whilst **the greatest victory for the climate movement is still to come, one that will set in motion a radical environmental reform**, we can look at the general societal turn towards sustainability and renewables as a sign of the progress that has been made in recent years. As a process that is fed back to itself, strikes are both advancing this turn and also a consequence of it. In the electoral arena, for instance, there is a clear indication that political parties have realized the importance of sustainability policies in their agendas. In the electoral arena, for instance, there is a clear indication that political parties have realized the importance of sustainability policies in their agendas. This can be illustrated by the electoral success of Greens parties in last year’s European Parliament elections. In Germany, for instance, the Greens took 20.5% of the national vote, almost doubling their 10.7% share from 2014. Perhaps more significant still, was the exceptionally high turnout in Germany – 61.4% –, demonstrating that people care about both politics and the climate. In the corporate sphere, many companies actively support the strikes. Some, like Ben & Jerry's, Patagonia, and Burton have closed their factories and all their online and physical stores, and encouraged their workers to participate in the protests. Here in Germany, 2400 companies have joined under the banner of "Entrepreneurs for Future". And even Swedish bus manufacturer Scania has dedicated Friday to employee training on sustainability, which may seem somewhat paradoxical to the critical reader since Scania’s industrial sector is very polluting in nature. Nonetheless, whether they honestly do it for the climate or to gain advertisement, the point is that they are doing it because people are doing it. In short, striking, as a form of peaceful civil disobedience, is an efficient way to protest and build a movement. It is something that everyone can participate in regularly and feel empowered by the scale and intensity of collective action. What makes striking the perfect vehicle for a mass movement, is the fact that it places collective action as the protagonist, as opposed to individual acts. Moreover, it is the perfect environment for the exchange of ideas and experiences. A powerful mechanism in the uphill struggle to transform our carbon-emitting society into a sustainable, egalitarian, and just one; we should all participate in climate strikes. The bigger the strike, the more powerful and transformative it is – and we do not have much time.

#### A Climate Right to Strike creates better working conditions for workers in climate tech and directly transition our economy away from fossil fuels

Raman et al. 21 [Anita Raman, Research and Policy Development Extension Associate; Avalon Hoek Spaans, Climate Labor Research and Policy; Hunter Moskowitz, Research Assistant at Cornell; Zach Cunningham, educator with the Worker Institute at Cornell University's ILR School; 3-22-2021; "Double Trouble: How the PRO Act Could Solve Two Crises at Once"; ILR School; https://www.ilr.cornell.edu/worker-institute/labor-leading-climate/how-pro-act-could-solve-two-crises-once; 11-2-2021] //Miller

