## Framing

#### The value is justice because the resolution asks us to debate the role of a just government

#### The standard is maximizing expected well-being:

#### Only util guides action – studies prove pleasure and pain are intrinsically binding – otherwise people could ask “why not?”

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**Pleasure** is not only one of the three primary reward functions but it also **defines reward.** As homeostasis explains the functions of only a limited number of rewards, the principal reason why particular stimuli, objects, events, situations, and activities are rewarding may be due to pleasure. This applies first of all to sex and to the primary homeostatic rewards of food and liquid and extends to money, taste, beauty, social encounters and nonmaterial, internally set, and intrinsic rewards. Pleasure, as the primary effect of rewards, drives the prime reward functions of learning, approach behavior, and decision making and provides the **basis for hedonic theories** of reward function. We are attracted by most rewards and exert intense efforts to obtain them, just because they are enjoyable [10]. Pleasure is a passive reaction that derives from the experience or prediction of reward and may lead to a long-lasting state of happiness. The word happiness is difficult to define. In fact, just obtaining physical pleasure may not be enough. One key to happiness involves a network of good friends. However, it is not obvious how the higher forms of satisfaction and pleasure are related to an ice cream cone, or to your team winning a sporting event. Recent multidisciplinary research, using both humans and detailed invasive brain analysis of animals has discovered some critical ways that the brain processes pleasure [14]. Pleasure as a hallmark of reward is sufficient for defining a reward, but it may not be necessary. A reward may generate positive learning and approach behavior simply because it contains substances that are essential for body function. When we are hungry, we may eat bad and unpleasant meals. A monkey who receives hundreds of small drops of water every morning in the laboratory is unlikely to feel a rush of pleasure every time it gets the 0.1 ml. Nevertheless, with these precautions in mind, we may define any stimulus, object, event, activity, or situation that has the potential to produce pleasure as a reward. In the context of reward deficiency or for disorders of addiction, homeostasis pursues pharmacological treatments: drugs to treat drug addiction, obesity, and other compulsive behaviors. The theory of allostasis suggests broader approaches - such as re-expanding the range of possible pleasures and providing opportunities to expend effort in their pursuit. [15]. It is noteworthy, the first animal studies eliciting approach behavior by electrical brain stimulation interpreted their findings as a discovery of the brain’s pleasure centers [16] which were later partly associated with midbrain dopamine neurons [17–19] despite the notorious difficulties of identifying emotions in animals. Evolutionary theories of pleasure: The love connection BO:D Charles Darwin and other biological scientists that have examined the biological evolution and its basic principles found various mechanisms that steer behavior and biological development. Besides their theory on natural selection, it was particularly the sexual selection process that gained significance in the latter context over the last century, especially when it comes to the question of what makes us “what we are,” i.e., human. However, the capacity to sexually select and evolve is not at all a human accomplishment alone or a sign of our uniqueness; yet, we humans, as it seems, are ingenious in fooling ourselves and others–when we are in love or desperately search for it. It is well established that modern biological theory conjectures that **organisms are** the **result of evolutionary competition.** In fact, Richard Dawkins stresses gene survival and propagation as the basic mechanism of life [20]. Only genes that lead to the fittest phenotype will make it. It is noteworthy that the phenotype is selected based on behavior that maximizes gene propagation. To do so, the phenotype must survive and generate offspring, and be better at it than its competitors. Thus, the ultimate, distal function of rewards is to increase evolutionary fitness by ensuring the survival of the organism and reproduction. It is agreed that learning, approach, economic decisions, and positive emotions are the proximal functions through which phenotypes obtain other necessary nutrients for survival, mating, and care for offspring. Behavioral reward functions have evolved to help individuals to survive and propagate their genes. Apparently, people need to live well and long enough to reproduce. Most would agree that homo-sapiens do so by ingesting the substances that make their bodies function properly. For this reason, foods and drinks are rewards. Additional rewards, including those used for economic exchanges, ensure sufficient palatable food and drink supply. Mating and gene propagation is supported by powerful sexual attraction. Additional properties, like body form, augment the chance to mate and nourish and defend offspring and are therefore also rewards. Care for offspring until they can reproduce themselves helps gene propagation and is rewarding; otherwise, many believe mating is useless. According to David E Comings, as any small edge will ultimately result in evolutionary advantage [21], additional reward mechanisms like novelty seeking and exploration widen the spectrum of available rewards and thus enhance the chance for survival, reproduction, and ultimate gene propagation. These functions may help us to obtain the benefits of distant rewards that are determined by our own interests and not immediately available in the environment. Thus the distal reward function in gene propagation and evolutionary fitness defines the proximal reward functions that we see in everyday behavior. That is why foods, drinks, mates, and offspring are rewarding. There have been theories linking pleasure as a required component of health benefits salutogenesis, (salugenesis). In essence, under these terms, pleasure is described as a state or feeling of happiness and satisfaction resulting from an experience that one enjoys. Regarding pleasure, it is a double-edged sword, on the one hand, it promotes positive feelings (like mindfulness) and even better cognition, possibly through the release of dopamine [22]. But on the other hand, pleasure simultaneously encourages addiction and other negative behaviors, i.e., motivational toxicity. It is a complex neurobiological phenomenon, relying on reward circuitry or limbic activity. It is important to realize that through the “Brain Reward Cascade” (BRC) endorphin and endogenous morphinergic mechanisms may play a role [23]. While natural rewards are essential for survival and appetitive motivation leading to beneficial biological behaviors like eating, sex, and reproduction, crucial social interactions seem to further facilitate the positive effects exerted by pleasurable experiences. Indeed, experimentation with addictive drugs is capable of directly acting on reward pathways and causing deterioration of these systems promoting hypodopaminergia [24]. Most would agree that pleasurable activities can stimulate personal growth and may help to induce healthy behavioral changes, including stress management [25]. The work of Esch and Stefano [26] concerning the link between compassion and love implicate the brain reward system, and pleasure induction suggests that social contact in general, i.e., love, attachment, and compassion, can be highly effective in stress reduction, survival, and overall health. Understanding the role of neurotransmission and pleasurable states both positive and negative have been adequately studied over many decades [26–37], but comparative anatomical and neurobiological function between animals and homo sapiens appear to be required and seem to be in an infancy stage. Finding happiness is different between apes and humans As stated earlier in this expert opinion one key to happiness involves a network of good friends [38]. However, it is not entirely clear exactly how the higher forms of satisfaction and pleasure are related to a sugar rush, winning a sports event or even sky diving, all of which augment dopamine release at the reward brain site. Recent multidisciplinary research, using both humans and detailed invasive brain analysis of animals has discovered some critical ways that the brain processes pleasure. Remarkably, there are pathways for ordinary liking and pleasure, which are limited in scope as described above in this commentary. However, there are **many brain regions**, often termed hot and cold spots, that significantly **modulate** (increase or decrease) our **pleasure or** even **produce the opposite** of pleasure— that is disgust and fear [39]. One specific region of the nucleus accumbens is organized like a computer keyboard, with particular stimulus triggers in rows— producing an increase and decrease of pleasure and disgust. Moreover, the cortex has unique roles in the cognitive evaluation of our feelings of pleasure [40]. Importantly, the interplay of these multiple triggers and the higher brain centers in the prefrontal cortex are very intricate and are just being uncovered. Desire and reward centers It is surprising that many different sources of pleasure activate the same circuits between the mesocorticolimbic regions (Figure 1). Reward and desire are two aspects pleasure induction and have a very widespread, large circuit. Some part of this circuit distinguishes between desire and dread. The so-called pleasure circuitry called “REWARD” involves a well-known dopamine pathway in the mesolimbic system that can influence both pleasure and motivation. In simplest terms, the well-established mesolimbic system is a dopamine circuit for reward. It starts in the ventral tegmental area (VTA) of the midbrain and travels to the nucleus accumbens (Figure 2). It is the cornerstone target to all addictions. The VTA is encompassed with neurons using glutamate, GABA, and dopamine. The nucleus accumbens (NAc) is located within the ventral striatum and is divided into two sub-regions—the motor and limbic regions associated with its core and shell, respectively. The NAc has spiny neurons that receive dopamine from the VTA and glutamate (a dopamine driver) from the hippocampus, amygdala and medial prefrontal cortex. Subsequently, the NAc projects GABA signals to an area termed the ventral pallidum (VP). The region is a relay station in the limbic loop of the basal ganglia, critical for motivation, behavior, emotions and the “Feel Good” response. This defined system of the brain is involved in all addictions –substance, and non –substance related. In 1995, our laboratory coined the term “Reward Deficiency Syndrome” (RDS) to describe genetic and epigenetic induced hypodopaminergia in the “Brain Reward Cascade” that contribute to addiction and compulsive behaviors [3,6,41]. Furthermore, ordinary “liking” of something, or pure pleasure, is represented by small regions mainly in the limbic system (old reptilian part of the brain). These may be part of larger neural circuits. In Latin, hedus is the term for “sweet”; and in Greek, hodone is the term for “pleasure.” Thus, the word Hedonic is now referring to various subcomponents of pleasure: some associated with purely sensory and others with more complex emotions involving morals, aesthetics, and social interactions. The capacity to have pleasure is part of being healthy and may even extend life, especially if linked to optimism as a dopaminergic response [42]. Psychiatric illness often includes symptoms of an abnormal inability to experience pleasure, referred to as anhedonia. A negative feeling state is called dysphoria, which can consist of many emotions such as pain, depression, anxiety, fear, and disgust. Previously many scientists used animal research to uncover the complex mechanisms of pleasure, liking, motivation and even emotions like panic and fear, as discussed above [43]. However, as a significant amount of related research about the specific brain regions of pleasure/reward circuitry has been derived from invasive studies of animals, these cannot be directly compared with subjective states experienced by humans. In an attempt to resolve the controversy regarding the causal contributions of mesolimbic dopamine systems to reward, we have previously evaluated the three-main competing explanatory categories: “liking,” “learning,” and “wanting” [3]. That is, dopamine may mediate (a) liking: the hedonic impact of reward, (b) learning: learned predictions about rewarding effects, or (c) wanting: the pursuit of rewards by attributing incentive salience to reward-related stimuli [44]. We have evaluated these hypotheses, especially as they relate to the RDS, and we find that the incentive salience or “wanting” hypothesis of dopaminergic functioning is supported by a majority of the scientific evidence. Various neuroimaging studies have shown that anticipated behaviors such as sex and gaming, delicious foods and drugs of abuse all affect brain regions associated with reward networks, and may not be unidirectional. Drugs of abuse enhance dopamine signaling which sensitizes mesolimbic brain mechanisms that apparently evolved explicitly to attribute incentive salience to various rewards [45]. Addictive substances are voluntarily self-administered, and they enhance (directly or indirectly) dopaminergic synaptic function in the NAc. This activation of the brain reward networks (producing the ecstatic “high” that users seek). Although these circuits were initially thought to encode a set point of hedonic tone, it is now being considered to be far more complicated in function, also encoding attention, reward expectancy, disconfirmation of reward expectancy, and incentive motivation [46]. The argument about addiction as a disease may be confused with a predisposition to substance and nonsubstance rewards relative to the extreme effect of drugs of abuse on brain neurochemistry. The former sets up an individual to be at high risk through both genetic polymorphisms in reward genes as well as harmful epigenetic insult. Some Psychologists, even with all the data, still infer that addiction is not a disease [47]. Elevated stress levels, together with polymorphisms (genetic variations) of various dopaminergic genes and the genes related to other neurotransmitters (and their genetic variants), and may have an additive effect on vulnerability to various addictions [48]. In this regard, Vanyukov, et al. [48] suggested based on review that whereas the gateway hypothesis does not specify mechanistic connections between “stages,” and does not extend to the risks for addictions the concept of common liability to addictions may be more parsimonious. The latter theory is grounded in genetic theory and supported by data identifying common sources of variation in the risk for specific addictions (e.g., RDS). This commonality has identifiable neurobiological substrate and plausible evolutionary explanations. Over many years the controversy of dopamine involvement in especially “pleasure” has led to confusion concerning separating motivation from actual pleasure (wanting versus liking) [49]. We take the position that animal studies cannot provide real clinical information as described by self-reports in humans. As mentioned earlier and in the abstract, on November 23rd, 2017, evidence for our concerns was discovered [50] In essence, although nonhuman primate brains are similar to our own, the disparity between other primates and those of human cognitive abilities tells us that surface similarity is not the whole story. Sousa et al. [50] small case found various differentially expressed genes, to associate with pleasure related systems. Furthermore, the dopaminergic interneurons located in the human neocortex were absent from the neocortex of nonhuman African apes. Such differences in neuronal transcriptional programs may underlie a variety of neurodevelopmental disorders. In simpler terms, the system controls the production of dopamine, a chemical messenger that plays a significant role in pleasure and rewards. The senior author, Dr. Nenad Sestan from Yale, stated: “Humans have evolved a dopamine system that is different than the one in chimpanzees.” This may explain why the behavior of humans is so unique from that of non-human primates, even though our brains are so surprisingly similar, Sestan said: “It might also shed light on why people are vulnerable to mental disorders such as autism (possibly even addiction).” Remarkably, this research finding emerged from an extensive, multicenter collaboration to compare the brains across several species. These researchers examined 247 specimens of neural tissue from six humans, five chimpanzees, and five macaque monkeys. Moreover, these investigators analyzed which genes were turned on or off in 16 regions of the brain. While the differences among species were subtle, **there was** a **remarkable contrast in** the **neocortices**, specifically in an area of the brain that is much more developed in humans than in chimpanzees. In fact, these researchers found that a gene called tyrosine hydroxylase (TH) for the enzyme, responsible for the production of dopamine, was expressed in the neocortex of humans, but not chimpanzees. As discussed earlier, dopamine is best known for its essential role within the brain’s reward system; the very system that responds to everything from sex, to gambling, to food, and to addictive drugs. However, dopamine also assists in regulating emotional responses, memory, and movement. Notably, abnormal dopamine levels have been linked to disorders including Parkinson’s, schizophrenia and spectrum disorders such as autism and addiction or RDS. Nora Volkow, the director of NIDA, pointed out that one alluring possibility is that the neurotransmitter dopamine plays a substantial role in humans’ ability to pursue various rewards that are perhaps months or even years away in the future. This same idea has been suggested by Dr. Robert Sapolsky, a professor of biology and neurology at Stanford University. Dr. Sapolsky cited evidence that dopamine levels rise dramatically in humans when we anticipate potential rewards that are uncertain and even far off in our futures, such as retirement or even the possible alterlife. This may explain what often motivates people to work for things that have no apparent short-term benefit [51]. In similar work, Volkow and Bale [52] proposed a model in which dopamine can favor NOW processes through phasic signaling in reward circuits or LATER processes through tonic signaling in control circuits. Specifically, they suggest that through its modulation of the orbitofrontal cortex, which processes salience attribution, dopamine also enables shilting from NOW to LATER, while its modulation of the insula, which processes interoceptive information, influences the probability of selecting NOW versus LATER actions based on an individual’s physiological state. This hypothesis further supports the concept that disruptions along these circuits contribute to diverse pathologies, including obesity and addiction or RDS.

