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## Advantage 1 - warming

#### Only Big Tech can save government climate policy from failing at the hands of partisan politics and Big Oil – they uniquely have the power to create change but need more encouragement to increase lobbying efforts – absent more lobbying, government climate bills will never pass.

Weihl ‘20

[Big Tech says it cares about climate—but do its lobbyists?, <https://www.fastcompany.com/90583501/big-tech-says-it-cares-about-climate-but-do-its-lobbyists>, 8/12/20, Bill Weihl, Bill Weihl is the former sustainability leader at Google and Facebook, and founder of ClimateVoice, a nonprofit initiative.] [SS]

In 2021, we will have a real shot at enacting policy solutions to the biggest existential challenge of our time: climate change. The nascent Biden administration has designated climate as a top-tier policy priority. A strong bipartisan majority of the American public backs climate policy action now, according to the polls. A powerful community-based movement for environmental justice has brought climate concerns into alignment with the wider struggle for justice and equity. **Climate’s moment is here, but where is** the clout and influence of **the avowedly pro-climate tech sector**? ADVERTISEMENT So far, **tech is not meeting the moment**. It’s mostly **missing** it, according to a November 16 report in E&E News. The headline says it all: “**115 Amazon lobbyists, 1 works on climate**.” Amazon, whose leader Jeff Bezos has given hundreds of millions to pro-climate groups and made a climate pledge to take his company carbon-neutral by 2040, can only find enough funds in his $57.9 million lobbying budget (since 2017) to hire one person to advocate for climate. To be fair, Amazon is not alone in largely taking a pass on pro-climate lobbying. Facebook’s public face, founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg, has been very vocal on the issue, denouncing, for example, the Trump administration’s withdrawal from the Paris Accord. But **as a sustainability executive** at the company, **I saw firsthand how little Facebook has lobbied on climate policy**. According to E&E’s reporting on lobbying disclosures**, Facebook—despite its growing presence in Washington—only began its** Capitol Hill **advocacy on climate** sometime **this summer**, and there’s no public record of what stands the company actually took. **The three other companies** in the Big Five (Google, Microsoft, and Apple) **have done a better job** of moving in the direction of policy involvement on climate. **Alphabet**, the parent company of Google, **disclosed contacting members** of Congress in 2017 and 2018 **about renewable energy**, efforts aligned with the company’s laudable carbon neutral stance. But how much of the $59.4 million the company has spent on lobbying since 2017 has actually been spent fighting for pro-climate policy? An exact reckoning isn’t public, but it’s a safe bet that other company priorities—such as their antitrust woes—have claimed the lion’s share. ADVERTISEMENT Though they don’t spend as much in total on lobbying as the other tech leaders, old rivals **Microsoft and Apple have been the most consistent in their low-key pro-climate lobbying** in recent years. Even in the face of the Trump administration’s vehement anti-climate stance, former EPA director Lisa Jackson—who spearheads Apple’s policy agenda—has repeatedly spoken up on climate. And in a really smart and hopeful move, **Microsoft just retained a lobbying firm to ramp up its pro-climate advocacy**. Now that the game is changing, and a new pro-climate administration is coming to town, will tech companies step up their lobbying game on climate? **With a House and Senate that are more divided than ever** along party lines**, pro-climate policy is going to need business allies to become law, even with strong leadership from the White House. The other side will come fully armed to this policy fight. Right now, Big Oil is outspending climate advocates by 10 to 1. Only the tech sector, positioned to expand even during COVID-19 and the ensuing recession, has the kind of economic and political force to serve as a counterweight.** **If the pro-climate tech sector starts spending its lobbying dollars like climate is a real corporate priority, it could be a game changer.** Tech companies need to do more than issue statements and sign letters, they need to really work this issue like it matters to them. **Politicians now hiding out in the middle conservative Democrats, and Republicans not at the extreme of their party’s ideology, will listen to the business sector** on this important issue. This isn’t a moment for the tech sector to play both sides of the issue, to quietly send contributions to climate deniers and obstructionists like the Chamber of Commerce, while publicly taking a pro-climate stance just to curry favor with the Biden administration. That kind of inauthenticity is pretty off-brand for such a brand-obsessed sector. **Tech companies like to be on the leading edge of change, and the bold steps they’ve taken in their internal climate targets and commitments now need the propellant of public policy to scale across the entire economy. They should be aware that the thousands of employees that are powering their success—who are deeply committed to the climate cause—will be watching to see what they do, not just what they say**.

#### Tech worker strikes lead to quick, concrete, global climate action from policymakers and tech leaders.

Baca and Greene ‘19

[Amazon, Google, other tech employees protest in support of climate action, Marie Baca and Jay Greene, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2019/09/20/amazon-google-other-tech-employees-protest-support-climate-action/>, September 20 2019, Education: Stanford University, BA in Human Biology; Stanford University, MA in Communications, Graduate Program in Journalism Marie C. Baca was a breaking news technology and business reporter in San Francisco. She left The Post in December 2019, Education: Macalester College, BA in English; Columbia University, MS in Journalism Jay Greene is a reporter for The Washington Post who is focused on technology coverage in the Pacific Northwest.] [SS]

**Thousands of workers at** the nation’s largest **tech companies** were expected to **walk off their jobs** Friday **to urge** industry and world **leaders to address climate change** more aggressively, part of a larger wave of demonstrations expected to draw millions of people across the globe. The group Amazon Employees for Climate Justice said **more than 1,800 Amazon employees in 25 cities pledged to walk out. Google** Workers for Action on Climate tweeted that they **expected** about **700 workers** **to strike** as of Thursday. Similar groups that said they were representing employees **at Microsoft, Facebook, Twitter, Square and other major tech companies** tweeted that they also **expected significant numbers of employees to walk out**. Hundreds gathered Friday outside Amazon’s headquarters in downtown Seattle as part of the demonstrations**. Participants chanted**, “Hey hey, ho ho, **fossil fuels have got to go**” and held signs with messages such as “Amazon, Let’s lead. Zero Emissions By 2030.” Rebecca Sheppard, 28, works in Amazon’s air, science and tech group to make the online retail giant’s planes more efficient. She said she thought about quitting last year over her concerns about Amazon’s massive carbon footprint, but colleagues discouraged her, saying she could effect change by sticking around. “We’ve just got to double down,” she said about employee efforts to produce change. (Amazon founder and chief executive Jeff Bezos owns The Washington Post.) ‘I hope the politicians hear us’: Millions of youth around the world strike for action **The strike is being held in advance of a Monday climate summit at the U**nited **N**ations. U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres has insisted that instead of bringing “fancy speeches” with them to the meeting, the countries must offer concrete commitments such as reaching net zero emissions by 2050 or eliminating the construction of coal-fired power plants. Strike organizers expected more than 1,000 events to take place in the United States alone. **The tech workers joined millions of youths from more than 150 countries** around the world who skipped school Friday in solidarity with the movement. Among them was 16-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, who has given a speech before the United Nations, met with political and business leaders, and has been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for her work. **Facebook released a statement** Friday **expressing its support for employees who chose to walk out** and said that **the company is “building sustainability into our operations** **as well as engaging the global community** on this important issue with our products.” Microsoft declined to comment. Google, Twitter and Square were not immediately available to comment. At Amazon, the walkout came a day after **Bezos announced a “Climate Pledge” that would require signatories to meet the goals of the Paris climate agreement a decade early. The pledge also requires regular measuring and reporting of emissions, as well as obtaining net zero carbon across businesses by 2040,** among other stipulations. U.S. takes a low profile as nations gather in New York to debate steps to combat climate change Bezos said **Amazon would be the first company to sign the pledge**. Critics, who have long claimed Amazon does little to offset the emissions it produces, say the pact lacks transparency and standardized rules for what is measured and reported. Amazon declined to comment on the walkout. In Seattle, workers who walked out held signs that opposed deals with gas and oil companies. The crowd booed when a speaker noted that Amazon funds climate-denying lobbyists. There was also a speaker from Google. **Sarah Read, a** user experience **researcher** with Prime Video, said Thursday’s announcement shows employees are having an impact. She said she **believes the Climate Pact is related to an employee-sponsored shareholder resolution that would have required the company create a plan to address climate change,** a resolution that failed in spring. Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos announces new ‘Climate Pledge’ ahead of employee protests “**It’s a direct response to Amazon employees standing up, speaking out** and saying this is important to them,” Read said.

#### Warming is an existential risk – irreversible tipping points make an uninhabitable future planet, devastated agriculture, water acidification, mass pandemics, and nuclear war possible. Scenario planning should be prioritized – magnitude first is the only ethical impact calculus.