We are in the midst of a global climate crisis. As long as humans burn fossil fuels, global temperatures will continue to increase at unsustainable levels, resulting in sea-level rise, raging wildfires, extreme weather events, and other climate catastrophes. At the same time, we are in the midst of an inequality crisis. One major driver of our growing inequities is a decades-long assault on workers’ rights to organize into unions and collectively address workplace concerns. It is incumbent on us to solve both of these crises. But, if you’ve read the news lately, you may view these as separate - even contradictory - goals. President Biden “is trying to square environmentalists’ demands to stop burning fossil fuels with labor leaders’ desire for union jobs linked to oil and gas,” the Washington Post declared this month. Hitting a similar theme, Politico recently wrote that Biden is “squeezed between promises to go green and bolster unions.” Can we really tackle climate change and empower workers? To us, the answer is a resounding “yes.” In fact, we believe this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build a sustainable economy and create a more equitable, just workplace. On March 9th, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act. If passed by the Senate and signed into law, the PRO Act would be the most significant labor law reform in decades. Ever since private-sector workers gained the legal right to organize a union (with some notable exceptions), employers and business-backed legislators have fought to weaken collective representation. The Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 weakened the right to strike and empowered employers to fight union drives. It also allowed states to pass so-called “right-to-work” laws, which let workers benefit from union representation without having to pay dues or fees. In the decades since, employers have gone on the offensive by waging anti-union campaigns, misclassifying workers as “independent contractors,” and successfully pushing right-to-work laws in 27 states. Violating workers’ rights is routine, and low-road employers slash pay and benefits by locating in states unfriendly to labor. As a result, private-sector union density has fallen from a mid-century high of over 30 percent to just 6.3 percent today, while income inequality has skyrocketed. The PRO Act would fundamentally alter this dynamic. It would overturn bans on solidarity boycotts and prevent employers from “permanently replacing” strikers. Many independent contractors would have the right to unionize, undermining management’s use of misclassification as a cost-saving tool. Employers would face stiffer penalties for impeding unionization, making it easier for workers to use their voices. Significantly, the PRO Act would outlaw right-to-work nationwide. In other words, it would be a shot in the arm to labor, possibly ushering in a new wave of union organizing. So what does this have to do with climate change? A lot, it turns out. Every state in the country faces increased climate risks moving into the future, and there has been a real movement towards climate mitigation and adaptation work in recent years. But the workers carrying out these projects face a patchwork of labor standards depending on where they live. And in many of the states with the most climate risks, workers also have the worst protections. Take North Carolina, a coastal state with several barrier islands. Rising sea levels could have devastating impacts on North Carolinians. Fortunately, the state’s solar industry employs over 6,000 workers and ranks third nationally in installations with over 7,000 MW. Yet, workers in this expanding industry do not have adequate rights or protections. Oxfam ranks North Carolina 47th overall in its “Best and Worst States to Work In America” index, citing its lack of paid sick leave and limits on collective bargaining, among other things. This is not surprising given the state is one of the least unionized in the country. Georgia provides another example. Georgia ranks among the top ten states in solar energy production and has strong potential for offshore wind. But Georgians will soon face more intense heat waves, sea-level rise, a loss of soil moisture, and an increased risk of drought, posing health and economic risks to the 14 percent of Georgia’s workforce who work in the production of goods. Georgia ranks as one of the worst places to work in America due to its weak wage policies, poor worker protections, and obstacles to union organizing. Unionization rates stand at less than 5 percent. Like any other work, green jobs aren’t inherently good jobs. Just 4 percent of workers in solar production and 6 percent of workers in wind belong to a union, while utility workers currently have a unionization rate of over 20 percent. Boosting these numbers presents a key challenge to workers’ rights advocates. Many states have crafted climate plans meant to decarbonize their economies. Some unions have successfully pushed for states and public utility commissions to attach labor standards requirements when the government procures renewable energy projects. We should encourage this, as it has led to real, tangible results in states such as New York and New Jersey. New Jersey, for example, has required prevailing wages on solar development since 2012 without slowing new solar installations. But in many states, barriers exist to attaching labor protections to renewable energy work. Much of the job growth potential in clean energy, such as the manufacturing of parts or maintenance services, exist in the supply chain, which some might argue (wrongly, in our opinion) is outside the state’s direct influence. For many of these occupations, employers routinely misclassify their workers as independent contractors or obscure the true nature of their employment to avoid paying benefits. So where should we look to improve working conditions in less labor-friendly states, as well as up and down the supply chain? The workers themselves. By stripping away some of the barriers to organizing, the PRO act would create the conditions necessary for workers to organize. This could help increase unionization in the renewable energy sector and beyond. Union representation can decrease workers’ exposure to on-the-job risks associated with hotter temperatures, air pollution, extreme weather, natural disasters, and biological hazards. It could also reduce the vulnerability of workers in industries dependent on fossil fuels and other natural resources. Union training and apprenticeship opportunities - along with union-negotiated “just transition” legislation - will enable workers to adjust and thrive in a changing environment. The COVID-19 pandemic illustrates how important union representation is during a crisis. Unionized workers had a seat at the table, allowing them to negotiate for paid leave and workplace safety measures that decreased their risk of contracting the virus. Climate change increases the risk of infectious diseases in many parts of the country, and access to good health care, breaks, and paid leave will give workers better footing to handle the next crisis. As advocates, we do not have to choose between fighting climate change and providing high-quality jobs. In fact, we can only create true climate resilience when we protect workers and allow them to organize. If the United States wants to truly mitigate and adapt to climate change, we must ensure that all climate jobs are high quality and protected by union contracts. The PRO Act offers the type of protection that will allow workers a more equal playing field to fight for dignified work, a better quality of life, and a sustainable future for all.