#### Extinction comes first under any framework

Pummer 15 [Theron, Junior Research Fellow in Philosophy at St. Anne's College, University of Oxford. “Moral Agreement on Saving the World” Practical Ethics, University of Oxford. May 18, 2015] brett

There appears to be lot of disagreement in moral philosophy. Whether these many apparent disagreements are deep and irresolvable, I believe there is at least one thing it is reasonable to agree on right now, whatever general moral view we adopt: that it is very important to reduce the risk that all intelligent beings on this planet are eliminated by an enormous catastrophe, such as a nuclear war. How we might in fact try to reduce such existential risks is discussed elsewhere. My claim here is only that we – whether we’re consequentialists, deontologists, or virtue ethicists – should all agree that we should try to save the world. According to consequentialism, we should maximize the good, where this is taken to be the goodness, from an impartial perspective, of outcomes. Clearly one thing that makes an outcome good is that the people in it are doing well. There is little disagreement here. If the happiness or well-being of possible future people is just as important as that of people who already exist, and if they would have good lives, it is not hard to see how reducing existential risk is easily the most important thing in the whole world. This is for the familiar reason that there are so many people who could exist in the future – there are trillions upon trillions… upon trillions. There are so many possible future people that reducing existential risk is arguably the most important thing in the world, even if the well-being of these possible people were given only 0.001% as much weight as that of existing people. Even on a wholly person-affecting view – according to which there’s nothing (apart from effects on existing people) to be said in favor of creating happy people – the case for reducing existential risk is very strong. As noted in this seminal paper, this case is strengthened by the fact that there’s a good chance that many existing people will, with the aid of life-extension technology, live very long and very high quality lives. You might think what I have just argued applies to consequentialists only. There is a tendency to assume that, if an argument appeals to consequentialist considerations (the goodness of outcomes), it is irrelevant to non-consequentialists. But that is a huge mistake. Non-consequentialism is the view that there’s more that determines rightness than the goodness of consequences or outcomes; it is not the view that the latter don’t matter. Even John Rawls wrote, “All ethical doctrines worth our attention take consequences into account in judging rightness. One which did not would simply be irrational, crazy.” Minimally plausible versions of deontology and virtue ethics must be concerned in part with promoting the good, from an impartial point of view. They’d thus imply very strong reasons to reduce existential risk, at least when this doesn’t significantly involve doing harm to others or damaging one’s character. What’s even more surprising, perhaps, is that even if our own good (or that of those near and dear to us) has much greater weight than goodness from the impartial “point of view of the universe,” indeed even if the latter is entirely morally irrelevant, we may nonetheless have very strong reasons to reduce existential risk. Even egoism, the view that each agent should maximize her own good, might imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk. It will depend, among other things, on what one’s own good consists in. If well-being consisted in pleasure only, it is somewhat harder to argue that egoism would imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk – perhaps we could argue that one would maximize her expected hedonic well-being by funding life extension technology or by having herself cryogenically frozen at the time of her bodily death as well as giving money to reduce existential risk (so that there is a world for her to live in!). I am not sure, however, how strong the reasons to do this would be. But views which imply that, if I don’t care about other people, I have no or very little reason to help them are not even minimally plausible views (in addition to hedonistic egoism, I here have in mind views that imply that one has no reason to perform an act unless one actually desires to do that act). To be minimally plausible, egoism will need to be paired with a more sophisticated account of well-being. To see this, it is enough to consider, as Plato did, the possibility of a ring of invisibility – suppose that, while wearing it, Ayn could derive some pleasure by helping the poor, but instead could derive just a bit more by severely harming them. Hedonistic egoism would absurdly imply she should do the latter. To avoid this implication, egoists would need to build something like the meaningfulness of a life into well-being, in some robust way, where this would to a significant extent be a function of other-regarding concerns (see chapter 12 of this classic intro to ethics). But once these elements are included, we can (roughly, as above) argue that this sort of egoism will imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk. Add to all of this Samuel Scheffler’s recent intriguing arguments (quick podcast version available here) that most of what makes our lives go well would be undermined if there were no future generations of intelligent persons. On his view, my life would contain vastly less well-being if (say) a year after my death the world came to an end. So obviously if Scheffler were right I’d have very strong reason to reduce existential risk. We should also take into account moral uncertainty. What is it reasonable for one to do, when one is uncertain not (only) about the empirical facts, but also about the moral facts? I’ve just argued that there’s agreement among minimally plausible ethical views that we have strong reason to reduce existential risk – not only consequentialists, but also deontologists, virtue ethicists, and sophisticated egoists should agree. But even those (hedonistic egoists) who disagree should have a significant level of confidence that they are mistaken, and that one of the above views is correct. Even if they were 90% sure that their view is the correct one (and 10% sure that one of these other ones is correct), they would have pretty strong reason, from the standpoint of moral uncertainty, to reduce existential risk. Perhaps most disturbingly still, even if we are only 1% sure that the well-being of possible future people matters, it is at least arguable that, from the standpoint of moral uncertainty, reducing existential risk is the most important thing in the world. Again, this is largely for the reason that there are so many people who could exist in the future – there are trillions upon trillions… upon trillions. (For more on this and other related issues, see this excellent dissertation). Of course, it is uncertain whether these untold trillions would, in general, have good lives. It’s possible they’ll be miserable. It is enough for my claim that there is moral agreement in the relevant sense if, at least given certain empirical claims about what future lives would most likely be like, all minimally plausible moral views would converge on the conclusion that we should try to save the world. While there are some non-crazy views that place significantly greater moral weight on avoiding suffering than on promoting happiness, for reasons others have offered (and for independent reasons I won’t get into here unless requested to), they nonetheless seem to be fairly implausible views. And even if things did not go well for our ancestors, I am optimistic that they will overall go fantastically well for our descendants, if we allow them to. I suspect that most of us alive today – at least those of us not suffering from extreme illness or poverty – have lives that are well worth living, and that things will continue to improve. Derek Parfit, whose work has emphasized future generations as well as agreement in ethics, described our situation clearly and accurately: “We live during the hinge of history. Given the scientific and technological discoveries of the last two centuries, the world has never changed as fast. We shall soon have even greater powers to transform, not only our surroundings, but ourselves and our successors. If we act wisely in the next few centuries, humanity will survive its most dangerous and decisive period. Our descendants could, if necessary, go elsewhere, spreading through this galaxy…. Our descendants might, I believe, make the further future very good. But that good future may also depend in part on us. If our selfish recklessness ends human history, we would be acting very wrongly.” (From chapter 36 of On What Matters)

