# 1n

## 1st

#### Interpretation: The aff must explicitly specify a comprehensive role of the ballot in the form of a text in the 1AC where they clarify how offense links back to the role of the ballot, such as whether post-fiat offense or pre-fiat offense matters and what constitutes that offense with implications on how to weigh

#### Violation: they don’t

#### Standards:

#### 1. Engagement – Knowing what counts as offense is a prerequisite to making arguments, so its impossible to engage the aff. Our interp ensures that I read something relevant to your method, and knowing how to weigh gives us a standard. Especially true since there is no norm on what "performative engagement" like there is for util offense

#### Few impacts:

#### a) Education – When two ships pass in the night we don’t learn anything - This also guts novice inclusion because now they can never learn arguments in round.

#### b) Turns the aff – your impacts are premised on actually having a debate and engaging with issues of oppression. Almost impossible to engage roles of the ballot are uniquely bad since no one will take seriously a position that can’t be clashed with, so you harm any progress your position can create.

#### c) Strategy Skew – You make formulating a strategy impossible since I don’t know what links to your evaluative mechanism and you can also recontextualize your ROTB to make up reasons why my offense doesn’t link in the 1AR

#### Framing: You can’t use your ROB to exclude my shell. My shell simply constrains how you read your ROTB. My method is your ROTB with specification, so if I’m winning comparative offense, the shell outweighs even if method debates in general preclude theory. If they go for the Aff first that proves the abuse of my shell since they should have specified in the AC.

#### Voters:

#### Fairness

#### Education

#### Drop the debater, a] deternece, b] epistemic skew

#### CI, a], b]

#### No RVIs, a] logic, b] baiting

## 2nd

#### The economy is soaring but unemployment remains a glaring weakness.

Cox 3/2

[10% GDP growth? The U.S. economy is on fire, and is about to get stoked even more, <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/03/02/10percent-gdp-growth-the-us-economy-is-on-fire-and-is-about-to-get-stoked-even-more.html>, Jeff Cox, March 2, 2021, finance editor for CNBC.com where he manages coverage of the financial markets and Wall Street. His stories are routinely among the most-read items on the site each day as he interviews some of the smartest and most well-respected analysts and advisors in the financial world. He also is a frequent guest on CNBC.] [SS]

