## Contention 1

#### Plan text: The United States ought to recognize an unconditional right to strike for agricultural laborers by amending the National Labor Relations Act to extend the definition of ‘employee’ to include agricultural laborers.

#### Squo NLRA fails to protect farmer’s rights to strike – plan amends the NLRA to collectively bargain

**Reilly, 11**, Penn State Law, “Agricultural Laborers: Their Inability to Unionize Under the National Labor Relations Act”, Penn State: Masters of Science, JD Law, URL: <https://pennstatelaw.psu.edu/_file/aglaw/Publications_Library/Agricultural_Laborers.pdf>, 2011 + since most recent citation is from then, KR

**The NLRA gives workers “freedom of association, self-organization, and designation of representatives of their own choosing” in order to equalize the bargaining power** between employers and employees in the hopes of limiting the interruptions to the free flow of commerce.10 **The statute covers a large number of workers based on the broad definition of “employee,”11 but excludes from coverage all agricultural laborers**.12 The NLRA does not define who these agricultural laborers are that are excluded from the right to organize, but rather Congress has instructed the National Labor Relations Boards (NLRB)13 in the annual Appropriations Act that in determining who is an agricultural laborer excluded from the NLRA, to rely on the definition of “agriculture” **found in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).14 Agriculture in the FLSA is defined as “farming in all its branches ... and any practices ...** performed by a farmer or on a farm as an incident to or in conjunction with such farming operations...”15 The definition also lists specific activities to further define what would specifically be considered agricultural work.16 Therefore, workers whose responsibilities are contained in the FLSA’s definition of “agriculture” are excluded from the right to organize and form unions under the NLRA.

The reasoning behind this exclusion is somewhat vague, especially considering that the bill originally proposed in the Senate did not exclude agricultural laborers from the definition of “employee.”17 There is not much mentioned about the agricultural exclusion because of the statute’s primary focus on addressing problems in the industrial sector. There is, however, a debate from in the House addressing the agricultural laborer exemption,18 where an argument was made that **agricultural laborers should be included because they needed the same protections as industrial** workers. Agricultural labor issues were brought to light in 1935 after governmental investigations into child labor issues and the lack of clean water provided for such workers.19

In response, **two possible reasons were briefly mentioned that may explain why agricultural laborers were excluded: first, in regions like the Midwest, farms are mostly family farms and should not be within the scope of the NLRA,** and second there was a concern that Congress did not have jurisdiction over agricultural workers because it was questionable whether such workers were engaged in interstate commerce.20 Many commentators believe that it was the former argument that led to the exclusion of agricultural workers from protection under the NLRA. Another possible reason for this exclusion as presented by some commentators is that the larger farms lobbied to have their workers excluded from the NLRA.21 While not expressly stated, the most likely explanation is that Congress wanted to protect the family farmer from having to pay higher wages that unions would inevitably demand of the employers.22 Realizing that agriculture was important to the entire nation, Congress wanted to shield this industry from unionization, and wanted to protect the family farmer from having to pay what they could not afford. Congress did not think it necessary to equate the family farmer with big business.

The broad definition of “agriculture” under the FLSA would seem to exclude from the NLRA any worker who is employed by any agricultural entity. This is not the case, however, because **the Supreme Court has adopted a two-part test to determine if an employee is in fact an agricultural laborer excluded from the NLR**A.23 An agricultural employee will be excluded from the right to organize if he or she is engaged in either primary or secondary farming. The Supreme Court has taken the FLSA definition of agriculture and essentially limited its application based on a strict application of the statutory language. Primary farming are those tasks specifically referred to in the statutory definition of “agriculture” such as “cultivation and tillage of the soil [and] dairying.”24 The rest of the definition is considered secondary farming, and therefore a worker is an agricultural laborer if the work performed is of the type that would be performed “by a farmer or on a farm as an incident to or in conjunction with such farming operations.”25

In one of the more recent cases to address the question of who is considered an agricultural employee, the Supreme Court in Holly Farms Corp. v. N.L.R.B. upheld the determination made by the NLRB that workers on live-haul chicken crews do not engage in agricultural labor and therefore are not subject to the agricultural exception from the NLRA.26 The responsibility of the live-haul crew is to enter the farms of independent contractors who raise chickens supplied by Holly Farms; the chickens are then caught and caged by nine chicken catchers, moved by a forklift operator onto a truck to be transported by a truck driver to the processing plant.27 These live-haul crews were not engaged in primary farming because primary farming would have been the actual raising of the poultry, which was the responsibility of the independent contractors, not the live- haul crews.28

The court then focused on whether these live-haul crews were engaged in secondary farming. In doing so, the court immediately found that that the work performed by the live-haul crews were not of the kind “performed by a farmer” because Holly Farms gave up its farmer status as soon as the chicks were delivered to independent contractors for raising.29 As a result of this determination, the truck drivers were not considered agricultural laborers and were therefore not part of the agricultural exception to the NLRA and were able to unionize.30

The court then looked to whether the chicken catchers and forklift operators were engaged in work “on a farm as an incident to or in conjunction with” raising poultry.31 The Supreme Court found that neither the chicken catchers nor the forklift operators “worked on a farm” because the work these employees performed were part of Holly Farms’ poultry processing operations and was not of the type of work contemplated to be included in the statutory definition of “farming.”32 The Supreme Court adopted the reasoning of the NLRB in deciding that the catchers and forklift operators were not performing work “incident to or in conjunction with” the farming operations of the independent contractors.33 In doing so, the Supreme Court decided that it was more important to look at the status of the employer as a farmer rather than where the laborer carried out the responsibilities of the job he or she was hired to perform. Because, as previously determined, Holly Farms was not considered a farmer by the time the live- haul crews went in to catch the chickens, the catchers and the forklift operators were not engaged in secondary farming as defined in the FLSA.34 This meant that all the members of the live-haul crews were not agricultural laborers and therefore all had the right to organize under the NLRA.

