# 1AC

## Framework

#### Ethics must be a priori:

#### 1] Regress: A theory is only binding when you can answer the question “why should I do this?” and not continue to ask “why”. Only practical reason provides a deductive foundation for ethics since the question “why should I be rational” already concedes the authoritative power of agency since your agency is at work. Metaethical standards outweigh: they determine what counts as a warrant for a standard, so absent grounding in some metaethical framework, their arguments aren’t relevant normative considerations.

#### 2] Is-ought gap – experience only tells us what is since we can only perceive what is, not what ought to be. But it’s impossible to derive an ought from descriptive premises, so there needs to be additional a priori premises to make a moral theory.

#### 3] Action theory: only evaluating action through reason solves since reason is key to evaluate intent, otherwise we could infinitely divide actions. For example: If I was brewing tea, I could break up that one big action into multiple small actions. Only our intention, to brew tea unifies these actions if we were never able to unify action, we could never classify certain actions as moral or immoral since those actions would be infinitely divisible

#### That justifies universalizability. Two warrants:

#### 1] Absent universal ethics, morality becomes arbitrary and fails to guide action, which means that ethics is rendered useless. Therefore err aff on risk of offense since anything else means ethics cannot serve it’s purpose.

#### 2] Any non-universalizable norm justifies someone’s ability to impede on your ends which also means universalizability acts as a side constraint on ends-based frameworks.

**Siyar 99** Jamsheed Aiam Siyar: Kant’s Conception of Practical Reason. Tufts University, 1999**:**

. Now, **when I represent my end as to be done, I represent it as binding me to certain courses of action**, precluding other actions, etc. **Thus, my ends function as constraints for me in that they determine what I can** or must **do** (at least if I am to be consistent). I may of course give up an end such as that of eating ice cream at a future point; yet while I have the end, I must see myself as bound to do what is necessary to realize it.35 Thus, I must represent my ends as constraints that I have adopted, constraints that structure the possible space of choice and action for me. Further, given that my end is rationally determined, I take it to be generally recognizable that my end functions as a rationally determined constraint. That is, I take it that other subjects can also recognize my end as an objective constraint, for I take it that they as well as myself can cognize its determining grounds—the source of its objective worth—through the exercise of reason. Indeed, **in representing an end, I** in effect **demand recognition for it from other subjects: since the end functions as an objective though self-imposed constraint for me**, I must demand that this constraint be recognized as such. The thought here is simply that **if I am committed to some end,** e.g. my ice cream eating policy, I must act in certain ways to realize it. In this context, **I cannot be indifferent to the** attitudes and **actions of others, for these may either help or hinder my pursuit of my end. Hence, if I am** in fact **committed to realizing my end,** i.e. if I represent an end at all, **I must demand that the worth of my end**, its status as to be done, **be recognized by others.**

#### Thus the standard is consistency with the categorical imperative. Prefer:

#### 1] Performativity- All arguments by definition appeal to reason; otherwise you are conceding they have no warrant to structure them and are by definition baseless. Thus reason is an epistemic constraint on evaluating neg arguments.

#### 2] Consequences Fail: [A] Every action has infinite stemming consequences, because every consequence can cause another consequence. [B] Aggregation Fails – suffering is not additive can’t compare between one migraine and 10 headaches [C] Predictions are impossible because anything could lead to a butterfly effect of unexpected consequences i.e. sneezing becoming a tornado and killing thousands. [D] destroy ethics since you only know for certain an action is correct is after you take it which makes it too late to correct a wrongdoing. Also, we’d1 always be culpable for things outside of the will due to infinite external factors which would infinitely condemn agents.

#### 3] Frameworks all share equal value. Weighing between them becomes infinitely regressive as it presupposes there is a higher metric to determine who has the better justifications. That means contestation is vacuous which means a locus of moral duty is sufficient since it has an uncontested obligatory power.

#### 4] Means-based ethics are key to ethical decision-making – other frameworks fail.

Anderson: Anderson, Kerby. [National Director of Probe Ministries International] “Utilitarianism: The Greatest Good for the Greatest Number.” *Probe*, 2004**. Strake Jesuit JX**