**The** U.S. **economy has roared back to life in 2021**, with first-quarter growth set to defy even the rosiest expectations as **another fresh influx of cash looms**. **Manufacturing** data Monday showed the sector **at its highest growth level since** August **2018.** That report from the Institute for Supply Management in turn helped confirm the notion among economists that **output to start the year is far better than** the low single-digit growth **many had been predicting** in late 2020. **The A**tlanta **Fe**deral **R**eserve, **which tracks data in real tim**e to estimate changes in gross domestic product, now **is indicating a 10% gain** for the first three months of the year. The GDPNow tool generally is volatile early in the quarter then becomes more accurate as the data rolls in through the period. That comes on the heels of a report Friday showing that **personal income surged 10%** in January, thanks largely to $600 stimulus checks from the government. **Household wealth increased nearly $2 trillion** for the month while spending rose just 2.4%, or $340.9 billion. Those numbers, along with **a burst of nearly $4 trillion in savings, point**ed **to an economy** not only **growing powerfully** but also one that is **poised to continue that path** through the year. “The V-shaped recovery in real GDP will remain V-shaped during the first half of this year and probably through the end of the year,” Ed Yardeni of Yardeni Research wrote in his daily note Tuesday. “However, it will no longer be a ‘recovery’ beyond Q1 because real GDP will have fully recovered during the current quarter. Thereafter, **GDP will be in an ‘expansion’ in record-high territory.**” Economists previously hadn’t expected the $21.5 trillion U.S. economy to regain its pandemic-related losses until at least the second or third quarter of this year, if not later. WATCH NOW VIDEO03:21 Global growth expectations are driving rates, not inflation fears, says UBS’s Alli McCartney But a combination of systematic resilience combined with previously unimaginable doses of fiscal and monetary stimulus have helped speed the recovery along considerably. The final quarter of 2020, in which **GDP increased 4.1%,** left the total of goods and services produced **just $270 billion shy of** the same period a year previous, **before Covid-19** struck. “With strong federal fiscal support and continued progress on vaccination, **GDP growth this year could be the strongest we’ve seen in decades**,” New York Federal Reserve President John Williams said in a speech last week. In fact, questions persist about whether the $1.9 trillion spending plan from the Biden administration is necessary, at least to that magnitude. An economy poised to show its fastest annual growth pace since at least 1984 doesn’t seem like a very good candidate for more spending at a time when the federal government already is expected to run a $2.3 trillion budget deficit this year. Respondents to the ISM report indicated soaring prices and trouble with supply chains, with one manager in electrical equipment, appliances and components noting: “Things are now out of control. Everything is a mess, and we are seeing wide-scale shortages.” Markets have worried lately that overheated growth could generate inflation, particulary with the Federal Reserve continuing to keep its foot on the policy pedal. “Too much of a good thing is often just too much,” Yardeni wrote. “The economy is hot and will get hotter with the bonfire of the fiscal and monetary insanities.” A major area of weakness To be sure, **frailties remain** in the economy. **Paramount among them is the gap in employment, particularly in** the **services** sector. As of January, **there were 8.6 million fewer employed than** there were **a year ago**, just before the pandemic began threatening the U.S., according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. About **4.3 million Americans have left the labor force** in that time. Despite a drop in the headline unemployment rate from a pandemic high of 14.8% to 6.3%, **employment in** the **hospitality** sector **has fallen by more than 3.8 million** from a year ago, and **the jobless rate for the industry is stuck at 15.9%, fully 10 percentage points higher than January** 2020. “**The most glaring issue** with where we stand now **has to be the labor market**. We still have [nearly] **10 million jobs** which **are** just simply **missing**,” said Troy Ludtka, U.S. economist at Natixis. “You’re going to see a situation in the coming years, looking back to this moment, where official statistics on things like food insecurity, poverty and inequality are going to reach generational highs.” However, Ludtka sees promise ahead, thanks in part to measures taken to address the ills of the current era. “The good news is that we are very quickly rebounding, and that is a sign of great promise,” he said. “We’re going to see an economy back to pre-pandemic levels of output, we’re going to see a situation in which unnecessary economic insecurity is mitigated.” There’s even some better news coming out of the jobs market, which despite the gaps that remain has recovered nearly 12.5 million nonfarm payroll jobs since the recovery began in May 2020. For one, job postings are on the rebound. Employment network Indeed reports that listings through Feb. 12 were up a seasonally adjusted 3.9% from Feb. 1, 2020, which it uses as the pre-Covid baseline. In early May 2020, postings lagged the baseline by 39%. **Economists are counting on pent-up demand that vaccinations and falling coronavirus numbers will bring to drive job growth.** Nonfarm payrolls for February are expected to show a gain of 210,000 when the BLS reports the numbers Friday.

#### Unions and worker strikes hurt AI innovation.

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." 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.**

#### The negative effects of strikes spill over to hurt wages, unemployment, and the overall economy.

McElroy ‘19

[Strikes Hurt Everybody, <https://www.wardsauto.com/ideaxchange/strikes-hurt-everybody>, 10/25/19, John McElroy, editorial director of Blue Sky Productions and producer of "Autoline" for WTVS-Channel 56 Detroit and "Autoline Daily" the online video newscasts.] [SS]

