## 1

#### Asteroid mining is starting now. New legal frameworks and massive investments bring it closer than you think-but we need to focus on maintaining progress

Gilbert 21 Alex Gilbert, 4-26-2021, "Mining in Space Is Coming," Milken Institute Review, https://www.milkenreview.org/articles/mining-in-space-is-coming//SJJK

Space exploration is back. after decades of disappointment, a combination of better technology, falling costs and a rush of competitive energy from the private sector has put space travel front and center. indeed, many analysts (even some with their feet on the ground) believe that commercial developments in the space industry may be on the cusp of starting the largest resource rush in history: mining on the Moon, Mars and asteroids. While this may sound fantastical, some baby steps toward the goal have already been taken. Last year, NASA awarded contracts to four companies to extract small amounts of lunar regolith by 2024, effectively beginning the [era of commercial space mining](https://payneinstitute.mines.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/149/2020/09/Payne-Institute-Commentary-The-Era-of-Commercial-Space-Mining-Begins.pdf). Whether this proves to be the dawn of a gigantic adjunct to mining on earth — and more immediately, a key to unlocking cost-effective space travel — will turn on the answers to a host of questions ranging from what resources can be efficiently. As every fan of science fiction knows, the resources of the solar system appear virtually unlimited compared to those on Earth. There are whole other planets, dozens of moons, thousands of massive asteroids and millions of small ones that doubtless contain humungous quantities of materials that are scarce and very valuable (back on Earth). Visionaries including Jeff Bezos [imagine heavy industry moving to space](https://www.fastcompany.com/90347364/jeff-bezos-wants-to-save-earth-by-moving-industry-to-space) and Earth becoming a residential area. However, as entrepreneurs look to harness the riches beyond the atmosphere, access to space resources remains tangled in the realities of economics and governance. Start with the fact that space belongs to no country, complicating traditional methods of resource allocation, property rights and trade. With limited demand for materials in space itself and the need for huge amounts of energy to return materials to Earth, creating a viable industry will turn on major advances in technology, finance and business models. That said, there’s no grass growing under potential pioneers’ feet. Potential economic, scientific and even security benefits underlie an emerging [geopolitical competition](https://nationalinterest.org/feature/geostrategic-importance-outer-space-resources-154746) to pursue space mining. The United States is rapidly emerging as a front-runner, in part due to its ambitious Artemis Program to lead a multinational consortium back to the Moon. But it is also a leader in creating a legal infrastructure for mineral exploitation. The United States has adopted the world’s first spaceresources law, recognizing the property rights of private companies and individuals to materials gathered in space. However, the United States is hardly alone. Luxembourg and the United Arab Emirates (you read those right) are racing to codify space-resources laws of their own, hoping to attract investment to their entrepot nations with business-friendly legal frameworks. China reportedly views space-resource development as a national priority, part of a strategy to challenge U.S. economic and security primacy in space. Meanwhile, Russia, Japan, India and the European Space Agency all harbor space-mining ambitions of their own. Governing these emerging interests is an outdated treaty framework from the Cold War. Sooner rather than later, we’ll need [new agreements](https://issues.org/new-policies-needed-to-advance-space-mining/) to facilitate private investment and ensure international cooperation.

#### Prohibitions on appropriation prevent asteroid mining despite growing space industries

Myers 16 -- Ross Myers (J.D. candidate at the University of Oregon Law School.), The Doctrine of Appropriation and Asteroid Mining: Incentivizing the Private Exploration and Development of Outer Space, 2016, Oregon Review of International Law, https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/19850/Meyers.pdf?sequence=1 WJ

Despite a decrease in national space program funding, corporate space missions are on the rise. In 2010, President Obama proposed that NASA exit the business of flying astronauts from Earth to low Earth orbit and move it to private companies.52 Several companies have stepped up to bat, and corporate space programs now include space tourism, supply missions, and in one case a one-way colonization mission to Mars.53 Corporate interest in space tourism and development demonstrates a strong private commercial interest in space as an industry, which could serve to finance the exploration of space in a period where national governments do not have an active financial interest in space. However, under current international treaties, the ownership of asteroids is prohibited, preventing corporations willing to invest in asteroid mining from having a secure claim.

