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#### Current quality of education is sharply decreasing through teacher shortages

**Boyce 19** Paul Boyce, 9-17-2019, "The Teacher Shortage Is Real and about to Get Much Worse. Here's Why," No Publication, https://fee.org/articles/the-teacher-shortage-is-real-and-about-to-get-much-worse-heres-why/

Teacher Shortage According to research by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), the teacher shortage could reach 200,000 by 2025, up from 110,000 in 2018. This shortage of workers is due to a number of factors. Among them are pay, working conditions, lack of support, lack of autonomy, and the changing curriculum. The shortage of teachers will inevitably cause a decline in educational standards. The shortage is crucially important to educational outcomes. Class sizes are rising, causing a detrimental effect on these outcomes. As the number of available teachers declines, class sizes have to increase to compensate. Having more kids in a class can also affect teacher performance—more books to mark, more children to monitor, more children's behavior that needs managing. The pressure on teachers to obtain high test scores amps up stress further. It creates a vicious cycle, and it is starting to snowball. The shortage is only set to increase unless something changes. Impact on Quality The shortage of teachers will inevitably cause a decline in educational standards. Principals face a shortage of highly qualified teachers. The natural response for them is to hire less qualified teachers, hire teachers trained in another field or grade, or make use of unqualified substitute teachers. This means students are being taught by teachers who lack sufficient skills and knowledge. According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future: Studies discover again and again that teacher expertise is one of the most important factors in determining student achievement, followed by the smaller but generally positive influences of small schools and small class sizes. That is, teachers who know a lot about teaching and learning who work in environments that allow them to know students well are the critical elements of successful learning. Teachers matter more to student achievement than any other factor. In fact, research by Chlotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor states that teacher qualifications predict more of the difference in educational gains than race and parent education combined.

#### Status Quo policies make the opportunity cost for teacher strikes too high

**Casey 20** Leo Casey, 12-2-2020, "The Teacher Strike: Conditions for Success," Dissent Magazine, <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/the-teacher-strike-conditions-for-success>

The most essential organizational task is winning and keeping the allegiance of teachers to the strike. Teachers are knowledgeable and discerning political actors. They understand full well that strikes are a high-intensity and high-risk tactic, with the potential both to deliver advances and victories that could not be otherwise obtained and to end in major setbacks and defeats. The risk side of this equation is particularly acute in the three-quarters of all states where teacher strikes are illegal; in these states, striking becomes an act of civil disobedience and can result in severe penalties to teachers and their unions. To be willing to go on strike and stay out until a settlement is won, therefore, teachers need to be convinced on a number of different counts: first, that they are fighting for important, worthwhile objectives; second, that those objectives cannot be achieved through other means that are not as high-intensity and high-risk as a strike; third, that the strike has reasonable prospects of success; fourth, that the strike objectives have strong support in the community; and fifth, that the solidarity among teachers, which is essential to a strike’s success, is strong and will hold. In significant measure, the last of these points is dependent not simply on the organization and mobilization of the strike, but also on the four antecedent conditions. If teachers become doubtful on any of these points, it will become difficult to mount or sustain a successful strike.

#### That causes teachers uproot and quitting through unsatisfaction

**Carpenter 21** Jennifer Carpenter., 05-17-21, "Opinion: Protect local control for schools," Burlington Free Press, https://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/opinion/my-turn/2017/05/17/opinion-protect-local-control-schools/101726614/

The most crucial part of the proposal put forward by House Speaker Mitzi Johnson and President Pro Tem Tim Ashe is that it protects local control of schools. Statewide health insurance negotiations for teachers is the first step towards a statewide teachers’ contract, kneecapping school boards and paving the way towards a single, statewide school district. That is unacceptable, but it is the hill Gov. Scott and his Republican allies have decided to make their stand on. It is telling that Sen. Degree, one of Gov. Scott’s strongest supporters, included in his proposed amendment a clause that would have removed teachers’ right to strike. That shows their true intentions. When teachers’ needs are not met, students’ needs will not be met, and we will be unable to retain and attract a workforce of young families which is critical to the revitalization of our state’s economy. There will be no incentive for the teaching profession to attract and retain new teachers to the field if our state government teaches our community that teachers have no say over their working conditions and therefore are not valued. Schools need teachers and we need enrollment of students. Teachers and families of school age children will simply uproot and go elsewhere to have their needs met, jeopardizing our educational system, our school-age population and workforce. A “one-size-fits-all” approach from our state government cannot possibly work across the board for every school. Having worked in four different school districts in the state, I have been exposed to potential consequences of centralized control. I recall an emergency meeting at one of those districts in 2016 between administration and teachers where there were very tense discussions on what the initial proposal of Act 46 per-pupil spending cap would have meant for the school. Had the administration and teachers not pulled together to discuss and demand more for their programs and allowed a reckless centralized decision to go forth, to paraphrase one of the teachers present at this meeting, the initial Act 46 proposal would have destroyed the institution, as it would have meant dismantling most aspects of the curriculum that would render the students to be competitive for college and in the workforce, as the cuts were too severe of an impact on the school programs to justify sending anyone there. As a result, several teachers said they would have been prepared to pull their own children from the school and move out of the area. This is only one example of how allowing the state to have centralized control, which has proved to be an approach lacking in carefully frontloaded research and detailed examination of impact on programs and teachers, would have devastating consequences on local communities.

#### Strikes empower unions and are successful achieving bargaining power, which keeps them in education.

**LawInfo 20** [Peter Serdyukov, National University, La Jolla, California. 05/18/20, Teachers Unions & Collective Bargaining. <https://www.lawinfo.com/resources/labor-law/teachers-unions-collective-bargaining.html>] // SC SD

A **teachers' union** is a special type of labor union designed to fight for the rights of educators. With roots dating back more than 150 years in the U.S., these organizations **play critical roles not only in securing benefits for teachers but also shaping the way education works. For instance, thanks to lobbying by the National Education Association, or NEA, in the late 1860s, Congress created the Department of Education.**

What Teachers' Unions Bargain For

**Like other types of**[**trade unions**](https://www.lawinfo.com/resources/employment-law-employee/unions/)**, teachers' unions use collective bargaining agreements, or CBAs, to protect their members. Over the years, collective bargaining has helped educators gain many rights, such as:**

**Fair working conditions, compensation, and pay equality**

**Tenure mechanisms that prevented qualified educators from being punished for their personal biases, political beliefs, or other unfair reasons**

**Access to various benefits**

When it comes to education policy, teachers' unions also work to ensure that educators can fulfill their job duties in the face of tough odds. For instance, the NEA played a critical role in shifting the focus from federal policies like the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which included 2001's No Child Left Behind Act, towards alternatives like the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015. At the same time, education policy is a very politicized issue, and not every lawmaker is onboard with the kinds of changes that teachers seek. These differences of opinion mean that individual educators may be subject to a variety of laws depending on where they are in their careers.

State Laws and the NLRA

**Some states prohibit certain types of collective bargaining for certain workers. For teachers, such restrictions usually come into effect in public schools, where educators are classified as public employees.**

**In Texas, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina, collective bargaining was entirely prohibited for public employees as of 2014. Only 11 states explicitly give teachers the right to do things like going on strike, and many states make it completely illegal for public employees to strike. In some right-to-work states, these employees may be allowed to strike, but the power of unions to compel them to join is often significantly limited**. As major walkouts and strikes over low pay have shown, these rules aren't always successful at stopping collective action, and public opinion may be evolving about educators' rights as employees.

How are states allowed to prohibit teachers from doing something that many workers view as a fundamental freedom? **The right to form unions, strike, bargain collectively, and take other actions are laid out in the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, or NLRA. This federal legislation also prohibits actions like unions trying to force people to join and stops employers from retaliating against workers who exercise their union rights. Although the NLRA can take precedence over many state laws, its protections exclude employees in the public sector, such as teachers.**

Teachers' Unions and the U.S. Constitution

Labor unions aren't mentioned anywhere in the U.S. Constitution. At the same time, however, **Article I of the Constitution grants Congress the power to regulate various forms of commerce among the states. The Constitution also protects people's right to assemble and speak freely, both of which are critical to common union activities, such as meeting, discussing employment conditions, promoting union membership, and collective bargaining.**

Bargaining Units

Bargaining units are groups of workers who are represented by a common labor union when it comes to collective bargaining and negotiation. Employers or official bodies, such as the Indiana Education Employment Relations Board, recognize bargaining unit groups as being represented by labor unions. **States that allow teachers to participate in collective bargaining may also mandate that schools clearly specify to which bargaining units they belong so that employees can take advantage of their rights.**

**Bargaining unit positions are jobs that receive labor union representation. Although all employees can hold these jobs regardless of their union membership status, only those who hold bargaining unit jobs gain the full benefits of being in unions.**

Being in a bargaining unit position generally makes it easier to file complaints and appeals because unions outline specific grievance procedures. At the same time, all teachers can exercise non-union complaint rights and appeals. For example, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission protects current employees and would-be workers from discrimination based on certain protected classes, such as race, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, national origin, or religion.

Teachers' Unions and Charter Schools

As in many other labor fields, unions sometimes clash with employers, such as schools. Notably, these disputes have come into the public eye as certain states move towards voucher and charter school education models.

One key distinction in such battles is the fact that although charter schools receive funds from the government, they're often treated and operated as independent entities. According to the Emory Law Journal, charter school efforts to secure funding while retaining their independence has led to significant uncertainty. For instance, almost half of all states exempt charter schools from the collective bargaining agreements that public schools in the same districts must follow, and only around an eighth of charter schools have labor unions. Some charter schools have even argued that as “political subdivisions,” they don't count as employers under the NLRA.