One problem with utilitarianism is that its leads to an ‘end justifies the means’ mentality. If any worthwhile end can justify the means to attain it, a true ethical foundation is lost. But we all know that the end does not justify the means. If that were so,then Hitler could justify the Holocaust because the end was to purify the human race. Stalin could justify his slaughter of millions because he was trying to achieve a communist utopia. The end never justifies the means. The means must justify themselves. A particular act cannot be judged as good simply because it may lead to a good consequence. The means must be judged by some objective and consistent standard of morality. Second, utilitarianism cannot protect the rights of minorities if the goal is the greatest good for the greatest number. Americans in the eighteenth century could justify slavery on the basis that it provided a good consequence for a majority of Americans. Certainly the majority benefited from cheap slave labor even though the lives of black slaves were much worse. A third problem with utilitarianism is predicting the consequences. If morality is based on results, then we would have to have omniscience in order to accurately predict the consequence of any action. But at best we can only guess at the future, and often these educated guesses are wrong. A fourth problem with utilitarianism is that consequences themselves must be judged. When results occur, we must still ask whether they are good or bad results. [Further][,] [u]tilitarianism provides no objective and consistent foundation to judge results because results are the mechanism used to judge the action itself. Inviolability is intrinsically valuable.

#### 5] All frameworks are based on interpretations of the resolution so therefore must have theoretical interpretations too so prefer ours as A) time skew – any other framework moots 6 minutes off of the AC which means it kills fairness and my ability to be an agent B) resource disparities – allows bigger schools with more resources to just have master framework files which preps out every framework and makes it where smaller schools can never engage C) Strategy skew – crunched 1ar can’t extend framework, beat framework and beat counter offense all at once when the neg gets to do the same but with more 75% more time than me to do it and 50% more than mine to respond

#### 6] Freedom is a property of agency, not a consequence. Adding two circles doesn’t make anything more circular than it was before, just like two humans aren’t freer than one human.

#### 7] Only universalizable reason can effectively explain the perspectives of agents – that’s the best method for combatting oppression because it abstracts from empirical nature which is what individuals use in order to justify discrimination.

Farr 2 writes…

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

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

## Offense

#### [1] A right to strike defends workers to set and pursue their own ends and resist coercion.

**Gourevitch 18:** Gourevitch, Alex. “A Radical Defense of the Right to Strike.” *Jacobin* 2018. <https://jacobinmag.com/2018/07/right-to-strike-freedom-civil-liberties-oppression> // King CP recut

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

#### [2] The humanity principle mandates no exploitation of agents.

**Lofaso 17** Anne Marie Lofaso, Workers’ Rights as Natural Human Rights, 71 U. Miami L. Rev. 565 (2017) Available at: https://repository.law.miami.edu/umlr/vol71/iss3/3 [Anne Marie Lofaso is Associate Dean for Faculty Research and Development and a professor at the West Virginia University College of Law. In 2010, she was named WVU College of Law Professor of the Year.] // King CP recut

It is the categorical imperative’s second formulation, known as the principle of ends, the principle of dignity, or the humanity principle, where Kant seems to add something more.202 Kant’s humanity principle tells us to treat people as if each person has intrinsic value simply because each person is human: “Act so that you use humanity, as much in your own person as in the person of every other, always at the same time as an end and never merely as a means.”203 The humanity principle forbids us to act in ways that exploit human beings or at least in ways that merely exploit human beings.204 Presumably, hiring workers per se does not violate the CI even though the employer uses its workers in furtherance of its purposes. The moral question inherent in a natural human rights approach to workers’ rights is whether these workers are being used merely as a means. Those interested in workers’ rights must determine whether, as a matter of fact (as opposed to a matter of law), workers are actually being used in an exploitative manner. This is essentially an empirical assessment of the moral claim: Are institutions, which are designed to protect workers, doing their job? It is also a legal strategy for developing positive labor standards, which reflect a particular conception of human dignity and autonomy while minimizing the impact of state and business coercion of workers.205 This particular formulation of the CI further and most clearly shows how the CI is in tension with political (or even economic) utilitarianism, by which majority rule governs and the ends justify the means.206 Morality requires that when people act we consider the humanity of each person and the effect of our actions on others’ humanity.

#### [3] A right to strike is key to support property rights.

Chicktay 6 [Mohamed Alli Chicktay, academic at the University of the Witwatersrand, 2006, “PLACING THE RIGHT TO STRIKE WITHIN A HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK,” No Publication, [https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/EJC85180] //King](https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/EJC85180%5d%20/King) CP

In addition, in terms of the concept of “self-ownership” we are all owners of our own bodies and therefore should not be forced to do anything with our bodies against our will. We can do whatever we wish with our bodies, provided that we are not aggressive to others who also have “self-ownership” over their bodies (Cohen Self-ownership, Freedom and Equality (1995) 68). Since we own our bodies, we also own the labour that we can perform with our bodies just as we do any other property. Being forced to work without the right to strike could therefore be seen as an infringement of one’s property rights. One may also argue that our body belongs to us and hence is our property. By striking we are withholding the use of our body and any prevention of the right to strike would thus be a violation of our property rights. Israel has argued that the denial of the right to strike violates one’s freedom from forced labour. He argues that by prohibiting strikes or imposing criminal and civil sanctions upon strikers, one would be forcing employees to work, which would be a violation of their right not to be subjected to forced labour (Israel International Labour Standards (1989) 25). The right to strike is also a violation of one’s right to dignity. Workers find a sense of self-worth in their work, which is hindered if they are exploited by employers and have no say in this environment. One of the most effective ways in which workers can have a meaningful say in the workplace is if they have the power to halt production (Harmer “The Right to Strike Charter Implications and Interpretations” 1992 47 University of Toronto Faculty of Law Review 438).