### 1NC – Impact – Warming

#### Asteroid Mining key to prevent terrestrial mining and solve warming.

MacWhorter 16 [Kevin; J.D. Candidate, William & Mary Law School, "Sustainable Mining: Incentivizing Asteroid Mining in the Name of Environmentalism", William & Mary Environmental Law and Policy Review, Vol 40, Issue 2, Article 11, <https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1653&context=wmelpr>] brett

In the next sixty years, scientists predict that certain elements crucial to modern industry such as platinum, zinc, copper, phosphorous, lead, gold, and indium could be exhausted on Earth. 12 Many of these have no synthetic alternative, unlike chemical elements such as oil or diamonds.13 Liquid-crystal display (LCD) televisions, cellphones, and laptops are among the various consumer technologies that use precious metals.14Further, green technologies including wind turbines, solar panels, and catalytic converters require these rare elements. 15 As demand rises for both types of technologies, and as reserves of rare metals fall, prices skyrocket.16 Demand for nonrenewable resources creates conflict, and consumerism in rich countries results in harsh labor treatment for poorer countries.17 In general, the mining industry is extremely destructive to Earth’s environment.18 In fact, depending on the method employed, mining can destroy entire ecosystems by polluting water sources and contributing to deforestation.19 It is by its nature an unsustainable practice, because it involves the extraction of a finite and non-renewable resource.20 Moreover, by extracting tiny amounts of metals from relatively large quantities of ore, the mining industry contributes the largest portion of solid wastes in the world.21 The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) describes the industry as the source of more toxic and hazardous waste than any other industrial sector [in the United States], costing billions of dollars to address the public health and environmental threats to communities. 22 Poor regulations and oxymoronic corporate definitions of sustainability, however, make it unclear as to just how much waste the industry actually produces.23 Platinum provides an excellent case study of the issue, because it is an extremely rare and expensive metal—an ore expected to exist in vast quantities in asteroids.24 Further, production of platinum has increased sharply in the past sixty years in order to keep up with growing demand for use in new technologies.25 In fact, despite their high costs, platinum group metals are so useful that [one] of [four] industrial goods on Earth require them in production. 26 Scholars do not expect demand to slow any time soon.27 Among other technologies, industries use platinum in products such as catalytic converters, jewelry production, various catalysts for chemical processing, and hydrogen fuel cells.28 While there is no consensus on how far the Earth’s reserves of platinum will take humanity, many scientists agree that platinum ore reserves will deplete in a relatively short amount of time.29 With the rate of mining at an all-time high,30 it is increasingly clear that historical patterns of mineral resources and development cannot simply be assumed to continue unaltered into the future. 31 The platinum mining industry, however, has a strong incentive to increase its rate of extraction as profits grow with the rate of demand. Without any alternative, this destructive practice will continue into the future.32 So-called platinum-group metal (PGM) ores are mined through underground or open cut techniques.33 Due to these practices, all but a very small fraction of the mined platinum ore is disposed of as solid waste.34 The environmental consequences of platinum production are thus quite significant, but like the mining industry in general, the amount of waste is typically under-reported.35 While this is due to high production levels at the moment, those levels will only increase given the estimated future demand of platinum.36 In spite of the negative consequences, mining continues unabated because it is economically important to many areas.37 The future environmental costs provide a major challenge in creating a sustainable system. Relegating at least some mining companies to near-Earth asteroids would reduce the negative effects of future mining levels on Earth. The economic benefits of mining need not be sacrificed for the sake of the environment.38

#### Extinction—contrary models are incorrect.

Specktor 19 [Brandon; 6/4/19; Writes about the science of everyday life for Live Science, and previously for Reader's Digest magazine, where he served as an editor for five years; "Human Civilization Will Crumble by 2050 If We Don't Stop Climate Change Now, New Paper Claims," livescience, <https://www.livescience.com/65633-climate-change-dooms-humans-by-2050.html>] Justin