## Plan

### PRO Act

#### The United States ought to recognize the unconditional right of workers to strike

#### The plan enforces all relevant parts of the PRO Act that restores worker’s right to strike

Rhinehart 21 Posted February 26, 2021 at 12:09 pm by [**Lynn Rhinehart**](https://www.epi.org/people/lynn-rhinehart/) (J.D., Georgetown University Law Center  
B.A., University of Michigan, Lynn Rhinehart is a senior fellow at EPI, where she works on labor and employment policy, with a focus on collective bargaining. ) <https://www.epi.org/blog/six-ways-the-protecting-the-right-to-organize-pro-act-restores-workers-bargaining-power/> [Working Economics Blog](https://www.epi.org/blog)///(\*ak)

When it was passed in 1935, the National Labor Relations Act declared that its purpose was to promote the practice of collective bargaining, where workers and their union sit down with their employer to negotiate over wages, safety, fairness, and other important issues. But over time, this promise has become hollow because weaknesses in the law have been exploited by [employers and the courts](https://www.epi.org/unequalpower/publications/private-sector-unions-corporate-legal-erosion/) to undermine workers’ bargaining power. Here are six ways the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act helps to level the playing field and restore workers’ bargaining power: The PRO Act has a process for reaching a first collective bargaining agreement. When workers first form a union, too often employers drag out the bargaining process and avoid reaching an initial agreement, because there are no monetary penalties in the law for bad faith bargaining. A year after forming their union, [more than half](https://www.epi.org/publication/bp235/) of all workers do not yet have an initial bargaining agreement with their employer. This leads to worker frustration, which employers exploit to undermine the new union. The PRO Act addresses this problem by establishing a mediation and arbitration process for reaching an initial agreement. The PRO Act requires employers to continue bargaining instead of taking unilateral action. Current law gives employers too much power to force its position on workers by unilaterally declaring that the parties have reached an impasse in bargaining and then either locking out workers—preventing them from working and getting paid—or implementing the employer’s proposals. This power, either alone or combined with the restrictions on workers’ ability to strike or put other economic pressure on the employer, puts employers in the driver’s seat in bargaining and greatly undermines workers’ bargaining power. To address this problem, the PRO Act prohibits employers from declaring impasse and locking out workers—a so-called “offensive lockout.” And the PRO Act requires employers to maintain the status quo on wages and benefits during bargaining—no more unilateral changes to put pressure on workers to cave in to the employer’s demands. The PRO Act gets the economic players to the bargaining table. Under current law, staffing firms, contractors, temporary agencies, and other employers try to evade their responsibility to bargain with workers and their union even when they have power over workers’ health and safety, schedules, wages, and other key issues. This leaves workers without the real economic players at the bargaining table. The PRO Act fixes this problem by adopting a strong joint-employer standard that will bring employers with power over wages or working conditions to the bargaining table. The PRO Act eliminates the ban on so-called “secondary” activity. In order to win a wage increase, a voice on new technology, safety improvements, or other bargaining priorities, workers need leverage to put economic pressure on their employer to accept their demands. But current law robs workers of their leverage in many ways, including a prohibition on so-called “secondary” activity that was enacted by Congress in 1947. In fact, current law instructs the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to give top priority to shutting down so-called “secondary” activity. These cases are given even higher priority than cases alleging that employers have illegally fired union activists, and statistics show this has in fact been the case. For example, in the first 12 years after the restriction on secondary activity was first implemented, the number of injunction proceedings against unions for engaging in illegal secondary activity [skyrocketed by 1,188%,](https://www.epi.org/unequalpower/publications/private-sector-unions-corporate-legal-erosion/) while virtually no injunction proceedings were brought against employers for violating workers’ rights. This restriction on secondary activity forbids workers from picketing or otherwise putting pressure on so-called “neutral” companies other than their employer, even if those companies could influence their employer’s practices by, for example, withholding purchases until workers and their employer reach a collective bargaining agreement. The restriction has been interpreted so broadly as to prohibit janitors from picketing a building management company over sexual harassment by its janitorial subcontractor. The Trump NLRB General Counsel [unsuccessfully tried to argue](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/biden-labor-appointee-frees-scabby-the-rat-from-legal-peril_n_6022e83dc5b6c56a89a4fa6a) that floating an inflatable Scabby the Rat balloon at a labor protest was illegal secondary activity, even though courts have consistently said such protests are protected by the First Amendment. Given the prevalence of subcontracting and the interrelated nature of business relationships, the ban on secondary activity does not reflect the realities of today’s business structures. It deprives workers of an important tool in the bargaining process and unfairly tips the power balance to employers. To correct this imbalance, the PRO Act repeals the ban on secondary activity. The PRO Act prohibits employers from permanently replacing strikers. Workers’ ultimate leverage in bargaining is to withhold their labor—in other words, to strike. The law technically protects workers from being fired when they go on a lawful strike, but this right has been gutted by a 1938 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that stated that employers can permanently replace, i.e., terminate, workers who are on strike over economic issues. Despite a slight increase in strike activity last year, the number of strikes continues to be at a historic low in part because of this weakness in the law. The PRO Act restores the right to strike by prohibiting employers from permanently replacing economic strikers. The PRO Act overrides state “right-to-work” laws that weaken unions. So-called right-to-work laws have nothing to do with getting or keeping a job—they are about weakening workers’ collective voice on the job. Under the law, unions are required to represent all workers protected by the collective bargaining agreement, but so-called right-to-work laws prohibit unions and employers from voluntarily agreeing that all workers covered and protected by the agreement should share in the costs of union representation through union dues or fees. This creates a “free rider” problem, where workers get the benefits of unionization but do not contribute toward the costs, creating a financial drain on unions. The PRO Act overrides state right-to-work laws and allows unions and employers to negotiate fair share agreements whereby all workers covered by the collective bargaining agreement share in the cost of representation.

#### The right to strike is guaranteed by U.S. law but it’s conditionality depends on the status of the limitations placed on it.

NLRB ND <https://www.nlrb.gov/strikes> | [National Labor Relations Board](https://www.nlrb.gov/) (The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is comprised of a team of professionals who work to assure fair labor practices and workplace democracy nationwide)///(\*ak)

Section 7 of the [National Labor Relations Act](https://www.nlrb.gov/how-we-work/national-labor-relations-act) states in part, “Employees shall have the right. . . to engage in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection.” Strikes are included among the concerted activities protected for employees by this section. Section 13 also concerns the right to strike. It reads as follows: Nothing in this Act, except as specifically provided for herein, shall be construed so as either to interfere with or impede or diminish in any way the right to strike, or to affect the limitations or qualifications on that right. It is clear from a reading of these two provisions that: the law not only guarantees the right of employees to strike, but also places limitations and qualifications on the exercise of that right. See for example, restrictions on strikes in health care institutions (set forth below).

## ADV---Unions

#### Current strike protection is weak, which decks unions, but policy would reverse it

HRW 21 April 29, 2021 6:00AM EDT Why the US PRO Act Matters for the Right to Unionize: Questions and Answers | <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/04/29/why-us-pro-act-matters-right-unionize-questions-and-answers> HRW (Human Rights Watch investigates and reports on abuses happening in all corners of the world. We are roughly 450 people of 70-plus nationalities who are country experts, lawyers, journalists, and others who work to protect the most at risk, from vulnerable minorities and civilians in wartime, to refugees and children in need.)///(\*ak)

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the [difficult economic and social realities](https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/02/united-states-pandemic-impact-people-poverty) for many working people in the United States and has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities. Low-wage workers, who are disproportionately women, migrants, and Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, have largely borne the brunt of the pandemic’s economic fallout.

