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### Advantage – Democracy

#### Global democracy is collapsing now.

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

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

#### The plan solves:

#### 1] Civic engagement – strikes increase democratic participation which reinvigorates democracy.

McElwee 15 [Sean; Research Associate at Demos; “How Unions Boost Democratic Participation,” The American Prospect; 9/16/15; https://prospect.org/labor/unions-boost-democratic-participation/] Justin

Labor organizer Helen Marot once observed, "The labor unions are group efforts in the direction of democracy." What she meant is that more than simply vehicles for the economic interests of workers (which they certainly are), labor unions also foster civic participation for workers. And nowhere is this clearer than in voter turnout, which has suffered in recent years along with union membership. Indeed, new data from the Census Bureau and a new analysis of American National Election Studies data support the case that unions' declining influence has also deeply harmed democracy.

In 2014, voter turnout was abysmal, even for a midterm. Census data suggest that only 41.9 percent of the citizen population over 18 turned out to vote. However, as I note in my new Demos report Why Voting Matters, there are dispiriting gaps in turnout across class, race, and age. To examine how unions might affect policy, I performed a new analysis of both Census Bureau and American National Election Studies data. The data below, from the 2014 election, show the differences in voter turnout between union and non-union workers (the sample only includes individuals who were employed, and does not include self-employed workers). While only 39 percent of non-union workers voted in 2014, fully 52 percent of union workers did.

As part of ongoing research, James Feigenbaum, an economics PhD candidate at Harvard, ran a regression using American National Election Studies data suggesting that union members are about 4 percentage points more likely to vote and 3 points more likely to register (after controlling for demographic factors) and individuals living in a union household are 2.5 points more likely to vote and register. This is largely in line with the earlier estimates of Richard Freeman.

These numbers may appear modest, but in a close national election they could be enough to change the result.

Other research has found an even stronger turnout effect from unions. Daniel Stegmueller and Michael Becher find that after applying numerous demographic controls, union members are 10 points more likely to vote.

What's particularly important is that unions boost turnout among low- and middle-income individuals. In a 2006 study, political scientists Jan Leighley and Jonathan Nagler found that, "the decline in union membership since 1964 has affected the aggregate turnout of both low and middle-income individuals more than the aggregate turnout of high-income individuals." In 2014, the gap between unions and non-union workers shrunk at the highest rung of the income ladder. There was a 15-point gap among those earning less than $25,000 (40 percent turnout for union workers, and 25 percent turnout for non-union workers). Among those earning more than $100,000, the gap was far smaller (49 percent for non-union workers and 52 percent for union workers).

Individuals living in union households are also more progressive than those in non-union households. I examined 2012 ANES data and find that union households aren't largely different from non-union households on many issues regarding government spending, but they are more likely to have voted for Obama, identify as Democratic, and support a robust role for the government in reducing income inequality. When looking at union members specifically, the gaps become slightly larger.

More upscale union members are far more progressive than their non-union counterparts. Non-union households with an income above $60,000 oppose government intervention to reduce inequality by 11 points, with 32.2 percent in favor and 43.4 percent against. But richer union households support government intervention, with 42.5 percent in favor and 29.9 percent opposed. As Richard B. Freeman has pointed out, "union members are more likely to vote for a Democrat for the House or Presidency than demographically comparable nonunion voters." He similarly finds that "unionism moves members to the left of where they would be given their socioeconomic status," in line with the data I examined from 2012.

A 2013 study by Jasmine Kerrissey and Evan Schofer finds that union members are not only more likely to vote, but also more likely to belong to other associations, and to protest. They also find that these effects are strongest among people with lower levels of education, suggesting that unions may help mobilize the least politically active groups. A recent study of European countries finds union members vote more and identifies those aspects of union membership that contribute to the higher turnout.

The strongest factor is that workers who engage in democratic organizations in the workplace (via collective bargaining) are more likely to engage in democracy more broadly by, for instance, voting.

Other studies support the idea that civic participation creates a feedback loop that leads to higher voting rates. Another factor is that union members make more money, and higher income is correlated with voting behavior. Finally, union members are encouraged by peers and the union to engage in politics, which also contributes to higher levels of turnout.

It's not entirely surprising that politicians who savage unions often share a similar contempt for the right to vote. Democracy in the workplace leads to democracy more broadly throughout society. Workers with more democratic workplaces are more likely to democratically engage in in society. Further, when unions and progressives demonstrate that government can benefit them, Americans are more likely to want to participate in decision-making. For all these reasons, unions play a unique and indispensable role in the progressive project. As Larry Summers, certainly not a leftist, recently argued, "the weakness of unions leaves a broad swath of the middle class largely unrepresented in the political process."

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

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

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

#### Democratic backsliding causes extinction.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Advantage – India

#### New covid strains are rampant in India, spills internationally

**Vaidyanathan 5-11** Gayathri Vaidyanathan, 5-11-2021, "Coronavirus variants are spreading in India — what scientists know so far," No Publication, <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01274-7> SJ//DA

Scientists are working to understand **several coronavirus variants now circulating in India**, where a ferocious second wave of COVID-19 has devastated the nation and caught authorities unawares. **The country recorded nearly 400,000 new infections on 9 May, taking its total to more than 22 million (see ‘Surging cases of COVID-19’).** Evidence is growing that **one variant first detected in India might be more transmissible and slightly better at evading immunity than existing variants**. Animal models also hint that it might be able to cause more severe disease. Researchers want to know if this variant and others might be driving the second wave and what kind of danger they pose globally. In just a few weeks, the **B.1.617 variant has become the dominant strain across India and has spread to about 40 nations, including the United Kingdom, Fiji and Singapore.** A growing problem Two weeks ago, it looked as if multiple variants were behind a series of surges in India. Genomic data indicated that B.1.1.7, first identified in the United Kingdom, was dominant in Delhi and the state of Punjab, and a new variant dubbed B.1.618 was present in West Bengal. B.1.617 was dominant in Maharashtra. But since then, B.1.617 has overtaken B.1.618 in West Bengal, has become the leading variant in many states, and is increasing rapidly in Delhi. “In some states, the surge can be tied to 617,” Sujeet Singh, director of the National Centre for Disease Control, based in New Delhi, told journalists on 5 May. Some say this could indicate that the variant is highly transmissible. “Its prevalence has increased over other variants in much of India, suggesting that it has better ‘fitness’ over those variants,” says Shahid Jameel, a virologist at Ashoka University in Sonipat who chairs the scientific advisory group of the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genome Sequencing Consortia (INSACOG). Ravindra Gupta, a virologist at the University of Cambridge, UK, agrees that it is “highly likely to be more transmissible”. On Monday, the World Health Organization **(WHO) designated B.1.617 a ‘variant of concern’. Variants are classified in this way when there is evidence that they spread more rapidly, cause more severe disease or evade previously acquired immunity better than do circulating versions of the virus.** On 7 May, the UK government declared the B.1.617.2 subtype a variant of concern in the United Kingdom. It revealed that recorded B.1.617.2 infections in the country had risen from 202 to 520 in a single week. Several other variants of concern have had a significant impact globally. These include B.1.351, which was identified in South Africa in late 2020; studies suggesting that the University of Oxford–AstraZeneca jab is less effective against that variant led to the nation suspending its roll-out. Similarly, the P.1 variant, which is able to evade some immunity, contributed to a major second wave in Brazil early this year. And the highly transmissible B.1.1.7 strain emerged in the United Kingdom in late 2020 and led to a surge of cases there and elsewhere.