The current climate crisis, they say, is larger and more complex than any humans have ever dealt with before. General climate models — like the one that the [United Nations' Panel on Climate Change](https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/) (IPCC) used in 2018 to predict that a global temperature increase of 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit (2 degrees Celsius) could put hundreds of millions of people at risk — fail to account for the **sheer complexity of Earth's many interlinked geological processes**; as such, they fail to adequately predict the scale of the potential consequences. The truth, the authors wrote, is probably far worse than any models can fathom. How the world ends What might an accurate worst-case picture of the planet's climate-addled future actually look like, then? The authors provide one particularly grim scenario that begins with world governments "politely ignoring" the advice of scientists and the will of the public to decarbonize the economy (finding alternative energy sources), resulting in a global temperature increase 5.4 F (3 C) by the year 2050. At this point, the world's ice sheets vanish; brutal droughts kill many of the trees in the [Amazon rainforest](https://www.livescience.com/57266-amazon-river.html) (removing one of the world's largest carbon offsets); and the planet plunges into a feedback loop of ever-hotter, ever-deadlier conditions. "Thirty-five percent of the global land area, and **55 percent of the global population, are subject to more than 20 days a year of** [**lethal heat conditions**](https://www.livescience.com/55129-how-heat-waves-kill-so-quickly.html), beyond the threshold of human survivability," the authors hypothesized. Meanwhile, droughts, floods and wildfires regularly ravage the land. Nearly **one-third of the world's land surface turns to desert**. Entire **ecosystems collapse**, beginning with the **planet's coral reefs**, the **rainforest and the Arctic ice sheets.** The world's tropics are hit hardest by these new climate extremes, destroying the region's agriculture and turning more than 1 billion people into refugees. This mass movement of refugees — coupled with [shrinking coastlines](https://www.livescience.com/51990-sea-level-rise-unknowns.html) and severe drops in food and water availability — begin to **stress the fabric of the world's largest nations**, including the United States. Armed conflicts over resources, perhaps culminating in **nuclear war, are likely**. The result, according to the new paper, is "outright chaos" and perhaps "the end of human global civilization as we know it."

### 1NC – Impact – Laundry List v1

#### And asteroid mining solves multiple existential threats-deflects massive asteroids and global warming resource scarcity and energy crisis-but public entities cant do it on their own

Reich 1-6 Aaron Reich, 1-6-2022, "Asteroids can destroy the Earth, asteroid mining can help save it," The Jerusalem Post | JPost, https://www.jpost.com/science/article-691731//SJJK

