## AC

### Advocacy

#### I affirm, Resolved: A just government ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike.

### Worker Power

#### Contention One: Worker Power

#### The right to strike is the only way to leverage worker power- that builds unions, solves inequality and environmental collapse, and forges democratic consciousness

**Bradbury, 19** – Labor Notes editor

[Alexandra, et al, “Why Strikes Matter,” Labor Notes, 10-17-19, https://www.labornotes.org/2019/10/why-strikes-matter, accessed 10-10-21]

Why Strikes Matter

**Strikes are where our power is**. Without a **credible** strike threat, workers are at the boss's mercy.

“Why do you rob banks?” a reporter once asked Willie Sutton. “Because that’s where the money is,” the infamous thief replied.

Why go on strike? Because that’s where our power is.

Teachers in West Virginia showed it in 2018 when they walked out, in a strike that bubbled up from below, surprising even their statewide union leaders.

No one seemed concerned that public sector strikes were unlawful in West Virginia. “What are they going to do, fire us all?” said Jay O’Neal, treasurer for the Kanawha County local. “Who would they get to replace us?” Already the state had 700 teaching vacancies, thanks to the rock-bottom pay the strikers were protesting.

After 13 days out, the teachers declared victory and returned to their classrooms with a 5 percent raise. They had also backed off corporate education “reformers” on a host of other issues.

The biggest lesson: “Our labor is ours first,” West Virginia teacher Nicole McCormick told the crowd at the Labor Notes Conference that spring. “It is up to us to give our labor, or to withhold it.”

That’s the fundamental truth on which the labor movement was built.

Strikes by unorganized workers led to the founding of unions. Strikes won the first union contracts. Strikes over the years won bigger paychecks, vacations, seniority rights, and the right to tell the foreman “that’s not my job.” Without strikes we would have no labor movement, no unions, no contracts, and a far worse working and living situation.

In short, strikes are the **strongest tool** in workers’ toolbox—our power not just to ask, but to **force** our employers to concede something.

DISCOVER YOUR POWER

The key word is “force.” A strike is **not just** a **symbolic** protest. **It works because we withhold something** that **the employer needs**—its production, its good public image, its profits, and above all its control over us.

As one union slogan has it, “this university works because we do”—or this company, or this city. A strike reveals something that employers would prefer we not notice: they need us.

Workplaces are typically run as dictatorships. The discovery that your boss does not have absolute power over you—and that in fact, you and your co-workers can exert power over him—is a revelation.

There’s no feeling like it. Going on strike changes you, personally and as a union.

“Walking into work the first day back chanting ‘one day longer, one day stronger’ was the best morning I’ve ever had at Verizon,” said Pam Galpern, a field tech and mobilizer with Communication Workers Local 1101, after workers beat the corporate giant in a 45-day strike in 2016.

“There was such a tremendous feeling of accomplishment. People were smiling and happy. It was like a complete 180-degree difference from before the strike,” when supervisors had been micromanaging and writing workers up for the smallest infractions.

In a good strike, everyone has a meaningful role. Strikers develop new skills and a deeper sense that they own and run their union. New leaders emerge from the ranks and go on to become stewards.

New friendships are formed; workers who didn’t know or trust one another before forge **bonds of solidarity**. A few stubborn co-workers finally see why the union matters and sign on as members.

Allies from faith groups, neighborhood groups, or other unions adopt your cause. You and your co-workers lose some fear of the boss—and the boss gains some fear of you.

In all these ways and more—not to mention the contract gains you may win—a strike can be a **tremendous union-building activity**.

JUST THE THREAT

Sometimes coming to the brink of a strike is enough to make your employer blink. Workers at an Indiana truck plant in 2016 got as far as hauling burn barrels to work every day to show they were ready to hit the picket lines. The company, Hendrickson International, averted a strike by agreeing to phase out two-tier wages and pensions.

The benefits of a humbled employer can last beyond a single contract cycle. After Seattle’s grocery chains in 2013 came within two hours of a strike—the union dramatized the impending deadline with a giant countdown clock—the chains scrambled to avoid a repeat in 2016 by settling a new contract before the old one expired.

The transformation can also reach **beyond the workplace**. Strikes **open** up **our political horizons**, **expanding our sense of what’s possible** if we use our power.

This summer, a general strike in Puerto Rico brought down two corrupt governors in quick succession. This fall, Amazon workers struck for a day as they pushed their employer to take on climate change. Large-scale strikes will be **crucial** if we expect to rescue our world from the corporations that promote **poverty** and **environmental collapse**. The 1% are not going to hand us anything.

A NEW UPSURGE?

Strikes in the U.S. have declined dramatically over the past half-century. Since 1947 the Bureau of Labor Statistics has tracked strikes and lockouts involving 1,000 or more workers.

From 1947 through 1981, there were hundreds of such big strikes each year. Last year there were 20. The decline in strikes is a reflection of unions’ diminishing power and numbers—and a reason for it. But strikes aren’t dead.

Over the years it has gotten harder (in some ways) to strike and win. Some of **the best tactics have been outlawed**; some of **the best sources of leverage** have been **neutralized**.

#### The right to strike is key to strong unions- that solves inequality

**Myall, 19** -- Maine Center for Economic Policy policy analyst

[James Myall, "Right to strike would level the playing field for public workers, with benefits for all of us," MECEP, 4-17-2019, https://www.mecep.org/blog/right-to-strike-would-level-the-playing-field-for-public-workers-with-benefits-for-all-of-us/, accessed 10-10-2021]

Right to strike would level the playing field for public workers, with benefits for all of us

The right of workers to organize and bargain with their employer benefits all Mainers. Collective bargaining leads to **better wages**, safer workplaces, and a fairer and more robust economy for everyone — not just union members. The **right to strike is critical** to collective organizing and bargaining. Without it, Maine’s public employees are unable to negotiate on a **level playing field**.

Maine’s Legislature is considering a bill that would give public-sector workers the right to strike. MECEP supports the legislation, and is urging legislators to enact it.

The right to strike would enable fairer negotiations between public workers and the government. All of us have reason to support that outcome. **Research shows** that union negotiations **set the bar** for working conditions with other employers. And as the largest employer in Maine, the state’s treatment of its workers has a big impact on working conditions in the private sector.

Unions support a fairer economy. Periods of high union membership are associated with **lower** levels of income **inequality**, both nationally and in Maine. Strong unions, including public-sector unions, have a critical role to play in **rebuild**ing **a strong middle class**.

Unions help combat inequities within work places. Women and people of color in unions face less wage discrimination than those in nonunion workplaces. On average, wages for nonunionized white women in Maine are 18 percent less than of those of white men. Among unionized workers, that inequality shrinks to just 9 percent. Similarly, women of color earn 26 percent less than men in nonunionized jobs; for unionized women of color, the wage gap shrinks to 17 percent.[i]

All of us have a stake in the success of collective bargaining. But **a union without the right to strike loses** much of **its negotiating power**. The right to withdraw your labor is the **foundation** of collective worker action. When state employees or teachers are sitting across the negotiating table from their employers, how much leverage do they really have when they can be made to work without a contract? It’s like negotiating the price of a car when the salesman knows you’re going to have to buy it — whatever the final price is.

**Research confirms** that public-sector unions are **less effective without the right to strike**. Public employees with a right to strike earn between 2 percent and 5 percent more than those without it.[ii] While that’s a meaningful increase for those workers, it also should assuage any fears that a right to strike would lead to excessive pay increases or employees abusing their new right.

LD 900, “An Act to Expand the Rights of Public Employees Under the Maine Labor Laws,” ensures that Maine’s public-sector workers will have the same collective bargaining rights as other employees in Maine. The bill would strengthen the ability of Maine’s public-sector workers to negotiate, resulting in higher wagers, a more level playing field, and a fairer economy for all of us.

#### Remedying inequality is key to prevent growing populism, backlash to the liberal order, and international conflict- no alt causes

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[Thomas, and Ronald Rogowski, UCLA political science professor, "Rising Inequality As a Threat to the Liberal International Order," International Organization, 75.2, 4-12-21, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-organization/article/rising-inequality-as-a-threat-to-the-liberal-international-order/4CDE05DEB3AB076CE338E1AA4A9C8087, accessed 6-27-21]

The rise of top-heavy inequality—earnings concentration in a very thin layer of elites—calls into question our understanding of the distributional effects of the Liberal International Order. Far more people lose from globalization, and fewer gain, than traditional economic models suggest. We review three modern trade theories (neo-Heckscher-Ohlin-Stolper-Samuelson or H-O-S-S, new new trade theory, and economic geography) that each arrive at the conclusion of top-heavy inequality by introducing some form of unit heterogeneity—an assumption that the actors we once treated as identical actually differ from one another in important ways. Heterogeneity allows the gains from globalization to concentrate in a narrow segment of workers with superlative talents, extraordinarily productive firms, or heavily agglomerated cities. An analysis of European voting data shows that **shocks from trade and migration elicit populist opposition only where the top 1 percent** have **gained the most**. With few politically feasible alternatives to protectionism, most notably the failure of democracies to redistribute income, our analysis predicts a persistence of public support for antiglobalization parties, especially those on the Right.

Presiding over the November 2016 meeting of the International Political Economy Society, which followed that year's US presidential election by only three days, David Lake began by saying, “To our theories, this result unfortunately comes as no surprise.” And indeed the field at large has believed that the growing “populist”1 backlash against the Liberal International Order (LIO)—not just the Trump victory but Brexit, the election of illiberal governments in Hungary, Poland, Turkey, the Philippines, and Brazil (to name only a few), and growing support for anti-immigrant and illiberal parties and candidates in many other democracies—has followed almost inevitably from the very changes the LIO has wrought, including of course increased trade and migration but also one major concomitant, rising economic inequality within states. According to our traditional economic theories,2 advanced and even middle-income countries are abundantly endowed with human capital, and poorly endowed with low-skill labor. And it is a rudimentary implication of international economics that, in those countries, expanded trade—or, even more, immigration of low-skill workers—will benefit the highly skilled and harm the less educated. Inequality will rise, and—perhaps the most prescient conclusion of the traditional analysis—partisanship will correlate increasingly with possession of human capital: opposition to the LIO will be strongest among the least educated and will decrease monotonically with more years of schooling.

The evidence, which we survey briefly, admits of no doubt that in almost all of the wealthier (and not a few semiwealthy) countries, inequality has risen, often quite sharply; returns on education3 have risen markedly; and education, even more than occupational status, has emerged as one of the most important predictors of electoral support for antiglobalization parties. What our theories however did not anticipate, and so far cannot explain, may well prove to have been even more important:

1. Not all who are well endowed in human capital, but chiefly a very thin upper layer—the top 1 percent, or even 0.1 percent—have harvested most of the gains from globalization.

2. The antiglobalization movements we observe

adopt a populist rhetoric that often excoriates not just globalization or immigration but also allegedly nefarious elites, who conspire, both domestically and across borders, to enrich each other at the expense of their fellow citizens;4

benefit chiefly parties of the radical Right; and

have in important cases attracted non-negligible support among university-educated segments of the electorate, albeit far less than among the less skilled.5

We suggest that the extreme inequality and the anomalies are related, and that some insights from recent work in international economics may help explain them. Three advances in trade theory predict extreme inequality. “New new” trade theory (NNTT), with its emphasis on superstar firms, offers a natural framework. So too does an “enriched” neo-H-O-S-S (Heckscher-Ohlin-Stolper-Samuelson) perspective that explores how superstar workers arise in the context of heterogeneous talent.6 Finally, economic geography, explored thoroughly by Broz, Frieden, and Weymouth in this issue, shows how globalization gives rise to superstar cities.7 These three trade theories predict top-heavy inequality primarily by allowing for unit heterogeneity—an assumption that the actors our traditional theories treated as identical actually differ in important ways. Firms within sectors differ in productivity, workers within a factor class differ in innate talents, and regions within countries differ in agglomeration economies.

None of this suggests, of course, that rising inequality is the only, or even necessarily the most important, cause of the **growing popular backlash against the LIO**. Skill-biased technological innovation and resistance to cultural change also matter, as we discuss more fully later. We do find, **however**, at least from a cursory analysis of European elections, that **backlash** against shocks from immigration and imports **is conditional on high inequality, disappearing where inequality is low**; and we suspect that rising “top-heavy” inequality is related to a particularly prominent strain, within the antiglobalization movements, of anti-elite and anti-expert sentiment.

We go on to suggest why rising inequality matters, not only as a source of opposition to the LIO but as an impediment to economic growth and an **exacerbant of** domestic polarization and **international conflict**.