The Supreme Court limited the applicability of the definition of “agriculture” in Holly Farms and in doing so opened up the possibility that more workers employed by large, vertically integrated employers would be able to organize.35 By taking the approach to look at the status of the employer rather than where the work is performed, the Supreme Court broadened the already broad definition of “employee” under the NLRA. More employees working for these vertically integrated employers will be able to experience the protection of the NLRA that has been open to industrial workers since the act was first passed in 1935. The impact of the Holly Farms decision is for courts to engage in an in depth analysis before deciding whether a worker is an agricultural laborer not protected by the NLRA. Switching the focus to the status of the employer rather than where the employees are performing their responsibilities will ensure greater protection for workers and a broader reach of the NLRA.

While the definition of “employee” has expanded to include some employees who are employed by agricultural employers, **there is still the exception for agricultural laborers included in the statute and therefore there are still many workers who are unable to form unions.** These may be the **workers that need the most protection because they are the field workers who are subjected to abuse, poverty and hazardous working conditions.36** Many commentators would like to see **the NLRA extended to include agricultural laborers**. The main advantage to **extending the definition of “employee” to include agricultural laborers under the NLRA is that the statute has been in existence for many years, and most of the challenges that would be brought up with respect to agricultural laborers attempting to unionize have most likely already been resolved in other employment sectors allowing the NLRB and courts to rely on precedent. This will make application of the statue to the agricultural laborers consistent with other employment sectors. Reliance on precedent would lead to predictable outcomes when labor disputes arise.** Agricultural laborers still have a ways to go before they will be able to reap the benefits of the NLRA; but, if this were to happen, **agricultural laborers would be able not only to unionize and have their association protected, but also would have the advantage of being able to rely on others with experience and knowledge of the NLRA and its intricacies**.

## Contention 2

#### Farmer’s yield is nearing an all-time low – government support doesn’t help the most needy and isn’t a long term solution

**Farm-Aid, 20,** 9/14/20, “Understanding the Economic Crisis Family Farms are Facing”, 2Farm Aid works with local, regional and national organizations to promote fair farm policies and grassroots organizations coordinating campaigns designed to defend and bolster family farm-centered agriculture. RL: <https://www.farmaid.org/blog/fact-sheet/understanding-economic-crisis-family-farms-are-facing/>, KR

**EVEN BEFORE COVID**-19**, FARM FAMILIES HAD NEGATIVE FARM INCOME**

Things have **been bad in farm country for a while. Between 2013 and 2018, farmers experienced a nearly 50% drop in net farm income as the prices for corn, wheat, dairy, beef and other farm products crashed**. While net farm income rose by 3% in 2019, government payments accounted for all of that increase (namely, via the trade bailout program). Without it, 2019 delivered farmers their second lowest income since 2013.[13]

As for 2020, while the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is forecasting a $19 billion (or 22.7%) increase in net farm income this **year, government payments like trade bailouts and federal COVID-19 relief programs account for 36% of net farm income** — the highest share since 2001 and the eighth highest share since The Great Depression.[14] Without the $22.4 billion provided in government payments, net farm income in 2020 would be well below the sector’s average from 2000 to 2019.[15] What’s more, the vast majority of payments flowed to the very largest farms. CNBC reports that the top 5% of trade bailout recipients received nearly half of all $28 billion paid in 2018 and 2019.[16]

Perhaps more troubling is USDA’s pre-pandemic data. In February, **USDA forecast** 2020 median farm household income at -$1,840 — **meaning that farm households would lose money from the farm.[17] More recent USDA data suggests a slightly better median income level,[18] presumably from high levels of government payments. But even these sector-wide income numbers likely mask severe distress in many parts of farm country, as many farmers who have been squeezed by years of low income did not benefit from federal payments**. Most farmers rely on off-farm jobs to feed their families, secure health insurance, and keep their farms afloat. Given the pandemic’s broader economic impacts, which arrived after farmers have had to dig into their savings for the better part of the last decade, **droves of farms are at risk of going under in the next year.**

FARM CREDIT CONDITIONS WEAKEN

Farmers rely heavily on credit to buy the seeds, fertilizer, machinery, livestock and other inputs that keep their farms running. Because most farmers require operating loans at the start of each season, a critical aspect of a farm’s financial health relates to its ability to make loan payments on time. Economists utilize various solvency measures to measure this, including the debt-to-asset ratio, debt-to-equity ratio and equity-to-asset ratio. All of these measured weakened for the eighth consecutive year in 2020. **As farm debt continues to rise, the sector’s risk of insolvency in 2020 is at its highest level since 2002**.[19] The following trends reveal weakening credit conditions for farmers and ranchers in today’s strained economy:

**Farmers struggle to make loan payments. Farm loan delinquency rates are rising.** The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, which covers Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Wyoming, reports that the volume of delinquent farm real estate and operating loans increased by about 17% and 13%, respectively, over the past year.[20] Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, covering Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan and Wisconsin, reports the share of farm loans with “major” or “severe” repayment problems is now at 8.3% — a level not seen since 1988.[21]

The 1980s all over again? Pre-COVID-19, total farm debt was estimated to hit a record $425 billion, just shy of the 1981 peak of $440 billion.[22] Since 2014, real estate debt has been rising to historic levels, potentially indicating not just rising land values, but farmers refinancing higher-interest loans or other debt into farm real estate. **In a time of persistently low farm income where farmers are defaulting on loans, this trend places a lot of farmland at risk of liquidation.[23]**

Growing demand for credit: **If farmers can’t secure affordable and timely credit, they face an economic uncertainty that threatens the survival of their farms. Several bankers are reporting growing demand for loans**, yet significant decreases in both the number and the size of agricultural loans in their portfolios.[24]

While economists and lenders note that federal relief has helped farmers navigate these conditions, many remain concerned that **without more intervention, a wave of foreclosures will strike farm country. These conditions are challenging for all farmers, but beginning farmers, smaller and midsized farmers, as well as other disadvantaged farmers in particular continue to struggle.**