Other Teachers’ Union Benefits

**Joining a union might give certain teachers more control over their futures. Since the benefits they receive go above and beyond what many school districts would provide of their own accord, these teachers may enjoy heightened access to vital resources that make it easier to focus on their career development**. Union members may receive:

Prescription medication benefits

Consumer discounts

Dental and vision health benefits

Pension plans

For teachers, the decision whether to join a union is a personal matter. Those who want to keep their options open, however, may benefit from learning about what kinds of allowances they enjoy in different states and distinct employment positions.

#### Only strikes have proven successful in raising wages.

**Richards 19**, [[Erin Richards](https://www.usatoday.com/staff/2647805001/erin-richards/), 6-18-19, “Strikes, pay raises & charter protests: America's teachers' exhausting, exhilarating year” <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2019/06/18/teacher-pay-raises-strike-last-day-of-school-summer/1437210001/>] // SC SD

"Oh, the places you'll go!" the popular Dr. Seuss book promises to new graduates.

And, this past year, to their teachers.

America's educators have survived a rollicking year in the public spotlight — and no slowdown is in sight.

In the last 18 months, we've seen **teachers striking for higher pay**, teachers running for political office, teachers protesting charter schools, teachers organizing insurgent groups within their unions and teachers broadcasting the state of their under-resourced classrooms.

USA TODAY tracked the pressures on America's teachers with a school-year-long series of stories, capped by a [nationwide analysis of teacher pay and housing costs](https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/education/2019/06/05/teachers-pay-cost-of-living-teaching-jobs/3449428002/).

Here's what happened.

**It's working: Teachers are pushing policy changes**

Starting last summer, it was front-line teachers rather than policymakers driving the national discussion over how best to educate children and compensate educators.

**How the movement started:** [‘Any talks of striking?’ A West Virginia teacher’s Facebook post started a national wave](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2019/02/20/teacher-strike-west-virginia-school-closings-education-bill/2848476002/)

Their actions are helping to change the narrative. Red-state governors who cracked down on teachers unions a decade ago and trimmed education budgets are now adding money to education efforts. In Texas, state Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican, just signed into law [a $5 billion school finance package](https://bit.ly/2Y3pFuk), with much of the money slated for teacher raises.

In Oklahoma, home to [one of the first statewide teacher strikes](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2018/04/02/teacher-strikes-shut-down-schools-across-oklahoma-kentucky/478102002/) in 2018, Republicans passed a budget that offers about $200 million in new education spending, partly to fund teacher raises.

On the Democratic side, presidential candidates Kamala Harris, a senator from California, and Joe Biden, former vice president, have both made pay raises for teachers part of their platforms.

In general, the public has backed the idea.

In a national poll from USA TODAY and Ipsos Public Affairs, a majority of people said teachers [had the right to strike](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/09/12/teachers-union-strike-pay/1227089002/), a view held even by the parents whose lives were most disrupted when teachers walked off the job.

#### Teacher strikes affect politics at the national level - increases educational focus.

Will 10/27 (Madeline, citing working study by two Brown professors, 10-27-2021, "When Teachers Strike, Education Becomes More Prevalent in Political Campaigns, Study Finds," Education Week, https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/when-teachers-strike-education-becomes-more-prevalent-in-political-campaigns-study-finds/2021/10)

Teacher strikes have a profound and often unrecognized role in national politics, a new working paper suggests: They put education front and center in Congressional campaigns and advertisements. Holding a strike more than doubles the likelihood that a Congressional candidate will air an education ad in the area where the labor action occurred, write the authors of the paper, which has not yet been peer reviewed. The upshot is that despite the risky nature of shutting down schools, strikes may elevate the importance of education issues, and ultimately could give teachers’ unions more power in the national arena. “We were really interested in some of these broader political effects of teacher strikes,” said Melissa Arnold Lyon, a co-author of the study and a postdoctoral research associate at the Annenberg Institute at Brown University. “Teachers’ unions have increasing prominence as national actors in education politics.” Teacher strikes are generally rare, but in 2018, a surge of activism—deemed the #RedforEd movement—led to teachers across entire states walking out of their classrooms to call for higher wages and more school funding. There were statewide strikes or walkouts that year in West Virginia, Oklahoma, and Arizona, as well as large-scale protests that shut down schools in North Carolina, Kentucky, and Colorado. That level of activism helped boost support for raising teacher salaries and triggered sympathetic media attention to the plight of teachers. Still, the working paper found that the statewide strikes were not necessarily driving the overall findings—even individual strikes increase the probability of education-focused advertisements being aired. Lyon and Brown professor Matthew Kraft created a dataset of all U.S. teacher strikes between July 2007 and November 2018—totaling 540 district strikes, many of which were part of coordinated efforts in a single state—and analyzed that alongside databases of TV political ads for U.S. House of Representatives elections. The researchers compared election ads in media markets where strikes occurred and in markets that didn’t experience strikes. The researchers focused on ads from House of Representatives campaigns to show how the effects of teacher strikes reverberate beyond local or state politics. Also, campaign ads are expensive and represent a significant investment from a candidate—and past research has shown that political ads can affect voter preferences, election turnout, and future legislative agendas. The researchers found that most of the ads were positive: They promoted a candidate (instead of attacking them) and had uplifting music. Although teacher strikes have negative consequences on parents and students in the form of lost instruction time and child care, few ads disparaged teachers’ unions or called for stricter laws against striking, Lyon said. That effect holds true for both political parties. “Republicans just as much as Democrats are talking about education more as a result of teacher strikes, and they’re doing so in largely positive ways,” she said. The study also found that the effects of strikes on political ads are strongest in political battleground areas, where candidates are appealing to swing voters. “These findings highlight how candidates with the greatest concern for their election prospects are the most reactive to strikes,” the researchers wrote. “This implies that strikes lead political elites to believe that they have something to gain from discussing education issues.” Teacher strikes often have the public’s support The statewide strikes and those that happened in big cities in 2018 and 2019 were notable for going beyond the bread-and-butter issues typical in labor disputes. While teachers were fighting for salary increases, they framed the strikes as efforts to do what’s best for their students. They pointed to sparsely resourced classrooms, shoddy school infrastructure, and gaps in available student supports. That framing—that teachers were on the picket lines, sometimes risking their jobs, in order to provide what’s best for their students—helped galvanize public support.

#### The teacher activism movement is a nation-wide force for social change. It’s successfully deconstructing privatization, inequality, and charter schools.

Will 19 (Madeline, 3-5-2019, "How Teacher Strikes Are Changing," Education Week, <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/how-teacher-strikes-are-changing/2019/03>) AG

But this time, teachers’ demands were different, a reflection of the changing flavor of strikes nationwide. While last year’s teacher walkouts were focused primarily on stagnant wages and crumbling classrooms, the strike demands now are more far-reaching. Teachers are pushing back against education reform policies such as charter schools and performance-based pay. They’re also fighting for social-justice initiatives like sanctuary protections for undocumented students. Although some experts say there’s a risk of losing public support as teachers become more political in their demands, the strikes so far have retained community involvement and have all been relatively successful. Even as the protests move from red states to blue cities, there is still a coherent narrative in place: Teachers are underpaid, asked to do more with less, and fed up. These strikes are not independent and isolated efforts, said Rebecca Tarlau, an assistant professor of education and labor and employment relations at Pennsylvania State University’s College of Education. “It’s a wave of different activists who are in conversation and connection and trying to transform their unions in really interesting and important ways,” she said. So far this year, teachers in Los Angeles went on a six-day strike that ended with a host of union victories, including smaller class sizes, more support staff, and other socially minded initiatives, like legal support for immigrant students. Teachers in Denver went on a three-day strike last month over the district’s performance-based compensation model. Then, West Virginia teachers walked out in protest of a bill that would have established charter schools in the state, along with up to 1,000 education savings accounts that allow certain parents to use public money to pay for private school. Teachers in Oakland, Calif., went on strike for two weeks in February over pay, class sizes, and the cash-strapped district’s proposal to close schools. As the teacher-activism movement spreads, it emphasizes the “point that teachers’ concerns are national and not simply a product of big-city unions,” said Jeffrey Henig, the director of the politics and education program at Teachers College, Columbia University. Now, he said, “we’re seeing that played back in places like West Virginia, where the local actors without the strong historical unions ... are now breathing the fumes of national issues like privatization and school choice and are broadening their scope as a result.” In some ways, the strike in Oakland embodied what the movement has become, experts say. At the center of the contract dispute was the union’s demand for a 12 percent pay raise. But Oakland Education Association President Keith Brown framed the strike as a “fight for the soul of public education” in the city. In addition to pushing for student supports, teachers are fighting against the proposed closures of up to 24 regular public schools and the growth of charter schools. “No one thinks of the Oakland strike as a strike that’s about salary,” Tarlau said. “It is part of the big picture: What is the future of our schools? What is the future of public education?”

#### Educational innovation solves extinction.

**Serdyukov 17** Peter Serdyukov, National University, La Jolla, California. 03/27/2017. “Innovation in Education: What Works, What Doesn’t, and What to Do about It?” Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching & Learning, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 4–33.