The recent strike at General Motors shows traditional labor practices must change. Not only did the strike cause considerable financial damage at GM, it drove another wedge between the company and its workers. And worst of all, it hurt a lot of innocent bystanders. Thanks to the UAW, the hourly workforce at GM earns the highest compensation in the U.S. auto industry. But you would never know that by listening to union leaders. They attack GM as a vile and heartless corporation that deliberately tries to oppress honest working men and women. Of course, they kind of have to say that. Union officials are elected, not appointed, and they are just as political as any Republican or Democrat. No UAW official ever got elected by saying, “You know what? Management is right. We’ve got to make sure our labor costs are competitive.” It’s the opposite. **Union leaders get elected by attacking management’s greed and arrogance. This creates a poisonous relationship between the company and its workforc**e. Many GM hourly workers don’t identify as GM employees. They identify as UAW members. And they see the union as the source of their jobs, not the company. It’s an unhealthy dynamic **that puts GM at a disadvantage to non-union automakers** in the U.S. like Honda and Toyota, **where workers take pride in the company** they work for and the products they make. **Attacking the company in the media also drives away customers**. Who wants to buy a shiny new car from a company that’s accused of underpaying its workers and treating them unfairly? Data from the Center for Automotive Research (CAR) in Ann Arbor, MI, show that **GM loses market share during strikes** and never gets it back. GM lost two percentage points during the 1998 strike, which in today’s market would represent a loss of 340,000 sales. Because GM reports sales on a quarterly basis we’ll only find out at the end of December if it lost market share from this strike. UAW members say one of their greatest concerns is job security. But causing a company **to lose market share is a sure-fire path to** more plant closings and **layoffs.** Even so, unions are incredibly important for boosting wages and benefits for working-class people. GM’s UAW-represented workers earn considerably more than their non-union counterparts, about $26,000 more per worker, per year, in total compensation. Without a union they never would have achieved that. Strikes are a powerful weapon for unions. They usually are the only way they can get management to accede to their demands. If not for the power of collective bargaining and the threat of a strike, management would largely ignore union demands. If you took away that threat, management would pay its workers peanuts. Just ask the Mexican line workers who are paid $1.50 an hour to make $50,000 BMWs. But **strikes** don’t just hurt the people walking the picket lines or the company they’re striking against. They **hurt suppliers, car dealers and the communities l**ocated **near the plants**. The Anderson Economic Group estimates that **75,000 workers at supplier companies were temporarily laid off because of the GM strike**. Unlike UAW picketers, **those supplier workers won’t get any strike pay** or an $11,000 contract signing bonus. No, **most of them lost** close to **a month’s worth of wages, which must be financially devastating** for them. **GM’s suppliers** also lost a lot of money. So now they’re **cut**ting **budgets and delay**ing **capital investments** to make up for the lost revenue, **which is a further drag on the economy**. According to CAR, the **communities** and states **where GM’s plants are located** collectively **lost a couple of hundred million dollars in payroll and tax revenue**. Some economists warn that **if the strike were prolonged it could knock** the state of **Michigan** – home to GM and the UAW – **into a recession**. That prompted the governor of Michigan, Gretchen Whitmer, to call GM CEO Mary Barra and UAW leaders and urge them to settle as fast as possible. So, while the UAW managed to get a nice raise for its members, the strike left a path of destruction in its wake. That’s not fair to the innocent bystanders who will never regain what they lost. John McElroyI’m not sure how this will ever be resolved. I understand the need for collective bargaining and the threat of a strike. But there’s got to be a better way to get workers a raise without torching the countryside.

#### Economic decline kills nuclear deterrence and leads to nuclear war and extinction.

Tønnesson 15 [(Stein, Research Professor, Peace Research Institute Oslo; Leader of East Asia Peace program, Uppsala University) “Deterrence, interdependence and Sino–US peace,” International Area Studies Review, Vol. 18, No. 3, p. 297-311, 2015]

Several recent works on China and Sino–US relations have made substantial contributions to the current understanding of how and under what circumstances a combination of nuclear deterrence and economic interdependence may reduce the risk of war between major powers. At least four conclusions can be drawn from the review above: first, those who say that interdependence may both inhibit and drive conflict are right**. Interdependence raises the cost of conflict for all sides but asymmetrical or unbalanced dependencies and negative trade expectations may generate tensions leading to trade wars among inter-dependent states that in turn increase the risk of military conflict** (Copeland, 2015: 1, 14, 437; Roach, 2014). **The risk may increase if one of the interdependent countries is governed by an inward-looking socio-economic coalition** (Solingen, 2015); second, the risk of war between China and the US should not just be analysed bilaterally but include their allies and partners. Third party countries could drag China or the US into confrontation; third, in this context it is of some comfort that the three main economic powers in Northeast Asia (China, Japan and South Korea) are all deeply integrated economically through production networks within a global system of trade and finance (Ravenhill, 2014; Yoshimatsu, 2014: 576); and fourth, decisions for war and peace are taken by very few people, who act on the basis of their future expectations. International relations theory must be supplemented by foreign policy analysis in order to assess the value attributed by national decision-makers to economic development and their assessments of risks and opportunities. **If leaders on either side of the Atlantic begin to seriously fear or anticipate their own nation’s decline then they may blame this on external dependence, appeal to anti-foreign sentiments, contemplate the use of force to gain respect or credibility, adopt protectionist policies, and ultimately refuse to be deterred by either nuclear arms or prospects of socioeconomic calamities. Such a dangerous shift could happen abruptly**, i.e. under the instigation of actions by a third party – or against a third party. Yet as long as there is both nuclear deterrence and interdependence, the tensions in East Asia are unlikely to escalate to war. As Chan (2013) says, all states in the region are aware that they cannot count on support from either China or the US if they make provocative moves. **The greatest risk is** not that a territorial dispute leads to war under present circumstances but **that changes in the world economy alter those circumstances in ways that render inter-state peace more precarious. If China and the US fail to rebalance their financial and trading relations** (Roach, 2014) **then a trade war could result, interrupting transnational production networks, provoking social distress, and exacerbating nationalist emotions. This could have unforeseen consequences in the field of security, with nuclear deterrence remaining the only factor to protect the world from Armageddon, and unreliably so. Deterrence could lose its credibility**: one of the two great powers might gamble that the other yield in a cyber-war or conventional limited war, or third party countries might engage in conflict with each other, with a view to obliging Washington or Beijing to intervene