#### The aff is key to increase incentives to farm: it increases wages, sets safe living conditions, AND helps farmers expand products

**Reilly, 11**, Penn State Law, “Agricultural Laborers: Their Inability to Unionize Under the National Labor Relations Act”, Penn State: Masters of Science, JD Law, URL: <https://pennstatelaw.psu.edu/_file/aglaw/Publications_Library/Agricultural_Laborers.pdf>, 2011 + since most recent citation is from then, KR

**The rate of pay agricultural laborers earn in return for their work would increase if these workers were able to organize and engage in collective bargaining with their employers.** **Agricultural workers in 2008 made between $8.64 per hour and $13.02 per hou**r.50 The hourly wage is relatively low, especially when **compared to other occupations with the ability to unionize that require similar training and working conditions**. For example**, construction laborers in 2008 earned between $10.80 and $14.95 per hour51 and textile, apparel and furnishing workers earned between $9.14 and $18.15 per hour**.52 While there is a wide range of earnings for anyone entering these three professions, **the two professions that are able to unionize earn more per hour on a national level than the agricultural workers who are exempted form organizing under the NLRA**. The low earnings of agricultural laborers as compared to other laborers supports a finding **that the NLRA would benefit agricultural laborers and are the type of workers that were meant to be extended the right to organize. If agricultural laborers were afforded protection under the NLRA to engage in collective bargaining, the likely result would be that bargaining representatives would be able to negotiate with agricultural employers for higher wages** that would lead to less of an earnings gap between agricultural laborers and laborers in other industries.

There is one major similarity between the construction industry and the agriculture industry that would seem to tip the scales in favor of affording agricultural laborers the right to unionize under the NLRA. **That is that both industries hire seasonally.**53 The seasonal nature of agricultural work is often cited as a reason against unionization, but with the similarity in the construction industry and the ability of those workers to unionize, the seasonal nature of agricultural work should be a factor in considering whether or not to include these workers under the NLRA, but is not itself conclusive. If seasonal workers in other industries are able to unionize, the seasonal nature of agricultural work should not be a major point of opposition to allowing agricultural laborers the right to collectively bargain.

**Agricultural laborers are also subject to harsh conditions because of the work that they perform and should be able to organize under the NLRA in order to bargain with their employers for better working conditions**. Agricultural laborers are **not always provided with access to clean drinking water nor are there typically adequate restroom facilitie**s for these workers to use.**55 Unions can help workers to gain access to sanitary facilities and clean drinking water by bargaining for these necessities with the employers.**56 By making these issues part of **a collective bargaining agreement, unions will be able to hold employers contractually liable to follow such conditions** and will thereby improve the conditions of employment for agricultural laborers who would otherwise be subject to sub-standard facilities.

Another hazardous working condition that arises for agricultural laborers **is the exposure to pesticides.** Agricultural laborers may be exposed to pesticides that are carcinogens or other pesticides that affect the endocrine and/or hormone systems.57 Agricultural laborers, especially those who apply pesticides, are at a greater risk of acute pesticide poisoning which many times is more prevalent than it needs to be because agricultural employers do not take the kinds of precautions necessary to prevent pesticide poisoning.58 **Unions again can aid agricultural laborers by limiting such exposure through a collective bargaining agreement because unions would be able to bargain for certain safety precautions to be taken** before workers are able to spray pesticides and can also ensure that safety gear is provided before spraying commences. Inadequate facilities and pesticides are two examples of the hazardous conditions that agricultural laborers are exposed to that could be cured through the right to unionize and collectively bargain with employers. Unions would be able to protect workers from such sub-standard conditions which in turn would lead to less illness and disease that agricultural laborers would be subjected to and would increase productivity on farms because field workers will not be slowed by sickness and would be able to work more as a result.

Further, “farmers, planters, ranchmen, dairymen, nut or fruit growers” are able to form associations for the mutual benefit of all members.59 These **associations allow their members to work collectively in preparing their products for market**.60 These producers are also able to form cooperatives to market their products and **maintain the “bargaining position of individual farmers” in order to prevent adverse consequences of overcrowding the market**.61 These agricultural producers are free to engage in concerted activity for the mutual protection of the association’s members, but agricultural laborers are exempt from asserting these same rights.62 **Agricultural producers are therefore able to become even stronger entities, further widening the differences in the bargaining positions between producers and agricultural laborers**. The unionization of agricultural laborers would better equalize the bargaining position on each side affording laborers the protections they need against agricultural employers as they become more powerful through associations.

#### 2 Distinct links:

#### 1] Productivity – Wages don’t destroy consumer spending AND create economic value

**Jayachandran, 20**, 6/18/2020, New York Times, “How a Raise for Workers Can Be a Win for Everybody”, Seema Jayachandran is an economics professor at Northwestern University, URL:<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/18/business/coronavirus-minimum-wage-increase.html>, KR

**Two new studies show that giving pay raises to low-wage workers is good for consumers, too**. That finding could add momentum to efforts to help grocery store clerks, nursing home workers and delivery drivers who are being paid a minimum wage despite their efforts being so essential during the current pandemic. The new research shows that **raising the minimum wage improves workers’ productivity, which translates into businesses offering higher-quality service. Because many customers are willing to pay more when quality improves, a company can raise its prices without losing sales volume. That means that profits need not suffer even though employee salaries increase.**

Moreover, **because companies are getting better performance from workers in return for paying them more, a higher minimum wage does not necessarily lead to fewer jobs. With a more productive work force, more economic value is being created and there is more money to go around**, so a higher paycheck for one person does not imply another person’s loss.

The federal minimum wage of $7.25 an hour has not increased since 2009, though Democrats in the House of Representatives have tried to raise it. State and local governments can set their own minimum wage, provided that it is above the federal rate. For example, Ohio’s minimum wage is $8.70 an hour and New York state’s is $11.80. San Francisco’s is $15.59 an hour.