Spratt and Dunlop 19 ([David Spratt is a Research Director for Breakthrough National Centre for Climate Restoration, Melbourne, and co-author of Climate Code Red: The case for emergency action.] [Ian T. Dunlop is a member of the Club of Rome. Formerly an international oil, gas and coal industry executive, chairman of the Australian Coal Association, chief executive of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and chair of the Australian Greenhouse Office Experts Group on Emissions Trading 1998-2000.] “Existential climate-related security risk: A scenario approach” Published by Breakthrough - National Centre for Climate Restoration Melbourne, Australia breakthroughonline.org.au info@breakthroughonline.org.au May 2019. <https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/148cb0_b2c0c79dc4344b279bcf2365336ff23b.pdf>. Accessed 22 Oct. 2019.) LHSLA LH

An existential risk to civilisation is one posing permanent large negative consequences to humanity which may never be undone, either annihilating intelligent life or permanently and drastically curtailing its potential.∂ With the commitments by nations to the 2015 Paris Agreement, the current path of warming is 3°C or more by 2100. But this figure does not include “long-term” carbon-cycle feedbacks, which are materially relevant now and in the near future due to the unprecedented rate at which human activity is perturbing the climate system. Taking these into account, the Paris path would lead to around 5°C of warming by 2100.∂ 7∂ Scientists warn that warming of 4°C is incompatible with an organised global community, is devastating to the majority of ecosystems, and has a high probability of not being stable. The World Bank says it may be “beyond adaptation”. But an existential threat may 8 also exist for many peoples and regions at a significantly lower level of warming. In 2017, 3°C of warming was categorised as “catastrophic” with a warning that, on a path of unchecked emissions, low-probability, high-impact warming could be catastrophic by 2050.∂ 9∂ The Emeritus Director of the Potsdam Institute, Prof. Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, warns that “climate change is now reaching the end-game, where very soon humanity must choose between taking unprecedented action, or accepting that it has been left too late and bear the consequences.” He says 10 that if we continue down the present path “there is a very big risk that we will just end our civilisation. The human species will survive somehow but we will destroy almost everything we have built up over the last two thousand years.”∂ 11∂ Unfortunately, conventional risk and probability analysis becomes useless in these circumstances because it excludes the full implications of outlier events and possibilities lurking at the fringes.∂ 12∂ Prudent risk-management means a tough, objective look at the real risks to which we are exposed, especially at those “fat-tail” events, which may have consequences that are damaging beyond quantification, and threaten the survival of human civilisation. Global warming projections display a “fat-tailed” distribution with a greater likelihood of warming that is well in excess of the average amount of warming predicted by climate models, and are of a higher probability than would be expected under typical statistical assumptions. More importantly, the risk lies disproportionately in the “fat-tail” outcomes, as illustrated in Figure 1.∂ This is a particular concern with potential climate tipping-points — passing critical thresholds which result in step changes in the climate system that will be irreversible on human timescales — such as the polar ice sheets (and hence sea levels), permafrost and other carbon stores, where the impacts of global warming are non-linear and difficult to model with current scientific knowledge.∂ Recently, attention has been given to a “hothouse Earth” scenario, in which system feedbacks and their mutual interaction could drive the Earth System climate to a point of no return, whereby further warming would become self-sustaining. This “hothouse Earth” planetary threshold could exist at a temperature rise as low as 2°C, possibly even lower.∂ 13∂ Because the consequences are so severe — perhaps the end of human global civilisation as we know it — “even for an honest, truth-seeking, and wellintentioned investigator it is difficult to think and act rationally in regard to… existential risks”. Particular 14 issues arise: What are the plausible worst cases? And how can one tell? Are scientists self-censoring to avoid talking about extremely unpleasant outcomes? Do scientists avoid talking about the most alarming cases to motivate engagement?∂ 15∂ Analysis of climate-related security threats in an era of existential risk must have a clear focus on the extremely serious outcomes that fall outside the human experience of the last thousand years. These “fat-tail” outcomes have probabilities that are far higher than is generally understood.∂ Traditionally, risk is assessed as the product of probability and damage. But when the damage is beyond quantification, this process breaks down. With existential risks, learning from mistakes is not an option, and we cannot necessarily rely on the institutions, moral norms, or social attitudes developed from our experience with managing other types of risk. What is needed now is an approach to risk management which is fundamentally different from conventional practice. It would focus on the high-end, unprecedented possibilities, instead of assessing middle-of-the-road probabilities on the basis of historic experience.∂ Scenario planning can overcome such obstacles, provided it is used to explore the unprecedented possibilities, and not simply act as a type of conventional sensitivity analysis, as is often the case in current practice. Properly applied, it can provide a framework that enables managers to better handle these critical uncertainties, avoid dangerous “group think” and provide flexible rather than unidimensional strategies, thereby potentially improving the quality of decisions in this vital arena.∂ 16∂ Existential risks require a normative view of the targets required to avoid catastrophic consequences, based on the latest science within a qualitative, moral framework. Action is then determined by the imperative to achieve the target. It requires policy that is integrated across national, regional and global boundaries, and which recognises that issues such as climate, energy, the ecological crisis and resources overuse are inextricably linked and cannot be treated in separate “silos”, as at present.∂ In Prof. Schellnhuber’s words: “We must never forget that we are in a unique situation with no precise historic analogue. The level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is now greater, and the Earth warmer, than human beings have ever experienced. And there are almost eight billion of us now living on this planet. So calculating probabilities makes little sense in the most critical instances… Rather, we should identify possibilities, that is, potential developments in the planetary makeup that are consistent with the initial and boundary conditions, the processes and the drivers we know.”∂ 17∂ In this spirit, we sketch a 2050 scenario.∂ 2020–2030: Policy-makers fail to act on evidence that the current Paris Agreement path — in which global human-caused greenhouse emissions do not peak until 2030 — will lock in at least 3°C of warming. The case for a global, climate-emergency mobilisation of labour and resources to build a zero-emission economy and carbon drawdown in order to have a realistic chance of keeping warming well below 2°C is politely ignored. As projected by Xu and Ramanathan, by 2030 carbon dioxide levels have reached 437 parts per million — which is unprecedented in the last 20 million years — and warming reaches 1.6°C.∂ 18∂ 2030–2050: Emissions peak in 2030, and start to fall consistent with an 80 percent reduction in fossil-fuel energy intensity by 2100 compared to 2010 energy intensity. This leads to warming of 2.4°C by 2050, consistent with the Xu and Ramanathan “baseline-fast” scenario. However, another 0.6°C of warming occurs 19 — taking the total to 3°C by 2050 — due to the activation of a number of carbon-cycle feedbacks and higher levels of ice albedo and cloud feedbacks than current models assume. [It should be noted that this is far from an extreme scenario: the low-probability, high-impact warming (five percent probability) can exceed 3.5–4°C by 2050 in the Xu and Ramanathan scheme.]∂ 2050: By 2050, there is broad scientific acceptance that system tipping-points for the West Antarctic Ice Sheet and a sea-ice-free Arctic summer were passed well before 1.5°C of warming, for the Greenland Ice Sheet well before 2°C, and for widespread permafrost loss and large-scale Amazon drought and dieback by 2.5°C. The “hothouse Earth” scenario has been realised, and Earth is headed for another degree or more of warming, especially since human greenhouse emissions are still significant.∂ 20∂ While sea levels have risen 0.5 metres by 2050, the increase may be 2–3 metres by 2100, and it is understood from historical analogues that seas may eventually rise by more than 25 metres. Thirty-five percent of the global land area, and 55 percent of the global population, are subject to more than 20 days a year of lethal heat conditions, beyond the threshold of human survivability.∂ The destabilisation of the Jet Stream has very significantly affected the intensity and geographical distribution of the Asian and West African monsoons and, together with the further slowing of the Gulf Stream, is impinging on life support systems in Europe. North America suffers from devastating weather extremes including wildfires, heatwaves, drought and inundation. The summer monsoons in China have failed, and water flows into the great rivers of Asia are severely reduced by the loss of more than one-third of the Himalayan ice sheet. Glacial loss reaches 70 percent in the Andes, and rainfall in Mexico and central America falls by half. Semi-permanent El Nino conditions prevail.∂ Aridification emerges over more than 30 percent of the world’s land surface. Desertification is severe in southern Africa, the southern Mediterranean, west Asia, the Middle East, inland Australia and across the south-western United States. Impacts: A number of ecosystems collapse, including coral reef systems, the Amazon rainforest and in the Arctic.∂ Some poorer nations and regions, which lack capacity to provide artificially-cooled environments for their populations, become unviable. Deadly heat conditions persist for more than 100 days per year in West Africa, tropical South America, the Middle East and South-East Asia, contributing to more than a billion people being displaced from the tropical zone. Water availability decreases sharply in the most affected regions at lower latitudes (dry tropics and subtropics), affecting about two billion people worldwide. Agriculture becomes nonviable in the dry subtropics.∂ Most regions in the world see a significant drop in food production and increasing numbers of extreme weather events, including heat waves, floods and storms. Food production is inadequate to feed the global population and food prices skyrocket, as a consequence of a one-fifth decline in crop yields, a decline in the nutrition content of food crops, a catastrophic decline in insect populations, desertification, monsoon failure and chronic water shortages, and conditions too hot for human habitation in significant food-growing regions.∂ The lower reaches of the agriculturally-important river deltas such as the Mekong, Ganges and Nile are inundated, and significant sectors of some of the world’s most populous cities — including Chennai, Mumbai, Jakarta, Guangzhou, Tianjin, Hong Kong, Ho Chi Minh City, Shanghai, Lagos, Bangkok and Manila — are abandoned. Some small islands become uninhabitable. Ten percent of Bangladesh is inundated, displacing 15 million people.∂ Even for 2°C of warming, more than a billion people may need to be relocated and In high-end scenarios, the scale of destruction is beyond our capacity to model, with a high likelihood of human civilisation coming to an end.∂ 21∂ National security consequences: For pragmatic reasons associated with providing only a sketch of this scenario, we take the conclusion of the Age of Consequences ‘Severe’ 3°C scenario developed by a group of senior US national-security figures in 2007 as appropriate for our scenario too: Massive nonlinear events in the global environment give rise to massive nonlinear societal events. In this scenario, nations around the world will be overwhelmed by the scale of change and pernicious challenges, such as pandemic disease. The internal cohesion of nations will be under great stress, including in the United States, both as a result of a dramatic rise in migration and changes in agricultural patterns and water availability. The flooding of coastal communities around the world, especially in the Netherlands, the United States, South Asia, and China, has the potential to challenge regional and even national identities. Armed conflict between nations over resources, such as the Nile and its tributaries, is likely and nuclear war is possible. The social consequences range from increased religious fervor to outright chaos. In this scenario, climate change provokes a permanent shift in the relationship of humankind to nature’. (emphasis added)