## Case

### Framing

#### Framework – the role of the ballot is to determine whether the plan is a good idea through evaluation of consequences.

#### 1] Don’t let them weigh the sum total of their impact—they only get to weigh the unique amount solved by the affirmative. Filter the debate through scope of solvency—there’s no impact to root cause if they don’t solve it

#### 2] No performative or methodological offense, only offense from the plan—reject it cuz it explodes predictable limits, spiking out of neg ground making any discussion qualitatively worse

#### 3]] Extinction outweighs under any framework

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

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)

### Cap

#### No new 1ar impact cards –

#### Capitalism is on a zero-growth trajectory now – it overcomes ecological damage and inequality – the aff causes spiking natural resource demand that destroys the environment

Saunders ’16 (Harry Saunders – Senior Fellow at the Breakthrough Institute and managing director of Decision Processes Incorporated, International Expert on energy efficiency and consumption. “Does Capitalism Require Endless Growth?” Summer 2016, http://thebreakthrough.org/index.php/journal/issue-6/does-capitalism-require-endless-growth)

But it is important to distinguish these challenges from the sweeping claims made originally by Sweezy, Magdoff, and Foster and repeated today by prominent intellectuals and activists such as Naomi Klein and Bill McKibben. In the pages that follow, I will demonstrate that both neoclassical growth theory and empirical evidence suggest that capitalist economies do not require endless growth but are rather much more likely to evolve toward a steady state once consumption demands of the global population have been satisfied. Those demands demonstrably saturate once economies achieve a certain level of affluence. For these reasons, a capitalist economy is as likely as any other to see stable and declining demands on natural resources and ecological services. Indeed, with the right policies and institutions, capitalist economies are more likely to achieve high living standards and low environmental impacts than just about any other economic system.

1.

From the window of his Manchester home in the mid-1840s, Marx’s colleague and contemporary Friedrich Engels looked out on a horrifying microcosm of what was happening in England and throughout the newly industrializing world — a stark imbalance between the luxurious wealth of capital owners and the miserable poverty of the workers they employed. Marx himself had witnessed firsthand this same imbalance, and over several decades of intense study came to propose that a core flaw of capitalism resides in excessive claims placed by privately owned capital as against labor on the economic value created by their combination.

Herein lay the fundamental contradiction, in Marx’s view, which would bring an end to capitalism. As capitalists invested in ever-newer technologies, Marx predicted that their dependence on labor would decline. As this occurred, returns to labor in the form of earned wages would decline. If there were no return to households for their labor, there would be no income with which to consume goods produced by capital owners, nor savings that households might reinvest in new capital. An economic system in which declining returns to labor due to technological change immiserated most households was a system in which the market for goods sold by capital owners could not long survive.

Notably, Marx did not dispute the necessity of capital for producing what households need, only who in society need control this resource. The problem, as Marx saw it, was that the surplus value created by labor was being unfairly conscripted by capital owners.

In the first decades of the twenty-first century, a number of prominent analyses have suggested that Marx’s prophecy is perhaps coming true. MIT economists Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee5 in recent years have suggested that continuing automation and rising labor productivity threaten mass unemployment, a problem foreseen by Keynes in 1930.6 Thomas Piketty, in his much-lauded book Capital in the Twenty-first Century7, finds that returns to capital have exceeded real economic growth in the industrialized world in recent decades, attributing that shift to ever-increasing concentration of limited capital in the hands of the few.