The two new studies, one focused on nursing homes and the other on department stores, looked at the effects of minimum wage changes made at various levels of government. While they are both still working papers and have not appeared in scholarly journals, they were conducted rigorously, by my estimation, and the evidence they offer deserves consideration in the debate on the minimum wage, particularly during our current health and economic crises.

The nursing home study, by the economist Krista Ruffini, a visiting scholar at the Minnesota Federal Reserve, has direct implications in the current pandemic. The improvements in quality it found may be a very a big deal: They imply fewer medical complications and, perhaps, a longer life for patients.

Ms. Ruffini analyzed hundreds of increases in the minimum wage across the United States from 1990 to 2017. In each case, she compared employment in neighboring counties that suddenly had different minimum wage levels.

Her method expands on a landmark study by David Card, an economist at the University of California, Berkeley, and Alan Krueger, the former presidential adviser and Princeton economist, who found no drop in fast-food employment when New Jersey raised its minimum wage in 1992 above the level paid across the state line in Pennsylvania.

Similarly, Ms. Ruffini found little change in employment levels in nursing homes. Many employees were paid the minimum wage or somewhat more than that. Even in cases of the workers — nursing assistants — who had been paid more than the minimum wage, an increase in that base wage rippled through the labor market and still raised their salaries.

Rivian edges closer to an I.P.O., seeking a valuation above $50 billion.

PG&E says it faces a federal inquiry and $1.15 billion in losses over the Dixie fire.

The Biden administration will publish vaccine mandate rules ‘in the coming days.’

Ms. Ruffini’s most startling finding was that higher minimum wages reduced mortality significantly among nursing home residents. Her research suggests that if every county increased its minimum wage by 10 percent, there could be 15,000 fewer deaths in nursing homes each year, or about a 3 percent reduction.

How did pay increases translate into better patient health and longer lives? It appears that with better pay, jobs in nursing homes became more attractive, so employee turnover decreased. Patients benefited from more continuity in their care.

In addition, **the better paid employees may have simply worked harder, perhaps because they cared more about holding onto their jobs. Economists say they have been paid an “efficiency wage”: Employees become more productive when their wages are higher.**

The higher wage may also have **attracted more skilled or industrious people to the job,** but this seems to account for at most a small portion of the improvements in patient health.

#### Prefer the only empirical study from a country

**Katovich, Maia, 18**, 1-4/2018, “The relation between labor productivity and wages in Brazil:”, Scielo Brazil, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin, Universidade de Campinas, Campinas, São Paulo. URL: <https://www.scielo.br/j/neco/a/QR5hfyMfL9c3gwQSGGcRyHD/?lang=en>, KR

**In Brazil, real wages grew significantly more than did labor productivity between 1996 and 2014**. However, this general trend disguises significant sectoral variations, which can be grouped into four conceptual trends. **Firstly, in the agriculture and commerce sectors, large gains in labor productivity were accompanied by real wage increases and improvements in the quality of employment.** This dynamic was likely due to **a positive interplay between productivity-enhancing market developments (incorporation of new technologies, high levels of investment, exploitation of new consumer markets/agricultural frontiers) and income-enhancing institutional developments** (formalization and minimum wage valorization). In conjunction, these forces resulted in productivity gains that outpaced wage growth, leading to declining relative wages in agriculture and commerce (see Appendix A for data on relative wages).

In a second sectoral trend, the construction and real estate and other services sectors enjoyed real wage gains over the 1996-2014 period, despite stagnation in labor productivity. Both sectors offer little natural room for drastic productivity growth through the incorporation of new technologies, investments, or practices. And both were major beneficiaries of institutional interventions such as formalization and valorization of the minimum wage.14 Together, these forces resulted in a sharp rise in relative wage for construction and real estate and other services.

In a third variation of the productivity-wage relationship, both labor productivity and real wages largely stagnated or declined slightly in the industry and transportation sectors. In the case of industry, international competition likely held down wages, while productivity suffered from ongoing processes of deindustrialization. By its nature, the transportation sector offers little room for major productivity gains, while the average wage may have fallen as a result of changing forms of employment relations (i.e., increasing levels of self-employment) and increasing relative costs of transport (Chahad; Cacciamali, 2005). These dynamics explain the moderate decline in relative wages for industry and transportation.

In a fourth and final trend, the financial and information services and public services sectors saw stable or declining levels of labor productivity, accompanied by increasing or stable real wages. Productivity declines in financial and information services were due largely to changes in the Brazilian banking system over the 1998-2004 period. Earnings increases in both sectors may have resulted from persistently high returns to education, growing demand for qualified workers, and high levels of labor organization. As a result, the relative wage rose sharply for these sectors between 1996 and 2014.

It is important to note that all analyses above should be interpreted with caution, due to the difficulty inherent in estimating absolute values of labor productivity for some sectors, particularly public services and real estate. Nevertheless, the values serve to elucidate temporal dynamics of labor productivity within (if not necessarily across) sectors, revealing essential patterns in the productivity-wage relationship.

Estimation of hierarchical wage models using pooled data assessed the main structural and individual determinants of real wages over the sample period. Growth in sector- and state- level labor productivity was significantly positively associated with growth in real wages for all economic sectors from 1996 to 2012. Elasticity between labor productivity and real wages was greatest for sectors where workers’ earnings are often based directly on productivity (real estate, commerce), or where firms can easily measure employees’ productivity (industry). Elasticities appear smaller in sectors where productivity is more difficult for firms to measure, or where there are high levels of minimum wage employment (agriculture, construction) or labor organization (financial and information services).

**In general, productivity’s impact on wages was comparable to the impacts of institutional factors**, particularly worker formalization and minimum wage. Formalization, which primarily impacts labor markets through the enforcement of a minimum wage-floor, exhibited the largest impacts on sectors with high proportions of minimum wage employment. Labor organization had varied effects on wage levels. In sectors with high levels of organization, increases in union-participation exhibited a significantly positive association with wages. In contrast, increases in union-participation in less-organized sectors were negatively associated with wages, perhaps because union activity served to draw earnings away from the larger share of non-unionized workers. Nonetheless, unionization changed little over the sample period and exerted a relatively small impact on hourly wages.