## Advantage 2 - AI

#### Big tech companies are developing lethal AI weapons.

Dellinger ‘19

[Microsoft, Amazon and other big tech companies are putting us at risk of a "killer AI,” study says, <https://www.mic.com/p/microsoft-amazon-other-big-tech-companies-are-putting-us-at-risk-of-a-killer-ai-study-says-18689833>, August 22 2019, AJ Dellinger, politics and innovation writer at Mic, where he writes about climate change, sustainability, environmentalism, technology, and social media. He also covers news about the tech industry, politics, and current events. AJ's bylines have also appeared in Forbes, U.S. News and World Report, CNET, Engadget, Digital Trends, and others. Prior to joining Mic, AJ was nights and weekends editor at Gizmodo, technology reporter at Newsweek and International Business Times, and staff writer at the Daily Dot. His reporting has been cited in a number of major publications and appeared in academic texts. He has appeared on Cheddar TV, WGN Radio, and served as a panelist and moderator at Structure Security Conference.] [SS]

Tech companies are happy to tout their innovations and latest developments, but one organization is warning that not all advancements are good ones. Dutch nonprofit **PAX**, an organization that advocates for peace, recently **looked into how the tech sector is handling** the **dev**elopment **of a**rtificial **i**ntelligence **and its potential to become an automated destructive force** that could turn on humanity. What it found is that just seven of the 50 companies it investigated partake in "best practices" to mitigate the risk of an eventual AI apocalypse. Twenty-one firms, including the likes of **Amazon and Microsoft, were marked as "high concern**." PAX's research focused on answering three different questions: Is the company developing technology relevant to the potential development of lethal autonomous weapons, is the firm working on military projects that may enable deadly force, and has the company committed to not contributing to the development of autonomous weapons? Companies were given high marks for committing themselves to not contributing to the development of potentially deadly machines. Meanwhile, companies that freely work alongside the military without a clear plan in place to prevent their technology from being used for lethal purposes received demerits. Given that, it's not surprising that **Amazon and Microsoft** would sit atop the list of companies that just **may push us toward a future filled with killer robots.** **The two have** spent the better part of the last year **locked in an ongoing competition to land a massive government contract to build** the Pentagon **a "war cloud**" known as the Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure, or JEDI. The project would equip the United States Department of Defense with a cloud infrastructure that would allow branches of the military to freely share information, from sensitive documents to mission plans, across multiple theaters. The appeal of tackling the proposal is clear for Amazon and Microsoft: **it carries a $10 billion contract** that will be rewarded to the company that can provide the service the government is looking for. But, **in winning the contract and building the war-enabling technology** that the military wants, one of **these companies will** undoubtedly **contribute to the deaths of humans.** U.S. Department of Defense Chief Management Officer John H. Gibson II has made that abundantly clear in talking about JEDI, stating publicly that "**This program is** truly **about increasing the lethality of our department**." The criticisms of the companies extend beyond just their interest in taking on the JEDI project. **Microsoft has** taken heat in the past for **provid**ing its **tech**nology **to** the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (**ICE**), including providing the organization tasked with separating migrant children from their families with "facial recognition and identification" tools. Last year, the company called the separation policy "abhorrent" and said its technology isn't being used to enable those practices, though it shied away from canceling ongoing work with ICE or from taking on future contracts with the government agency. Microsoft has urged Congress to take steps to regulate facial recognition technology before it is put to use in overzealous and potentially harmful ways, so points for recognizing the risk even if the company is profiting off it anyway. While Microsoft has at least shown a little bit of caution when it comes to deploying its technology, Amazon has been a bit more brazen in offering up facial recognition services. Earlier this year, Andy Jassy — **the CEO of** Amazon Web Services (**AWS**) — said the company would offer its technology to "any government department that is following the law." That's pretty broad, and since the government has a pretty powerful hand in deciding what exactly the law is, it can be read as Amazon offering its facial recognition project Rekognition up carte blanche to any agency that wants to use it. The company **hasn't been shy about selling Rekognition** to law enforcement agencies across the country **despite concerns it contributes to the invasion of the public**'s right to **privacy**. It also hasn't been particularly dissuaded from profiting off the technology even though it's actually pretty terrible at identifying people **and displays a clear bias when attempting to identify women and people of color**. Add to that the concern that **it may one day contribute to the development of automated killing machines,** as PAX would suggest, and you have a real recipe for something awful. While Amazon and Microsoft are headliners on the list of companies of "high concern" identified by PAX, they certainly aren't alone. Controversial AI company Palantir was listed as a potential contributor to autonomous killing machines for accepting a U.S. military contract to build and deploy an AI system designed to "help soldiers analyze a combat zone in real time." Palantir has had ties to the intelligence community essentially since it was founded and just recently re-upped a data-mining contract with ICE despite objections from employees, so its inclusion on PAX's list shouldn't come as a surprise. PAX also called out Canadian company AerialX for creating a "kamikaze" drone called the DroneBullet that uses machine vision to identify, track and attack a target. The technology is designed to identify other, adversarial drones and knock them out of the air, but PAX raised concerns the technology could easily be adapted for other sorts of autonomous attacks. Finally, PAX warned that Anduril Industries — the AI defense startup of Oculus Rift founder Palmer Luckey — has created technology that could lead to the development of autonomous weapons, though it denied having any focus on such project. The company has worked to create technology to help provide a view of a battlefield to soldiers and potentially allow them to "direct unmanned military vehicles into combat," according to PAX. While some companies are, in the eyes of PAX, brazenly pushing us closer to the brink of killer robots while lining their own pockets, there are plenty of voices within the tech community raising warning flags. Despite his many faults, Elon Musk has been a leading advocate for developing limits on AI to prevent the machines from one day turning on us. He and the heads of Google's AI departments have signed pledges not to contribute to lethal autonomous weapons. More than 2,400 AI researchers and experts have likewise committed to not contributing to any projects that may one day lead to a Terminator-like outcome for humanity. Others have started to delve into the ethics of AI and are working to develop best practices and guidelines that would ideally serve as guard rails for all future developments to make sure AI projects never go too far toward automating the act of killing. Unfortunately for now it seems some companies are more dedicated to their bottom line than to making sure our existence doesn't come to an end from robotic arms. **Whether it's human-made AI that turns on us, human-related climate change that produces unlivable conditions, or human-made weapons of mass destruction that are unleashed on massive populations, it seems like one way or another we'll figure out a way to wipe ourselves out.**

#### **Strikes are increasingly affecting company’s decision, specifically in AI – history proves.**

Tiku ‘18

[The Year Tech Workers Realized They Were Workers, <https://www.wired.com/story/why-hotel-workers-strike-reverberated-through-tech/>, 12/24/2018, Nitasha Tiku, enior writer for WIRED in San Francisco, covering people and power in Silicon Valley and the tech industry’s impact on politics and culture. Before coming to WIRED she worked as a senior writer for BuzzFeed News. Tiku received her bachelor’s degree from Columbia University and a master’s degree from New York University’s journalism school. She lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.] [SS]