Weaknesses and deficiencies in US labor law have made the situation worse. Workers face major obstacles to organize, unionize, and collectively bargain for [fair wages](https://www.ilo.org/legacy/english/inwork/cb-policy-guide/declarationofPhiladelphia1944.pdf), decent benefits, and safe working conditions. On numerous fronts, US laws fall far short of international standards on freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Now there is an opportunity to strengthen US labor laws. The Protecting the Right to Organize Act (the PRO Act), H.R. 842, S. 420 passed the US House of Representatives on March 9, 2021 with a bipartisan vote. If approved by the Senate, it would significantly strengthen the ability of workers in the private sector to form unions and engage in collective bargaining for better working conditions and fair wages. If enacted into law, the PRO Act would be the most comprehensive worker empowerment legislation since the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) of 1935.

This question-and-answer document addresses the PRO Act through a human rights lens, with a focus on the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. It examines the challenges of unionizing in the US and explains how the PRO Act would be a corrective. Current US law excludes certain categories of workers, makes it difficult for workers to join unions, hampers the fight for better working conditions, and has failed to keep up with the disruptive role of workplace technologies in organizing efforts. Addressing these shortcomings could help to bring US law closer to international human rights standards, and slow or reverse decades of rising economic inequality.

#### AFF solves captive audience AND permanent replacement---both substantively contributed to the trend against unions since the 70s

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An increasing volume of research demonstrates that erosion of worker bargaining power and collective bargaining have led to wage suppression and the deterioration of labor’s share of income. At the same time, bold and robust policy proposals to strengthen workers’ bargaining power have risen to a new level of priority for the center-left. President-elect Joe Biden has produced an extensive proposal to strengthen workers’ ability to form unions, and a comprehensive reform of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) recently passed the U.S. House of Representatives.

A full appreciation of the need for comprehensive labor law reform requires an understanding of the serious shortcomings in current law and how they have been exploited over the years by employers resisting efforts by their workers to form unions. Structural weaknesses in the law, exacerbated by anti-union amendments to the NLRA in 1947 and aided by a series of rulings by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and courts, have allowed employers to interfere in and defeat efforts by their workers to organize unions and to face no real consequences for doing so. The full effect of these trends can be seen by analyzing how dramatically new unionization fell in the 1970s—a trajectory from which the labor movement has never recovered.

This paper explains what happened to private-sector unionization in the 1970s by examining data on union elections and workers’ ability to achieve an initial collective bargaining agreement. After showing that a dramatically smaller percentage of workers have been successful at forming a union and winning a first contract, the paper examines the changes in employer anti-union behavior that contributed to this result.

Among its key findings, the paper shows that in the 1950s and 1960s more than 1% of those employed participated in an NLRA election each year. In the 1970s that share fell to 0.78% and in the 1980s to 0.29%. In addition, workers began to lose elections at a higher rate in the 1970s in the face of increased employer resistance. In the 1940s, workers won a union in 80 percent of NLRB representation elections, but by 1977 workers were losing more than half of these elections. And, while 86% of workers who chose a union were able to win a first contract in the 1950s, that share declined to less than 70% in the 1970s. By the 1990s, it was down to 56%. Putting these three pieces together—participation in elections, successful elections, and winning a first contract—we show that while 0.46% of the workforce was able to make it across the unionizing finish line in the 1966–1968 period, only 0.17% of the workforce was able to do so by 1978–1980.

In addition, by the 1970s employers were charged with committing significantly more unfair labor practices (ULPs), such as firing union activists during organizing campaigns. ULP charges against employers rose sevenfold between 1950 and 1980. Starting in the 1970s, employers also made greater use of the “free speech” rights included in the Taft-Hartley amendments of 1947, holding mandatory “captive audience” meetings to voice opposition to unions and make thinly veiled threats about what could happen if workers organized. Employers also began far more extensive use of a growing “union avoidance” industry of consultants. While there were just a handful of anti-union consulting firms in the beginning of the 1970s, by decade’s end there were hundreds, and a management consultant told Congress in the late 1970s that his industry had grown tenfold over the preceding decade.

Employers were able to defeat unions so effectively because, over the years, labor law had become heavily tilted against workers and toward employers. Though these employer-friendly laws were on the books in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, it was not until the 1970s that employers began to take full advantage of their power. Several key sources set the stage for this 1970s unraveling of workers’ bargaining power under the law. First, a Republican Congress largely neutered workers’ leverage in passing the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act over President Truman’s veto. Second, Taft-Hartley forced the NLRB to prioritize litigation against unions for engaging in so-called secondary activity over all other cases, including cases involving illegal firings of union supporters. Third, the law’s ineffective remedies became obvious, and the NLRB’s efforts to hold employers accountable for violating the law were stymied in the courts. Fourth, employers increasingly found an ally in the U.S. Supreme Court, which issued a series of decisions restricting workers’ rights and limiting employers’ bargaining obligations. Finally, employers started making greater use of replacement workers during strikes—a trend that grew in the 1970s and 1980s and significantly undermined workers’ right to strike. The cumulative impact of these factors meant that by the 1970s the law did not effectively protect workers’ bargaining power and gave employers a wealth of tools to resist unionization.

Legislative efforts to strengthen the law in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1990s were thwarted by an organized and united business community that stepped up to vigorously oppose and, through a filibuster by a minority of senators, defeat all attempts at legislative reform.

By telling the story through statistics, labor history, and the law about the various factors that resulted in the decline of unionization, this paper provides a more accurate accounting of the decline of unionization than do the frequent assertions of globalization or automation as the driving forces. Our empirical assessment of the role of globalization and automation focuses on the impact of the shrinkage on manufacturing employment. We provide detailed statistical analyses showing that at most one-fifth of the decline is due to manufacturing’s erosion, and provide evidence of the severe declines in union coverage in nonmanufacturing sectors (e.g., utilities, transportation, construction, mining, and communications) and in many nonmanufacturing industries (e.g., grocery stores, bus transportation, newspapers, metal ore mining, and building services). A review of various analyses of wage determination also casts doubt on a dominant role of automation and globalization on private-sector union decline. Last, an examination of international comparisons of union erosion also confirms a minor role for manufacturing decline, finding that the pace, intensity, and timing of union decline does not correspond to manufacturing’s decline.

Survey research confirms that working people want unions: Recent polling shows that nearly half of nonunion workers would vote to have union representation if given an opportunity to do so on their current job.

Labor law has not kept pace with workers’ interests and needs and provides a classic example of “policy drift,” the failure to update the law to reflect changing external circumstances, with the result that and the outcomes of the policy start to shift. Labor law’s support for workers’ ability to pursue union organizing and collective bargaining has declined over many decades, and efforts to remedy this drift have been blocked by a minority of senators despite majority support in both houses of Congress and presidential support for reform.

As policymakers and others concerned about the erosion of workers’ bargaining power and its impacts on today’s workforce debate measures to strengthen the ability of workers to organize, the background information and analysis in this paper should be of assistance in understanding the shortcomings in current law that need to be addressed if workers are to truly have the freedom to form and join unions.

#### The aff also solves restrictions on secondary strikes---that restores unions

**Bahn***, Kate (***2019***) The once and future role of strikes in ensuring U.S. worker power*. Equitable Growth. (2019, August 28). https://equitablegrowth.org/the-once-and-future-role-of-strikes-in-ensuring-u-s-worker-power/.

Washington University in St. Louis sociologist Jake Rosenfeld examines the role of work stoppages in his recent book [What Unions No Longer Do](https://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674725119), and finds that strikes at large firms began declining in the mid-1970s, according to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Work Stoppages file. Rosenfeld then digs deeper to estimate the trends of strikes at firms both large and small by calculating a broader measure using data from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service from 1984 to 2002. He finds a peak in strikes in the late 1980s and then a stark decline after.

The decline of strikes is a result of a variety of factors. One is the increased use of replacement hires, especially after [the PATCO strike of 1981](https://www.politico.com/story/2017/08/05/reagan-fires-11-000-striking-air-traffic-controllers-aug-5-1981-241252), when President Ronald Reagan summarily fired 11,000 air traffic controllers who were striking for higher pay and a reduced work week. President Reagan quickly replaced those striking workers with 4,000 air traffic control supervisors and Army members, sending a powerful message to U.S. workers about the use of strikes in labor disputes.

But even before this historic turning point, [the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947](https://www.nlrb.gov/about-nlrb/who-we-are/our-history/1947-taft-hartley-passage-and-nlrb-structural-changes) limited the ability of workers to strike. This included restrictions on [secondary boycotts and picketing](https://www.nlrb.gov/rights-we-protect/whats-law/unions/secondary-boycotts-section-8b4), both of which make striking especially difficult in today’s increasingly fissured workplace, where you cannot strike against the corporation that is at least partly responsible for your workplace conditions but not technically your direct employer. For example, workers at the franchises of McDonald’s Corporation who attempt to unionize are not protected by the Fair Labor Standards Act when picketing against McDonald’s because they are, most commonly, the employees of a franchisor, rather than of the main corporation.

These factors, along with a general increasing [business hostility toward unions](https://onlabor.org/captive-audience-meetings-a-backgrounder/) and lack of enforcement of labor protections, have ultimately made strikes less effective as a tool for collective bargaining in the United States.