**Wage growth in line with the first sectoral trend (observed in the agriculture and commerce sectors) may be the most sustainable in the long term, in the sense that increased earnings over the 1996 to 2014 period accompanied real gains in labor productivity.** In contrast, rising relative wages in the financial and information services and public services sectors highlight the capacity of labor organization, institutional protections, and skill-biased job polarization to decouple wages from productivity levels. In sum, institutional mechanisms display the capacity to substantially reallocate factor incomes toward workers, but these mechanisms face natural limitations if not accompanied by growth in labor productivity. **Thus, sustainable future wage growth in Brazil will likely depend on positive interplays between market-driven productivity gains and continued institutional interventions.**

#### That drives economic confidence – Increased productivity drives farm growth which creates a chain of investment.

**Wang et. al, 19**, “How Farmers Make Investment Decisions: Evidence from a Farmer Survey in China”, Sustainability, Shuangjin Wang 1, Yuan Tian 2,\*ORCID, Xiaowei Liu 3 and Maggie Foley 4, 1: School of Management, Tianjin University of Commerce, Tianjin 300134, China, 2: School of Economics and Management, Beijing Jiaotong University, Beijing 100044, China, 3: College of Business, St. Ambrose University, Davenport, IA 52803, USA, 4: Davis Business School, Jacksonville University, Jacksonville, FL 32211, USA, URL: <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwii17vKue7zAhVdJjQIHUr3D7YQFnoECAUQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mdpi.com%2F2071-1050%2F12%2F1%2F247%2Fpdf&usg=AOvVaw1RMvM-hGadn_uoetBxebDi>, KR

**A variety of research methods were used in previous research to study farmers’ investment adjustment behavior from different perspectives**. For example, Factor Analysis [3,7], Multinomial Logit Model [8,10,11], Deterministic Discrete Event Model [9], Mixed Logit Model with Flexible Mixing Distribution [12], Tobit Model [13,14], Probit Model [15–17], and Structural Equation Modeling [18,19].

It is widely accepted **that farmers’ investment adjustment behavior is affected by** many factors, but different literature has different opinions on key influencing factors that affect farmers’ investment behavior. Adimassu et al. [20] have found that farmers’ investments are limited by their capabilities. Okello et al. [21] have revealed that **economic benefits, such as higher yields and income, can affect farmers’ investment in seed selection.** Also, the cropped area, scale of the farmland, and agricultural income significantly influence farmers’ willingness to invest [10]. **The government’s support and favorable policies can positively promote the agriculture investment of farmers** [22,23]. Adimassu et al. [2] finds that farmers’ investment behavior is affected by five major factors: households’ resource endowments, knowledge, and experience of farming, access to information, social capital, and availability of family labor.

Moreover, some economic studies focus on specific factors that affect investment choice, such as state subsidies [24], the impact of agricultural cooperatives [25], risk preferences [26,27], the mode of communal land acquisition [28], government policies [29], and the presence of a price floor [13]. Besides, Ullah and Anad [30] examine the factors that influence the level of agricultural mechanization**: economic condition of farmers, the land tenure system, scale of farmland, cost of fuel, and the cost of renting agricultural machinery. Konrad et al. [15] have found that the scale of farm operations, environmental concerns, and innovation readiness are important for farmers’ technology investments.**

Factors such as the effect of planting structure adjustment and the output elasticity of capital can affect the investment adjustment behavior of farmers, and have been investigated by some studies. Ji et al. [31] have found that **the shortage of a labor force can be supplemented by increasing capital input**. In addition, other reasons may also lead to investment adjustment behavior such **as attitudes toward capital input [4], the amount of agricultural income [32], expected financial benefits from capital input [33], and differences in adjustment capabilities [34].**

#### 2] Capital Investment; Boosting wages creates incentive to invest

**Duke, 16,** 9/2/2016, “To Raise Productivity, Let’s Raise Wages”, Center for American Progress, Brendan Duke: Princeton University; MPA in Economic Policy, Macalester; B.A. nin political science, Associate Director for Economic Policy, Senior Policy Analyst for US Congress Joint Economic Committee, URL: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2016/09/02/142040/to-raise-productivity-lets-raise-wages/>, KR

Gordon argues that a key reason **productivity surged during this period was that rising real wages provided an incentive for firms to invest in capital, such as machinery. When labor is cheap, businesses have little incentive to invest in capital because they can always hire another worker on the cheap. But higher wages reduce the price of capital relative to labor, nudging firms to make investments and raise productivity**.

The 1929–1950 increase in wages was at first a result of several policies that directly raised workers’ wages, including the first federal minimum wage, the first federal overtime law, and the National Labor Relations Act, which made it easier for workers to join a union and bargain with their employers. The entry of the United States into World War II further drove investment higher, as the economy converted into what Gordon describes as a “maximum production regime.”

It is striking that during this period of rapid productivity growth, wages for production workers grew even faster than productivity growth did. The current debate about whether a typical worker’s compensation has kept track with the economy’s productivity typically envisions productivity growth as the precondition for wage growth. But Gordon’s research implies that the relationship can go both ways: Not only can productivity growth raise wages, **but higher real wages also can boost productivity growth—the main reason for slow gross domestic product growth—by giving firms a reason to purchase capital.**

Can higher wages raise productivity growth in 2017? Basic economic theory and common sense suggests that **an increase in the price of labor—wages—achieved through higher labor standards will cause firms to invest in more capital, raising the economy’s productivity.**

Some have tried to use this fact to claim that raising wages ultimately will hurt workers by causing them to be replaced with machines. **But automation is just another way of saying productivity growth: Robots replacing humans means more output produced using fewer human hours—the literal definition of higher productivity**. We can either have a productivity problem or an automation problem, but we cannot have both at the same time.