Introduction Education, being a social institution serving the needs of society, is indispensable for society to survive and thrive. It should be not only comprehensive, sustainable, and superb, but must continuously evolve to meet the challenges of the fast-changing and unpredictable globalized world. This evolution must be systemic, consistent, and scalable; therefore, school teachers, college professors, administrators, researchers, and policy makers are expected to innovate the theory and practice of teaching and learning, as well as all other aspects of this complex organization to ensure quality preparation of all students to life and work. Here we present a systemic discussion of educational innovations, identify the barriers to innovation, and outline potential directions for effective innovations. We discuss the current status of innovations in US education, what educational innovation is, how innovations are being integrated in schools and colleges, why innovations do not always produce the desired effect, and what should be done to increase the scale and rate of innovation-based transformations in our education system. We then offer recommendations for the growth of educational innovations. As examples of innovations in education, we will highlight online learning and time efficiency of learning using accelerated and intensive approaches. Innovations in US education For an individual, a nation, and humankind to survive and progress, innovation and evolution are essential. Innovations in education are of particular importance because education plays a crucial role in creating a sustainable future. “Innovation resembles mutation, the biological process that keeps species evolving so they can better compete for survival” (Hoffman and Holzhuter, 2012, p. 3). Innovation, therefore, is to be regarded as an instrument of necessary and positive change. Any human activity (e.g. industrial, business, or educational) needs constant innovation to remain sustainable. The need for educational innovations has become acute. “It is widely believed that countries’ social and economic well-being will depend to an ever greater extent on the quality of their citizens’ education: the emergence of the so-called ‘knowledge society’, the transformation of information and the media, and increasing specialization on the part of organizations all call for high skill profiles and levels of knowledge. Today’s education systems are required to be both effective and efficient, or in other words, to reach the goals set for them while making the best use of available resources” (Cornali, 2012, p. 255). According to an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report, “the pressure to increase equity and improve educational outcomes for students is growing around the world” (Vieluf et al., 2012, p. 3). In the USA, underlying pressure to innovate comes from political, economic, demographic, and technological forces from both inside and outside the nation. Many in the USA seem to recognize that education at all levels critically needs renewal: “Higher education has to change. It needs more innovation” (Wildavsky et al., 2012, p. 1). This message, however, is not new – in the foreword to the 1964 book entitled Innovation in Education, Arthur Foshay, Executive Officer of The Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation, wrote, “It has become platitudinous to speak of the winds of change in education, to remind those interested in the educational enterprise that a revolution is in progress. Trite or not, however, it is true to say that changes appear wherever one turns in education” (Matthew, 1964, p.

### Growth adv

#### The pandemic slowed growth, but it’s not irreversible – education improvement can turn the tide.

Hanushek and Woessmann 20 (Eric, award-winning economist and PhD Economics @ MIT, and Ludger, Prof. Economics @ Ludwig Maximillian University of Munich, September 2021, "The Economic Impact of Learning Losses,” https://www.oecd.org/education/The-economic-impacts-of-coronavirus-covid-19-learning-losses.pdf) AG

As a result of the schools being closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, classes were almost universally disrupted for months in the first half of 2020. As pupils gradually return to school, the high costs of not learning should be taken into account. The future impact of past and future learning losses need to be considered when it comes to the design of mixed in-person and home learning and when classes are potentially cancelled again locally or regionally due to newly occurring infections. Roughly speaking, research in the economics of education shows that each additional year of schooling increases life income by an average of 7.5-10%. In other words, a loss of one third of a school year’s worth of learning would reduce the subsequent earned income of the pupils concerned by about 3%. Beyond crudely measured school attainment, the loss in cognitive skills resulting from school closures and the untested ways of re-opening is the larger issue. The different ways of estimating the economic costs of the pandemic for current students provide consistent estimates of today’s learning challenges. The costs of school closure and the associated learning losses go beyond the lower incomes that this cohort of students can expect. A less skilled work force also implies lower rates of national economic growth. A loss of one-third of a year in effective learning for just the students affected by the closures of early 2020 The Economic Impacts of Learning Losses | © OECD 2020 13 will, by historical data, lower a country’s GDP by an average of 1.5% over the remainder of the century. If the re-opened schools (which also involve new students) are not up to the same standard as before the pandemic, the impacts on future economic well-being will be proportionately larger. In addition to the economic effects of the cognitive skill losses emphasised here, there are other potentially important costs due to losses in social-emotional development of children, although neither the magnitude nor the economic impact of these are currently known. There is considerable anecdotal evidence that children from disadvantaged backgrounds and pupils with learning difficulties have a particularly difficult time coping with the home-learning phase. Due to the very different pressures, school closures threaten to become a major burden on the equality of educational opportunities and lead to increased inequality in society. Immediate concrete measures need to be taken to provide effective learning for all age groups, albeit in an adapted format – from improving distance learning to developing constructive ways to re-open schools to all children and adolescents. Because school attendance will likely remain disrupted for some time to come, the serious costs of not learning must be considered and comprehensive measures must be taken to ensure that learning takes place everywhere again. Indeed, as described, it is possible and important to build upon the new organisation of schools to ensure that the schools are actually superior to the pre-COVID schools. Unless schools get better, the current students will be significantly harmed. Moreover, the harm will disproportionately fall on disadvantaged students. Substantial learning differences across countries, closely related to institutional structures of their school systems, indicate that improvements are possible (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2011[12]; Woessmann, 2016[11]). Therefore, permanent learning losses are not inevitable if countries improve the learning gains of their students in the future.

#### COVID put education funding on the brink. Kills growth and democracy.

Goczek et al 21 (Lukasz, Professor of Macroeconomics @ University of Warsaw, Ewa Witkowska, and Bartosz Witkowski, 6/5/21, "How Does Education Quality Affect Economic Growth?" <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/13/11/6437>) AG