#### Working conditions in India are horrible, ensures disease spread

**Raju 3-24**  Raju, Emmanuel, et al. “COVID-19 in India: Who Are We Leaving behind?” Progress in Disaster Science, Elsevier, 24 Mar. 2021, [www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590061721000235#bb0315](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590061721000235#bb0315). SJ//DA

The **COVID-19 response guidelines advocated** by different governments and international organisations include ‘working from home’. What defines the ‘ability’ to work from home is, however, unclear. **Working from home requires a safe and sustained income. This is something most slum dwellers in India do not possess.** People in informal settlements depend on day labour and casual work. Moreover, their work is often carried out hands-on and in person which make it difficult for them to continue working while following physical distancing regulations. Similar to the informality of the settlements, people's employment and economy are founded within the informal labour sector. Research suggests that physical distancing lowers the spread of COVID-19 but not everyone can afford the luxury of working from home or not at all [22,74]. Restricting people's movements often result in constraining their economic opportunities. These restrictions will have severe health and wellbeing impacts on already poor and vulnerable populations (such as those working in the informal sectors without secure employments). Many **fragile populations, including slum dwellers, cannot make economic sacrifices as they would leave them starving. For the poor, tending to livelihood activities, ensuring an income, and food security, represent more of a concern than the possibility of contracting COVID-19.** Gender disparities coupled with mental health consequences are increasing with the pandemic as women are having to bear more unpaid work [15]. This adds pressure upon the already fragile social and financial state of these urban spaces. It also ties into issues of food insecurity. People are having to choose between facing an increased COVID-19 infection risk and starvation. Moreover, governmental support services, such as money and food, provided by the Indian government have been slow and insufficient. The deliveries made through the Public Distribution System (PDS) to these informal settlements in the cities resulted in large queues and congested lanes. This can increase the infection spread. Adding to the concern, the India Meteorological Department estimated that the summer of 2020 was warmer than usual in many parts of India [54]. Most informal settlements have erratic or starved electricity connections. It is therefore difficult to anticipate that people will stay indoors without sufficient airflow or inadequate ventilation that exposes them to heat risks. It becomes imperative to take cognisance of and address the stark reality of urban inequality and future hazards while addressing the current pandemic [56].3. The plight of migrant workers The lockdown in India might have contained COVID-19 (for now), but it also created another sort of humanitarian crisis through the millions stagnated inter-state migrant workers. **The majority of Indian migrant workers live in informal settlements. Seasonal and temporary migrants often move to settlements built around industrial sectors such as garment factories or construction sites. These temporary living arrangements are sometimes shared with relatives and social networks, other times accommodation is provided by the employer.** **Recent research studies carried out in Mumbai indicate that these “units have an average of seven to eight workers who live and work in cramped spaces with no fire exits and surrounded by hazardous chemicals and machines”** [50]. **A large part of these urban seasonal and temporary migrant populations are socially vulnerable** people fleeing poverty – in search for a better life. Caste plays an important role in India's social stratification. Social marginalisation and exclusion of ‘lower’ castes therefore often prevent people's development and progress. For example, people of ‘lower-castes’ are restricted access to resources and institutions which turn into a vicious inescapable circle of poverty [17,63]. Adding to this, people on the move tend to lack access to affordable and stable healthcare services, and often live in unsafe conditions that increases their vulnerability to health risks [9,29]. Similarly to the characteristics of slum settings, these living and **working conditions can be catastrophic for the spread of infectious diseases [63].** Millions of people lost their only source of income as the COVID-19 lockdown closed down many industries and street operations across India. The lockdown also introduced new travel, transport and physical distancing regulations. These new rules did not only prevent people from working but they also left migrants stranded in their current locations. The Public Distribution System in urban areas also proved to be low (about 50%) leaving many urban poor without food sources [62]. There is an urgent need to “expand the list of eligible households” during the pandemic [62]. **Over 80% of people in India are employed within the informal sector [33]. Most of these jobs include temporary and seasonal work** such as construction work, food- and street vendors, and rickshaw pullers. A majority of casual workers in urban areas are men tending to seasonal or temporary migration for work [8, 55, 84]. Adding to this, few research investigations explore the impacts upon women who were left-behind while becoming temporary (single) household-heads in the rural areas. Remittances play an important role in their survival and daily life. **The COVID-19 crisis and lockdown will therefore have impacted the entire migrant household through their reduced or lacking incomes**. It is likely that food insecurity and financial hardship extended from the stranded migrants to their female-headed households [21]. This could also have an impact on the incidence of debt. It differs across states, however, data from an Action Aid study with informal workers indicates increasing incidence of debt during the lockdowns in some states [2].

#### Continuing India’s COVID crisis dooms the global economy

**Conversation 4-30** Conversation, 4-30-2021, "4 Reasons Why India's COVID Crisis Will Derail the World Economy," US News & World Report, <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2021-04-30/4-reasons-why-indias-covid-crisis-will-derail-the-world-economy?fbclid=IwAR1k9KuwWnm_ev35vFjC8vchQIO0gJTCWMV9BcCFA1JEpkkc3oyiydqYvi8> SJ//DA