The sharp slowdown in productivity growth today heavily implies that **we currently have too little automation rather than too much**. At the same time, the evidence on policies that raise wages—such as the minimum wage—points to no noticeable effect on employment. Indeed, the New Deal and its rising labor standards were also a period of rapid employment growth.

A more important question is whether we have enough of the other key ingredient for the productivity growth that made the 1930s possible: innovation. Technological change itself is another reason firms purchase new capital—otherwise, investment amounts to “stacking wooden ploughs on top of wooden ploughs.” Gordon makes clear that the 1930s were in fact one of the most innovative decades in history, as the economy began to harness the potential of the internal combustion engine and electrification. **Firms ultimately could afford policies that raised wages because they could raise their productivity with new equipment featuring innovative technology.**

There exists a vigorous debate today about whether we live in a period of very ordinary or extraordinary innovation. Some—such as Gordon himself—argue that productivity growth inevitably will be slower because today’s new technology is inherently less innovative than that of the 1930s. In that case, there still exists a strong justification for raising labor standards: **Slow productivity growth makes it that much more important that its fruits be shared equitably.**

But others—including Andrew McAfee and Erik Brynjolfsson of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the country’s leading growth optimists—argue that we live in a period of extraordinary technological change. Even so, recent innovations—such as 3-D printing and social media—have failed to raise productivity growth, even after accounting for the possible problems with how statistics measure it. Therefore, it **may be the ability of firms to hire workers at wages that have barely grown since 2000—rather than purchasing new equipment and adopting new technology—that has prevented productivity from rising.**

The truth likely falls somewhere in between the pessimists and the optimists, with healthy—if not necessarily explosive—productivity growth possible. In that case, **policies that raise wages may be the key to unlocking productivity growth by increasing incentives for firms to invest in capital. Such wage-raising policies include making it easier for workers to bargain collectively, raising the federal minimum wage, and modernizing overtime rules**. Fortunately, the Obama administration recently has taken action on the latter and proposed an increase in the overtime threshold to $47,000 per year.

#### Increasing yield prevents food shortages and nutrient deficiencies

**Tian et al 21**-- Tian, Zhixi [principal investigator, Institute of Genetics and Developmental Biology and former research geneticist at Purdue], et al. "Designing future crops: challenges and strategies for sustainable agriculture." The Plant Journal 105.5 (2021): 1165-1178. (AG DebateDrills)

The first straightforward strategy for designing future crops that meet sustainable agriculture requirements is to improve the following aspects of current well-cultivated crops. **Increasing yield. It is estimated that the yields of major crops need to increase at a rate of 2.4% per year to meet the food supply demand by 2050. However, the current growth rates of the four major crops, maize (Zea mays), rice (Oryza sativa), wheat (Triticum aestivum), and soybeans (Glycine max), are only approximately half of this anticipated rate (Ray et al., 2013).** The development of new varieties with high yield potential that can fill this gap is the foremost mission of the Future Crops Design project. **In fact, in a trial, it was reported that a super-high-yield rice variety could produce one- to threefold more grains under optimal conditions than in normal paddy fields (Liu et al., 2020a). Improving nutritional quality.** Although the amount of food supply has been significantly improved in the last half-century, changes in human lifestyle and food consumption have resulted in a phenomenon called hidden hunger (Nair et al., 2016). For instance, in sub-Saharan Africa and America, about 17–30% of children under the age of 5 years have an inadequate daily intake of Vitamin A (Harjes et al., 2008; Haskell, 2012). **It has been reported that about two billion people are suffering from a chronic deficiency of micronutrients (WHO, 2008), a new threat to human health.** Moreover, the incidence of type-2 diabetes, obesity and colon disease has markedly increased in the past decade (Zhou et al., 2016). **Hence, the second mission of the Future Crops Design project is to generate crops with higher/balanced nutritional quality or specialized metabolites using metabolic engineering and synthetic biology approaches** (Francis et al., 2017; Martin and Li, 2017; Sweetlove et al., 2017; Vasconcelos et al., 2017). **Increasing agricultural resource use efficiency. It was reported that ~17% of arable land has lost productivity since 1945 due to inappropriate agriculture management** (Oldeman, 1994). In fact, nutrient-use efficiencies of today’s crops only reach 30–50% for nitrogen fertilizer (Cassman et al., 2002) and ~45% for phosphorus fertilizer (Smil, 2000). Moreover, fresh water has become a limiting factor for agriculture in many areas in the world. It is estimated that about 2800 km3 of fresh water per year is used for agricultural irrigation, and that crop production decreases by ~20% without irrigation (Siebert and Doll, 2010). **Therefore, to reduce agricultural inputs and environmental burdens, we should aim to develop high nutrient and water-use efficiency crops without yield penalty.**

#### U.S. agricultural collapse and food insecurity trigger great power wars—multiple hotspots.

**Castellaw 17** (John – 36-year veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps and the Founder and CEO of Farmspace Systems LLC, “Opinion: Food Security Strategy Is Essential to Our National Security,” 5/1/17, <https://www.agri-pulse.com/articles/9203-opinion-food-security-strategy-is-essential-to-our-national-security>)