It is common knowledge that education is important, and there is overwhelming evidence that better education gives great returns to individuals. Oreopoulos and Salvanes [53] suggest that better education might lead individuals to make better decisions about health, marriage, and parenting style. It is also believed that schooling improves patience, making individuals more goal-oriented and less likely to engage in risky behavior. Yet, at the macroeconomic level, there is little empirical evidence that better education in a given country translates into better economic results. This can be mostly attributed to the quantitative, not qualitative, data on education available across countries. While Hanushek and Woessmann [6] published evidence of the importance of education quality as a factor of GDP growth, their results might cause some doubts, mostly because they investigated the contemporaneous relationship between the two—or, to be more accurate, the correlation between the 1960–2010 GDP growth and the available PISA scores (from the beginning of the current century). As a result, their research confirms the existence of the relation itself; however, its direction is most likely opposite to the claim of the authors—or at least it is difficult to identify the direction of the relation. A possible solution would be to use properly lagged PISA results and include them in the GDP growth regression. An obvious problem is the lack of the lagged PISA results given that the tests started at the beginning of the current century. As a partial solution to this problem, we suggested estimating a model that explains the results of PISA as a function of educational expenditures. The model would then been used to provide backward predictions of PISA scores, and the final model of GDP growth could be estimated with the use of adequately lagged PISA scores in the role of input. The resulting model seems to be rational from the economic and the educational point of view. Although the results are in line with earlier claims by the cited authors, it provides stronger evidence for the relevance of the quality of education as it is statistically more robust, and the properties of the applied estimator are generally better. As a result, applying the alternative technique should be viewed as an important value-add of this research. Justifying the value of a good education is of double importance. In practical Sustainability 2021, 13, 6437 18 of 22 terms, it is an important voice in the discussion and provides an additional argument for directing a stream of investment in education, which is particularly important while governments might start searching for savings if global markets fall into the recession phase of the economic cycle. One might wonder why the different types of skills have such a similar influence on the performance of the economies. Certainly, a few reasons could be given. Firstly, each of them should be viewed as a proxy for the general quality of education in a given school, district, or even country—probably more than the indicator of the level of teaching of a particular class. Secondly, the final PISA scores in different areas are in some cases constructed with the use of their values (or actually, their components) in various areas. As a result, the distributions of different PISA scores are not fully independent, which can be partly reflected in the above-described similarities between the three different models presented in Table 2. In any case, it can be believed that the methodology discussed here should be viewed as a formal confirmation that expenditures on education, which result in higher education quality, just pay back. The return is not immediate, but some years after the graduates enter the labor market, the quality of the education that they attained at the age of 15 begins to matter. Several elements are crucial for the properly constructed model and for trustworthy conclusions. An important question is how long after graduation the employees have the greatest impact on the total productivity in the economy and contribute the most to the GDP growth. While answering this question would suggest the adequate lag length for the models analyzed in the study, it is not simple to do so. It seems rational to assume that the employees of crucial significance should obtain better remuneration. This process, however, exhibits little stability: while in 1975 they were the 29-year-olds who had the highest average wages, recently, the peak is observed in the cohort of 40-year-olds. That could be attributed to the increasing professionalization and an increasing role of knowledge and experience in the labor market, which suggests that the significance of the quality of education has increased and might be expected to further increase in the future. However, such a result makes it more challenging to properly lag the regressors in the model equations. Still, the robustness analysis partly described in this paper and delivered by Witkowska and Witkowski [54] leaves no doubts: while the results are observed most clearly with lags of 15 years, which means considering the education quality of today’s 30-year-olds, the figures are very similar for the 25- as well as the 40-year-olds. The transmission channel in the analyzed phenomenon is interesting. While in the theoretical model we concentrated on the economic aspects of education quality, those are not limited to these. Authors in [4,55] have pointed out that, on the individual level, expenditures on education as well health will develop adequate competencies and improve the state of health so that the productivity and income of that person will increase in the future. These two factors, education and health, have an impact on human productivity, which has an impact on production, and with an increase in production, economic growth will also increase. Therefore, education and health, which are important components of human capital, have an impact on economic growth. A study on economic growth in Korea and Japan by Han and Lee [56] provides empirical arguments that there is strong cointegration between health services and education in improving the quality of human resources and economic growth. Yet another transmission channel to be taken into consideration is the democracy– education nexus. While most of the highest-developed countries in the world are adult democracies, there is a clear relationship between education and democracy across countries [57,58]; however, the reason for this remains unclear. In their study [59], they proposed the explanation hinging on the connection between education and the costs and benefits of political engagement. Schools not only educate but also socialize young people, and political involvement is a form of the latter. There is numerous evidence showing a positive connection between education and civic engagement. Ref. [59] models education as raising the benefits of political action when individuals choose to support a more or less democratic Sustainability 2021, 13, 6437 19 of 22 regime. In this model, democratic regimes offer weak incentives to a wide base of potential supporters, whereas dictatorships offer strong incentives to a narrower base. Education increases the society-wide support for democracy because democracy relies on people with high participation benefits for its support. The authors showed that better-educated nations are more likely both to protect democracy and to undertake effective efforts to prevent coups. The performed analysis additionally raised two broader questions. First, whereas the model itself focused on the effects of education on participation, the analysis applied to 32 all social glues that encourage collective action; so, perhaps the analysis suggests a solution to Olson’s free-rider problem in all organizations, and not just in political regimes—namely, human capital or other kinds of social glue as a motivation to participate. Secondly, the results shed a light on the problem of why some dictators invest in education that might be a threat to them. One of the possible answers is that many dictators face an external threat and, therefore, must grow their economies and their armies (including investing in human capital) to counter these threats even if this raises the risk of democratization. A second answer is that, even with a lack of external threats, dictators might benefit from economic growth, and, therefore, they might promote education to become richer. A third idea is that all dictators face significant ouster risks and that it is much better for the dictator’s life for him to be replaced by democracy in an educated country than by another dictator in an uneducated one. Fortunato & Panizza [57] in their study on the interaction between democracy and education and its impact on the quality of government, draw three important conclusions. Firstly, the interaction between democracy and education is always positively and significantly correlated with the quality of government. Secondly, the correlation between democracy and quality of government is statistically significant only in countries with high levels of education. Thirdly, the marginal effect of education is positive and statistically significant in countries with high levels of democracy. In their model [57], they synthesized, in one framework, the stance emphasizing the importance of political institutions as a fundamental factor explaining cross-country differences in income per capita with the stance that institutional improvements and development is driven by social and human capital. The most important empirical finding from this work is the conclusion that democratic institutions and education complement each other, but they argue that democracy leads to the election of better candidates only in the situation where the level of education is above a certain threshold. Simultaneously, amelioration of education can affect the quality of the elected officials but only if the cost of entry into politics is not prohibitive. The authors ran a set of Monte Carlo simulations to show that these results were not driven by reverse causality. By looking explicitly at the interaction between democracy and education, they demonstrated how these two variables complement each other in the selection of high-quality policymakers, which guarantees good governance. In addition, we should bear in mind that economic growth is an important facet, but just one of many, of country development. We can expect societies with higher education quality to be more democratic and politically stable, to exhibit less violence, poverty and inequality, and to enjoy a higher quality of governance. All of these additional factors associated clearly with higher education quality can have a noteworthy positive impact on both economic growth and society’s welfare, going far beyond simple economic calculation. The development of a knowledgeable population does not only contribute to economic growth itself but also might contribute to such aspects of national well-being as welfare and poverty reduction [3]. The authors in [58] also agree that the development of economic growth analysis provides a basis for the role of human capital as an important part of increasing economic growth. Wensley and Evans [60] are convincing that the higher the quality of human capital, the higher its effect on economic growth, and there are numerous studies stating that education is of particular importance for growth in developing countries [2,61–63]. Sustainability 2021, 13, 6437 20 of 22 The above results seem to be an important confirmation of the role of education not just for the well-being of individuals but also for the well-being of entire societies. Of course, the milestone study [6] and the earlier analysis of Hanushek and Woessmann suggested the existence of such a relation. However, we believe that this study is the first to confirm them with the use of modern econometric tools that include not just the dynamic panel data models but also the BMA approach. Its strength consists in the elimination of a vast amount of subjectivity that accompanies the construction of a single model. Instead, a number of models were analyzed and averaged, confirming the validity of the results. They seem vital, especially in the pandemic era when numerous governments will be looking for various areas in which the costs can be cut to compensate for the recent excessive expenditures on healthcare and lockdown support. The decision of where to cut costs will be challenging; however, the conclusions of this study are clear: saving on the quality of education in the middle and long time horizon will not pay off in terms of economic growth and should not be considered as a profitable solution. On the other hand, our study has natural limitations. The crucial one is the limited number of lagged PISA scores due to the relatively short history of this tool. Secondly, although the number of countries that participate is quite large today, initially, it was notably lower. These shortcomings simply require more time. Secondly, while we believe that the PISA scores are the most adequate measure of quality of education, they are not perfect either. Providing high-quality education for humankind is of crucial importance and, as such, has been listed as one of the priorities on various global development agendas, such as the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development [64]. Education is crucial for individual and social development given that it allows for the transmission of knowledge and facilitates the ability to understand and cope with the surrounding world in addition to inspiring innovation [65]. Good education reduces poverty and promotes prosperity.

#### Growth solves extinction.

Aschenbrenner 20 [Leopold Aschenbrenner; Student in economics at Columbia University and research affiliate at the University of Oxford’s Global Priorities Institute; "Securing posterity," Works in Progress; 10/19/20; <https://worksinprogress.co/issue/securing-posterity/>] julian // Re-Cut Justin

I argue that the opposite is the case. It is not safe stagnation and risky growth that we must choose between; rather, it is stagnation that is risky and it is growth that leads to safety. We might indeed be in “time of perils”: we might be advanced enough to have developed the means for our destruction, but not advanced enough to care sufficiently about safety. But stagnation does not solve the problem: we would simply stagnate at this high level of risk. Eventually, a nuclear war or environmental catastrophe would doom humanity regardless. Faster economic growth could initially increase risk, as feared. But it will also help us get past this time of perils more quickly. When people are poor, they can’t focus on much beyond ensuring their own livelihoods. But as people grow richer, they start caring more about things like the environment and protecting against risks to life. And so, as economic growth makes people richer, they will invest more in safety, protecting against existential catastrophes. As technological innovation and our growing wealth has allowed us to conquer past threats to human life like smallpox, so can faster economic growth, in the long run, increase the overall chances of humanity’s survival. This argument is based on a recent paper of mine, in which I use the tools of economic theory—in particular, the standard models economists use to analyze economic growth—to examine the interaction between economic growth and the risks engendered by human activity. In this model, society must choose how much of its resources to allocate to consumption and how much to safety efforts. Consumption makes us happy, but also creates risks of catastrophe. Investing in safety can in turn help mitigate that risk. For example, consuming fossil fuels can engender great prosperity, but also increases the risk of tail-end climate change. We can spend money on carbon abatement to reduce this risk. Or consider air travel. It’s very useful as well, but also facilitates the spread of infectious diseases, including potentially a pandemic that could wipe out the human race. We can spend money on pandemic preparedness to mitigate that risk. Crucially, society is impatient; it discounts the future. People generally care most about their more immediate well-being. Although they may care about their kids and grandkids, they are certainly not particularly concerned about the trillions of potential lives billions of years in the future that the aforementioned philosophers appeal to. However, an impatient society does care about not getting wiped out. Therefore, what fraction of its resources this impatient society will allocate to safety depends on how much the people in this society value their own lives. As it turns out, under the standard preferences used in economic theory, people value life more and more as they grow richer. This is because of the diminishing marginal returns of consumption. As you grow richer, using an extra dollar to purchase more consumption goods gives you less and less additional utility; meanwhile, as your life becomes better and better, you stand to lose more and more if you die. As a result, the richer people are, the greater the fraction of their income they are willing to sacrifice to protect their lives. Comparing the current pandemic to the 1918 pandemic illustrates this phenomenon. Today, we are putting much of life on hold to minimize deaths. By contrast, in 1918, nonpharmaceutical interventions were milder and went on only for a month on average in the U.S., even though the Spanish Flu was arguably deadlier and claimed younger victims. We are willing to sacrifice much more today than a hundred years ago to prevent deaths because we are richer and thus value life much more. What does this mean for our model? Initially, a poor society will start out by allocating nearly all of its resources to consumption. And so as the economy grows, so does risk. However, as people grow richer, they start valuing life more. They start investing in safety to mitigate risk, shifting more and more resources from consumption to safety. At this point, as the economy grows, risk begins to fall. The risk of a existential catastrophe then looks like an inverted U-shape over time: The dot represents where we might be right now. Over the past centuries, as we have grown out of poverty, we have overwhelmingly focused on consumption. As a result, risk is growing. But as we are growing richer, we are beginning to value life more, and are slowly investing more in safety. Eventually, we will have shifted enough resources to safety such that risk begins to fall—fall exponentially to zero, in fact, such that there is a positive probability of humanity surviving to reach a grand future. And all of this occurs despite our society’s impatience. There is an analog to this in environmental economics, called the “environmental Kuznets curve.” It was theorized that pollution initially rises as countries develop, but, as people grow richer and begin to value a clean environment more, they will work to reduce pollution again. That theory has arguably been vindicated by the path that Western countries have taken with regard to water and air pollution, for example, over the past century. The idea that we are in a unique time in history in which we are facing an elevated risk of existential catastrophe is not new either. Carl Sagan was the one who coined the term “time of perils.” Derek Parfit called it the “hinge of history.” They argue that the discoveries of the last centuries have granted humanity immense power, and so we are in a most “dangerous and decisive” period. But if we manage to survive, our descendants will be able to spread throughout the galaxy, making us much less vulnerable. They will have mastered new technologies that make us immune to bioengineered pathogens, neutralize the threat from atomic bombs, provide plentiful energy without destroying the environment, and keep artificial intelligence in check so it faithfully serves human needs. With their technology and wisdom, our descendants will be able to secure a long and safe future. Our challenge, then, is to make it through this unique perilous period. Seeing the rising levels of existential risk over the past centuries, some might call for an end to economic growth. They might argue, rightfully so, that economic growth has only led to rising risk in the past. Indeed, a period of accelerated economic growth would initially also accelerate the rise in risk. The level of risk might look something like this, where the lighter line is the path with accelerated growth: Even a few hundred years later, the critics of growth would seem to be vindicated! Faster growth just increased the risk! Except that they are missing the whole picture: The accelerated economic growth also accelerated our path along the inverted-U shape of risk. Faster growth means people are richer sooner, so they value life more sooner, so society shifts resources to safety sooner—and ultimately we will begin the decline in risk sooner. As a result, the overall probability of an existential catastrophe—the area under the risk curve—declines! Faster growth means we get through the “time of perils” more quickly. Indeed, stagnation would be the most dangerous choice of all: we would be stuck at an elevated level of risk, meaning an eventual existential catastrophe would be inevitable.