**The second wave of the pandemic has struck India with a devastating impact**. With over 300,000 new cases and 3,000 deaths across the country each day at present, the total number of deaths has just passed the 200,000 mark – that's about one in 16 of all COVID deaths across the world. It is also evident that the India statistics are significant underestimates. The virulence of the second wave in India seems to be related to a confluence of factors: government complacency, driven by poor data collection and being in denial about the reality of the data; a new variant with a hockey-stick shaped growth curve; and some very large and unregulated religious and political events. **It is clear that there is now a humanitarian crisis of significant proportions.** India is a country of 1.4 billion people and makes up a sixth of the world's population**. Here are some ways in which it is also going to affect the world economy: 1. A lost year** for India? **India is itself the fifth largest economy in the world and contributes significantly to world economic growth. With relatively high growth rates (of between 4% and 8%) and its large size, it has a significant impact on the world economy.** Even in early 2020, before the pandemic took hold, the IMF had cited India's indifferent output as the main reason for sluggish world growth figures in 2018 and 2019. The IMF downgraded its 2020 forecast to 5.8% partly because it expected more of the same from the subcontinent. Now it looks as if world growth for 2020 was down by around 4%, with India down 10%. **Everyone has been expecting a great rebound in 2021 from both India and the world, but that now looks seriously doubtful.** For instance, Sonal Varma, **India chief economist at the investment group Nomura, predicts that India's GDP will shrink around 1.5% in the current quarter.** Coupled with significant pandemic-related problems also in Brazil and South Africa, we might expect the **impact on world growth to be considerable** – even before taking any knock-on effects into account. **2. International restrictions** In terms of knock-on effects, the scale of the crisis in India is likely to mean that international restrictions remain in place for longer than hoped. In the words of Soumya Swaminathan, the chief scientist of the World Health Organization (WHO): "The virus doesn't respect borders, or nationalities, or age, or sex or religion." As others have asked rhetorically, can a country of this size be isolated? On a recent flight from New Delhi to Hong Kong, for instance, 52 passengers tested positive for COVID. We also know that the Indian variant is already in the UK (while some of India's second wave, notably in the Punjab, has been caused by the UK variant). **Preventing this spread from India requires strict quarantines and travel restrictions. This is bad news for airlines, airports and the businesses that depend on them, so this too will have a large dampening effect on global economic growth. 3. Pharma problems The pharmaceutical industry in India is the third largest in the world in terms of volume and 11th largest in terms of value. It contributes 3.5% of the total drugs and medicines exported globally and about 20% of the global exports of generic drugs. If these exports are in doubt, there will be all sorts of consequences for healthcare around the world, which will again feed through to global growth. Above all, in the current situation, India produces 70% of the world's vaccines**. Serum Institute of India (SII) has been given the rights to produce the AstraZeneca vaccine for 64 low-income countries in the WHO's Covax progamme, as well as 5 million doses destined for the UK. The crisis in India has already meant that these exports of the vaccine have been postponed or called off, leaving many countries vulnerable to fresh waves of the virus and probably delaying their efforts to return to business as usual. If India is unable to provide vaccine supplies to the rest of the world, we can expect spillover effects in the form of recurrent lockdowns, increased need for social-distancing measures, and a significant decrease in economic activity. **4. Services not rendered India provides back-office staff for many activities in western Europe and the US, especially in the health and financial sectors. With these services now in jeopardy, the US Chamber of Commerce, for one, is concerned that the Indian economy could create "a drag for the global economy".** For the UK, too, trade links with India are especially important in the aftermath of Brexit. This is demonstrated by Prime Minister Boris Johnson's two attempts to visit in 2021 - both cancelled at the last minute because of the pandemic. Given all these issues, and the humanitarian crisis unfolding, **it has become imperative** for the world to act quickly **to help India** – whether such help is requested or not. We are seeing signs of this coming through, albeit after a short delay, from the UK (oxygen concentrators, ventilators); the US (vaccine raw materials, drugs, rapid tests and ventilators); and Germany (oxygen and medical aid).

#### Economic downturn leads to war.

**Liu 18** [Qian. Qian Liu is a Managing Director, Greater China, the Economist Group. “The next economic crisis could cause a global conflict. Here's why”. 11-13-2018. World Economic Forum. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/11/the-next-economic-crisis-could-cause-a-global-conflict-heres-why.] SJ//VM

*The response to the 2008 economic crisis has relied far too much on monetary stimulus, in the form of quantitative easing and near-zero (or even negative) interest rates, and included far too little structural reform. This means that the next crisis could come soon – and pave the way for a large-scale military conflict.* The next economic crisis is closer than you think. But what you should really worry about is what comes after: in the current social, political, and technological landscape, a prolonged economic crisis, combined with rising income inequality, could well escalate into a major global military conflict. The 2008-09 global financial crisis almost bankrupted governments and caused systemic collapse. Policymakers managed to pull the global economy back from the brink, using massive monetary stimulus, including quantitative easing and near-zero (or even negative) interest rates. Image: UN But monetary stimulus is like an adrenaline shot to jump-start an arrested heart; it can revive the patient, but it does nothing to cure the disease. Treating a sick economy requires structural reforms, which can cover everything from financial and labor markets to tax systems, fertility patterns, and education policies. Policymakers have utterly failed to pursue such reforms, despite promising to do so. Instead, they have remained preoccupied with politics. From Italy to Germany, forming and sustaining governments now seems to take more time than actual governing. And Greece, for example, has relied on money from international creditors to keep its head (barely) above water, rather than genuinely reforming its pension system or improving its business environment. The lack of structural reform has meant that the unprecedented excess liquidity that central banks injected into their economies was not allocated to its most efficient uses. Instead, it raised global asset prices to levels even higher than those prevailing before 2008. In the United States, housing prices are now 8% [higher](https://www.zillow.com/home-values/) than they were at the peak of the property bubble in 2006, according to the property website Zillow. The price-to-earnings (CAPE) ratio, which measures whether stock-market prices are within a reasonable range, is now [higher](http://www.multpl.com/shiller-pe/) than it was both in 2008 and at the start of the Great Depression in 1929. As monetary tightening reveals the vulnerabilities in the real economy, the collapse of asset-price bubbles will trigger another economic crisis – one that could be even more severe than the last, because we have built up a tolerance to our strongest macroeconomic medications. A decade of regular adrenaline shots, in the form of ultra-low interest rates and unconventional monetary policies, has severely depleted their power to stabilize and stimulate the economy. If history is any guide, the consequences of this mistake could extend far beyond the economy. According to Harvard’s Benjamin Friedman, [prolonged periods](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/bfriedman/files/the_moral_consequences_of_economic_growth_0.pdf) of economic distress have been characterized also by public antipathy toward minority groups or foreign countries – attitudes that can help to fuel unrest, terrorism, or even war. For example, during the Great Depression, US President Herbert Hoover signed the 1930 Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, intended to protect American workers and farmers from foreign competition. In the subsequent five years, global trade shrank by two-thirds. Within a decade, World War II had begun. To be sure, WWII, like World War I, was caused by a multitude of factors; there is no standard path to war. But there is reason to believe that high levels of inequality can play a significant role in stoking conflict. According to [research](http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674430006) by the economist Thomas Piketty, a spike in income inequality is often followed by a great crisis. Income inequality then declines for a while, before rising again, until a new peak – and a new disaster. Though causality has yet to be proven, given the limited number of data points, this correlation should not be taken lightly, especially with wealth and income inequality at historically high levels. **Have you read?** [How to prevent World War 3](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/11/how-to-prevent-world-war-3) [How countries have recovered from the financial crisis and other top economic stories of the week](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/08/post-financial-crisis-recovery-top-economic-stories-of-week) [Four things not to do in an economic crisis](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2014/07/economic-policies-pursuant-global-crisis-critique) This is all the more worrying in view of the numerous other factors stoking social unrest and diplomatic tension, including technological disruption, a record-breaking migration crisis, anxiety over globalization, political polarization, and rising nationalism. All are symptoms of failed policies that could turn out to be trigger points for a future crisis. Voters have good reason to be frustrated, but the emotionally appealing populists to whom they are increasingly giving their support are offering ill-advised solutions that will only make matters worse. For example, despite the world’s unprecedented interconnectedness, multilateralism is increasingly being eschewed, as countries – most notably, Donald Trump’s US – pursue unilateral, isolationist policies. Meanwhile, proxy wars are raging in Syria and Yemen. Against this background, we must take seriously the possibility that the next economic crisis could lead to a large-scale military confrontation. By the [logic](http://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Clash-of-Civilizations-and-the-Remaking-of-World-Order/Samuel-P-Huntington/9781451628975) of the political scientist Samuel Huntington , considering such a scenario could help us avoid it, because it would force us to take action. In this case, the key will be for policymakers to pursue the structural reforms that they have long promised, while replacing finger-pointing and antagonism with a sensible and respectful global dialogue. The alternative may well be global conflagration.