2018 WAS THE year that Big Tech’s mission statements came back to haunt it. When **employees** felt that their products were damaging the world and that management wouldn't listen, they **went public** with their protests. At Google and Amazon, **they challenged contracts to sell a**rtificial **i**ntelligence and facial-recognition technology **to the Pentagon** and police. At Microsoft and Salesforce, **workers argued against selling cloud computing services to agencies separating families at the border. Technology’s unintended consequences were** also **central to the most disruptive labor action in the Bay Area** this year, a strike by nearly 8,000 Marriott employees, including many in downtown San Francisco, just a dockless scooter ride from the headquarters of many major tech firms. Unite Here, the **union representing strikers in eight cities,** including San Jose and Oakland, **demanded limits on automation** like facial recognition at the front desk or the use of Alexa in lieu of a concierge. Marriott agreed to notify workers 150 days before implementing new technology and to give workers committee representation while the technology is still in development, among other protections. Union organizers say **they wouldn’t have won the changes without the strike,** which lasted two months. When Google employees and contractors briefly stepped away from their desks to protest the company’s policies on sexual harassment on November 1, Marriott workers in San Francisco had already been striking for 27 days, with 32 days still ahead of them—just like Marriott workers in San Jose, where Google plans to build a controversial new mega-campus. Both the **highly paid engineers and the low-paid housekeepers want a seat** at the table **when it comes to deploying technology**. Both sets of workers are also demanding changes in how their employers handle sexual harassment. A week after the walkout, Google tweaked its arbitration policy for sexual harassment claims. Facebook, Airbnb, and Square soon followed. In Marriott’s case, the union secured GPS-enabled silent panic buttons for all workers and policy changes, like removing and banning guests who harass women, and the right not to serve a guest who they believe harassed them. In fact, the parallels between the two high-profile movements—despite vast differences in market power, class, and income—suggest that **Google employees’ sense of exceptionalism may be starting to crack,** along with illusions about how Google operates**. If tech’s moment of reckoning has taught us that Silicon Valley is** the same old **capitalism, then perhaps Googlers are not a new kind of worker, and maybe some traditional labor rules apply: like the need for collective action in order to make structural change.** But the proximity of the Marriott strike also brings into focus both the potential and the limits of the fledgling revolt within Big Tech. “When tech workers see that people who get paid way, way, way, way less than they do strike for months, it makes them realize, ‘What the fuck are we doing when we walk out for half an hour?’” says a former Google employee of the Marriott workers. “The difference in the last few months has been more people realizing that we are actually better if we organize.” ADVERTISEMENT The public actions that started the year---**open letters, petitions, and Medium posts-**--are ultimately an appeal to a company’s values. But after The New York Times reported that Google gave a $90 million exit package to Android founder Andy Rubin after he was accused of sexual harassment, employees lost faith. Then at a company-wide meeting, executives offered business-as-usual pablum. Disgust was universal enough that the 20,000-person walkout was arranged in just three days. Image may contain Number Text and Symbol Want more? Read all of WIRED’s year-end coverage “Last year feels like it was a century ago. So much has changed,” says Stephanie Parker, one of the walkout organizers. “Seeing the cafeteria workers and security guards at Silicon Valley companies bravely demand access to benefits and respect was a deeply inspiring experience for me and many other tech workers this past year. It helped me to see parallels between the struggles of these service workers and my own experience as a black woman in tech, and also prepared me to identify with the struggles happening in other local industries, like the Marriott hotel strike.” Nelson Lichtenstein, a history professor and director of the Center for the Study of Work, Labor, and Democracy at UC Santa Barbara, says that over time, corporate success and growing size tend to create divisions and inequalities. “It takes a while. Sometimes it takes a generation, or a little less, for the ordinary person—not the person who’s hired on day one with stock options—to say, ‘Wait a minute, this thing isn’t working for me, and I can see some corruption in the institution.'” Most Popular An illustration of arms holding a TV, and a remote. GEAR The 64 Absolute Best Prime Day Deals PARKER HALL AND GEAR TEAM Loki CULTURE Loki Has Always Been Marvel’s Most Queer Character ANGELA WATERCUTTER An illustration of arms holding gadgets with sales tags. GEAR 26 of the Best Deals From Target’s Prime Day Rival Sale MEDEA GIORDANO AND GEAR TEAM Paper cut outs of man and woman with phones between them BUSINESS A New Wave of Dating Apps Takes Cues From TikTok and Gen Z ARIELLE PARDES ADVERTISEMENT So far, tech-worker activism has been most visible at Google. Might workers elsewhere adopt similar tactics? Take Amazon, a company known for its aggressive anti-union tactics. This spring, white-collar employees told WIRED that their colleagues are too pragmatic and fearful of retaliation to go the way of Google activists. In December, however, employees said **workers have been more vocal and restless over issues like the facial-recognition service Amazon sells to police departments** and Amazon’s fierce opposition to a proposed Seattle tax on the company that would have funded homeless programs. “**We’re** just **beginning to challenge the fear that drives what looks from the outside to be apathy,**” says one Amazon employee. “Social movements are funny creatures. They sometimes pop up in unexpected places with unexpected rapidity,” says Joshua Freeman, a professor at CUNY’s School of Labor and Urban Studies. He sees in the recent protests some echoes of the 1930s, when workers who had seen themselves as “individualists”---most notably news reporters---realized they needed union support as much as blue-collar workers. Then, too, society was in tumult. "There was a general radicalization of American society in response to the Great Depression, in the sense that the corporate economy had failed most Americans,” he says. Reporters were also unhappy with their employers using their pages to “promote conservative political positions,” Freeman says. Rachel Gumpert, Unite Here’s head of communications, was not surprised to see both sets of workers organize around an issue like sexual harassment. “Sometimes your base salary doesn’t protect you,” says Gumpert. “Everybody needs to have voice in their job and dignity at work.”

#### Big tech develops AI weapons for the US military – they have incentive to encourage an AI arms race BUT workers have historically caused them to back out of weapons dev.

Skolink 3/16

[Big Tech is fueling an AI "arms race": It could be terrifying — or just a giant scam, <https://www.salon.com/2021/03/16/big-tech-is-fueling-an-ai-arms-race-it-could-be-terrifying--or-just-a-giant-scam/>, March 16 2021, Jon Skolink, staff writer at Salon. His work has appeared in Current Affairs, The Baffler, AlterNet, and The New York Daily News.] [SS]

"It should not come as a surprise that a commission packed with tech billionaires would call for increased intellectual property protections, oppose regulation (including on Lethal Autonomous Weapons), propose toothless ethics principles, and call for more federal funding of their industry," Poulson said in a statement. Indeed, many commission members are past and present tech executives of companies on the fore of AI — companies that have much to gain from future contracting deals with the Pentagon. The commission's chair, for example, is Eric Schmidt, the former CEO of Google, who remains — as Poulson pointed out — a major shareholder in Alphabet, Google's parent company. Google's head of AI, Andrew Moore, is also a member of the NSCAI. **Google already has an extensive history of working with the Pentagon.** According to The Intercept, in a federally-funded $70 million program called Project Maven, **Google developed "algorithmic warfare initiative to apply artificial intelligence solutions to drone targeting."** The company expecting that revenue would steadily rise from $15 million to $250 million a year for such defense projects. Advertisement: In April of 2018, **however, 3,000 Google employees signed an open letter decrying the company's involvement in defense technology, a move that eventually led to Google'**s ultimate decision **to back out of the deal**. Schmidt strongly objected to Google's decision, calling it an "aberration" within the tech industry, which he felt was otherwise inclined to collaborate with the Defense Department. Former Undersecretary of the Navy Robert Work, the vice chairman of NSCAI, called Google's decision "hypocritical," using language that suggested a new cold war is already underway: "Anything that's going on in the AI center in China is going to the Chinese government and then will ultimately end up in the hands of the Chinese military." Other members of the commission include **Oracle** CEO Safra Catz, **Microsoft** chief scientific officer Eric Horvitz, and Andrew Jassy, the future CEO of **Amazon** Web Services, all of whom **received cloud awards as part of the CIA's Commercial Cloud Enterprise** (C2E), as Poulson noted. **Oracle, Amazon and Microsoft**, in fact**, are** currently **involved in an acrimonious legal battle over** a $10 billion cloud-computing contract called the Joint Enterprise Defense Initiative (**JEDI**). The deal was initially considered to be "gift-wrapped" for Amazon until Oracle butted in, alleging improprieties. In an odd turn of events, the Pentagon awarded the contract to Microsoft, prompting Amazon to sue the federal government for anti-Amazon bias, based on ex-President Trump's overheated rhetoric. Advertisement: When it comes to securing Big Tech's enormous future contracts with the Pentagon, it appears that Jassy, Catz and Horvitz have set aside their mutual grievances for the time being Other board members of NSCAI include Gilman Louie and Christopher Darby, who are the founder and vice president (respectively) of a CIA-funded nonprofit called In-Q-Tel, which invests money in private companies who are developing technologies that might be useful to the intelligence community. According to a Wall Street Journal investigation from 2015, half of In-Q-Tel's trustees were financially connected to private companies in which In-Q-Tel had invested. Another board member, William Mark, a vice president of SRI International, has served on the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), a government-run program that partners with a variety of private companies and research institutions to "make pivotal investments in breakthrough technologies for national security." DARPA has awarded SRI numerous contracts for the development of speech recognition, translation and, most recently, deep-fake recognition systems. Advertisement: In other words, **nearly everyone involved in preparing or supporting the NSCAI report would seem likely to benefit from the perception that the U.S. is falling behind other nations in vital defense technology.** The Defense Department, Poulson told Salon, "prefers to run the race as if it is losing — which happens to increase military budgets, justify post-government consulting careers and help tech CEOs oppose regulation." **It's only natural that government authorities would seek out industry experts to consult on AI projects — it's a fast-developing field that almost no one outside the tech world understands.** **Poulson wonders**, however, "**whether the U.S. will give human rights organizations** — such as Human Rights Watch and the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots — **as much of a seat** at the table **as it does tech billionaires**." **The** very **fact that the NSCAI is stacked with panel members with an obvious incentive to weaponize new technologies raises the question whether there needs to be an AI "arms race"** at all. That term, of course, harkens back to Cold War hysteria surrounding the threat of nuclear annihilation, which led U.S. lawmakers to grow unduly concerned with the "missile gap," a widely held misconception that the Soviet Union was outpacing the U.S. with superior ballistic missile capabilities. (As intelligence sources knew even at the time, the Soviet nuclear arsenal was in bad shape and much smaller than advertised.) Advertisement: Arms control strategies, in fact, may be a more effective strategy in the AI realm, just as it was with nuclear missiles, especially given that America already collaborates heavily with China in AI research. As Graham Webster wrote recently in MIT Tech Review: Unlike the US and USSR, in which science and technology developed on largely independent tracks, the US and China are part of a globally intertwined ecosystem. Even if the US and China cut off trade with each other, both countries would still have to worry about security risks from components, since risks along the supply chain exist everywhere. For example, Alibaba, a tech giant on the forefront of AI, has multiple offices in the U.S., and Google AI chief Jeff Dean is an adviser at China's Tsinghua University, which opened an Institute for Artificial Intelligence in June 2018. Stanford University's Artificial Intelligence lab has a partnership with one of China's biggest retailers. In other words, an arms race in which the two nations are locked in silos of information, research and development is not just ethically dubious but logistically impossible. Advertisement: Will China and Russia explore uses of AI in weapons of the future? Almost certainly — both countries have already signaled movement in that direction. But if American politicians and scientists want to maximize the potential of AI, framing its development in terms of an international "arms race" seems like a strategic and philosophical mistake on a huge scale. AI has the potential to revolutionize health care, education, climate science and many other fields — and those things all play a fundamental role in national security. But **these new technologies will not make America more secure if they are understood as weapons of international combat.**