#### DPT is empirically robust. Every counterexample crumbles under better historical analysis.

Miller, PhD in IR, 19

(Paul D., Georgetown, Professor of the Practice of International Affairs at Georgetown, <https://networks.h-net.org/node/28443/discussions/4846080/h-diploissf-state-field-essay-unreality-realism-international>) BW

That, of course, is anathema to the foreign policy that realists prefer. The idea that liberalism might lead to world peace is a cornerstone of liberalism, one of its strongest selling points to scholars and practitioners, and a potential death-blow to realism. The idea of a liberal or democratic peace is almost as old as liberalism itself, having first been outlined by Immanuel Kant in Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch (1795). Kant argued with remarkable prescience that a confederation of republican governments could be the anchor of world peace. Two centuries later, Jack Levy famously would observe that “the absence of war between democracies comes as close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations.”[14] Despite the initial failure of the Wilsonian project, subsequent decades have gradually vindicated much of it through the spread of democracy and international cooperation. If it is true that liberal democracies do not fight each other, then a foreign policy that champions and encourages democracy abroad holds out the promise of spreading peace, stability, and prosperity—and to do so on grounds antithetical to realism. If the democratic peace theory is true, realism is not only false, it is basically immoral for leading humanity away from its best hope for peace. Given the challenge that the democratic peace theory presents to realism, it is striking how rarely realists engage with it. In research for my last book, I found almost no effort to rebut it in the major recent works advocating for restraint or retrenchment. Mearsheimer commendably tries to fill the gap. He argues that for the democratic peace theory to be relevant, it has to trump concerns about survival. Clearly it does not; states and people care more about survival than about freedom, Mearsheimer claims, and so the theory is of limited applicability. Mearsheimer seemingly argues that this scope condition is a weakness of the democratic peace theory: “These conditions do not always exist. The world has never been populated with democracies alone, which significantly restricts the scope of democratic peace theory” (3579). Democracies will always have to live by realist logic, like the balance of power, when dealing with non-democratic powers. He later notes that democracies can backslide, making the democratic peace not apply to them anymore. Mearsheimer’s argument is a non-sequitur; he is refuting an argument no one makes. Advocates of the democratic peace theory do not argue that democracy is or will be global, or that it must become global for the democratic peace theory to be relevant. We do not claim that democracy is more important than survival or that it exempts democracies from acting according to realist logic in relation to non-democratic powers. (In my book I specifically argue that the two logics operate in tandem). We claim that the question of survival does not arise in the first place between two liberal democracies, and thus does not have to be trumped. And I was taught in graduate school that specifying your theory’s scope conditions strengthens your case; it does not weaken it. By contrast, Mearsheimer claims “Realism is a timeless theory,” (2551) which is simply false, arising as it did in the unique conditions of post-Westphalian Europe to explain the era’s new interpretation of sovereignty. In any case, if it were timeless, realists would be unable to explain variance across history. Mearsheimer is not engaging with a fair version of his critics’ arguments. This is particularly on display with his treatment of Francis Fukuyama, whose arguments he repeatedly mischaracterizes. Fukuyama’s “End of History” essay is essentially a restatement of the democratic peace theory, resting as it does on the potent idea that liberal democracy and capitalism are superior to their alternatives and that their spread will also spread peace, liberty, and human flourishing. But in his critique of liberalism, Mearsheimer returns several times to Fukuyama and uses a caricatured version of it as a foil for himself. “According to Fukuyama, [democratic] nations would have virtually no meaningful disputes, and wars between great powers would cease,” Mearsheimer argues (165). In his reading, Fukuyama believed “liberal democracy would steadily sweep across the globe, spreading peace everywhere” (3635). What Fukuyama actually wrote was very different from what Mearsheimer recounts. Fukuyama wrote in his original essay that the ‘end of history’ does not mean “there will no longer be events to fill the pages of Foreign Affairs' yearly summaries of international relations.” Fukuyama did not suggest that every state would immediately convert to liberal democracy. “At the end of history, it is not necessary that all societies become successful liberal societies, merely that they end their ideological pretensions of representing different and higher forms of human society.” Nor does the End of History mean the end of war: “This does not by any means imply the end of international conflict per se… terrorism and wars of national liberation will continue to be an important item on the international agenda.” Conflict would continue and many states would remain within “History” for the foreseeable future. “Russia and China are not likely to join the developed nations of the West as liberal societies any time in the foreseeable future,” he wrote.[15] More positively, in contrast to his discussion of nationalism and liberalism, Mearsheimer’s treatment of the democratic peace theory does engage with some of the empirical data. Mearsheimer argues there are four clear-cut cases of democracies fighting against each other: Germany against the Allies in World War I; the Boer War (1899-1902); the Spanish-American War of 1898; and the Kargil War between India and Pakistan in 1999. Along the same lines, he also claims that the United States “has a rich history of toppling democratically elected governments,” further disproving the democratic peace theory. He cites Guatemala in 1954, Iran in 1953, Brazil in 1964, and Chile in 1973 as examples. None of these cases hold up. Mearsheimer gives prominent place to his claim that Wilhelmine Germany was a liberal democracy, and thus that World War I falsifies the democratic peace theory. (Christopher Layne makes the same argument in Peace of Illusions).[16] The claim is false. The Polity IV project gives Germany in 1914 a score of 2 on its scale of -10 (full autocracy) to 10 (full democracy). Like many hybrid, transitional, or incomplete democracies, Wilhelmine Germany blended traits of democracy and autocracy. It held elections and had a parliament; it also censored the press and established a military dictatorship over foreign and defense policy with no democratic checks on war-making powers. This is not the kind of regime that scholars of the democratic peace have in mind. The Boer War and Spanish-American War and coups in Guatemala, Iran, and Brazil fail by the same measures. One or the other party in the war or coup simply were not full democracies. As importantly, Mearsheimer does not engage with more recent historiography on these cases; he is recycling old talking points by critics of U.S. foreign policy.[17] Suffice to say, the coups are more complicated than Mearsheimer’s single sentence makes them out to be. (Chile, in particular, was emphatically not a U.S.-sponsored coup, despite what your college professor told you). If these cases are to be used to disprove the democratic peace theory, more is needed. Mearsheimer’s discussion of the democratic peace theory has more problems. “Perhaps the most damning evidence against the case for liberal democratic norms is found in Christopher Layne’s careful examination of four cases where a pair of liberal democracies marched to the brink of war, but one side pulled back and ended the crisis,” (3772) he writes. No, in fact these cases are not evidence against the democratic peace theory; if anything, they could be seen as evidence for it because the democracies in question did not go to war. Whatever the causal mechanism at work, the cases simply do not comment on the democratic peace theory because they do not include examples of democracies going to war against each other. The Kargil War is perhaps the single case of a militarized crisis between two democracies (Pervez Musharraf overthrew the Pakistani democracy months later), though one that was so small and brief, and killed so few people, that the Uppsala Data Conflict Program (UDCP) codes it as falling below the conventional threshold of 1,000 battle deaths that political scientists use to define “war” (UDCP estimates 886 battle deaths).[18] That is a technicality, however, and the case does raise a potential problem for the democratic peace theory. But not a large one. As I often tell my students, the fact that scholars have spent so much time debating the marginal cases proves that the democratic peace theory is true the rest of the time—which is to say, it is true for the other 99.9 percent of cases. It is true enough for policymaking: scholars can reliably trust that democracies virtually never go to war against each other. And if it is true, realism is not just a faulty guide; it is a treacherous one, leading us in exactly the opposite direction we should go.

#### High-quality education solves sustainable development.

WEF 15 (World Economic Forum, world-renowned economic/leadership organization, 5-19-2015, "Why education is the key to sustainable development," World Economic Forum, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/05/why-education-is-the-key-to-sustainable-development/>) AG

A strong education system broadens access to opportunities, improves health, and bolsters the resilience of communities – all while fueling economic growth in a way that can reinforce and accelerate these processes. Moreover, education provides the skills people need to thrive in the new sustainable economy, working in areas such as renewable energy, smart agriculture, forest rehabilitation, the design of resource-efficient cities, and sound management of healthy ecosystems.

Perhaps most important, education can bring about a fundamental shift in how we think, act, and discharge our responsibilities toward one another and the planet. After all, while financial incentives, targeted policies, and technological innovation are needed to catalyze new ways of producing and consuming, they cannot reshape people’s value systems so that they willingly uphold and advance the principles of sustainable development. Schools, however, can nurture a new generation of environmentally savvy citizens to support the transition to a prosperous and sustainable future.

Some schools are already becoming learning labs for sustainable development, where young students are being prepared to adapt to and help mitigate the consequences of climate change. Guided by the UNFCCC – as well as related initiatives like the UN Alliance on Climate Change Education, Training, and Public Awareness – governments are increasingly integrating education strategies, tools, and targets into national development policies. The UNESCO-led UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which began in 2005, was explicitly intended to instill in every human being “the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary to shape a sustainable future.”