At the same time, there is an increasing consensus today that unions are a positive force for increasing worker power and [balancing against economic inequality](https://equitablegrowth.org/examining-the-links-between-rising-wage-inequality-and-the-decline-of-unions/). In polling of support for unions and specific aspects of collective bargaining, Equitable Growth grantee Alex Hertel-Fernandez of Columbia University, along with William Kimball and Thomas Kochan of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, find that [support for unions](https://equitablegrowth.org/what-kind-of-labor-organizations-do-u-s-workers-want/) has grown overall, with nearly half of U.S. workers in 2018 saying they would vote for a union if given the opportunity. This is a significant increase from one-third of workers supporting unionization in 1995. According to their research, workers primarily value unions’ role in collective bargaining and ensuring access to benefits such as healthcare, retirement, and unemployment insurance.

Strikes have historically been one of the strongest tools used by unions to ensure they have power to engage in collective bargaining. But striking was viewed as a negative attribute in the survey done by Hertel-Fernandez, Kimball, and Kochan. Yet, when they presented workers with the hypothetical choice of a union exercising strike power with other attributes of unions, such as collective bargaining, support increased.

But strikes, of course, do not take place in a bubble. The wider climate of worker bargaining power and institutions that support labor organizing plays a role in making this historically crucial tool effective again. So, too, does the power of employers to resist these organizing efforts when the labor market lacks competition that would increase worker bargaining power.

[Monopsony power](https://equitablegrowth.org/understanding-the-importance-of-monopsony-power-in-the-u-s-labor-market/) is a situation in the labor market where individual employers exercise effective control over wage setting rather than wages being set by competitive forces (akin to monopoly power, where a limited number of firms exercise pricing power over their customers.) In a new Equitable Growth [working paper](https://equitablegrowth.org/working-papers/how-does-market-power-affect-wages-monopsony-and-collective-action-in-an-institutional-context/) by Mark Paul of New College of Florida and Mark Stelzner of Connecticut College, the role of collective action in offsetting employer monopsony power is examined in the context of institutional support for labor. Paul and Stelzner construct an abstract model with the assumption of monopsonistic markets and follow the originator of monopsony theory Joan Robinson’s insight that unions can serve as a countervailing power against employer power.

Their model shows that institutional support for unions, such as legislation protecting the right to organize, is necessary for this dynamic process of balancing employers’ monopsony power. In an accompanying [column](https://equitablegrowth.org/rethinking-collective-action-and-u-s-labor-laws-in-a-monopsonistic-economy/), the two researchers write that they “find that a lack of institutional support will devastate unions’ ability to function as a balance to firms’ monopsony power, potentially with major consequences … In turn, labor market outcomes will be less socially efficient.”

In short, policies and enforcement that support collective action such as strikes not only creates benefits for workers directly but also addresses a larger problem of concentrated market power.

Within the past few years, strikes have been revived as a bargaining tool. “Red for Ed” became the name referring to teachers strikes that took place across traditionally conservative right-to-work states. Beginning with the closure of all schools in West Virginia in 2018 following 20,000 teachers across the state walking out, this movement spread to Oklahoma, Kentucky, Arizona, and Colorado, among other places. These strikes were led by rank-and-file union members, rather than by union leadership, rendering them illegal under the Taft-Hartley Act, which prohibits so-called wildcat strikes. These strikes led to [significant gains](https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/29/us/what-teachers-won-and-lost/index.html) for these public-sector workers through organizing against policymakers rather than direct management.

Before Red for Ed, the “Fight for Fifteen” movement starting in 2012 and “OUR Walmart” starting in 2010 exemplified labor organizing in new mediums by conducting worker-led actions against large corporations that directly employ or control the employment (as in the franchisor-franchisee model) of low-wage workers. The efforts of [Fight for Fifteen](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/31/nyregion/15-minimum-wage-new-york.html) directly impacted New York state’s minimum wage increase to $15 per hour and has paved the way for a national movement for a higher minimum wage. OUR Walmart led [walkouts and Black Friday protests](https://www.thenation.com/article/great-walmart-walkout/) in the years leading up to [Walmart’s decision to increase wages](https://finance.yahoo.com/news/walmarts-hourly-wages-for-employees-will-go-beyond-15-probably-over-time-ceo-doug-mc-millon-160008612.html).

Many structural changes, such as the fissuring of the workplace, have reduced the ability of private-sector unions to make gains against employers, yet these strikes and labor actions represent an opportunity for growth. With the U.S. labor market increasingly dominated by the services sector, these strikes were conducted by workers whose jobs cannot move elsewhere and whose work we interact with in our daily lives. Ruth Milkman of the City University of New York [describes these labor actions](https://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY_GC/media/LISCenter/2019%20Inequality%20by%20the%20Numbers/Instructor%20Readings/Milkman-2.pdf) as similar to those that existed before the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 protected the right strike (before these rights were subsequently chipped away by the Taft-Hartley Act 20 years later) in order to unionize.

With popular and successful strikes in unexpected places, what will the role of strikes be in the future? Will workers continue recognize the strength of the strike and other labor actions, and will policymakers and enforcers make it a successful tool for increasing worker bargaining power? Research by Alex Hertel-Fernandez, Suresh Naidu, and Adam Reich of Columbia University [looked at](https://onlabor.org/polling-the-teacher-walkouts-strong-support-for-the-teachers-unions-and-future-labor-action/) the response to strikes following the Red for Ed movement in conservative states and found that residents of areas affected by the teacher walkouts broadly supported the strikes, with 39 percent saying they strongly supported the walkouts and another 27 percent somewhat in support of the walkouts, including half of self-identified Republicans supporting the strikes.

What’s more, the three researchers found that families that learned about them from their teachers or directly from the union had even stronger support for the strikes, compared to those who learned about them from other sources, such as talk radio. First-hand knowledge of strikes increases support for them.

In addition to Hertel-Fernandez’s work showing broad support for unions generally and increasing support for bold labor actions, more policymakers and advocates are providing much-needed proposals on how to foster a robust U.S. labor market and strengthen institutions that would make collective action more successful. Emblematic of this is Harvard Law’s Labor and Worklife Program’s [Clean Slate Project](https://lwp.law.harvard.edu/clean-slate-project), led by Sharon Block and Ben Sachs of Harvard University, which gathers academic experts and labor organizers to develop strong proposals that would increase worker bargaining power. Multiple 2020 presidential campaigns have followed suit, with new proposals to boost unions.

Unions in the United States are at their [lowest level of density](https://www.hamiltonproject.org/papers/the_shift_in_private_sector_union_participation_explanations_and_effects) since they became legal around 80 years ago, with 6.4 percent of private-sector workers in unions today. Yet there is increasing energy for bringing back this crucial force to balance the power of capital and ensure the fruits of economic growth are more broadly shared among everyone who creates it. Strikes are a compelling tool for dealing with [rising U.S. income and wealth inequality](https://equitablegrowth.org/the-federal-reserves-new-distributional-financial-accounts-provide-telling-data-on-growing-u-s-wealth-and-income-inequality/)—just as they were in an earlier era of economic inequality, when unions first gained their legal stature in the U.S. labor market.

#### Scenario 1 is inequality:

#### Best evidence concludes AFF---decreasing worker power causes inequality AND slow growth

Bivens & Shierholz 18, Josh Bivens is the director of research at the Economic Policy Institute (EPI). Heidi Shierholz leads EPI’s policy team, which monitors wage and employment policies coming out of Congress and the administration and advances a worker-first policy agenda. EPI (2018) “What labor market changes have generated inequality and wage suppression?” <https://files.epi.org/pdf/148880.pdf> brett

Some economists and policymakers might express unease at the view that the downsides of one deviation from “competitive” markets (either labor market frictions or market concentration or some other source of employer power) should be countered by introducing another market imperfection (e.g., unions or a binding minimum wage). But this unease is unwarranted. The “theory of the second best” clearly argues that once markets depart at all from perfect competition, efficiency may well be increased by further departures. For example, in the case of monopsony power in low-wage labor markets, legislated minimum wage increases can potentially move wages closer to efficient levels and increase employment.

At the macroeconomic level, this claim that stripping away bulwarks to workers’ power has failed to lead to efficiency gains seems extremely well supported by the evidence. While many of the policy changes that have limited workers’ market power since the 1970s were done explicitly in the name of efficiency-seeking, the rate of productivity growth (a measure of how much income is generated in an hour of work—the most common macroeconomic measure of economic efficiency) slowed radically in the years after the mid-1970s, as seen in Figure B.13 This slowdown was briefly reversed in the late 1990s by the large investment in information and communications technologies associated with the widespread adoption of the internet and by a period of tighter labor markets (Bivens 2017b). But this brief surge soon failed and productivity continued growing much more slowly than in previous periods—when policy had consciously supported the leverage of typical workers. In short, the policy movement to disempower workers not only led to less equal growth, but was also associated with significantly slower growth.

When we assert that most of the policy change that led to inequality and slower growth was focused on disempowering workers—and that policy going forward needs to work to reempower workers—we certainly do not mean to imply one should ignore potential policy opportunities that could erode employer power (e.g., through more robust antitrust enforcement). But the larger opportunities are likely those that lead to more labor market balance in the power between employers and workers by increasing worker power—not trying to move the labor market toward a competitive ideal that is not attainable.