**The United States faces many threats to our National Security. These threats include continuing wars with extremist elements such as ISIS and potential wars with rogue state North Korea or regional nuclear power Iran.** **The heated economic and diplomatic competition with Russia and a surging China could spiral out of control.** Concurrently, **we face threats to our future security posed by growing civil strife, famine, and refugee and migration challenges which create incubators for extremist and anti-American government factions**. Our response cannot be one dimensional but instead must be a nuanced and comprehensive National Security Strategy combining all elements of National Power including a Food Security Strategy. **An American Food Security Strategy is an imperative factor in reducing the multiple threats impacting our National wellbeing.** **Recent history has shown that reliable food supplies and stable prices produce more stable and secure countries. Conversely, food insecurity, particularly in poorer countries, can lead to instability, unrest, and violence. Food insecurity drives mass migration around the world from the Middle East, to Africa, to Southeast Asia, destabilizing neighboring populations, generating conflicts, and threatening our own security by disrupting our economic, military, and diplomatic relationships.** **Food system shocks from extreme food-price volatility can be correlated with protests and riots.** Food price related protests toppled governments in Haiti and Madagascar in 2007 and 2008. In 2010 and in 2011, food prices and grievances related to food policy were one of the major drivers of the Arab Spring uprisings. Repeatedly, history has taught us that **a strong agricultural sector** **is** **an unquestionable requirement** **for** inclusive and sustainable growth, broad-based development progress, and **long-term stability**. The impact can be remarkable and far reaching. **Rising income, in addition to reducing the opportunities for an upsurge in extremism, leads to changes in diet, producing demand for more diverse and nutritious foods provided, in many cases, from American farmers and ranchers.** **Emerging markets currently purchase 20 percent of U.S. agriculture exports and that figure is expected to grow as populations boom.** Moving early to ensure stability in strategically significant regions requires long term planning and a disciplined, thoughtful strategy. To combat current threats and work to prevent future ones, our national leadership must employ the entire spectrum of our power including diplomatic, economic, and cultural elements. The best means to prevent future chaos and the resulting instability is positive engagement addressing the causes of instability before it occurs. This is not rocket science. We know where the instability is most likely to occur. The world population will grow by 2.5 billion people by 2050. Unfortunately, this massive population boom is projected to occur primarily in the most fragile and food insecure countries. This alarming math is not just about total numbers. Projections show that the greatest increase is in the age groups most vulnerable to extremism. There are currently 200 million people in Africa between the ages of 15 and 24, with that number expected to double in the next 30 years. Already, 60% of the unemployed in Africa are young people. Too often **these situations deteriorate into shooting wars** requiring the deployment of our military forces. We should be continually mindful that the price we pay for committing military forces is measured in our most precious national resource, the blood of those who serve. For those who live in **rural America**, this has a disproportionate impact. Fully 40% of those who serve in our military come from the farms, ranches, and non-urban communities that make up only 16% of our population. Actions taken now to increase agricultural sector jobs can provide economic opportunity and stability for those unemployed youths while helping to feed people. A recent report by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs identifies agriculture development as the core essential for providing greater food security, economic growth, and population well-being. **Our active support for food security, including agriculture development, has helped stabilize key regions over the past 60 years. A robust food security strategy, as a part of our overall security strategy, can mitigate the growth of terrorism, build important relationships, and support continued American economic and agricultural prosperity while materially contributing to our Nation’s and the world’s security.**

#### Food insecurity encourages WMD use - Extinction

**Cribb 19** [Julian Cribb is a distinguished science writer with more than thirty awards for journalism. He was a newspaper editor, founder of the influential ScienceAlert website and author of eight books, including The Coming Famine. Food as Existential Risk. August, 2019. https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/food-or-war/food-as-an-existential-risk/8C45279588CD572FE805B7E240DE7368]

As things stand, the only entities that can afford to own nuclear weapons are nations - and if **humanity** is to be **wiped out**, it will most likely be as a **result** of an **atomic conflict** between nations. It follows from this that, if the world is to be made safe from such a fate it will need to get rid of nations as a structure of human self-organisation and replace them with wiser, less aggressive forms of self-governance. After all, the nation state really only began in the early nineteenth century and is by no means a permanent feature of self-governance, any more than monarchies, feudal systems or priest states. Although many people still tend to assume it is. Between them, nations have butchered more than 200 million people in the past 150 years and it is increasingly clear the world would be a far safer, more peaceable place without either nations or nationalism. The question is what to replace them with.

Although **there may** at first glance **appear** to be **no close linkage** between **w**eapons of **m**ass **d**estruction and **food**, in the twentyfirst century with world resources of **food**, land and water under **growing stress**, **nothing can be ruled out**. Indeed, chemical weapons have frequently been deployed in the Syrian civil war, which had drought, agricultural failure and hunger among its early drivers. And **nuclear conflict** remains a **distinct possibility** in **South Asia** and the **Middle East**, especially, as these regions are already **stressed in** terms of **food**, land and water, and their **nuclear firepower** or access to nuclear materials is **multiplying**.

It remains an open question whether **panicking regimes** in **Russia**, the **USA** or even **France** would be **ruthless enough** to deploy **atomic weapons** in an attempt to **quell invasion** by tens of millions of **desperate refugees**, **fleeing famine** and climate chaos in their own homelands - but the possibility ought not to be ignored.

That **nuclear war** is at least a possible outcome of **food** and climate **crises** was first flagged in the report The Age of Consequences by Kurt Campbell and the US-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies, which stated ‘it is clear that even nuclear war cannot be excluded as a political consequence of global warming’.15 **Food insecurity** is therefore a **driver** in the **preconditions** for the **use of nuclear weapons**, whether limited or unlimite**d.**

## Framework

#### The standard is maximizing expected wellbeing.

#### Prefer it:

#### 1] Actor specificity:

#### A] Aggregation – every policy benefits some and harms others, which also means side constraints freeze action.

#### B] No act-omission distinction – choosing to omit is an act itself – governments decide not to act which means being presented with the aff creates a choice between two actions, neither of which is an omission

#### C] No intent-foresight distinction – If we foresee a consequence, then it becomes part of our deliberation which makes it intrinsic to our action since we intend it to happen

#### 2] Extinction comes first!

**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] AT

**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)

#### 3] Only consequentialism explains degrees of wrongness—if I break a promise to meet up for lunch, that is not as bad as breaking a promise to take a dying person to the hospital. Only the consequences of breaking the promise explain why the second one is much worse than the first. Intuitions outweigh—they’re the foundational basis for any argument and theories that contradict our intuitions are most likely false even if we can’t deductively determine why.