Together, UNESCO and the UNFCCC are not only promoting climate-change education in schools; they are also giving teachers the tools and knowledge they need to provide that education through online courses. Already, more than 14 million students and 1.2 million teachers in 58 countries have been engaged in such learning, and 550 business schools have signed on to the Principles for Responsible Management Education, developed by the UN Global Compact.

This progress, though important, is just the beginning. What is needed now is a global movement, with every student in every country learning about sustainable development from well-trained teachers, equipped with the appropriate curricula and resources. An ambitious sustainable development agenda, together with a legally binding global climate deal, could go a long way toward catalyzing such a movement.

Of course, we cannot secure a sustainable future in a matter of months. But, with a well-designed set of commitments and targets, we can move onto the right path. And, with effective educational programs that instill in future generations the importance of restoring Earth’s balance and delivering a prosperous future for the many, rather than the few, we can stay on that path.

#### Solves a laundry list of existential threats.

Tom Cernev & Richard Fenner 20, Australian National University; Centre for Sustainable Development, Cambridge University Engineering Department, "The importance of achieving foundational Sustainable Development Goals in reducing global risk," Futures, Vol. 115, January 2020, Elsevier. Recut Justin

4.1. Cascading failures Fig. 3 demonstrates that cascade failures can be transmitted through the complex inter-relationships that link the Sustainable Development Goals. Randers, Rockstrom, Stoknes, Goluke, Collste, Cornell, Donges et al. (2018) have suggested that where meeting some SDGs impact negatively on others, this may lead to “crisis and conflict accelerators” and “threat multipliers” resulting in conflicts, instability and migrations. Ecosystem stresses are likely to disproportionately affect the security and social cohesion of fragile and poor communities, amplifying latent tensions which lead to political instabilities that spread far beyond their regions. The resulting “bad fate of the poor will end up affecting the whole global system"(Mastrojeni, 2018). Such possibilities are likely to go beyond incremental damage and lead to runaway collapse. The World Economic Forums’ Global Risks Report for 2018 shows the top five global risks in terms of likelihood and impact have changed from being economic and social in 2008 to environmental and technological in 2018, and are closely aligned with many SDGs (World Economic Forum, 2018). The report notes “that we are much less competent when it comes to dealing with complex risks in systems characterised by feedback loops, tipping points and opaque cause-and-effect relationships that can make intervention problematic”. The most likely risks expected to have the greatest impact currently include extreme weather events natural disasters, cyber attacks, data fraud or theft, failure of climate change mitigation and water crises. These are represented in Fig. 3 by the following exogenous variables. “Climate change” drives the need for Climate Action (SDG 13), “Cyber threat” may adversely impact technology implementation and advancement which will disrupt Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11); Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8) and the rate of introduction of Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7), with reductions in these goals having direct consequences in also reducing progress in the other goals which they are closely linked to. “Data Fraud or Threat” has the capacity to inhibit innovation and Industrial Performance (SDG 9), reducing competitiveness (and having the potential to erode societal confidence in governance processes). “Water Crises” (linked with climate change) have a direct impact on Human Health and Well Being (SDG 3) as well as reducing access to Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6) and reducing agricultural production which increases Hunger (SDG 2). The causal loop diagram also highlights “Conflict” as a variable (driven by multiple environmental-socio-economic factors) which together with regions most impacted by climate degradation will lead to an increase in migrant refugees enhancing the spread of disease and global pandemic risk, thus impacting directly on Human Health and Well Being (SDG 3) 4.2. Existential and catastrophic risk The level and consequences of these risks may be severe. Existential Risks (ER) have a wide scope, with extreme danger, and are “a risk that threatens the premature extinction of humanity or the permanent and drastic destruction of its potential for desirable future development” (Farquhar et al., 2017,) essentially being an event or scenario that is “transgenerational in scope and terminal in intensity” (Baum & Handoh, 2014). With a smaller scope, and lower level of severity, global catastrophic risk is defined as a scenario or event that results in at least 10 million fatalities, or $10 trillion in damages (Bostrom & Ćirković, 2008). Global Catastrophic Risk (GCR) events are those which are global, but they are durable in that humanity is able to recover from them (Bostrom & Ćirković, 2008; Cotton-Barratt, Farquhar, Halstead, Schubert, & Snyder-Beattie, 2016) but which still have a long-term impact (Turchin & Denkenberger, 2018b). Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals can be considered to be a means of reducing the long-term global catastrophic and existential risks for humanity. Conversely if the targets represented across the SDGs remain unachieved there is the potential for these forms of risk to develop. This association combined with the likely emergence of new challenges over the next decades (Cook, Inayatullah, Burgman, Sutherland, & Wintle, 2014) means that it is of great value to identify points within the systems representations of the Sustainable Development Goals that could both lead to global catastrophic risk and existential risk, and conversely that could act as prevention, or leverage points in order to avoid such outcomes. This identification in turn enables sensible policy responses to be constructed (Sutherland & Woodroof, 2009). Whilst existential threats are unlikely, there is extensive peril in global catastrophic risks. Despite being lesser in severity than existential risks, they increase the likelihood of human extinction (Turchin & Denkenberger, 2018a) through chain reactions (Turchin & Denkenberger, 2018a), and inhibiting humanity’s response to other risks (Farquhar et al., 2017). It is necessary to consider risks that may seem small, as when acting together, they can have extensive consequences (Tonn, 2009). Furthermore, the high adaptability potential of humans, and society, means that for humanity to become extinct, it is most likely that there would be a series of events that culminate in extinction as opposed to one large scale event (Tonn & MacGregor, 2009; Tonn, 2009). Whilst the prospect of existential risk, or global catastrophic risk can seem distant, the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change estimated the risk of extinction for humanity as 0.1 % annually, which accumulates to provide the risk of extinction over the next century as 9.5 % (Cotton-Barratt et al., 2016). With respect to identifying these risks, it is known that in particular, “positive feedback loops… represent the gravest existential risks” (Kareiva & Carranza, 2018), with pollution also having the potential to pose an existential risk. With respect to reinforcing feedback loops, there is particular concern about the effects of time delay, and the level of uncertainty when feedback loops interact (Kareiva & Carranza, 2018). It is difficult to identify the exact thresholds that are associated with tipping points (Moore, 2018), which leads to global catastrophic risk or existential risk, and thus it is necessary to understand the events that can lead to existential risks (Kareiva & Carranza, 2018). Table 1 identifies possible global catastrophic risks and existential risks as reported in the literature and from Fig. 3 these are aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals they impact on the most. 4.3. Linking risks with progress in the SDGs Generally it is the Outcome/Foundational and Human input SDGs that are most directly related. For example as the movement of refugees increases pandemic risk, poverty levels in low and middle income countries increase reducing the health of the population, and so restricting access to education which further enhances poverty and birth rates rise as family sizes increases generating unsustainable population growth which furthers the migration of refugees (Fig. 5). Fig. 3 shows that leverage points to reduce refugees lies in SDG 16 (Peace Justice and Strong Institutions), reducing malnutrition through alleviating SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and taking SDG 13 (Climate Action) to avoid the mass movement of people to avoid the impacts of global warming. Global warming itself will drive disruptive changes in both terrestial and aquatic ecosystems affecting SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 14 (Life Below Water) adding to their vulnerability to increases in pollution driven by a growing economy. Loop B (in Fig. 4)shows the constraints associated with SDG 13 (Climate Action) may slow the economic investment in industry and infrastructure reducing the pollution generated, encouraging adoption of SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) whilst stimulating carbon reduction and measures such as afforestation, which will also improve the foundational environmental goals. Depletion of resources and biodiversity are strongly linked to SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) through measures such as halving global waste, reducing waste generation through recycling reuse and reduction schemes, and striving for more efficient industrial processes. The more resources that are used, the less responsible is Consumption and Production which may thus reduce biodiversity (Fig. 3) and increase the amounts of wastes accumulating in the environment. The final driver of Global Catastrophic Risk is an agricultural shortfall which will increase global Hunger (SDG 2) and widen the Inequality (SDG 10) between rich and poor nations and individuals. Quality Education (SDG 4) is important as a key leverage point to stimulate the generation and adoption of new technologies to improve energy (SDG 7) and water supplies (6) which can enhance agricultural production. Such linkages are convincingly examined and demonstrated in the recent film “The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind” (2019), based on a factual story of water shortages in Malawi in the mid 2000s. These examples may appear self evident, but it is the connections between the goals and how they adjust together that is important to consider so the consequence of policy actions in one area can be fully understood. Because of the underlying system structures global threats can quickly transmit through the system. Water Crises will limit the water available for agriculture and basic needs which in turn will stimulate a decline in Gender Equality (SDG 5). Technology disruption from cyber attacks will restrict the ability to operate Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11) and potentially expose populations to extreme events by disrupting transport, health services, and the ability to pay for adaptation and mitigation of climate related threats from a weakened economy. Conflict (in all forms) will increase refugees and climate change provides the backdrop against which all these interactions will play out.