#### **Wars go nuclear, Extinction**

Starr 15 [Steve Starr; Director of the University of Missouri’s Clinical Laboratory Science Program, as well as a senior scientist at the Physicians for Social Responsibility; “Nuclear War, Nuclear Winter, and Human Extinction,” 10/14/19, <https://fas.org/pir-pubs/nuclear-war-nuclear-winter-and-human-extinction/>] // Re-Cut Justin

While it is impossible to precisely predict all the human impacts that would result from a nuclear winter, it is relatively simple to predict those which would be most profound. That is, a nuclear winter would cause most humans and large animals to die from nuclear famine in a mass extinction event similar to the one that wiped out the dinosaurs. Following the detonation (in conflict) of US and/or Russian launch-ready strategic nuclear weapons, nuclear firestorms would burn simultaneously over a total land surface area of many thousands or tens of thousands of square miles. These mass fires, many of which would rage over large cities and industrial areas, would release many tens of millions of tons of black carbon soot and smoke (up to 180 million tons, according to peer-reviewed studies), which would rise rapidly above cloud level and into the stratosphere. [For an explanation of the calculation of smoke emissions, see Atmospheric effects & societal consequences of regional scale nuclear conflicts.] The scientists who completed the most recent peer-reviewed studies on nuclear winter discovered that the sunlight would heat the smoke, producing a self-lofting effect that would not only aid the rise of the smoke into the stratosphere (above cloud level, where it could not be rained out), but act to keep the smoke in the stratosphere for 10 years or more. The longevity of the smoke layer would act to greatly increase the severity of its effects upon the biosphere. Once in the stratosphere, the smoke (predicted to be produced by a range of strategic nuclear wars) would rapidly engulf the Earth and form a dense stratospheric smoke layer. The smoke from a war fought with strategic nuclear weapons would quickly prevent up to 70% of sunlight from reaching the surface of the Northern Hemisphere and 35% of sunlight from reaching the surface of the Southern Hemisphere. Such an enormous loss of warming sunlight would produce Ice Age weather conditions on Earth in a matter of weeks. For a period of 1-3 years following the war, temperatures would fall below freezing every day in the central agricultural zones of North America and Eurasia. [For an explanation of nuclear winter, see Nuclear winter revisited with a modern climate model and current nuclear arsenals: Still catastrophic consequences.] Nuclear winter would cause average global surface temperatures to become colder than they were at the height of the last Ice Age. Such extreme cold would eliminate growing seasons for many years, probably for a decade or longer. Can you imagine a winter that lasts for ten years? The results of such a scenario are obvious. Temperatures would be much too cold to grow food, and they would remain this way long enough to cause most humans and animals to starve to death. Global nuclear famine would ensue in a setting in which the infrastructure of the combatant nations has been totally destroyed, resulting in massive amounts of chemical and radioactive toxins being released into the biosphere. We don’t need a sophisticated study to tell us that no food and Ice Age temperatures for a decade would kill most people and animals on the planet. Would the few remaining survivors be able to survive in a radioactive, toxic environment?

### Solvency

#### Plan text: A just government ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike. CX checks theory interps to avoid frivolous debates – otherwise I get an I meet.

#### Definition of unconditional right to strike:

NLRB 85 [National Labor Relations Board; “Legislative History of the Labor Management Relations Act, 1947: Volume 1,” Jan 1985; <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=7o1tA__v4xwC&rdid=book-7o1tA__v4xwC&rdot=1>] Justin

\*\*Edited for gendered language

As for the so-called absolute or unconditional right to strike—there are no absolute rights that do not have their corresponding responsibilities. Under our American Anglo-Saxon system, each individual is entitled to the maximum of freedom, provided however (and this provision is of first importance), his [their] freedom has due regard for the rights and freedoms of others. The very safeguard of our freedoms is the recognition of this fundamental principle. I take issue very definitely with the suggestion that there is an absolute and unconditional right to concerted action (which after all is what the strike is) which endangers the health and welfare of our people in order to attain a selfish end.

### FW

#### The standard is maximizing life. Prefer it:

#### [1] Actor spec: util is the best for governments, which is the actor in the rez - governments must aggregate since every policy benefits some and harms others, which also means side constraints freeze action.

#### [2] Death outweighs— A] agents can’t act if they fear for their bodily security. B] biological life is a prerequisite to any alternative advocacy.