#### Extinction.

Solt 11 – Frederick Solt, Ph.D. in Political Science from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, currently Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Iowa, Assistant Professor, Departments of Political Science and Sociology, Southern Illinois at the time of publication, “Diversionary Nationalism: Economic Inequality and the Formation of National Pride,” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 73, No. 3, pgs. 821-830, July 2011, Available to Subscribing Institutions)

One of the oldest theories of nationalism is that states instill the nationalist myth in their citizens to divert their attention from great economic inequality and so forestall pervasive unrest. Because the very concept of nationalism obscures the extent of inequality and is a potent tool for delegitimizing calls for redistribution, it is a perfect diversion, and states should be expected to engage in more nationalist mythmaking when inequality increases. The evidence presented by this study supports this theory: across the countries and over time, where economic inequality is greater, nationalist sentiments are substantially more widespread. This result adds considerably to our understanding of nationalism. To date, many scholars have focused on the international environment as the principal source of threats that prompt states to generate nationalism; the importance of the domestic threat posed by economic inequality has been largely overlooked. However, at least in recent years, domestic inequality is a far more important stimulus for the generation of nationalist sentiments than the international context. Given that nuclear weapons—either their own or their allies’—rather than the mass army now serve as the primary defense of many countries against being overrun by their enemies, perhaps this is not surprising: nationalism-inspired mass mobilization is simply no longer as necessary for protection as it once was (see Mearsheimer 1990, 21; Posen 1993, 122–24). Another important implication of the analyses presented above is that growing economic inequality may increase ethnic conflict. States may foment national pride to stem discontent with increasing inequality, but this pride can also lead to more hostility towards immigrants and minorities. Though pride in the nation is distinct from chauvinism and outgroup hostility, it is nevertheless closely related to these phenomena, and recent experimental research has shown that members of majority groups who express high levels of national pride can be nudged into intolerant and xenophobic responses quite easily (Li and Brewer 2004). This finding suggests that, by leading to the creation of more national pride, higher levels of inequality produce environments favorable to those who would inflame ethnic animosities. Another and perhaps even more worrisome implication regards the likelihood of war. Nationalism is frequently suggested as a cause of war, and more national pride has been found to result in a much greater demand for national security even at the expense of civil liberties (Davis and Silver 2004, 36–37) as well as preferences for “a more militaristic foreign affairs posture and a more interventionist role in world politics” (Conover and Feldman 1987, 3). To the extent that these preferences influence policymaking, the growth in economic inequality over the last quarter century should be expected to lead to more aggressive foreign policies and more international conflict. If economic inequality prompts states to generate diversionary nationalism as the results presented above suggest, then rising inequality could make for a more dangerous world. The results of this work also contribute to our still limited knowledge of the relationship between economic inequality and democratic politics. In particular, it helps explain the fact that, contrary to median-voter models of redistribution (e.g., Meltzer and Richard 1981), democracies with higher levels of inequality do not consistently respond with more redistribution (e.g., Bénabou 1996). Rather than allowing redistribution to be decided through the democratic process suggested by such models, this work suggests that states often respond to higher levels of inequality with more nationalism. Nationalism then works to divert attention from inequality, so many citizens neither realize the extent of inequality nor demand redistributive policies. By prompting states to promote nationalism, greater economic inequality removes the issue of redistribution from debate and therefore narrows the scope of democratic politics.

#### Scenario 2 is democracy:

#### Unions are key to it

Levitz, 19 (Eric, “Democracy Dies When Labor Unions Do,” New York: Intelligencer, 9/18/19, <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2019/09/democracy-dies-when-labor-unions-do.html>)

But these facts say less about the deficiencies of democracy than they do about about the insufficiency of elections — by themselves — to produce popular self-rule. The alternative to naive faith in the omnicompetence of the individual voter need not be an equally naive faith in that of unelected technocrats. The most vital mediating institutions in a liberal democracy are not those formed by elites to check the irrational appetites of ordinary voters, but rather, those formed by ordinary voters to check the avarice of elites. Democracy asks too much of the individual. But if individuals organize collectively, they can force democracy to give them a better deal.

Which is a fancy way of saying: To repair American democracy — and fortify it against future threats — Democrats must not only bring more Americans into the electorate, but also, more American workers into labor unions.

Democracy begins at work.

There’s a strong argument that giving ordinary Americans a say over how their workplaces are governed is just as fundamental to democracy as giving them the ballot.

These days, political liberty is often defined narrowly as the freedom to vote in fair elections. But in earlier eras of American history, genuine political freedom was thought to have a material component: To truly participate in self-government, one needed not only a voice in public affairs, but also a modicum of power in one’s economic life. Franklin Roosevelt articulated this principle when introducing his economic bill of rights in 1944, telling Congress, “We have come to a clear realization of the fact that true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence.” This sentiment might have struck some of FDR’s fellow “economic royalists” as un-American. But the notion that self-government is impossible without a degree of economic autonomy was common among our republic’s founding generation. The historian Terry Bouton writes of America’s original grassroots revolutionaries:

[M]any Pennsylvanians believed that economic equality was what made political equality possible. They were convinced that “the people” would never have political liberty until citizens had the economic wherewithal to protect their rights. To them, concentrations of wealth and power led to corruption and tyrannical rulers, while widely dispersed political and economic power promoted good government.

… Farmers and artisans declared that the Revolution was about “the freemen of this Country” stating that “they do not esteem it the sole end of Government to protect the rich & powerful.” … [G]overnment should promote the interests of “the mechanicks and farmers [who] constitute ninety-nine out of a hundred of the people of America.” In short, the objective of the Revolution was bringing “gentlemen men … down to our level” and ensuring that “all ranks and conditions would come in for their just share of the wealth.”

The revolution’s elite architects had other objectives. But while they typically did not believe that all white men (let alone, all people) were entitled to political liberty, they agreed that one needed economic power to exercise such freedom. As Alexander Hamilton wrote in the Federalist Papers, “[A power over man’s subsistence amounts to a power over his will.”](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed79.asp)

If we accept our founders’ premises, then the true measure of a democracy — which is to say, a system of government in which all citizens enjoy political liberty — cannot merely be how many offices its people get to vote on. Rather, to gauge how democratic a society is, one must examine how much power ordinary citizens have over the terms of their own subsistence, and how evenly economic resources are dispersed across the demos. Judged on these terms, it is clear that the contemporary United States is the [opposite of “excessively democratic”](http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2017/12/inequality-is-rising-globally-and-soaring-in-the-u-s.html) — and that it will remain so, absent a revival of its labor movement.

In the founding era, classical republicans imagined that the great masses of ordinary (white male) Americans could attain the economic autonomy necessary for political liberty by becoming small landholders, or independent artisans. But the industrial revolution rendered that vision obsolete. Today, the vast majority of Americans are not self-employed, and spend the bulk of their waking hours answering to bosses who have power over their subsistence. In this context, most workers can only secure a degree of control over their economic lives by organizing collectively to check the power of their employers. Which is to say, they can only do so by forming unions.

That trade unions do, in fact, increase their members’ power over their own working lives is confirmed by the [wage and benefits premiums](http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/union-effect-in-california-1/) that unionized workforces enjoy. But organized labor does not merely democratize individual firms; it also democratizes economic power throughout the economy. As America’s [private-sector unionization rate](http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2018/01/democrats-paid-a-huge-price-for-letting-unions-die.html) collapsed over the past half century, the middle-class’ share of productivity gains went down with it. And [a large body of economic research](http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/05/unions-are-not-a-special-interest-group.html) confirms that this is no mere correlation. When workers organize, they secure a voice within the “[private governments](https://www.vox.com/the-big-idea/2017/7/17/15973478/bosses-dictators-workplace-rights-free-markets-unions)” that rule their economic lives, and they (typically) use that voice to rationally advance their own material interests — which, most of the time, also advances the self-interest of most Americans (a.k.a. the public interest). In other words, by forming trade unions, ordinary citizens achieve much of what critics of democracy insist it can’t deliver.

Thus, even if organized labor did nothing to increase voter participation, or the responsiveness of elected officials to popular demands, it would still serve an indispensable democratic function by fostering the material preconditions for popular self-government.

Unions make electorates more representative.

Many items on the Democratic Party’s democracy reform agenda are aimed at making the American electorate look more like the American people. Automatic voter registration, a federal Election Day holiday, and felon enfranchisement are all aimed at reducing class and racial disparities in voter participation. And such reforms are laudable. But no plan for lifting America’s low voter turnout rates is complete without a plan for boosting its [piddling rate of unionization.](http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2019/09/democrats-unions-2020-labor.html)

As the Center for American Progress (CAP) [has noted](https://www.americanprogressaction.org/issues/economy/reports/2012/01/25/10913/unions-make-democracy-work-for-the-middle-class/), the U.S. states with the highest unionization rates also have the highest rates of voter turnout, and the same correlation holds between nations. And the political science literature suggests this is not coincidental. As David Madland and Nick Bunker wrote for CAP in 2012:

A 1 percentage point increase in union density in a state increases voter turnout rates by 0.2 to 0.25 percentage points according to[analysis](http://www.jstor.org/pss/2669299) by Benjamin Radcliff and Patricia Davis, political scientists at the University of Notre Dame and the State Department, respectively. In other words, if unionization were 10 percentage points higher during the 2008 presidential election, 2.6 million to 3.2 million more Americans would have voted.

Similarly,[research](http://lera.press.illinois.edu/proceedings2006/zullo.html) by Roland Zullo, a labor studies professor at the University of Michigan, shows that self-described working-class citizens — whether unionized or not — are just as likely to vote as other citizens are when unions run campaigns in their congressional district. Yet when unions don’t run campaigns, working-class citizens are 10.4 percent less likely to vote than other citizens.

A similar pattern holds for communities of color. Voters of color are just as likely to vote as white voters in districts with union campaigns but are 9.3 percent less likely to vote in districts without campaigns.