### solvency

#### Plan text: A just government ought to recognize an unconditional right of teachers to strike.

#### Amendment is normal means

Brudney 20 Brudney, J. J. (2020). The Right to Strike is Recognised as Customary International Law. *Yale Law*, 10–11. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781509933587.ch-011/SJKS

Recognition of the right to strike as fundamental by two key ILO supervisory bodies is reinforced by affirmation of the right within a broad framework of international covenants, transnational conventions and judicial decisions, and national constitutions. The right to strike is recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the United Nations (ICESCR).47 It has been incorporated into the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) by that Covenant’s Human Rights Committee, which supervises the Covenant’s implementation.48 Although these two treaties are more familiar starting points for international human rights analysis than the ILO Conventions, the Article focuses primarily on the Convention 87 applications because of their extensive in-depth nature. In this regard, it is notable that the two U.N. Covenants declare a specific commitment to Convention 87, which is the only other international convention they even mention, and the two treaty bodies regularly apply their relevant articles in terms that are consistent with ILO application of that convention.49

## Fw

#### Death is the worst evil

Paterson 03 – Department of Philosophy, Providence College, Rhode Island. (Craig, “A Life Not Worth Living?”, Studies in Christian Ethics, <http://sce.sagepub.com>)

Contrary to those accounts, I would argue that it is death per se that is really the objective evil for us, not because it deprives us of a prospective future of overall good judged better than the alter- native of non-being. It cannot be about harm to a former person who has ceased to exist, for no person actually suffers from the sub-sequent non-participation. Rather, death in itself is an evil to us because it ontologically destroys the current existent subject — it is the ultimate in metaphysical lightening strikes.80 The evil of death is truly an ontological evil borne by the person who already exists, independently of calculations about better or worse possible lives. Such an evil need not be consciously experienced in order to be an evil for the kind of being a human person is. Death is an evil because of the change in kind it brings about, a change that is destructive of the type of entity that we essentially are. Anything, whether caused naturally or caused by human intervention (intentional or unintentional) that drastically interferes in the process of maintaining the person in existence is an objective evil for the person. What is crucially at stake here, and is dialectically supportive of the self-evidency of the basic good of human life, is that death is a radical interference with the current life process of the kind of being that we are. In consequence, death itself can be credibly thought of as a ‘primitive evil’ for all persons, regardless of the extent to which they are currently or prospectively capable of participating in a full array of the goods of life.81 In conclusion, concerning wille d human actions, it is justifiable to state that any intentional rejection of human life itself cannot therefore be warranted since it is an expression of an ultimate disvalue for the subject, namely, the destruction of the present person; a radical ontological good that we cannot begin to weigh objectively against the travails of life in a rational manner. To deal with the sources of disvalue (pain, suffering, etc.) we should not seek to irrationally destroy the person, the very source and condition of all human possibility.82

#### Extinction is a distinct phenomenon that requires prior consideration

**Burke et al 16** Associate Professor of International and Political Studies @ UNSW, Australia, 2016 (Anthony, Stefanie Fishel is Assistant Professor, Department of Gender and Race Studies at the University of Alabama, Audra Mitchell is CIGI Chair in Global Governance and Ethics at the Balsillie School of International Affairs, Simon Dalby is CIGI Chair in the Political Economy of Climate Change at the Balsillie School of International Affairs, and, Daniel J. Levine is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Alabama, “Planet Politics: Manifesto from the End of IR,” Millennium: Journal of International Studies 1–25)

8. Global ethics must respond to mass extinction. In late 2014, the Worldwide Fund for Nature reported a startling statistic: according to their global study, 52% of species had gone extinct between 1970 and 2010.60 This is not news: for three decades, conservation biologists have been warning of a ‘sixth mass extinction’, which, by definition, could eliminate more than three quarters of currently existing life forms in just a few centuries.61 In other words, it could threaten the practical possibility of the survival of earthly life. Mass extinction is not simply extinction (or death) writ large: **it is a qualitatively different phenomena that demands its own ethical categories.** It cannot be grasped by aggregating species extinctions, let alone the deaths of individual organisms. Not only does it erase diverse, irreplaceable life forms, their **unique histories** and **open-ended possibilities**, but it **threatens the ontological conditions of Earthly life**.

IR is one of few disciplines that is explicitly devoted to the pursuit of survival, yet it has almost nothing to say in the face of a possible mass extinction event.62 It utterly lacks the conceptual and ethical frameworks necessary to foster diverse, meaningful responses to this phenomenon. As mentioned above, Cold-War era concepts such as ‘nuclear winter’ and ‘omnicide’ gesture towards harms massive in their scale and moral horror. However, they are asymptotic: they imagine nightmares of a severely denuded planet, yet they do not contemplate the **comprehensive negation** that a mass extinction event entails. In contemporary IR discourses, where it appears at all, extinction is treated as a problem of scientific management and biopolitical control aimed at securing existing human lifestyles.63 Once again, this approach fails to recognise the reality of extinction, which is a **matter of being and nonbeing**, not one of life and death processes.

Confronting the enormity of a possible mass extinction event requires a total overhaul of human perceptions of what is at stake in the disruption of the conditions of Earthly life. The question of what is ‘lost’ in extinction has, since the inception of the concept of ‘conservation’, been addressed in terms of financial cost and economic liabilities.64 Beyond reducing life to forms to capital, currencies and financial instruments, the dominant neoliberal political economy of conservation imposes a homogenising, Western secular worldview on a planetary phenomenon. Yet the **enormity, complexity, and scale** of mass extinction is so huge that humans need to **draw on every possible resource in order to find ways of responding**. This means that they need to mobilise multiple worldviews and lifeways – including those emerging from indigenous and marginalised cosmologies. Above all, it is crucial and urgent to realise that extinction is a **matter of global ethics**. It is not simply an issue of management or security, or even of particular visions of the good life. Instead, it is about staking a claim as to the goodness of life itself. If it does not fit within the existing parameters of global ethics, then it is these boundaries that need to change.

9. An Earth-worldly politics. Humans are worldly – that is, we are fundamentally worldforming and embedded in multiple worlds that traverse the Earth. However, the Earth is not ‘our’ world, as the grand theories of IR, and some accounts of the Anthropocene have it – an object and possession to be appropriated, circumnavigated, instrumentalised and englobed.65 Rather, it is a complex of worlds that we share, co-constitute, create, destroy and inhabit with countless other life forms and beings.

The formation of the Anthropocene reflects a particular type of worlding, one in which the Earth is treated as raw material for the creation of a world tailored to human needs. Heidegger famously framed ‘earth’ and ‘world’ as two countervailing, conflicting forces that constrain and shape one another. We contend that existing political, economic and social conditions have pushed human worlding so far to one extreme that it has become almost entirely detached from the conditions of the Earth. Planet Politics calls, instead, for a mode of worlding that is responsive to, and grounded in, the Earth. One of these ways of being Earth-worldly is to embrace the condition of being entangled. We can interpret this term in the way that Heidegger66 did, as the condition of being mired in everyday human concerns, worries, and anxiety, to prolong existence. But, in contrast, we can and should reframe it as authors like Karen Barad67 and Donna Haraway68 have done. To them and many others, ‘entanglement’ is a radical, indeed fundamental condition of being-with, or, as Jean-Luc Nancy puts it, ‘being singular plural’.69 This means that no being is truly autonomous or separate, whether at the scale of international politics or of quantum physics. World itself is singular plural: what humans tend to refer to as ‘the’ world is actually a multiplicity of worlds at various scales that intersect, overlap, conflict, emerge as they surge across the Earth. World emerges from the poetics of existence, the collision of energy and matter, the tumult of agencies, the fusion and diffusion of bonds.

Worlds erupt from, and consist in, the intersection of **diverse forms of being** – material and intangible, organic and inorganic, ‘living’ and ‘nonliving’. Because of the tumultuousness of the Earth with which they are entangled, ‘**worlds’ are not static, rigid or permanent. They are permeable and fluid**. They can be **created**, **modified** – and, of course, destroyed. Concepts of violence, harm and (in)security that focus only on humans ignore at their peril the destruction and severance of worlds,70 **which undermines the conditions of plurality that enables life on Earth to thrive.**

## UV

#### Unknowability means antiblackness is not ontological

Gordon 17

(Lewis R Gordon is a Professor of Philosophy and Africana Studies at the University of Connecticut, “Thoughts on Afropessimism”, December 2017, Contemporary Political Theory, pg: 1-9)

--Existentialism is true – being lives in worlds they construct – cannot claim humanity is complete bc it’s always being constructed

--They lack epistemic certainty – not a set series but always up to reinterpretation -

--Conflation of THE antiblack world with AN antiblack world – existence of antiblacknenss not permanent

--Offense – fatalist frame of it being inev tells black people that are fighting to reduce antiblackness that it isnt worth it bc its permanent – if socially dead why keep fighting

--Pessimism is a failure to understand failure – people resist not bc they have certainty it will work but bc they just don’t know, and instead of giving up they keep on fighting