We assess the implications of top-heavy inequality for the LIO. What remedies have been proposed? And if they lack sufficient political support, what sources of resilience can sustain the LIO under top-heavy inequality? Relatedly, we return to the question of why antiglobalization sentiment has benefited the political Right more than the Left. Finally, we chart a course for future research on models of top-heavy inequality, and discuss how they illuminate “blind spots” in the literature on international political economy.

First, however, we survey briefly the extent of growing economic inequality in advanced economies and its seeming relation, chiefly through a human-capital channel, to antiglobalization and anti-elite attitudes and voting.

Convergence Across Countries, Divergence Within Them

The triumph of the LIO in the 1980s and 1990s—the collapse of Communism, the dismantling of trade barriers, the strengthening of institutions of international governance—coupled with, and facilitated by, breakthrough innovations in transport, communication, and finance, affected economic inequality in two ways that standard factor-endowment theories predicted: inequality declined significantly between countries, thus beginning to erode three centuries of the Great Divergence between rich and poor nations; but inequality within countries, especially among the advanced economies, increased almost as sharply.

Between countries. As late as 1990, the richest 10 percent of the world's population earned on average over ninety times what the poorest decile received; only twenty years later, that ratio had fallen to sixty-five times,8 or only slightly more than the within-country ratio of Brazil, where in 2008 the average income of the richest decile was about fifty times that of the poorest.9

Within countries. Beginning even earlier, inequality of incomes, whether measured as the Gini index or the share of total income accruing to the top decile, has risen in virtually all of the advanced economies,10 and indeed in many of the middle-income ones.11 Bourguignon notes that the collapse of the Soviet empire and the opening of China, India, and Latin America injected roughly “a billion workers, for the most part unskilled, into international competition.”12 That will have drastically lowered the global capital-labor ratio and hence further raised returns on human and physical capital, while reducing those on low-skill labor, in virtually all but the poorest, most labor-abundant countries.

In short, across much of the globe, the enormous overall gains from trade have benefited the highly skilled, the inventive entrepreneurs, and the owners of capital; the incomes of the less skilled and the capital-poor have risen more slowly, stagnated, or actually declined—exactly the development whose early manifestations alarmed Dani Rodrik two decades ago.13

Surely not all of the rise in inequality stems from globalization.14 Many analyses attribute much of the widening within-country gap—in the US, perhaps as much as four-fifths15—not to globalization but to skill-biased technological innovation.16 Bourguignon contends, to be sure, that innovation has been largely endogenous to globalization: wider markets and intensified competition have raised the returns on cost-reducing innovation.17 Cheaper labor, however, whether from offshoring or the competition of low-wage imports, might be expected to curtail the demand for labor-saving technologies, not to increase it.18 A stronger case is implied by “new new” trade theory: if managerial pay correlates closely with firm size, and if the most successful firms in a globalized economy tend to be the largest, it follows that globalization contributes directly to the rise in top incomes.19 Perhaps most importantly, however, whatever skill-biased innovation may have contributed to the gains of the top quintile or decile, it can say little about the gains of the top 1, or 0.1, percent of the distribution.20 Trade, as we argue, can more readily explain those disproportionate gains.

Rising Skills Premia

Also consistent with mainstream theory were the rising returns on education and the widening gap between high- and low-skill workers’ attitudes toward trade and migration. Exactly as theory would lead us to expect, antiglobalization sentiment rose sharply, and was increasingly concentrated, among voters with the least human capital—that is, the less educated.

Returns on education have indeed risen sharply. In the US in the 1970s, workers with a college degree earned only about a quarter more than ones of comparable ethnicity and age who had completed only high school; by 2010, that gap had risen to almost 50 percent.21 The “raw” difference in annual earnings (i.e., without controlling for ethnicity and age) between college graduates and those who have completed only high school is now 64 percent in the US, and on average in the OECD economies 45 percent.22

At the same time, less educated voters have mobilized strongly against globalization in almost all of the advanced economies. In the US, whites with less than a college education, having up to the year 2000 differed little in their partisanship from whites with university degrees, began to tilt Republican in the early 2000s23 and supported Trump in 2016 by a margin of more than two to one (64 to 28 percent).24 In the Brexit referendum, similarly, 70 percent of voters with only a General Certificate of Secondary Education, roughly equivalent to a US high-school diploma, supported leaving the European Union, while those with university degrees voted by almost the same margin (68 percent) to remain.25 And a recent International Monetary Fund working paper finds that since 2002 tertiary (i.e., university or equivalent) education has correlated, more than any other single variable, with not voting for a populist party in European parliamentary elections—an effect that has grown only stronger since 2012.26

The Riddle of the 1 Percent

In many ways, then, a standard factor-proportions picture of globalization's distributional and political effects holds up. What it cannot explain, as economists have by now noted repeatedly,27 is why so much of the bounty has gone to the top 1 percent and why even the remainder of the top decile, let alone the highly educated generally, have benefited comparatively little. This pattern is reflected in average real income trends since 1991 across five advanced economies (Figure 1). Much of the real income growth of the top 10 percent owes to gains by the top 1 percent (compare panels 1 and 2); the next 9 percent (i.e., the remainder of the top decile) have seen a comparatively paltry increase. At the same time, the incomes of next 9 percent, which stagnate or even decline after about 2000, mirror those of the middle 40 percent (compare panels 2 and 3). Taken together, the three panels demonstrate the extent to which a narrow elite has risen above the rest of society's otherwise skilled workers.

Haskel and colleagues more vividly make this case in the US with data on returns on education, finding that the median income of the top 1 percent had risen by 60 percent between 1990 and 2010, while the returns on university education, even for holders of advanced degrees, had declined in real terms after about 2000, virtually erasing their modest gains from the previous decade.28

The seemingly inexorable rise of the 1 percent, when contrasted with the relative stagnation of the rest of the top decile, and of owners of human capital in the middle 40 percent, raises at least three questions. Can our standard theories be modified to explain this “top-heavy” form of inequality? Would such a modified theory still provide a plausible link to globalization? And does such a theory help us understand the simultaneously anti-elitist and antiglobalization character of recent populist movements?

Heterogeneous Workers, Firms, and Regions: Three Ways Globalization Affects Top-Heavy Inequality

We argue that the top-heavy inequality we observe is consistent with three recent advances in trade theory. Each highlights how the bulk of globalization's gains concentrate in a narrow subset of superstar workers, superstar firms, or superstar cities. An “enriched” H-O-S-S model shows how globalization concentrates wages in a small share of highly talented workers. New new trade theory implies that globalization concentrates profits in a few multinational corporations. Finally, economic geography, extensively reviewed by Broz, Frieden, and Weymouth (in this issue), predicts that globalization concentrates economic growth in a few metropolitan regions.29 By producing far more extreme inequality than traditional models suggest, these theories may help explain the puzzling composition of antiglobalization interests and why these movements adopt a populist tone that demonizes elites.

In presenting these advances, we spare the reader their mathematical exposition and instead focus on their sometimes subtle intuitions. We then explore their similarities and differences, as well as how they illuminate the puzzles of LIO backlash.

Neo-H-O-S-S

The first advance injects new life into the increasingly disesteemed, yet still heavily used, factor-endowments framework of Heckscher-Ohlin and Stolper-Samuelson. It turns out that modest enhancements introduced by Haskel and colleagues yield productive insights into the puzzles of LIO backlash.30 The key amendment introduces heterogeneous workers with varying degrees of innate talent. To state briefly the salient and surprising implications of that model, a drop in the relative price of labor-intensive goods, whether induced by globalization or by technology, can not only reduce the wages of low-skill workers, as in traditional models, but also distribute almost all of the resultant gains to a thin layer of highly talented people—and, at least as importantly, induce stagnation, or actual decline, in the earnings of highly skilled but less talented workers.31 And, once we observe that such a shift is both quite recent and plausibly linked to globalization, we may have shed some light on (a) the rabidly anti-elitist and antiglobalization tinge of the populist movements, (b) why such movements have recently peaked, and (c) why they gain (and may well continue to gain) support not only from the “usual suspects” among low-skill workers but also from those with moderate or even relatively high endowments of human capital.32

For those who appreciate a more rigorous introduction, we offer a graphical exposition of the “richer” H-O-S-S model in online Appendix A2. More intuitively, the key to understanding that model is what happens to high-skill workers when the relative price of capital rises.33 First consider the unsurprising fact that within most firms, sectors, and professions, some workers possess natural talent while the majority are perfectly average. Naturally, the most talented employees are far more productive than their average colleagues, even when everyone works with the same amount of capital. In Hollywood, for example, all actors may read the same script, but only A-list talent like Meryl Streep, Denzel Washington, or Tom Hanks can turn that script into an Oscar-winning performance.

In the classic model, trade lowers wages and raises the relative cost of capital; in the enriched model, the owners of capital make up for that higher cost by lowering the wages of mediocre employees and raising the wages of superstars. Capital owners become less able to afford mediocre workers whose productivity cannot keep up with rising capital costs. Instead, they hire the superstars, whose superior productivity can more than cover the increased costs of capital.

Consider the Hollywood example that Haskel and colleagues used, where film scripts represent intellectual capital, indeed the most important form of capital for the entertainment industry. As the world's tastes and purchasing power increase demand for Hollywood entertainment, the price of scripts rises—those of stellar scripts, most of all. As that price rises, studios or streaming services become less and less likely to hire actors of only middling quality to perform such a script. The studios’ investment in a high-quality script will pay off, and bring their film the requisite audience, only if it stars actors of extremely high talent: Robert Downey Jr., Scarlett Johansson, or Samuel L. Jackson (or all three in the same film!).34

Admittedly, this analysis assumes, rather than explains, that we can attribute the rise of the top 1 percent to differences in talent but a lot of evidence supports the thesis. For one thing, in almost all countries—including such improbable cases as France and Spain—half to two-thirds of the income of the top 1 percent consists of salaries (compensation for work). Rarely, in any present-day advanced economy, do returns on capital constitute more than a quarter of the incomes of the top 1 percent (in the US, it is less than 15 percent), Thomas Piketty's arguments notwithstanding.35 As one observer notes, “The fact that so many of [today's] top earners work for a living is striking,”36 given that a century ago the great majority of elite incomes came from investments in property, bonds, or equities. For another, the model accurately predicts the kind of “fractal” inequality that so far has seemed to prevail almost everywhere in advanced and semi-advanced economies.37 That is, inequality seems to have grown not only between, but within firms and occupations: the top lawyers, academics, physicians, middle managers, and even shop floor workers, have begun to earn far more than the median member of their profession, or even the median co-worker of equal qualifications in their firm.

Once we grant that such differences in talent can become important, the model suggests that any globalization-induced rise in the relative price of capital-intensive goods (or, equivalently, decline in the relative price of labor-intensive products) in advanced economies will depress (or threaten to depress) the wages not only of low-skill workers but also of high-skill ones of less than superlative talent. It thus raises the prospect that the growing resistance to global markets may be embraced, sooner rather than later, not only by low-skill workers but by a growing segment of those with higher education or advanced training.

New New Trade Theory

“New new” trade theory (NNTT) offers an alternative firm-centric view of top-heavy inequality.38 Whereas neo-H-O-S-S focuses on how workers of different talents select into different sectors, NNTT focuses on how firms of different productivity levels sort into import-export activities. One of its salient implications is that increases in foreign trade concentrate the distribution of profits into the largest and most productive firms in each sector.39

The intuition is simple: import and export activities require large upfront costs, such as setting up global logistics networks and investing overseas—costs that only the largest firms can afford. The benefits of trade, access to larger markets, for example, then make these large firms even larger, which subsequently allows them to out-compete their smaller domestic rivals. Armed with global economies of scale, superstars like Walmart and Amazon flood the domestic market with low-cost goods and services. This squeezes out the smallest firms, for example, local mom-and-pop establishments, while reducing the profits of the midsize firms, whose middling productivity permits them to sell only domestically. In sum, NNTT implies, and offers evidence to show, that superstar firms in each sector reap the lion's share of the gains from globalization.

In its earliest formulation, NNTT implied no wage inequality, because it assumed workers to be homogeneous. Recent advances draw implications for wage inequality by allowing some profits to pass through to workers—what the literature calls rent-sharing. One modification allows firms to screen, and bargain over quasi-rents with, workers of varying abilities.40 More productive exporting firms pay higher wages to attract higher-ability talent. In the end, rent-sharing allows inequality in firm profits to spill over into inequality in workers’ wages.41

NNTT implies that globalization-induced inequality should manifest itself principally at the level of the firm, pulling up the compensation of all workers in the larger and more successful firms, and leaving behind all of those employed in smaller, domestically oriented firms (or those unemployed through the demise of the smallest firms). This is exactly what Helpman and colleagues find in Brazil, where 70 percent of overall inequality occurs within sectors and occupational categories; similar results were obtained by Akerman and co-authors in an analysis of wage inequality in Sweden from 2000 to 2007.42

Economic Geography

Economic geography explores the origins and effects of one of society's most readily observable features: the unequal distribution of economic activity across space, a phenomenon commonly called agglomeration.43 Broz, Frieden, and Weymouth (in this issue) document how globalization's effects appear most clearly at the level of communities, and operate through the mechanisms specified by economic geography.44 Here we complement their account by situating economic geography within only the broader set of trade models that contribute to extreme inequality. Globalization, we contend, exacerbates regional inequality by inflicting economic stagnation and decline on all but a handful of superstar cities. The mechanism works through the joint effect of agglomeration forces and trade costs. Globalization facilitates the lowering of trade costs (not just those of transportation and communication, but also costs imposed by tariff policies), and this frees up firms to locate in the places that confer the greatest advantage.