A [2018 study](https://jamesfeigenbaum.github.io/research/pdf/fhw_rtw_jan2018.pdf) of the electoral impacts of so-called “right to work” (RTW) laws lend credence to these findings. Such laws undermine organized labor by allowing workers who join a unionized workplace to enjoy the benefits of a collective bargaining agreement without paying dues to the union that negotiated it. This encourages other workers to skirt their dues, which can then drain a union of the funds it needs to survive. On the plus side, such state-level right to work laws provided political scientists at Boston University, Columbia, and the Brookings Institution with a natural experiment to test the relationship between unionization and electoral outcomes. By examining how voter turnout changed before and after the passage of RTW in a given state’s border counties — and comparing those shifts to the control group of adjacent counties in non-RTW states — researchers found that right to work laws are associated with 2 to 3 percent reduction in voter participation.

Separately, unions also appear to facilitate the kind of cross-racial civic solidarity that scholars like Rosenberg fear our species may be evolutionarily ill-equipped to achieve. Although the American labor movement has often been a bastion of white supremacy — one that channeled the “economic anxiety” of white male workers into causes like the Chinese Exclusion Act — it was also at the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement, and helped to keep the bulk of white workers in the Midwest in a partisan coalition with African-Americans for decades after backlash politics painted the non-union South red. According to that 2018 study, the passage of right to work laws is associated with [a 3.5 percent drop in the Democratic Party’s share of the presidential vote](http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/01/democrats-paid-a-huge-price-for-letting-unions-die.html). Which is to say: Had tea party governments not passed such measures in Wisconsin and Michigan, it’s plausible that the union movements in those states would have kept a critical mass of white non-college voters from chasing the siren song of white identity politics in 2016.

The proletariat needs lobbyists, too.

One testament to American democracy’s dysfunction is the cartoonish incompetence of its commander-in-chief. A less conspicuous — but more consequential — one is the chasm between popular preferences and public policy. The Trump administration’s decision to prioritize tax relief for corporate shareholders over new spending on infrastructure, public education, health-insurance subsidies, or addiction treatment [in the middle of a historic drug overdose epidemic](http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2017/10/the-opioid-crisis-is-an-emergency-for-american-conservatism.html) didn’t merely buck majoritarian opinion among Americans writ large, but also,[among self-identified Republicans](https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/9/28/16375174/tax-cut-poll). And the same can be said of the White House’s prioritization of various polluters’ profit margins [over the cleanliness of America’s air and water](http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2019/05/democrats-are-ignoring-their-partys-strongest-2020-issue.html), or Congress’ perennial prioritization of the [pharmaceutical industry’s profitability](http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2019/08/poll-marijuana-legalization-data-for-progress-radical-ideas-popular-aoc.html) over the affordability of prescription drugs, or the myriad other ways that well-heeled interest groups overrule the bipartisan consensus of ordinary Americans in opinion polls.

One could attribute such policy outcomes to the median voter’s failure to meet democracy’s heavy demands; her struggle to sift through large amounts of information, and refusal to sacrifice her limited free time to the obligations of civic engagement. But the average American worker — and typical American CEO — are each working with the same archaic evolutionary hardware. The fact that the latter has proven so much more adept at using democratic freedoms to advance her interest is a function of resources, not psychobiology.

Influencing elections and legislative processes requires investments of time, money, and attention. Wealthy individuals and corporations can easily shoulder such expenses; ordinary voters can’t.  For this reason, if the average House member betrays the interests of the oil company based in her district, she will see her voice-mail box fill up, and campaign coffers empty out; if she betrays her median constituent’s avowed desire to see carbon pollution more tightly regulated, by contrast, said voter probably won’t even notice.

This simple reality — that economic power is easily converted into the political variety — is an inherent constraint on popular sovereignty in all capitalist democracies. But trade unions help to mitigate it, both by reducing inequalities in economic power (as we’ve already seen), and by enabling working-class voters to collectivize the costs of political engagement.

#### Extinction.

Kasparov 17, Chairman of the Human Rights Foundation, 2/16/2017 Garry, “Democracy and Human Rights: The Case for U.S. Leadership” <http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/021617_Kasparov_%20Testimony.pdf>

The Soviet Union was an existential threat, and this focused the attention of the world, and the American people. There existential threat today is not found on a map, but it is very real. The forces of the past are making steady progress against the modern world order. Terrorist movements in the Middle East, extremist parties across Europe, a paranoid tyrant in North Korea threatening nuclear blackmail, and, at the center of the web, an aggressive KGB dictator in Russia. They all want to turn the world back to a dark past because their survival is threatened by the values of the free world, epitomized by the United States. And they are thriving as the U.S. has retreated.The global freedom index has declined for ten consecutive years. No one like to talk about the United States as a global policeman, but this is what happens when there is no cop on the beat. American leadership begins at home, right here. America cannot lead the world on democracy and human rights if there is no unity on the meaning and importance of these things. Leadership is required to make that case clearly and powerfully. Right now, Americans are engaged in politics at a level not seen in decades. It is an opportunity for them to rediscover that making America great begins with believing America can be great. The Cold War was won on American values that were shared by both parties and nearly every American. Institutions that were created by a Democrat, Truman, were triumphant forty years later thanks to the courage of a Republican, Reagan. This bipartisan consistency created the decades of strategic stability that is the great strength of democracies. Strong institutions that outlast politicians allow for long-range planning. In contrast, dictators can operate only tactically, not strategically, because they are not constrained by the balance of powers, but cannot afford to think beyond their own survival. This is why a dictator like Putin has an advantage in chaos, the ability to move quickly. This can only be met by strategy, by long-term goals that are based on shared values, not on polls and cable news. The fear of making things worse has paralyzed the United States from trying to make things better. There will always be setbacks, but the United States cannot quit. The spread of democracy is the only proven remedy for nearly every crisis that plagues the world today. War, famine, poverty, terrorism–all are generated and exacerbated by authoritarian regimes. A policy of America First inevitably puts American security last.American leadership is required because there is no one else, and because it is good for America. There is no weapon or wall that is more powerful for security than America being envied, imitated, and admired around the world. Admired not for being perfect, but for having the exceptional courage to always try to be better. Thank you.

## Method

#### Scenario analysis is the most valuable thing for education. Since we do debate for education, we must analyze real life scenarios.

Naazneen Barma et al. 16. May 2016, [Advance Publication Online on 11/6/15], Barma, PhD in Political Science from UC-Berkeley, Assistant Professor of National Security Affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School, Brent Durbin, PhD in Political Science from UC-Berkeley, Professor of Government at Smith College, Eric Lorber, JD from UPenn and PhD in Political Science from Duke, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, Rachel Whitlark, PhD in Political Science from GWU, Post-Doctoral Research Fellow with the Project on Managing the Atom and International Security Program within the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard, “‘Imagine a World in Which’: Using Scenarios in Political Science,” International Studies Perspectives 17 (2), pp. 1-19, <http://www.naazneenbarma.com/uploads/2/9/6/9/29695681/using_scenarios_in_political_science_isp_2015.pdf>