## Advocacy

#### Thus, the advocacy – A just government ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike. CP and PICs affirm because they do not disprove my general thesis and check the doc for a list for spec. CX checks all theory interps otherwise grant me an auto I meet.

## Underview

#### 1] 1AR theory is legitimate – Otherwise the neg can be infinitely abusive, and I can’t check back against it. Aff theory comes before neg K and substance, because it indicts their method, and you reward their abuse because I don’t have time to win both theory and other areas of debate. A] 1AR theory is DTD because my 4 minute 1AR is too short to win both theory and other layers. They must also be punished to deter future abuse. B] No RVI on 1AR theory, they get a 6-3 time skew.

**2] Negs must defend the status quo: A] predictability – otherwise negs get infinite potential counteradvocacies like CPs, Ks, etc. – while affs are pidgeonholed to the wording of the res. B] The word of the lord,**

**Plants 89** [J. Daniel Plants, Baylor University, 1989, "Counterplans Re-Visited: The Last Sacred Cow?," Punishment Paradigms : Pros And Cons, <http://groups.wfu.edu/debate/MiscSites/DRGArticles/Plants1989Punishment.htm>] AG

Marginality in Practice The notion of "as compared to the way things are done now" is nothing novel. Such a comparison is implicit any time the term "should" is invoked. Examples will make this clear. **Imagine a congressperson proposing a mandatory seat belt law**. The floor is opened to debate over the merits of mandating safety belts. All of a **sudden, another member of Congress interrupts with the brilliant idea of banning all automobiles. Such a suggestion would be immediately discarded as irrelevant** (if not also as absurd). **Obviously, when the first member of congress proposed the seat belt law**, he or **she presupposed the existence of cars** in the first place. **The bill was suggested in a world where automobiles** (and automobile accidents) **were the quid pro quo**. Similarly, take the example of a group of friends discussing where to dine. After a list of several restaurants, someone suggests that the group play tiddly-winks instead. While that might make for great group fun, playing tiddly-winks has absolutely nothing to do with the process of selecting WHERE to have dinner. The tiddly-winks suggestion should have been offered in the "What should we do tonight?" or the "Should we even have dinner?" conversations. Once the topic under discussion is clearly not whether to eat but where to do it, **the "counterplan"** offered by the tiddly-wink enthusiast **begs the question being asked**. These analogies highlight the fundamental flaw in the optimality perspective. **Counterplans are not responsive to the question posed by the resolution**. **The resolution suggests an action**, and asks if it should be done. It explicitly **limits the range of discussion to that action** and no more: should we affirm this resolution? Yes or no? The area under discussion is the resolution and its beneficial and detrimental effects, nothing more. When the negative counterplans, it begs the question of the topic. **Resolutions do not make claims** such as, "Resolved: the United States should enact \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as **compared to all other competing priorities."** Such wording might legitimize counterplans, implicitly, by requiring the affirmative to be superior to all other options, although even then it is arguable that the affirmative need only be superior to extant alternatives. It is not a coincidence that the resolution is worded in its present fashion. It proposes a course of action. It is up to both sides to clash over that particular action, not distract the question at hand with unrelated policies. An example of a popular generic counterplan will further illustrate my point. Recent college and high school topics have dealt with uniform, minimum educational standards imposed by the Federal government. The thrust of this topic, and the reason that Federal intrusion into the area of education was ever suggested, is that for the past 200+ years, the states' performance in education has been unsatisfactory. Time and again, the states have been unwilling to force the schools under their control to meet minimum standards. The affirmative's rationale for Federal action is largely buttressed by the demonstrated recalcitrance of the states to take the initiative. Without fail, the negative would counterplan by doing exactly what the affirmative did, but enacting the proposal simultaneously in the 50 states. Such a strategy begs the question posed by the topic. The topic demands that the desirability of federal action be debated; the negative proposal to go through the states relegates the central question of the resolution to secondary importance. Indeed, at the start of the debate, the affirmative, in arguing for change advances its best possible indictment of the status quo as it exists at the start of the first affirmative constructive. In arguing for change, what other system could the affirmative claim to be superior to? The status quo is all that exists when the debate commences. The affirmative cannot forsee all possible systems that the negative could offer; and even if such premonition were possible, the negative could always change its strategy, since the affirmative