#### Arms race goes nuclear and causes global war – incentivizes first use and third party interference

Horowitz et. al ‘19(Michael C. Horowitz is Professor of Political Science and Associate Director of Perry World House at the University of Pennsylvania. Paul Scharre is Senior Fellow and Director, Technology and National Security Program at the Center for a New American Security. Alexander Velez-Green is a defense analyst based in Washington, DC. Michael C. Horowitz, Paul Scharre, Alexander Velez-Green., 12-11-2019, "A Stable Nuclear Future? The Impact of Autonomous Systems and Artificial Intelligence," arXiv.org, https://arxiv.org/abs/1912.05291)

Autonomous systems could also influence the potential for nuclear escalation indirectly from the potential for robotic and autonomous systems to give large conventional military advantages to their adopters. Some types of automation might be beneficial when one party does it, but harmful when deployed symmetrically by both sides, as is the case with many military actions viewed in the context of nuclear stability. One example could be the role of automation in accelerating actions. This could be beneficial in enhancing deterrence and buying additional time for decision-makers. If both sides were to use automation to react at “machine speed,” however, the net result could be harmful. Schelling’s discussion of the “premium on haste” may also be useful here. For instance, the Eisenhower doctrine of massive retaliation sought to “knock out [the Soviet] SAC first” once major war appeared imminent, thereby enabling the United States to use nuclear weapons to offset the Warsaw Pact’s numerical advantage in conventional forces.132 Some fear that Russia, now in a position of conventional inferiority relative to the United States, might escalate to nuclear war more quickly during a conflict for similar reasons.133 Concern about the way that U.S. conventional superiority might encourage nuclear-armed adversaries to escalate in a crisis led the U.S. Department of Defense, in the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review, to discuss U.S. nuclear deterrence as critical, in part, for “communicating to potential nuclear-armed adversaries that they cannot escalate their way out of failed conventional aggression.”134 If a nation deploys autonomous systems in a manner that significantly tilts the conventional military relationship in its favor, a nuclear-armed adversary may feel increased incentives to resort to nuclear use, or the threat thereof, to avoid military defeat. 135 For instance, the advent of autonomous swarming forces with greater speed and coordination than human-centered systems could heighten conventional military imbalances in key regions, such as Europe or Asia. This possibility has already attracted the attention of prominent Russian strategists, who write that robotic systems could one day “yield results comparable to the battlefield efficiency of nuclear weapons.”136 If autonomous military systems provide an actor like the United States – or others in the future – a decisive conventional military advantage versus a nuclear-armed adversary, that adversary may be incentivized to threaten or even use nuclear weapons to defeat aggression or coerce an end to the conflict. Russia is not the only country that has indicated a possible willingness to use limited nuclear strikes to end a conventional war that it is losing on favorable terms. Pakistan has indicated likewise.137 And China may be considering a similar doctrinal innovation.138 It is also possible, however, that robotics and autonomous systems narrow the gap between nuclear powers, decreasing reliance on nuclear weapons. Given that the key driver of robotics and AI technology is the commercial sector – and that robotic technologies to-date have rapidly diffused – AI could end up being more of a net leveler among actors from a balance of power perspective. More sophisticated actors would still have access to more capable military systems, but the relatively low barriers to entry for AI and autonomous systems compared to other military-specific technologies such as stealth or fighter jet engines, means that less capable actors would gain in relative power. If applications of AI serve to narrow conventional military gaps, the result could actually decrease the reliance that some nuclear powers place on nuclear weapons, because they would feel more capable of defending themselves conventionally. Unintentional Escalation The use of autonomous systems for conventional military operations also could increase the risk of accidental, inadvertent, or catalytic escalation at the conventional level, with implications for nuclear stability. For instance, if nations developed lethal autonomous weapons that could choose their own targets without a human in the loop, they could potentially be at risk for accidents, miscalculation, or unanticipated interactions with the environment or adversary systems. During a crisis, such unauthorized interactions could pose risks to escalation management. Catalytic (third party) escalation at the conventional level also poses a risk for nuclear stability. A third party observing rising tensions between two of its own nuclear-armed adversaries may be incentivized to instigate a crisis or conflict, in the expectation that it would benefit by turning its adversaries on one another. Autonomous systems may offer a particularly viable option for these actors. For instance, if the two states are engaged in a limited conventional war, a third party could hack an autonomous system fielded by one of the parties and use it to expand the scope of the conflict, for instance, by targeting previously untargeted theater or strategic assets. The risk of catalytic escalation would be exacerbated by actors’ unfamiliarity with autonomous systems, the increased speed of military activity in an era of AI, and more traditional drivers of crisis escalation, to include imperfect information about an adversary’s intentions and capabilities. Third party actors may be able to exploit these crisis dynamics to preserve their anonymity. For instance, they could redirect targeting by an autonomous system during a period of intensified fighting. This could leave the targeted actor with very little time to evaluate the likely source or intent of escalated attacks on its theater or strategic assets, thereby increasing the likelihood of counter-escalation. Escalation in each of the scenarios described above would be driven, at least at first, by conventional systems. Unwanted escalation below the nuclear threshold, however, could still increase the risk of crises or conflicts getting out of hand by dragging nations further down the slippery slope from crisis to conflict or conventional conflict to nuclear war.

#### Nuclear war is existential – climate, mass starvation, Ice Age, and meltdowns

Starr 14 [Steven, Senior Scientist for Physicians for Social Responsibility (www.psr.org) and Director of the Clinical Laboratory Science Program at the University of Missouri. Starr has published in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists and the Strategic Arms Reduction (STAR) website of the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, June 5, “The Lethality of Nuclear Weapons: Nuclear War has No Winner,” http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-lethality-of-nuclear-weapons-nuclear-war-has-no-winner/5385611]

Nuclear war has no winner. Beginning in 2006, several of the world’s leading climatologists (at Rutgers, UCLA, John Hopkins University, and the University of Colorado-Boulder) published a series of studies that evaluated the long-term environmental consequences of a nuclear war, including baseline scenarios fought with merely 1% of the explosive power in the US and/or Russian launch-ready nuclear arsenals. They concluded that the consequences of even a “small” nuclear war would include catastrophic disruptions of global climate[i] and massive destruction of Earth’s protective ozone layer[ii]. These and more recent studies predict that global agriculture would be so negatively affected by such a war, a global famine would result, which would cause up to 2 billion people to starve to death. [iii] These peer-reviewed studies – which were analyzed by the best scientists in the world and found to be without error – also predict that a war fought with less than half of US or Russian strategic nuclear weapons would destroy the human race.[iv] In other words, a US-Russian nuclear war would create such extreme long-term damage to the global environment that it would leave the Earth uninhabitable for humans and most animal forms of life. A recent article in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, “Self-assured destruction: The climate impacts of nuclear war”,[v] begins by stating: “A nuclear war between Russia and the United States, even after the arsenal reductions planned under New START, could produce a nuclear winter. Hence, an attack by either side could be suicidal, resulting in self-assured destruction.” In 2009, I wrote an article[vi] for the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament that summarizes the findings of these studies. It explains that nuclear firestorms would produce millions of tons of smoke, which would rise above cloud level and form a global stratospheric smoke layer that would rapidly encircle the Earth. The smoke layer would remain for at least a decade, and it would act to destroy the protective ozone layer (vastly increasing the UV-B reaching Earth[vii]) as well as block warming sunlight, thus creating Ice Age weather conditions that would last 10 years or longer. Following a US-Russian nuclear war, temperatures in the central US and Eurasia would fall below freezing every day for one to three years; the intense cold would completely eliminate growing seasons for a decade or longer. No crops could be grown, leading to a famine that would kill most humans and large animal populations. Electromagnetic pulse from high-altitude nuclear detonations would destroy the integrated circuits in all modern electronic devices[viii], including those in commercial nuclear power plants. Every nuclear reactor would almost instantly meltdown; every nuclear spent fuel pool (which contain many times more radioactivity than found in the reactors) would boil-off, releasing vast amounts of long-lived radioactivity. The fallout would make most of the US and Europe uninhabitable. Of course, the survivors of the nuclear war would be starving to death anyway. Once nuclear weapons were introduced into a US-Russian conflict, there would be little chance that a nuclear holocaust could be avoided. Theories of “limited nuclear war” and “nuclear de-escalation” are unrealistic.[ix] In 2002 the Bush administration modified US strategic doctrine from a retaliatory role to permit preemptive nuclear attack; in 2010, the Obama administration made only incremental and miniscule changes to this doctrine, leaving it essentially unchanged. Furthermore, Counterforce doctrine – used by both the US and Russian military – emphasizes the need for preemptive strikes once nuclear war begins. Both sides would be under immense pressure to launch a preemptive nuclear first-strike once military hostilities had commenced, especially if nuclear weapons had already been used on the battlefield. Both the US and Russia each have 400 to 500 launch-ready ballistic missiles armed with a total of at least 1800 strategic nuclear warheads,[xi] which can be launched with only a few minutes warning.[xii] Both the US and Russian Presidents are accompanied 24/7 by military officers carrying a “nuclear briefcase”, which allows them to transmit the permission order to launch in a matter of seconds.