#### 4] Reformism is effective and brings revolutionary change closer rather than pushing it away

Delgado 9 (Richard, self-appointed Minority scholar, Chair of Law at the University of Alabama Law School, J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, his books have won eight national book prizes, including six Gustavus Myers awards for outstanding book on human rights in North America, the American Library Association’s Outstanding Academic Book, and a Pulitzer Prize nomination, Professor Delgado’s teaching and writing focus on race, the legal profession, and social change, 2009, “Does Critical Legal Studies Have What Minorities Want, Arguing about Law,”) //BS 1-28-2018

2. The CLS critique of piecemeal reform Critical scholars reject the idea of piecemeal reform. Incremental change, they argue, merely postpones the wholesale reformation that must occur to create a decent society. Even worse, an unfair social system survives by using piecemeal reform to disguise and legitimize oppression. Those who control the system weaken resistance by pointing to the occasional concession to, or periodic court victory of, a black plaintiff or worker as evidence that the system is fair and just. In fact, Crits believe that teaching the common law or using the case method in law school is a disguised means of preaching incrementalism and thereby maintaining the current power structure.“ To avoid this, CLS scholars urge law professors to abandon the case method, give up the effort to ﬁnd rationality and order in the case law, and teach in an unabashedly political fashion. The CLS critique of piecemeal reform is familiar, imperialistic and wrong. Minorities know from bitter experience that occasional court victories do not mean the Promised Land is at hand. The critique is imperialistic in that it tells minorities and other oppressed peoples how they should interpret events affecting them. A court order directing a housing authority to disburse funds for heating in subsidized housing may postpone the revolution, or it may not. In the meantime, the order keeps a number of poor families warm. This may mean more to them than it does to a comfortable academic working in a warm office. It smacks of paternalism to assert that the possibility of revolution later outweighs the certainty of heat now, unless there is evidence for that possibility. The Crits do not offer such evidence. Indeed, some incremental changes may bring revolutionary changes closer, not push them further away. Not all small reforms induce complacency; some may whet the appetite for further combat. The welfare family may hold a tenants‘ union meeting in their heated living room. CLS scholars‘ critique of piecemeal reform often misses these possibilities, and neglects the question of whether total change, when it comes, will be what we want.

#### 5] Methodological pluralism is objectively the best way to approach politics – it opens up new ideas and avoids violence associated with sweeping root cause claims.

Bleiker 14 [Roland, professor of IR, University of Queensland. 6/17/2014. “International Theory Between Reification and Self-Reflective Critique.”] JCH-PF

For Levine, the key challenge in international relations (IR) scholarship is what he calls “unchecked reification”: the widespread and dangerous process of forgetting “the distinction between theoretical concepts and the real-world things they mean to describe or to which they refer” (p. 15). The dangers are real, Levine stresses, because IR deals with some of the most difficult issues, from genocides to war. Upholding one subjective position without critical scrutiny can thus have far-reaching consequences. Following Theodor Adorno—who is the key theoretical influence on this book—Levine takes a post-positive position and assumes that the world cannot be known outside of our human perceptions and the values that are inevitably intertwined with them. His ultimate goal is to overcome reification, or, to be more precise, to recognize it as an inevitable aspect of thought so that its dangerous consequences can be mitigated. Levine proceeds in three stages: First he reviews several decades of IR theories to resurrect critical moments when scholars displayed an acute awareness of the dangers of reification. He refreshingly breaks down distinctions between conventional and progressive scholarship, for he detects self-reflective and critical moments in scholars that are usually associated with straightforward positivist positions (such as E.H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, or Graham Allison). But Levine also shows how these moments of self-reflexivity never lasted long and were driven out by the compulsion to offer systematic and scientific knowledge. The second stage of Levine's inquiry outlines why IR scholars regularly closed down critique. Here, he points to a range of factors and phenomena, from peer review processes to the speed at which academics are meant to publish. And here too, he eschews conventional wisdom, showing that work conducted in the wake of the third debate, while explicitly post-positivist and critiquing the reifying tendencies of existing IR scholarship, often lacked critical self-awareness. As a result, Levine believes that many of the respective authors failed to appreciate sufficiently that “reification is a consequence of all thinking—including itself” (p. 68). The third objective of Levine's book is also the most interesting one. Here, he outlines the path toward what he calls “sustainable critique”: a form of self-reflection that can counter the dangers of reification. Critique, for him, is not just something that is directed outwards, against particular theories or theorists. It is also inward-oriented, ongoing, and sensitive to the “limitations of thought itself” (p. 12). The challenges that such a sustainable critique faces are formidable. Two stand out: First, if the natural tendency to forget the origins and values of our concepts are as strong as Levine and other Adorno-inspired theorists believe they are, then how can we actually recognize our own reifying tendencies? Are we not all inevitably and subconsciously caught in a web of meanings from which we cannot escape? Second, if one constantly questions one's own perspective, does one not fall into a relativism that loses the ability to establish the kind of stable foundations that are necessary for political action? Adorno has, of course, been critiqued as relentlessly negative, even by his second-generation Frankfurt School successors (from Jürgen Habermas to his IR interpreters, such as Andrew Linklater and Ken Booth). The response that Levine has to these two sets of legitimate criticisms are, in my view, both convincing and useful at a practical level. He starts off with depicting reification not as a flaw that is meant to be expunged, but as an a priori condition for scholarship. The challenge then is not to let it go unchecked. Methodological pluralism lies at the heart of Levine's sustainable critique. He borrows from what Adorno calls a “constellation”: an attempt to juxtapose, rather than integrate, different perspectives. It is in this spirit that Levine advocates multiple methods to understand the same event or phenomena. He writes of the need to validate “multiple and mutually incompatible ways of seeing” (p. 63, see also pp. 101–102). In this model, a scholar oscillates back and forth between different methods and paradigms, trying to understand the event in question from multiple perspectives. No single method can ever adequately represent the event or should gain the upper hand. But each should, in a way, recognize and capture details or perspectives that the others cannot (p. 102). In practical terms, this means combining a range of methods even when—or, rather, precisely when—they are deemed incompatible. They can range from poststructual deconstruction to the tools pioneered and championed by positivist social sciences.