The literature identifies many advantages to urban agglomerations. Large cities increase access to suppliers of intermediate inputs, as well as to transportation infrastructure, large pools of specialized talent, and diverse consumers. Moreover, they facilitate the exchange of information about changes in competition, technology, and consumer tastes.45 Some locations also offer a fixed advantage such as access to deep ports or natural resources. Overall, large cities exist and continue to grow because they confer some large basket of benefits on those who locate there.46 The link to globalization seems obvious: the cheaper transportation becomes, and the farther tariff barriers fall, the easier it is for firms and workers to realize the benefits of agglomeration.

For regional inequality to speak to the puzzle of earnings inequality, it must be true that changes in regional growth both reflect and pass through to the wages of resident workers. We find this plausible and consistent with evidence of the stark spatial inequality in returns on skills. A growing literature documents the “end of spatial wage convergence” since 1980, with the bulk of wage gains going to high-skill workers concentrating in just a handful of large cities.47 However, enormous wage inequality within the largest cities suggests that between-region inequality provides only a partial picture. In reality, heterogeneity among workers and firms likely overlaps with, and is accentuated by, the effects of large cities.

Notable Similarities and Differences

All three advances in trade theory point to the same pessimistic outcome, that globalization produces extreme inequality, where a narrow segment of society benefits to the exclusion of the rest. Each theory identifies a different set of “superstars” within this narrow segment: workers with superlative talents, extraordinarily productive firms, or urban agglomerations. Despite varying mechanisms, each arrives at the conclusion of extreme inequality by introducing some form of unit heterogeneity—an assumption that the actors we once treated as identical actually differ from one another in important ways. Workers of similar education differ in innate talent; firms in the same sector vary in productivity; and regions in the same country vary in their advantages of agglomeration. This heterogeneity suggests a radically different perspective on the politics of globalization, one where we should not be surprised that populist protectionist movements arise; that they vilify elites; or that, despite finding their base constituency among low-skill workers, they enjoy nontrivial support from high-skill workers across many sectors.

We highlight two differences among these theories. First, they arrive at the implication of extreme inequality by varying degrees of theoretical complexity. In this regard, neo-H-O-S-S offers a clear advantage: its general framework requires no added assumptions about heterogeneous firms, economies of scale, locational mobility, or rent sharing.

Second, and at least as important, is the empirical accuracy of key theoretical assumptions. In the case of NNTT, evidence for the crucial rent-sharing assumption is decidedly mixed.48 For economic geography, countries almost certainly differ in the degree to which factors are spatially mobile. The neo-H-O-S-S model of differently talented workers will enjoy the most traction in longer-run analyses of wage outcomes, where factors are fully mobile across sectors and regions. Overall, the evident variance in empirical support for different modeling assumptions should caution users to validate these assumptions in their particular research contexts.

Finally, these unit heterogeneity models are not mutually exclusive—they likely reinforce one another in interesting ways. The most talented workers can earn the highest wage by working for the largest firms that can afford them. Regional agglomeration facilitates this advantageous match by locating these superstar workers and superstar firms in the same city. Thus, the top-heavy inequality we observe may very well arise at the intersection of heterogeneous workers, firms, and regions.

Hypothesis

Under any of the three trade theories described here, globalization produces top-heavy inequality, wherein a thin margin of workers benefits while the rest are left behind. This drives a populist strain of backlash that views globalization as a struggle of the masses versus the elites. To our mind, this casts a different light on recent research that sees the backlash as a response to shocks from immigration or imports. To state our key hypothesis:

H when top-heavy inequality is high, shocks from trade, whether in goods, services, or factors of production, increase public support for populist parties. 49 **In the absence of top-heavy inequality**, however, such **shocks have no effect on support for populism**. 50

**Rising inequality drives diversionary nationalism and sparks international conflict**

**Solt, 11** -- Southern Illinois University political science and sociology professor

[Frederick, “Diversionary Nationalism: Economic Inequality and the Formation of National Pride,” The Journal of Politics, Vol. 73, No. 3 (Aug. 3, 2011), pp. 821-830, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1017/s002238161100048x?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents>, accessed 6-27-21]

One of the oldest theories of nationalism is that states instill the nationalist myth in their citizens to divert their attention from great economic inequality and so forestall pervasive unrest. Because the very concept of nationalism obscures the extent of inequality and is a potent tool for delegitimizing calls for redistribution, it is a perfect diversion, and states should be expected to engage in more nationalist mythmaking when inequality increases. The evidence presented by this study supports this theory: across the countries and over time, where economic inequality is greater, nationalist sentiments are substantially more widespread.

This result adds considerably to our understanding of nationalism. To date, many scholars have focused on the international environment as the principal source of threats that prompt states to generate nationalism; the importance of the domestic threat posed by economic inequality has been largely overlooked. However, at least in recent years, domestic inequality is a far more important stimulus for the generation of nationalist sentiments than the international context. Given that nuclear weapons—either their own or their allies’—rather than the mass army now serve as the primary defense of many countries against being overrun by their enemies, perhaps this is not surprising: nationalism-inspired mass mobilization is simply no longer as necessary for protection as it once was (see Mearsheimer 1990, 21; Posen 1993, 122-24).

Another important implication of the analyses presented above is that growing economic inequality may increase ethnic conflict. States may foment national pride to stem discontent with increasing inequality, but this pride can also lead to more hostility towards immigrants and minorities. Though pride in the nation is distinct from chauvinism and outgroup hostility, it is nevertheless closely related to these phenomena, and recent experimental research has shown that members of majority groups who express high levels of national pride can be nudged into intolerant and xenophobic responses quite easily (Li and Brewer 2004). This finding suggests that, by leading to the creation of more national pride, higher levels of inequality produce environments favorable to those who would inflame ethnic animosities.

Another and perhaps even more worrisome implication regards the likelihood of war. Nationalism is frequently suggested as a **cause of war**, and more national pride has been found to result in a much greater demand for national security even at the expense of civil liberties (Davis and Silver 2004, 36-37) as well as preferences for “a **more militaristic** foreign affairs posture **and** a more **interventionist role** in world politics” (Conover and Feldman 1987, 3). To the extent that these preferences influence policymaking, the growth in economic inequality over the last quarter century should be expected to lead to **more aggressive foreign policies and more international conflict**. If economic inequality prompts states to generate diversionary nationalism as the results presented above suggest, then rising inequality could make for a **more dangerous world**.

The results of this work also contribute to our still limited knowledge of the relationship between economic inequality and democratic politics. In particular, it helps explain the fact that, contrary to median-voter models of redistribution (e.g., Meltzer and Richard 1981), democracies with higher levels of inequality do not consistently respond with more redistribution (e.g., Benabou 1996). Rather than allowing redistribution to be decided through the democratic process suggested by such models, this work suggests that states often respond to higher levels of inequality with more nationalism. Nationalism then works to divert attention from inequality, so many citizens neither realize the extent of inequality nor demand redistributive policies. By prompting states to promote nationalism, greater economic inequality removes the issue of redistribution from debate and therefore narrows the scope of democratic politics.

**Tackling inequality is key to catalyze international coop and inoculate the US against nationalism**

**Kupchan, 21** – Georgetown University international affairs professor

[Charles A. Kupchan, CFR senior fellow, served on the National Security Council during the Obama administration, and Peter L. Trubowitz, London School of Economics and Political Science IR professor, Associate Fellow at Chatham House, “The Home Front: Why an Internationalist Foreign Policy Needs a Stronger Domestic Foundation,” Foreign Affairs, May/June 2021, accessed 6-23-21]

The Home Front: Why an Internationalist Foreign Policy Needs a Stronger Domestic Foundation

U.S. President Joe Biden has declared that under his leadership, “America is back” and once again “ready to lead the world.” Biden wants to return the country to its traditional role of **catalyz**ing **international coop**eration and staunchly defending liberal values abroad. His challenge, however, is primarily one of politics, not policy. Despite Biden’s victory in last year’s presidential election, his internationalist vision faces a deeply skeptical American public. The political foundations of U.S. internationalism have collapsed. The domestic consensus that long supported U.S. engagement abroad has come apart in the face of mounting partisan discord and a deepening rift between urban and rural Americans.

An inward turn has accompanied these growing divides. President Donald Trump’s unilateralism, neo-isolationism, protectionism, and nativism were anathema to most of the U.S. foreign policy establishment. But Trump’s approach to statecraft tapped into public misgivings about American overreach, contributing to his victory in 2016 and helping him win the backing of 74 million voters in 2020. An “America first” approach to the world sells well when many Americans experience economic insecurity and feel that they have been on the losing end of globalization. A recent survey by the Pew Research Center revealed that roughly half the U.S. public believes that the country should pay less attention to problems overseas and concentrate more on fixing problems at home.

Redressing the hardships facing many working Americans is essential to **inoculating the country against “America first”** and Trump’s illiberal politics of grievance. That task begins with economic renewal. Restoring popular support for the country’s internationalist calling will entail sustained investment in pandemic recovery, health care, infrastructure, green technology and jobs, and other domestic programs. Those steps will require structural political reforms to ease gridlock and ensure that U.S. foreign policy serves the interests of working Americans.

What Biden needs is an “inside out” approach that will link imperatives at home to objectives abroad. Much will depend on his willingness and ability to take bold action to rebuild broad popular support for internationalism from the ground up. Success would significantly reduce the chances that the president who follows Biden, even if he or she is a Republican, would return to Trump’s self-defeating foreign policy. Such **future-proofing** is critical to **restoring international confidence in the** **U**nited **S**tates. In light of the dysfunction and polarization plaguing U.S. politics, leaders and people around the world are justifiably questioning whether Biden represents a new normal or just a fleeting reprieve from “America first.”

#### Global co-op is key to solve guaranteed existential threats

**Sasnal, 20** -- Polish Institute of International Affairs head of research

[Patrycja, "Mistaking Panacea for Pathogens: The Case for Existential Multilateralism," Challenges of Global Governance Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic, May 2020, https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/report\_pdf/challenges-of-global-governance-amid-the-covid-19-pandemic.pdf, accessed 8-18-20]

The majority of the global population only fears a handful of international threats. According to a Eurobarometer poll, the greatest EU concerns are immigration (34 percent), climate change (24 percent), the economic situation (18 percent), and terrorism (15 percent). According to a Pew survey, the top three concerns in Asia-Pacific and Latin America are cyberattacks, climate change, and terrorism. In most polls, Africans fear economic hardship the most, but the 2019 Afrobarometer also found that a majority think climate change is making their lives worse. According to an early Pew survey after the pandemic in the United States, Americans feared infectious diseases the most (79 percent) followed by terrorism (73 percent), nuclear weapons (73 percent), cyberattacks (72 percent), a rising China (62 percent), and climate change (60 percent).

These first-tier global challenges—climate change, terrorism, mass migration, infectious diseases, nuclear weapons, economic hardship, and cyberattacks—are not only substantively but also qualitatively different. That quality rests neither on the number of victims nor on the kind of perpetrator (state, individual, or natural) hut instead on the potential to threaten the **existence of humanity**. Three threats have this potential: climate change, highly infectious diseases, and nuclear weapons. Of course, abstract scenarios are easily imagined in which human existence is endangered because of a massive cyberattack, mass migration, or vicious artificial intelligence that leads to a **conflict in which nuclear weapons are used** and **humanity kills itself**. Such potential futures, though, require a chain of events, whereas the three existential menaces are present and direct. Unlike other threats, they are all global and equal. No community is immune from them or their aftermath. All three can reach a tipping point, after which the danger spirals out of control.

This set of existential threats is not conventionally recognized. The term existential threat has proliferated in political debates to mean anything across a spectrum of minor and major challenges: the opiate crisis to the policies of the Donald J. Trump administration. In twentieth-century politics, the expression was barely used despite the omnipresent danger of the nuclear bomb. For the past two decades, it has been mostly associated with terrorism. Terrorism, however, is not a threat to human existence—not even to Middle Easterners, where 95 percent of deaths from terrorist attacks occur. Classing mass migration as an existential threat is even more preposterous given how little insecurity migrants have brought to already stable host countries. Similarly, little suggests that inequality or economic hardship are existential threats, though their complex forms and far-reaching consequences render them categories of their own.