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

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

There appears to be lot of disagreement in moral philosophy. Whether these many apparent disagreements are deep and irresolvable, I believe there is at least one thing it is reasonable to agree on right now, whatever general moral view we adopt: that it is very important to reduce the risk that all intelligent beings on this planet are eliminated by an enormous catastrophe, such as a nuclear war. How we might in fact try to reduce such existential risks is discussed elsewhere. My claim here is only that we – whether we’re consequentialists, deontologists, or virtue ethicists – should all agree that we should try to save the world. According to consequentialism, we should maximize the good, where this is taken to be the goodness, from an impartial perspective, of outcomes. Clearly one thing that makes an outcome good is that the people in it are doing well. There is little disagreement here. If the happiness or well-being of possible future people is just as important as that of people who already exist, and if they would have good lives, it is not hard to see how reducing existential risk is easily the most important thing in the whole world. This is for the familiar reason that there are so many people who could exist in the future – there are trillions upon trillions… upon trillions. There are so many possible future people that reducing existential risk is arguably the most important thing in the world, even if the well-being of these possible people were given only 0.001% as much weight as that of existing people. Even on a wholly person-affecting view – according to which there’s nothing (apart from effects on existing people) to be said in favor of creating happy people – the case for reducing existential risk is very strong. As noted in this seminal paper, this case is strengthened by the fact that there’s a good chance that many existing people will, with the aid of life-extension technology, live very long and very high quality lives. You might think what I have just argued applies to consequentialists only. There is a tendency to assume that, if an argument appeals to consequentialist considerations (the goodness of outcomes), it is irrelevant to non-consequentialists. But that is a huge mistake. Non-consequentialism is the view that there’s more that determines rightness than the goodness of consequences or outcomes; it is not the view that the latter don’t matter. Even John Rawls wrote, “All ethical doctrines worth our attention take consequences into account in judging rightness. One which did not would simply be irrational, crazy.” Minimally plausible versions of deontology and virtue ethics must be concerned in part with promoting the good, from an impartial point of view. They’d thus imply very strong reasons to reduce existential risk, at least when this doesn’t significantly involve doing harm to others or damaging one’s character. What’s even more surprising, perhaps, is that even if our own good (or that of those near and dear to us) has much greater weight than goodness from the impartial “point of view of the universe,” indeed even if the latter is entirely morally irrelevant, we may nonetheless have very strong reasons to reduce existential risk. Even egoism, the view that each agent should maximize her own good, might imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk. It will depend, among other things, on what one’s own good consists in. If well-being consisted in pleasure only, it is somewhat harder to argue that egoism would imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk – perhaps we could argue that one would maximize her expected hedonic well-being by funding life extension technology or by having herself cryogenically frozen at the time of her bodily death as well as giving money to reduce existential risk (so that there is a world for her to live in!). I am not sure, however, how strong the reasons to do this would be. But views which imply that, if I don’t care about other people, I have no or very little reason to help them are not even minimally plausible views (in addition to hedonistic egoism, I here have in mind views that imply that one has no reason to perform an act unless one actually desires to do that act). To be minimally plausible, egoism will need to be paired with a more sophisticated account of well-being. To see this, it is enough to consider, as Plato did, the possibility of a ring of invisibility – suppose that, while wearing it, Ayn could derive some pleasure by helping the poor, but instead could derive just a bit more by severely harming them. Hedonistic egoism would absurdly imply she should do the latter. To avoid this implication, egoists would need to build something like the meaningfulness of a life into well-being, in some robust way, where this would to a significant extent be a function of other-regarding concerns (see chapter 12 of this classic intro to ethics). But once these elements are included, we can (roughly, as above) argue that this sort of egoism will imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk. Add to all of this Samuel Scheffler’s recent intriguing arguments (quick podcast version available here) that most of what makes our lives go well would be undermined if there were no future generations of intelligent persons. On his view, my life would contain vastly less well-being if (say) a year after my death the world came to an end. So obviously if Scheffler were right I’d have very strong reason to reduce existential risk. We should also take into account moral uncertainty. What is it reasonable for one to do, when one is uncertain not (only) about the empirical facts, but also about the moral facts? I’ve just argued that there’s agreement among minimally plausible ethical views that we have strong reason to reduce existential risk – not only consequentialists, but also deontologists, virtue ethicists, and sophisticated egoists should agree. But even those (hedonistic egoists) who disagree should have a significant level of confidence that they are mistaken, and that one of the above views is correct. Even if they were 90% sure that their view is the correct one (and 10% sure that one of these other ones is correct), they would have pretty strong reason, from the standpoint of moral uncertainty, to reduce existential risk. Perhaps most disturbingly still, even if we are only 1% sure that the well-being of possible future people matters, it is at least arguable that, from the standpoint of moral uncertainty, reducing existential risk is the most important thing in the world. Again, this is largely for the reason that there are so many people who could exist in the future – there are trillions upon trillions… upon trillions. (For more on this and other related issues, see this excellent dissertation). Of course, it is uncertain whether these untold trillions would, in general, have good lives. It’s possible they’ll be miserable. It is enough for my claim that there is moral agreement in the relevant sense if, at least given certain empirical claims about what future lives would most likely be like, all minimally plausible moral views would converge on the conclusion that we should try to save the world. While there are some non-crazy views that place significantly greater moral weight on avoiding suffering than on promoting happiness, for reasons others have offered (and for independent reasons I won’t get into here unless requested to), they nonetheless seem to be fairly implausible views. And even if things did not go well for our ancestors, I am optimistic that they will overall go fantastically well for our descendants, if we allow them to. I suspect that most of us alive today – at least those of us not suffering from extreme illness or poverty – have lives that are well worth living, and that things will continue to improve. Derek Parfit, whose work has emphasized future generations as well as agreement in ethics, described our situation clearly and accurately: “We live during the hinge of history. Given the scientific and technological discoveries of the last two centuries, the world has never changed as fast. We shall soon have even greater powers to transform, not only our surroundings, but ourselves and our successors. If we act wisely in the next few centuries, humanity will survive its most dangerous and decisive period. Our descendants could, if necessary, go elsewhere, spreading through this galaxy…. Our descendants might, I believe, make the further future very good. But that good future may also depend in part on us. If our selfish recklessness ends human history, we would be acting very wrongly.” (From chapter 36 of On What Matters)

#### If Time

#### Strikes empirically improve working conditions stopping COVID spread but hindrances to the right to organize halt progress

**Abrams 11-30** Abigail Abrams, 11-30-2020, "How COVID-19 Pushed Frontline Workers Into Collective Action," Time, <https://time.com/5928528/frontline-workers-strikes-labor/> SJ//DA