must speak first. In short, when the affirmative argues that we should change, they mean that change is beneficial as compared to the present system; there exists no other standard of comparison to which they could conceivably be appealing, The origin of the idea that the affirmative must compare favorably to any and all negative proposals, is beyond me. Surely the affirmative has done their job if they can prove change is warranted at the margin. Negative Fiat As most students of debate know, debate has adopted a curious deus ex machina to make debate more practical. **The concept of fiat** (from Latin, literally meaning, "Let it be") **is the assumption**, for the purpose of discussion, **that the resolution can be implemented**. Obviously, four debaters in a classroom aren't really able to affect the nation's policies. But debate would be inane if the affirmative offered the plan in the 1AC, and then the 1NC rose and cavalierly argued, "Since the affirmative team members are not congresspersons, they cannot put their plan into effect. Therefore, the negative wins." Thus, **to avoid questions of whether or not the present system would adopt the affirmative, we assume that it would, for the purpose of discussion**. This makes it possible to debate the merits of proposals, rather than the likelihood of their adoption. So far, so good. We have made only one assumption: that the action specified in the topic is put into effect, so that its desirability can be evaluated. Notice that **the rationale for allowing [fiat] this is**, once again, **to focus** more clearly **on whether we "should" affirm the topic**. This brings us to an important question: Where does "negative fiat", if such a thing is possible, come from? Why does the negative have the right to offer and implement proposals? Observe that fiat, as developed above, is not known as "affirmative" fiat; it is neutral with respect to side. It is a device that assists BOTH teams in analyzing whether we should take action. Fiat merely directs the debate more clearly to relevant discussion. **Fiat is not a reciprocal privilege that the negative deserves on grounds of equity, because it doesn't give either side an advantage over the other**. Fiat inheres in the way both teams debate the merits of the resolution. In essence, **the negative already has "benefited" from fiating the resolution into existence as much as the affirmative did; both sides now can avoid debating what WOULD be done and debate instead what SHOULD be done**. Consequently, the conclusion that the negative deserves "negative fiat" to counter the "affirmative fiat" is groundless. Thus, the prior question, posed again: why and how can the negative assume into existence alternative policies? **There is only one action asked to be debated: the resolution** (or its designated representative, the plan) . **We can assume into existence the resolution and nothing more. From our standpoint, that is literally all that we have control over**; we have, by agreeing to limit discussion to a single proposal, proscribed our ability to deal with or effectuate any other policies. Succinctly stated, **there is no theoretical basis for the existence of counterplans as an argument against the affirmative**. Whither the negative? At the outset of this section, let me make clear my conviction that this part of the essay is not indispensable to my argument in any way. The preceding paragraphs are reasons why counterplans have no legitimacy as debate arguments. If that is indeed true, then arguments about what debate will come to after the passing of counterplans, is secondary. Remember, at one time there was no such thing as a counterplan. Debate persevered. There is absolutely nothing wrong with innovation in debate; however, those who innovate must be able to justify the appropriateness of their creations. If counterplans are proven inappropriate for debate, they should be discarded. The fact that they have been around for so long should afford them no special protection. For the sake of argument (no pun intended), though, what would the post-counterplan world look like? Not that different, really. The negative would defend the status quo. The affirmative, to win, would have to be on balance superior to the way things are done in the present system. It is beyond me why so many people are unwilling to force the negative to defend the present system. A typical claim is, "It's unfair to leave the negative nothing but the messed-up, defunct status quo. Why should the negative get stuck with it?" What a facile assertion! The status quo is not some random, irrational system that is inherently deficient. **There are reasons why things are done the way they currently are**. True, they may be bad or flimsy reasons, but in those instances, then change would seem to indeed be warranted. And should we not have equal, if not greater, sympathy for **the aff**irmative? They **are asked to prove that the longstanding traditions of the status quo be abandoned**

**3] Round off the probability of the DA to zero – expert predictions are less accurate than dart throwing monkeys.**

**Menand 05** Louis Menand (the Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Professor of English at Harvard University) “Everybody’s An Expert” The New Yorker 2005 http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/12/05/everybodys-an-expert