The economist Robert Gordon8,9 finds that growth rates slow dramatically as societies become wealthier. The growth associated with the enormous rise in economic productivity and output associated with the transition from agrarian to industrial societies cannot be sustained as societies shift from industrial to post-industrial economies. Meanwhile, Paul Mason and others in the “post capitalism" movement contend that “an economy based on the full utilization of information cannot tolerate the free market.”10 His argument is that capitalist corporations will not prove capable of capturing value from the technology they deliver, value adequate to sustain them over time.

Before considering whether these various challenges to advanced capitalist economies portend their collapse, it is important to note what none of these analyses suggest, which is that capitalism’s unquenchable demand for growth has run up against fundamental biophysical limits. If anything, these analyses suggest the opposite: that the limits to continuing growth in capitalist economies are social or technological, not biophysical. Brynjolfsson and McAfee, and Piketty, through technically different mechanisms, ultimately raise concerns that center around the immiseration of labor. Whether due to technological change, growing returns to capital, or both, all three centrally focus on declining wages and employment as the central challenge that threatens robust and equitable growth in capitalist economies.

Mason, conversely, projects that technological change threatens returns to capital. The commodification of everything — material goods, knowledge, and information — ultimately brings with it an end to profits and hence both capital accumulation and capital reinvestment.11 Gordon, meanwhile, observes that there is simply no further techno-economic revolution that can replicate the one-time boost in economic productivity that comes with the shift from agrarian to industrial economies.12 If there is a common theme in these challenges to capitalist economies it is that all find their way, to one degree or another, back to Marx, not Malthus. The long-term challenge for capitalist economies, these analyses suggest, is too little growth, not too much.

2.

The headwinds facing advanced industrial economies — stagnant growth and rising inequality — tell us something about the prospects for low- or zero-growth capitalist economies. Gordon’s analysis suggests that industrialized economies in relatively short order achieve a “satisficing” level of household consumption. Once that level is achieved, and once societies have built out the basic infrastructure of modernity — cities, roads, electrical grids, water and sewage systems, and the like — the growth rates characterized by the early stages of industrialization cannot be sustained by the knowledge and service sectors that increasingly dominate post-industrial societies.

World Bank data clearly show this. Economic growth rates decline as countries become richer. Growth in GDP per capita in OECD countries slowed from an average of about 3 percent per year in the period 1961–1985 to about half of that in the period 1986–2014.13 Gordon’s analysis is supported not only by the long-term slowing of growth in industrialized economies but also by saturating household consumption in those economies. According to the World Bank, OECD growth in real household consumption per capita (consumption of both goods and services) has shown steady decline each decade from around 3 percent per year in the 1970s to around 1 percent per year since 2000.14

Brynjolfsson and McAfee, and Piketty, suggest that declining returns to households from their labor will drive worsening inequality and stagnant or declining wages. But that does not imply a declining material standard of living. The same technology gains and capital mobility that have eroded the power of labor in developed world labor markets have also persistently reduced the real prices of goods and services, making them ever more affordable.

Even as nominal wage growth has slowed or stagnated in the US and other advanced developed economies, households are able to buy more with less of their incomes. This is because the cost of goods and services has grown even more anemically, inflation nearly disappearing in these countries over the same time period, meaning wages have grown in real terms. OECD data show that real wages OECD-wide have grown by about 1 percent per year between 2000 and 2014, including real growth in the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany.15 Growth in the Scandinavian economies (Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland) has exceeded this.16

This is true even at the bottom of the income distribution. Virtually all low-income homes in the United States today boast a refrigerator, modern heating and cooling, and electricity. Large majorities have dishwashers, washers and dryers, computers, cable television, and large-screen displays. Consumer goods and services once considered luxuries in the United States and other developed countries are today widely available and utilized by all citizens. That is mostly because home appliances and other goods today cost a small fraction, measured in the work time necessary to purchase them, of what they did thirty years ago.17,18

Of course, rising economic inequality raises a range of concerns beyond those related to access to goods and services. Higher rates of inequality may threaten social mobility, social cohesion, and perhaps even democratic governance. Even so, inequality appears to decline as nations industrialize and become wealthier. In rich Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Denmark), inequality has essentially halved since World War II.19 Declines recently are less impressive in the United States, United Kingdom, and other parts of Europe20, but, nonetheless, inequality remains reliably lower than in most developing economies21, where aggressive but still insufficient capital formation in the presence of large labor forces tends to result in higher levels of inequality.