Over the past decade, the “cult of irrelevance” in political science scholarship has been lamented by a growing chorus (Putnam 2003; Nye 2009; Walt 2009). Prominent scholars of international affairs have diagnosed the roots of the gap between academia and policymaking, made the case for why political science research is valuable for policymaking, and offered a number of ideas for enhancing the policy relevance of scholarship in international relations and comparative politics (Walt 2005,2011; Mead 2010; Van Evera 2010; Jentleson and Ratner 2011; Gallucci 2012; Avey and Desch 2014). Building on these insights, several initiatives have been formed in the attempt to “bridge the gap.”2 Many of the specific efforts put in place by these projects focus on providing scholars with the skills, platforms, and networks to better communicate the findings and implications of their research to the policymaking community, a necessary and worthwhile objective for a field in which theoretical debates, methodological training, and publishing norms tend more and more toward the abstract and esoteric. Yet enhancing communication between scholars and policymakers is only one component of bridging the gap between international affairs theory and practice. Another crucial component of this bridge is the generation of substantive research programs that are actually policy relevant—a challenge to which less concerted attention has been paid. The dual challenges of bridging the gap are especially acute for graduate students, a particular irony since many enter the discipline with the explicit hope of informing policy. In a field that has an admirable devotion to pedagogical self-reflection, strikingly little attention is paid to techniques for generating policy-relevant ideas for dissertation and other research topics. Although numerous articles and conference workshops are devoted to the importance of experiential and problem-based learning, especially through techniques of simulation that emulate policymaking processes (Loggins 2009; Butcher 2012; Glasgow 2012; Rothman 2012; DiCicco 2014), little has been written about the use of such techniques for generating and developing innovative research ideas. This article outlines an experiential and problem-based approach to developing a political science research program using scenario analysis. It focuses especially on illuminating the research generation and pedagogical benefits of this technique by describing the use of scenarios in the annual New Era Foreign Policy Conference (NEFPC), which brings together doctoral students of international and comparative affairs who share a demonstrated interest in policy-relevant scholarship.3 In the introductory section, the article outlines the practice of scenario analysis and considers the utility of the technique in political science. We argue that scenario analysis should be viewed as a tool to stimulate problem-based learning for doctoral students and discuss the broader scholarly benefits of using scenarios to help generate research ideas. The second section details the manner in which NEFPC deploys scenario analysis. The third section reflects upon some of the concrete scholarly benefits that have been realized from the scenario format. The fourth section offers insights on the pedagogical potential associated with using scenarios in the classroom across levels of study. A brief conclusion reflects on the importance of developing specific techniques to aid those who wish to generate political science scholarship of relevance to the policy world. What Are Scenarios and Why Use Them in Political Science? Scenario analysis is perceived most commonly as a technique for examining the robustness of strategy. It can immerse decision makers in future states that go beyond conventional extrapolations of current trends, preparing them to take advantage of unexpected opportunities and to protect themselves from adverse exogenous shocks. The global petroleum company Shell, a pioneer of the technique, characterizes scenario analysis as the art of considering “what if” questions about possible future worlds. Scenario analysis is thus typically seen as serving the purposes of corporate planning or as a policy tool to be used in combination with simulations of decision making. Yet scenario analysis is not inherently limited to these uses. This section provides a brief overview of the practice of scenario analysis and the motivations underpinning its uses. It then makes a case for the utility of the technique for political science scholarship and describes how the scenarios deployed at NEFPC were created. The Art of Scenario Analysis We characterize scenario analysis as the art of juxtaposing current trends in unexpected combinations in order to articulate surprising and yet plausible futures, often referred to as “alternative worlds.” Scenarios are thus explicitly not forecasts or projections based on linear extrapolations of contemporary patterns, and they are not hypothesis-based expert predictions. Nor should they be equated with simulations, which are best characterized as functional representations of real institutions or decision-making processes (Asal 2005). Instead, they are depictions of possible future states of the world, offered together with a narrative of the driving causal forces and potential exogenous shocks that could lead to those futures. Good scenarios thus rely on explicit causal propositions that, independent of one another, are plausible—yet, when combined, suggest surprising and sometimes controversial future worlds. For example, few predicted the dramatic fall in oil prices toward the end of 2014. Yet independent driving forces, such as the shale gas revolution in the United States, China’s slowing economic growth, and declining conflict in major Middle Eastern oil producers such as Libya, were all recognized secular trends that—combined with OPEC’s decision not to take concerted action as prices began to decline—came together in an unexpected way. While scenario analysis played a role in war gaming and strategic planning during the Cold War, the real antecedents of the contemporary practice are found in corporate futures studies of the late 1960s and early 1970s (Raskin et al. 2005). Scenario analysis was essentially initiated at Royal Dutch Shell in 1965, with the realization that the usual forecasting techniques and models were not capturing the rapidly changing environment in which the company operated (Wack 1985; Schwartz 1991). In particular, it had become evident that straight-line extrapolations of past global trends were inadequate for anticipating the evolving business environment. Shell-style scenario planning “helped break the habit, ingrained in most corporate planning, of assuming that the future will look much like the present” (Wilkinson and Kupers 2013, 4). Using scenario thinking, Shell anticipated the possibility of two Arab-induced oil shocks in the 1970s and hence was able to position itself for major disruptions in the global petroleum sector. Building on its corporate roots, scenario analysis has become a standard policymaking tool. For example, the Project on Forward Engagement advocates linking systematic foresight, which it defines as the disciplined analysis of alternative futures, to planning and feedback loops to better equip the United States to meet contemporary governance challenges (Fuerth 2011). Another prominent application of scenario thinking is found in the National Intelligence Council’s series of Global Trends reports, issued every four years to aid policymakers in anticipating and planning for future challenges. These reports present a handful of “alternative worlds” approximately twenty years into the future, carefully constructed on the basis of emerging global trends, risks, and opportunities, and intended to stimulate thinking about geopolitical change and its effects.4 As with corporate scenario analysis, the technique can be used in foreign policymaking for long-range general planning purposes as well as for anticipating and coping with more narrow and immediate challenges. An example of the latter is the German Marshall Fund’s EuroFutures project, which uses four scenarios to map the potential consequences of the Euro-area financial crisis (German Marshall Fund 2013). Several features make scenario analysis particularly useful for policymaking.5 Long-term global trends across a number of different realms—social, technological, environmental, economic, and political—combine in often-unexpected ways to produce unforeseen challenges. Yet the ability of decision makers to imagine, let alone prepare for, discontinuities in the policy realm is constrained by their existing mental models and maps. This limitation is exacerbated by well-known cognitive bias tendencies such as groupthink and confirmation bias (Jervis 1976; Janis 1982; Tetlock 2005). The power of scenarios lies in their ability to help individuals break out of conventional modes of thinking and analysis by introducing unusual combinations of trends and deliberate discontinuities in narratives about the future. Imagining alternative future worlds through a structured analytical process enables policymakers to envision and thereby adapt to something altogether different from the known present. Designing Scenarios for Political Science Inquiry The characteristics of scenario analysis that commend its use to policymakers also make it well suited to helping political scientists generate and develop policy-relevant research programs. Scenarios are essentially textured, plausible, and relevant stories that help us imagine how the future political-economic world could be different from the past in a manner that highlights policy challenges and opportunities. For example, terrorist organizations are a known threat that have captured the attention of the policy community, yet our responses to them tend to be linear and reactive. Scenarios that explore how seemingly unrelated vectors of change—the rise of a new peer competitor in the East that diverts strategic attention, volatile commodity prices that empower and disempower various state and nonstate actors in surprising ways, and the destabilizing effects of climate change or infectious disease pandemics—can be useful for illuminating the nature and limits of the terrorist threat in ways that may be missed by a narrower focus on recognized states and groups. By illuminating the potential strategic significance of specific and yet poorly understood opportunities and threats, scenario analysis helps to identify crucial gaps in our collective understanding of global politicaleconomic trends and dynamics. The notion of “exogeneity”—so prevalent in social science scholarship—applies to models of reality, not to reality itself. Very simply, scenario analysis can throw into sharp relief often-overlooked yet pressing questions in international affairs that demand focused investigation. Scenarios thus offer, in principle, an innovative tool for developing a political science research agenda. In practice, achieving this objective requires careful tailoring of the approach. The specific scenario analysis technique we outline below was designed and refined to provide a structured experiential process for generating problem-based research questions with contemporary international policy relevance.6 The first step in the process of creating the scenario set described here was to identify important causal forces in contemporary global affairs. Consensus was not the goal; on the contrary, some of these causal statements represented competing theories about global change (e.g., a resurgence of the nation-state vs. border-evading globalizing forces). A major principle underpinning the transformation of these causal drivers into possible future worlds was to “simplify, then exaggerate” them, before fleshing out the emerging story with more details.7 Thus, the contours of the future world were drawn first in the scenario, with details about the possible pathways to that point filled in second. It is entirely possible, indeed probable, that some of the causal claims that turned into parts of scenarios were exaggerated so much as to be implausible, and that an unavoidable degree of bias or our own form of groupthink went into construction of the scenarios. One of the great strengths of scenario analysis, however, is that the scenario discussions themselves, as described below, lay bare these especially implausible claims and systematic biases.8 An explicit methodological approach underlies the written scenarios themselves as well as the analytical process around them—that of case-centered, structured, focused comparison, intended especially to shed light on new causal mechanisms (George and Bennett 2005). The use of scenarios is similar to counterfactual analysis in that it modifies certain variables in a given situation in order to analyze the resulting effects (Fearon 1991). Whereas counterfactuals are traditionally retrospective in nature and explore events that did not actually occur in the context of known history, our scenarios are deliberately forward-looking and are designed to explore potential futures that could unfold. As such, counterfactual analysis is especially well suited to identifying how individual events might expand or shift the “funnel of choices” available to political actors and thus lead to different historical outcomes (Nye 2005, 68–69), while forward-looking scenario analysis can better illuminate surprising intersections and sociopolitical dynamics without the perceptual constraints imposed by fine-grained historical knowledge. We see scenarios as a complementary resource for exploring these dynamics in international affairs, rather than as a replacement for counterfactual analysis, historical case studies, or other methodological tools. In the scenario process developed for NEFPC, three distinct scenarios are employed, acting as cases for analytical comparison. Each scenario, as detailed below, includes a set of explicit “driving forces” which represent hypotheses about causal mechanisms worth investigating in evolving international affairs. The scenario analysis process itself employs templates (discussed further below) to serve as a graphical representation of a structured, focused investigation and thereby as the research tool for conducting case-centered comparative analysis (George and Bennett 2005). In essence, these templates articulate key observable implications within the alternative worlds of the scenarios and serve as a framework for capturing the data that emerge (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994). Finally, this structured, focused comparison serves as the basis for the cross-case session emerging from the scenario analysis that leads directly to the articulation of new research agendas. The scenario process described here has thus been carefully designed to offer some guidance to policy-oriented graduate students who are otherwise left to the relatively unstructured norms by which political science dissertation ideas are typically developed. The initial articulation of a dissertation project is generally an idiosyncratic and personal undertaking (Useem 1997; Rothman 2008), whereby students might choose topics based on their coursework, their own previous policy exposure, or the topics studied by their advisors. Research agendas are thus typically developed by looking for “puzzles” in existing research programs (Kuhn 1996). Doctoral students also, understandably, often choose topics that are particularly amenable to garnering research funding. Conventional grant programs typically base their funding priorities on extrapolations from what has been important in the recent past—leading to, for example, the prevalence of Japan and Soviet studies in the mid-1980s or terrorism studies in the 2000s—in the absence of any alternative method for identifying questions of likely future significance. The scenario approach to generating research ideas is grounded in the belief that these traditional approaches can be complemented by identifying questions likely to be of great empirical importance in the real world, even if these do not appear as puzzles in existing research programs or as clear extrapolations from past events. The scenarios analyzed at NEFPC envision alternative worlds that could develop in the medium (five to seven year) term and are designed to tease out issues scholars and policymakers may encounter in the relatively near future so that they can begin thinking critically about them now. This timeframe offers a period distant enough from the present as to avoid falling into current events analysis, but not so far into the future as to seem like science fiction. In imagining the worlds in which these scenarios might come to pass, participants learn strategies for avoiding failures of creativity and for overturning the assumptions that prevent scholars and analysts from anticipating and understanding the pivotal junctures that arise in international affairs.