Across the country**, workers like Cotton, who have never gone on strike and did not consider themselves activists, have been moved to organize protests, sick-outs and strikes over COVID-19. Unions report a surge in workers taking action and an increased interest in organizing. Grocery stores, warehouses, hospitals, nursing homes, fast food restaurants, schools, and health clinics—unionized and not—all saw walkouts in 2020.** While the National Labor Relations Board temporarily froze union representation elections last spring, and COVID-19 has continued to complicate some elections, unions of all types say the pandemic has fueled interest in their work. National unions across industries including health care, food service and retail say they are continuing to field more calls from from workers who want to join up and seeing thousands of current members eagerly volunteering to take action. **The labor turmoil has followed the course of the pandemic. Last spring, Amazon warehouse workers, Whole Foods employees, and gig workers at Instacart and Shipt refused to work in protest of their companies’ lack of coronavirus safety precautions. In July, workers at the JBS beef plant in Greeley, Colo., one of the country’s largest meatpacking plants, walked out following a deadly COVID-19 outbreak,** and in the fall, as the third wave of infections began overwhelming much of the American heartland, a coalition of five unions across six Midwestern hospitals joined forces to demand in a series of letters that the Catholic hospital chain Ascension Health improve staffing levels and infection control protocols. The complaints rise from an awkward reality: With certain exceptions, such as doctors and nurses, many of the workers deemed “essential” during the pandemic earn relatively low wages and lack access to employer benefits, like paid sick leave or compensation for working under hazardous conditions. While the shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) eased at larger hospitals by the end of 2020, many essential workers who are not directly in the medical field are still struggling to consistently access masks or face shields. Meanwhile, many employers of these essential workers, including Walmart, Amazon, Kroger and Costco, have raked in record profits. The Brookings Institution found that 13 of the largest retail companies in the country earned a total of $16.7 billion more in 2020 than they did in 2019, while raising workers’ pay an average of just $1.11 per hour since the start of the pandemic. **The federal government has, for the most part, declined to erect any safeguards for the workers it said should keep working during a pandemic. While Congress included paid sick leave in its first coronavirus relief package last spring, large loopholes left millions of essential workers ineligible**. Lawmakers passed no federal hazard pay requirements. The Trump Administration’s National Labor Relations Board, the agency tasked with enforcing private sector labor laws, further rolled back and weakened worker protections, while the U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration has been criticized for its lax treatment of worker complaints during the pandemic. Just 10.3% of U.S. employees belonged to a union in 2019, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and many of the people who went on strike or organized walk-outs work in industries that do not traditionally have union presences. Tech workers, for instance, organized at least 43 protests, actions or work stoppages related to the coronavirus last year, including a number of small, upstart operations, independent of any formal union, according to Collective Action in Tech. Because many of these tech companies do not have unions, most of the workers who lead or participated in the protests were not labor activists, but workers responding to the perilous situation in which they found themselves. “The billionaires have gotten much, much richer over the course of the pandemic, and workers are still struggling. They’re scared to leave their jobs because they need their health insurance. And they’re doing work that’s essential, yet treated as disposable,” says Rebecca Givan, a professor of labor studies and employment relations at Rutgers. “All of those factors coming together has created a moment with a lot of potential.” Advocates say the past year’s burgeoning, if partly ad hoc, labor movement will outlive the pandemic that gave rise to it. “Anytime workers participate in collective action and succeed, they learn a lifelong lesson,” Givan says. ‘At some point, you have to do something drastic’ The choice to strike is never easy. Even prior to COVID-19, surveys showed that between 50 and 80% of Americans live paycheck to paycheck. Giving up a paycheck and benefits during a global pandemic, when hundreds of thousands of businesses are shuttering and tens of millions of workers are being laid off, is a risk of another order altogether—especially when the work you’re leaving has been deemed vital.From lockdown, people leaned out of their windows to cheer for health care workers, hospitals bought ads celebrating their employees, and school kids painted posters for grocery store clerks and delivery drivers, thanking them for their service. “The nurses ourselves were like, this is a serious time, we’re needed. We can’t be striking,” says Tonia Bazel, an infectious disease nurse at Albany Medical Center in New York. In March, when COVID-19 cases were first rising, she and her coworkers put off talk of a strike. But in November, after months of sharing ill-fitting and sometimes dirty PPE and raising concerns about other infection control failures, Bazel’s union filed an OSHA complaint and voted to strike. “Not only our hospital, but the CDC and everyone else around us were decreasing the standards, so that we could work in these horrible conditions,” she says. After the MultiCare providers went on strike in November, the company ignored their demands for weeks. But after finding itself under media scrutiny, it reversed course and offered urgent care providers N95s starting Dec. 14. After the MultiCare providers went on strike in November, the company ignored their demands for weeks. But after finding itself under media scrutiny, it reversed course and offered urgent care providers N95s starting Dec. 14. Courtesy Zack Pattin In Washington state, a group of physician assistants, nurse practitioners and doctors faced a similar dilemma. “Honestly there was a lot of reluctance from everybody about going on strike. It’s a thing that you don’t think about people in our position doing,” says Dr. Amir Atabeygi, who works in MultiCare Indigo Urgent Care clinics. “People wanted to keep working in the clinics and seeing all the patients who were lined up out the door.” But like the nurses in Albany, the Washington providers’ situation worsened as COVID-19 cases rose. MultiCare continued refusing to provide clinic employees with N95 masks or address concerns about infection control procedures or long hours, and by mid-November, the urgent care clinic workers, who are represented by the Union of American Physicians and Dentists, voted to strike. “At some point, you have to do something drastic to sort of bring attention to the problem,” Atabeygi says. Marie Watson, who works in the maintenance department at the Mission Foods plant in Pueblo, Colo., says that, for her and her coworkers, the increase in union solidarity was driven primarily by fear—for herself and her community. Over the summer, she says, a supervisor who tested positive for COVID-19 was permitted to return to work; Watson worked “practically back to back with” the infected employee. “I was worried as hell,” she says. The collective bargaining agreement at her plant doesn’t allow workers to strike, so her options were limited. But in December amid an outbreak of COVID-19 at the plant, the union publicly called on Mission Foods to close for 14 days to sanitize the facility. The company refused to close, and when the virus hit the plant for a third time this month, the union called once again for Mission Foods to pause operations for cleaning. (Armando Garza, regional director of manufacturing for Mission Foods told TIME the company has conducted weekly plant cleanings and that the Pueblo Department of Health visited its facility Dec. 2 and was “satisfied with our prevention measures.”) Kim Cordova, the president of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 7, which represents 25,000 workers in supermarkets, packing houses, food processing plants, health care facilities and barbershops across Colorado and Wyoming says the problems Watson and others face is born of the disconnect between the federal government’s decision to label certain workers essential and its failure to prioritize their safety. “They’re being forced to go out there,” Cordova says, “but nobody’s protecting them.” An uptick in interest in labor organizing Walk-outs and strikes tend to have an add-on effect. When workers see their peers advocating for themselves and winning benefits, labor experts say they’re more likely to consider organizing, too. This past fall, for example, nurses, respiratory therapists, radiologists and other workers who belong to Teamsters Local 332 at Ascension Genesys Hospital near Flint, Michigan banded together with unions at five other regional hospitals to push administrators to implement hazard pay and guarantee higher staffing levels. Workers at those six hospitals had never collaborated in that way before. After the Local 332 union secured a letter of agreement from Ascension Genesys guaranteeing some hazard pay, other unions used that agreement as leverage to get their hospital to extend the same bonuses to them, too. “The coalition is definitely picking up momentum amid the pandemic,” says Nina Bugbee, president of Teamsters Local 332. Many unionized workers also began to see an increase in outreach from nonmembers interested in joining their ranks. National Nurses United, the largest nurses’ union in the country, won six union elections in 2020, up from four in 2019, and says it saw members engage in more than double the number union actions from the previous year. The New York State Nurses Association, which represents the nurses in Albany and around the state, says it had 100 nurses at a hospital in the Hudson Valley vote to join the union in August, and in North Dakota, the Teamsters Local 120 got a new request from workers at another Cash-Wa facility who wanted to organize their own bargaining unit—a rare occurrence in a state where just 6% of workers are unionized. Joe Crane, a representative for UAPD says that, during the first month of the pandemic alone, his union heard from as many doctors reaching out to learn about organizing as it does in a typical year. Bazel, the nurse at Albany Medical Center, also reports a surge in union membership from nurses who didn’t previously think the union was necessary. “A lot of them are now right with us,” she says. Cash-Wa had for months failed to require masks in its warehouses, enforce social distancing rules or otherwise screen employees. By late November, Cotton and her fellow workers—all deemed “essential,” under guidance from the federal government—had reached a breaking point: they banded together and refused to work for 24 hours. Notably, some of the newly organized workers’ groups have sprouted up in conservative states, where right-to-work rules tend to limit traditional unions. Steve Sandman, a delivery driver for Cash-Wa in North Dakota, had never belonged to a union before he took his current job and hardly considered himself an activist. But when his employer failed to take adequate safety precautions, Sandman says he took it upon himself to lobby his non-union coworkers to join the union and hold the company accountable. “They’ve seen the benefits and the number of union employees has increased,” he says. Matthew Carey, a physician assistant in Lacey, Washington didn’t know his union existed when he took the job at the MultiCare Indigo Urgent Care clinics, and he wasn’t excited about joining. He’d always thought unions were mostly just “extra work.” But in 2020, after MultiCare management repeatedly refused to provide N95 masks or address providers’ other concerns, Carey stood on the strike line with his colleagues. Multicare’s “main goal is to preserve profits, which I’m fine with profits, but you can’t do it at the expense of the workers,” he says. Carey later tested positive for COVID-19, which he says he picked up at the clinic after working without proper protective equipment. (MultiCare told TIME it could not comment on Carey’s situation but suggested that workers who fall ill are likely getting infected through socializing with other staff or out in the community.) For Carey, the decision to strike was driven not only by concerns about his own safety, but the safety of his community. It’s a sentiment that dozens of workers and labor activists expressed. “If we can’t take care of ourselves, how can we take care of patients?” says Dr. Atabeygi. Brian Nowak, who works for Teamsters Local 120, the union representing the 75 Cash-Wa workers who went on strike in North Dakota, made a similar point. “If drivers come in contact with somebody in the warehouse who is infected, and they take this back out to their customer, that affects our community,” he says. “This could in essence become a hub” for the coronavirus. In September, Adam Dean, a professor of political science at George Washington University, co-authored a study in Health Affairs showing that unionized nursing homes were associated with a 30% relative decrease in mortality rate at the height of the first coronavirus surge compared to nursing homes without unions. The unions were also associated with greater access to PPE and a relative decrease in the COVID-19 infection rate. “Labor unions provide protections that not only benefit workers in the union, but have broader benefits for society,” Dean says. Two steps forward, one step back **In some places, organizing has paid off. In West Virginia, Kroger employees’ strike threat earned them raises and limits on health care premium increases. In Chicago, nursing home workers’ 12-day strike earned them hazard pay, paid sick days and an agreement that they not be required to work without PPE. After the MultiCare providers went on strike in November, the company ignored their demands for weeks. But after finding itself under media scrutiny, it reversed course and started rolling out N95s to its urgent care providers on Dec. 14. But in much of the country, labor activists say, progress has been ponderous. The patchwork system of coronavirus-inspired relief, combined with the government’s lax enforcement of workers’ right to organize, has weakened what might have been more robust national momentum, says Dean, the George Washington University professor. “Even if there’s an increase in individual interest to join unions, there’s still major obstacles in American labor law that make it difficult for workers to actually form or join a union,”** he says. Some hospitals, grocery chains and other employers offered limited versions of hazard pay or incentives for employees to pick up extra shifts, and some states provided money to help employers offer bonuses, taking the steam out of some cooperative efforts.