“Expert Political Judgment” is not a work of media criticism. Tetlock is a psychologist—he teaches at Berkeley—and his conclusions are based on **a long-term study** that he **began twenty years ago**. He **picked two hundred** and **eighty-four people who made their living** “commenting or **offering advice on political and economic trends**,” and he started asking them to assess the probability that various things would or would not come to pass, both in the areas of the world in which they specialized and in areas about which they were not expert. Would there be a nonviolent end to apartheid in South Africa? Would Gorbachev be ousted in a coup? Would the United States go to war in the Persian Gulf? Would Canada disintegrate? (Many experts believed that it would, on the ground that Quebec would succeed in seceding.) And so on. By the end of the study, in 2003, **the experts** had **made 82,361 forecasts**. Tetlock also asked questions designed to determine how they reached their judgments, how they reacted when their predictions proved to be wrong, how they evaluated new information that did not support their views, and how they assessed the probability that rival theories and predictions were accurate. Tetlock got a statistical handle on his task by putting most of the forecasting questions into a “three possible futures” form. **The respondents were asked to rate the probability of** three alternative outcomes: **the persistence of the status quo, more of something** (political freedom, **economic growth**), **or less of something** (repression, **recession**). And he measured his experts on two dimensions: how good they were at guessing probabilities (did all the things they said had an x per cent chance of happening happen x per cent of the time?), and how accurate they were at predicting specific outcomes. The results were unimpressive. On the first scale, **the experts performed worse than** they would have **if they** had simply **assigned an equal probability to all three outcomes—**if **they** had given each possible future a thirty-three-per-cent chance of occurring. Human beings who spend their lives studying the state of the world, in other words, **are poorer forecasters than dart-throwing monkeys**, who would have distributed their picks evenly over the three choices.

## Adv

**Global democracy is collapsing now.**

**Freedom House 3/3** [Freedom House. Freedom House works to defend human rights and promote democratic change, with a focus on political rights and civil liberties. We act as a catalyst for freedom through a combination of analysis, advocacy, and action. Our analysis, focused on 13 central issues, is underpinned by our international program work. “New Report: The global decline in democracy has accelerated”. 3-3-2021. . https://freedomhouse.org/article/new-report-global-decline-democracy-has-accelerated.] SJ//VM