The distinction between existential and other international threats matters for multilateralism and global governance in light of the functional difference in the roles of the state in fighting them. The former can be taken on **only by international efforts**. Other concerns can be fought in other ways: a unilateral national decision to act internally or on another state; or a national bottom-up societal effort to reduce terrorism, disrupt cyber capabilities, or influence local migration patterns. Climate change, nuclear weapons, and infectious diseases, however, require global multilateral efforts to prevent their destructive potential from manifesting itself.

REVIVING TRUST IN INFORMATION AND SCIENCE

National responses to the pandemic have often been provisional—decisions of utmost importance to civil liberties are taken without proper argumentation or scientific judgment, because none is available. Not in living memory have governments watched each other as closely as now on decisions such as when and how to lock down and open societies and economies—at least in Europe. Since the pandemic, hunger for information and knowledge seems to have increased exponentially in international relations and the global public sphere because specific epidemiological expertise was needed—such that was available to only a few. Perhaps for the first time on such a scale, information is seen as directly correlated with human well-being. What scientists know about the virus—the way it is transmitted, how it mutates, how strong the antibodies are—is no longer seen as abstractly affecting our individual lives but directly affecting them.

The shortening of this perception chain is an opportunity for the scientific and analytical community to revive trust in experts by learning from the experience of life scientists. Medicine advanced as a result of interdisciplinary and international teams, and innovative fast publishing procedures (short communications and case reports). Given the importance of information to physical, political, and social life, further plans are being enacted to make scientific publications available for free, something social scientists should ponder as well.

The pandemic also exposes the weight of information in politics. First, information has been critical to assessing how effectively governments are responding to COVID-19. Without reliable statistical information from the health sector, it is impossible to analyze the scale of the pandemic, and therefore say anything about the measures authorities have taken. The Open Data Inventory 2018/19, which assesses the coverage and openness of official statistics, including health data, finds them open and covered only in Europe, North America, and a handful of other countries. Second, states have used the pandemic to spread propaganda and misinformation. China and Russia have a lot to answer for here by vilifying the European Union and the United States, as do Iran (which blamed the virus on the United States) and several Gulf states (which blamed Iran).

EXISTENTIAL MULTILATERALISM

The Indian novelist Arundhati Roy sees the pandemic as a portal between the old and new world. In international politics, this may translate into a passage from the post-1989 preoccupation with terrorism and economic growth based on consumption and exploitation to new existential politics. Little can be said about the future with certainty except that **it will face global existential threats**: climate change, infectious diseases, nuclear war. Because of the nature of these menaces, **they cannot be mitigated save by multinational**, informed, and expert **governance**.

#### Right to strike is key to combat climate change

**Subasinghe, 19** -- International Transport Workers’ Federation legal advisor

[Ruwan, and Jeff Vogt, director for the Solidarity Center’s Rule of Law department and was previously the legal director of the International Trade Union Confederation, "Unions must join the Global Climate Strike to avert a climate catastrophe," Equal Times, 9-5-19, https://www.equaltimes.org/unions-must-join-the-global?lang=en#.YYKfiZrMJPZ, accessed 11-3-21]

Unions must join the Global Climate Strike to avert a **climate catastrophe**

Over the past twelve months, groups like the youth-led #FridaysforFuture movement and the civil disobedience network Extinction Rebellion have woken up the world to the climate and ecological emergency we are facing. Earlier this year, over a million students walked out of classes as part of two hugely successful global school strikes against inaction on the climate crisis.

Now young people around the world are calling on workers to join them on 20 and 27 September for the third wave of global climate strikes. While some trade unions have been responding to the call with plans for lunch break actions and workplace climate assemblies, most are constrained by legal restrictions on the **right to strike** at the national level.

Since taking unprotected action can lead to unions and their leaders being held liable for damages and individual members being disciplined or dismissed, defying legal requirements in pursuit of climate action may not be a viable option for many beleaguered unions across the globe.

A strike is generally framed in national law as either a positive right or a freedom from liability which an employer would otherwise be able to assert in, for example, tort or contract. However, in many jurisdictions the right can only be exercised in the context of collective bargaining and/or a trade dispute. Unions operating in such jurisdictions will find it difficult to formally join the Global Climate Strike as the purpose of the action ostensibly falls outside the strict scope of collective bargaining or a trade dispute. While unions are increasingly bringing environmental issues to the bargaining table with demands for greening or just transition clauses, these efforts are still limited to workplace mitigation and adaptation strategies and do not cover wider commitments on climate change.

In countries where strikes in furtherance of socio-economic aims are permitted, unions will nevertheless need to win the argument that climate change is a socio-economic issue and not just an environmental or a political one.

Here we can, and should, rely on international law.

Committee on Freedom of Association

The International Labour Organization’s (ILO) tripartite Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA) has for nearly 70 years defined the scope of the right to freedom of association, including the right to strike. The CFA has consistently held that workers may engage in collective action, including protests and strikes, outside of the collective bargaining process and over matters beyond the traditional ambit of wages and conditions of work. So long as the strike is not ‘purely political’ in nature, such as an insurrection, the CFA has stated that, “organizations responsible for defending workers’ socio-economic and occupational interests should be able to use strike action to support their position in the search for solutions to problems posed by major social and economic policy trends which have a direct impact on their members and all workers in general, in particular as regards employment, social protection and standards of living.”

In the past, the CFA has given its imprimatur to protests and strikes concerning a range of issues including trade agreements, labour law reform, pensions, tax policy, social protection and similar demands. While it has not yet had occasion to consider a climate strike, it should find such a strike to be protected. Indeed, there is no issue today that has a more direct, immediate and serious impact on the world of work than the climate emergency.

Already, the ILO has explained that climate change, if not addressed, will have a serious impact on employment in all sectors and in all regions. These impacts include significant climate-driven migration for work, dangerous working conditions from extreme heat, job loss in rural areas due to crop failure and job loss in urban areas due to extreme weather events. Also, the actions we will need to take to mitigate climate change may be deeply disruptive, as the ILO Commission on the Future of Work has underscored. Conflict over how this is carried out and who benefits is certain to happen. Indeed, this is why Sustainable Development Goal 16 calls for broad social engagement in order to attain economic, social and environmental sustainability.

The Global Climate Strike, for trade unions, would necessarily mean a call for immediate and significant reductions in emissions while respecting the need for a just transition to protect workers and their communities.

The concept of a just transition of the workforce is firmly embedded in the legally binding Paris Agreement. Furthermore, in 2015 the ILO’s tripartite constituents unanimously endorsed guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies. The promotion and realisation of fundamental principles and rights at work, which includes the principle of freedom of association, lies at the heart of the guidelines. It is evident that without **the right to strike** workers will not be able to **effectively demand** investment in new green jobs, training, income protection and other necessary measures for a fair and just transition.

Strengthening the green-red alliance

After the climate strike, we will urgently need to think about how to deepen policy coherence between the labour and environmental justice fields. While they have some different objectives, both share a common history of resistance to dominant economic and political structures which have subordinated the interests of individuals and communities. Indeed, a new field of ‘just transition’ law may be a way to bridge the fields of labour and environmental law and transform these into a coherent legal discourse.

We would also propose as an important step the recognition of the right to strike in cases where an employer engages in activity which is demonstrably harmful to the environment. This is in a sense the extension of the long-standing principle that workers can remove themselves immediately from dangerous work without fear of retaliation. What can be more dangerous than activity that threatens our workplace, our communities and indeed life on Earth as we know it.

With only 11 years left to avert climate catastrophe, trade unions must be **given the means** to help prevent irreversible damage from climate change.

The right to strike is a human right protected under international law. Strikes have been, and can continue to be, a tool for **major societal transformations**, such as the democratisation of countries, from Poland to South Africa to Tunisia, and a just transition to a low carbon economy is just as significant. Without the **industrial muscle** of unions, we will not be able to **effectively** achieve the profound transformation of our economy, including the investment needed to create millions of new sustainable jobs.

A determined labour movement can face up to the ultimate challenge of climate change.

#### Extinction

**Ahmed, 19** -- INSURGE intelligence editor; citing Breakthrough National Centre for Climate Restoration research director David Spratt and former Chief of the Australian Defence Force retired Admiral Chris Barrie

[Nafeez, "New Report Suggests ‘High Likelihood of Human Civilization Coming to an End’ Starting in 2050," Vice, 6-3-19, https://www.vice.com/en\_us/article/597kpd/new-report-suggests-high-likelihood-of-human-civilization-coming-to-an-end-in-2050, accessed 5-5-20]

A harrowing scenario analysis of how human civilization might collapse in coming decades due to climate change has been endorsed by a former Australian defense chief and senior royal navy commander.

The analysis, published by the Breakthrough National Centre for Climate Restoration, a think-tank in Melbourne, Australia, describes climate change as “a **near**- to mid-**term** **existential threat** to human civilization” and sets out a plausible scenario of where business-as-usual could lead over the next 30 years.

The paper argues that the potentially “extremely serious outcomes” of climate-related security threats are often **far more probable than conventionally assumed**, but almost impossible to quantify because they “fall outside the human experience of the last thousand years.”

On our current trajectory, the report warns, “planetary and human systems [are] reaching a ‘point of no return’ by mid-century, in which the prospect of a largely uninhabitable Earth leads to the breakdown of nations and the international order.”

The only way to avoid the risks of this scenario is what the report describes as “akin in scale to the World War II emergency mobilization”—but this time focused on rapidly building out a zero-emissions industrial system to set in train the restoration of a safe climate.

The scenario warns that our current trajectory will likely lock in at least 3 degrees Celsius (C) of global heating, which in turn could **trigger** further amplifying **feedbacks** unleashing further warming. This would drive the **accelerating collapse** of **key ecosystems** “including coral **reef s**ystems, **the Amazon** rainforest and in **the Arctic**.”

The results would be devastating. Some one billion people would be forced to attempt to relocate from unlivable conditions, and two billion would face scarcity of water supplies. **Ag**riculture would collapse in the sub-tropics, and food production would suffer dramatically worldwide. The internal cohesion of nation-states like the US and China would unravel.

“Even for 2°C of warming, more than a billion people may need to be relocated and in high-end scenarios, the scale of destruction is beyond our capacity to model with a high likelihood of human civilization coming to an end,” the report notes.

The new policy briefing is written by David Spratt, Breakthrough’s research director and Ian Dunlop, a former senior executive of Royal Dutch Shell who previously chaired the Australian Coal Association.

In the briefing’s foreword, retired Admiral Chris Barrie—Chief of the Australian Defence Force from 1998 to 2002 and former Deputy Chief of the Australian Navy—commends the paper for laying “bare the unvarnished truth about the desperate situation humans, and our planet, are in, painting a disturbing picture of the real possibility that human life on Earth may be on the way to **extinction**, in the most horrible way.”

Barrie now works for the Climate Change Institute at Australian National University, Canberra.

Spratt told Motherboard that a key reason the risks are not understood is that “much knowledge produced for policymakers is **too conservative**. Because the risks are now existential, a new approach to climate and security risk assessment is required using scenario analysis.”

Last October, Motherboard reported on scientific evidence that the UN’s summary report for government policymakers on climate change—whose findings were widely recognized as “devastating”—were in fact **too optimistic**.

While the Breakthrough scenario sets out some of the more ‘high end’ risk possibilities, it is often not possible to meaningfully quantify their probabilities. As a result, the authors emphasize that conventional risk approaches tend to **downplay worst-case scenarios** despite their plausibility.

Spratt and Dunlop’s 2050 scenario illustrates how easy it could be to end up in an accelerating runaway climate scenario which would lead to a largely uninhabitable planet within just a few decades.