“Afropessimism” came out of “Afro-pessimism.” The elimination of the hyphen is an important development, since it dispels ambiguity and in effect announces a specific mode of thought. Should the hyphen remain, the ambiguity would be between pessimistic people of African descent and theoretical pessimism. The conjoined, theoretical term is what proponents often have in mind in their diagnosis of what I shall call ‘‘the black condition.’’ The appeal to a black condition is peculiarly existential. Existentialists reject notions of human ‘‘nature’’ on the grounds that human beings live in worlds they also construct; they produce their so-called essence. That does not mean, however, human beings lack anchorage. Everyone has to start from somewhere. Existentialists call that somewhere a condition or conditions for these reasons, and the world human beings produce or through which we live is sometimes called ‘‘human reality.’’ Critics of existentialism often reject its human formulation. Heidegger, for instance, in his ‘‘Letter on Humanism,’’ lambasted Sartre for supposedly in effect subordinating Being to a philosophical anthropology with dangers of anthropocentrism (Heidegger, 1971). Yet a philosophical understanding of culture raises the problem of the conditions through which philosophical reflections could emerge as meaningful. Although a human activity, a more radical understanding of culture raises the question of the human being as the producer of an open reality. If the human being is in the making, then ‘‘human reality’’ is never complete and is more the relations in which such thought takes place than a claim about the thought. The etymology of existence already points to these elements. From the Latin ex sistere, ‘‘to stand out,’’ it also means to appear; against invisibility in the stream of effects through which the human world appears, much appears through the creative and at times alchemic force of human thought and deed. Quarrels with and against existential thought are many. In more recent times, they’ve emerged primarily from Marxists, structuralists, and poststructuralists, even though there were, and continue to be, many existential Marxists and even existentialists with structuralist and poststructuralist leanings. I begin with this tale of philosophical abstraction to contextualize Afropessimism. Its main exemplars, such as Jared Sexton and Frank Wilderson III, emerged from academic literary theory, an area dominated by poststructuralism even in many cases that avow ‘‘Marxism.’’ Sexton (2010) and Wilderson (2007) divert from a reductive poststructuralism, however, through examining important existential moves inaugurated, as Daniel McNeil (2011, 2012) observed, by Fanon and his intellectual heirs. The critical question that Afropessimism addresses in this fusion is the viability of posed strategies of Black liberation. (I’m using the capital ‘‘B’’ here to point not only to the racial designation ‘‘black’’ but also to the nationalist one ‘‘Black.’’ Afropessimists often mean both, since blacks and Blacks have a central and centered role in their thought.) The world that produced blacks and in consequence Blacks is, for Afropessimists, a crushing, historical one whose Manichaean divide is sustained contraries best kept segregated. Worse, any effort of mediation leads to confirmed black subordination. Overcoming this requires purging the world of antiblackness. Where cleansing the world is unachievable, an alternative is to disarm the force of antiblack racism. Where whites lack power over blacks, they lose relevance – at least politically and at levels of cultural and racial capital or hegemony. Wilderson (2008), for instance, explores my concept of ‘‘an antiblack world’’ to build similar arguments. Sexton (2011) makes similar moves in his discussions of ‘‘social death.’’ As this forum doesn’t afford space for a long critique, I’ll offer several, non-exhaustive criticisms. The first is that ‘‘an antiblack world’’ is not identical with ‘‘the world is antiblack.’’ My argument is that such a world is an antiblack racist project. It is not the historical achievement. Its limitations emerge from a basic fact: Black people and other opponents of such a project fought, and continue to fight, as we see today in the #BlackLivesMatter movement and many others, against it. The same argument applies to the argument about social death. Such an achievement would have rendered even these reflections stillborn. The basic premises of the Afropessimistic argument are, then, locked in performative contradictions. Yet, they have rhetorical force. This is evident through the continued growth of its proponents and forums (such as this one) devoted to it. In Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism, I argued that there are forms of antiblack racism offered under the guise of love, though I was writing about whites who exoticize blacks while offering themselves as white sources of black value. Analyzed in terms of bad faith, where one lies to oneself in an attempt to flee displeasing truths for pleasing falsehoods, exoticists romanticize blacks while affirming white normativity, and thus themselves, as principals of reality. These ironic, performative contradictions are features of all forms of racism, where one group is elevated to godlike status and another is pushed below that of human despite both claiming to be human. Antiblack racism offers whites self-other relations (necessary for ethics) with each other but not so for groups forced in a ‘‘zone of nonbeing’’ below them. There is asymmetry where whites stand as others who look downward to those who are not their others or their analogues. Antiblack racism is thus not a problem of blacks being ‘‘others.’’ It’s a problem of their not-being-analogical-selves-and-not-even-being-others. Fanon, in Black Skin, White Masks (1952), reminds us that Blacks among each other live in a world of selves and others. It is in attempted relations with whites that these problems occur. Reason in such contexts has a bad habit of walking out when Blacks enter. What are Blacks to do? As reason cannot be forced, because that would be ‘‘violence,’’ they must ironically reason reasonably with forms of unreasonable reason. Contradictions loom. Racism is, given these arguments, a project of imposing non-relations as the model of dealing with people designated ‘‘black.’’ In Les Damne´ de la terre (‘‘Damned of the Earth’’), Fanon goes further and argues that colonialism is an attempt to impose a Manichean structure of contraries instead of a dialectical one of ongoing, human negotiation of contradictions. The former segregates the groups; the latter emerges from interaction. The police, he observes, are the mediator in such a situation, as their role is force/violence instead of the human, discursive one of politics and civility (Fanon, 1991). Such societies draw legitimacy from Black non-existence or invisibility. Black appearance, in other words, would be a violation of those systems. Think of the continued blight of police, extra-judicial killings of Blacks in those countries. An immediate observation of many postcolonies is that antiblack attitudes, practices, and institutions aren’t exclusively white. Black antiblack dispositions make this clear. Black antiblackness entails Black exoticism. Where this exists, Blacks simultaneously receive Black love alongside Black rejection of agency. Many problems follow. The absence of agency bars maturation, which would reinforce the racial logic of Blacks as in effect wards of whites. Without agency, ethics, liberation, maturation, politics, and responsibility could not be possible. Afropessimism faces the problem of a hidden premise of white agency versus Black incapacity. Proponents of Afropessimism would no doubt respond that the theory itself is a form of agency reminiscent of Fanon’s famous remark that though whites created le Ne`gre it was les Ne`gres who created Ne´gritude. Whites clearly did not create Afropessimism, which Black liberationists should celebrate. We should avoid the fallacy, however, of confusing source with outcome. History is not short of bad ideas from good people. If intrinsically good, however, each person of African descent would become ethically and epistemologically a switching of the Manichean contraries, which means only changing players instead of the game. We come, then, to the crux of the matter. If the goal of Afropessimism is Afropessimism, its achievement would be attitudinal and, in the language of old, stoic – in short, a symptom of antiblack society. At this point, there are several observations that follow. The first is a diagnosis of the implications of Afropessimism as symptom. The second examines the epistemological implications of Afropessimism. The third is whether a disposition counts as a political act and, if so, is it sufficient for its avowed aims. There are more, but for the sake of brevity, I’ll simply focus on these. An ironic dimension of pessimism is that it is the other side of optimism. Oddly enough, both are connected to nihilism, which is, as Nietzsche (1968) showed, a decline of values during periods of social decay. It emerges when people no longer want to be responsible for their actions. Optimists expect intervention from beyond. Pessimists declare relief is not forthcoming. Neither takes responsibility for what is valued. The valuing, however, is what leads to the second, epistemic point. The presumption that what is at stake is what can be known to determine what can be done is the problem. If such knowledge were possible, the debate would be about who is reading the evidence correctly. Such judgment would be a priori – that is, prior to events actually unfolding. The future, unlike transcendental conditions such as language, signs, and reality, is, however, ex post facto: It is yet to come. Facing the future, the question isn’t what will be or how do we know what will be but instead the realization that whatever is done will be that on which the future will depend. Rejecting optimism and pessimism, there is a [an] supervening alternative: political commitment. The appeal to political commitment is not only in stream with what French existentialists call l’intellectuel engage´ (committed intellectual) but also reaches back through the history and existential situation of enslaved, racialized ancestors. Many were, in truth, an existential paradox: commitment to action without guarantees. The slave revolts, micro and macro acts of resistance, escapes, and returns help others do the same; the cultivated instability of plantations and other forms of enslavement, and countless other actions, were waged against a gauntlet of forces designed to eliminate any hope of success. The claim of colonialists and enslavers was that the future belonged to them, not to the enslaved and the indigenous. A result of more than 500 years of conquest and 300 years of enslavement was also a (white) rewriting of history in which African and First Nations’ agency was, at least at the level of scholarship, nearly erased. Yet there was resistance even in that realm, as Africana and First Nation intellectual history and scholarship attest. Such actions set the course for different kinds of struggle today. Such reflections occasion meditations on the concept of failure. Afropessimism, the existential critique suggests, suffers from a failure to understand failure. Consider Fanon’s notion of constructive failure, where what doesn’t initially work transforms conditions for something new to emerge. To understand this argument, one must rethink the philosophical anthropology at the heart of a specific line of Euromodern thought on what it means to be human. Atomistic and individual substance-based, this model, articulated by Hobbes, Locke, and many others, is of a non-relational being that thinks, acts, and moves along a course in which continued movement depends on not colliding with others. Under that model, the human being is a thing that enters a system that facilitates or obstructs its movement. An alternative model, shared by many groups across southern Africa, is a relational version of the human being as part of a larger system of meaning. Actions, from that perspective, are not about whether ‘‘I’’ succeed but instead about ‘‘our’’ story across time. As relational, it means that each human being is a constant negotiation of ongoing efforts to build relationships with others, which means no one actually enters a situation without establishing new situations of action and meaning. Instead of entering a game, their participation requires a different kind of project – especially where the ‘‘game’’ was premised on their exclusion. Thus, where the system or game repels initial participation, such repulsion is a shift in the grammar of how the system functions, especially its dependence on obsequious subjects. Shifted energy affords emergence of alternatives. Kinds cannot be known before the actions that birthed them. Abstract as this sounds, it has much historical support. Evelyn Simien (2016), in her insightful political study Historic Firsts, examines the new set of relations established by Shirley Chisholm’s and Jesse Jackson’s presidential campaigns. There could be no Barack Obama without such important predecessors affecting the demographics of voter participation. Simien intentionally focused on the most mainstream example of political life to illustrate this point. Although no exemplar of radicalism, Obama’s ‘‘success’’ emerged from Chisholm and Jackson’s (and many others’) so-called ‘‘failure.’’ Beyond presidential electoral politics, there are numerous examples of how prior, radical so-called ‘‘failures’’ transformed relationships that facilitated other kinds of outcome. The trail goes back to the Haitian Revolution and back to every act of resistance from Nat Turner’s Rebellion in the USA, Sharpe’s in Jamaica, or Tula’s in Curacao and so many other efforts for social transformation to come.