#### Warming causes Extinction

Kareiva 18, Peter, and Valerie Carranza. "Existential risk due to ecosystem collapse: Nature strikes back." Futures 102 (2018): 39-50. (Ph.D. in ecology and applied mathematics from Cornell University, director of the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability at UCLA, Pritzker Distinguished Professor in Environment & Sustainability at UCLA)//Re-cut by Elmer

In summary, six of the nine proposed planetary boundaries (phosphorous, nitrogen, biodiversity, land use, atmospheric aerosol loading, and chemical pollution) are unlikely to be associated with existential risks. They all correspond to a degraded environment, but in our assessment do not represent existential risks. However, the three remaining boundaries (**climate change**, global **freshwater** cycle, **and** ocean **acidification**) do **pose existential risks**. This is **because of** intrinsic **positive feedback loops**, substantial lag times between system change and experiencing the consequences of that change, and the fact these different boundaries interact with one another in ways that yield surprises. In addition, climate, freshwater, and ocean acidification are all **directly connected to** the provision of **food and water**, and **shortages** of food and water can **create conflict** and social unrest. Climate change has a long history of disrupting civilizations and sometimes precipitating the collapse of cultures or mass emigrations (McMichael, 2017). For example, the 12th century drought in the North American Southwest is held responsible for the collapse of the Anasazi pueblo culture. More recently, the infamous potato famine of 1846–1849 and the large migration of Irish to the U.S. can be traced to a combination of factors, one of which was climate. Specifically, 1846 was an unusually warm and moist year in Ireland, providing the climatic conditions favorable to the fungus that caused the potato blight. As is so often the case, poor government had a role as well—as the British government forbade the import of grains from outside Britain (imports that could have helped to redress the ravaged potato yields). Climate change intersects with freshwater resources because it is expected to exacerbate drought and water scarcity, as well as flooding. Climate change can even impair water quality because it is associated with heavy rains that overwhelm sewage treatment facilities, or because it results in higher concentrations of pollutants in groundwater as a result of enhanced evaporation and reduced groundwater recharge. **Ample clean water** is not a luxury—it **is essential for human survival**. Consequently, cities, regions and nations that lack clean freshwater are vulnerable to social disruption and disease. Finally, ocean acidification is linked to climate change because it is driven by CO2 emissions just as global warming is. With close to 20% of the world’s protein coming from oceans (FAO, 2016), the potential for severe impacts due to acidification is obvious. Less obvious, but perhaps more insidious, is the interaction between climate change and the loss of oyster and coral reefs due to acidification. Acidification is known to interfere with oyster reef building and coral reefs. Climate change also increases storm frequency and severity. Coral reefs and oyster reefs provide protection from storm surge because they reduce wave energy (Spalding et al., 2014). If these reefs are lost due to acidification at the same time as storms become more severe and sea level rises, coastal communities will be exposed to unprecedented storm surge—and may be ravaged by recurrent storms. A key feature of the risk associated with climate change is that mean annual temperature and mean annual rainfall are not the variables of interest. Rather it is extreme episodic events that place nations and entire regions of the world at risk. These extreme events are by definition “rare” (once every hundred years), and changes in their likelihood are challenging to detect because of their rarity, but are exactly the manifestations of climate change that we must get better at anticipating (Diffenbaugh et al., 2017). Society will have a hard time responding to shorter intervals between rare extreme events because in the lifespan of an individual human, a person might experience as few as two or three extreme events. How likely is it that you would notice a change in the interval between events that are separated by decades, especially given that the interval is not regular but varies stochastically? A concrete example of this dilemma can be found in the past and expected future changes in storm-related flooding of New York City. The highly disruptive flooding of New York City associated with Hurricane Sandy represented a flood height that occurred once every 500 years in the 18th century, and that occurs now once every 25 years, but is expected to occur once every 5 years by 2050 (Garner et al., 2017). This change in frequency of extreme floods has profound implications for the measures New York City should take to protect its infrastructure and its population, yet because of the stochastic nature of such events, this shift in flood frequency is an elevated risk that will go unnoticed by most people. 4. The combination of positive feedback loops and societal inertia is fertile ground for global environmental catastrophes **Humans** are remarkably ingenious, and **have adapted** to crises **throughout** their **history**. Our doom has been repeatedly predicted, only to be averted by innovation (Ridley, 2011). **However**, the many **stories** **of** human ingenuity **successfully** **addressing** **existential risks** such as global famine or extreme air pollution **represent** environmental c**hallenges that are** largely **linear**, have immediate consequences, **and operate without positive feedbacks**. For example, the fact that food is in short supply does not increase the rate at which humans consume food—thereby increasing the shortage. Similarly, massive air pollution episodes such as the London fog of 1952 that killed 12,000 people did not make future air pollution events more likely. In fact it was just the opposite—the London fog sent such a clear message that Britain quickly enacted pollution control measures (Stradling, 2016). Food shortages, air pollution, water pollution, etc. send immediate signals to society of harm, which then trigger a negative feedback of society seeking to reduce the harm. In contrast, today’s great environmental crisis of climate change