#### Strikes are vital for democracy- they prefigure collective democratic movements and activate skilled movements

**Medearis, 20** – UC Riverside political science professor

[John, "On the Strike and Democratic Protest," in Protest and Dissent, ed. by Melissa Schwartzberg, 2020, University Press Scholarship Online, accessed 11-3-21]

But in order to highlight the democratic significance of the strike, it is necessary to emphasize that a strike is not merely a (p.246) cessation of work—and it can never be just an individual act. To be sure, a strike might be experienced as nothing more than not-working by a worker who participates only by staying home on strike days. But a work stoppage by an individual worker would not be a strike. To be potent and meaningful, a strike must be collective.34 And for this reason it must also be more than just a collective cessation. For even the cessation of labor necessarily entails collective action: an ongoing ensemble of reflexive activities directed toward coordination among many agents. Examples of this coordinating activity include designing and carrying out a program of face-to-face mobilizing, planning, and holding mass meetings, and related organization-building. The nine-day West Virginia teacher walkout in 2018 took place only as the culmination of a long process needed to achieve such coordination, an active process whose incidents included the organization and use of a Facebook group for dissenting public employees in late 2017; teachers’ meetings in many counties beginning in January 2018; informational “walk-ins” beginning at about the same time; smaller daylong walkouts in February; and finally, strike votes in counties across the state.35

There is a further sense in which a strike intrinsically is a collective action, and not just an individual act or a collective cessation. A strike is an action of a collective that constitutes and posits the collective. The few political theorists who write about strikes often emphasize that they are coercive, but it is important to recognize one of the specific kinds of coercion involved. Many movements adopt strategies that restructure power relations, strategies that forcefully shift contention between challengers and more powerful elites from one arena to another.36 Strikes fit this mold, reshaping power relations by combining the power of employees, forming them into a collective for dealing with an employer, forcefully insisting that the boss cannot bypass collective demands and impose terms of employment on isolated workers, in a series of one-on-one negotiations.

In fact, strikes, as autonomy-seeking exercises of collective power, cannot be summoned without workers cooperating with each other on terms that recognize equal voice. Under most established labor law regimes, strikes must be authorized by a democratic vote. And this democratic requirement is more than a contingent imposition by the state on workers’ range of action—a democratic principle (p.247) imposed, extraneously, on the nature of the strike.37 For one thing, strikes by minorities of workers generally cannot succeed. And the idea of democratic authorization is arguably inscribed in the purpose of strikes: supporting the autonomy of otherwise isolated, individual workers vis-à-vis the market and employers. Two relevant and interrelated forms of autonomy can be distinguished here: private autonomy—the autonomy protected by individual liberties, and public autonomy—the collective autonomy of democratic agents.38 Strikes, we have seen, are often necessary to counteract domination and oppression faced by isolated workers, to support their autonomy. But, again, there can be no such thing as an individual strike, and so no way for an isolated individual to support just her private autonomy through an individual suspension of labor. An exercise of workers’ public autonomy is required to protect both public and private autonomy in this instance. If the goal is to protect autonomy, in other words, workers’ only choice is to act collectively and democratically. Neither inaction nor undemocratic combined action will do.39 Some recognition of considerations like these probably explain why West Virginia teachers held strike votes, sought democratic authorization, even though this procedure was not mandated by law—even though, in fact, it was probably illegal under state law for the teachers to strike at all. So, to sum up: Even the apparently simple collective stoppage of work usually seen to characterize a strike is never just a cessation. It is also an active phase, a culmination of a process of coordination and cooperation among equal workers, part of an extended democratic collective action.40 And in any case, as we shall soon see, there is generally more to a strike than stoppage and the degree of active coordination needed to initiate it.

Republican theorists make a strong case for understanding strikes as statements about domination. But in addition to a statement about domination, a strike can also justly be interpreted as a positive statement, or a **reminder, about the agency, power, and skill of rank-and-file actors**, and the way the exercise of these capacities or qualities shapes firms and organizations—as well as their ability to achieve their recognized goals. Jane McAlevey notes that “the ability of workers” to strike—“to withdraw their cooperation from interdependent relationships of power”–such as workplaces, firms, schools, governments—depends on their already (p.248) “understanding their contribution” to those institutions and social relations.41 Indeed, it is not uncommon for workers, even those planning to strike, not just to recognize but to be positively disposed toward some of the purposes of their workplaces, firms, and organizations—and to be proud of their contributions to fulfilling those purposes.42 Citing the Chicago school strike of 2012, McAlevey argues that even as teachers withdrew their labor, they were conscious that they “labor[ed] for something deeply purposeful,” that they valued, and were fully aware of “their contribution to the education and development” of children, and regarded this as their mission even as they geared up to walk out.43

Here it is worth acknowledging that, as crucial as it is to recognize the potential for oppression and domination in employment, it is also essential to recognize the need and potential for satisfaction and fulfillment through work. Robert Kuttner observes that much orthodox economic analysis assumes workers see work only as “a burden and something to be avoided.”44 Work does entail effort, exertion, and the overcoming of difficulty. But this is not necessarily negative. For work is also “a source of self-esteem and mastery; an engagement with the social world; a basis for positive or negative self-identity.”45 G.W.F. Hegel’s account of the lord and bondsman—one of the best known treatments in canonical political theory of the ethical significance and characteristics of labor—rests on the related idea that labor is valuable to workers as an externalization of their will, and a demonstration of their skill, agency, and potency, one they can see reflected, sometimes in the material results of their work, but more generally in the constructed social world around them.46

With all this in mind, it is appropriate, first, to regard a strike as a living counterfactual that demonstrates the efforts and contributions—as well as the agency and skill—of workers to the organization for which they work, and at least some of the organization’s goals. A variety of university, school, and public employee unions deploy variants of the slogan: The university (school, city) works because we do.47 The slogan is of course in part a warning about the possible impact of a strike—of a work stoppage—but it also reminds us, more generally, that even institutions that are often identified with their most visible leaders—entrepreneurs, CEOs, presidents, superintendents—are made what they are, substantially, by the (p.249) many, by the active contributions of ordinary actors. This could fairly be described as the democratic truth of any organization, the fact that it is made what it is substantially by its rank and file.48

In addition to adding a layer to the potential meaning of strikes, the positive consciousness of workers of their own agency, potency, and skill likely helps explain the sense of roughly political attachment of many employees to their organizations—their sense of durable membership in the firms or schools or governments of which they are a part in consequence of their work. It explains something additional, that is, about why workers claim to be entitled to quit working without quitting their jobs: because they claim a kind of membership that is not cancelled by striking, and that cannot simply be revoked purely on the discretion of management.49 And this, too, makes strikes more politically, ethically, and expressively more complex than they might seem—at least to some people. Joseph Schumpeter focused on entrepreneurial potency, was contemptuous of workers who also saw factories and firms as in some sense “theirs.”50 But a sense that their effort, skill, agency, and contributions make them legitimate members of their firms and organizations gives workers as well a reason to choose “voice” over “exit”—protest, even deeply contentious protest, over mere quitting.51 Even as workers stop working, their strike is often in part an expression of this political, incipiently democratic sense of commitment and earned belonging to an organization or association. And although this chapter is not really about workplace democracy, it is worth noting that insofar as workers seek to democratize a workplace, they are attempting to democratize an institution that they understand already to be, in substantial part, the result of their work—an association of which they already consider themselves members.

If labor in the most obvious or familiar sense relevant here—making things, or performing services—ceases during a strike, other generative activity, of a different kind, by the same people—cooperating with and acting on other agents—does not end but is instead significantly redirected. Ordinarily, the activity of obeying superiors, following work rules and procedures, and so on, maintains or reproduces the hierarchical relationships and lines of authority that to some extent characterize almost every workplace. But during strikes, this activity is redirected toward more horizontal (p.250) ties and relations between workers cooperating for a common purpose.52 From beginning to end, a strike is in yet another sense not only a suspension of one kind of activity, but also a robust collective action that has to be planned and actively maintained. In most contemporary instances, as I have already shown, simply to coordinate the work stoppage itself, there must first be a long **process** of discussion, advocacy, and persuasion between workers—and then, often, a strike vote. And once a strike of any length begins, more egalitarian collective action, more horizontal relation-building, is needed. Workers must organize picket lines, rallies, and similar protests that call attention to and support their efforts. They must engage in bargaining that involves and ultimately wins the support of most employees. They must create and sustain the mechanisms for communicating, sharing information, calling and running meetings, issuing public statements, and so on. The particular work involved varies according to the nature and duration of the strike and the kind of organization struck. Sit-down strikes, ones involving an occupation of the workplace, were perhaps at the far end of the spectrum in the variety and intensity of both the work strikers were called upon to perform, and the social ties and relationships they found it necessary to build in so doing. A description of the 1936–37 sit-down strike at the Fisher One and Two General Motors plants in Flint, Michigan is instructive:

The strike, which was to continue for six weeks, was a large organizational undertaking. A committee of seventeen was in charge and reported daily to membership meetings. The sit-downers, organized into squads of fifteen under a captain, lived together in these groups in sections of the plant. Strike duty was six hours a day, three on and nine off, consisting of picketing at the gates, patrolling, health and sanitary inspection, [and] K.P.53

The teachers’ strikes that spread across the United States in 2018 also required many different kinds of work and collective effort. While the West Virginia strike was on, thousands of teachers protested daily in the state capitol building in Charleston.54 Other strikers collected and distributed food for poor students who normally rely on school breakfasts and lunches.55 And still others, of course, continued bargaining with political leaders and (p.251) communicating with and canvassing members. Later, while on strike in Oklahoma, teachers organized a 110-mile march.56 There is a lot more going on in these instances, obviously, than cessation, than not-working.

And these directly-strike-related activities do not exhaust the list of egalitarian, horizontal relationships and institutions that strikes may enact or reproduce. Consider, for example, the matter of labor rights, or what we might call a regime of labor rights: the right to strike itself, of course, but also the right to engage in a whole range of what American labor law calls “concerted activities,” the right to form and take part in unions and other worker associations, the right ultimately to engage in collective bargaining over wages, benefits, and working conditions, and the related association and speech rights needed for this. Even labor rights that are well defined in law and policy and not presently a matter of public debate are only really enjoyed to the degree they are enacted and supported by many people. If, as J. S. Mill argues, to “have” a right is to “have something which society ought to defend [a person] in the possession of,” then to enjoy and experience a right requires both enactment on one person’s part and the active support and defense of the enactment by others.57

Some relatively well-institutionalized exercises of rights, like voting or publishing an article, mainly require the fairly impersonal, routinized action of many people, such as editors, election officials, poll workers, or advertising salespeople. Other, more extra-institutional rights exercises, such as marching or speaking at a demonstration, are enabled by more consciously enabling activities undertaken by people playing different roles for a shared aim. In either case, one person’s exercise of a right—whether a more institutionalized exercise or a more extra-institutional one—may also be made possible by many other people simultaneously exercising the same right. All this analysis applies to strikes. Those engaged in strikes together provide each other the active support that the exercise of any right always requires. And in so doing, they are building horizontal, participation-supportive social relations and ties. They are producing and reproducing, for themselves and each other, an actual labor rights regime—bringing it out of the pages of law books and into lived experience, so to speak.

(p.252) And this horizontal relation-building in support of labor rights is even more significant, more needed, in the many actual instances where labor rights are controversial, resisted, and contested—where it is an open question what rights workers will have and enjoy. Strikes, as opportunities actively and forcefully to enact and experience labor rights, have sometimes been at least as important to determining what labor rights ultimately are as simple legislation, litigation, and debate. Even after the US National Labor Relations Act (or Wagner Act) was passed, Ahmed White notes, its meaning “remained in doubt for months after its passage.”58 In fact, many employers simply assumed the Supreme Court would annul Wagner, since the Court had so often overturned labor rights legislation.59 As White adds: “until this contest was settled there was, as the history of the strikes shows, no real labor law.”60 Under such conditions, “the process of forging the Act’s meaning was accomplished not only by the courts, the Board, and other elite institutions, but by labor itself—and, in this respect, not only by the movement’s top leaders, but by rank-and-file workers and shop-floor activists.”61

Something similar could be said about an earlier era, when the question was not so much actively establishing the meaning of new labor legislation, but rather actively overturning established labor law practice and precedent. The scourge of labor then, as it had been for decades, was the court injunction forbidding a strike. James Gray Pope argues that it is the long history of strikes carried out in defiance of injunctions that more than anything else discredited and forced an end to the court orders.62

Finally, even if the legislature and courts have determined the legal extent and definition of some labor right, employers may still often attempt to deny workers the enjoyment of that right. If it is true that strikes and other concerted labor actions can contest and determine the content of actual labor rights as against the state and political resistance, the same is surely true as against employer resistance in the economy and workplace.

To take stock, then, the case so far for the strike as a democratic response to the character of labor and employment encompasses: the proposition that even the cessation of labor is a collective action that requires, if it is to serve its purpose, active coordination among workers on equal terms; the proposition that strikes (p.253) can be seen as positive expressions or reminders of the agency and skill of workers; the related proposition that recognition of how their, effort, skill, and agency help make their firms or organizations what they are provides the basis for a claim to membership in them and so to collective influence in them, a claim that adds to our understanding of why workers strike rather than quit; and the proposition that in a strike, workers redirect some of their activity from reproducing workplace hierarchy to producing and reproducing **horizontal, egalitarian ties** with other workers, and toward reproducing or practically enacting a regime of democratic labor rights.