**Washington - March 3, 2021 — Authoritarian actors grew bolder during 2020 as major democracies turned inward, contributing to the 15th consecutive year of decline in global freedom**, according to [***Freedom in the World 2021***](https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2021/democracy-under-siege), the annual country-by-country assessment of political rights and civil liberties released today by Freedom House. **The report found that the share of countries designated Not Free has reached its highest level since the deterioration of democracy began in 2006, and that countries with declines in political rights and civil liberties outnumbered those with gains by the largest margin recorded during the 15-year period.** The report downgraded the freedom scores of 73 countries, representing 75 percent of the global population. Those affected include not just authoritarian states like China, Belarus, and Venezuela, but also troubled democracies like the United States and India. **In one of the year’s most significant developments, India’s status changed from Free to Partly Free, meaning less than 20 percent of the world’s people now live in a Free country—the smallest proportion since 1995. Indians’ political rights and civil liberties have been eroding since Narendra Modi became prime minister in 2014.** His Hindu nationalist government has presided over increased pressure on human rights organizations, rising intimidation of academics and journalists, and a spate of bigoted attacks—including lynchings—aimed at Muslims. The decline deepened following Modi’s reelection in 2019, and the government’s response to the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 featured further abuses of fundamental rights. **The changes in India formed part of a broader shift in the international balance between democracy and authoritarianism, with authoritarians generally enjoying impunity for their abuses and seizing new opportunities to consolidate power or crush dissent.** In many cases, promising democratic movements faced major setbacks as a result. **In Belarus and Hong Kong, for example, massive prodemocracy protests met with brutal crackdowns by governments that largely disregarded international criticism. The Azerbaijani regime’s military offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh indirectly threatened recent democratic gains in Armenia, while the armed conflict in Ethiopia’s Tigray Region dashed hopes for the tentative political opening in that country since 2018.** All four of these cases notably featured some degree of intervention by an autocratic neighbor: Moscow provided a backstop for the regime in Belarus, Beijing propelled the repression in Hong Kong, Turkey’s government aided its Azerbaijani counterpart, and Ethiopia’s leader called in support from Eritrea. **The malign influence of the regime in China, the world’s most populous dictatorship, ranged far beyond Hong Kong in 2020. Beijing ramped up its global disinformation and censorship campaign to counter the fallout from its cover-up of the initial coronavirus outbreak**, which severely hampered a rapid global response in the pandemic’s early days. Its efforts also featured increased meddling in the domestic political discourse of foreign democracies, as well as transnational extensions of rights abuses common in mainland China. The Chinese regime has gained clout in multilateral institutions such as the UN Human Rights Council, which the United States abandoned in 2018, as Beijing pushed a vision of so-called noninterference that allows abuses of democratic principles and human rights standards to go unpunished while the formation of autocratic alliances is promoted. **“This year’s findings make it abundantly clear that we have not yet stemmed the authoritarian tide,” said Sarah Repucci, vice president of research and analysis at Freedom House. “Democratic governments will have to work in solidarity with one another, and with democracy advocates and human rights defenders in more repressive settings, if we are to reverse 15 years of accumulated declines and build a more free and peaceful world.” A need for reform in the United States** While still considered Free, the United States experienced further democratic decline during the final year of the Trump presidency. The US score in [Freedom in the World](https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2021/democracy-under-siege) has dropped by 11 points over the past decade, and fell by three points in 2020 alone. The changes have moved the country out of a cohort that included other leading democracies, such as France and Germany, and brought it into the company of states with weaker democratic institutions, such as Romania and Panama. **Several developments in 2020 contributed to the United States’ current score. The Trump administration undermined government transparency by dismissing inspectors general, punishing or firing whistleblowers, and attempting to control or manipulate information on COVID-19. The year also featured mass protests that, while mostly peaceful, were accompanied by high-profile cases of violence, police brutality, and deadly confrontations with counterprotesters or armed vigilantes. There was a significant increase in the number of journalists arrested and physically assaulted, most often as they covered demonstrations. Finally, the outgoing president’s shocking attempts to overturn his election loss—culminating in his incitement of rioters who stormed the Capitol as Congress met to confirm the results in January 2021—put electoral institutions under severe pressure.** In addition, the crisis further damaged the United States’ credibility abroad and underscored the menace of political polarization and extremism in the country. ”January 6 should be a wake-up call for many Americans about the fragility of American democracy,” said Michael J. Abramowitz, president of Freedom House. **“Authoritarian powers, especially China, are advancing their interests around the world, while democracies have been divided and consumed by internal problems. For freedom to prevail on a global scale, the United States and its partners must band together and work harder to strengthen democracy at home and abroad. President Biden has pledged to restore America’s international role as a leading supporter of democracy and human rights, but to rebuild its leadership credentials, the country must simultaneously address the weaknesses within its own political system.”** “Americans should feel gratified that the courts and other important institutions held firm during the postelection crisis, and that the country escaped the worst possible outcomes,” said Abramowitz. “But the Biden administration, the new Congress, and American civil society must fortify US democracy by strengthening and expanding political rights and civil liberties for all. People everywhere benefit when the United States serves as a positive model, and the country itself reaps ample returns from a more democratic world.” **The effects of COVID-19** Government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the global democratic decline. Repressive regimes and populist leaders worked to reduce transparency, promote false or misleading information, and crack down on the sharing of unfavorable data or critical views. Many of those who voiced objections to their government’s handling of the pandemic faced harassment or criminal charges. Lockdowns were sometimes excessive, politicized, or brutally enforced by security agencies. And antidemocratic leaders worldwide used the pandemic as cover to weaken the political opposition and consolidate power. In fact, many of the year’s negative developments will likely have lasting effects, meaning the eventual end of the pandemic will not necessarily trigger an immediate revitalization of democracy. In Hungary, for example, the government of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán took on emergency powers during the health crisis and misused them to withdraw financial assistance from municipalities led by opposition parties. In Sri Lanka, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa dissolved Parliament in early March and, with new elections repeatedly delayed due to COVID-19, ruled without a legislature for several months. Later in the year, both Hungary and Sri Lanka passed constitutional amendments that further strengthened executive power. **The resilience of democracy** **Despite the many losses for freedom recorded by** [**Freedom in the World**](https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2021/democracy-under-siege) **during 2020, people around the globe remained committed to fighting for their rights, and democracy continued to demonstrate its remarkable resilience. A number of countries held successful elections, independent courts provided checks on executive overreach, journalists in even the most repressive environments investigated government transgressions, and activists persisted in calling out undemocratic practices.**

**The plan solves:**

**2] Corruption reduction – the right to strike fights concentration of power while reducing inequality.**

**IER 17** [Institute of Employment Rights. The IER exists to inform the debate around trade union rights and labour law by providing information, critical analysis, and policy ideas through our network of academics, researchers and lawyers. “UN Rights Expert: Right to strike is essential to democracy”. 3-10-2017. . https://www.ier.org.uk/news/un-rights-expert-right-strike-essential-democracy/.] SJ//VM