#### Efforts for better conditions are small but there, an unconditional right would only help

**Shahsudarshan 5-24** Aditi Shahsudarshan, 5-24-2021, "Renault-Nissan and Hyundai face shutdowns in India over workers' COVID fears," Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/india/renault-nissan-india-union-says-workers-go-strike-wednesday-2021-05-24/> SJ//DA

**Workers at Renault-Nissan's car plant in the southern state of Tamil Nadu will go on strike on Wednesday because their COVID-related safety demands have not been met, a union representing the workers told the company in a letter on Monday. Hyundai said it would suspend operations at its plant, also in Tamil Nadu, for five days starting Tuesday, after several workers staged a brief, sit-in protest on Monday amid rising cases in the state. "The management agreed to close the plant after workers expressed concerns over safety after two employees succumbed to COVID,**" E. Muthukumar, president of the Hyundai Motor India Employees Union, told Reuters. The unrest highlights the challenges companies face in India amid a huge wave of COVID-19 infections, an overwhelmed health system and a shortage of vaccines which is making employees more fearful. Tamil Nadu is one of the worst hit states with more than 30,000 cases a day last week. The state, an auto hub known as India's Detroit, has imposed a lockdown until May 31 but allowed some factories, including auto plants, to continue operating. The strike threat at the Renault-Nissan plant came ahead of a court hearing on Monday over allegations from workers that social distancing norms were being flouted and factory health policies did not sufficiently address the risk to lives. Renault-Nissan has said it is following COVID-19 safety protocols. read more At the hearing, a lawyer for the workers argued that while the company had reduced the number of shifts, production numbers had not been cut and the headcount remained the same leading to crowding on the factory floor. The company told the court it had reduced the workforce to around 5,000 from 8,000. It also said it had vaccinated employees over 45 and was willing to inoculate those under 45 if vaccines were made available. The two-judge bench presiding over the case said that while the health of workers is paramount, if industries go down there will be no place for them to work. They also said the company must not take advantage of the exemption granted by the state and should reduce production to meet only necessary export orders. "The production should have fallen ... You also have to assuage the feeling of the workers," said the court, which will next hear the case on May 31. **The union, which represents about 3,500 workers at the plant**, said in its May 24 letter to Renault-Nissan that workers would not return until they felt safe. **The workers' demands include lower production so there is better social distancing, vaccinations and higher insurance cover to include medical expenses for their families.**

#### Enforcement through IFAs is normal means – that solves credibility concerns and legal loopholes which encourages striking.

Neill 12 [Emily CM; “The Right to Strike: How the United States Reduces it to the Freedom to Strike and How International Framework Agreements can Redeem it,” 1/1/12; Labor & Employment Law Forum Volume 2 Issue 2 Article 6; <https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1047&context=lelb>] Justin

IFAs open the door to collective bargaining by creating a space that alters the traditionally antagonistic employer-employee engagement and is more hospitable to the organizing process.83 MNC commitment to respect the core ILO principles of freedom of association and the rights to organize and collectively bargain through IFAs are instrumental to realizing that purpose.84

1. The Creation and Proliferation of International Framework Agreements

An IFA is an agreement negotiated between an MNC and typically85 a global union86 to establish an ongoing relationship between the signatories and ensure adherence to uniform labor standards by the MNC in all countries in which it operates.87 IFAs are the first and only formally-negotiated instruments between unions and corporations at the global level and a significant development in labor relations.88 Since the signing of the first IFA in 1988, they have spread at a steadily increasing rate. 89 Their proliferation since 2000 has been especially dramatic—with the number of IFAs signed in 2003-2006 nearly doubling the number signed in the first fifteen years.90 By 2008, approximately sixty-five agreements had been concluded.91 At the end of 2010, that number had jumped to seventy-six.92

2. Context of Framework Agreements: Corporate Social Responsibility

While both corporate codes of conduct and IFAs can be traced to a consumer driven push for corporate social responsibility, a key difference separates the two: credibility. In the late 1980’s, MNCs in the United States began to respond to campaigns by non-governmental organizations accusing MNCs of international human rights abuses by elaborating internal codes of conduct.93 These codes, unilaterally written and implemented, tend to be vague and provide for no enforcement mechanism.94 The voluntary, self-enforcing nature of these commitments has led critics to conclude that they are mere marketing ploys lacking in credibility or having any real social impact.95

IFAs were developed, in part, as an alternative to corporate codes of conduct to raise labor standards.96 Unlike unilateral codes, IFAs are negotiated between the two principal actors—employers and workers—in the employment relationship.97 Involvement of the very party the agreement is meant to protect attaches greater meaning and significance to the instrument.98

The purpose of IFAs is to promote fundamental labor rights by regulating corporate conduct on a global level.99 This brings us to another key distinction between corporate codes of conduct and IFAs: their concrete normative content.