Moreover, increased capital mobility has driven declining inequality between countries, even as it may be worsening inequality within them. Thanks to global trade and international supply chains, firms have become increasingly able to locate production facilities in the developing world, where labor with the requisite skills can be employed at lower wages.

As might be expected, labor in industrialized countries is not happy with this turn of events. But the result has been a long-term convergence of wages between producing and consuming countries, declining inequality globally, and a dramatic decline in absolute levels of poverty. The ILO reports that between 2000 and 2011, real average wages approximately doubled in Asia.22 In Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa they also rose substantially, well above the developed world average23, while in developed economies they increased by only about 5 percent, far below the world average24, leading to what leading ILO observer Patrick Belser has dubbed “the great convergence”25 — a dynamic that was incidentally predicted many decades ago on theoretical grounds by famed economist Paul Samuelson.26 Meanwhile, according to the World Bank, the global share of people living on less than $1.90 per day (the World Bank definition of extreme poverty) fell from 44 percent in 1981 to 13 percent in 2012.27

Taken together, then, the dynamics transforming the global economy, while not without challenges, paint an interesting picture of slowing growth, converging global incomes, falling cost, and saturating demand for goods and services. Should these dynamics hold, it is not hard to imagine a future in which the global economy gravitates toward a prosperous and equitable zero-growth economy placing relatively modest demands on the biocapacity of the planet.

#### Critique of neoliberalism is politically useless—economic elites don’t identify with the title and dismiss social criticism as ‘economically illiterate.’

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Beyond conceptual proliferation and incoherence, there is an important third terminological feature of neoliberalism that more clearly distinguishes it from the multitude of other stressed and stretched concepts that dot the social sciences: it dares not speak its own name. While there are many who give out and are given the title of neoliberal, there are none who will embrace this moniker of power and call themselves as such. There is no contemporary body of knowledge that calls itself neoliberalism, no self-described neoliberal theorists that elaborate it, nor policy-makers or practitioners that implement it. There are no primers or advanced textbooks on the subject matter, no pedagogues, courses or students of neoliberalism, no policies or election manifestoes that promise to implement it (although there are many that promise to dismantle it). Pedantic as it may seem, this is a point that warrants repetition if only because there is a considerable body of critical literature that deploys neoliberalism under the mistaken assumption that, in doing so, it is being transported into the front-lines of hand-to-hand combat with free-market economics.

Advocates of market deregulation, private-sector-led growth or any of the various shifting components that might be part of neoliberalism do not describe themselves or their policies as such. Instead, neoliberalism is defined, conceptualized and deployed exclusively by those who stand in evident opposition to it, such that the act of using the word has the twofold effect of identifying oneself as non-neoliberal, and of passing negative moral judgment over it. Consequently, neoliberalism often features, even in sober academic tracts, in the rhetorical toolkit of caricature and dismissal, rather than of analysis and deliberation.

Boas and Gans-Morse (2009, p. 152) find that the inversion in its usage from positive to negative arose during the Pinochet regime in Chile. Until then, Latin American debates over economic policy in the 1960s and 1970s used the term largely in the positive sense, often with reference to West Germany's Wirtschaftswunder, whereas it became steadily negative in the 1980s. Importantly, neoliberalism, which was always a marginal part of the vocabulary in mainstream academic economics, even before its negative association, has since disappeared almost entirely in that arena in parallel with its growing influence and usage in the rest of the social sciences. As a result, the one-sided usage of neoliberalism extends not just to the way it is used only by self-consciously non-neoliberal critics, but also as a term used only by non-economists, and that, too, when referring to economic phenomena and economic forms of reasoning.

Indeed, the word neoliberalism is so utterly absent in modern economics that it is impossible to reconcile Ferguson's above definition of it as ‘macro-economic doctrine’ with the corpus of contemporary macro-economic theory at hand. For example, the word neoliberalism does not appear at all in any of the major macro-economic textbooks, including Mankiw's Principles of macroeconomics (2012), Blanchard's Macroeconomics (2012), Obstfeld and Rogoff's Foundations of international macroeconomics (1996), Krugman, Obstfeld and Melitz's International economics or Agénor and Montiel's Development macroeconomics (2008). Neither does it appear at all in a host of other widely read texts in the field, including Debraj Ray's Development economics (1998), Banerjee and Duflo's Poor economics (2011) or Barr's The economics of the welfare state (1993). Even the more unorthodox economists critical of market-based solutions, such as Paul Krugman or Joseph Stiglitz, find no need to use the concept. Neoliberalism is absent entirely from Krugman's End this depression now! and finds mention only once (in a footnote to the preface) in Stiglitz's The price of inequality: The avoidable causes and the invisible costs of inequality (2012).