The United Nations’ Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai, has reminded member states of the International Labour Organization (ILO) – including the UK – that they have a positive obligation to uphold the right to strike. **Speaking at an ILO meeting on Monday 06 March 2017 in Geneva, Kiai argued that the right to strike is fundamental to the preservation of democracy. “The concentration of power in one sector – whether in the hands of government or business – inevitably leads to the erosion of democracy, and an increase in inequalities and marginalization with all their attendant consequences. The right to strike is a check on this concentration of power,”** he explained. **The right to strike has been established in international law as a corollary to the right of freedom of association for decades, and is enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights as Article 11.** As a member state of the ILO and of the EU, the UK is legally obliged to uphold the right to strike, although through the Trades Union Act 2016 and the anti-trade union laws that preceded it, the government is making it harder and harder for trade unions to take industrial action. Kiai criticised such actions, saying government’s have a duty not to impede workers’ ability to take industrial action. “I deplore the various attempts made to erode the right to strike at national and multilateral levels,” the expert said, reminding delegates: “**Protest action in relation to government social and economic policy, and against negative corporate practices, forms part of the basic civil liberties whose respect is essential for the meaningful exercise of trade union rights.** This right enables them to engage with companies and governments on a more equal footing, and Member States have a positive obligation to protect this right, and a negative obligation not to interfere with its exercise.”

**Democratic backsliding causes extinction.**

**Kendall-Taylor 16** [Andrea; Deputy national intelligence officer for Russia and Eurasia at the National Intelligence Council, Senior associate in the Human Rights Initiative at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington; “How Democracy’s Decline Would Undermine the International Order,” CSIS; 7/15/16; <https://www.csis.org/analysis/how-democracy%E2%80%99s-decline-would-undermine-international-order>/] Justin

It is rare that policymakers, analysts, and academics agree. But there is an emerging consensus in the world of foreign policy: threats to the stability of the current international order are **rising**. The norms, values, laws, and institutions that have undergirded the international system and governed relationships between nations are being gradually dismantled. The most discussed sources of this pressure are [the ascent of China](http://nationalinterest.org/feature/how-china-sees-world-order-15846) and other non-Western countries, Russia’s assertive foreign policy, and the diffusion of power from traditional nation-states to nonstate actors, such as nongovernmental organizations, multinational corporations, and technology-empowered individuals. Largely missing from these discussions, however, is the [specter of widespread democratic decline](http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/article/facing-democratic-recession). Rising challenges to **democratic governance** across the globe are a **major strain** on the international system, but they receive [far less attention](http://www.iiss.org/en/publications/survival/sections/2016-5e13/survival--global-politics-and-strategy-april-may-2016-eb2d/58-2-03-boyle-6dbd) in discussions of the shifting world order.

In the 70 years since the end of World War II, the United States has fostered a global order dominated by states that are liberal, capitalist, and democratic. The United States has promoted the spread of democracy to strengthen global norms and rules that constitute the foundation of our current international system. However, despite the steady rise of democracy since the end of the Cold War, over the last 10 years we have seen dramatic reversals in respect for democratic principles across the globe. [A 2015 Freedom House report](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/01152015_FIW_2015_final.pdf) stated that the “acceptance of democracy as the world’s dominant form of government—and of an international system built on democratic ideals—is under **greater threat than at any point in the last 25 years**.”

Although the number of democracies in the world is at an all-time high, there are a number of [key trends](file:///C:\Users\PMeylan\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\5V2CJVRN\160715_KendallTaylor_DemocracysDecline_Commentary.docx#http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/article/democracy-decline) that are working to undermine democracy. The rollback of democracy in a few influential states or even in a number of less consequential ones would almost certainly accelerate meaningful changes in today’s global order.

Democratic decline would **weaken U.S. partnerships and erode an important foundation for U.S. cooperation** abroad. [Research demonstrates](file:///C:\Users\PMeylan\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\5V2CJVRN\160715_KendallTaylor_DemocracysDecline_Commentary.docx#http://cmp.sagepub.com/content/18/1/49.abstract) that domestic politics are a key determinant of the international behavior of states. In particular, democracies are more likely to form alliances and cooperate more fully with other democracies than with autocracies. Similarly, authoritarian countries have established mechanisms for cooperation and sharing of “worst practices.” An increase in authoritarian countries, then, would provide a broader platform for coordination that could enable these countries to overcome their divergent histories, values, and interests—factors that are frequently cited as obstacles to the formation of a cohesive challenge to the U.S.-led international system.

Recent examples support the empirical data. Democratic backsliding in Hungary and the hardening of Egypt’s autocracy under Abdel Fattah el-Sisi have led to enhanced relations between these countries and Russia. Likewise, democratic decline in Bangladesh has led Sheikh Hasina Wazed and her ruling Awami League to seek closer relations with China and Russia, in part to mitigate Western pressure and bolster the regime’s domestic standing.