3. Core ILO Principles as the Substantive Content of IFAs

Whereas codes tend to be vague in their commitments, MNCs commit themselves to concrete international labor norms through framework agreements. The key areas of IFAs are the acceptance of the four core labor standards, as articulated in the 1998 ILO Declaration.100 The Declaration itself is typically not mentioned, but rather the four rights are referred to in IFAs by their convention numbers.101 Thus, apart from a very few exceptions, IFAs refer explicitly to ILO Conventions 87 and 98 on freedom of association and the right to organize and collective bargaining, respectively.102

As previously discussed, ILO standards are the principal source of international labor norms.103 ILO Conventions 87 and 98 are perhaps the most important of ILO principles since the right to organize and bargain collectively is essential to the defense of working conditions like wages, hours, and health and safety through the collective bargaining process.104

4. Scope of IFAs, MNCs and Supply Chains

One of the most important features of IFAs is their goal of addressing behavior not only within the signatory MNC, but along their supply chains as well.105 According to one study, of the IFAs in existence as of 2008, eighty eight percent explicitly indicated that the norms of the agreements applied to their subsidiaries and seventy-three percent contained provisions defining their application to suppliers and subcontractors.106 These provisions contain varying degrees of commitment on behalf of the signatory MNC. Some MNCs agree to place very concrete obligations on supply chain parties, going so far as to detail sanctions to be imposed upon non-compliant suppliers.107 Others contain provisions that are less mandatory, limiting the MNC’s obligation to informing or encouraging its suppliers and subsidiaries to respect the principles of the agreement. For instance, the PSA Peugeot Citroen IFA was amended in 2010, changing its once relatively firm language by which suppliers are “required” to make similar commitments to a much weaker provision in which the MNC agrees to “request” that its suppliers a similar commitment in respect of their own suppliers and sub-contractors.108

III. ANALYSIS

The principal weapon workers have to leverage their bargaining power is the strike.109 The permanent strike replacement policy renders [strikes] this weapon almost meaningless by subjecting workers that employ it to a risk of job loss. This practice deviates from international norms on freedom of association, the right to organize, and bargain collectively, as enunciated in Conventions 87 and 98, and reaffirmed in the ILO 1998 Declaration to the point of rendering the right to strike a mere freedom to strike.110 Fortunately, IFAs have the potential to bring many U.S. operating companies into compliance with international standards on the right to strike, which prohibits the use of permanent replacements.

This Section first addresses the effect of the permanent replacement doctrine on the right to strike in the United States. It next argues that as a member of the ILO, the U.S. is obligated to amend this policy to guarantee workers protection in their right to strike. Finally, it argues that even if the U.S. permits permanent strike replacements, certain U.S. companies are bound to IFAs that prohibit them from taking advantage of the policy.

A. Interference with the Right to Strike is an Abridgement of ILO Principles

Collective bargaining is the mechanism through which workers present their demands to an employer and, through negotiations, determine the working conditions and terms of employment.111 The right to strike arises most often in the context of collective bargaining, though as a weapon of last resort.112 The employment relationship is an economic one—with most workers’ demands encompassing improved pay or other working conditions.113 To bring balance to the employment relationship at the bargaining table, one of the primary weapons available to workers in defending their interests is the threat of withholding labor to inflict costs upon the employer.114 The principle of the strike as a legitimate means of action taken by workers’ organizations is widely recognized in countries throughout the world, almost to the point of universal recognition.115 The ILO Committee on Freedom of Association holds the position that the right to strike is a basic consequence of the right to organize.116

Interference or impairment of the right to strike is inconsistent with Articles 3, 8, and 10 of Convention 87 guaranteeing workers freedom of association and the right to take concerted actions to further their interests. Article 3 recognizes the right of workers’ organizations to organize their activities and to formulate their programs.117 Article 10 states that the term “organization” means any organization for furthering and defending the interests of workers.118 When read together with Article 10, Article 3 protects activities and actions that are designed to further and defend the interests of workers. Recall that strikes are recognized as an essential means through which workers further and defend their interests.119 Article 8 declares that no national law may impair the guarantees of the Convention.120 Because strike action falls under the activities protected by Article 3, which are aimed at furthering and defending workers’ interests, limitations on the right to strike may contravene Conventions 87 and 98.121 This subsection addresses the lawful practice of hiring of permanent replacements for striking workers in the United States as it relates to ILO principles.

1. The Use of Permanent Strike Replacements Reduces the ‘Right’ to Strike to the Unprotected ‘Freedom’ to Strike

In refraining from ratifying ILO Conventions 87 and 98, the United States government has insisted that U.S. law sufficiently guarantees workers protections of the principles of freedom of association, the rights to organize, and bargain collectively.122 While Section 13 of the NLRA addresses the right to strike,123 in reality, enforcement of the NLRA falls short of its goals and departs from international norms, which afford the right to strike fundamental status.124

The Mackay doctrine, permitting permanent replacement of strikers renders the right a mere privilege, or freedom, because it removes meaningful protection of the right by stripping employers of a duty to refrain from interference with striking.125 Wesley Hohfeld’s famous account of legal rights provides a useful analytical framework for distinguishing between the colloquial uses of the “rights” and their implications.126 Under this framework, rights are distinguished from what he calls privileges, or freedoms, by the existence or inexistence of a corresponding duty. All rights have a corresponding duty, or a legal obligation to respect the legal interest of the right-holder and refrain from interfering with it.127 In the example of the right to strike, the correlative is the employer’s duty to not interfere with the employees’ right.128 On the other hand, a ‘freedom’ is the liberty to act, but without the imposition of a duty upon others.129 When one has the freedom to act, others simply do not have a right to prevent her from acting.130 In the strike context, if employees enjoy the freedom to strike, an employer does not have the right to stop the employees from striking, but does not have a duty to not interfere with the act of striking.131

In establishing the Mackay permanent strike replacement Doctrine, the Supreme Court reasoned that the ‘right’ to strike does not destroy an employer’s right to protect and continue business by filling the vacancies of the strikers.132 In so holding, the Court actually transformed the ‘right’ to strike it into the ‘freedom’ to strike by removing a corresponding affirmative duty not to interfere with the exercise of the right from the employer.133 The hire of permanent replacements interferes with strike action by inflicting substantial repercussions upon the employees that undertake the action, loss of employment opportunities.134

The Mackay doctrine forces an employee to choose to strike—at the risk of losing the very job that is the object of the gains and benefits sought— rendering the act virtually useless.135 The threat of being permanently replaced has, in fact, discouraged workers from exercising their ‘right’ to strike.136

Application of the Mackay doctrine produces results that are inconsistent with the NLRA’s provisions regarding protected activity, making the diminution of protection for striking employees even more apparent. In recognizing an employer right to hire permanent replacements, the Mackay Court created a loophole for employers who otherwise are prohibited from firing striking employees under the Section 8(a)(3) of the NLRA, which proscribes retaliation against employees that engage in protected union activity.137 While the act of permanently replacing strikers is lawful, firing strikers is unlawful, although both acts produce the same result: loss of a job as a consequence of striking.138 The result renders the NLRA’s protections for striking workers a dead letter. Although employers have a duty to refrain from retaliation against workers engaged in union activity in the form of firing, employers do not have a duty to refrain from reaching the same result through a different tactic—permanent replacement.139 Thus, this removal of a duty to refrain from interference renders the ‘right’ to strike, an unprotected ‘freedom’ to strike that yields to an employer’s corresponding freedom to replace strikers.140 In other words, the Mackay doctrine preserves the NLRA Section 13 reference to strike action as a lawful recourse for workers, but not one afforded the status of a protected right.