An asteroid impact has the potential to cause worldwide cataclysms and extinction-level events, but they could be mined as an alternative to heavily polluting mining on Earth. [Asteroids](https://www.jpost.com/tags/asteroid) make up one of the most numerous types of objects in the solar system. Currently, 1,113,527 asteroids are known to exist in the solar system, according to NASA, but those are just the ones definitively identified, with experts always finding more. These large space rocks vary in size, some less than a meter wide, others stretching several kilometers. Some of these just orbit around the sun, never approaching anything else. Others skirt dangerously close to planets, including several close brushes with our own planet – and on a few occasions, actually hitting us, causing an impact event. These impacts are incredibly destructive and have the potential to be the cause of major catastrophes, destroying cities, continents or even a global disaster. The destructive nature of asteroids, even small ones, is something well known to experts, with space agencies around the world monitoring for potential catastrophic impacts, as well as researching potential means of identifying them and stopping them. It is something that has also long permeated the realm of popular culture, whether it be from now classic films like Armageddon or the very recent Don’t Look Up. BUT ASTEROIDS are not necessarily just the harbingers of destruction we have long considered them. Rather, they may just be able to help save the Earth. Asteroids are, essentially, rocky remnants of the formation of the solar system. Sometimes called minor planets, these rocks are made of various materials and minerals from those early days. Billions of years ago, many of these asteroids are thought to have collided together to eventually form planets, and the minerals and materials support this. So what kinds of minerals could we find on asteroids? According to the Weizmann Institute of Science’s Dr. David Polishook, who is also a member of [NASA’s Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) Mission](https://www.jpost.com/science/nasas-iron-dome-dart-takes-off-to-test-asteroid-deflection-686826) which seeks to test asteroid deflection in order to avert an impact, there are three categories we need to care about. First, he told the Magazine, there are strong metals, such as iron and nickel. These are relatively common on Earth and can be used in a variety of applications. Second, there are the rarer metals such as platinum and iridium. These minerals are very rare and extremely expensive. As such, there is definitely a profit to be made by bringing these to Earth. The third isn’t a mineral exactly but is still something extremely important: water. “Yes, the same H2O we all drink,” Polishook clarified. This itself isn’t unsurprising. Scientists have long known water and ice to be present on various asteroids throughout the solar system. In fact, it is commonly theorized that asteroid impacts are what ended up bringing water to Earth in the first place. The scientific community is well aware of the potential value of this field, as while the collective mass of asteroids may not seem like much compared to a planet – indeed, according to NASA, the combined mass of all asteroids in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter is actually less than the Earth’s Moon – they are still filled with valuable materials in extremely high quantities. Indeed, there is even a large resurgence in asteroid exploration in recent years. Several recent missions have already been launched to bring back samples of asteroids. These include the Hayabusa and Hayabusa2 missions from the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and NASA’s ongoing Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security-Regolith Explorer (OSIRIS-REx) mission. Hayabusa managed to bring back a sample from 25143 Itokawa, Hayabusa2 brought back a sample from [162173 Ryugu](https://www.jpost.com/science/article-689341) and OSIRIS-REx is currently bringing back a sample from [101955 Bennu](https://www.jpost.com/health-science/will-500-meter-asteroid-bennu-hit-earth-in-next-century-nasa-investigates-676537). Interest hasn’t waned either. In October, NASA launched its latest probe, known as [Lucy](https://www.jpost.com/science/nasa-to-launch-first-space-probe-to-study-jupiters-trojan-asteroids-682158), to study Trojan asteroids near Jupiter in a first-of-its-kind mission. Later, NASA plans to send a probe to [16 Psyche](https://www.jpost.com/health-science/what-is-a-10000-quadrillion-asteroid-the-size-of-cyprus-really-made-of-676243), a massive asteroid 227 kilometers in diameter – longer than the maximum length of Cyprus – rich in iron and nickel that was once believed to be worth around $10 quintillion, which is more valuable than the entire global economy, though this exact value is still up for debate. Even the United Arab Emirates, coming off the success of its recent Mars mission, is planning to [land a spacecraft on an asteroid](https://www.jpost.com/science/uae-to-launch-mission-to-explore-venus-land-on-asteroid-681622). Ostensibly, these missions are less about mining and more about scientific curiosity, as asteroids hold keys to understanding the formation of the solar system and, by extension, our very planet. However, that is not to say asteroid mining has not generated interest elsewhere. In fact, there are already laws on the books about it. Asteroid mining is specifically mentioned in the United Nations-mediated Outer Space Treaty, signed by over 100 countries worldwide, and some countries like Luxembourg have already legislated local laws about it. Economically, there are other benefits to this as well. “Mining materials rare on Earth could make the miner rich,” Polishook explained, comparing it to the boom of the 19th-century California gold rush. Yes, launching mining missions to asteroids is expensive, but the returns could be worth it. Especially since asteroids have materials there that astronauts could use. This includes water, which can be used for drinking, creating oxygen for astronauts to breathe, or creating hydrogen for spacecraft to use as fuel. It could also be possible to mine a certain type of helium isotope known as helium 3. A thin layer of this light material that originates from the Sun can be found on the surface of any atmosphere-less body, including asteroids, and it could be possible to turn this into energy through nuclear fission. In other words, economically, the cost of these missions could be negligible. There is also great interest in identifying asteroids that would be prime targets for these missions, with many prioritizing large and close-by asteroids. One website, the asteroid value database [Asterank](https://www.asterank.com/), has even begun estimating the value of various asteroids as well as the estimated profit of these missions. Right now, according to Asterank, a number of asteroids are valued over $100 trillion, but in terms of cost-effectiveness, the most profitable is Ryugu, with an estimated value of $82.76 billion and an estimated profit of $30.08b. Another ideal target, though much more difficult, is Ceres, the largest asteroid in the asteroid belt, with a diameter of around 980 kilometers – in fact, it is so large that, according to some scientists, it should actually be considered a planet in its own right – which is rich in ice water. This could serve as an ideal hub of sorts for these mining missions. HOWEVER, THERE are obstacles in the way of asteroid mining succeeding. According to Polishook, there are three major obstacles in the way. “First, identifying the composition of an asteroid using a telescope and determining if it is rich with water, iron or platinum is still not straightforward. This is especially true for platinum, which was only recognized in meteorites that reached the Earth. It is only reasonable you can find these in asteroids, since meteors come from asteroids, but platinum was never seen in them before. “A close look at an asteroid using a spacecraft can identify these materials, but one can’t send thousands of probes to thousands of asteroids to look for platinum while keeping their budget balanced,” he explained. “Second, reaching the relevant asteroid is also a challenge, though it has been done before. To do this commercially, you will have to invest much more in R&D for your vehicles and equipment. “Third, digging in an asteroid or dismantling it or vaporizing it and carefully collecting the ore you need, whether platinum or even water, is not an easy task when you need to work in zero-gravity,” he added. “While it is a lot of material to sift, these bodies are not large enough to have a strong gravity of their own. Thus, you cannot land on them or stand on them and mine. The miners, whether humans or robots, will have to hook themselves in some way to the surface in order to work while the asteroid rotates at a few hours per circle.” And it isn’t as though NASA hasn’t tried to do this before. “Some years ago, NASA developed a tool to capture an asteroid, but with these many hard-to-solve technological issues, this tool became relevant to only lift a 2-meter-wide rock from an asteroid surface, and eventually this program was canceled. So, objectively, this issue is hard to solve,” Polishook said. Even the promise of helium 3 isn’t enough, because while it is theoretically possible to turn it into energy through nuclear fission, scientists currently have no way or even an idea of how to actually do this, putting it firmly in the realm of science fiction at the moment. Despite their further planned asteroid missions, Polishook doesn’t think NASA or other national space agencies will get into mining operations in the near future – they have enough on their plate as it is, he said. Most likely, asteroid mining would fall into the realm of the private sector. However, people have already tried and have paid the price.