Moreover, neoliberalism has, since 1966, only ever appeared twice in the pages of The American Economic Review, on both occasions as fleeting mentions. It has not appeared at all in The Quarterly Journal of Economics since 1960, nor in Journal of Political Economy since 1956. It has never appeared in Journal of Development Economics at all. In comparison, in 2012, it appeared in 10 papers in The Journal of Development Studies, eight papers in World Development, 17 papers in Development and Change and 10 papers in Journal of International Development. 5

What these strikingly different patterns of usage between economics and non-economics indicate is that, beyond dysfunctionality, neoliberalism signifies and reproduces the mutual incomprehensibility and the deep cognitive divide between these two domains (Jackson, 2013; Milonakis & Fine, 2013). Ha-Joon Chang notes that ‘critics of neoliberalism are routinely dismissed as “economically illiterate”’ (Chang, 2003, pp. 42–43). Indeed, for the rest of the social sciences, economics is an entirely alien discipline that is found to be intellectually vapid on the one hand, but also inscrutable and impenetrable due to the mathematical sophistication of its theory and empirics.

Neoliberalism purports to provide a lens through which this mysterious and hostile terrain can be surveyed, simplified, labelled and rendered understandable from a safe distance. Economic theory can thus be vicariously critiqued and dismissed without one having to encounter it, much less understand it. Not unsurprisingly, what emerges as a result is inadequate and often bears the character of dispatches from trench warfare, in which sketchy and vague outlines of enemy activity are reported from across a foggy and impassable no-man's land.

#### Rejection of capitalism causes massive transition wars

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This is the immiserization thesis of Marx. And it is central to revolutionary Marxism, since if capitalism produces no widespread misery, then it also produces no fatal internal contradiction: If everyone is getting better off through capitalism, who will dream of struggling to overthrow it? Only genuine misery on the part of the workers would be sufficient to overturn the whole apparatus of the capitalist state, simply because, as Marx insisted, the capitalist class could not be realistically expected to relinquish control of the state apparatus and, with it, the monopoly of force. In this, Marx was absolutely correct. No capitalist society has ever willingly liquidated itself, and it is utopian to think that any ever will. Therefore, in order to achieve the goal of socialism, nothing short of a complete revolution would do; and this means, in point of fact, a full-fledged civil war not just within one society, but across the globe. Without this catastrophic upheaval, capitalism would remain completely in control of the social order and all socialist schemes would be reduced to pipe dreams.

#### Extinction

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Should the United States experience a severe economic contraction during the second term of President Bush, the American people will likely support politicians who advocate further restrictions and controls on our market economy – guaranteeing its strangulation and the steady pauperization of the country. In Congress today, Sen. Edward Kennedy supports nearly all the economic dogmas listed above. It is easy to see, therefore, that the coming economic contraction, due in part to a policy of massive credit expansion, will have serious political consequences for the Republican Party (to the benefit of the Democrats). Furthermore, an economic contraction will encourage the formation of **anti-cap**italist **majorities and a turning away from** the **free market** system. The danger here is not merely economic. The political left openly **favors the** collapse of America’s strategic position abroad. The **withdrawal** **of the** **U**nited **S**tates **from the Middle East**, the **Far East and Europe** **would** **catastrophically impact** an international system that presently allows **6 billion** people to live on the earth’s surface **in** relative **peace**. **Should anti-capitalist dogmas overwhelm the global market** and trading system that evolved under American leadership, the planet’s economy would contract and untold **millions would die of starvation**. **Nationalistic totalitarianism**, fueled by a politics of blame, **would** once again **bring war to Asia and Europe**. But this time the war would be **waged** **with** **mass destruction weapons** and the United States would be blamed because it is the center of global capitalism. Furthermore, if the anti-capitalist party gains power in Washington, **we can expect to** see policies of appeasement and unilateral disarmament enacted. **American appeasement and disarmament**, in this context, would be an admission of guilt before the court of world opinion. **Russia and China**, above all, **would exploit this** admission **to** **justify aggressive wars**, invasions **and mass destruction** attacks. A future financial crash, therefore, must be prevented at all costs.