## Solvency

#### Thus the plan: A just government ought to recognize the unconditional right of big tech workers to strike. To clarify, big tech includes Amazon, Apple, Google/Alphabet, Facebook, and Microsoft.

#### Tech unions are gaining traction – they have the ability to make real change and affect company policy, they just need to be recognized.

Vynk et. Al. 4/30

[Six things to know about the latest efforts to bring unions to Big Tech, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2021/01/26/tech-unions-explainer>, April 30 2021, Gerrit De Vynck , Nitasha Tiku and Jay Greene, Education: Carleton University, BA in Journalism and Global Politics Gerrit De Vynck is a tech reporter for The Washington Post. He writes about Google and the algorithms that increasingly shape society. He previously covered tech for seven years at Bloomberg News., Education: Columbia University, BA in English; New York University, MA in Journalism Nitasha Tiku is The Washington Post's tech culture reporter based in San Francisco., Education: Macalester College, BA in English; Columbia University, MS in Journalism Jay Greene is a reporter for The Washington Post who is focused on technology coverage in the Pacific Northwest] [SS]

Earlier this year, some **Google workers**said they **were forming a union**. The news was met with confusion from some: Why would employees at a company famous for high salaries and free lunches want a union? But the move is just the latest in a growing battle over equity, ethics and labor rights at the biggest tech companies, one that goes well **beyond wages and perks***.* Google, Amazon, Apple and Facebook are among the biggest and most powerful corporations in history, staffed by hundreds of thousands of employees and contractors. Most of Amazon’s workforce labors in warehouses, and the janitors who clean up after Google workers don’t get the same benefits and protections as employees. Many jobs considered white-collar, such as writing code, selling software and moderating content, are done by contractors, too. **A unionization****battle at** an **Amazon**warehouse earlier this year **became one of the highest-profile labor fights in recent years. Union drives have popped up among groups of those blue-collar tech workers for years, but labor activism is cropping up among more privileged employees as** well. **Demands for stronger policies against sexual harassment and more support for women and people of color have already led to changes**at the tech giants. Google’s decision in December to fire its star artificial intelligence researcher — one of the most prominent Black women in the field — led to **calls against censoring research critical of Googl***e* and demands to investigate the firings of outspoken employees. Silicon Valley’s two-tiered system for white-collar workers is under pressure as coronavirus spreads There’s another key element at play, though. **Some workers don’t like the role their companies have in society, such as selling AI software to militaries or facial recognition tools to police. Employees at Twitter, Facebook and Google’s YouTube have** all **tried to** apply pressure on their bosses to **clamp down on abusive, racist and sexist content** on their platforms. The highest-profile example came in January when **Twitter banned President Donald Trump from its site after 350 employees wrote a letter demanding an investigation into the company’s decisions to keep Trump** on its platform. At the end of the day, the growing tension between workers and management represents a power struggle as tech giants, some of which started with idealistic visions, have emerged as corporate behemoths with little accountability. What’s the history of unions in Silicon Valley? Well before the digital era, the area now known as Silicon Valley was the largest fruit-producing region in the world and a hotbed of labor activity. That changed when tech took over in the 1960s. Robert Noyce, the founder of Intel, laid out the industry’s union-skeptical position early on. “Remaining nonunion is essential for survival for most of our companies. If we had the work rules of union companies, we’d all go out of business,” Noyce once said, according to “Silicon Valley Fever,” a 1984 book chronicling the tech industry’s early years. Noyce’s position has remained an article of faith ever since. For tech founders, the ability to shift their businesses quickly, hiring and firing as needed and paying workers with stock options instead of offering traditional salaries and benefits, is key to success. In his book “Temp,” Cornell University history professor Louis Hyman argues that the use of contractors in Silicon Valley is an extension of that mind-set, allowing companies to downsize quickly without looking as though they were laying off hundreds of employees. Most Silicon Valley leaders still see their industry as a true meritocracy, where employees are generously compensated, can easily switch jobs and don’t need a union to advocate for them. But a growing number of activists both inside and outside the companies don’t agree. Union advocates say discrimination faced by women and people of color at the tech companies proves the need for stronger worker protections. **Unions can** also **be a way for workers to have their voices heard about** the **issues** they have with decisions executives are making, **such as which politicians to give money to or whether to sell software to the military and police.** Google workers launch unconventional union with help of Communications Workers of America Why does it matter? What happens in Silicon Valley matters around the world. Other companies look to the tech industry for ideas on how to structure their workforces and set human resources policies. Successfully unionizing even a handful of workers at the biggest and most important American corporations would also be a big win for the labor movement, whose power has been shrinking over the past several decades. If unions really are the drag on productivity that their critics say they are, their presence could have long-term negative effects on the economic power of U.S. tech giants. Some tech workers are concerned that companies such as Google, which prided itself on having an open culture, will become even less transparent if employees are represented by a union. “Of course our employees have protected labor rights that we support. But as we’ve always done, we’ll continue engaging directly with all our employees,” Kara Silverstein, Google’s director of people operations, said in a statement when employees announced their union. But even if unionization efforts don’t take hold among the majority of tech workers, the fact that the conversation is happening marks a real change of attitude in Silicon Valley. The debate over how much power the workers should have to influence decisions at their companies, who gets fired or hired, and whether the widespread use of contractors should continue is far from over. Biden fires Trump-appointed labor board general counsel and deputy who refused to resign Is the Google initiative different from a traditional union? Yes and no. Americans may be more familiar with unions representing autoworkers or steelworkers, which bargain over a contract to win better wages and working conditions. That type of union typically seeks federal certification to prove that it represents the majority of employees — a long and often contentious process conducted by the National Labor Relations Board. **The Google effort**, on the other hand, **is a “minority” union**, more common in the 1930s. A group **of** about 230 **employees** and contractors who work for Google and other parts of its parent company Alphabet launched the Alphabet Workers Union in January **to advance worker rights and push progressive causes**. Members will pay dues and the union will have an elected board and paid staff, but it won’t have the right to bargain with Alphabet because it’s not certified by the NLRB. The Alphabet group also differs from a traditional union in accepting independent contract workers, which make up about half of Google’s workforce but are officially employed by other firms. Contractors are not protected under the National Labor Relations Act, which enshrines the right to form a union and take collective action, which is part of the reason the Alphabet union opted for this structure, says Auni Ahsan, a Google employee and member of the union’s council. Ahsan also pointed out that NLRB certification comes with few protections. Google contractors in Pittsburgh who formed a union in 2019 have struggled to get the contracting agency that employs them, HCL America, to come to the bargaining table, even after the NLRB filed a complaint. Google contract workers vote to form a union amid employee discord over treatment Since launching, the Alphabet group has grown its U.S. membership to more than 800. But that’s still a tiny proportion of the 260,000 people who work for the company worldwide. Inside Google, the move was met with mixed reactions. According to a current employee, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to share internal communications, on an internal mailing list some Googlers accused the union of representing only a thin slice of political views at the company, while others made jokes like, “Does this mean we are going to get full-sized kombucha back?” What about unionization efforts at Amazon? Amazon employs hundreds of thousands of warehouse workers whose jobs are worlds away from the white-collar offices. Unionization efforts have popped up from time to time, mostly focused on improving wages and safety. During the coronavirus pandemic, concerns over safety have increased. In October, the company said nearly 20,000 of its U.S. employees had tested positive or had been presumed positive for the virus since the pandemic took hold. Amazon has more than 1 million workers worldwide. (The Washington Post is owned by Amazon chief executive Jeff Bezos.) For years, the e-commerce giant has fought unionization attempts. The highest profile example heated up in November, when workers at a warehouse in Bessemer, Ala., filed a notice with the NLRB to hold a union vote. The agency called for a seven-week mail-in voting period to begin Feb. 8 for nearly 6,000 workers. Amazon set up an anti-union website — DoItWithoutDues.com — discouraging workers from paying dues and joining the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union. It required workers to attend meetings were company officials disparaged unionization, and Amazon challenged the election procedures, pressing for in-person voting even during the pandemic. Amazon presses for in-person voting for unionization election in the midst of a pandemic Unlike the Google union, the Amazon workers sought full certification from the NLRB, which would have given them the ability to collectively bargain for a contract, as well as provide job-security protections that nonunion workers don’t have. The drive attracted support from national politicians, including Sen. Bernie Sanders and Sen. Elizabeth Warren. When the ballots were counted in April, they showed most workers had rejected the union, giving Amazon a major win. The fight isn’t over though. The RWDSU has filed complaints saying Amazon interfered in the process, and over a thousand Amazon workers from other locations have expressed interest in forming their own unions since the Bessemer drive became national news. How are tech companies responding? Perhaps **the surest sign that Big Tech thinks unions can have a substantial impact is found in the companies’ responses**. **Amazon’s anti-union website isn’t the only example of companies pushing back against organizing efforts in their workforces**. In 2019, Google hired IRI Consultants, a firm known for working on anti-union efforts. The company also fired several workers that year who said they had been let go for organizing other employees. Google said at the time the employees had broken rules on information-sharing. Late last year, the NLRB accused Google of spying on and firing those workers. Google has said it is confident in the legality of the firings. The search giant was one of a group of companies that had asked the NLRB to overturn an Obama-era rule that forced employers to let employees use company email for labor organizing. In 2019, the NLRB reversed the rule. Google is threatening to pull its search engine out of Australia Are gig workers allowed to unionize? Most gig workers, such as those who drive for Uber or delivery groceries for Instacart, are classified as independent contractors and not protected by the NLRA. Efforts to reclassify gig workers as employees have been stymied by division among Democrats and tremendous pressure from multibillion-dollar tech companies. After California legislators in 2019 passed AB5, granting employee status to gig workers such as Uber and Lyft drivers, a coalition of gig companies, including Uber, Lyft, Instacart and DoorDash spent more than $200 million on a state ballot initiative that reversed the gains of AB5 in exchange for limited benefits. Instead of guaranteeing the minimum wage or health insurance, Proposition 22 promised minimum earnings restricted to the time a passenger is in the vehicle, not the amount of time spent working, and a stipend for health care. Uber and Lyft used sneaky tactics to avoid making drivers employees in California, voters say. Now, they’re going national. **Gig workers and their advocates are pushing ahead with efforts to organize**, even as tech companies have moved quickly to push for Proposition 22 in other states and squash nascent union efforts. In January, Instacart fired its only unionized workers, a group of 10 employees in Skokie, Ill., as part of a larger layoff of nearly 2,000 in-store shoppers, who pick and pack groceries and are the only segment of Instacart’s workforce classified as employees. Earlier in January, the grocery chain Albertsons laid off employees who handled delivery and replaced them with contractors from DoorDash, a move interpreted by critics as a response to Proposition 22’s success. Meanwhile, **a group of gig workers and unions has filed a lawsuit in California Supreme Court to have Proposition 22 overturned.** She was Instacart’s biggest cheerleader. Now she’s leading a worker revolt. In response to tech company crackdowns and lobbying, gig workers have shifted their strategy **to emphasize building worker-led movements and increasing their ranks,** rather than focusing on employment status as the primary goal, says Veena Dubal, a law professor at the University of California Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco. The hope is that with President Biden in the White House and an even split in the Senate, **legislators will mobilize at the federal level, through the NLRA or bills such as the PRO Act, to recognize gig worker collectives as real unions.** “**I think we’re going to see more militancy” such as work stoppages, direct action and consumer boycotts,** Dubal said. There’s evidence the Biden administration may be open to new rules in favor of gig workers. At the end of April, labor secretary Marty Walsh said that gig work contractors should actually be classified as full employees in “lot of cases.”