These claims take on even greater importance when read in conjunction with the vital republican case for strikes as responses to forms of domination characteristic of employment. Too much democratic theory neglects domination, or ignores the central place of resisting domination and oppression in democratic practice.63 But contemporary republicanism’s characteristic concern for identifying and resisting domination readily complements an approach to democratic theory that understands democratic movements and institutions always emerge in a social world that has already taken shape—a social world, parts of which strongly resists efforts at common egalitarian management, and that provides some groups and individuals the means to oppress or dominate others.64 With domination and oppression in view, it is possible to distinguish the entire comprehensive argument for viewing strikes as democratic: They consist of workers striving to act together, on equal terms, building horizontal relations with each other, to resist economic domination and to achieve some rough sort of collective management of the terms of labor.

From the Strike to Democratic Protest

What does this exploration of the strike tell us about democratic protest and collective action, generally? One rendering of the question would be: What does the strike tell us about when we are justified in saying that a protest or collective action has democratic value—in characterizing the protest or collective action as democratic? And it is not too difficult to see that the desiderata that make strikes democratically valuable should qualify other protests (p.254) as democratic as well. In short, then, protests and collective actions that are coordinated on equal terms by their participants; collective actions that are exercises and expressions of the effort, agency, and skill of ordinary people; protests that build, maintain, or reproduce horizontal, egalitarian ties and relations among participants; protests that enact and give life to a scheme of democratic rights; and protests that counter oppression and domination are in this measure democratic. But I think it is possible to learn more than this about protest—especially democratic protest—from the analysis of the strike.

To this point, my case for the democratic value and significance of the strike has rested in part on recognition of a number of claims. It has rested on appreciation of the uniqueness of labor—or labor power—as compared to other purported commodities, and the resultant, troubling potential in employment for oppression and domination.65 It has rested as well on recognizing that strikes involve a cessation of labor—but also much more. For human activity, of which labor is just one variety, does not just make commodities and services, it also reproduces relations of employment and other social relations. And the socially reproductive activity of workers does not cease in a strike, but instead is redirected democratically. My argument so far has also rested on the related recognition of the effort, agency, and skill of workers, on their recognition of this effort, agency, and skill, and on the claim of membership in workplaces, firms, and organizations to which this recognition may give rise.

So the question about the broader implications of what we have learned about the strike cashes out, in part, as a question about the generalizability of these claims about labor, domination, activity, agency, and skill. As we move away from the sphere of employment, which of these assumptions still pertain? To answer, we must expand the scope of attention from labor (and labor power), narrowly, to activity, generally—or at least the kinds of activity that characterize politics. And we must broaden the scope of attention from protest or collective action within relations of employment and within the political economy to protest or collective action in virtually any social domain.

It seems clear that the particular concerns associated with selling labor power, while essential in the domain of employment, are (p.255) not necessarily relevant outside of it. Other forms of protest are focused on domination and oppression, but they are not necessarily focused on the particular forms of these phenomena that can arise from selling one’s labor power. Similarly, the fundamental relation between cessation or withdrawal and the strike does not necessarily pertain to other forms of democratic protest—though it is crucial to some, such as boycotts.

But many of the crucial assumptions or claims from the previous section are still relevant when we turn our attention away from employment and employees to protesters and political actors, generally. More specifically: their effort, agency, and skill; the consciousness they often have of this agency and skill and of their importance for their campaigns, movements, or organizations; the sense in which their protest activity builds and reproduces horizontal ties and social relations among participants—these all apply to activity other than labor, as well, and so are quite relevant outside of the realm of employment. And I want to suggest now that these pertinent assumptions—these facts about protesters or participants in collective action—jointly support a claim that democratic protest should be understood as work.

By calling a variety of political action work, by calling attention to political work, I seek to accentuate activity that is purposive, that involves exertion and effort, and that both requires and develops, in varying measure, know-how and skill. We are very conscious of work as a feature of employment—of work as something that goes on in the political economy—but my point is that work is a crucial feature of political life as well. Yet the importance of political work is not well recognized in either of the two reigning approaches to democratic theory today. Elite approaches have typically seen voting—or some other relatively untaxing form of participation—as the activity characteristic of democracy, and have doubted the ability of citizens to do much more than vote.66 And although one recent trend in deliberative theory de-emphasizes the need for any particular individuals to engage in principled deliberation, it still emphasizes discourse over other forms of participation.67 Work as democratic participation tends not to get its due.

The concrete types of activities indicated by “political work” are fairly clear in the case both of strikes and other non-strike collective actions. Just as (potential) strikers must persuade other (p.256) workers to join them on strike, both strikers and other protesters and activists must often work to gain the support of other similarly situated or like-minded people, or to persuade them to join them in some other form of protest, such as a rally, march, or picket. But it is not easy to organize such a campaign of agitation, to canvass others to participate politically. (This is especially true of canvassing that aims to get a majority of some group of people—not just the “usual suspects”—to engage in a costly or risky effort.) Such an endeavor involves assessing the target group, deciding who among them is to actually to be contacted and recruited, creating a system or organization for reaching those people and recording the interactions; learning through trial and error how to communicate with them persuasively and effectively. Similarly, organizing the rally or march itself also requires work. Someone has to choose and scout the location; some participants must obtain permission or permits and deal with the police (or plan for the consequences of not doing so); some participants must serve as leaders or monitors, to make sure more casual participants understand and abide by decisions about the nature of the protest; someone has to train those leaders and monitors; and so on. Meetings to decide on the goals and parameters of the protest—sometimes smaller leadership meetings and sometimes larger mass-membership ones—are inevitably involved, as well. And planning and organizing meetings is another sort of skill or art. Almost all of these efforts involve using and developing what we tend to call social skills: listening and responding to frustrated people, defusing conflicts, making people feel welcome and appreciated. And, of course, situated within these broader tactical and strategic efforts are smaller practical tasks, from making signs to feeding, hydrating, and caffeinating marchers or canvassers.

Some democrats, convinced that all this is work, still may not be sure they should pay attention or pay heed to such run-of-the mill effort and skill. Surely keeping lists, designing posters, or making coffee are beneath the interest of democratic theory. But it is telling that democracy’s skeptics and critics have always doubted the ability and proficiency of ordinary people to participate significantly in politics—that this doubt has been part of their case against democracy, or at least against enthusiasm for democracy. Schumpeter is not alone in having concluded that “the electoral (p.257) mass is incapable of action other than a stampede.”68 By contrast, theorists favorable toward democracy have tended to evince an appreciation of the capacities to act of ordinary people, even if this appreciation has usually taken the form of appreciation of lay capacities to engage in a fairly narrow range of specific activities they have considered to be truly democratic, like voting and deliberating. Surely this appreciation of lay capacities (even when applied only to a narrow range of capacities) makes sense for democrats. If an “ought” implies a “can,” then democratic theorists have reason to find evidence for and grounds to appreciate the relevant capacities of ordinary people. And so, if I am right that democratic protest requires ordinary people to engage in political work—that ordinary people ought to do such work for the vitality of democracy—then it behooves us to find evidence for and the grounds to appreciate the capacities of ordinary people for such work. Democratic theory should explore and recognize the value of what Mary Dietz calls “sustained, purposeful activity that meets obstacles and undertakes acts of transformation in the world”; democratic theory needs “an action-coordinating concept that appreciates the purposeful nature of human struggle as politics.”69

Democratic theorists might offer another objection to recognizing the centrality of political work. Surely, some might say, it is possible to distinguish the reflection, deliberation, and judgment that go into planning such work from the subsequent drudgery of actually carrying it out. And surely, the critics might say, it is the deliberation—the distinctly discursive, thoughtful phase leading to a decision—that, once distinguished from the phase of action, should be carefully studied and democratically appreciated or critiqued. I have argued elsewhere that this sort of objection stems, in part, from a mistaken view that takes action to be divisible into a series of discrete acts, each preceded by a distinct decision.70 Action is better seen as a continual, reflexive process, ongoing in time.

But rather than deducing a response to this objection from a relatively abstract theory of action, it is better to notice the way that a little concrete familiarity with actual cases of “political work” furnishes a response to the idea that we should distinguish and valorize the reflection, deliberation, and judgment involved in protest. The teachers who went on statewide strike in West Virginia (p.258) in 2018 did not arrive at that point through completion of a distinct phase of pure reflection and deliberation. Rather, they got to the point of mounting a lengthy statewide strike by series of active interventions—and learning from them. They had tried lobbying the state government and learned from the failure of that effort. They tried smaller walkouts and informational walk-ins and learned from the meager results of those actions. And as the movement grew, other teachers were drawn to join those first to act, not through deliberative persuasion alone, but through active example. And strikes themselves are always active tests of hypotheses. Workers do not know if they will succeed. They are trying their powers and testing the intentions and strength of their opponents.

In general, then, strikers, activists, and other participants in political work usually do not engage in a distinct and prior process of study, discussion, deliberation, and judgment all before engaging in any action. Rather, they learn, communicate, and even formulate goals through engagement in a continual active process. The activity itself is infused with inquiry, thought, and communication. They start acting, and their action elicits or provokes responses that have to be considered—exposes them and others to experiences and information that would never have been available to them had they opted for a distinct a priori discursive process. Another clear example of this, one not tied to labor and employment, is the lunch counter protests that spread across the American South in 1960.71 The upsurge did not begin with a full plan, or even a clear policy demand or singular message. In initiating the sit-ins, protesters, in effect, were poking a stick at a complex system of institutions, laws, and disparate groups all sustaining—or at least not yet undermining—the racial caste system. Unpredictably, businesses and officials in Greensboro, North Carolina, hesitated to crack down harshly on the early sit-ins. Crucial allies had previously disapproved of sit-ins, but now new ones stepped in to help. Protesters learned, reacted, and formulated new tactics, and revised goals in response to these countermoves, growing more ambitious all the time. What mushroomed in spring 1960, it is important to emphasize, was a novel form of action, not so much any new contribution to discourse—a new argument or policy proposal. And it is not just the activists who learned from this tactical intervention. So did other lay actors. And they learned from (p.259) watching an active intervention playing out—not, primarily, from listening to or taking part in an exchange of reasons.

Drawing on John Dewey, it is appropriate to call this sort of active political process experimental. Dewey stressed scientific practice of experiment as a model for political action and social inquiry because experimentation always involves active intervention, rather than mere passive observation and reflection—a continual process of thoroughly entwined action and thought, rather than just “comparison of ideas already current” or “elaboration of ideas and policies after ideas are once put forth” as a prelude to a distinct phase that puts those ideas into action.72 In such a process, thought and deliberation cannot be seen as purely prior to action. Nor can ends or goals—since these are likely to change as active experience spurs reconsideration.

This understanding of political work as experimental and continually ongoing provides, I think, a valuable perspective from which to consider recent work on means and ends in politics. The critique of political theory that is overly focused on ends—to the exclusion or derogation of means—is a growing genre.73 Ends-centered political thought often assumes that it is possible to posit ideal ends, goals that are valuable in themselves, and then later devise means capable of achieving them. Karuna Mantena shows how M. K. Gandhi perceived the dangers of this approach and transcended it. Gandhi, according to Mantena, was deeply concerned with “cycles of violence” and the “inherent tendency towards escalation in conflict.”74 He believed that those who unduly elevated their ideal ends would be prone to choose means that would lead toward violent escalation. The alternative was to understand that means and ends are not categorically distinct, but are “convertible terms”—and to select means that would minimize the likelihood of resistance and violent escalation.75 Alexander Livingston has made the case for a remarkably analogous reading of Dewey, one focused on the unpredictability and contingency of action. Livingston’s Dewey argues that once we recognize that action is unpredictable in outcome; that it is an always ongoing, endlessly iterative process; and that ends are never more fallible projections from our current situation, rather than fixed, certain beacons, guiding our action from beyond its native realm, then we recognize that means and ends (p.260) are interdependent. **Today’s ends are** always **tomorrow’s means**.76 Interestingly, Livingston shows how this approach leads Dewey to justify strikes, despite the fact that they are coercive. Strikes can be a “democratic means” when they serve “as a tool of provoking public inquiry,” where inquiry means “the practice of creatively responding to problematic situations that arise when the means of action escape their anticipated ends.”77

Mantena’s Gandhi, then, demonstrates how potential destructive cycles of violence should lead us to see means and ends as interrelated. And Livingston’s Dewey should prompt us to recognize that action’s contingency—and the revisability of ends—establish the same. I would add: Recognition of the chief claims of this chapter—the significance of the agency and skill of workers and activists, their participation in political work, the experimental quality of much of that work—provides a complementary but distinct justification for viewing means and ends as interdependent.