may cause some harm but there are generally long time delays between rising CO2 concentrations and damage to humans. The consequence of these delays are an absence of urgency; thus although 70% of Americans believe global warming is happening, only 40% think it will harm them (http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/visualizations-data/ycom-us-2016/). Secondly, unlike past environmental challenges, **the Earth’s climate system is rife with positive feedback loops**. In particular, as CO2 increases and the climate warms, that **very warming can cause more CO2 release** which further increases global warming, and then more CO2, and so on. Table 2 summarizes the best documented positive feedback loops for the Earth’s climate system. These feedbacks can be neatly categorized into carbon cycle, biogeochemical, biogeophysical, cloud, ice-albedo, and water vapor feedbacks. As important as it is to understand these feedbacks individually, it is even more essential to study the interactive nature of these feedbacks. Modeling studies show that when interactions among feedback loops are included, uncertainty increases dramatically and there is a heightened potential for perturbations to be magnified (e.g., Cox, Betts, Jones, Spall, & Totterdell, 2000; Hajima, Tachiiri, Ito, & Kawamiya, 2014; Knutti & Rugenstein, 2015; Rosenfeld, Sherwood, Wood, & Donner, 2014). This produces a wide range of future scenarios. Positive feedbacks in the carbon cycle involves the enhancement of future carbon contributions to the atmosphere due to some initial increase in atmospheric CO2. This happens because as CO2 accumulates, it reduces the efficiency in which oceans and terrestrial ecosystems sequester carbon, which in return feeds back to exacerbate climate change (Friedlingstein et al., 2001). Warming can also increase the rate at which organic matter decays and carbon is released into the atmosphere, thereby causing more warming (Melillo et al., 2017). Increases in food shortages and lack of water is also of major concern when biogeophysical feedback mechanisms perpetuate drought conditions. The underlying mechanism here is that losses in vegetation increases the surface albedo, which suppresses rainfall, and thus enhances future vegetation loss and more suppression of rainfall—thereby initiating or prolonging a drought (Chamey, Stone, & Quirk, 1975). To top it off, overgrazing depletes the soil, leading to augmented vegetation loss (Anderies, Janssen, & Walker, 2002). Climate change often also increases the risk of forest fires, as a result of higher temperatures and persistent drought conditions. The expectation is that **forest fires will become more frequent** and severe with climate warming and drought (Scholze, Knorr, Arnell, & Prentice, 2006), a trend for which we have already seen evidence (Allen et al., 2010). Tragically, the increased severity and risk of Southern California wildfires recently predicted by climate scientists (Jin et al., 2015), was realized in December 2017, with the largest fire in the history of California (the “Thomas fire” that burned 282,000 acres, https://www.vox.com/2017/12/27/16822180/thomas-fire-california-largest-wildfire). This **catastrophic fire** embodies the sorts of positive feedbacks and interacting factors that **could catch humanity off-guard and produce a** true **apocalyptic event.** Record-breaking rains produced an extraordinary flush of new vegetation, that then dried out as record heat waves and dry conditions took hold, coupled with stronger than normal winds, and ignition. Of course the record-fire released CO2 into the atmosphere, thereby contributing to future warming. Out of all types of feedbacks, water vapor and the ice-albedo feedbacks are the most clearly understood mechanisms. Losses in reflective snow and ice cover drive up surface temperatures, leading to even more melting of snow and ice cover—this is known as the ice-albedo feedback (Curry, Schramm, & Ebert, 1995). As snow and ice continue to melt at a more rapid pace, millions of people may be displaced by flooding risks as a consequence of sea level rise near coastal communities (Biermann & Boas, 2010; Myers, 2002; Nicholls et al., 2011). The water vapor feedback operates when warmer atmospheric conditions strengthen the saturation vapor pressure, which creates a warming effect given water vapor’s strong greenhouse gas properties (Manabe & Wetherald, 1967). Global warming tends to increase cloud formation because warmer temperatures lead to more evaporation of water into the atmosphere, and warmer temperature also allows the atmosphere to hold more water. The key question is whether this increase in clouds associated with global warming will result in a positive feedback loop (more warming) or a negative feedback loop (less warming). For decades, scientists have sought to answer this question and understand the net role clouds play in future climate projections (Schneider et al., 2017). Clouds are complex because they both have a cooling (reflecting incoming solar radiation) and warming (absorbing incoming solar radiation) effect (Lashof, DeAngelo, Saleska, & Harte, 1997). The type of cloud, altitude, and optical properties combine to determine how these countervailing effects balance out. Although still under debate, it appears that in most circumstances the cloud feedback is likely positive (Boucher et al., 2013). For example, models and observations show that increasing greenhouse gas concentrations reduces the low-level cloud fraction in the Northeast Pacific at decadal time scales. This then has a positive feedback effect and enhances climate warming since less solar radiation is reflected by the atmosphere (Clement, Burgman, & Norris, 2009). The key lesson from the long list of potentially positive feedbacks and their interactions is that **runaway climate change,** and runaway perturbations have to be taken as a serious possibility. Table 2 is just a snapshot of the type of feedbacks that have been identified (see Supplementary material for a more thorough explanation of positive feedback loops). However, this list is not exhaustive and the possibility of undiscovered positive feedbacks **portends** even greater **existential risks**. The many environmental crises humankind has previously averted (famine, ozone depletion, London fog, water pollution, etc.) were averted because of political will based on solid scientific understanding. We cannot count on complete scientific understanding when it comes to positive feedback loops and climate change.