## 2

#### Strong commercial space catalyzes tech innovation – progress at the margins and spinoff tech change global information networks

Joshua Hampson 2017, Security Studies Fellow at the Niskanen Center, 1-25-2017, “The Future of Space Commercialization”, Niskanen Center, https://republicans-science.house.gov/sites/republicans.science.house.gov/files/documents/TheFutureofSpaceCommercializationFinal.pdf

Innovation is generally hard to predict; some new technologies seem to come out of nowhere and others only take off when paired with a new application. It is difficult to predict the future, but it is reasonable to expect that a growing space economy would open opportunities for technological and organizational innovation. In terms of technology, the difficult environment of outer space helps incentivize progress along the margins. Because each object launched into orbit costs a significant amount of money—at the moment between $27,000 and $43,000 per pound, though that will likely drop in the future —each 19 reduction in payload size saves money or means more can be launched. At the same time, the ability to fit more capability into a smaller satellite opens outer space to actors that previously were priced out of the market. This is one of the reasons why small, affordable satellites are increasingly pursued by companies or organizations that cannot afford to launch larger traditional satellites. These small 20 satellites also provide non-traditional launchers, such as engineering students or prototypers, the opportunity to learn about satellite production and test new technologies before working on a full-sized satellite. That expansion of developers, experimenters, and testers cannot but help increase innovation opportunities. Technological developments from outer space have been applied to terrestrial life since the earliest days of space exploration. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) maintains a website that lists technologies that have spun off from such research projects. Lightweight 21 nanotubes, useful in protecting astronauts during space exploration, are now being tested for applications in emergency response gear and electrical insulation. The need for certainty about the resiliency of materials used in space led to the development of an analytics tool useful across a range of industries. Temper foam, the material used in memory-foam pillows, was developed for NASA for seat covers. As more companies pursue their own space goals, more innovations will likely come from the commercial sector. Outer space is not just a catalyst for technological development. Satellite constellations and their unique line-of-sight vantage point can provide new perspectives to old industries. Deploying satellites into low-Earth orbit, as Facebook wants to do, can connect large, previously-unreached swathes of 22 humanity to the Internet. Remote sensing technology could change how whole industries operate, such as crop monitoring, herd management, crisis response, and land evaluation, among others. 23 While satellites cannot provide all essential information for some of these industries, they can fill in some useful gaps and work as part of a wider system of tools. Space infrastructure, in helping to change how people connect and perceive Earth, could help spark innovations on the ground as well. These innovations, changes to global networks, and new opportunities could lead to wider economic growth.

#### Short innovation cycles mean every contract counts

John J. Klein 19, Senior Fellow and Strategist at Falcon Research Inc. and adjunct professor at the George Washington University Space Policy Institute, 1-15-2019, "Rethinking Requirements and Risk in the New Space Age," Center for a New American Security, https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/rethinking-requirements-and-risk-in-the-new-space-age

Unfortunately, these variances in models between the MDAP’s lengthy development cycle and the commercial space sector’s 18-month innovation cycle are a result of stark differences in thinking about requirements and risk. Requirements and risk for MDAPs commonly focus on ensuring critical mission capabilities at a given cost. In contrast, the commercial space sector tends to focus more on providing innovation quickly using economies of scale. The commercial sector understands that time dynamically shapes decisions related to requirements and risk because of the relatively short innovation cycle. In a highly competitive space sector with tight profit margins, those unable to innovate quickly will likely be out of business soon. Alternatively, space systems with mission assurance requirements – where failures are detrimental to national security and military operations – often drive DoD’s timelines. Program managers of critical national security space systems commonly require additional time to test and verify that satellites can perform missions with a very low probability of failure.