The interrelation of means and ends—indeed the difficulty of making a sharp distinction between means and ends—is quite clear with respect to strikes. Strikes are intended to protect and achieve worker autonomy, but they are also active exercises of it. They are intended to establish a democratic regime of labor rights, but they attempt to establish such rights through collectively putting them into action. The point, I think, is quite generalizable. Mantena, for example, argues that “Gandhi’s understanding of swaraj or self-rule may be the clearest instance of an end that is constitutive of the act itself.”78 Citizens and activists often understand their participation not as a one-off tactic chosen to accomplish an end and then abandoned, but as a long-lasting process, in the course of which they seek to become more effective. They obtain satisfaction now in exercising their skills, agency, and their power—individual and collective—and they also understand that the present exercise can help lead to **greater future efficacy as citizens**. Experimental action, then, should not be seen just as a means to democratic ends: first because, like other kinds of political action, it may be one form of a **never-ending** process of **growth in** citizen efficacy and **power**.

It should not be seen just as a means, additionally, because in fact it often entails a process of clarifying and choosing purposes and values and understandings that are not determined ahead of (p.261) time or externally from the activity itself. Interviews suggest, for example, that Occupy Wall Street activists saw their varied activities neither just as fulfillments in themselves nor merely as means to some ideal democratic future, but as part of an ongoing process of **developing** their **political capacities for future democratic involvement**. Participants celebrated the fact that movement activity **“unleash[ed]** all these sorts of **talents and energies**,” that it **“politicized” people**, enhancing their understanding of the world; gave them opportunities to “learn the **right skills**” and **become** “really good leaders and good **organizers**”; engendered pride at having “transformed” the Occupy encampment to make it a better site for democratic activity; and fostered a “sense of community.”79

Conclusion

Strikes and other concerted activities by workers are, even in the best times we have ever known, **crucial** for what we could fairly call democratic equality—for combating the forms of economic inequality that are so dangerous to political equality and in turn to the **health of democratic politics**. Strikes are also important democratic collective actions that address the deep interest workers have in exercising control over how they labor, in influencing the structure of employment. And strikes are vivid exemplars of two things we should remember about all democratic protest: its character as political work, purposive, strenuous, and skillful; and its status as neither means nor end, but both.

#### Strong democracy prevents world war

**Diamond, 19** – Stanford polisci professor

[Larry; 2019; Professor of Sociology and Political Science and at Stanford University, Ph.D. in Sociology from Stanford University; Ill Winds, “Conclusion: A New Birth of Freedom,” Ch. 14]

In such a near future, my fellow experts would no longer talk of “democratic erosion.” We would be spiraling downward into a time of democratic despair, recalling Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s grim observation from the 1970s that liberal democracy “is where the world was, not where it is going.” 5 // The world pulled out of that downward spiral—but it took new, more purposeful American leadership. The planet was not so lucky in the 1930s, when the global implosion of democracy led to a catastrophic **world war**, between a rising axis of emboldened dictatorships and a shaken and economically depressed collection of self-doubting democracies. // These are the stakes. Expanding democracy—with its liberal norms and constitutional commitments—is a **crucial** foundation **for world peace** and security. Knock that away, and our most basic hopes and assumptions will be imperiled. // The problem is not just that the ground is slipping. It is that we are perched on a global precipice. That ledge has been gradually giving way for a decade. If the erosion continues, we may well reach a **tipping point** where democracy goes bankrupt suddenly—plunging the world into depths of oppression and aggression that we have not seen since the end of **World War** II. As a political scientist, I know that our theories and tools are not nearly good enough to tell us just how close we are getting to that point—until it happens.

#### Democratic peace is an empirical law- best and newest studies prove

**Imai, 20** – Harvard government and stats professor

[Kosuke, PhD in Political Science at Harvard, Professor in the Department of Government and the Department of Statistics at Harvard University "Robustness of Empirical Evidence for the Democratic Peace: A Nonparametric Sensitivity Analysis", accessed 9-1-2021, https://imai.fas.harvard.edu/research/files/dempeace.pdf]

The democratic peace — the idea that democracies rarely fight one another — has been called “the closest thing we have to an **empirical law** in the study of international relations.” Yet, some contend that this relationship is spurious and suggest alternative explanations. Unfortunately, in the absence of randomized experiments, we can never rule out the possible existence of such confounding biases. Rather than commonly used regression-based approaches, we apply a **nonparametric sensitivity analysis**. We show that overturning the positive association between democracy and peace would require a confounder that is 47 times more prevalent in democratic dyads than in other dyads. To put this number in context, the relationship between democracy and peace is at least **five times as robust** as that between smoking and lung cancer. To explain away the democratic peace, therefore, scholars must find far more powerful confounders than already those identified in the literature.

#### Strong unions empowered by strikes build peace movements- de-rails interventionism

**Marshall, 3** -- Labor Commission of the Communist Party USA chair

[Scott, "Our Best Defense: Labor and the Anti-war Movement," Political Affairs, July 2003, https://web.archive.org/web/20071024140838/http://politicalaffairs.net:80/article/view/48/1/23, accessed 4-16-18]

Our Best Defense: Labor and the Anti-war Movement

The world’s working class and people had no side in the war in Iraq and nothing to gain. George Bush, with his narrow band of extreme right-wing ideologues, corporate interests, military fanatics and racists, was willing to spill gallons of other people’s blood for economic and political domination. The corrupt, dictatorial regime in Baghdad, while really powerless in this situation, was willing to sacrifice its people in hope of preserving its rule. In response to the slaughter, the world’s overwhelming majority, the working people, demand an immediate end to the war and the complete withdrawal of all US, British and other forces from Iraq and the region. Meanwhile, the largest, broadest, most global peace movement ever has developed. Millions around the world, including hundreds of thousands in the US, have taken to the streets. In much of the world this movement is led, in part, by the trade unions. In many countries, **strike** action**s** and boycotts were used to **oppose** the **war** and to **block military supplies**. Here at home the labor component of the anti-war movement was unprecedented. Hundreds of local unions, dozens of central labor bodies and joint councils and many other labor- related coalitions denounced the war. Several international unions condemned the war outright. The AFL-CIO Executive Council seriously questioned the war drive of the Bush administration. In many cities labor anti-war coalitions, which combine labor leaders and rank-and-file activists, have sprung into life – even helping to lead broader, massive anti-war demonstrations. Labor and Peace Issues of war and peace have always been critical questions of the class struggle – many times, they become overriding issues. For the working class and the labor movement the struggle for peace is ultimately inseparable from the struggle for economic and social justice. This is not at all a new idea. Eugene Debs, one of the greatest labor leaders in American history, put it this way in 1918 in his famous Canton, Ohio peace speech: The master class has always declared the wars; the subject class has always fought the battles. The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose, while the subject class has had nothing to gain and all to lose – especially their lives. Debs, one of the great pioneers of industrial unionism, was arrested and jailed for this speech and for counseling young workers to refuse military service in World War I. From his jail cell, Debs received close to a million votes for president in the 1920 election. Debs was not alone in opposing World War I. Most of the leadership of the Industrial Workers of the World opposed the war and spoke out. Many locals of the American Federation of Labor passed resolutions condemning it. In fact, labor anti-war sentiment is **deeply rooted in** US **labor** history. Samuel Gompers, president of the AFL, made a fiery speech against war at a meeting called by the New York Central Labor Union in 1890, saying: Labor is never for war. It is always for peace…Who would be compelled to bear the burden of war? The working people. They would pay the taxes, and their blood would flow like water … The battle for the cause of labor, from the times of the remotest antiquity, has been for peace and for good will among men. The capitalists and their elected supporters became alarmed at the unity and militancy of the CIO and labor emerging from World War II. Though labor fully supported this just war to defeat fascism, it also expected greater democracy and a more peaceful world to emerge. The labor movement fully expected, also, to recoup equally for the many sacrifices made by workers in support of the war. Corporate and banking profits were up and labor expected wages, health care, pensions and the general welfare of working people to improve also. Wall Street had other plans. A vicious anti-labor offensive, including the Taft-Hartley Act and the McCarthy red scare, were tools used to put labor in its place. This campaign effectively killed democracy in labor and drove out progressive and militant labor leadership from most of the unions. In time, this led to domination by the right-wing, class collaborationist leadership of George Meany and later Lane Kirkland. Central to the Meany/Kirkland leaderships’ thinking was full support for the US government’s anti-Communist, cold-war foreign policy. In this process, foreign policy issues were moved out of the local union halls and workplaces and into small committees in the national offices of the AFL-CIO. The Meany/Kirkland leadership argued that unions should leave foreign policy to the experts, including the CIA and State Department agents they welcomed into the house of labor. It got worse. As rank-and-file movements and some labor leaders began to question the war in Vietnam, the AFL-CIO leadership made it clear that any labor council that passed an anti-war resolution would be expelled from the federation. Regardless, the basic self-interest of working people for peace began to reassert itself in labor. Local unions passed resolutions against the war and some labor leaders spoke out. Eventually this jelled in a national Labor for Peace movement that played a role, with the larger peace movement, in helping to end the war in Vietnam. Another closely related development was going on at the same time. Rank-and-file union activists, many of them veterans of the civil rights and anti-Vietnam war movements, were beginning to be elected to leadership positions in labor. These activists began to have a progressive influence far beyond their numbers, even in top circles of the AFL-CIO. In the 1960s, 1970s and in to the 1980s, rank-and-file union caucuses were changing the face of labor. These included Black caucuses, Latino caucuses and women’s caucuses. These caucuses tended mainly to deal with questions of promoting more militant trade unionism and union democracy. Most also took on peace and civil rights issues. Very few had a narrow focus on just “bread-and-butter” union issues. After all, that was the kind of trade unionism they were fighting to change. The grass roots caucuses and activists and even some higher level progressive labor leaders began to reintroduce foreign policy issues into labor. In the 1980s and early 1990s attention shifted to US policy in Central and Latin America. The Reagan/Bush years saw an aggressive big business assault on labor and working people at home coupled with an aggressive foreign policy. Many in labor saw the political connection between runaway shops in places like El Salvador and Nicaragua and union-busting at home to support those same company profits. During this period labor leaders like John Sweeney spoke out against US policy in Central America while the old guard Kirkland leadership continued to aid and give comfort to US government efforts in support of anti-labor dictatorships around the world. The election of the Sweeney/Chavez-Thompson/Trumka leadership was a watershed event for labor. The stagnation and class collaborationism imposed on labor by the McCarthy-era attacks was coming to an end. Another change was an end to AFL-CIO blind obedience to the foreign policy goals of the State Department. The door was opened for labor to once again assume its natural role as a champion of peace. After the Sweeney team’s election many unions and central labor bodies began actively questioning US foreign policy. This included things like questioning labor’s own involvement in the overthrow of the Allende government in Chile. What a difference – from Meany threatening to lift charters for opposing the Vietnam war, to hundreds of local unions and labor bodies demanding the Bush administration not invade Iraq. From “Bread and Butter” Comes Peace This engaging of foreign policy and peace issues in labor did not happen in a vacuum, separated from other important developments in the class struggle. In the past, labor was at the heart of great movements. The fight for public education, the eight-hour day movement, the fight for unemployment compensation and Social Security, and the fight against fascism are prime examples. Under the Meany/Kirkland leadership the unions were no longer identified with the great social movements of the day. Nor was labor seen as the social movement around which great coalitions and struggles could be built. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, it was the civil rights movement, the anti-Vietnam war movement, and the women’s movement of the 1960s and 1970s that helped to shake labor out of its lethargy. Coming out of the McCarthy era, the center of gravity for rank-and-file movements and for progressive labor leaders who wanted change was the killing organized workers were taking in the workplaces. The massive restructuring of industry in the late 1970s and early 1980s meant the loss of hundreds of thousands of good-paying union jobs. In steel, auto, electrical, rubber and manufacturing in general, union jobs and benefits were being decimated. Union density, or the percentage of workers in unions, was plummeting. New technologies were not only cutting down the number of workers needed in manufacturing, but were also making it easier for industries to move production around – from north to south, or to other countries. Though it wasn’t called globalization yet, a new wave of that process was beginning. Added to this, was the fact that the business unionism style of Kirkland and friends was not attracting new emerging sections of workers. With the exception of a few unions, most were doing little to organize new members. Most of the unions that backed the Sweeney team against the old leadership in 1995 were also deeply concerned about the stagnation and declining power of the unions to influence economic and political life. There was no strategy. Labor’s influence at election time and in the halls of Congress was in steep decline. With the new Sweeney leadership, this began to change rapidly. Debate was on labor’s agenda again. How to build coalitions with other social movements – the African American, Mexican American, Latino, Asian American and other oppressed people’s movements, the women’s movements, youth movements, seniors movements, gay and lesbian movements, civil liberties and religious movements? How to make the unions the champions of all working people, organized and unorganized? How to bring new vigor and strategy to organizing the unorganized? How to build labor’s independent political action? And yes, how to build ties with peace and solidarity movements? These were the kinds of questions swirling around at all levels of a labor movement that suddenly seemed released from stagnation. This most recent burst of anti-war sentiment in labor against the Bush administration’s pre-emptive, go-it-alone war on Iraq has been explosive, broad-based and qualitative. Yet it is logically and organically linked to these other developments in labor mentioned above. It was a good thing the fog was lifting because the new George W. Bush administration was radically renewing the assault on labor. But in the new situation, labor was fighting back like it hadn’t in many years. Important victories like the recent longshore union’s West Coast agreement (ILWU) and the transit workers victory in New York (TWU) are prime examples. Of course, fighting back doesn’t always mean winning, but it does mean lessons are being learned and connections are being made. Even as the new peace movement continues to grow in labor, it’s instructive to look at the other key components of labor’s fightback agenda. Just a few important examples: the AFL-CIO has opened a broad offensive against Bush’s radical budget and tax give-away to the rich plans. Labor is sponsoring a dramatic new “freedom ride” across the country to champion legalization of undocumented immigrant workers. The AFL-CIO is active in coalitions to protect affirmative action at the University of Michigan. Unions and the AFL-CIO are leading all kinds of campaigns to expose the corruption and criminal activities of some of the biggest corporations. And labor is gearing up to continue to refine its independent political action and mobilization abilities for the 2004 elections. Once labor moves to a position of again questioning the right of corporations and the government to run roughshod over workers’ lives and rights, certain other conclusions have to be drawn. There is a connection between the company that shuts down your plant to move it overseas and the foreign policy that props up right-wing dictators in the countries where your plant moves. This developing understanding of the link between “bread and butter” issues at home and international affairs and peace are key components of class consciousness.