#### Climate Change makes war inevitable.

Dr. Michael T. Klare 20, Five Colleges Professor of Peace and World Security Studies at Hampshire College, Ph.D. from the Graduate School of the Union Institute, BA and MA from Columbia University, Member of the Board of Director at the Arms Control Association, Defense Correspondent for The Nation, “How Rising Temperatures Increase the Likelihood of Nuclear War”, The Nation, 1/13/2020, https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/nuclear-defense-climate-change/

Climbing world temperatures and rising sea levels will diminish the supply of food and water in many resource-deprived areas, increasing the risk of widespread starvation, social unrest, and human flight. Global corn production, for example, is projected to fall by as much as 14 percent in a 2°C warmer world, according to research cited in a 2018 special report by the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Food scarcity and crop failures risk pushing hundreds of millions of people into overcrowded cities, where the likelihood of pandemics, ethnic strife, and severe storm damage is bound to increase. All of this will impose an immense burden on human institutions. Some states may collapse or break up into a collection of warring chiefdoms—all fighting over sources of water and other vital resources.

A similar momentum is now evident in the emerging nuclear arms race, with all three major powers—China, Russia, and the United States—rushing to deploy a host of new munitions. This dangerous process commenced a decade ago, when Russian and Chinese leaders sought improvements to their nuclear arsenals and President Barack Obama, in order to secure Senate approval of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty of 2010, agreed to initial funding for the modernization of all three legs of America’s strategic triad, which encompasses submarines, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and bombers. (New START, which mandated significant reductions in US and Russian arsenals, will expire in February 2021 unless renewed by the two countries.) Although Obama initiated the modernization of the nuclear triad, the Trump administration has sought funds to proceed with their full-scale production, at an estimated initial installment of $500 billion over 10 years.