#### Tech innovation solves every existential threat – cumulative extinction events outweigh the aff

Dylan **Matthews 18**. Co-founder of Vox, citing Nick Beckstead @ Rutgers University. 10-26-2018. "How to help people millions of years from now." Vox. https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2018/10/26/18023366/far-future-effective-altruism-existential-risk-doing-good

If you care about improving human lives, you should overwhelmingly care about those quadrillions of lives rather than the comparatively small number of people alive today. The 7.6 billion people now living, after all, amount to less than 0.003 percent of the population that will live in the future. It’s reasonable to suggest that those quadrillions of future people have, accordingly, hundreds of thousands of times more moral weight than those of us living here today do. That’s the basic argument behind Nick Beckstead’s 2013 Rutgers philosophy dissertation, “On the overwhelming importance of shaping the far future.” It’s a glorious mindfuck of a thesis, not least because Beckstead shows very convincingly that this is a conclusion any plausible moral view would reach. It’s not just something that weird utilitarians have to deal with. And Beckstead, to his considerable credit, walks the walk on this. He works at the Open Philanthropy Project on grants relating to the far future and runs a charitable fund for donors who want to prioritize the far future. And arguments from him and others have turned “long-termism” into a very vibrant, important strand of the effective altruism community. But what does prioritizing the far future even mean? The most literal thing it could mean is preventing human extinction, to ensure that the species persists as long as possible. For the long-term-focused effective altruists I know, that typically means identifying concrete threats to humanity’s continued existence — like unfriendly artificial intelligence, or a pandemic, or global warming/out of control geoengineering — and engaging in activities to prevent that specific eventuality. But in a set of slides he made in 2013, Beckstead makes a compelling case that while that’s certainly part of what caring about the far future entails, approaches that address specific threats to humanity (which he calls “targeted” approaches to the far future) have to complement “broad” approaches, where instead of trying to predict what’s going to kill us all, you just generally try to keep civilization running as best it can, so that it is, as a whole, well-equipped to deal with potential extinction events in the future, not just in 2030 or 2040 but in 3500 or 95000 or even 37 million. In other words, caring about the far future doesn’t mean just paying attention to low-probability risks of total annihilation; it also means acting on pressing needs now. For example: We’re going to be better prepared to prevent extinction from AI or a supervirus or global warming if society as a whole makes a lot of scientific progress. And a significant bottleneck there is that the vast majority of humanity doesn’t get high-enough-quality education to engage in scientific research, if they want to, which reduces the odds that we have enough trained scientists to come up with the breakthroughs we need as a civilization to survive and thrive. So maybe one of the best things we can do for the far future is to improve school systems — here and now — to harness the group economist Raj Chetty calls “lost Einsteins” (potential innovators who are thwarted by poverty and inequality in rich countries) and, more importantly, the hundreds of millions of kids in developing countries dealing with even worse education systems than those in depressed communities in the rich world. What if living ethically for the far future means living ethically now? Beckstead mentions some other broad, or very broad, ideas (these are all his descriptions): Help make computers faster so that people everywhere can work more efficiently Change intellectual property law so that technological innovation can happen more quickly Advocate for open borders so that people from poorly governed countries can move to better-governed countries and be more productive Meta-research: improve incentives and norms in academic work to better advance human knowledge Improve education Advocate for political party X to make future people have values more like political party X ”If you look at these areas (economic growth and technological progress, access to information, individual capability, social coordination, motives) a lot of everyday good works contribute,” Beckstead writes. “An implication of this is that a lot of everyday good works are good from a broad perspective, even though hardly anyone thinks explicitly in terms of far future standards.” Look at those examples again: It’s just a list of what normal altruistically motivated people, not effective altruism folks, generally do. Charities in the US love talking about the lost opportunities for innovation that poverty creates. Lots of smart people who want to make a difference become scientists, or try to work as teachers or on improving education policy, and lord knows there are plenty of people who become political party operatives out of a conviction that the moral consequences of the party’s platform are good. All of which is to say: Maybe effective altruists aren’t that special, or at least maybe we don’t have access to that many specific and weird conclusions about how best to help the world. If the far future is what matters, and generally trying to make the world work better is among the best ways to help the far future, then effective altruism just becomes plain ol’ do-goodery.\*

## Case