#### Companies are learning how to push back – government action is uniquely key to holding corporations accountable and empowering workers.

Lafer and Loustaunau ‘20

[Fear At Work, <https://www.epi.org/publication/fear-at-work-how-employers-scare-workers-out-of-unionizing/>, July 23 2020, Gordon Lafer and Lola Loustaunau, Quals: <https://www.epi.org/people/gordon-lafer/>, <https://www.epi.org/people/lola-loustaunau/>] [SS]

What this report finds: Most **American workers want a union** in their workplace **but** very **few have it, because the right to organize—supposedly guaranteed by federal law—has been** effectively **cancelled out by** a combination of **legal and illegal employer intimidation tactics**. This report focuses on the legal tactics—heavy-handed tactics that would be illegal in any election for public office but are regularly deployed by employers under the broken National Labor Relations Board’s union election system. Under this system, **employees** in workplace elections **have no right to free speech** or a free press, **are threatened with losing their jobs** if they vote to establish a union, **and can be forced to hear one-sided propaganda** with no right to ask questions or hear from opposing viewpoints. **Employers**—including many respectable, name-brand companies—collectively **spend $340 million per year on “union** **avoidance” consultants** **who teach them how to exploit** **these weakness of federal labor law to** effectively **scare workers out of exercising their** legal **right to collective bargaining**. Inside accounts of unionization drives at a tire manufacturing plant in Georgia and at a pay TV services company in Texas illustrate what those campaigns look like in real life. Below are some of the common employer tactics that often turn overwhelming support for unions at the outset of a campaign into a “no” vote just weeks later. All of these are legal under current law: Forcing employees to attend daily anti-union meetings where pro-union workers have no right to present alternative views and can be fired on the spot if they ask a question. Plastering the workplace with anti-union posters, banners, and looping video ads—and denying pro-union employees access to any of these media. Instructing managers to tell employees that there’s a good chance they will lose their jobs if they vote to unionize. Having supervisors hold multiple one-on-one talks with each of their employees, stressing why it would be bad for them to vote in a union. Having managers tell employees that pro-union workers are “the enemy within.” Telling supervisors to grill subordinates about their views on unionization, effectively destroying the principle of a secret ballot. Why it matters: The right to collective bargaining is key to solving the crisis of economic inequality. When workers have the ability to bargain collectively with their employers, the division of corporate profits is more equally shared between employees, management, and shareholders. When workers can’t exercise this right, inequality grows and wages stagnate, as shown in the long-term decline of workers’ wages over the past 40 years: CEO compensation has grown 940% since 1978, while typical worker compensation has risen only 12%—and that was before the coronavirus pandemic hit. The importance of unions has been even further heightened by both the COVID-19 pandemic and the national protests around racial justice. In recent months, thousands of nonunion workers walked off their jobs demanding personal protective equipment, hazard pay, and access to sick leave. The concrete realization that these things could only be won through collective action has also led many of these workers to seek to unionize in order to protect themselves and their families. At the same time, the importance of the power of collective bargaining for essential workers and Black workers has become clearer. Unionization has helped bring living wages to once low-wage jobs in industries such as health care and is a key tool for closing racial wage gaps. In recent years the Black Lives Matter movement has joined with the fight for a $15 minimum wage and other union efforts in order to win economic dignity for African American workers. What we can do about it: **Congress must** act to **ensure that workers have a right to vote to unionize in an atmosphere defined by free speech and open communication, and without fear of retaliation for one’s political views.** **The House of Representatives took an important step in this direction when it** **passed the** Protecting the Right to Organize (**PRO) Act** in February 2020. If adopted by the Senate, **the PRO Act would help ensure that workers have a meaningful right to organize** and bargain collectively **by streamlining the process when workers form a union, bolstering workers’ chances of success at negotiating a first agreement, and holding employers accountable** when they violate the law. Beyond passing the PRO Act**, legislators should back a package of proposals** advanced by a group of 70 economists, academics, and labor leaders led by Harvard University’s Center for Labor and Worklife program. Their Clean Slate for Worker Power agenda **includes extending labor rights to farmworkers, domestic workers, and independent contractors who are now excluded from federal union rights; requiring meaningful employee representation on corporate boards of directors; mandating a national requirement that employees may only be fired for just cause rather than arbitrarily; and enabling workers to engage in sector-wide negotiations rather than single-employer bargaining. These proposals would help create shared prosperity by starting to restore balance and effective democratic standards in federal labor law.**

## Framework

#### Pleasure and pain are intrinsically valuable. people consistently regard pleasure and pain as good reasons for action, despite the fact that pleasure doesn’t seem to be instrumentally valuable for anything.

Moen 16 [Ole Martin Moen, Research Fellow in Philosophy at University of Oslo “An Argument for Hedonism” Journal of Value Inquiry (Springer), 50 (2) 2016: 267–281] SJDI

Let us start by observing, empirically, that a widely shared judgment about intrinsic value and disvalue is that pleasure is intrinsically valuable and pain is intrinsically disvaluable. On virtually any proposed list of intrinsic values and disvalues (we will look at some of them below), pleasure is included among the intrinsic values and pain among the intrinsic disvalues. This inclusion makes intuitive sense, moreover, for there is something undeniably good about the way pleasure feels and something undeniably bad about the way pain feels, and neither the goodness of pleasure nor the badness of pain seems to be exhausted by the further effects that these experiences might have. “Pleasure” and “pain” are here understood inclusively, as encompassing anything hedonically positive and anything hedonically negative.2 The special value statuses of pleasure and pain are manifested in how we treat these experiences in our everyday reasoning about values. If you tell me that you are heading for the convenience store, I might ask: “What for?” This is a reasonable question, for when you go to the convenience store you usually do so, not merely for the sake of going to the convenience store, but for the sake of achieving something further that you deem to be valuable. You might answer, for example: “To buy soda.” This answer makes sense, for soda is a nice thing and you can get it at the convenience store. I might further inquire, however: “What is buying the soda good for?” This further question can also be a reasonable one, for it need not be obvious why you want the soda. You might answer: “Well, I want it for the pleasure of drinking it.” If I then proceed by asking “But what is the pleasure of drinking the soda good for?” the discussion is likely to reach an awkward end. The reason is that the pleasure is not good for anything further; it is simply that for which going to the convenience store and buying the soda is good.3 As Aristotle observes: “We never ask [a man] what his end is in being pleased, because we assume that pleasure is choice worthy in itself.”4 Presumably, a similar story can be told in the case of pains, for if someone says “This is painful!” we never respond by asking: “And why is that a problem?” We take for granted that if something is painful, we have a sufficient explanation of why it is bad. If we are onto something in our everyday reasoning about values, it seems that pleasure and pain are both places where we reach the end of the line in matters of value.