Even during the initial modernization program of the Obama era, Russian and Chinese leaders were sufficiently alarmed to hasten their own nuclear acquisitions. Both countries were already in the process of modernizing their stockpiles—Russia to replace Cold War–era systems that had become unreliable, China to provide its relatively small arsenal with enhanced capabilities. Trump’s decision to acquire a whole new suite of ICBMs, nuclear-armed submarines, and bombers has added momentum to these efforts. And with all three major powers upgrading their arsenals, the other nuclear-weapon states—led by India, Pakistan, and North Korea—have been expanding their stockpiles as well. Moreover, with Trump’s recent decision to abandon the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, all major powers are developing missile delivery systems for a regional nuclear war such as might erupt in Europe, South Asia, or the western Pacific.

#### It's the most probable scenario for Extinction – you can’t negotiate with the environment.

* Climate change is unique from all other existential risks: 1) probability is super high—it’s already happening and we’re quickly approaching the threshold. 2) we’re not doing anything about it, especially at the scale to which it is occurring versus other threats. 3) firm historical precedent.

Wagner and Weitzman 15 (Gernot Wagner, Ph.D. Student in Political Economy and Government, Harvard University & Martin Weitzman Professor of Economics at Harvard University, “How does climate stack up against other worst-case scenarios?”, Excerpt from “Climate Shock”)

What then, if anything, still distinguishes climate change from the others remaining: biotechnology, nanotechnology, nukes and pandemics? For one, the relatively high chance of eventual planetary catastrophe. In Climate Shock, we zero in on eventual average global warming of 6°C (11°F) as the final cutoff few would doubt represents a true planetary catastrophe. Higher temperatures are beyond anyone’s grasp. Yet our current path doesn’t exclude eventual average global warming above 6°C. In fact, our own analysis puts the likelihood at around 10 percent, and that’s for an indisputable global catastrophe. Climate change would trigger plenty of catastrophic events with temperatures rising by much less than 6°C. Many scientists would name 2°C (3.6°F) as the threshold, and we are well on our way to exceeding that, unless there is a major global course correction. Second, the gap between our current efforts and what’s needed on climate change is enormous. We are no experts on any of the other worst-case scenarios, but there at least it seems like much is already being done. Take nuclear terrorism. The United States alone spends many hundreds of billions of dollars each year on its military, intelligence and security services. That doesn’t stamp out the chance of terrorism. Some of the money spent may even be fueling it, and there are surely ways to approach the problem more strategically at times, but at least the overall mission is to protect the United States and its citizens. It would be hard to argue that U.S. climate policy today benefits from anything close to this type of effort. As for mitigating pandemics, more could surely be spent on research, monitoring and rapid response, but here too it seems like needed additional efforts would plausibly amount to a small fraction of national income. Third, climate change has firm historical precedence. There’s ample reason to believe that pumping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere is reliving the past — the distant past, but the past nonetheless. The planet has seen today’s carbon dioxide levels before: over 3 million years ago, with sea levels some 20 meters higher than today, and camels roaming the high Arctic. There are considerable uncertainties in all of this, but there’s little reason to believe that humanity can cheat basic physics and chemistry. Contrast the historical precedent of climate change with that of biotechnology, or rather the lack of it. The fear that bioengineered genes and genetically modified organisms will wreak havoc in the wild is a prime example. They may act like invasive species in some areas, but a global takeover seems unlikely, to say the least. Much like climate change, historical precedent can give us some guidance. But unlike climate change, that same historical precedent gives us quite a bit of comfort. Nature itself has tried for millions of years to create countless combinations of mutated DNA and genes. The process of natural selection all but guarantees that only a tiny fraction of the very fittest permutations has survived. Genetically modified crops grow bigger and stronger and are pesticideresistant. But they can’t outgrow natural selection entirely. None of that yet guarantees that scientists wouldn’t be able to develop permutations that could wreak havoc in the wild, but historical experience would tell us that the chance is indeed slim. In fact, the best scientists working on biotechnology seem to be much less concerned about the dangers of “Frankenfoods” and GMOs than the general public. The reverse holds true for climate change. The best climate scientists appear to be significantly more concerned about ultimate climate impacts than the majority of the general public and many policy makers. That alone should give us pause.