Although none of these burgeoning relationships has developed into a highly unified partnership, democratic backsliding in these countries has provided a basis for cooperation where it did not previously exist. And while the United States certainly finds common cause with authoritarian partners on specific issues, the **depth and reliability of such cooperation is limited**. Consequently, further democratic decline could **seriously compromise** the United States’ ability to form the kinds of deep partnerships that will be required to confront today’s increasingly complex challenges. Global issues such as climate change, migration, and **violent extremism demand the coordination and cooperation that democratic backsliding would put in peril**. Put simply, the United States is a less effective and influential actor if it loses its ability to rely on its partnerships with other democratic nations.

A slide toward authoritarianism could also **challenge the current global order by diluting U.S. influence in critical international institutions**, including the [United Nations](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/christopher-walker-authoritarian-regimes-are-changing-how-the-world-defines-democracy/2014/06/12/d1328e3a-f0ee-11e3-bf76-447a5df6411f_story.html) , the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Democratic decline would weaken Western efforts within these institutions to advance issues such as Internet freedom and the responsibility to protect. In the case of Internet governance, for example, Western democracies support an open, largely private, global Internet. Autocracies, in contrast, promote state control over the Internet, including laws and other mechanisms that facilitate their ability to censor and persecute dissidents. Already many autocracies, including Belarus, China, Iran, and Zimbabwe, have coalesced in the “Likeminded Group of Developing Countries” within the United Nations to advocate their interests.

Within the IMF and World Bank, autocracies—along with other developing nations—seek to water down conditionality or the reforms that lenders require in exchange for financial support. If successful, diminished conditionality would enfeeble an important incentive for governance reforms. In a more extreme scenario, the rising influence of autocracies could enable these countries to bypass the IMF and World Bank all together. For example, the Chinese-created Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank and the BRICS Bank—which includes Russia, China, and an increasingly authoritarian South Africa—provide countries with the potential to bypass existing global financial institutions when it suits their interests. Authoritarian-led alternatives pose the risk that global economic governance will become [fragmented and less effective](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00396338.2016.1161899?journalCode=tsur20#.V2H3MRbXgdI).

Violence and instability would **also likely increase** if more democracies give way to autocracy. [International relations literature](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/1995-05-01/democratization-and-war) tells us that democracies are **less likely to fight wars** against other democracies, suggesting that interstate wars would rise as the number of democracies declines. Moreover, within countries that are already autocratic, additional movement away from democracy, or an “authoritarian hardening,” would increase global instability. Highly repressive autocracies are the most likely to experience state failure, as was the case in the Central African Republic, Libya, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen. In this way, democratic decline would significantly strain the international order because rising levels of instability would exceed the West’s ability to respond to the tremendous costs of peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and refugee flows.

Finally, widespread democratic decline would contribute to rising anti-U.S. sentiment that could **fuel a global order that is increasingly antagonistic to the United States** and its values. Most autocracies are highly suspicious of U.S. intentions and view the creation of an external enemy as an effective means for boosting their own public support. Russian president Vladimir Putin, Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro, and Bolivian president Evo Morales regularly accuse the United States of fomenting instability and supporting regime change. This vilification of the United States is a convenient way of distracting their publics from regime shortcomings and fostering public support for strongman tactics.

Since 9/11, and particularly in the wake of the Arab Spring, Western enthusiasm for democracy support has waned. Rising levels of instability, including in Ukraine and the Middle East, fragile governance in Afghanistan and Iraq, and sustained threats from terrorist groups such as ISIL have increased Western focus on security and stability. U.S. preoccupation with intelligence sharing, basing and overflight rights, along with the perception that autocracy equates with stability, are trumping democracy and human rights considerations.

While rising levels of global instability explain part of Washington’s shift from an historical commitment to democracy, the nature of the policy process itself is a less appreciated factor. Policy discussions tend to occur on a country-by-country basis—leading to choices that weigh the costs and benefits of democracy support within the confines of a single country. From this perspective, the benefits of **counterterrorism cooperation or access to natural resources are regularly judged to outweigh the perceived costs of supporting human rights**. A serious problem arises, however, when this process is replicated across countries. The bilateral focus rarely incorporates the risks to the U.S.-led global order that arise from widespread democratic decline across multiple countries.

Many of the threats to the current global order, such as China’s rise or the diffusion of power, are driven by factors that the United States and West more generally have little leverage to influence or control. Democracy, however, is an area where **Western actions can affect outcomes**. Factoring in the risks that arise from a global democratic decline into policy discussions is a vital step to building a comprehensive approach to democracy support. Bringing this perspective to the table may not lead to dramatic shifts in foreign policy, but it would ensure that we are having the right conversation.