#### **The standard is maximizing expected well being.**

Prefer:

#### **1]outweighs on actor specificity since governments make policies as a whole that benefit and help some people and side constraints freeze action – actor spec outweighs and turns since it’s better than no action, states don’t have wills and intentions since they are not indivuals actors, different agents have different obligations**

#### **2] no act omission distinction -- governments control everything that happens in the public sphere since they yes/no bills – act omission distinction would make the yemen war moral**

#### 3] use epistemic modesty – multiply probability of the fwk times the magnitude of the impacts A) clash – encourages both substantive and phil debates so that we talk about all the offense B) leads to the net most morality and proves that only beating fwk is not enough to win the debate

4] Role playing as policy makers is key to solving real world problems-so the role of the ballot is to evaluate the hypothetical consequences of the plan and vote for the best hypothetical policy action. Coverstone[[1]](#footnote-1) :

(Alan H., “Acting on Activism: Realizing the Vision of Debate with Pro-social Impact,” Paper presented at the National Communication Association Annual Conference, 11/17/05)

 After all, if democracy means anything, it means that citizens not only have the right, they also bear the obligation to discuss and debate what the government should be doing**.** Absent that discussion and debate, much of **the motivation for personal political activism is** also **lost**. Those who have co-opted Mitchellâ€™s argument for individual advocacy often quickly respond that nothing we do in a debate round can actually change government policy, and unfortunately, an entire generation of debaters has now swallowed this assertion as an article of faith. The best most will muster is, â€œOf course not, but you donâ€™t either!â€ The assertion that nothing we do in debate has any impact on government policy is one that carries the potential to undermine Mitchellâ€™s entire project. If there is nothing we can do in a debate round to change government policy, then we are left with precious little in the way of pro-social options for addressing problems we face. At best, we can pursue some Pilot-like hand washing that can purify us as individuals through quixotic activism but offer little to society as a whole. It is very important to note that Mitchell (1998b) tries carefully to limit and bound his notion of reflexive fiat by maintaining that because it â€œviews fiat as a concrete course of action, it is bounded by the limits of pragmatismâ€ (p. 20). Pursued properly, the debates that Mitchell would like to see are those in which **the relative efficacy of concrete political strategies** for pro-social change **is debated**. In a few noteworthy examples, this approach has been employed successfully, and I must say that I have thoroughly enjoyed judging and coaching those debates. The students in my program have learned to stretch their understanding of their role in the political process because of the experience. Therefore, those who say I am opposed to Mitchellâ€™s goals here should take care at such a blanket assertion. Â¶ However, **contest debate teaches students to combine personal experience with the language of political power.** Powerfulpersonal **narratives unconnected to** political **power are** regularly **co-opted** by those who do learn the language of power. One needlook no further than the annual state of the Union Address where personal story after personal story is used to support the political agenda of those in power. The so-called **role-playing** that public policy contest debates encourage **promotes**active **learning** ofthe vocabulary and levers of **power** in America**.** Imagining the ability to use our own arguments to influence government action is one of the great virtues of academic debate. Gerald Graff (2003) analyzed the decline of argumentation in academic discourse and found a source of student antipathy to public argument in an interesting place.Â¶ Iâ€™m up againstâ€¦their aversion to the role of public spokesperson that formal writing presupposes. Itâ€™s as if such students canâ€™t imagine any rewards for being a public actor or even imagining themselves in such a role. This lack of interest in the public sphere may in turn reflect a loss of confidence in the possibility that the arguments we make in public will have an effect on the world. Todayâ€™s students lack of faith in the power of persuasion reflects the waning of the ideal of civic participation that led educators for centuries to place rhetorical and argumentative training at the center of the school and college curriculum. (Graff, 2003, p. 57)Â¶ The power to imagine public advocacy that actually makes a difference is one of the great virtues of the traditional notion of fiat that critics deride as mere simulation. **Simulation of success**in the public realm **is**far more **empowering** to students than completely abandoning all notions of personal power in the face of governmental hegemony by teaching students that nothing they can do in a contest debate can ever make any difference in public policy.â€ Contest debating is well suited to rewarding public activism if it stops accepting as an article of faith that personal agency is somehow undermined by the so-called role playing in debate. Debate is role-playing whether we imagine government action or imagine individual action. **Imagining myself starting a socialist revolution** in America **is no less of a fantasy than imagining myself** making a difference **on Capitol Hill.** Furthermore, both fantasies influenced my personal and political development virtually ensuring a life of active, pro-social, political participation. Neither fantasy reduced the likelihood that I would spend my life trying to make the difference I imagined**. One fantasy**actually **does make a greater difference: the one that speaks the language of political power.**The **other** fantasy **disables action by making one a laughingstock** to those who wield the language of power.

#### **5] extinction 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)

#### **6] Intuitions come first** Huemer

Huemer, Michael. "Moral Knowledge." Ethical Intuitionism. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2005. 99-127.

Other things being equal, it is reasonable to assume that things are the way they appear. I call this principle 'Phenomenal Conservatism' ('phenomenal' meaning 'pertaining to appearances'). I have discussed the principle elsewhere, so here I will be relatively brief.(1) There is a type of mental state, which I call an 'appearance', that we avow when we say such things as 'It seems to me that p', 'It appears that p', or 'p is obvious', where p is some proposition. Appearances have propositional contents--things they represent to be the case--but they are not beliefs, as can be seen from the intelligibility of, 'The arch seems to be taller than it is wide, but I don't think it is'. Nevertheless, appearances normally lead us to form beliefs. 'Appearance' is a broad category that includes mental states involved in perception, memory, introspection, and intellection. Thus, we can say, 'This line seems longer than that one', 'I seem to recall reading something about that', 'It seems to me that I have a headache', and 'It seems that any two points can be joined by a single straight line'.(2) All of those statements make sense, using the same sense of 'seems'. Appearances can be deceiving, and appearances can conflict with one another, as in the Müller-Lyer illusion: It initially seems that the top line is longer than the bottom line. But if you get out a ruler and measure them, you will find them to be of the same length. The top line will seem, when holding a ruler next to it, to be 2 inches long, and the bottom line will similarly appear to be 2 inches long. So, all things considered, it seems that the two lines are of the same length. As this example illustrates, an initial appearance can be overruled by other appearances (this does not mean the initial appearance goes away, but only that we don't believe it), and only by other appearances. Some appearances are stronger than others--as we say, some things are 'more obvious' than others--and this determines what we hold on to and what we reject in case of conflict. Presumably, it more clearly seems to you that the result of measuring the lines is accurate than that the result of eyeballing them is, so you believe the measurement result (this may have to do with background beliefs you have about the reliability of different procedures--which would themselves be based upon the way other things seem to you). Things can become complicated when many different beliefs and/or appearances are involved, but the basic principle is that we are more inclined to accept what more strongly seems to us to be true. Appearances can be intellectual, as opposed to sensory, mnemonic, or introspective. It seems to us that the shortest path between any two points must be a straight line; that time is one-dimensional and totally ordered (for any two moments in time, one is earlier than the other); and that no object can be completely red and completely blue at the same time. I accept those things on intellectual grounds. I am not looking at all the possible pairs of points and all the possible paths connecting each pair and seeing, with my eyes, that the straight path is the shortest in each case. Instead, I am 'seeing' intellectually that it must be true--that is, when I think about it, it becomes obvious. Logical judgments rest on intellectual appearances. We think the following inference logically valid (the premises entail the conclusion, regardless of whether the premises are true): Socrates is a man. All men are inconsiderate. Therefore, Socrates is inconsiderate. but the next one invalid: Socrates is inconsiderate. All men are inconsiderate. Therefore, Socrates is a platypus. We 'see' this, not with our eyes, but with our intellect or reason. All judgments are based upon how things seem to the judging subject: a rational person believes only what seems to him to be true, though he need not believe everything that seems true.(3) The function of arguments is to change the way things seem to one's audience, by presenting other propositions (premises) that seem true and seem to support something (the conclusion) that may not initially have seemed true to the audience. An argument has force only to the extent that its premises seem true and seem to support its conclusion. Intellectual inquiry presupposes Phenomenal Conservatism, in the sense that such inquiry proceeds by assuming things are the way they appear, until evidence (itself drawn from appearances) arises to cast doubt on this. Even the arguments of a philosophical skeptic who says we aren't justified in believing anything rest upon the skeptic's own beliefs, which are based upon what seems to the skeptic to be true.

#### You’ll say reasons override intuitions. That’s a false premise. The basis of logic isn’t justified by more logic; logic is just intuitive. Intuitions outweigh on bindingness.

#### justifies degrees of wrongness – breaking a promise to take a dying person to the hospital is not as bad as breaking a promise to meet someone for lunch and only consequentialism solves – proves that their framework is bad for weighing which outweighs on resolvability – most frameworks are super unclear on how to weigh so the burden is on them to prove why weighing under their framework is easy

#### C) Intuitions outweigh even dropped framework warrants. When I can’t refute someone’s rant on the moon landing being faked, I don’t discount this evidence, but given my stronger justification to the contrary I retain my belief.

# Underview

1AR theory – a) the neg can engage in infinite abuse, making debate impossible, b) drop the debater – the 1AR is too short for theory and substance so ballot implications are key to check abuse, c) no RVIs – they can stick me with 6min of answers to a short arg and make the 2AR impossible, d) competing interps –the neg should have to defend their norm since they have more time. Aff theory first – it’s a much larger strategic loss because 1min is ¼ of the which means there’s more abuse if I’m devoting a larger fraction of time

# 1AR

1. [MBA(Alan,ActingonActivism,[http://home.montgome... 17-2005).doc)]](http://home.montgomerybell.edu/~coversa/Acting%20on%20Activism%20(Nov%2017-2005).doc)%5D)

   An important concern emerges when Mitchell describes reflexive fiat as a contest strategy capable of â€œeschewing the power to directly control external actorsâ€ (1998b, p. 20). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)