#### Interventionism causes global hotspots to go nuclear

**Obayemi, 6** -- East Bay Law School professor

[Olumide, admitted to the Bars of Federal Republic of Nigeria and the State of California, Golden Gate University School of Law, "Article: Legal Standards Governing Pre-Emptive Strikes and Forcible Measures of Anticipatory Self-Defense Under the U.N. Charter and General International Law," 12 Ann. Surv. Int'l & Comp. L. 19, l/n, accessed 9-19-13]

The United States must abide by the rigorous standards set out above that are meant to govern the use of preemptive strikes, because today's international system is characterized by a relative infrequency of interstate war. It has been noted that developing doctrines that lower the threshold for preemptive action could put that accomplishment at risk, and exacerbate regional crises already on the brink of open conflict. n100 This is important as O'Hanlon, Rice, and Steinberg have rightly noted: ...countries already on the brink of war, and leaning strongly towards war, might use the doctrine to justify an action they already wished to take, and the effect of the U.S. posture may make it harder for the international community in general, and the U.S. in particular, to counsel delay and diplomacy. Potential examples abound, ranging from Ethiopia and Eritrea, to China and **Taiwan**, to **the Mid**dle **East**. But perhaps the clearest case is the **India-Pakistan** crisis. n101 The world must be a safe place to live in. We cannot be ruled by bandits and rogue states. There must be law and order not only in the books but in enforcement as well. No nation is better suited to enforce international law than the United States. The Bush Doctrine will stand the test [\*42] of time and survive. Again, we submit that nothing more would protect the world and its citizens from **nuclear weapons**, terrorists and rogue states than an able and willing nation like the United States, acting as a policeman of the world within all legal boundaries. This is the essence of the preamble to the United Nations Charter.

### Solvency

#### Contention Two: Solvency

#### Unconditional right to strike is key to prevent ambiguity and loopholes that gut the aff

**Chang, 15** – Renmin University Professor of Labour Law

[Kai, Director of the Research Institute of Labour Relations of Renmin University, Chair of the Labour Relations Branch of the China Human Resource Development Association; and Fang Lee Cooke, Distinguished Professor of Human Resource Management (HRM) and Asia Studies at Monash University, “Legislating the right to strike in China: Historical development and prospects,” Journal of Industrial Relations, 2015, Vol. 57(3), https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.920.4293&rep=rep1&type=pdf, accessed 10-10-21]

**The right to strike is a basic** human **right** in the Covenant on International Human Rights (United Nations Human Rights website: http://www.ohchr.org/ EN/Professionallnterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx). It is also the basic content of the right to collective disputes in labour disputes. This concerns an important issue in the legislation of the right to strike, that is the position of the right to strike in the legal system of citizens’ rights in China. We argue that human rights or Constitutional rights must be made more specific through further legislation. **Otherwise**, such **rights** will **only exist in notion without** any **enforcement** possibility. In China, the legislation of strike should be reified in labour laws and not merely exist as a kind of general human rights or constitutional rights in abstract. Although the Constitution in 1975 and 1978 also stipulated ‘the freedom of strike’, the meaning of this kind of constitutional right is symbolic as a declaration rather than implementational. This is because the stipulation was not re-enforced with more specific legal regulations, especially when the Labour Law (enacted in 1995) and other relevant labour regulations did not exist at the time. The legislation of the right to strike is therefore not only a necessity in the provision of a fuller set of human rights or civil rights in general, but also a necessity in providing a more comprehensive set of basic labour rights, particularly the right to organise and the right to collective bargaining (Kovacs, 2005).

The legislation of the right to strike is an important component of labour legislation. In the system of labour laws, the right to strike is not a single or isolated right, but an integral part of the system of workers’ rights. The right to strike, the right to organise and the right to collective bargaining together form the ‘basic labour rights’. These rights are interconnected and interact with each other to take effect. In particular, the right to organise is a basic right; the right to bargaining is a core right; and the right to strike is to guarantee the right to bargain (Ewing, 2013). As the basic component of labour rights to collective disputes, the right to strike is the ultimate and the highest means of defence for workers in the dispute between labour and capital. As a labour right of self-defence for workers, the effect of strike is ‘deterrent’. It exerts pressure and restriction on employers and forces them to deal with labour relations more cautiously. The implementation of the right to strike is closely related to the right to collective bargaining. Under normal circumstances, only when the bargaining fails, or the collective contract fails to perform, or the rights and interests of the workers have been violated or will suffer an encroachment and cannot be resolved by bargaining, can workers exercise the right to strike. The direct purpose of a strike is to sign or implement collective contract or other agreement. The strike is the major means that workers have to restrict employers from refusing to bargain and non-honcst bargaining in the course of collective bargaining. In China, without the guarantee of the right to collective disputes, especially the right to strike, it will be difficult for the system of collective bargaining to be effective. Therefore, the legislation of the right to strike in China should be combined with the legislation of collective contract. This will **avoid ambiguity** of the legislation **on the right to strike**. It will stipulate the nature, effect and position of the right to strike more clearly. The implementation and restriction of the right will also be more easily regulated.

As an important part of the collective labour rights, the right to strike with other contents of collective labour rights should be considered together as a bundle of rights or a holistic system of rights to make a legislative plan. In addition, in view of the equality principle in regulating labour relations, we argue that if the right to strike can be incorporated into the legislation of the right to collective disputes, then it will be beneficial to the formation of a **comprehensive** system of labour dispute rights. The significance of doing so is manifold: first, making it clear that the right to strike is an integral part of the right to collective disputes and is the right to be exercised in collective disputes; second, the employers should correspondingly have the right to lockout as a counter power; third, the exercise of the right to collective disputes should follow the procedure that deals with collective disputes.

The legislation of the right to strike involves not only legislative theories, but also the opportunity and conditions to legislate. This mainly involves two conditions.

First, the legislation of the right to strike must have a corresponding legal environment and conditions, especially a relatively comprehensive system of collective contract and labour disputes settlement. The system of collective contract in China has only been developed recently, and much remains to be improved (e.g. Brown, 2006). For example, in the overall design and detailed procedure of the labour disputes resolution system, the trade unions as a main body in the system have not been taken into account. Disputes derived from signing the collective contract cannot go through the procedure of labour disputes resolution. By contrast, disputes arising from the implementation of the collective contract can do so according to relevant regulations. However, in the ‘Regulation on Labour Disputes Settlement' (1993), there is no regulation on the resolution of disputes over collective contracts. In addition, the same regulation specifies that ‘enterprise and workers are parties of the case of labour disputes'. This means that the enterprise union is not listed as a party in labour disputes and that the legitimacy of the union’s involvement in the dispute resolution is questionable. These examples of legislative **loopholes** suggest that there is a need to amend and improve relevant laws and regulations to provide **greater** procedural and substantive **clarity**.

Second, whether or not enterprise unions really represent workers’ interests is another condition for strike legislation. Standard strikes should have the grassroots unions as the legal organisers of strikes. In some countries, self-organised strikes that bypass the union as the legal strike organising body will be deemed illegal.6 In the Chinese context, the grassroots unions, especially those in the private sector, have not become organisations that are independent of the employer and truly represent the workers’ interests. Therefore, whether or not the unions can undertake the duty of organising collective disputes or strike remains uncertain. Moreover, in situations where the union enjoying the exclusive right to organise is unwilling to or cannot organise strikes, workers will not be able to hold spontaneous strikes without violating the law, if spontaneous strikes that arc not organised by the union are outlawed. Under such circumstances, the legislation of strike is likely to have an adverse effect on workers’ capacity to strike, because they are trapped by the predicaments of the unions. In a period when the law is evasive on strikes, workers can still go on spontaneous strikes without violating the law. But after the legislation of strikes, spontaneous strikes will be most likely prohibited. Therefore, the legislation of strikes in China must seriously take into account the role of the unions and the reform necessary for them to function appropriately in the light of marketisation and legislation.

The legislation of the right to collective disputes or the right to strike must make it the basic starting point to guarantee the basic rights and interests of workers on the one hand and to maintain the stability of the society on the other. **The legislation of strikes should not be turned into** the **legislation** against, or **restricting, strikes**. In view of the current situation in China, the legislation of strikes should take the strategy of being proactive, incremental, and consistent with corresponding laws. It should be noted that Article 27, Chapter Three of the Trade Union Law (2001) has made a significant step forward towards the legislation of right to strike. In spite of the fact that the term ‘strikes' is not used in this law, its description of ‘incidents of stoppage of work and go-slow collectively’ clearly refers to strikes. This law requires that after a stoppage or go-slow occurs in enterprises or public sector organisations, the unions ‘should’ raise demands on behalf of the workers and the employer ‘should’ address its employees’ legitimate demands. The logical premise of the two ‘shoulds’ is: strike is not illegal.

This stipulation in the Trade Union Law (2001) is obviously transitional in nature, however. There remains a large gap between this rudimentary stipulation and a more comprehensive system appropriate for a market economy. The current stipulation is no more than a passive approval of strike action without any clear specification of its legality. It offers no legal protection for striking in the form of ‘criminal immunity’ and ‘civil immunity’.7 Nevertheless, this basic provision is a significant step towards the legislation of the right to strike.

#### Limited right to strike is a picnic for lawyers- even when employees would win the strike is delayed into non-existence

**Bornstein, 18** -- Maurice Blackburn Lawyers National Head of Employment Law

[Josh, “Requiem for the Right to Strike,” Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, 2018, https://www.monash.edu/\_\_data/assets/pdf\_file/0008/1441196/Josh-Bornstein-paper.pdf,%20accessed%2010=11=21]

In practise, the **technical requirements** are a **lawyers' picnic**, enabling employers to **frustrate and delay** strike action. **Even where there is complete compliance**, the **limited right to strike** is **all too easily removed** because the Fair Work Commission (FWC) is vested with considerable power to suspend or terminate protected industrial action.15 It must suspend or terminate protected industrial action if satisfied that the action is "... causing or threating to cause, significant economic harm to the employer, or any of the employees, that will be covered by the agreement.'16 Or. if it may cause "significant damage to the Australian economy or an important part of if}7

#### Unconditional is key- exceptions are stretched to ban strikes even when they should be allowed

**le Roux, 16** -- University of Cape Town law professor

[Rochelle, and Tamara Cohen, University of KwaZulu-Natal, "Understanding the limitations to the right to strike in essential and public services in the SADC region," Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal, 2016, http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci\_arttext&amp;pid=S1727-37812016000100007, accessed 10-11-2021]

This analysis has shown that, with the exception of South Africa and Namibia, limitations to the right to strike of public sector employees in the SADC exceed those endorsed by international conventions. In particular, limitations to freedom of association in the public sector are commonplace, and limitations to the right to strike vary from an outright ban to a **ban by subterfuge**. In other words, **even where strikes are generally permitted** in the public sector and prohibited only in defined essential services, a **broad definition** of essential services or a determination of essential services swayed by governmental influence and interests **effectively results** in an outright ban of public sector strikes in the sub-region.